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**Representation of Women in Advertisements in Arabic and  
English Magazines: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Approach.**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is concerned with investigating the representations of ideal femininity in cosmetics' advertising discourse in two versions of ELLE print magazine, ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK. It also aims at examining the linguistic and semiotic persuasive strategies advertisers employ to construct such ideals. Moreover, it investigates the readers' perspectives and perceptions of cosmetics advertisements. Thus, a triangulated method is applied to the data: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and focus groups. MCDA and CDA are applied to the dataset of advertising discourse to cross-culturally examine the ideal feminine figure and female identities presented in the data, while focus groups are conducted to elicit readers' perceptions of the adverts' content.

The adverts' analysis has revealed that there are seven contradictory gendered identities represented to women as ideals which are: the active, the relaxed, the dependent, the friendly, the childish, the rebel and the mysterious. The ideal feminine figure depicted for Saudi and British readers is almost identical: a white, young and natural looking woman who achieves her feminine look through the application of cosmetic products. The discourse analysis and the focus group discussions have proved that there is a gap between the ideals depicted in the adverts and the views and perceptions of real women in both groups, but it was greater in the Saudi group where the ideal was a Western woman. Hence, advertisers present an ideal that does not reflect the women who read the magazines or their society. They are rather promoting a pseudo-culture with new definitions of feminine beauty and ideal female identities. Comparative analysis of linguistic and semiotic strategies found in ELLE

ARABIA and ELLE UK have revealed that both versions constitutes of a variety of strategies, however, the British version included more of the persuasive strategies than the Arabic version. Advertising discourse affects the power relations in society, and that is clear through the analysis where adverts encourage women to believe that make up is a necessity to be acceptable in society. Consequently, adverts create a link between consumerism and the construction of identity through lifestyles leading to a globalised culture based on consumption.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In the consumerist world we live in today, adverts represent an integral part of our daily lives. They are found everywhere, and so cannot be dismissed easily. People are bombarded by adverts through all types of mass media. Women seem to be not only the centre of most of these adverts, whether they market beauty products or clothes and accessories, but they are also their primary target. Though it can be argued that people cannot avoid adverts, it is certainly possible to view them critically. Analysing and evaluating the content of adverts can shed light on the pervasive techniques of advertising discourse and how the implied ideologies might affect women's beliefs, lifestyles and – most importantly – self-image.

Advertising discourse has been of interest to researchers in many different fields, including marketing, psychology and linguistics. Sociolinguists look at different types of adverts, analysing various components of the advertising discourse which provides insights into the persuasive strategies advertisers use to influence readers, as well as the disparity between how women and men are targeted in adverts. In relation to cosmetic adverts, previous research (e.g. Coupland, 2007; Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013) has focused more on investigating the textual part to reveal the ideologies embedded in those adverts and thus have neglected the semiotic aspects. Nowadays, the mass media rely more on images as they deliver messages more easily; in the context of cosmetic adverts, images are arguably more attractive and consequently have greater effect. Few studies to date have examined cosmetic products adverts from a multimodal perspective, with the exception of Baykal (2016)

who has focused on mascaras, and McLoughlin (2013) who has looked at skin care products within beauty/lifestyle features and skin care/fashion advertisements. Both studies covered adverts from magazines distributed in one country only. Thus, to my knowledge, this thesis is the first to investigate representations of femininity cross-culturally by examining cosmetic adverts (foundation, eyeliner, mascara, lipstick) comprehensively through Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). The focus here is on adverts within two different versions of ELLE magazine that are distributed in two different languages: ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK. This approach reveals the universality of the ideologies implied in women's magazines adverts as well as the cross-cultural differences in representations of ideal femininity.

Applying MCDA to adverts distributed in Saudi Arabia and the UK, this thesis discusses the degree and effects of hegemonic discourses of advertising. It shows how ideal femininity is represented from the point of view of brand advertisers, whose goal is to gain profits through convincing women, regardless of their race, ethnicity or age that they are always lacking something and this can only be solved through consuming their products. Comparing hegemonic ideologies implied in cosmetic adverts cross-culturally, this thesis aims to identify the similarities and differences between the two versions addressed to different audiences. By exposing these ideologies, it becomes clear how women are targeted in a universal way and given a unified ideal to aspire to. Being treated in this way can have a significant effect on women's identities, as in reality women differ in many aspects but especially the way they look. Furthermore, adverts that depict an ideal woman whose looks differ fundamentally from the society to which the magazine is addressed may send a message to readers that they are not good enough to be considered beautiful or feminine according to global standards.

Therefore, women in such societies might arguably try to change who they are and how they look to accommodate the stereotypes advertised as ideal figures. The effect of adverts may be reflected through the culture where beautifying rituals are not local and traditional, but instead more global, where the end goal is not having a better or aesthetised version of one's self but a replica of a beauty that does not reflect the society's identity, heritage and values. The result of such adverts' ideologies would be a 'pseudo-culture'; a culture that is 'superimposed' in order to replace the original one (Yazdanparast et al., 2018).

As a Saudi woman studying in the UK and applying a feminist approach to MCDA, my background - combined with the conditions related to writing this thesis - have undeniably affected my data analysis; it is viewed through my own perspectives and life experiences. The Saudi culture is affected by Islam and Arab traditions. According to the General Authority of Statistics (2019), women in Saudi Arabia represent almost half of Saudi society with 49% of total population where the average age is 28. Saudi women wear a black outer cloak (abaya) over their dress and a black scarf around their heads (shayla). Some of them wear a black face cover that only shows the eyes (niqab). It is very common to wear Western designed clothes under abaya. It is also normal to wear makeup under niqab or with hijab. Muslim women are allowed to wear makeup for husbands, in front of other women and non-marriageable male relatives (maharim); male members of a woman's family with whom marriage would be considered prohibited in Islam. In the past, Saudi women used kohl and (dayram); a piece of the bark extracted from the walnut tree that is used to give the lips a red hue as it works as a natural dye.

Coming from Saudi Arabia, a country that has traditional values and religious beliefs which play a key role in constructing the everyday identities of members of society, I have for a long time felt vexed by the way magazines address Saudi women. Looking at the images in Saudi women's magazines, most women are depicted as having blonde hair, blue eyes and pale skin. This representation of the ideal feminine figure does not reflect the society I come from. As Ghanem (2016) points out in *Vogue Arabia*, there are five features that Arabic women are "genetically blessed with" which are: big eyes, full eyebrows, natural curves, olive complexion and thick hair. Arabic beauty standards are different from those of Western societies and having a Westernised version of femininity imposed on Saudi readers can arguably make targeted readers feel less beautiful in comparison. Being raised by my family to be a critical woman made me aware that there is discrimination in the globalised depictions of beauty ideals. Adopting feminist MCDA in this thesis has allowed me to reveal the implications of the ideologies communicated in the adverts addressing women; it has provided me with the tools to investigate the persuasive strategies employed to deliver indirect messages through adverts which affect women's self-esteem and identity. Being a student in the UK has given me the opportunity to investigate the magazines distributed there and, consequently, to examine the ideal feminine figure depicted for British women. This thesis, therefore, presents a comparative analysis. As an integral part of the data analysis, I also conducted focus groups with Saudi and British women to hear their opinions first-hand on the cosmetic adverts within those magazines. Hence, the process of writing this thesis and investigating the way women are represented in those two different cultures has been both complex and enlightening.

My overall intention is that this study will demonstrate how advertising strategies target women globally, which results in depowering them. Moreover, this research adds original data to cross-cultural linguistic studies that have, to date, under-investigated the ideologies embedded through media representations of beauty addressed to women from different cultures. Analysing adverts from ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK, and examining audience perspectives through focus groups with Saudi and British women as participants, contributes to reaching an understanding of the ideologies that cosmetic adverts communicate to women and how those women feel towards such representations of beauty. The hegemonic advertising discourse has sociocultural effects as the adverts imply certain lifestyles, beauty standards and ideals based on cosmetic brands' interests influencing women's habits, beliefs and – more importantly – their identities and how they view themselves. The unrealistic standard depicted in adverts is not limited to one culture, but the problem of placing pressure on women through creating problems in their bodies appears to be a global problem. Women all over the world are encouraged to embrace a beauty that is defined by the powerful cosmetic brands' companies and on their way to reach that ideal, they must get rid of what identifies them as individuals (Lazar, 2006). Rather than celebrating women's diversity, advertisers impose a template that women can only fit through consumption of cosmetic products.

### **1.1 Why Cosmetic Advertising Discourse?**

While cosmetics adverts claim on a surface level to 'empower' women, researchers including Bartky (1990), Lazar (2006), McLoughlin (2013) and Ringrow (2016) have demonstrated how cosmetics adverts are driven by powerful discourses and

ideologies about gender that result in women perceiving themselves to be inadequate unless they engage in commodity consumption, consuming multiple products in order to make themselves acceptable to enter into public life and secure themselves a (male) partner. Women are either expected to have a fairer skin or a different hair colour to be considered beautiful. Men are also targeted; Tan et al. (2013) found that 'commodity consumption' is the main feature of global hegemonic masculinity in men's lifestyle magazines, where men are preferred to be 'refined and sophisticated' (Tan et al., 2013: 245). However, this mainly targets intelligence and dressing in a certain style rather than amending physical bodily features such as skin or hair colour. Comparing how women and men are represented in magazine advertisements, Conley and Ramsey (2011) found that women are portrayed as more 'flawless' than men. Thus, 'the paradoxical adherence to the cosmetic industry discourse ... indicates that gender inequality remains an ideological force in our society' (McCabe, de Waal Malefyt and Fabri, 2017: 18). The notion that there is a certain standard or template that women should fulfil to be considered 'feminine' or 'beautiful' is a product of consumerism, where marketers create the illusion of an ideal who has certain qualities that could not be achieved without the application of products. The solutions those products provide are not permanent and thus women enter into the never-ending cycle of purchasing products which deal with 'insoluble' problems, an essential element in 'consumer femininity' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 176).

A Saudi woman I know told me once that she could not leave the house without applying full makeup, despite being young, beautiful and with a successful career. Her idea of looking good or acceptable is that her skin should look flawless and to her, that would not be achievable without concealer, foundation, and powder. She is not alone



in this, as I see many young women within the university campuses both in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and in Nottingham, UK, who apply full makeup every morning in order to feel that they look good enough. Cosmetic adverts create insecurities in young women by depicting natural skin colour and conditions as problematic. This could be indicative of broader patterns created by the discourse of advertising, where women always feel the need to change something in their appearance to be acceptable in society. It could be argued that cosmetics products help women feel more confident but, on the other hand, the cosmetics industry creates unrealistic standards that would make any woman feel deviant rather than normal; Jaworski (2003: 152) argues that this is due to the 'power constraints imposed on body representations'. Jaworski explains the relationship between the ideal and power in society stating that '(t)he discursive and/or visual representations of such ideal bodies are constituted by and constitutive of the power relations operating within the community' (2003: 153). Thus, people in powerful positions who control media and advertisements produce unrealistic ideals and, in doing so, they control women who thrive to match that perfect ideal. Though the ideal image is usually heavily edited, it still has the power to make women doubt their appearance, especially at a young age when they are trying to feel accepted by peers and society.

## **1.2 Why a Cross-Cultural comparison?**

As a lecturer in Saudi Arabia, I have witnessed young women adopt a variety of looks that are so different from their natural look (black or dark brown hair, beige or tanned skin and brown eyes), which require them to change the colour of their hair, skin and eyes as well. Such extreme makeovers could affect their perceptions of themselves and make them hide an important part of their identity. These observations inspired

me to examine the language of cosmetic advertising to understand the beauty ideal those girls might be aiming to have and why they aspired to such a Westernised version of femininity. I wanted to examine the cosmetics adverts addressed to British women as well, however, to inspect the ideologies found there. By conducting a cross-cultural study, I aim to compare the ideologies presented through the adverts in order to find whether the ideal depicted for women in the UK is also unreachable and unrepresentative of British women, and if that ideal feminine figure seems to be global. Therefore, in this thesis, I analyse cosmetics adverts taken from Arabic and British magazines closely and comprehensively to reveal dominant ideologies that could affect women's perceptions of ideal beauty and the way they see themselves. As part of this, I report on focus groups conducted with Saudi and British women to investigate how readers respond to those cosmetics adverts and the messages they deliver.

By investigating the discourses of advertisements cross-culturally, I aim to explore the ideal feminine figure in two versions of ELLE magazine: ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK (I explain the reasons for selecting these magazines in Section 3.6.2). Each culture has its own standards of beauty and consequently its own notion of the ideal bodily figure and face. In this study, I look at adverts targeting women from the two different cultures to identify if the beauty ideal depicted for them is similar or different; this allows me to investigate the degrees of injustice and inequality women are subjected to through adverts. Adverts in general – in both contexts – portray white women, and thus it could be presumed that British women have less pressure since their looks could be closer to the ideal than Saudi women. This idea is examined throughout the analysis and the focus groups discussions. Another key reason behind

investigating adverts cross-culturally is the way ideologies are delivered through image and language. In this research, I examine how advertising language employs persuasive strategies in both Arabic and English to manipulate readers and look at whether they differ or not.

### **1.3 Methodology and Research Questions**

I aim here to expose the messages implied through hegemonic discourses of cosmetics advertising: where advertisers control the way women perceive of their looks by indicating, firstly, that they do not resemble the ideal feminine figure and, secondly, that they need to consume products to reach that ideal. To achieve this, I examine the adverts through Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). The MCDA approach has been established by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), in which the analyst focuses on the meaning and ideologies communicated through different modes, including pictures and text. Through the application of MCDA, I will reveal how semiotic choices presented in adverts are loaded with ideologies that target our identities. To analyse textual techniques, I apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as developed by Fairclough (2013), Wodak and Fairclough (2010), Wodak and Meyer (2009), and Van Dijk (2008). Applying CDA to the data, I will explain how the language of adverts comprises powerful ideologies and how such ideas play a role in the construction of identity.

Following Fairclough's (2013) argument that we must consider not only the text and its production, but its reception as well, included in this thesis is an evaluation of how readers perceive the advertisements. This is investigated through focus groups, as detailed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 9. Therefore, this research is conducted through a triangulated method: MCDA, CDA and focus groups. I take a Feminist Critical

Discourse Analysis (FCDA) approach as part of this, with the aim of revealing embedded ideologies concerning gender. As defined by Lazar (2005), FCDA examines the relationship between gender, power and discourse to achieve justice. I take the position that, while some women may enjoy wearing make up for a change or as a luxury, for others wearing it has become a necessity to achieve an idealised, aestheticised identity. I am therefore critical throughout this study of the discourse within these adverts. In this thesis, I refer to CDA, MCDA and FCDA separately due to the frameworks I applied from each approach in which the MCDA does not include analysis of textual elements. I apply three MCDA frameworks that focus on the semiotic elements only as detailed in Chapter 3 where Kress's quadrant focus on the distribution of elements on the page, Machin and Mayr's framework is applied to visual semiotic choices and van Leeuwen's framework for visual representation of social actors. CDA, on the other hand, is employed to analyse the textual elements of the discourse of advertising based on Woods' framework. Lastly, FCDA is the approach I take as I approach data with the aim of investigating the ideologies hidden in the discourse of cosmetic adverts and its relation to power distribution in society.

This thesis attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What types of identities are created in the discourse of cosmetics adverts for women?

RQ 2: How do these adverts represent idealised femininity in each cultural context?

RQ 3: What are the semiotic and linguistic strategies used in those adverts?

RQ 4: Do the semiotic and linguistic strategies used differ between Arabic and English magazines? Is there any evidence of a globalised femininity in the dataset?

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

The significance of this thesis stems from two key areas of innovation: cross-cultural comparison and the triangulation of method. A previous cross-cultural comparison of women's magazines had been conducted by McLoughlin (2017) and it compared between magazines in South Asia and United Kingdom. Comparative studies of cosmetics advertisements have been conducted between English and French magazines (Ringrow, 2016) and Moroccan and British magazines (Chafai, 2010) but none have addressed cosmetics adverts in Saudi and British magazines. Thus, to my knowledge, this is the first study to investigate that, which brings a new understanding on the similarities and differences in the presentation of the ideal woman in those two cultures, as well as the effect of globalization on that ideal. This is also the first study to use a combination of MCDA, CDA and focus groups, where the first two methods are employed to analyse the data and the latter to identify participants' responses towards it. Thus, the current study contributes to sociolinguistic research, MCDA in particular, as it combines three multimodal approaches to image analysis: Kress's (2003) quadrant of spatial meaning potential in Western images, Machin and Mayr's (2016) framework to analyse objects, and van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of the visual representation of social actors. It presents a cross-cultural comparative study conducted through a triangulated approach to examine the ideologies concealed in multimodal data.

## **1.5 Thesis outline**

The thesis is divided into ten chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review, where I consider previous studies in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), including CDA, FCDA and

MCDA. In this chapter I also consider gender in advertisements and the cross-cultural approaches to gender studies. I present previous studies on advertising discourse as well as the language of magazines. The literature review also includes a section on interdisciplinary perspectives on gender and advertising discourses.

Chapter 3 provides a summary of previous methodologies applied in different studies that analyse adverts. In this chapter, I present a detailed description of the triangulated multimethods applied here, which combines CDA, MCDA and focus groups along with the criticisms addressed to each approach. Furthermore, this chapter presents data related to the focus groups, including the questions asked for each group and how the groups' data have been analysed. Moreover, I discuss the rationale behind the data collection.

Chapters 4-8 constitute the comparative analysis of the adverts. The first two analysis chapters are dedicated to direct comparative analysis, since these two chapters include adverts that are reproduced in both the Arabic and English versions of ELLE magazine, with some slight changes. Chapter 4 includes the analysis of a foundation advert which is Dior's *Forever Cushion* and Chapter 5 analyses another foundation advert, Chanel's *Les Beige*. In contrast, the following three analysis chapters comprise indirect comparative analysis as the adverts analysed appear *only* in either the Arabic or English versions, but which are for similar products (enabling a comparative analysis). Chapter 6 features the analysis of two foundations: Max Factor's *Lasting Performance* and schnarwiler's *Organic* foundation. Chapter 7 provides the analysis of two eye-related products: Lancôme's *Monsieur Big* mascara and Sephora's *Nuit Kajal* eyeliner. Chapter 8 includes the analysis of two lip products:

Bourjois' *Rouge Laque* and Chanel's *Rouge Allure Ink*. Note that each of these items are produced by leading cosmetics brands, and the adverts are part of a wider marketing strategy. In appearing in one of the two versions of ELLE magazine, they have considerable potential influence on a female audience.

Chapter 9 is dedicated to the focus groups data. It includes the excerpts and quotes taken from the focus groups' discussions which are divided according to the themes.

Chapter 10 is the discussion chapter, which synthesises the key findings. In this chapter, the most dominant discourses found in the analysis chapters are presented, along with an evaluative summary of the focus group discussions. Furthermore, it draws cross-cultural comparisons between the findings in the Arabic and English ELLE in terms of the identities presented and the ideal feminine figure depicted for women in each version of the magazine. There is a comparison between the textual and multimodal techniques used here, as well. The last section of this chapter presents a methodological evaluation, in which the triangulated multimethod is examined.

Chapter 11 is the conclusion chapter, where I summarise the findings of the thesis and consider the practical and methodological implications of the research. Finally, I summarise the limitations of the research and suggestions for possible future research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

In this thesis, I take a Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) approach to investigating language, gender and advertising discourse in women's magazines. Specifically, I take a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) approach. When I am using the terms 'discourse' and pluralised 'discourses' throughout this thesis, I refer to Baxter's broad view of discourses as 'forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices' (Baxter, 2003: 7). Consequently, discourse as social and ideological practice is concerned with the influence of power relations on society that is performed through language.

Women's magazines have long been of interest to researchers from sociolinguistics, psychology, marketing and cultural studies who investigate the effects of the persuasive techniques used in the discourse of advertising. Sociolinguists study the textual choices of magazines to investigate the ideologies implied in that discourse and how it reflects on individuals, as well as society. Psychologists examine the effects magazines' images have on readers' mental and physical health and how they can help readers deal with them (Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar, 2005), along with examining the effects of thin models in media (Polivy and Herman, 2004). Marketing scholars, on the other hand, study how consumers react to those techniques in order to find a way to increase their profits by creating more consumers. Thus, whilst this thesis is grounded in sociolinguistic theory and approaches, the following literature review comprises research from different areas including: cultural studies, psychology and marketing



along with linguistics. The review aims to present a critical overview of previous research related to this study, thus providing a background for this thesis.

I begin this chapter by presenting the literature related to the approaches I use in my methodology, which I return to from a practical, methodological perspective later in Chapter 3. Thus, I start with a section on Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), (Section 2.1), where I indicate its aim and the interaction between discourse structure and social structure. This section provides a discussion of different definitions of discourse, the relationship between discourse and power, as well as the relation between text and readers. Then, in Section 2.2, I introduce Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), providing crucial definitions, how these are used in the thesis and, crucially, how they relate to the overall aim of this study. Within this, I consider the concepts of ideology and identity which focus on the interplay between language, culture, ideology and how it could shape women's identities. I focus here on the reproduction of power relations in society through discourse. The following Section 2.3 introduces multimodality, focusing on how it is applied in previous research on different types of discourse. Section 2.4 provides definitions of gender and how it is related to ideology. Section 2.5 concerns Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) and includes feminist approaches to language and gender research as well as the purpose of feminist research. The following Section 2.6 explores the nature of advertisements as a pervasive type of discourse which affects distribution of power in society, including a review on women's magazines and previous studies on advertising discourse in terms of how women are targeted. Moreover, it discusses the gender bias in media representations of men and women, before I move on to present previous studies on

gender that apply cross-cultural approaches. Section 2.7 presents interdisciplinary perspectives on gender and advertising discourses.

## **2.1 Critical Discourse Studies**

The focus of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is upon the relationship between social structure and discourse structure. The main goal of CDS is the 'critical study of social issues, problems, social inequality, domination and related phenomena, in general, and the role of discourse, language use or communication in such phenomena' (van Dijk, 2008: 6). According to van Dijk, if CDS is considered as a field of investigation and analysis of inequality in society, then we must examine the 'power' factor in this process. He refers to power abuse as 'domination'; it is the reason behind the following:

inequities, injustice, and inequality, that is, all forms of illegitimate actions and situations...Power abuse, thus, means the violation of fundamental norms and values in the interests of those in power and against the interests of others. (2008: 18-19).

CDS, as van Dijk sees it, is not considered as a method of study; CDS employ different methods depending on the goals of the research, the type of data collected, and the researcher's interests. The researcher in CDS takes a clear position defending the 'dominated' people. CDS focuses on three major concepts when analysing the reproduction of social power: discourse, cognition and society. I am not following a cognitive approach, but it is important to mention it in this discussion (Section 2.2.2) as it is part of CDS.

The other important aspect of CDS is the role of cultural effects; van Dijk (2008) states that CDS analysis 'examines the discursive reproduction of power against the

cultural background of the participants' (2008: 17). It is important to bear in mind while conducting a critical discourse study the differences in people's cultures and how they affect discourses. Culture is defined by Sheehan (2004: 24) as 'the lens through which the world is seen' and 'the blueprint for all our activities'. Discourse is part of culture since it is produced by people and then affects other people in the same society. Hence, when analysing language critically, it should not be dealt with as an isolated entity; on the contrary, it should be looked at in relation to the specific society it exists within. For example, advertisements in Arabic magazines are not always created by Arabic advertising agencies; as a result, Arab readers encounter concepts and ideals that are not part of Arabic culture, yet they are promoted within it. Therefore, an advertisement may be produced in the Arabic language, but that is not enough to make it suitable for Arabs. Each culture has its own ideals and values. Thus, the researcher in CDS must have the cultural factor in mind while analysing discourse. In this thesis, I take into consideration the cultural aspects of the Saudi and British societies throughout my analysis of the adverts taken from both ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK. Below, I move to defining discourse and how it affects the distribution of power in society.

### **2.1.1 Defining Discourse**

Discourse studies are integrated in many fields such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, social psychology and the study of communication (van Dijk, 2011). Discourse can be influential when used as a tool of hegemony, because it has the power of controlling and directing

people's minds subconsciously. According to Fairclough (2003: 45), hegemony is defined as follows:

a particular way of conceptualizing power which amongst other things emphasises how power depends upon achieving consent or at least acquiescence rather than just having the resources to use force, and the importance of ideology in sustaining relations of power.

Thus, discourse is very important and powerful since it affects the distribution of power in societies. As Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 30) argue, relations of power are organised by 'persuasion, consensus and complicity. Hegemony as a practice of power, operates largely through discourse'. Power is therefore transferred from dominant groups to people through discourse, by making people believe that there is a natural, preferred way of things. The meaning of *discourse* differs according to the writer's intentions and the context in which it occurs.

In general, there are two major views of 'discourse'; one that is limited to the linguistic part of language (which deals with the structure of the written or spoken communication), and another which is broad and encompasses more than language, since it relates language to its sociocultural effects through power relations in the society under study. Linguists deal with those views differently, since some researchers divide the definition of discourse into three categories rather than two. For example, Cameron and Panovic (2014) argue that there are three levels of discourse. First, discourse is 'language above the sentence', where the analyst is interested in analysing the forms and structures of language that exceeds the one sentence level. Second, discourse is 'language in use'. In this sense, discourse analysis is concerned with the participants who communicate through language and what messages or aims they reach in each specific context. Third, discourse is 'a form of

social practice', where language, whether written or spoken, affects society. After classifying definitions of discourse into those three categories, Cameron and Panovic (2014: 6) state that, when discourse focuses on social aspects, the second and third definitions are usually combined.

Baxter (2003:7) differentiates between the two meanings of discourse as 'language above the sentence', which is the narrow or textual-based view, and the broad view -defined at the beginning of this chapter – in which discourse is 'a form of social/ideological practice'. Baxter posits that this view might overlap with the definition of discourse as 'language in use' which is related to the use of language in context. Hence, they are merged into one category. I follow Mills' (1997: 17) argument that discourse cannot be viewed in isolation and, instead, reproduces the world from the point of view of the writer or speaker through language. In this sense, language does more than simply transferring information; it creates ideas and has an effect on audience. According to Wodak and Fairclough (2010), discourse always takes place within a context whereby it is related to previous discourses, and these contribute to the construction of meaning; discourse cannot be treated as an isolated entity.

Another view of written and spoken texts is that all texts are representations of social practices that include participants; where it is not necessary that all participants or social actors are mentioned because, through recontextualization, some of them might be excluded (van Leeuwen, 2008). For example, some written texts include sentences written in the passive structure, and thus, the participant exists on the social level but would be deleted on the textual level to focus the reader's attention on the verb or process and the object. This sheds light on the link between

language and society where discourse is a mode of communication. An additional dimension of discourse and its effects in relation to society is that it affects people's identities: discourses are 'the rules and guidelines which we produce and which are produced for us in order to construct ourselves as individuals and to interact with others' (Mills, 2008:7). From this point of view, discourse can be seen as organized and controlled by individuals and groups to shape how people think, behave and communicate with others in society, and this is found throughout the discourse of advertisements analysed in this thesis. Harvey (1996) extends the definition of discourse to view it as an expression of power. He states that discourses are 'manifestations of power' (1996: 78); they embody power because they carry ideologies implicitly and rebuild the world by formatting the minds of individuals to suit the purposes of dominant groups. In this research, advertising discourse includes linguistic elements (words, and sentences) and semiotic elements (images) and their effects on individuals and the power relations in society. The influence of advertising discourse on ideologies and the way it leads to reconstructing the identities of individuals is critically analysed for its role in both representing and affecting the distribution of power. Below, we move to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is one of the approaches available to analyse discourse.

## **2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

CDA according to Fairclough (2003: 205) is 'analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse (including language but also other forms of semiosis (...)) and other elements of social practices'. Scholars and researchers developed critical discourse analysis to analyse discourse and its effects, but also to 'produce and convey critical

knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection' (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7). CDA is concerned with 'social processes and problems' (Wodak and Fairclough 2010: 101), including social relations of power. In her discussion of the CDA approach, Wodak (2011: 54-55), points out its main characteristics stating that it is 'interdisciplinary', 'problem-oriented' and 'eclectic'. She also mentions that it combines ethnography with fieldwork and during the study, there is a movement from theory to empirical data and the other way round. Wodak also indicates that CDA investigates a variety of genres and relationships in which the analysis integrates historical as well as socio-political contexts. Wodak discusses more characteristics of CDA that are related to the theories applied, which she states might differ depending on the CDA approach selected. Those theories range between 'grand theories' and 'middle-range theories'. Lastly, Wodak mentions that CDA aims at making its result accessible to other 'experts' to be able to apply them to change discursive practices.

Wodak (2001: 9) clarifies the notion of being 'critical' in CDA as having four qualities. First, the researcher should distance her/himself from the data investigated. Second, the analyst should embed the data in the social context. Third, the analyst takes an explicit political stance. Fourth, the analyst should 'focus on self-reflection' as a scholar conducting research. Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 44) define CDA in terms of its huge effect on the construction of identity as 'a form of ideological practice that mediates, influences and even constructs our experiences, identities and ways of viewing the world'. Being in a position of power in relation to discourse production (whether it is written or spoken, such as newspaper writers, curriculum designers, or television and radio presenters), gives those people access to deliver ideologies about

people's identities and how they should view the world. In the case of beauty advertisements targeting women, for example, discourse can drive women to change the way they look at themselves, to copy specific idealised beauty standards, and to pay money to reach those advertised goals.

The aim of critical discourse analysis, then, is to reveal the power relations found in linguistic discursive practices by 'denaturalizing the discursive practices and the texts of a society' and 'by making visible and apparent that which may previously have been invisible and seemingly natural' (Kress, 1990: 85). Hence, CDA researchers 'play an advocacy role' for socially discriminated groups (Meyer, 2001: 15). There are power connections that are concealed within discourse messages and, through discourse, power controls recipients' actions and beliefs towards themselves and other things around them. Similarly, Sunderland and Litosseliti (2002:19) argue that CDA aims at 'demystifying something which may become "naturalized", i.e. seen as something that has always been, was "meant to be", or cannot be altered'. Critical discourse analysis is also primarily concerned with 'the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk, 2008: 85). The definition provided by van Dijk (2008) foregrounds the need of any critical discourse research to discuss a social problem by explaining the discourse structure in relation to the social structure, and to consider how discourse legitimises or reproduces power and dominance in society. This is the primary aim of my approach to CDA in this thesis. The following section gives an overview on the nature of ideology, the relationship between power, discourse and ideology as well as the effects of ideologies delivered by people in power positions through discourse on the construction of individuals' identities.



### **2. 2. 1 Ideology and Identity**

Fairclough (2015) explains that, for people in powerful positions, there are two possible ways of getting people to cooperate with them or to follow their orders, which is either by force or by agreement. The easiest way according to Fairclough is to win people's approval through discourse: 'ideology is the key mechanism of rule by consent, and because it is the favoured vehicle of ideology' (Fairclough, 2015: 65). Indeed, Simpson (1993: 164) argues that 'language reflects and to some extent reinforces the cultural and ideological practices which it describes'. As a part of CDA, ideology is considered an essential part in creating and sustaining imbalanced power relations (Wodak, 2001: 10). According to Fairclough (2003: 9), ideologies are defined as 'representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation.' Fairclough (2015) explains the effect of the 'ideology factor' by describing how people passively accept others' principles as their own which, in turn, affect power relations in society by legitimising them. In her discussion on the relation between language and power in CDA, Wodak (2001) indicated that language can affect power balance in the short and long terms in different ways as it could 'challenge power', 'subvert it', and 'alter' its distributions. Fairclough defines 'ideological power' as 'the power to project one's practices as universal and "common sense", [which] is a significant complement to economic and political power' (2015: 64). Fairclough refers to Gramsci's explanation of ideology to construct his definition of ideology itself 'as an implicit philosophy in the practical activities of social life, backgrounded and taken for granted, that connects it to 'common sense' (Fairclough 2015: 107).

Therefore, ideologies are ideas and concepts that are concealed to the point where people do not notice their presence because they are *hidden* within discourse.

The characteristic of being hidden or implicit is essential in the construction of an ideology, since the moment a receiver or reader is 'aware' of that ideology, it loses its power and control. This is because, as Fairclough (2015: 113) argues, ideologies come to be 'common-sense to the extent that the discourse types which embody them become naturalized'. Fairclough discusses the concept of 'ideological diversity' which affects 'ideological common sense', because when there are different, sometimes opposing ideologies held by various groups, the 'common-sense' part does not apply anymore. The way a producer of a text constructs her/his view of the world is crucial for discourse analysis and investigating power relations, because the interpretation the producer presents contains the clues that the receiver will draw upon by linking what they read or hear to what they already conceive of as 'knowledge'.

The relationship between discourse and *identity* is discussed in depth by Benwell and Stokoe (2006). They argue that 'identity is actively, ongoingly, dynamically constituted in discourse' (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 4). Thus, identity is represented and created through discourse. Benwell and Stokoe discuss the effect of 'lifestyle' and 'commodification' on the construction of the modern identity by explaining how people have turned to the consumption of products as a way of refining their identity: 'As consumers, our identities are drawn into a commodity relationship then sold back to us transformed by Est'ee Lauder, Dior and Calvin Klein' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 172). They argue that identities in modern life are commodified in many ways: identities of consumers, the process of goods consumption which leads to the

commodification of identities, representations of identities in commodified contexts, and self-commodifying discourses (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 165). For this reason, advertisers do not link products with a category like social class, but they do connect products with specific lifestyles where consumers can identify with them since they want to have such lifestyles.

There are several theories on the relationship between consumption and identity. According to Campbell (1987), in the eighteenth-century consumption was associated with individuals' identities; people's consumption of goods was based on who they are or whom would they like to be. Douglas and Isherwood (1979), on the other hand, relate the effect of goods consumption to the society in which consumption leads to culture building as well as building and sustaining social relations. A third theory on how identity construction is related to consumption is proposed by Baudrillard (1998) who theorises that postmodern consumption strengthens the link between the goods and the consumer's identity by defining people's identities according to what they consume, and he also states that the desire to be different and unique is the motive behind consumption. There are two different models of consumers' position in the commodification process. First, the Frankfurt School model which criticizes the culture of consumption where the consumer is 'passive' and is being 'manipulated' by advertisers (Keat, Whitely, and Abercrombie, 1994). The second model proposed by Keat, Whitely, and Abercrombie (1994) posits that consumers are not passive, but rather are critical experts of the market through their expertise and, thus, they have authority whether to reject or accept the promoted commodities.

Advertisements affect people's identity as they convey 'political and ideological concepts that shape, promote or abolish pseudo-cultures.' (Yazdanparast et al., 2018: 186). According to Yazdanparast et al., 'pseudo-culture' is:

a culture that is not commonly learned or acquired through shared experiences, but rather a culture that is superimposed on people in an effort to replace the commonly held shared cultural values. (2018: 186)

Advertising has the power to superimpose any culture with Western culture promoted as an international, global and ideal. In the case of cosmetics adverts, ideal femininity is mainly depicted through the Western ideals (Isa and Kramer, 2003) and this is one of the aspects that I will test in this thesis through the cross-cultural analysis of representation of ideal femininity in ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK, as articulated in my research questions in Chapter 1. Having discussed the relation between CDA and construction of identity, I move on in the following section to the social aspects which represent another element of CDA.

### **2.2.2 Social Aspects**

One of the key dimensions of CDA is the social aspect that refers to the society and how power relations are reproduced through discourse. Though social aspects are not the central focus of this research, they do represent one of the aspects discussed in the thesis since social factors undoubtedly affect the analysis. Harvey (1996) constructs a 'dialectical cognitive map' that represents social processes. As I pointed out earlier (Section 2.1), I am not following a cognitive approach, yet, due to its importance I include it in the literature. In his 'Cognitive Map of Social Process', Harvey

distinguished between six moments: language/discourse, power, beliefs/values/desires, institutions, material practices and social relations. The moment of language or discourse refers to the moments where people pick up items from language that express their ideas or feelings about life and about their surroundings. From Harvey's (1996) perspective, discourses represent expressions of power. Thus, the moment of power is about power relations and how they function within the social process. The moment of beliefs and desires refers to what we believe about the world, how we can understand it in a better way, and how we wish to be in it. The moment of institution building discusses 'the organization of political and social between individuals on a more or less durable basis' (Harvey 1996:79). Regarding the moment of material practices, Harvey (1996: 79) says that it is about 'the material embeddedness of human life'. The last moment is the moment of social relations which involves all types of human social interaction.

Fairclough (2015) argues that one of the most influential social practices is discourse; it affects social structures, because any control or limitations applied to discourse content can result in a change in social relationships and identities. That, in turn, will lead to more lasting changes on the society through the changes in the attitudes of its members, their knowledge, identities and relationships within that society. Social power refers to an imbalance in control between social groups and their members, where one group control others to achieve its own goals regardless of the rest of the groups' interests: this is called social power abuse (van Dijk, 2008). Having social power or control is very effective in society, and in cases of power abuse it becomes dangerous because those in control of discourse:

may indirectly control the minds of people. And since people's actions are controlled by their minds (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values), mind control also means indirect action control. (van Dijk 2008: 9).

This highlights the need to scrutinise different types of social power enacted in society, whether in discourse or other forms but discourse in particular; social power abuses are often implicit and difficult to notice, yet so powerful that they shape societies, identities and direct actions of individuals. Power is passed through discourse as a form of social interaction in various ways; one of these is 'direct control of action' such as recommendations and advice. A second type or way is through 'persuasive discourse' e.g. adverts. Another type of discourse that has power in society is the discourse that describes future possibilities and expectations such as experts' predictions (van Dijk, 2008). All three types might be found in the analysis of cosmetics adverts through advice, persuasive techniques and professionals' predictions about skin conditions and makeup durability. Next, I provide an overview of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) in the following section, as it is part of the methodological approach I take to analysing the data.

### **2.3 Multimodality and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)**

Magazine advertisements use 'a wide range of semiotic resources' (van Leeuwen, 2005: 8) and hence the visual aspects should be analysed as well as the linguistics'. In his discussion of the 'mechanisms of semiotic invention and innovation', van Leeuwen (2005: 37) explains that 'connotation' is one of those tools used in semiotics which creates a different layer of meaning. There are two important 'connotators' in images according to van Leeuwen (2005) which are: poses and objects. Poses include the type of shot, the direction of the eyes and hands as they signify certain meanings. Objects,

on the other hand, connote meanings as they represent ideas and that is not limited to the objects present in the image, but it includes other photography techniques such as lighting, framing and focus (van Leeuwen, 2005: 39). He explains that the innovative part of connotations in imagery is that they could reveal a variety of messages about the representation depicted e.g. occupation, social class and marital status.

Visual elements in advertising express meaning: the inclusion of visual aspects to a critical discourse analysis has been termed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) as 'Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis' (MCDA). This approach allows the written and spoken discourse to be analysed alongside such aspects as colour, lighting and shapes. Multimodal analysis of discourses should focus on elements such as identities and actions while revealing the ideologies behind any foregrounded or concealed element (Machin, 2013). According to Machin and Mayer (2012), the purpose of MCDA is to analyse the communicated meaning in pictures, diagrams, graphs and texts critically through description. MCDA is interested in the relationships between semiotic choices, ideology, and power. The purpose of MCDA according to Machin and Mayr is to:

reveal the kinds of ideas, absences, and taken-for-granted assumptions in the images as well as the texts which will also serve the ends of revealing the kinds of power interests buried in them' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 9-10).

Kress (2003: 68) discusses the effect of culture on meaning making 'For all modes, the regularities are culture-specific'. He posits a 'quadrant of spatial meaning potential' which he clearly indicates is designed for 'Western images'. The meaning of each quadrant differs according to its position where top is 'ideal', bottom is 'real', left is 'given' and right is 'new'. The quadrant will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 as it is

part of the methodology applied in this thesis. Jewitt (2013) explains that multimodality attempts to show the links between the semiotic elements and the meanings they have in relation to society. Written language is seen as one of a variety of multimodal modes that are shaped by society and culture. Other modes include: image, sound, speech, and gesture. The difference in how each mode delivers a message is the reason why we can produce original meanings: through combining them. The analysis of visual language includes the objects and settings of a text and the ideas they communicate, as well as the people in the images and their relation to the viewers. This can be done through a combination of the following tools: use of powerful cultural symbols, using size, choice of colour, use of tone, level of focus, foregrounding and overlapping.

MCDA has been applied to different types of mass media where two modes or more are combined to produce meaning. Brookes et al. (2018), for example, investigated the representations of dementia in the British press through multimodal discourse analysis, where they refer to Machin (2013) to analyse the lexical choices and then the representation of people with dementia through analysing their images and the neuroimaging pictures. Brookes et al. (2018) analyse the representations' outer appearance, where the people depicted in the images are represented as anonymous since there is nothing about their looks that reveal anything about who they are. The second element is the gaze, where Brookes et al. (2018) analyse the gaze direction of the representations as where the people in the images do not look directly at the viewer and consequently, there would not be a relationship between the two. The poses of the dementia participants are analysed as well which proved to be passive poses. In their data, Brookes et al. (2018) found that dementia participants are



represented through 'disembodied hands' which had different connotations. The results revealed that the media oversimplify dementia and objectify people with dementia. These findings prove how MCDA exposes the dominant ideologies media send to people.

MCDA has been used to analyse online advertising in many fields. For example, Harvey (2013) analyses hair loss websites examining the strategies used and the representation of baldness. Through analysing the content of the website through MCDA, his results reveal that hair loss is treated as an illness which could be cured through advertised products in the websites. Thus, rather than presenting the condition as natural, it is portrayed as a disease to create a problem that is solved by the products. Similarly, Brookes and Harvey (2015) investigate public health promotion discourse where the application of MCDA revealed that both text and photographs delivered contradictory and ambiguous messages to readers through inducing fear in readers without being clear in who are the diabetic people in those photographs, what is happening to them and why did they have it. Brookes and Harvey (2016) apply MCDA to examine social actors and identities present in commercial advertising website of online payday loan discourse through analysing linguistic and multisemiotic choices. Their analysis revealed that commercial discourse in their study employs 'emotive imagery' and 'opaque warnings' to manipulate people to make 'quick decisions'. Hunt (2015) also analysed diabetes-related Facebook pages from commercial and non-profit organizations through MCDA (spatial organization and social actors). The results revealed that there is a synthetic personalisation through linguistic and semiotic choices and a variety of themes which implies the involvement

of the individual with those organizations; thus, the individual is treated as a consumer.

Similarly, in their study to investigate the multimodal promotions on baby feeding in the UK, Brookes, Harvey and Mullany (2016), examined the social actors involved in the feeding process as they are presented at the pamphlets along with the process itself following Machin and Mayr's (2012) MCDA approach. The social actors were babies and parents; mostly mothers. The mothers are depicted in kitchens whereas the fathers/partners are only present in non-domestic settings. Brookes, Harvey and Mullany (2016) analyse the shots and angles from which the actors are depicted which revealed that breastfeeding mothers are presented in close shots creating an intimate relation with the viewer whereas the bottle feeding mother is impersonalised as viewers cannot see their faces and hence there is no involvement between them and the readers. In relation to the infants, they are presented in more than one way in the breastfeeding pamphlets but they are absent from the bottle feeding pamphlets. They found dominant ideologies of womanhood – including the naturalness of motherhood and breastfeeding – evident in government literature targeted at new parents. They also found contradictions in the messages delivered through the campaign, as motherhood is depicted as natural yet mothers are also instructed in detail on how to breastfeed. Importantly, they find that women are supposed to have the choice of whether to breastfeed or use formulas, but, at the same time, would be judged as failures if they chose the latter. Therefore, these studies provided a background on how different MCDA approaches can be employed to reveal the hidden meanings in images.

Of particular relevance to this study, Baykal (2016) analysed six mascara advertisements taken from two Turkish women's magazines and two localised version of international well-known women's magazines written in Turkish. Baykal employed the following MCDA approaches to analyse the visual elements in the adverts: (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin, 2007; Jewitt, 2009) with a focus on applying Halliday's (1994) textual and interpersonal functions for visual analysis and ideational function for the verbal analysis. She analyses elements of colour, size, frames and spatial organisation. In her analysis she found that the mascaras have equal prominence with the women in the adverts where mascaras represent the 'actor' and women are 'the goal'. Significantly, Baykal finds that women are framed in vague, abstract settings which she interprets according to Fairclough's (2003) work as 'promot[ing] assumptions of universal agency, individuality and consumerism' (Baykal, 2016: 49). Her research revealed that celebrities are presented as ideals and the mascaras are the tools for the ideal look. In relation to applying the quadrant, 4 out of 6 adverts in her dataset followed the pattern whereby the tip of the mascara occupied the upper part next to the texts. Therefore, that reveals that the adverts emphasise the mascaras' qualities by positioning the text and the mascaras' tip at the upper part as ideals and simultaneously draw the readers' attention to the text by having the mascara close to it. Analysing the interaction between the viewer and the representation, 4 out of 6 had indirect gaze and hence they represent 'an offer'. This type of gaze is interpreted as an offer of information (Baykal, 2016) and it could be a strategy to get the readers' focus on the lashes rather than the eyes as all the adverts are promote mascaras. Analysing the textual parts, Baykal found descriptive adjectives in different forms and attached to nouns. Baykal indicates that the ideology of ideal

beauty 'maximises' the effects and importance of the products advertised. Hence, multimodality is an essential part of advertisements' analysis due to its role in revealing hidden ideologies. Below, I demonstrate the relevance of gender to the ideologies embedded in advertisements.

## **2.4 Defining Gender**

The first thing that might come to mind when encountering the term *gender* is the biological sex that each person is born with but, looking at it from a contemporary sociolinguists' point of view, gender concerns social and cultural norms. Edwards (2009: 127) explains that gender, 'although built on biological categorization, is a social construction'. More than the biological sex people are born with, then, a critical sociolinguistic view of gender sees it as 'culturally learned, mediated or constructed' (Sunderland 2004: 14). This is to define gender as a social construct which, according to Conradie:

Implies that the affective, cognitive and behavioural patterns, commonly associated with either masculinity or femininity, are not only determined by biology. Instead, individuals are socialized-on the basis of biological sex- to perform gender according to a specific society's gender-typed norms and expectations so to perform 'normal' gender requires the display of certain characteristics- as informed by the dominant forces of society. (Conradie, 2011: 401).

The subject of gender is interlinked to ideology in society because there are powerful groups who try to affect and control people's identity, where identity refers to one's sense of self (Litosseliti and Sunderland, 2002). Gender ideology is 'the perspectives on gender fashioned by [dominant social] powers' (Conradie 2011: 402), which dictate ideal versions of femininity or masculinity. This is extremely subtle and therefore hegemonic, since – as Lazar (2005) argues, it does not look like domination.

Gendered discourse positions women and men in specific ways; in adverts, for example, it is common to find a 'discourse of sensuality' where products are advertised as providing some feelings and that arguably indicates 'an ideology of passivation, narcissism and sexual objectification is being aimed at female consumers' (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 173).

There is an obvious difference in media representations of men and women, in terms of the presence of the female body (Lirola and Chovanec, 2012:489). According to Falk (1995), the natural body is always changed and that would be done in accordance with the norms and rules of that culture. Malkin et al. (1999) conducted a study to examine gendered messages related to the body on the covers of men's and women's magazines. The research findings revealed that men's magazines sent messages about improving one's life through increasing knowledge and hobbies, whereas on the other hand, women's magazines encourage women to improve their life by changing their appearance through losing weight to be 'happier, sexier and more lovable' (Malkin et al., 1999: 654). The second alarming finding is that women are not only encouraged and expected to have an unrealistic shape, but they are supposed to be eating fatty foods or preparing them which makes the goal nearly impossible. The difference in the messages delivered by the covers of men and women magazines reflects the way society push women into distressing lifestyles that would arguably affect their health, self-esteem and social life whereas men do not have similar pressure. Richardson and Locks (2014: 32) explain the differences in society's expectations of men and women in relation to grooming as follows: 'grooming is a distinctly gendered activity with women expected to engage in much more detailed and intricate grooming processes than men.' This could be due to the tendency to

depict women's bodies as imperfect and those imperfections should be fixed or hidden, as argued by Lirola and Chovanec (2012). This research demonstrates the pressure on women to have a culturally acceptable appearance is more demanding than that on men, as Black and Sharma (2001: 100) argue: 'male bodies require a very different form of maintenance in order to conform to hegemonic masculinity - men are "real" without this work'. Women, conversely, are expected to 'maintain' themselves to be judged as acceptable and beautiful by society. Though societies tend to control and judge many aspects of individuals' lives, women seem to be at the centre of that:

women are the group most routinely and consistently judged according to aesthetic ideals. Not all women wish to or are able to approximate to an idealised standard of beauty but all women are evaluated against this yard stick. (Black and Sharma, 2001:104).

Feminist analysts within the field of Language and Gender have taken a critical stance against such gendered discourses, as outlined below.

## **2.5 Feminist CDA**

Work in language and gender research has been defined in terms of two categories, namely 'modern' and 'postmodern' feminist approaches, whereby 'modern' refers to the pre-1990 period and 'postmodern' refers to post-1990. Cameron (2005: 484) explains the difference between these two approaches. She argues that the 'modern' approach was based on the biological difference of 'sex', which in turn created the base for the social construction of 'gender'. The 'postmodern' approach takes up this social constructionist view. Regarding gender identities, the modern approach posits

that gender identity is something we have, whereas the postmodern approach views what we *do* as representing our gender identity. Language and gender research has therefore moved from defining gender in terms of differences between two binary categories ('women and men'), towards an understanding of gender as multiple and complex and as varying according to context. Fundamental to language and gender research, however, is a feminist stance.

Feminist research 'has a specific political purpose by focusing on gender as a social, political and ideological category', addressing individuals' gendered subjectivities and challenging gender inequalities (Mills and Mullany, 2011: 2). Many feminist researchers have employed CDA, typically examining the relationships between gender, ideology, power and discourse to achieve social equality e.g. (Ringrow, 2016), with Lazar (2005) terming this 'Feminist CDA'. Such an approach aims to reveal 'social processes and mechanisms that can perpetuate injustice, inequality, manipulation and 'sex' discrimination in both overt or subtle, pernicious form' (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002: 21). Hence, it is not expected for a feminist CDA researcher to be objective or unbiased; the approach itself calls for standing up to power abuse and gaining emancipation for dominated groups, by resisting ideological discourses that targets the less powerful to maintain power relations within society. Thus, in my analysis, I will employ critical feminist discourse analysis to unveil the persuasive techniques used by advertisers targeting women's ideologies and identities. Below, I provide an overview on the discourse of advertising and women's magazines.

## 2.6 Advertising Discourse and Magazines

Mass media in all its forms has two major characteristics: they reach a huge number of recipients and they do so in a short time, such as through television, radio, magazines, and newspapers. As van Dijk argues, looking at effects of the variety of printed texts, 'mass media are most pervasive, if not most influential, when judged by the power criteria of recipient scope' (van Dijk 2008: 54-55). Magazines, as one type of mass media, contain a number of versatile topics depending on the type of the magazine, but there is one thing in common in all different types of magazines: the presence of advertisements. Advertising is powerful, not just due to its pervasiveness, but for being a link between politics and society as it is considered 'a medium that echoes political and socio-cultural ideology by reconfiguring sign and symbols of appropriation' (Yazdanparast et al., 2018: 187). Woods (2006: 1) indicates the power of advertising stating that it is the 'driving force behind our consumerist culture'. The way adverts are executed; through colour, lighting and attractive models 'signify a different reality', yet 'there are enough reality ingredients to make it recognisable as a possible world' (Machin and Thornborrow 2003: 460). The effect of the media is so powerful and undeniable as it targets the masses in a very implicit way, and advertisements represent one type of persuasive discourse whose mission is to influence actions of receivers by having access to the public through mass media and by employing 'rhetorical means' to get the public's consent (van Dijk 2008). Advertisements in women's magazines, for example, focus on providing alternatives of the things women are expected to desire but find it difficult to achieve, such as a slimmer body or whiter skin. The discourse used within advertisements is powerful as



it is considered a 'persuasive' discourse (Beasley and Danesi, 2002) that influences readers to get their consent implicitly (van Dijk, 2008).

Fairclough (2015: 67) argues that advertising is a core example of a discourse type which carries ideologies within it to justify the structures of power relations found in society. He argues that advertising 'firmly embeds the mass of the population within the capitalist commodity system by assigning them the legitimate and even desirable role of consumers'. Coupland (2007: 57) supports this, stating that commercial discourses both 'confirm and shift boundaries'. Advertising discourse can therefore result in either approving the existing power relations or changing them according to the interests of the dominant powerful social groups.

According to Sheehan (2004) there are two types of advertisements: informational and transformational, the former provide information about the product's features and the latter suggests how the consumer's life would be transformed if they purchase the product. By suggesting that a product has the power to change the consumer's life, transformational adverts direct people to 'determine what the better version of life will be' (Sheehan, 2004: 21). Thus, transformational adverts can arguably control readers' minds and future. Adverts may have other effects on society that might not be negative or abusive, such as being informational (Sheehan, 2004) or informative. Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2013: 61) argue that informative adverts 'can help create awareness, construct identities and attitude'.

The idea of *stereotype* is one of the concepts that are affected by the discourse of advertisements which, as Mills (2008: 127) argues, is as follows:

not a fixed set of behaviours which exist somewhere, but the hypothesized version of the stereotype (...) something which is played with by those arenas where our common experience is mediated, for example on television, in advertising, newspapers and magazines.

Through the reproduction of stereotypical ideas or images of certain things in society, such as female beauty standards then, consumers try to match the new idealised stereotype and, consequently, the culture itself can change in its typical ideals and values.

In order to alter readers' beliefs and create new stereotypes for them that would turn them into consumers, adverts deploy different strategies. Reihani and Rasekh (2012) investigate two advertising strategies, *reason* and *tickle* advertising, in Persian printed adverts. They adopted Simpson's (2001) framework to distinguish between reason and tickle depending on discourse features where Simpson defines them as the following:

reason advertising as 'an attempt to persuade the consumer by providing direct and easily decipherable reasons for purchase. Tickle advertising takes a more indirect approach by appealing to the humor, memories, and feelings of the potential customer (Reihani and Rasekh 2012:186).

According to Simpson (2001), reason adverts usually place the product in an obvious way along with the name of the brand, and if possible, the logo will be there as well. The second characteristic of reason adverts is that it contains a clear statement about why consumers should buy the product. Tickle adverts, on the other hand, are not direct and they involve implicature and metaphor. Adverts have different strategies and they are not limited to linguistic techniques since texts can be accompanied by images, and in this case, images need to be analysed just like texts.

Martin (2007) investigated adverts in French media and her analysis findings' reveal one advertising strategy, which is mixing English with French in French adverts. Martin indicates the effect of English stating that it connotes 'modernity, quality engineering, exclusivity, professional mobility, international appeal' among other positive characteristics (Martin, 2007: 170). According to Martin's results, Adverts targeting women have a lot of English borrowed words in French adverts ('Frenglish') especially in the context of health, youth and beauty treatments (Martin, 2007: 177-178). The most borrowings found focused on the products' benefits, and it is known in advertising as 'Unique selling proposition' and they are considered as 'good attention getters' (Martin, 2007: 181). Having such mixing between two languages in French media is an aspect that I would examine the current thesis in British and Saudi media which would be revealed through the application of CDA to the textual parts of the adverts.

One of the most popular and recent advertising strategies that is frequently used in cosmetic advertisements is the use of scientific sounding words which has been referred to as 'pseudo-scientific' and 'scientised terms'. In her study on cosmetics adverts (detailed in Section 2.6.3), Ringrow (2016) discusses the reason behind scientised terminology in cosmetic adverts which is to 'authenticate' their products (Ringrow, 2016: 82). Ringrow also refers to other strategies she found such as 'Green beauty', where cosmetic products are linked to nature which could attract women to the products due to perceiving them as being harmless, and the Problem-solution pattern. McLoughlin (2013: 21) analysed the language used for skin care products through CDA and social semiotics, and she found this strategy employed in the data she analysed where she describes the advertising language used as

‘manipulative and persuasive; a mixture of cosmetics terminology and pseudo-science’ (Mcloughlin, 2013: 21).

As can be seen from the studies mentioned above, advertisements employ a variety of strategies to persuade consumers and those adverts can be analysed from different perspectives in relation to the textual elements. In this thesis, cosmetics adverts consist of a variety of products that draw upon different ideologies. The adverts will be analysed comprehensively through textual and semiotic approaches. Texts will be analysed through CDA, using the criteria proposed by Woods (2006), which aims to reveal ideologies implied in the advertising language through analysis of sounds, words and structures as well as the semantic strategies (discussed in chapter 3). Images will be analysed through the application of MCDA. Having briefly outlined several advertising strategies, I will move to discussing the importance and effects of women’s magazines.

### **2.6.1 Women’s Magazines**

From a very young age, women learn that their appearances affect their life as people’s evaluation of their looks define how they are treated. As Aubrey (a media analyst interested in the effects of media on body image) points out, women’s looks ‘can shape their social and economic opportunities’ (Aubrey, 2010: 50). Such conceptions about the importance of body image is generated by society, and reinforced by the mass media (Aubrey, 2010; Malkin, Wornian and Chrisler, 1999).

Magazines are considered as one form of ‘panoptic gaze’, which is related to Foucault’s theory which is based on Bentham’s model prison where ‘the Panopticon’ aims ‘to train individuals to see themselves as being seen’ (Hoy, 1999: 9). This ‘widely

attempts to guide women as to how they should look' and plays an integral part in how women see and monitor their bodies (Reel et al., 2008: 326). McCracken (1993: 1) describes the importance and position of women's magazines in society according to what they deliver to advertisers and consumers as 'one such mass cultural form – a multi-million-dollar business which presents pleasurable, value-laden semiotic systems to immense numbers of women'. Thus, it is a medium of communication that women who consume such magazines appear to enjoy as a leisure activity, which makes the print magazine industry a profitable business for advertisers and magazine producers alike. Looking from the reader's perspective, Ytre-Arne (2011a: 214) examined the audience of women's magazines by interviewing fourteen readers. She found that they mentioned that the nature of women's magazines is 'undemanding and adaptable' and that is the reason that they can read them in different situations. Ytre-Arne's (2011a: 220) also found that women's magazines offered their readers 'a reliable and immediately accessible source of relaxation' since reading such materials does not require readers to focus on demanding topics.

Women's magazines can be powerful tools of change in society as they are considered as 'possible purveyors of ideology and pleasure', while reading them is a form of 'social practice situated in everyday life' (Ytre-Arne, 2011a: 213). Investigating the discourse of advertising in women's magazines has been selected as the topic of this thesis as it arguably reflects the power relations in that society, as magazines act as 'potential mirrors or perhaps even agents of social change' (Ytre-Arne, 2011b: 249). Magazines, according to Gill (2007: 162), are 'simultaneously cultural texts, parts of increasingly concentrated media empires'. Hence, magazines such as ELLE UK and ELLE

ARABIA represent a suitable medium for data collection and analysis as they are expected to reflect ideologies present in their respective societies.

Looking at the process of selecting the cultural components in women's magazines, McCracken (1993:3) indicates that viewing women's magazines in terms of them being a 'business' along with having 'cultural texts' shows how advertisers shape 'the cultural content' of those magazines. McCracken describes the indirect nature of women's magazines which naturalise the hegemonic discourses of patriarchy, because women as readers are 'not force-fed negative images that naturalize male dominance; rather, women's magazines exert a cultural leadership to shape consensus in which highly pleasurable codes work to naturalize social relations of power' (McCracken, 1993: 3). According to McCracken (1993: 4), there are three main types of advertisements in women's magazines: the 'front cover' which is supposed to attract readers into looking at the content inside, 'covert advertisements' which recommend products through different materials within the magazine and the last type is the 'purchased advertisements', which are the adverts that earn revenues for the publishers and which makes up 50%-60% of most women's magazines (McCracken, 1993: 40). This type of advertisement is the one analysed in this research.

Machin and Thornborrow (2003) summarise the literature on women's magazines into five main issues. The first two points are related to how women are portrayed in those magazines; which is women as 'sex objects', and /or as doing 'trivial things'. The next two issues are related to the world created for women through these magazines, which is a 'simplified' and 'contradictory' world. The final point that Machin and Thornborrow (2003) include is the damaging effect of women's magazines

on women's self-image. Analysing the ideologies of the ideal female body presented in magazines, Jeffries (2007: 194) found that the ideal body presented to readers is the 'stable, youthful and clean' body. Jeffries also notes 'the naturalization of certain attitudes towards perfection and constructed naturalness - often, but not only through surgery'. Jeffries used CDA to analyse the language of magazines looking at the ideologies related to the women's bodies. Similarly, my thesis would investigate the language of magazines critically through CDA, but I would look at cosmetic adverts in particular and I will utilize additional methodologies (multimodality and focus groups) to reveal the ideologies related to the ideal femininity in addition to the readers' responses to such ideologies.

Mersey (2015) discusses the relationship between media and the construction of social identity where she investigates the effects of magazines on the identity of the audience (as explained in Section 2.7). Thus, women's magazines might affect their readers by changing their values and perceptions of beauty and femininity among other things. Exploring the relationship between images of thin women in magazines and eating disorders, Sypeck, Gray and Ahrens (2004) discuss the effect of mass media presentation of women. They explain that the print media has been providing the ideal feminine beauty for the last forty years and this ideal has become the extremely thin woman. According to Sypeck, Gray and Ahrens (2004), such ideal affects the readers negatively and they explain that it could have the following negative consequences:

Such a message may contribute to the objectification of women, creating additional physical requirements that must be satisfied to merit depiction on a magazine and communicating to American women an increasingly thin feminine ideal. (Sypeck, Gray and Ahrens, 2004: 347).

In addition to the extreme thin size of the models presented, Sypeck, Gray and Ahrens (2004: 347) found that magazines depicted full body images on covers rather than a face or half body, and the combination of these two factors affected American women by increasing 'the disturbed eating patterns'.

Female faces in cosmetic advertisements positioned in printed magazines are depicted in a certain way that makes them look flawless, according to Wells (2015), women's faces in cosmetic adverts appear as follows:

[they are] flattened with no shadows visible, reduced to a set of facial features arranged on a smooth and atonal expanse of skin. In this way the medium and image are conflated, the glossy, smooth feel of the magazine page stands in for the woman's skin. (Wells, 2015: 204)

Wells (2015:195) describes the nature of photographic mass media in contemporary societies, which applies images of women in magazines as 'more withheld or eviscerated' as women's images are 'blandly styled and 'photoshopped' to the point of dehumanizing them.' Editing images through digital media to improve women's looks in women's magazines has been faced by campaigns like Dove's campaign for 'Real Beauty'. Wells (2015) argue that photoshopping is not the only problem:

However, their emphasis on 'photoshopping' tends to overlook the extent to which studio photography already constructs the body through lighting, lenses, cosmetics and styling. Nor is 'real beauty' the issue: such images of women are not damaging because they are not accurate depictions of actual women, but because of the underlying implication that women ought to be plastic, malleable, manipulable. (Wells, 2015: 222).

Women's magazines 'contribute to people's sense of community' (Ytre-Arne, 2011b: 258). The variety of articles and the way they are presented give readers feelings of belonging as readers can identify with one or more of the life aspects presented in women's magazines.



It is known that paper or print magazines contribute to environmental pollution and waste, but as Koprina (2015) argues, even electronic production of magazines has its own negative impact on the ecosystem as it contributes to the global warming through energy consumption as well as mining for some metals required for technology production. More importantly, digital technologies have e-waste which also affects the environment. Therefore, even though online magazines might be popular nowadays, there are no guarantees that they will still be available in the future as society realise the degree of its waste on the eco system. Having considered women's magazines – their nature, importance and how they present the ideal woman - I provide below an overview on how women are targeted differently in adverts.

### **2.6.2 Gender in Advertisements**

Advertising is 'part of a larger mass media process providing problematic images to women' (Sheehan, 2004: 109). A lot of the advertisements in magazines target female readers where they place 'consumption at the center of women's identity' (Westkaemper, 2017:19). Women are treated differently in the way they are presented and targeted in advertisements, just like in other life domains, 'the traditional subordinate status of women is clearly marked in terms of language usage, attitudes and stereotypes' (Edwards, 2009: 140). Modern cultures are mainly characterised as directed by media to consume in order to express individuality (Rice, 2014). Being exposed for media ideologies for a long time would eventually affect women on different levels, as Fairclough (2003: 8) argues 'prolonged experience of advertising and other commercial texts contributes to shaping people's identities as 'consumers', or their gender identities.'

In a diachronic study that examines stereotypes, Temmerman and Van de Voorde (2013) investigate how men are represented in two Flemish women's magazines in 1958 and 2008. Women's magazines represent great material for research and, they argue, 'enhanced interest in women's magazines is not so surprising, given the influence such magazines are believed to have on their readers and, in a broader sense, on contemporary society' (Temmerman and Van de Voorde 2013: 3). Results show that the mention of 'men' as a topic in women's magazines has increased over the years, whereas on the contrary, the importance of marriage has declined. Yet, the presence of the love of man is still necessary for women. This suggests that, as time has passed, the role of men in women's life has changed; my study will demonstrate whether this is the case in an Arabic cultural context as well as a British one.

Shuo, Wang and Wang (2014) investigated the appeals in English advertisements in Cosmopolitan magazine. The focus of the research is the verbs used in the adverts, whether they are related to reason or emotion. The results show that the Material process which is related to verbs like 'have', 'create', 'discover' in which there something is 'done' is more frequent than the Mental process that is related to verbs about 'sensing' like 'love', 'imagine', 'fit'. Thus, the researchers conclude that reason appeals are more apparent in English women's adverts. They believe it is expected to have more material process because reason verbs e.g. have and create are more suitable to describe the appearance and shape and other characteristics of the products.

A study on beauty products' advertisements in popular local women's magazines, Cleo and Women's Weekly, carried out by Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, (2013) using CDA as a tool revealed that many discourse strategies are used. They identified seven strategies which they summarise as the following: 'manufacturing consent through implication', 'invoking inadequacies', 'irrealis representations', 'positive self-representation', 'puffery', 'celebrity endorsement', 'scientific evidence' and 'emotive words' (Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013: 68). The language used in headlines is designed to attract women's attention. They also found that brands use language that shows their superiority over other brands. The ideal feminine implied in the adverts analysed by Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus (2013: 69), 'should have big, expressive, sexy eyes. Their eyes should have no dark circles under them, no eye bags, lashes should be long, full, luscious, silky and soft'. Thus, adverts portray a certain image as the ideal and for women to be beautiful, they should match that image by purchasing the advertised products. Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus conclude that adverts focus on the problem-solution technique to promote their products along with the strategies mentioned earlier to create a persuasive discourse that affects women's perceptions of the ideal look.

As the founder of FCDA, Lazar (2006) took a FCDA approach and examined the different representations of what she termed 'power femininity' in advertisements addressed to women in Singapore. She explains that advertised products are referred to as empowering agents that help women reach their ultimate beauty. The beauty products' adverts are constructed in a language that assumes that there is a beauty in every female and those products make the beauty show, shine, and improve. Another way of empowering women in adverts is the use of realistic descriptions of women

rather than one ideal image. There is also the point that some adverts draw on the idea that wearing makeup gives women pleasure. A second concept of empowerment is through knowledge or education where adverts claim that they will teach women how to apply products like professionals at the hands of the experts in classes or workshops. Thus, they are saying this would give females power through the acquisition of beauty knowledge. In Lazar's analysis of 'power femininity' in Singaporean advertisements, she argues that agentic power can be constructed through advertisements in three ways. Firstly, women's agency to look beautiful by taking control of their bodies and skin to have a good appearance. Secondly, connecting women's agency to consumerism by boosting females' confidence through the consumption of the beauty products. Third, the transformative agentic power where the focus is on constructive actions versus the resistive agentic power that is about overcoming difficulties. Lazar also argues that sexual power is often used to sell products in women's adverts. Through her analysis, she argues that advertisers try to represent women as having sexual power and control over men which is against the stereotypical image and part of 'popular (post)femim' (Lazar, 2006: 505).

Lazar (2002) also analyses advertisements addressed to educated Singaporean women and men to persuade them to start a family. There are three main stages of a woman's life that those adverts focus on which are: courtship before marriage, marriage, and motherhood. Through her analysis, Lazar (2002: 124) noticed that the adverts focus on women as consumers of personal relationships which she refers to as 'an identity founded upon other-centeredness'. Thus, even though the adverts look like they are addressing both men and women, the analysis shows that it is the female who is the target of those adverts in both print and television. Similarly, Haider (2009)

analysed Pakistani women's magazines through FCDA to reveal linguistic and semiotic techniques used in magazines to shape Pakistani women's identity. She argues that semiotics affects the gendered patterns and women's social identity. The findings reveal that happiness is depicted through being young, having fair skin and accessories. Middle aged women and older women as well as professional women are not represented in the magazines. Moreover, Haider found a focus on physical attractiveness and adverts of contraceptive which she interprets as encouraging 'the ideology of patriarchal marriage and children' (Haider, 2009: 236).

Conradie (2011) conducted a study investigating the linguistic construction of gender ideologies in Cosmopolitan magazine. The study is based on the assumption that gender is a 'social construct' discussed earlier (Section 2.4). The second assumption of the study is that this process of gender socialization is affected by ideological discourses like lifestyle magazines. Conradie refers to the influence of mass media as a source of ideology. Conradie's analysis shows three types of underlying assumptions: existential, propositional and value assumptions. The results also show that the article positions femininity as a homogeneous category and produces the ideology that most women experience anxiety. Again, these findings show that adverts position women in certain roles that suit their marketing goals.

Similarly, Coupland (2007) analyses adverts related to skincare products in women and men's magazines in UK. In the adverts, ageing is a problem and skin products are solutions. Magazines influence readers by presenting the idea of 'the self-as-body' (Coupland 2007:38). Products are 'scientised' as found in previous research (McLoughlin, 2013; Ringrow, 2016) and represented as 'pharmaceutical' to convince

the readers who are the consumers of two main ideas. First, people do not like to show or look like they are ageing. Second, people should take care of their look and their skin so they do not show that it is ageing or at least they should conceal the ageing appearance. According to Coupland (2007: 39), the claims that advertisers propose support the 'socio-cultural attitudes, ideological beliefs, about the meaning of ageing itself. In this ideology, to age is to lose symbolic capital and self-worth'. In the analysis, the focus is on 'ideological presuppositions' and 'cultural constructions of, ageing and gender' (Coupland 2007: 40). Looking at it from another angle, Coupland mentions that women are expected to take care of their bodies to be able to match the female images in the media. Coupland refers to Smith (1988: 47) stating that women's bodies 'always need fixing' because 'without work they cannot approximate the kinds of appearance offered by images in the mass media' (Coupland, 2007: 42). This therefore provides another reason for consumers to spend money on the products being advertised.

McLoughlin (2013) examined the representation of beauty in *Asiana* magazine, which targets British Asian female readers through applying social semiotics and CDA. McLoughlin conducted focus groups with British Asian women to investigate how they perceive of the ideal beauty presented. Findings revealed that the ideal is 'white, western and wealthy' (McLoughlin, 2013: 15). Whiteness is treated as a 'universal beauty aesthetic' and consequently whitening creams are considered as a treatment for the skin that would help women reach that ideal with all the privileges ties to the fair white skin. Similarly, in this thesis, I investigate the representation of ideal femininity depicted for readers of *ELLE* magazine. However, I look at two different versions of *ELLE* magazine that are distributed in two different cultures (Britain and

Saudi Arabia) to examine the ideal cross-culturally and whether it is identical or different. As a part of multimethod, I also conduct focus groups with both Saudi and British women to investigate their responses towards the adverts.

Other research shows the significance of gender to advertising, even when the product being sold is not specifically related to beauty products. Thornborrow (1994), for example, examines the language of two advertisements of Filofax personal planners to show how adverts construct the ideal reader differently according to gender. Thornborrow discusses the modes of address where she states that 'Through this direct address, the text positions readers as potential consumers of the product' (1994: 135). Tag questions are used as well as 'let's':

These co-opting strategies not only draw the reader into the discourse as the direct addressee ... but the use of items such as tag questions and let's also imitates the co-operative, empathizing characteristics which have come to be associated-folk-linguistically-with women's talk. (Thornborrow 1994: 137).

The advert targeting females focus in portraying women in conventional, stereotypical roles as mothers and wives and isolate them from men's world which evolves around 'action and power'; 'the ubiquitous nature of advertising serves to embed these stereotypes even more deeply into structures of common-sense knowledge' (Thornborrow 1994: 150).

Lirola and Chovanec (2012) investigated cosmetic surgery print advertisements in Spain. The results revealed the ideologies implied in these adverts analysed in which women bodies are commodified and a sense of inadequacy is created within women to feel the need for the intervention advertised. Zuraidah and Kui Ling (2018) looked at the representation of overweight female bodies in Malaysian slimming

advertisements found in a Malaysian English newspaper. Findings of their research show that the overweight body is problematised to promote slimming products and thus, the 'female body' became a 'source of profit for the beauty industry on which the advertising depends' (Zuraidah and Kui Ling, 2018: 15). Their findings prove that 'extremely thin woman' discussed earlier by (Sypeck, Gray and Ahrens, 2004) advertised as an ideal in magazines is still prominent and effective.

The range of research outlined here demonstrates the importance of researching adverts aimed at women because advertisers are using a variety of strategies to affect women's ideologies; they push women to fit into narrow, fictional templates that do not necessarily suit those women. They also aim at directing women towards consumption mentality, relating identity construction to the consumption of specific products. In the following section, I will present several studies that focus on gender representation cross-culturally as it is one of the essential aspects of my thesis.

### **2.6.3 Gender and Cross-Cultural Approaches**

Magazines prove to be a good source to investigate the cross-cultural similarities and differences in the ideologies presented through the advertisements, as the following studies have revealed. Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund (1995), who are researchers in marketing, conducted a cross-cultural comparison between gender roles represented in magazines in the Netherlands, the USA and Sweden published in the early 1990s. They focused on five magazine categories: general interest and news, business, sports, women's and entertainment. They looked for adverts that included adults and determined their sex and role: whether it's working or non-working (family, recreational and decorative). The results show that there is cultural bias as well as



stereotyping in the representation of women and men roles in magazine adverts among all the three countries as all of them depicted more men than women in working roles. In relation to this study, the countries included are all Western and consequently are similar to some extent, unlike this thesis, where the comparison is done between two different countries Western and Middle-Eastern (British and Saudi).

Chafai (2010) examined the representation of women in Moroccan and British magazines' advertisements. To analyse the magazines' adverts from a sociolinguistic point of view, Chafai deployed a visual communication approach to examine functions of image elements, and a textual approach, though the textual approach used is not clear as she does not specify any framework for the textual analysis of the data. Chafai's (2010) study results show that the Moroccan adverts place emphasis on the woman's role as a mother as well as the value of the family more than British adverts which according to Chafai, reflects individuals' lives in each society in relation to dependence versus independence. In relation to women's role as taking care of their appearances, beauty is depicted as important in both societies but it is more explicit in the British adverts. Lingerie and beauty products' adverts depict women focusing on body parts such as: breasts and legs, in a way that does not reflect the culture of the Moroccan society. In the British adverts, women are frequently portrayed as sexual objects which reveals that appearance and sex are framed as essential in women's life. From her perspective, Chafai (2010) states that the British magazine adverts reflect the British society, but the Moroccan adverts do not reflect the reality of the Moroccan women. Ideal femininities are one of the elements examined in the analysis, where I investigate whether they reflect the British and Saudi cultures or not.

Ringrow (2016) conducted a comparative study between cosmetics adverts in English and French women's magazines. She applied Feminist CDA to investigate the type of femininity represented through language. Ringrow focuses on the problem-solution pattern found in cosmetic adverts which was present in 66% of the adverts she analysed. French adverts had more of the problem-solution pattern with 72% of the total adverts than the English adverts with 60% of the pattern in all adverts. The solutions provided to the problems included scientised ingredients which deals with the surface of the skin only. The solutions are also temporary which contribute to the creation of 'consumer/commodified femininity' (Ringrow, 2016: 54). Concerning the scientised solutions, French adverts contained 67% whereas English adverts had less of that with 48%, which could reflect the larger French market. Ringrow investigated the discourse and visual signifiers of sensuality where the results show that French adverts had more nudity and English adverts had slightly more overall sensual language and imagery. Ringrow's study compares between two European countries which might have contributed to some of the similarities but the difference in language and culture between the two affected other areas of the study. Such cultural differences are expected to affect the comparison in this thesis, but it could reveal greater difference as there are less similarities between the two cultures under study in this thesis as they have different languages, religion, traditions and locations.

In her cross-cultural study of women's lifestyle magazines targeting South Asian women in Britain and India, McLoughlin (2017) investigates the representation of women across those two countries. McLoughlin employed CDA, social semiotics and focus groups. She aimed to investigate how South Asian magazines deal with the East and West merge and at the traditional versus modern conflict in their way of

representing women and how that contribute to the discourse of gender. The results showed that the English language magazines in India reflects the tension women face in India by having balance between the modern and traditional identities. The analysis revealed a global ideal which is thin, blonde and fair skinned with occasional reference to Indian beauty. The focus groups revealed three subject positions that ranged between preferring, opposing and negotiating the ideal subject position. Despite acknowledging that the ideal is unrealistic, participants still felt the pressure to fit in.

In their study of transnational magazines, Yan and Bissell (2014) found that the same person who appears on one cover of the magazine would be on other different country edition at the same month, and they argue that this can be due to one of the following factors: It could be the popularity of the person, the representation of someone who depicts ideal beauty, editing strategy to decrease cost or to maintain a consistent global style of the magazine. Having one cover for different editions depict a global ideal that might not be suitable to some countries in relation to their race, as it would be difficult to achieve white beauty by people with black skin, dark eyes, or black hair. It arguably makes them feel not good enough because they are so far removed from that ideal femininity. Yan and Bissell categorised the magazine covers in terms of theme, and found that ELLE (the focus of this thesis) ranked the second highest in the percentage of 'beauty' related covers after Cosmopolitan (16.7%). 15.1% of ELLE's story frames were dedicated to beauty, which is more than Glamour (10.8%) and Vogue (9.6%). ELLE covers models had the smallest body size and highest glamorization score and, in relation to the cultural influence on the cover, ELLE presented 'a universal standard of beauty' that does not take into consideration the different cultures where it is published (Yan and Bissell, 2014). Due to the crucial role

magazines play in society in relation to reconstructing women's identity, magazine producers should be more critical of the ideologies implied in their contents. As McLoughlin (2013: 27) points out:

magazine text producers are optimally placed to play a vital re-educational role by featuring models who present a wider range of skin types thereby developing a positive sense of racial diversity.

I consider this issue later in this thesis during the analysis of my data. Moving from previous research that focus on gender bias found in cross-cultural magazines' adverts, the following penultimate section discusses the various studies that reveal the effects of advertisements on readers from different perspectives.

## **2.7 Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Advertising Discourses**

Bartky (1990) discussed the phenomenon of a "fashion-beauty complex" from a feminist perspective, where she explains that it is the result of capitalism where businesses control the audience by selling products, services and even ideologies through celebrities and public figures. She indicates that a fashion-beauty complex has two aims:

Overtly ... [it] seeks to glorify the female body and to provide opportunities for narcissistic indulgence. ... its covert aim, which is to depreciate woman's body and deal a blow to her narcissism. (Bartky, 1990: pp.39-40).

The persistent exposure to altered images of beautiful women would lead women to feel that they 'fail to measure up' as every part of their bodies needs some sort of alteration which would lead to an 'estrangement' between a woman and her body where she 'exist as object' and 'sense' herself as 'deficient' (Bartky, 1990). As a result of that, 'The fashion-beauty complex refines and deepens feminine anxieties' (Bartky,

1990: 41). Such effects would arguably be strong after exposure to cosmetic adverts as the focus is on the face which is the external part of a person's identity since the ideal image in those adverts is a photoshopped one that reveal the model's skin as flawless with no pores or wrinkles.

The transition from childhood to adulthood is a challenging phase, but to girls it is more than that, as it represents a 'search for an identity in an image-oriented world' (Rice, 2014: 4). The effect of the media and how it represents women and judges them according to their looks is very harmful to young women as they see their bodies as 'measures of their value and worth as women ... as integral to their very sense of self'. Rice states how it affected the women she encountered through her research 'Fearing negative responses ... many describe how they altered or concealed the unacceptable to avoid judgement and rejection' (Rice, 2014: 6). The pressure to conform to media role models is greater on women as Rhode (2016) points out: 'Discrimination on the basis of appearance also compounds gender inequality by reinforcing a double standard and a double bind for women.' (Rhode, 2016: 85).

Though Dove's campaign, as mentioned previously, attempted to redefine 'real beauty', their adverts implied several negative effects as Murray (2013: 98) who analysed the campaign, argues that "Real beauty" in this campaign is:

an oppressive ideology that reinforces the value of female beauty and its pursuit by garnering women's agreement with its values of ideological and material consumption'. Thus, women are targeted as consumers in every way even through the campaign that claims to change stereotypes and care about women's self-esteem.

The effect of cosmetics advertising on women is so deep that even the names of products reflect and reproduce the way women are viewed in society (Radzi and

Musa, 2017). Radzi and Musa (2017: 34) investigated the representation of women through names of cosmetics' products and their findings revealed a 'disturbing pattern of oppression against women' in which the names indicate that women are measured through their physical appearance and assigned roles of mothers and nurturers. Radzi and Musa (2017) argue that selling products with these names that misrepresent women defeats the concept that cosmetics empower women and boost their confidence.

Culture is the foundation as well as the reflection of each nation or society. Prior to the globalization we witness today, each culture has its own set of beauty standards and having these local ideals were more achievable than the unified white ideal. The result of such 'cultural assimilation' (Yan and Bissell, 2014) would arguably affect women's identities in addition to their self-esteem. The cosmetics industry is based in the Western countries and therefore it produces ideals that is closer to its population than those in further places. Combined with mass media, the cosmetic industry work to eliminate 'traditional ideals of beauty' to replace them with 'a uniform global look' (Isa and Kramer, 2003:41). Replacing traditional identity with a global one is part of the pseudo-culture discussed by Yazdanparast et al. (2018). Yazdanparast et al. (2018: 187) discuss the relationship between mass media, culture and pseudo-culture and reveal the effects:

The degradation of culture and the atomized contents of pseudo-culture make it difficult for individuals to perform self-formation, as the function of pseudo-culture is to transform people into objects of manipulation.

To get rid of that effect, Yazdanparast et al. suggest that individuals need to analyse the pseudo-culture critically, by 'challenging the validity' of its assumptions. Such

intervention to the cultural ideals would consequently affect women in some cultures and that could be damaging (Yan and Bissell, 2014: 195). The effects of the media on individuals are so strong, especially advertisements' images. People are faced with two options as they perceive of the media models as 'ideals'; they 'either attempt to conform to them or resist them' (Richardson and Locks, 2014: x). From women's perspectives, it would not be easy to resist media models as they fall under more pressure by society. Mersey (2015) discusses the effects of thin models on magazine covers on the identity of the girls. She explains that effect according to 'social identity theory' which claims that readers would have one of two reactions to the 'media ideal', they would:

adjust their interpretation of the media to better suit a positive sense of self ... or they will change their social selves to meet the media ideal. (Mersey, 2015: 522).

This reflects the great influence magazines have on women's identity construction, and the importance of critically analysing their content.

Research on women's magazines has shown that there might be 'substantial differences' in the way materials are interpreted between readers and textual analysts (Ytre-Arne, 2011a: 213). Etcoff et al. (2004) conducted a study commissioned by beauty product company Dove to gain an understanding of how women perceive of beauty and how it affects their wellbeing. The findings illustrate that women identify beauty in terms of 'physical attractiveness' and the ideal they look up to is 'extremely difficult to achieve' and consequently, they think it is 'difficult to think of themselves as beautiful' (Etcoff et al., 2004: 47). Having such feelings would likely affect those women's self-esteem; this is confirmed through the participants' responses where

almost half of them strongly agreed with the statement: “When I feel less beautiful, I feel worse about myself in general” (Etcoff et al., 2004: 18). These results also revealed that women believe that attractiveness affects their social position in life, hence the media-generated ideal beauty affects women’s sense of self-worth in addition to their self-esteem.

As feminist critics Lazar (2006) and Gill (2007) point out, contemporary adverts claim to empower women. As discussed in section (2.6.2), Lazar (2006, 505) refers to this trend as ‘power femininity’. However, the truth is they are selling empowerment to young women through neoliberal consumerism. Such types of advertising can have the opposite effect on women. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) suggests that the ‘American culture socializes women to adopt observers’ perspectives on their physical selves’ (Fredrickson et al., 1998:269). Their theory is similar to Bartky’s (1990) discussion on the alienation of the female body where women would see their bodies as objects as discussed earlier (see 2.7). Such self-objectification affects women psychology as it ‘recasts women’s greater concern with their physical appearance as a survival tactic rather than a mere preference’ (Fredrickson et al., 1998:281). In an experiment, Fredrickson et al. (1998) ‘induced self-objectification’ by asking men and women to try swimsuits or sweaters randomly and then take a maths test. The results show that self-objectification caused women to experience shame about their bodies, which led to a lower performance on the maths test – but there was no impact on the men. Hence, the way society frame women’s perspectives about their bodies could affect women’s mental abilities as well as their self-esteem.



Freedman (1987), a psychologist interested in body image and how it affects women, explains the reason that women are more affected by body image 'Because beauty is linked with femininity, the influence of body image on self-image is greater for women than for men' (1987: 357). She indicates an additional reason that makes it difficult for women to have a 'positive body image' which is the contradictory, changing nature of the 'beauty ideal', which 'make conflicting demands on women to maintain opposite body types at the same time.' (Freedman, 1987: 357). Consequently, women's bodies are a cause of concern and anxiety as they should make sure it conforms to the society's beauty ideal as well as accept the contradiction that would make that process of alteration non-ending.

Recurrent exposure to ideal images in the media might cause very serious behavioural disorders such as body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). If a woman spends her time camouflaging her face with beauty products because she thinks she has 'scars or lines', this is considered as a 'safety' behaviour by individuals having BDD in which 'safety behaviours for all anxiety disorders are actions within situations designed to prevent feared catastrophes' (Veale, 2004: 120). Polivy and Herman (2004) discuss the possible effects of being exposed to media images of thin, attractive models where they argue that it could be either that of pain or pleasure. According to Polivy and Herman (2004), if a person compares themselves with an idealised image, the result is a painful experience because of how different they are from the person in the image. On the other hand, if looking at a beautiful woman could get the viewer to 'fantasise' about the feeling of having that look, which might lead her to get excited to emulate the woman in the image, then, the experience could be pleasurable. Yan and Bissell (2014: 196) argue that the comparison to the ideal beauty 'seems almost inevitable'

for women especially at younger age. Having these comparisons would have negative effects on women and that is one of the reasons I look at ideal femininity in this thesis and how readers would react to it through the analysis and focus groups.

Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar (2005) examined the effects of models' bodies on magazines' covers on body image and self-esteem among adolescent girls aged (11-16). They created three different types of magazine covers for the study: covers with ultra-thin models, covers with the same model but her body is edited to be average in size and covers with no model. The results show that the groups who viewed ultra-thin and average models had a decrease in both self-esteem and body image. Thus, as the previous studies mentioned above (Veale, 2004), (Polivy and Herman, 2004) and (Yan and Bissell, 2014), Clay, Vignoles, and Dittmar's study confirms the negative effects of unrealistic idealised feminine image on women's self-esteem.

Reel et al. (2008) interviewed Caucasian and African American women whose ages are between 20 and 80. Their study revealed that, regardless of their age and race, women are 'vulnerable to body dissatisfaction' and they 'recognize and respond to societal expectations of beauty and femininity' (Reel et al., 2008: 321). Even though the women in the study reported 'liberated body ideals', it was a 'fragile liberation' as they were 'still emotionally affected by their inability to meet the 'ideal' for women' (Reel et al., 2008: 324). The other finding of their study, that women operate under the 'panoptic gaze', shows that the women who participated in the study were judging their bodies according to the ideals of the society rather than their own standards and beliefs of what is the ideal look. Reel et al.'s study emphasises women's vulnerability and that the conflict between internal beauty standards and social beauty standards

are global as it faced women from both races. Moreover, media plays an important role in deciding the ideal women should look for. Thus, in this thesis, I would examine the ideal and how Saudi and British women react to the ideal depicted for them.

In 2018, women were considered the 'largest spending power of any generation' (Gibson, 2018). Thus, women might be targeted more by advertisers than before as they represent the greatest spending power. Marketers conduct research to find out the most effective ways to increase women's consumptions. Sheehan (2004: 104) indicates that the relation between beautiful models and beauty products could be explained by referring to 'match-up hypothesis' which 'suggests that attractive persons are highly effective endorsers for products that are used to enhance the consumer's own attractiveness'. Thus, it is not a surprise that models in cosmetics adverts are considered beautiful with flawless skin since that would make the adverts more effective. Majeed et al. (2017: 6) mentions that it was found that 'celebrities' glamour is perceived to be transferred to women while consuming the endorsed product'. In their study of the effects of emotional stimuli on women's consumption behaviour, Majeed et al. (2017) found out that celebrity endorsement, especially when they express happy emotions, combined with colour and music were the most effective techniques. Mixing positive and negative emotional feelings in adverts proved to be effective e.g. skin care product adverts where the advert starts with the 'beauty enhancement feelings' and then 'generate fear about bad skin' (Majeed et al., 2017: 5). Sheehan (2004), who is a researcher in communication and marketing, examined the relationship between the advert, the product and the meaning formed by the consumer and she indicates that meanings consumers develop from an advert affects how they create their worldviews. Consumers use products and the meaning

they derive from them as a way of defining themselves (Sheehan, 2004: 27). Therefore, adverts affect consumers' identity as it shapes their views of the world and more importantly of themselves. These interdisciplinary findings prove the need for CDS, that aim to counter the effect of marketing goals by studying discourse, in this case the discourse of advertising, to reveal the unequal way women are treated in adverts. They demonstrate that these representations create problems that can affect women's social identities.

## **2.8 Summary**

In providing a detailed literature review of previous studies that have contributed to the field of knowledge to all areas related to this research, it is clear that the discourse of advertising is biased. Women are consistently targeted and represented by advertisers differently from men (Malkin et al., 1999; Benwell and Stokoe 2006) in addition to being judged and controlled by society (Black and Sharma, 2001). The greater problem is that, in order to be regular consumers, women are treated as objects whose appearance and therefore their identity are expected to be modified and altered endlessly in a pursuit of ever-changing 'ideal' femininity. Advertisers employ a variety of persuasive techniques to convince women of their need to achieve that 'ideal' to the point of creating problems out of natural conditions and normal skin colour and features. The effects of such advertising are immense, as seen and detailed in section (2.7).

In this literature review, I have provided a comprehensive background on the approaches and methodologies used to analyse multimodal data and how different researchers executed their studies differently depending on the type of material, and

or the aim of the study. Moreover, this chapter has revealed the areas that have not been examined to date. As seen through the literature, research on cosmetics adverts has not sufficiently taken into account different products, as the focus was typically on one product. It is important to investigate a variety of products as it reveals that the ideologies implied in cosmetics adverts are not limited to adverts of a specific product and even when the products are different, the ideal feminine represented is almost the same. Thus, in this thesis I will analyse different cosmetic products' adverts (foundations, lipsticks and eye products) which would be a valuable addition to the field of CDA and MCDA. Furthermore, much of the existing research depends solely on one of the following approaches in their analysis of adverts: CDA, MCDA, and content analysis where the researcher(s) tend to focus on proving a specific structure or theme. In this thesis, I analyse the various components (image and text) in a comprehensive way where the analysis does not target a certain variable, but rather explores all the strategies employed by advertisers to send their ideologies implicitly. I also address the gap in the studies of critical discourse analysis of advertisements in relation to audience response, as there is only one study where women's point of view has been taken into account through focus groups (McLoughlin, 2013).

This study aims to investigate cosmetics adverts comprehensively, examining both image and text, as well as readers' responses. The approach taken to this is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This study aims to investigate the prominent discourses communicated through cosmetic advertisements in ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA, answering the following set of research questions:

RQ 1: What types of identities are created in the discourse of adverts for women?

RQ 2: How do these adverts represent idealised femininity in each cultural context?

RQ 3: What are the semiotic and linguistic strategies used in those adverts?

RQ 4: Do the semiotic and linguistic strategies used differ between Arabic and English magazines? Is there any evidence of a globalised femininity in the dataset?

As introduced earlier in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3), I have adopted a triangulated, multimethod approach which includes MCDA and CDA in addition to focus groups to investigate readers' perceptions of the ideologies implied in the adverts. In the following section, (Section 3.1), I present an overview of the previous methodological approaches used to analyse adverts by other researchers in the field, which influenced the design of this current study. It is followed by a detailed description of the methodological triangulation adopted in this study in section (3.2), including the different frameworks applied. After that, in section (3.3), I present the CDA approach I applied in this study followed by a detailed description of the MCDA approaches applied in section (3.4). It is followed by section (3.5) detailing the focus group methods, including the sampling processes and analytical framework. Following the

focus group section, I provide the initial rationale and criteria of data collection in section (3.6).

### **3.1 Methodological approaches to Advertisements**

As highlighted in Chapter 2, discourse used within advertisements is powerful as it is considered a 'persuasive' discourse (Beasley and Danesi, 2002) that influences readers to get their consent implicitly (Van Dijk, 2008). Accordingly, researchers examine the characteristics of this type of discourse for different reasons. Researchers have adopted different frameworks to analyse adverts in women's magazines. As detailed in Chapter 2, linguists have analysed adverts using FCDA (Haider, 2009; Lazar, 2009b) and CDA (Conradie, 2011; Shuo, Wang and Wang, 2014; Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013). Other linguists focused on the semiotic aspects such as Chafai (2010), who opted for a visual communication approach to investigate functions of images in adverts, McLoughlin (2013) who applied social semiotics and Baykal (2016) who used MCDA to analyse images in adverts.

I am conducting qualitative research through the application of MCDA to a small data sample, which proved to be an appropriate approach to analyse adverts as seen through previous studies that I will discuss later in (Section 3.6). Having small data is advantageous as it allows for a thorough, comprehensive deep analysis rather than looking for certain items within the data set to prove an assumption. It gives the researcher opportunity to employ a multimethod approach rather than applying one approach that focuses on a certain strategy e.g., investigating images to reveal their function only (Chafai, 2010), or examining verbs only (Shu, Wang and Wang, 2014). I chose to do a qualitative analysis through MCDA rather than a quantitative analysis

e.g. corpus analysis, because of the data availability, my desire to focus on close details in images in cosmetics adverts for cross-cultural reasons. Corpus linguistic studies 'involve interrogating large sets of data so as to describe and explicate patterns of communication.' (Harvey et al., 2007: 773). As corpus linguistics is based on large sets of texts, and focus more on the frequency of lexical items, it would be more beneficial if the data comprised of beauty articles rather than adverts. CDA and MCDA, on the other hand, focus on text and image connotations and hidden ideologies more which makes them more appropriate as frameworks of analysis. Choosing qualitative research over quantitative allows me to answer the research questions I have. Conducting a quantitative analysis would reveal the frequency of recurrent themes but not the details in each advert that a micro close analysis through MCDA would allow. Applying MCDA to a small amount of data allows me to examine each semiotic and linguistic element in the context of the advert and how they interact together in a way that reflects and affects society. Thus, it would enable me to answer the research questions revealing the ideal femininity depicted for readers through images and text as well as the strategies employed on both levels: semiotic and linguistic to create a persuasive discourse.

### **3.2 Methodological triangulation**

The research in this thesis is conducted using a triangulated method (Carter et al., 2014). Duffy (1987: 131) defines 'triangulation' as 'the use of multiple methods in the study of the same phenomenon'. Flick (2004: 178) states that 'triangulation' in social research is used to refer to the observation of the research issue from (at least) two different points'. Triangulation of methods has some shortcomings; it is very difficult



to replicate, it depends on the research questions, and hence, if the research lacks focus it would not provide satisfactory results (Jick, 1979: 609). In this thesis, the goal of triangulation is to look at the same set of data from different perspectives and it is also designed to answer the research questions. I am adopting multiple methods by combining MCDA with CDA and focus groups. Triangulation between methods including focus groups is useful when the topic is 'complex or controversial' (Litosseliti, 2003). I applied MCDA to investigate the identities presented for women through semiotic techniques employed in the adverts. CDA is used to examine the persuasive textual techniques in the adverts. Focus groups, on the other hand, are conducted to investigate the responses of Saudi and British female readers towards the content of the adverts. Incorporating focus groups link the adverts and the analysis to the real-life readers (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Triangulation between methods is advantageous as it is considered as 'a vehicle for cross validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data.' (Jick, 1979: 602). The knowledge acquired from the triangulation of different qualitative methods is very beneficial as the following discussion from Flick illustrates:

Additional knowledge can be used for confirming (validating) the results coming from one method. Even more instructive will be methodological triangulation, if it provides complementary results, that is, a broader, more comprehensive or even complete image of the issue under study. Particularly challenging are divergent results coming from different methods demanding additional theoretical or empirical explanation. (Flick, 2011; 73).

### **3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis**

The type of language used in adverts is classified as persuasive due to the discourse strategies used to influence the readers (van Dijk, 2008). Such discourse is very

influential because it affects power relations in society (Fairclough, 2015; Coupland, 2007). Therefore, to analyse the linguistic data, I will utilise CDA (Kress, 1990; Fairclough 2003; van Dijk, 2008) with a focus on Woods' (2006) criteria of analysis for advertisements. In this section I will provide the practical aspect of CDA through presenting Woods' framework, following on from my introduction of CDA in detail in Chapter 2, section (2.2). Woods' criteria include: sound selection, word choice, sentence structure and manipulation of meaning. Woods believes that in reality we do not have barriers between linguistic elements of phonetics, phonology, semantics, syntax, morphology and pragmatics as they co-occur in real-life everyday language. Thus, she created the framework mentioned above that includes all the criteria to examine advertisements in a comprehensive way. The framework will be classified into those four elements: sounds, words, structures, and meaning.

- Sounds include many features that should be taken into account such as rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, sound symbolism, onomatopoeic words, and sound-play. These features affect the readers by attracting attention and making the statement more memorable. Hence, in adverts, manipulation of sounds plays a great role as an attention-grabbing strategy especially in the headings that readers will encounter first thing in the text. By starting with a catching word or sentence, the advertisers have a greater chance that readers will continue to look at the advertised products.
- Vocabulary includes many techniques like the use of neologisms, homonyms, homographs, homophones, hyperbole, spelling, abbreviations, euphemism, polysemous words, figurative language, scientific and pseudo-scientific terminology. Such lexical items affect the readers' perception of words, e.g. in

adverts, the use of pseudo-scientific terms lead readers to think that those products are kind of medical rather than cosmetic.

- Structure of sentences may take one of the following forms: rhetorical questions, claim, opaque comparison, imperative form, three-part list, problem-solving or problem-reduction. Each structure has a certain function, questions in adverts, for example, engage the reader to think and then to keep reading to find the answer.
- Meaning is crucial in language because it can be manipulated through presupposition, personalisation or personification to affect the readers' minds and psychology. Adverts designers can use presupposition to implement their ideologies as taken-for-granted facts or principles.

Applying the framework proposed by Woods, I aim to examine the ideologies implied within vocabulary, sounds, structure and meaning to reveal the dominant discourses found in the adverts in both ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK and then compare the findings in relation to each culture. CDA has a great effect on the construction of identity as well as world views (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

CDA has been subject to criticism for a variety of reasons. Billig (2003) points out that critical discourse analysts need to be self-reflective as their analysis is subject to critique. Regarding Billig's view, I provided a detailed background on my position as the analyst in which my background and circumstances surrounding the writing of this thesis affected my analysis at the beginning of Chapter 1. Antaki et al. (2003) present a list of shortcomings of CDA as well as other types of discourse analysis. One of the shortcomings is 'under-analysis through spotting' in which the analysts focus on labelling procedures and spotting features found in the discourse rather analysing that

discourse. They indicate that analysis should 'show what the feature does, how it is used, what it is used to do' (Antaki et al., 2003; nk). The second shortcoming Antaki et al. (2003) discuss is 'under-analysis through summary' where the researcher present the data without analysing it. The third point is 'under-analysis through taking sides' as 'position taking-...- is not analysis in itself.' (Antaki et al., 2003; nk). A fourth limitation is 'under-analysis through over-quotation or isolated quotation'. Fifth, 'under-analysis through false survey' which occurs when the analyst generalise the discourse of one participants to all people who are in the same position. The answer to Antaki et al.'s criticism lies in analysing the data thoroughly. The application of CDA to all elements in the data is done comprehensively and systematically ensures that there is no 'spotting'. Through the process of analysing discourse critically, linking the analysis of the linguistic and semiotic features to the social practices, the analysis would not be a mere 'summary'. 'Taking sides' is just a part of the analysis and thus, when supported through analysis it would not be a limitation. In relation to the misuse of quotation as a shortcoming, that should be avoided by integrating quotations within the analysis. Finally, avoiding overgeneralisation would answer the last criticism addressed by Antaki et al.

Another criticism is that CDA researchers take a standpoint by choice rather than as a result of investigation of facts, meaning that their opinions should not be accepted without any argument (Hammersley, 1997). However, as Breeze (2011) answers to this criticism, though CDA researchers often states their position, two issues should be taken into consideration. First, the analysts' interpretations 'must be open to argument'. Second, even though CDA calls for 'transparency and truthfulness', CDA analysts should be objective in their analysis nevertheless (Breeze, 2011: 501).

CDA is also criticised for its partiality in the interpretation (Widdowson, 1998). Widdowson also addressed the vague nature of CDA analysis and the need to have clear methodology with its own set of tools. This criticism has been redeemed later by analysts as they developed frameworks for analysis such as van Dijk (1993), Wodak and Meyer (2001) and Machin and Mayr (2012). Martin (2000) argues that CDA should focus on positive, emancipatory discourses just as the dominant ones to be able to achieve social change. The argument proposed by Martin could be addressed by analysts in future studies where they change the focus of the research.

### **3.4 Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis**

The choice of MCDA as the framework of analysis is because it focuses on the ideologies represented through semiotic choices and its relation to power interests (Machin and Mayer, 2012; Gibson, Lee, & Crabb, 2015) as well as the meaning of semiotic elements in relation to society (Jewitt, 2013). Hence, it addresses the ideologies embedded in adverts; this makes MCDA the most appropriate framework of analysis as its purpose is to critically analyse the meaning communicated through pictures and text by using description (Machin and Mayer, 2012). As discussed in (Chapter 2), there are many ideological strategies that advertisers play with to manipulate women such as concealing imperfections (Coupland, 2007), enhancing looks or empowering women through the use of beauty products (Lazar, 2006). The aim of being critical is to reveal the implied ideologies. The viability of this framework was established at the pilot phase.

The images accompanying texts were analysed using a combination of three frameworks, in which each framework deals with different aspects of the elements

represented in the image. Kress (2003: 66) developed ‘visual grammar’ where ‘grammar’ refers to ‘the regularities of a particular mode which a culture has produced’. Kress focuses on the organisation of elements when writing is accompanied by an image. He posits that the ‘spatial positioning’ of those elements has meaning (2003: 65), proposing a ‘Quadrant of spatial meaning potential in Western image’.

Figure 3. 1 ‘Quadrant of spatial meaning potential in Western image’, (Kress, 2003)

given/ideal	new/ideal
given/real	new/real

This quadrant is divided by two lines that intersect with each other at right angles, where the top-left corner is ‘given/ideal’, the top-right is ‘new/ideal’, the bottom-right is ‘new/real’ and the bottom-left is ‘given/real’. Kress (2003: 157) refers to the effect of a culture’s ‘reading path’ on the construction of meaning. I modified the quadrant to suit the Arabic images as seen in figure (3.2), by placing the ‘given’ on the right, and the ‘new’ on the left according to the reading path. The ‘ideal/real’ is not modified because after the pilot study results, in which the ‘ideal/real’ were modified so the ‘real’ is on top and the ‘ideal’ is at the bottom, I collected the data and reassessed the modified quadrant where I realised that the ‘ideal/real’ classification is not tied to the reading path as Arabs read top to bottom just as in English. Thus, it should stay as in the Kress’s quadrant.

Figure 3. 2 'Quadrant of spatial meaning potential in Arabic image'

new/ideal	given/ideal
new/real	given/real

Kress emphasises the importance of meaning carried by image, when the image is on the left side of a layout and writing is on the right side. According to Kress (2003: 138), this means that 'the image is given – it is *the* taken-for-granted mode of communication – and writing has an ancillary function, namely of glossing what the image does'. The decision on which mode to use depends on two factors: the 'best fit', where things that are best depicted spatially are presented as an image, and things that are best shown as 'event and action sequence' are presented in writing (Kress, 2003). In the analysis of data, Kress' framework would be applied in the form of quadrant to make the relationships between the quadrant's components clear rather than merging the quadrant analysis with the object analysis which would lead to losing the significance of the spatial meaning and repeating some parts of analysis as they belong to both frameworks (Kress, 2003 and Machin and Mayr, 2012).

I also make use of the influential framework proposed by Machin and Mayr (2012) to analyse objects. According to this framework of visual analysis, I examine the images' connotations as well as their attributes. Connotations are the implicit meanings that the image suggests, and they are influential in adverts because they represent the ideas indirectly through the use of images. Settings illustrated in the image will be analysed to see their effects on the meaning delivered. Saliency is one

of the most important points that Machin and Mayr discuss in their analysis of semiotic elements. It is achieved through size, colour, tone, focus, foregrounding, overlapping, and cultural symbols. The salience of one or more of the previous features plays a role in highlighting that feature and its meaning.

To analyse the relationship between people depicted in adverts and the viewers, van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of visual representation of social actors is also employed in this thesis to assess three aspects: distance, relation and interaction. This is the 'Representation and Viewer Network'; the distance between the representation (which is the person depicted in the image) and the viewer depends on whether the camera shot is close or far. The relationship between the viewer and the representation depends on two criteria. First, the vertical angle from which the representation is facing the viewer and it represents the power differences. Second, the horizontal angle and it shows the involvement dimension. Interaction between the representation and the viewer depends on the gaze of the former whether it is directed towards the viewer or not.

As Machin and Mayr (2012) discuss the criticism addressed at CDA, they point out that such criticism applies to MCDA as well. Machin and Mayr (2012) discuss the criticism that applies to both CDA and MCDA such as ignoring the readers' interpretations, who might find the images neutral or even interesting or empowering by suggesting adding an ethnographic method to the CDA or MCDA. Forceville (2010) addresses some of the shortcomings of multimodality where he argues that there is inconsistency in the way terminologies are defined or used. His criticism has been redeemed later by Machin and Mayr (2012) who clearly define terminologies. Another



criticism that Forceville mentions is that multimodal analysis could not be generalised as it lacks stability. MCDA does not seek to overgeneralise but to reveal indicative findings.

### **3.5 Focus Groups**

Along with my own MCDA and CDA analysis, I wanted to include focus groups in this study to gain crucial data on how everyday readers might respond to the persuasive techniques employed in the adverts. Using focus groups according to Linhorst is:

a qualitative research method in which a moderator interviews a small group of participants, typically 6 to 10, and uses the group process to stimulate discussion and obtain information on the beliefs, attitudes, or motivations of participants on a specific topic. (Linhorst, 2002:209).

Hence, conducting focus groups would enable me to know how Saudi and British women feel about the models depicted in the cosmetics adverts. As Machin and Mayr (2012: 217) point out, an 'ethnographic approach' enriches the study of 'text production and/ or consumption'. Focus groups' participants' comments and answers would help bridge the gap between the analyst's point of view and readers'. As Machin and Mayr highlight the importance of having an ethnographic element in CDA:

What an ethnographic component in CDA could do is help to connect production and textual analysis to the way that people live their everyday lives. This in turn will allow us to speak more confidently about the nature of the way ideology works and the way that dominant discourses are used by people. (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 217).

There are many advantages of conducting focus groups according to Krueger (1994). First, focus groups are 'socially oriented', and participants are placed in real life situations in which they are able to lower their inhibitions. Second, discussions are

flexible and hence the moderator can ask for clarifications unlike other methods. Third, results are easily understood and are believable. Fourth, conducting focus groups is 'relatively low cost'. Fifth, the discussions provide 'speedy results' compared to other methods. Sixth, the researcher can 'increase the sample size' without 'dramatic increase in the time' unlike other studies.

Focus groups are often used in marketing research, as in the study conducted by Antioco et al. (2012), which investigated the relationship between women's self-esteem and idealised models in adverts addressing women. Recently, focus groups have been used in education, linguistics, health research and feminist research (Litosseliti, 2003). To my knowledge, this is the first study that integrates an ethnographic element in conjunction with CDA and MCDA. There are three studies that combined ethnographic elements with CDA and/or multimodality. First, McLoughlin (2013) where she examined the ideal beauty represented in *Asiana* magazine through social semiotics, CDA and focus groups. Second, McLoughlin (2017) in which she combined CDA, social semiotics and focus groups to analyse South Asian women's magazines. Third, Bouvier (2016) combined social semiotics with interviews to explore the identity women communicate through fashion. Focus groups are used in this research as a form of 'participatory action' to investigate readers' views and this has been used in other feminist research (Wilkinson, 1998). The focus group discussion in McLoughlin's (2013) study revealed the connection between the beauty ideologies and the cultural reasons behind those ideologies. Bouvier's interviews revealed how women perceived of their clothing and the way they describe it which Bouvier (2016: 374) comments on stating that: 'the accounts of the women indicated that the clothing allowed them not just to communicate these ideas but to embody them.' Using focus

groups in this manner can 'enable the development of collective understandings of shared problems-and (often) solutions to these problems' (Wilkinson, 1998: 186). Thus, I conducted the focus groups, as detailed in the following sections, to reveal how potential readers would react to the ideologies embedded in the discourse of advertisements analysed in this research.

Though they have been used in different fields, focus groups have been criticised as a research method for not providing quantitative results and for the possibility of not providing a representative sample (Stewart et al., 2007). The first criticism should not be considered a shortcoming, as focus groups usually emphasise qualitative data that could not be collected through quantitative methods. As Barbour (2011) explained, part of the criticism focus groups receive is due to the quantitative research traditions which she considers 'inappropriate' when looking at the benefits of the qualitative methods. Stewart et al.'s second criticism is concerned with the groups as not being representative of larger population which they defend by pointing out that it could be a limitation; which is found in most methodology and research tools and that it is not a "fatal flaw". In the case of this thesis, the focus groups are conducted to provide indicative findings. Wilkinson (1998) mentions another criticism addressed to focus groups which is the restrained role of the researcher. The reduced researcher influence is not always a negative characteristic. It is a debatable issue, as Wilkinson mentions that it could be considered a strength, especially when the researcher is interested in the way participants look at concepts, as in this thesis, because focus groups give them the chance to express their opinions. Thus, their responses might reveal themes and interpretations that are different from the researcher's. Litosseliti (2003: 21) points out some of the possible limitations of

conducting focus groups which concerns several difficulties. There is the difficulty in separating between the view of the group and those of the individuals', the difficulty in analysing the results as well as the difficulty in generalising the findings. Litosseliti (2003: 21) argues that a researcher could overcome some of those limitations through 'careful planning and skilful moderating' and that though the result might not be generalizable, they are still considered 'indicative' of a social phenomenon. Krueger (1994) presents some of the limitations of focus groups. First, the limited and controlled role of the researcher. Second, the analysis of data is difficult as it should be always in context. Third, group discussions need a moderator who is skilful in interviews' techniques. Fourth, different groups could differ in the way they participate as each group might have certain characteristics. Fifth, it is not easy to assemble group participants. Lastly, it is not easy to find a suitable environment for group discussion as it is for individual interviews. Regarding Kruger's first limitation, as I mentioned earlier, it could be considered a strength (Wilkinson, 1998). In relation to the second and third limitations, the researcher could overcome these difficulties as argued earlier (Litosseliti, 2003). The differences in group characteristics is not always a limitation especially in comparative studies like this thesis. The last two issues pointed out by Kruger could be solved by careful planning.

### **3.5.1 Focus group participants**

I held two focus groups for this project; Saudi female postgraduate students' group and British female postgraduate students' group, in which each group represents a sample of real life readers of the magazine. To recruit participants for the focus groups, I used segmentation, the process of controlling the selection of participants to match

certain categories. A segmented sample ensures homogeneity, as this ‘not only allows for more free-flowing conversations among participants within groups but also facilitates analyses that examine differences in perspective between groups.’ (Morgan, 1997: 35). Homogeneity is advisable in focus groups (Morgan, 1997; Carey, 2015; Knodel, 1993). Thus, posters were distributed through the following University of Nottingham campuses: University Park, Jubilee and Queen’s Medical Centre looking for female, British English native speakers and Saudi Arabic native speakers who were postgraduate students. Emails were sent to administrators at the School of Life Sciences, School of Medicine, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies and the School of Law to distribute the advert among postgraduate students. Participants contacted me through e-mail to inform me of their intention to participate in the focus groups. The participants were all postgraduate students to ensure that they had a somewhat similar background. Morgan (1997) states that focus groups should be homogeneous in terms of background but not attitudes. There were six participants in each focus group, which scholars have argued to be a sufficient number (Krueger, 1994; Linhorst, 2002; Bloor et al., 2000; Barbour 2007).

Table 3. 1 Saudi Focus Group

Participant Pseudonym	Age
Samar	27
Mona	29
Norah	30

Fatimah	30
Laila	32
Amal	33

Table 3. 2 British Focus Group

Participant Pseudonym	Age
Nicole	23
Becca	24
Felicity	24
Anne	25
Sandra	29
Emily	52

The eldest participant is 52 and therefore she is not part of the targeted readers according to the survey below. The disparity in age could affect this participant's interpretation of the adverts, but as the participants were from the same cohort, this may explain the lack of any effect of age difference on the proceedings of the focus group discussion. Thus, with the exception of that participant, the focus groups' participants are representative of readers in terms of the age range as it is within the range of the targeted readers' as the COMSCORE2014 survey revealed 89.4 % of

readers are above 21 and the majority of readers are age 18-49 (67.5%). The participants do not buy magazines, but they engage with them occasionally in different places.

In regard to ethical considerations, as prescribed by the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham, participants provided their informed consent before taking part in the study (see Appendix A for a sample of the consent form). The participants were provided with a description of the research objectives, as well as how the data would be used. Assurance of confidentiality was given to the respondents in the form of anonymity, and participants were advised that their involvement in the project was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to exit the focus group at any time.

### **3.5.2 Analysis of the focus groups data**

The focus group discussions were audiotaped and then transcribed. As Wilkinson (1998: 187) points out, the nature of data emerging from focus groups is more suitable for qualitative analysis in which 'data are best reported with extensive, illustrative extracts'. The data is analysed through ethnographic analysis which is described as:

more selective and limited in scope(...) Its main advantage is to permit a detailed interpretative account of the everyday social processes of communication, talk and action occurring within the focus group. (Wilkinson, 1998: 196).

Each focus group was introduced to each advert by giving them some time to look at it in hard copy. Then, I asked few questions for each advert. There were five questions that I asked for all the adverts in both groups:

1. How does it make you feel?

2. What is the product being advertised?
3. What are the special features of the product?
4. How do you feel about the advert?
5. Would you buy the product? Why?

These questions gave the participants a chance to talk about their impressions towards each advert without any interference. After these questions were discussed, I also had a specific set of questions for each advert depending on the themes I had already identified. Below are two tables for questions asked for each group.

Table 3. 3 British Focus Group Questions

Group	Advert	Questions
British	Dior Perfect cushion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does 'perfect' mean in this context?</li> <li>• How do you feel reading the word 'perfect' in a cosmetics advert?</li> <li>• How do you feel reading the word 'fresh' in a cosmetics advert?</li> </ul>
	Chanel Les Beige	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your definition of 'natural'?</li> </ul>
	Lancôme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think they mean by saying 'it's a match'?</li> <li>• Is it important to find 'a match'?</li> </ul>
	Max Factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does formula mean in this context?</li> <li>• Why is it important to have a 'lasting' foundation?</li> </ul>
	Bourjois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel when you encounter texts in a foreign language?</li> <li>• What are the qualities related to being attractive?</li> </ul>



Table 3. 4 Saudi Focus Group Questions

Group	Advert	Questions
Saudi	Dior Perfect cushion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does 'perfect' mean in this context?</li> <li>• How do you feel reading the word 'perfect' in a cosmetics advert?</li> <li>• How do you feel reading the word 'fresh' in a cosmetics advert?</li> </ul>
	Chanel Les Beige	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your definition of 'natural'?</li> </ul>
	Sephora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean to be 'irresistible'?</li> <li>• Do you think it is important for a woman to look 'irresistible' and to feel irresistible'?</li> </ul>
	schnarwiler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does 'organic' mean to you?</li> <li>• How do you feel reading an entire advert in a foreign language?</li> </ul>
	Chanel lipstick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel when you encounter texts in a foreign language?</li> <li>• What are the qualities related to being attractive?</li> </ul>

Discussions in the British focus group were in English (my second language). Discussions in the Saudi focus group were conducted in Arabic (my mother tongue) because it is the participants' first language and therefore it would arguably be easier for them to express their opinions without thinking of the translation. I transcribed the discussions of both groups and translated the Saudi focus group discussion from Arabic

to English. I double checked the translation with another Arabic native speaker who is specialised in English language. The discussions were successful as the participants in both groups enjoyed discussing the topic of cosmetics adverts and the women represented in those adverts. The discussion lasted one hour with each group. Names of participants used in this thesis are all pseudonyms. Quotations and excerpts are taken from the focus groups' discussions and analysed in relation to the themes found in the adverts' analysis. The data collected from the focus groups is analysed and presented according to the themes.

### **3.6 Data**

#### **3.6.1 Why print magazines?**

Magazines aim 'to win consent for particular constructions of femininity' (Gill, 2007: 164) and hence it is a suitable source to investigate idealised femininity. Within women's magazines, cosmetics adverts represent one of the two 'largest advertising categories' (McCracken, 1993: 4) which reveals its prominence and effectiveness on readers. In this thesis, I chose to analyse cosmetics advertisements collected from print women's magazines. It could be argued that in the digital world we live in now, print magazines would not be noticed, but that is not true as Ytre-Arne (2011c: 467) states 'In spite of some decline in circulation and readership numbers, women's magazines in print still constitute a substantial cultural and economic industry worldwide'. In her interviews to investigate readers' experiences of print and online women's magazines, Ytre-Arne (2011c: 471) found that women preferred print magazines over online magazines because the experience of the medium is different, as viewing the magazine on a computer seem 'too stressful' with all the 'clicking,

scrolling, negotiating pop-ups, navigating back and forth'. Print magazines, on the other hand, are 'read in a more laid-back manner' and are 'associated with relation, leisure and entertainment' (Ytre-Arne, 2011c: 470). Informants in Ytre-Arne (2011c) study mentioned that they prefer print magazines because they can 'hold' them, 'save' them to read later and use them for 'scrapbooking' as well. One of the reasons behind my decision to analyse print magazines is the quality of magazines, following as Gill's (2007) argument, which illustrates the importance of magazines as a print media in relation to other media:

Magazines represent an enduringly popular medium, whose appeal has not been diminished by all the technologies ... both the 'magazining' of newspapers and the increasing tendency of businesses of all kinds – from supermarkets to mortgage lenders – to produce their own magazines is testimony to the popularity of the form. (Gill, 2007: 162).

Print magazines' adverts reflect the semiotic techniques utilised to carry gendered ideologies in a rich and effective way. Wells (2015: 204) emphasises the link between the medium and the ideology in magazines' cosmetics adverts as 'the glossy, smooth feel of the magazine page stands in for the woman's skin'. Women's magazines arguably affect their readers through the semiotic techniques – Machin and Thornborrow (2003) liken adverts in magazines, which they call '*Cosmo-land*' to fairyland where:

fashionable colour coordination and abstract, shiny, clean settings populated by beautiful people, signify a different reality ... enough reality ingredients to make it recognizable as a possible world'. Second, 'advertising occupies up to 95 per cent of the space in some women's magazines. (Machin and Thornborrow 2003: 460).

The size of adverts in magazines is another reason as they are arguably larger than any other medium except billboards; since an advert is either a full page or two pages,

which is the whole layout of the medium. Furthermore, the visibility and availability of print magazines in public spaces for free e.g. hair salons and dentists' waiting areas. Unlike online magazines which require access to the internet and which must be specifically searched for, magazines can be picked up and casually browsed by readers looking to pass time. Any cross-cultural differences are arguably clearer in print advertisements as can be seen in the previous studies conducted on cross-cultural comparison on print magazines' adverts (Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1995; Yan and Bissell, 2014; Ringrow, 2016). Print magazines are more culturally oriented than online ones which are not distributed locally to one country but, because of their availability online, could be accessed by readers from any country. Thus, it might make online magazine editors less attentive to cultural differences and accordingly, both content and adverts would be more globalised. Focusing on the cross-cultural representation, print magazine adverts serve as a better medium for my thesis as the similarities and differences would be clearer and consequently reveal any and unequal representation of ideal femininity. Women's magazines offer their readers 'a reliable and immediately accessible source of relaxation' since reading such materials does not require readers to focus on demanding topics (Ytre-Arne, 2011a: 220). Thus, readers often flick through print magazines uncritically as they usually read them for leisure where they are in a relaxed, uncritical mood making the ideas implied in the magazines easily accepted as they are perceived and processed as a form of entertainment. It could be argued that online magazines has a similar effect but I beg to differ as a print magazine requires the reader to hold it and accordingly, the reader would be involved, whereas an online magazine could be read while browsing other websites simultaneously by moving from one tab to another changing the content and the mindset of the reader.

Previous studies -discussed in Chapter 2 - proved that print advertisements represent an appropriate material to reveal gender ideologies (Thornborrow, 1994; Lazar, 2002; Lazar, 2006; Coupland, 2007; Conradie, 2011; Lirola and Chovanec, 2012; Reihani and Rasekh, 2012; McLoughlin, 2013; Temmerman and Van de Voorde, 2013; Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013; Baykal, 2016; Zuraidah and Kui Ling, 2018).

I considered analysing online women's magazines but, because online content follows different rules and functions, the format of the online magazine differs from that of the physical copy in relation to the placement of adverts. Additionally and crucially, in ELLE ARABIA online, there are very few fixed adverts where on each page one of them appears on the left, but can be deleted by pressing the (x) button. Those adverts are not necessarily related to the category the reader is browsing, too. Cosmetic products are only mentioned as part of the content within articles under the 'BEAUTY' heading without any link to the shop or the product provider. ELLE UK online magazine takes a different format to ELLE ARABIA and to the print version, as there is one constant advert that appears through the different pages within the website (which again could be deleted by pressing the (x) button). This might be due to online marketing strategies, as cosmetic products are only mentioned within articles under the 'BEAUTY' heading in which the products are presented either within the article or at the end as suggestions. Those products have a 'SHOP', 'SHOP NOW', or 'BUY' button that link the reader to the product provider. Some articles do this indirectly, where it highlights the name of the product, which is presented as a hyperlink, in a different colour. The difference in the context of the adverts between the two mediums would yield a different effect on the readers for two reasons. First, in the print magazine, the adverts are presented like articles and other sections where they take one or two

pages, and hence, they would be arguably viewed as content material rather than intrusive advert. Second, they are placed in different sections within the magazine, which would lead the reader to view them regardless of their interest in cosmetics. In contrast, adverts in online magazines are presented through small spaces around or within the content. Therefore, they are not allocated a space as big as articles which could arguably make them less noticeable. Online magazine adverts occupy a smaller, non-central position. They are presented under the 'BEAUTY' heading, thus, the reader would be exposed to cosmetics adverts only if she is interested in beauty products. Another difference is that online adverts could be considered slightly pushy as they have the 'BUY/SHOP' button.

In addition to the difference in format, there is the context of the advert itself. In the online magazine, the products are depicted in isolation which is direct marketing within the article itself. It does not embed any ideology or link it to a particular culture as there are not any women in the adverts. Thus, it does not serve as suitable data for the study. Contrariwise, in print magazines' adverts, cosmetic products are presented within a specific lifestyle and it reflects a particular culture which makes print magazines the best source to investigate ideal femininities and cross-cultural differences in cosmetic adverts. Another possible source of data is Instagram, but this is problematic in terms of data selection; advertisements on social media are usually based on a user's interests and on 'cookies'. Therefore, the messages are tailored to that user's needs or according to what the viewer frequently looks at, which does not include the variables I aim to examine in terms of how ideal femininity is presented to all readers and if that ideal differs cross- culturally.

### 3.6.2 Why ELLE print magazine?

ELLE is the world's biggest-selling fashion magazine brand with 46 print editions worldwide and 44 websites according to the ELLE media information 2016 (HEARST magazines UK). The first British edition was launched in 1985 (Gough-Yates, 2003:99) and the publishers aimed to make this edition a 'localised' version of the French ELLE (Gough-Yates, 2003:102). Therefore, analysing adverts from ELLE UK would show whether the French identity of ELLE is affecting the British ELLE. The launch of ELLE's Middle East edition took place twenty years later, in 2006, where it aimed for 'East-West balance' and advertisers from famous brands 'adapt their message to the market' (Passariello, 2006). Blondeau (2006) refer to this version of ELLE as ELLE Oriental which is published in two languages: Arabic and French and distributed initially in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco. Blondeau explain that there is a Pan-Arabic edition, that is published in Arabic language and where the content is adapted to the gulf area conservative culture as it is distributed in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and other gulf countries. Passariello states that 'For Elle, the stakes are highest in Saudi Arabia, which is the biggest fashion market in the Middle East because of its young population but is also the most conservative' (Passariello, 2006). ELLE has specific messages for their readers:

ELLE is more than a magazine, it's an identity.

Our goal is not only to successfully adapt this publication to the Arabic language, but also, and especially, to introduce a new face to the media scene: that of the Middle Eastern Woman. Neither hidden, nor unveiled. A woman with a unique identity that is definitely no mere imitation of Western women. (Blondeau, 2006)

Thus, investigating the adverts in ELLE ARABIA would reveal if the Arabic, Middle Eastern woman is represented in the way it was promised. As can be seen, ELLE is a very popular magazine with a French origin and many international versions, and I chose it to investigate whether the adverts in the selected versions of ELLE would reflect and represent the cultures they are addressing or do these localise versions promote a certain global identity regardless of the targeted readers culture and identity.

The adverts selected for analysis were limited to ELLE magazines; four ELLE UK issues and five ELLE ARABIA issues in the period November 2016 to August 2017. I chose ELLE because it is one of the few worldwide published magazines that 'bridge the gap between the high-fashion world in Milan, Paris and New York and small villages' (Yan and Bissell, 2014: 206) as it delivers the latest trends in fashion and makeup to readers in any place. ELLE provides two versions (ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA) written in the readers' native language addressing women from different cultures, and that makes ELLE a suitable choice to examine the representation of ideal femininity cross-culturally. The data collection started in November 2016 and ended in August 2017, with 4 issues of ELLE UK and 5 of ELLE ARABIA.

### **3.6.3 Sample**

Data collection was limited to this time frame and number of issues for four reasons. First, the aim of the methodology is to conduct close micro textual analysis and hence the sample is limited to ensure that. Second, the focus in the analysis is on the cross-cultural elements which required further analysis of the same data. Third, the focus group is part of the study and it is allocated time to be conducted, transcribed,



translated (for Saudi focus group discussion) and analysed. Fourth, I was able to find sufficient data for analysis by then (10 advertisements). Small samples of data fit MCDA research as 'they are representative' (Lirola and Chovane, 2012: 492) and treated as 'case studies' (Zuraidah and Kui Ling, 2018). The justification for selecting this number of magazine issues is that they contain adverts that fit the criteria and hence are characteristic of the discourse of cosmetics advertising in a comparable way. The main criteria for the adverts selected were: an advert for a make-up product with a woman or women in the image. This is because, by focusing on a woman's look – especially the face, which is an essential part of one's identity – the adverts might best reveal ideologies about gender.

The total number of adverts found in ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK were not equal as ELLE ARABIA has very limited number of cosmetics adverts. Thus, I opted for disproportionate stratification which is employed 'when a researcher wants to make comparisons among different strata that are not equally represented in the population' (Salkind, 2010: 1452). Salkind (2010:1452) highlights the benefits of stratified sampling as it increases the 'representativeness of the sample' and 'reduce(s) overall costs of data collection through effective allocation of resource' (Salkind, 2010: 1453). Stratified sampling is dependent on what is found in ELLE ARABIA to ensure comparative elements. Employing this sampling procedure, I started with the adverts in ELLE ARABIA as I mentioned earlier. Five make-up adverts were found in ELLE ARABIA (three for foundation, one for lipstick and one for eyeliner). Based on that, I formed three subcategories: foundations, lip products and eye products and then I collected a sample from ELLE UK cosmetic adverts. I selected the first two adverts that fit the criteria and then discarded the repeated ones because

they were exact replicas. During the selection, adverts for products that are part of ELLE Promotion pages were not included, as they are presented in a different format where it is more of an advertorial than a typical advertisement as they appeared within articles as recommendations. This was done to ensure the comparative element was present in the analysis as it is one of the key aims of the study.

The first two adverts that fit the criteria and matched the type of products advertised in ELLE ARABIA magazine are: Dior's *Dior Forever* and Chanel's *Les Beige Foundations* which were found in both versions of ELLE. The third foundation advert in ELLE ARABIA is Schnarwiler's *Organic foundation*. In ELLE UK, an advert was skipped and excluded to ensure the comparable element because it was on two pages whereas the one in ELLE ARABIA is on one page and then Max Factor foundation was included. The lipsticks adverts included in the data are the only ones encountered in the issues purchased. In ELLE ARABIA, it is Chanel's *Rouge Allure Ink* and in ELLE UK, Bourjois' *Rouge Laque*. Eye products are different, as I only found an advert for an eyeliner, Sephora's *Nuit Kajal* in the Arabic version and an advert for a mascara; Lancôme's *Monsieur Big* in the British one. These were the only adverts for eye products in all the magazines. Despite the fact that the mascara's advert is on two pages, I included it. Thus, though it would have been preferred to have one page advert to ensure the consistency, this was not an option as I wanted to investigate the ideal femininity represented in different types of cosmetics including eye products and hence, I included that advert to ensure comparability.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter has presented the details related to data collection including the criteria and rationale behind that. It also gave an overview of previous methods of analysing adverts. The methodology applied in this thesis is discussed in detail showing the tools of each framework: MCDA and CDA. The focus group sampling process, as well as analysis of the results were discussed. I also presented some of the critique addressed to CDA, MCDA and focus groups. The next chapter is the first of four analysis chapters in which I apply the methodology discussed in this chapter to the data collect from magazine advertisements.

## Chapter 4

### Direct Comparative Analysis

#### Dior 'Forever Perfect Cushion' Foundation: (ELLE UK) vs. (ELLE ARABIA)



Figure 4. 1 Dior ELLE UK



Figure 4. 2 Dior ELLE ARABIA

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider a foundation advert produced by Dior that is found in both ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA. The advert is identical in the two versions in terms of the image and the product advertised, but it differs in the language used in the copy. As such, I consider it as a direct comparative analysis between the versions of Dior advert. The Dior advertisement in the April 2017 issue of ELLE UK magazine runs over a double page spread on pages 36-37, preceded by the Dolce and Gabbana's advertisement for clothes and handbags in which a woman stands in a natural place surrounded by pebbles. She is wearing a dress made from shiny yellow and red huge sequins, a matte coloured handbag and colourful high heel sandals. The woman in Dolce and Gabbana's advert is wearing a little make up and her hair is styled up in a simple way with a scarf worn as a head band which combined with the scene behind could arguably refer to the idea that a woman can shine while still looking natural. Dior's advert is followed by ELLE website page that advertise the content of ELLE website (ELLEUK.COM) along with their ELLE UK twitter account, hashtag and Facebook symbol. Thus, the advert appears after Dolce and Gabbana's fashion adverts which could arguably inspire the readers that to have that natural-looking style, you have to wear Dior's foundation. The following advert is not related to makeup or fashion and this would arguably help make the Dior advert stand out in terms of size as it is on two pages unlike the surrounding adverts as well as through its matte black background between pages that has more white. The Dior advertisement in the February 2017 issue of ELLE ARABIA runs over a double page spread on pages 2 and 3. It is preceded by another double page spread for Chanel advertisement for clothes and accessories. In Chanel's advert, a woman is depicted twice making poses that show her clothes, nails and makeup. She

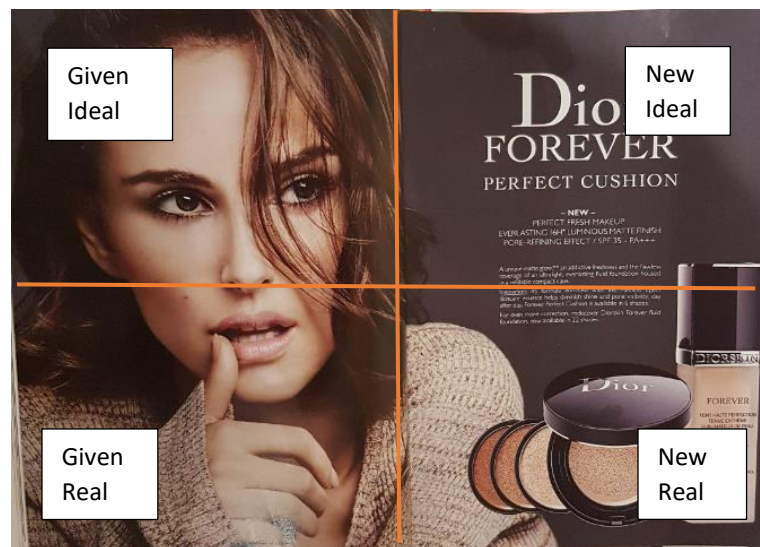
is wearing colourful suit; a short skirt and a jacket with colourful makeup and a funky hairstyle. She is wearing shiny accessories and glitter. Dior advert is followed by a Louis Vuitton clothes and bags advertisement where three women are depicted wearing some formal grey suits made up of skirts, jacket and long, leather boots walking down the street with beige house walls in the background. Thus, Dior Foundation appears as the first cosmetic advert the readers would encounter in this issue and hence it would arguably attract readers through its order of appearance as well as its matte black background as, just as in the ELLE UK, it is surrounded by pages that has more white in their background or frame.

The advertisement in both magazines includes two products: the '*Dior Forever Perfect Cushion Foundation*' and the '*DIORSKIN Forever fluid foundation*'. It consists of three parts. The first part occupies a whole page, and a quarter of the other page, and it denotes the image of a celebrity; the actress Natalie Portman. The second part, which is on the top half of the page, is the text. The text is relatively small in relation to the empty space around it, which could be a link to the effect of the product making pores less visible, since in this case the letters are also less visible. The last part is almost equal in size to the text and it is occupied by the image of the products (with a life-size product lid made of paper attached on top of the image in the ELLE UK version). The relationship between text and image here is that of an 'anchorage' value, since the visual information dominates the multimodal text (Barthes, 1977).

## 4.2 Objects analysis

Kress's (2003) quadrant is applied to the Dior advert in ELLE UK and the modified quadrant is applied to the ELLE ARABIA version of the same advert, as can be seen through the analysis of the figures below:

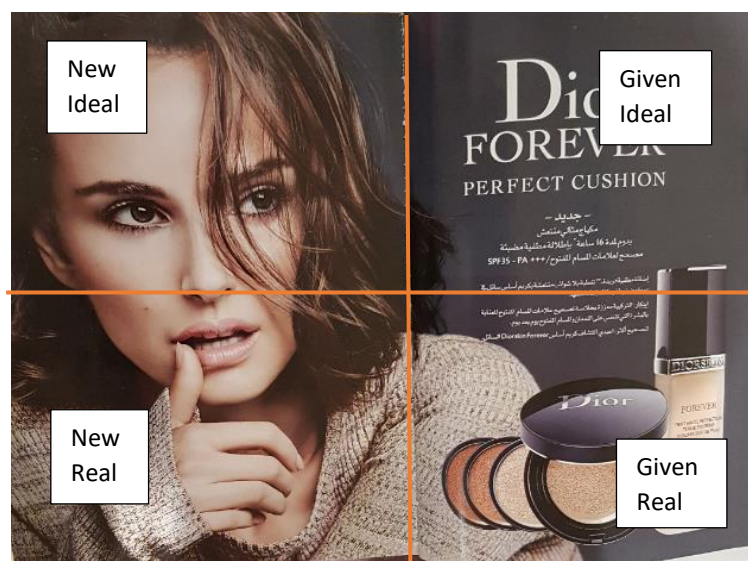
Figure 4. 3 Dior *Forever Perfect Cushion* Foundation advert (ELLE UK) according to Kress's (2003) quadrant:



<u>The woman's upper part of the face</u>	<u>Text</u>
<p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The woman in the image here is familiar because she is an actress who is known for her roles in successful films.</li> <li>• She represents women who are approximately in their thirties who apply natural looking makeup, nail polish and wear relaxing clothes; a knitted, long-sleeved blouse.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her skin represents the promise of the products, or the 'ideal' that the readers will be looking for.</li> </ul>	<p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The news that this foundation is new, perfect and everlasting is 'new' which presupposes that it is different from other foundations and has different qualities.</li> <li>• The text explains the effects of the advertised products and how they make the woman achieve that look.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reader is expected to desire a foundation that lasts for 16 hours and has a matte finish, pore-refining effect as it is depicted as ideal.</li> </ul>

<u>The mouth, the hand and the blouse</u>	<u>The products</u>
<p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hand touching the mouth connotes a feminine touch.</li> <li>• The thumb pointing up connotes satisfaction with the product. This thumb gesture is a given that readers are familiar with.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The gaps in the fabric connote the pores that people have.</li> <li>• The beige, knitted blouse is an item that readers can find and have in real life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It could be interpreted that the products are the secret behind the 'flawless' skin of the actress that readers will get to know looking at this advert.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The products are the tools to achieve the ideal look depicted.</li> <li>• The product can be purchased in real life to achieve the 'ideal' look.</li> </ul>

Figure 4. 4 Dior *Forever Perfect Cushion* Foundation advert (ELLE ARABIA) according to modified quadrant:





<p><u>The woman's face</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the actress is depicted as a 'new' aspect for Arabic readers which can be interpreted in two ways; that the reader will receive the image of the actress as 'new' because the reader is not familiar with her (as an actress famous in the West but not the Arabic media), or that the way her skin looks (as a result of using the products) is new.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig. 4.3 <i>Ideal</i> analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Text</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The beauty cosmetics promises, and terminology are presented as known pieces of information, which is ironic given adverts are meant to present something new for the reader. That could be just disregarding the difference in reading paths between English and Arabic on the part of the advertiser.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig. 4.3 <i>Ideal</i> analysis.</li> </ul>
<p><u>The mouth, the hand and the blouse</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Touching the thumb to the lips is a new aspect of femininity for the reader.</li> <li>The new element for the readers is that the actress recommends the products depicted through the thumb pointing up.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig. 4.3 <i>Real</i> analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The products</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The products are depicted as given and hence connotes that the reader knows these products already. That could refer to seeing the product in stores or previous adverts, but it could also be that advertisers used the same English version of the advert as mentioned earlier.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig 4.3 <i>Real</i> analysis.</li> </ul>

To analyse objects, Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework is utilized here. The image of an actress in her thirties dominates the advertisement. The actress is depicted in an abstract setting, with no items being presented around her to indicate anywhere more specific. The use of an abstract setting helps in delivering the message communicated through the image by focusing on the product rather than setting, time or place (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 50). The other benefit of depicting people in abstract settings is mentioned by Gill (2007), where she explains that it is considered a strategy and it

is used by international magazines to make their 'brand' 'coherent', which is through the depiction of women in 'abstract, empty settings'. In the abstract setting, we can see the woman's head, the top of her shoulders and her right hand. She is wearing a beige knit blouse, and this type of fabric looks real in the image, as if we can touch it because of its texture. The choice of the knit fabric could be related to knitted blankets and cushions, which takes the reader back to the name of the product '*Dior Forever Perfect Cushion*' (see section 4.5). There is a contrast between the woman's skin and the knitted top; whereas her face looks clear with no traces of pores, the top is naturally full of gaps because of its pattern. This contrast serves to dramatise the effect of 'visible pores' by comparing them to the gaps in the knitted top, while also showing the actress' skin to be flawless as a result of applying the foundation. The emphasis on concealing pores and likening them to gaps in knitwear does not only create a problem, but it exaggerates it and that could affect women's self-esteem and encourage them to consume cosmetics products in search for confidence and acceptance.

The beige or tan shade of the woman's blouse, mixed with some brown threads, seems to be close to the woman's skin and hair colour as well as to the shades of the product presented. The woman's facial features, skin tone, hair and eye colour are close to both British and Arabic women's looks. Arabic women are not usually blonde or blue-eyed and, as a result, Arabic readers can identify with this woman just like British readers. The long sleeves of the blouse provide 'coverage' for the arms which resembles the 'coverage' the products offer, as mentioned in the text as one of the product's qualities. The choice of the long-sleeved top is suitable for Arabic media advertising because usually it is not preferred to show women's skin in

advertisements, except the face and hands, for cultural reasons. Luqmani, Yavas and Quraeshi (1989) state that international print advertisements are sometimes modified by covering models' images with long dresses due to religious and cultural norms. Al-Olayan and Karande (2000: 72) discuss the effect of cultural and religious factors on advertisers where they only show women 'if they are appropriately dressed'. Therefore, in this image, there is no part that is edited to cover the arms or the chest since they are already covered. Zhang and Gelb (1996: 42) explain the importance of making the content of advertisements compatible with the culture from a marketing perspective:

cultural congruence brings about more favourable attitudes. Therefore, matching advertising appeals to culture is advisable for advertisers, especially in the case of sharply contrasting cultures. (Zhang and Gelb, 1996: 42).

The depicted look does not reveal whether the woman is staying in or going out but it may show that the products are suitable for both conditions and that the product's promise of being 'everlasting' is in effect. Thus, it can be inferred from the woman's image that it is viable to use the advertised foundation for a long time (it is mentioned that it lasts for 16 hours) and yet look 'fresh' as the text promises. The fact that the actress is not wearing any accessories, combined with the loose hair, loose-fitting blouse, the natural looking makeup and the nude colour of the nail polish imply that this woman likes a simple, comfortable and natural look, and if the reader identifies with this image, or admires the woman as a celebrity then she would become a consumer of the foundation just like her.

The actress's glossy hair is styled in a soft, loose way which arguably looks natural. According to Ringrow (2016: 68), it is typical of cosmetics advertisements to

employ 'sensory modality' which 'makes objects or people appear 'better' than their real-life counterparts, as any flaws or irregularities in tone, texture, or colour are perfected'. This is evident in the execution of the actress's 'flawless skin' and 'glossy hair'. The use of sensory modality serves to emphasise 'pleasure' and 'indulgence' through images (Ringrow, 2016: 68). Her face is the most salient feature in the advertisement since it is the largest element, in addition to the fact that the advertised product is a foundation for the face. Therefore, the readers should look at her face in the first instance, and that is why it is salient in terms of size.

The colours in this image are of medium saturation since they are neither intense nor dull, which supports the product's description 'matte glow' because it is in between the two. It also emphasises the characteristic mentioned that the product will 'diminish shine'. The actress's image, as well as the black background, are less saturated than the products' image. Moreover, the image of the actress is toned by adding grey to the pure colours which makes them less bright. Lighting in this advert is not high because we can see some shadows of the hair on the face, the cheek and the neck. The woman's face is foregrounded through the close-up shot that focuses on the effects of applying the products on her face. Arguably the purpose of the less bright light is to conceal the pores and any other detail that would be clearer with a brighter light. As Machin and Mayr point out, 'In Western cultures, brightness has metaphorical associations of transparency and truth as opposed to darkness which has associations of concealment, lack of clarity and the unknown' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 205). The actress's lips are slightly parted and thus we can see a glimpse of her teeth. Her thumb is touching her lower lip which is glossy against the 'matte' complexion of the face. This gesture could be interpreted as an invitation to share a

secret; arguably the products behind the 'flawless' look. The thumb pointing upward hints that the actress is satisfied with her experience of the products and hence she recommends them. Goffman (1976) has referred to this representation of a woman's hand as 'the feminine touch'; that is a soft touch where a woman touches a part of her body, this part becomes a precious and delicate product. Thus, if Goffman's observations are applied, the actress' lips are commodified through her touch.

### **4.3 The relationship between the woman and the viewer**

The relationship between the woman and the viewer is analysed according to van Leeuwen's framework (2008). The actress is depicted in a close-up shot and thus she is close to the viewers, which Machin and Mayr (2012) would argue also makes her appear as though she is the speaker behind the written words in the adjacent text. She is gazing upwards to the left side as if she is looking at the title of the advertisement. Therefore, the interaction between her and the viewer is indirect. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) interpret this as an 'offer' which they say is uncommon in magazine photographs since such photographs usually depict participants looking at the viewer to 'demand' attention. Not following the norm, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 126) is either a 'startling mistake' or 'an innovative experiment'; in Dior's case, I believe it is the latter as the woman's averted gaze would direct the reader to what she is looking at and thus, directing the reader towards the brand and the text indirectly. The function of an 'offer' image is to create an 'imaginary barrier' where the model 'pretends' that no one is looking at her and, at the same time, the viewer has the 'illusion' that she does not know that she is being looked at (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 126). Horizontally, the woman is depicted from a frontal angle, which

signals her involvement with the reader. Analysing the social relation level, we see the woman at eye level, which indicates that we are equals and hence as readers, we can identify with her and share her experience.

#### 4.4 Products' image

The second image in the advertisement is located to the right of the woman's image, at the bottom right corner of the page, and it denotes the products advertised. The products are reproduced as life-size. They are presented on a matte black background and parts of them appear on the woman's clothes as a background in an abstract setting. There are two products: *Dior Forever Perfect Cushion* which is packaged in a compact case and presented with three additional shades and a paper card resembling the lid of the cushion foundation in ELLE UK (see Figure 4.5), and the *Diorskin Forever Fluid Foundation* that is packaged in a pump bottle. In the Arabic version, there is no paper card on the compact foundation which could be because the magazine is not wrapped or because Dior do not offer the complementary foundation sample. The compact cushion foundation is the main product advertised; we know this because its name is mentioned in the title and because of its centrality in the right page of the advertisement, as well as the way it is presented with three additional shades of the product and a paper card resembling the lid of the product.

Figure 4. 5 Dior Card (first side)



The lid-shaped paper card on top of the cushion foundation looks like a real-life lid in terms of size. On the upper side of the card, the circular card is covered with matte black and framed with a thin silver line all around it. On the top right of the card there is a grey part which could be a sign as where readers should remove the card to reveal what is underneath it, or it could be a shadow as a reflection of light on the paper lid. At the centre of the top of the card, there is the name of the brand written in silver along with the noun phrase “EXCLUSIVE INVITATION”, the textual analysis is in the following section (see 4.5). Below that, there are two lines written in white. The choice of silver and white on top of the black attracts attention due to the contrast. Taking the invitation card off the page, the silver frame on top shines with the light. On the other side of the card, there is a silver frame just like the upper side though it is thinner (see Figure 4.6). The name of the brand ‘Dior’ and the slogan ‘Forever’ are written in silver followed by a text written in white. Surrounding the text, there are rectangular swatches of available 22 shades of the fluid foundation.

Figure 4. 6 Dior card (second side)



There is a number over each shade indicating its product number. The shades range from pale white to very dark brown with twenty different options in between. Thus, there are many foundation options that the reader can check to decide which one is suitable for her tone and then takes this invitation to the store to try the 'complimentary foundation sample' as indicated.

Under the invitation card, there is the compact powder *Dior forever perfect cushion* with three different shades refills under it (see Figures 4.1 & 4.2). The refills are presented on top of each other horizontally, which gives a sense of different dimensions or height through overlapping, in which the shade of the compact powder on the top is given more importance through its position. It could be because this shade is the most popular, or that Dior believe it suits the majority of their customers, or that this is the shade being worn by the actress. The shade is similar to the actress's skin and thus it could be an illustration of which one she applied to have such look. Looking at the general colour scheme of the image, there are two fixed colours in the packaging of both foundations, which are black and silver. The compact foundation is depicted in a real-life size; with the paper card removed, we will see the lid opened and the inside of the foundation is glittery as well as the other three shades behind it. The four shades represent the available foundations that suits white, brown and black skin tones. In relation to the shades presented, they are fitting for the skin tone range of both Arabic and British women.

The secondary product is the *Dior skin forever fluid foundation* and it is presented in a pump bottle in one shade that is suitable for white complexion. The black and silver in the lid are matte, the text on the bottle is written in matte black.



We can see shadows over both products as a result of using dark tones. Both products are depicted from two dimensions or sides, which gives the impression that they are real products that stand out from everything on the page. There is no text on the main product except the name of the brand written in silver on black. On the other hand, the second product, which is the liquid foundation, has the name of the product rather than the brand. It is engraved on the silver frame around the top of the bottle along with some description written in black over the shaded glass bottle plus the name of the brand at the bottom. The most salient feature about the products is the tone since the contrast between the dark tones all over the advertisement and the light tones of the cushion foundation draws the viewer's attention to it. It also reproduces the idea of light that is mentioned in the text where the effect of the product is that it gives 'luminous matte' and 'matte glow'. The last multimodal technique used is the way the text is presented. The text is written in white on top of a black background. Characteristics of font are included in the text analysis below.

## **4.5 Text Analysis**

### **4.5.1 English version**

The text consists of the following:

Dior  
FOREVER  
PERFECT CUSHION

-NEW-  
PERFECT FRESH MAKEUP  
EVERLASTING 16H\* LUMINOUS MATTE FINISH  
PORE-REFINING EFFECT/ SPF 35 – PA +++

A unique matte glow, \*\*an addictive freshness and the flawless

coverage of an ultralight, everlasting fluid foundation housed in a refillable compact case.

Innovation: its formula enriched with Poreless Effect skincare essence helps diminish shine and pore visibility, day after day. Forever Perfect Cushion is available in 6 shades.

For even more correction, rediscover Diorskin Forever fluid foundation, now available in 22 shades.

The first line is the name of the brand 'Dior' written in a very large, emboldened font and thus it adds emphasis and strength (Nakilcioğlu, 2013). Furthermore, it would catch the reader's attention and foreground the brand name. On the second line, there is the adverb 'FOREVER' which is the name of the product's line. It is capitalised, written in the same font size and emboldened as well. The final line of the first part of the text is 'PERFECT CUSHION' emboldened and capitalised yet in a relatively smaller font. Therefore, the top three lines stand out; easily noticed and remembered. The first three lines introduce the product by mentioning the name of the brand, the line 'FOREVER' and the name of the foundation. The adverb 'forever' is hyperbole that is widely used in advertisements and slogans; it is a pre-modifier that expresses degree, which in this advertisement is the length of time that the product remains 'perfect'. The adjective 'perfect' is also used to describe the noun 'cushion' as the ideal one, and the combination of an adverb and an adjective creates different dimensions of description of the product. The use of the adjective 'perfect', which is repeated three times in the text, encourages the readers to seek perfection which is impossible to achieve because there are not any stable standards that define perfection. This also targets women in a way that is not found in advertisements for men's products. Women are pressured through adverts to seek 'perfection' which would affect their

identities and their perception of themselves through the lens of the advertisements' definitions of perfection, but men are usually encouraged to 'enhance' their appearance (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985).

The choice of the noun 'cushion' connotes a soft, comfortable object that supports and protects. Hence, as the name for the product, it connotes a foundation that has all the qualities needed to provide protection for the skin for a very long time – according to the advertisement, sixteen hours. It could be related to the shape of the product as it resembles a cushion, unlike the liquid foundation which comes in the pump bottle. Dior's website gives another interpretation of the choice of 'cushion' where it states in the product's formula section that 'Thanks to its patented "Air Cushion" technology, Diorskin Forever Perfect Cushion retains the quality of its pigments and the benefits of its skincare ingredients each time it is opened'. Thus, according to the website, the word 'cushion' is part of the name of technology used in making the product which is 'Air Cushion technology'. This technology seems to be a trend in foundation since *Chanel* and *Lancôme* has a 'cushion' foundation as well.

The copy is placed under the title and it comprises four parts. As we go from top to bottom, the size of font decreases. The first part of the copy consists of four capitalised lines situated in the middle of the page. This part acts as a summary of the most unique qualities of the product, and that is related to its central position. The first line has one emboldened and hyphenated word '-NEW-' which is the most frequently used adjective in English and American television advertisements and it is usually exploited when an old product is 'relaunched' (Woods, 2006: 21). In this case of *Dior Perfect Cushion*, it is new in the packaging as compact with a puff sponge cushion but the Dior Perfect is a line that has been on the market before as a liquid

foundation. This idea of 'new' products 'can be linked to the idea of 'newness' in consumerism in general' (Ringrow, 2016: 38). Hyphens are usually used to connect words, yet the adjective is hyphenated though it stands alone. Hence, in this advertisement, the hyphen works to link the part above, which includes the names of the brand and product, with the text below that explains the most important features. The use of hyphens in combination with other font features as capitalisation and boldness creates an emphasis on the word and draw the reader's attention visually.

Following the adjective '-new-', there is the adjectival phrase 'PERFECT FRESH MAKEUP' that has two adjectives describing the 'makeup'. This use of many adjectives is a technique used to give the product 'multiple-layers' of description (Woods, 2006: 21). The lack of verbs is a typical feature of the language of advertisements where grammatical rules are dismissed, 'Advertising has furthermore developed its own disjunctive variety of English, in which verbs do not need to be used at all' (Leech, 1966: 154). The adjective 'perfect' is a key quality of the product because this is the second time it is mentioned and it is a part of the product's name. The second adjective is 'fresh' and it connotes bright and healthy appearance of the makeup. The freshness is illustrated through the image because the woman's application of the foundation left her skin looking healthy and radiant. The third line has a similar no verbs structure 'EVERLASTING 16H\* LUMINOUS MATTE FINISH'. The phrase starts with the adjective that indicates the durability of the product followed by another adjective that is formed through the combination of a number and a measurement unit '16 hour' which indicates how long the product's performance 'FINISH' can last. The third adjective 'luminous' connotes brightness whereas the next adjective 'matte' contradicts that through the connotation of something looking dull, and thus it is an oxymoron

describing the 'finish' of the foundation. The noun 'finish' is used here to describe the appearance of the surface of the skin. This contradiction between 'luminous' and 'matte' is visible in the packaging of the products through the use of dull black and shiny silver. It can also be seen in the way the woman's face glows with a healthy complexion that is not greasy. The last line of the first part provides more information on the product's feature 'PORE-REFINING EFFECT/ SPF 35 – PA +++'. The advertiser mentions the foundation's ability to change the look of pores to some extent by 'refining' them, as well as its ability to protect the skin from sunburns. The abbreviation 'SPF' indicate the Sun Protection Factor that refers to the level of protection from the ultraviolet B radiation, whereas the (PA) refers to the protection from the ultraviolet A radiation and this system is used by the Japan Cosmetic Industry Association (JCIA) (Donglikar and Deore, 2016). As discussed in Section 2.6, the use of abbreviations and scienticised terms are some of the techniques that advertisers use to impress readers (Woods, 2012; Ringrow, 2016). These claims about the efficiency and results of the products are exaggerated and some of them might not be real and such use of language is frequent in women advertisements as found in Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus' (2013) analysis of beauty products advertisements.

The second part of the copy is written in a smaller font and it is not capitalised which could signify that it is less important than the previous part. The first sentence 'A unique matte glow,' starts with the hyperbole 'unique'. It is followed by the noun phrase 'matte glow' which is synonymous with 'luminous matte' mentioned earlier in the text. The repetition and synonymy serve to emphasise the main qualities of the product that are produced for the second time as an oxymoron combining the opposites 'matte' and 'glow'. After the comma, the advertiser keeps using the

definition structure 'an addictive freshness'. This is the second time we come across the word 'fresh' but now as a noun not adjective and it refers to an 'addictive' type of 'freshness' that makes the consumer dependent on it. The following part is 'and the flawless coverage of an ultralight, everlasting fluid foundation', it starts with a noun phrase preceded by the determiner 'the' which connotes a unique or well-known thing. The hyperbolic adjective 'flawless' is synonymous of 'perfect' since both refer to the lack of imperfections; as already mentioned, this is not a possible standard to achieve. The choice of words in the textual part of this advertisement presupposes that women would want or are in need of a 'flawless', 'perfect' look. The list of descriptions of the features of the product continues with three more adjectives, two of which are hyperbolic; 'ultralight' which connotes extreme lightness and 'everlasting' where the foundation is described as a product that is once applied will last forever. The third adjective describes the material of the foundation as 'fluid'. There are many fricative sounds in this part of the copy /f/, /v/ and /sh/. Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) found that these sounds occur frequently in house-cleaning advertisements in English, and Woods (2006) suggests that these sounds are used in such advertisements because of their 'harsh pronunciation' which is why they are connected with the abrasive features of cleaning items. In this Dior advertisement, the product is 'foundation' that is named 'Forever Perfect Cushion' and hence the repetition of the sounds /f/ and /v/ may be related to the sounds in the product's name. It is also considered an alliteration since the /f/ is repeated in an initial position. This discourse technique is employed to make the text more noticeable in the mind while reading, and after reading, it may last longer in the memory. The last sentence of the text in this section is 'housed in a refillable compact case', the choice of 'housed' connotes

that this foundation is not loose as in liquid or regular compact foundations because it is in a safe place under an inside lid, and a 'puff-sponge' and then the outer lid which is like a 'house' in terms of 'being secured'. This offer of the availability of refill service is only available at Dior counters according to note regarding the two asterisks at the beginning of the sentence.

'Innovation' is the first word of the third part of the copy, it is underlined and followed by a colon giving the impression that it is introducing a definition or some news. The noun 'innovation' connotes a new method or product and therefore the structure is similar to the first part of the copy where the word '-NEW-' is placed at the beginning of the text. This emphasis is on purchasing 'new' cosmetics products which are usually 'old' products relaunched; in this case, the product's packaging is new and it is claimed that its quality is different, yet the 'Dior Forever' line of product for foundations is not new. After stating that the product is 'innovated', the text illustrates what is new about it by stating 'its formula enriched with Poreless Effect skincare essence'. The possessive pronoun 'its' refer to the foundation and is followed by the scientised term 'formula' that is used to make the reader believe that using this product will make her healthy (Woods, 2006). Ringrow (2016) mentions some of the scientific lexis that are used in cosmetics advertisements such as 'formulas' and 'systems'. This 'formula' is 'enriched' and since the verb is in the passive and the focus thus is on the product, we do not know the agent behind this process of enriching the product. Therefore, it is not clear who are the people behind this 'innovation', whether they are scientists, dermatologists or just business people. Another vague element is the 'Poreless Effect skincare essence' which is supposed to be the unique ingredient in this foundation. It connotes a substance for the skin but the adjective phrase

'poreless effect' is ambiguous and the possible connotation to be derived is that the substance affects the pore to make them less visible. The substance; the 'essence' is described but not named and this linguistic ambiguity is typical of the language of advertising (Leech, 1966 and Woods, 2012). Leech (1966) explains the type of vagueness that occur in advertising language:

What sometimes makes vagueness insidious in advertising language, as in other types of loaded language, is the power to mislead, by giving empty claims an appearance of exactitude. (Leech, 1966: 161).

The rest of the sentence continues the description of the effect of the essence; without mentioning the name of the ingredient it claims 'helps diminish shine and pore visibility'. Thus, this part explains the meaning of 'poreless effect' to the readers. The product 'helps diminish' the 'shine' and 'pore visibility' which means it only reduces the condition but does not treat it or cure it. The verb 'diminish' belongs to 'Transformation' discourse that is frequently employed in advertisements for beauty products to offer 'a positive response' (Ringrow, 2016). The following phrase 'day after day' refers to the longevity of the product's effect and encourages the reader to use it daily. The last sentence in this part provides the number of the shades available of the compact foundation which is six.

At the final part of the copy, the advertiser introduces the second product which is the liquid foundation by promoting that the application of this additional product provides 'even more correction'. The sentence starts with the preposition 'for' followed by the adverb 'even' which is used to add emphasis to the comparative adverb 'more'. Both adverbs refer to the noun 'correction' that is related to the effect of using foundation. The use of 'even more' could connote that the 'perfect cushion'



does not provide enough 'correction' and the consumer may need more 'correction' and therefore she needs to buy the 'fluid' foundation which creates more necessities for women. This would affect women negatively on two levels; psychological and economical. From the perspective of women, buying the product yet needing more correction may lead to disappointment as well as feeling that they have a worse skin condition than that in the advertisement, which needs 'even more correction' and that could lead to lower self-esteem. The effect may not be limited to that, it may affect the identity of women where they identify themselves according to this description; so the woman using this foundation would identify herself as having an oily skin because she uses this type of product. This aspect is discussed by Miles (2002), where he mentions how the effect of consumption on identity could be indirect:

[a] person might not construct an identity directly through what he or she consumes, but they may well construct who they are as a result of why they consume that particular item. (Miles, 2002: 153).

In addition, it would lead to more consumption. Employing the word 'correction' implies that the natural qualities of the skin are considered to be problems that should be amended or straightened. Such choice of words affects women's self-esteem and pushes them to feel insecure in their own skin to make them purchase items that 'hide' and 'correct' what is natural. After inviting the reader to do 'more correction', there is the imperative 'rediscover Diorskin Forever fluid foundation'. The use of the verb 'rediscover' implies that the fluid foundation is not completely new because it has been discovered before and can be 'rediscovered' again now. The concluding sentence 'now available in 22 shades' is a final note on how many shades are available of this second product.

The text on the top of the compact cushion foundation invitation card has the name of the brand followed by the noun phrase 'EXCLUSIVE INVITATION' capitalised which reflects stability and trustworthiness. The adjective 'exclusive' connotes that only the readers of this magazine; and of this advertisement in particular, can get the invitation and therefore it is considered to be an advantage. It also connotes a special lifestyle which is that of the rich and famous where people are treated as VIPs who receive invitations from brands such as Dior. Below that, there is a rhetorical question 'ARE YOU READY TO FIND YOUR PERFECT MATCH?'. This question personalises the invitation by using the pronoun 'you' and the possessive determiner 'your' to make the reader feel that the question is addressed to her as an individual. This is a synthetic personalisation which as Talbot (1992: 179) explain is used to establish 'an informal friendly relationship between the producers of mass media texts and their audience'. Hence, it is a false relationship; the question presupposes that the reader is in need of finding a 'match'. The verb 'find' is synonymous of 'discover' which mentioned in the text in 'rediscover' and that connotes the idea of an existing solution in the form of a product that needs to be found. The noun phrase 'perfect match' has two possible meanings. The first meaning is related to the foundation where the 'match' refers to the suitable shade to the skin tone. The second meaning is related to social relationships in which 'match' refers to an eligible partner. The advertiser could have both meanings combined to connote that this foundation is the 'perfect' partner that lasts forever. The use of 'perfect' makes the product's name more memorable through the repetition in the text of the copy and here on the card.

On the back of the card, there is the brand's name and slogan 'Dior' 'Forever' followed by text. The first sentence announces that 'It's time to freshen up' where the

phrasal verb 'freshen up' refers to change that is usually related to washing up, yet here it is through consuming cosmetic products 'your makeup look'. The use of the personal determiner 'your' emphasises the concept of personal invitation. The possessive determiner 'your' is used for the third time in 'DISCOVER YOUR TRUE-TO-TONE COLOUR MATCH foundation'. There is alliteration in the repetition of the consonant sound /t/ and this makes it more memorable. The manner of production of the /t/ sound that involves the tongue touching the alveolar ridge is similar to the way the foundation should touch the skin. Another feature of the /t/ sound is being voiceless and it makes the words evoke a sense of softness. However, that might not be salient for everyone as it is written and not necessarily articulated. The second part of the sentence illustrates where the reader can discover the matching shade which is 'at your nearest Dior counter'. There is the use of the discourse device 'your' again which implies here a sense of familiarity where the advertiser is considering what is convenient for the reader 'nearest'. It also implies that 'Dior' company is considerate about their customers and thus are close to them by having many counters. Following this sentence, there is an imperative directing the readers to go to the store and implicitly directing them to be their customers through trying the complementary foundation sample 'Bring this invitation for your shade matched complimentary foundation sample'.

This advertisement targets a wide range of women since the problems it creates 'shiny skin' and 'visible pores' which are not limited to a specific age or race. Providing two possible solutions in the form of different types of foundations in terms of the material it is made of 'compact powder or liquid' makes the reader feel that she has an option of choosing the type and the shade and thus encourage her to purchase

one. The invitation card is an impressive way of personalising the offer which is distributed to a large number of people through the magazine. The image of the natural looking actress plays an important role in affecting the reader's perception of what is beautiful and of how a skin should look like because everything about her is adjusted and beautified to fit magazine images' quality and hence she looks like a model more than a normal woman who may need a product that reduce pores visibility. The creation of a problem from a skin condition and making women uncomfortable in their own skin may damage their self-esteem and beauty standards. The concepts of 'Forever' and 'Perfect' are unrealistic and connecting them to beauty achievement goes against what is 'natural' and 'healthy'.

#### **4.5.2 Arabic version**

Dior

FOREVER

Perfect cushion

The next part is translated:

-New-

Fresh perfect makeup

It lasts for 16 hours with an illuminated matte look

Corrector for signs of open pores/SPF 35 – PA +++

Unique matte light, flawless refreshed coverage with a liquid foundation in a refillable compact packaging.

Innovation: the formula is enhanced with the correcting essence for the signs of open pores for a skincare that eliminates shine and open pores day after day.

For more correction, rediscover 'DiorSkin Forever' fluid foundation.

The first three lines contain the names of the brand and the product. These are written in English in the same order and format used in the English version of the advertisement. This might be interpreted in different ways: it could refer to the assumption that readers of this magazine are capable of reading English, or that the brand 'Dior' is very well known and recognised and thus functions as an image sign that does not need to be translated. The slogan 'Forever' and the product's name FOREVER PERFECT CUSHION are written in English, which could attract the reader as it stands out as something different or as a sign of prestige due to the use of foreign language. The choice of using English could be because this is the text written on the product's cardboard packaging box and hence the products will be recognised easier and faster if the customer encountered it first as a reader of the advertisement. It could be easier to remember as well since it is the only part in the text that is written in English along with the (SPF-PA symbols).

The Arabic text starts with the adjective 'new' which is identical to the English advertisement which is a technique to relaunch old items which I believe encourages women to be consumers by promoting the concept of buying every 'new' product. The adjective 'new' is followed by a description of the makeup as 'fresh perfect makeup' which is also similar to the English equivalent except for the order of adjectives which is the result of literal translation I think, yet that does not affect the meaning in Arabic. The next line describes the durability of the product 'It lasts for 16 hours' and the type of the look 'with an illuminated matte look'. This is the third line in the Arabic copy, and until here, the content is almost identical with two exceptions in this line. The first difference is the replacement of the adjective 'everlasting' that may connote the concept of forever which is rarely used in the Arabic cultures, except in contexts

related to the hereafter. Therefore, the adjective is replaced by the verb 'lasts'. This replacement gives the product more credibility as it is realistic and more appropriate to the cultural context of the readers. The second difference is the replacement of the noun 'finish' with the noun 'look'. In the English version of the advertisement, 'finish' refers to the appearance of the skin surface. In the Arabic advertisement, 'look' refers to the same thing. The difference in the choice of nouns may be because in Arabic, the equivalent of 'finish' in meaning is the noun 'touch' or the noun phrase 'final touch'. The phrase 'final touch' in Arabic is used in describing the exterior of objects more frequently than in describing humans' appearance, making it perhaps less appropriate to use here. The fourth line of the first part of the copy starts with 'corrector' which is a noun that refers to the makeup; in this case it is the foundation. Using the noun 'corrector' connotes that the foundation compensates for the skin flaws in women, hence by using it they will be more acceptable to the society. Depicting the foundation as a 'corrector' is somewhat offensive because it treats the natural skin condition as a mistake in need of correction; as if it is the fault of the woman to have such skin and thus it should be artificially corrected. Words like 'corrector' or 'concealer' appear to be common in the contexts of advertisements directed to women; they are even used as names of beauty products just like corrector pens or correction fluid that erase mistakes made in pen by covering them up. The noun 'corrector' is followed by a preposition 'for' to indicate the purpose and target of this 'correcting' process; which is 'the signs of open pores'. Therefore, the advertised foundation does not treat the pores but just improves the look of 'signs' of these 'pores' in an attempt to make them invisible. Keeping the two symbols or

abbreviations 'SPF' and 'PA' in English could be due to their universality or that there is no equivalent abbreviation in Arabic though there are terms.

The second part of the copy begins with the phrase 'unique matte light', the main lexical item is 'light', which refers to the foundation's effect on the skin which is made clear through the actress' face. This lighting of the face is described as 'unique', just as in the English version, which could show that it is a feature the advertiser made sure is present in both advertisements or that it is due to its many counterparts in Arabic. The second adjective used to describe the type of light the product provide is 'matte', which is a key characteristic of the foundation since it aims to diminish the shiny and oily skin look. The importance of this feature is revealed through its repetition twice. At this stage in the text of the English advertisement of Dior, the text describes the application of the foundation as 'an addictive freshness'. In the Arabic advertisement, there is no mention of this adjective. The deletion of 'addictive' might be due to its negative connotation and the fact that in Arabic, the use of the term 'addictive' is limited to contexts of warning such as warning about drugs addiction or the dangerous effects of smoking and that it is 'addictive'. Thus, it could be that the advertiser does not want to link the product to bad habits with lethal consequences. Another possible reason is that the word 'addictive' is censored in Arabic magazines. In addition, the adjective 'addictive' is an exaggeration and unrealistic as there is no certain proof that the foundation contains elements that lead to addiction and exaggerations are interpreted as a form of deception in Arabic media and thus it is not accepted (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989). Besides, 'addictive' in Arabic has no positive connotation at all, but in English it could refer to something enjoyable, making the adjective more socially acceptable in the British context. The noun 'freshness' is

removed and used to describe the foundation's coverage and it is switched to 'refreshed'. The second phrase describes the foundation's coverage as 'flawless' and 'refreshed'. Employing the noun 'coverage' to refer to the effect of the application of the product connotes 'hiding' the 'flaws'; the 'pores' and the 'shine' that are treated as errors to be 'corrected' through the 'coverage' provided by the 'corrector'.

Such use of these terms in a beauty product advertisement in a fashion magazine where beauty is supposed to be celebrated from different angles is disappointing. Some beauty products' advertisements promote the idea that these cosmetics empower women. This was discussed by Lazar (2006) (see 2.6.2) in her analysis of adverts where she explains that this proposed empowerment is reached through consumption of cosmetic products. In her analysis of such advertisements, Lazar states the ways in which empowerment are embedded. Two of the ways of constructing agentive power are exploited here; which is giving women a chance to control their appearance by improving it through application of cosmetics, and the other is having power through linking women's confidence to consumption of beauty products. This is a false empowerment, I would argue, as it just proves that women are constantly in need of improvement to fulfil the social requirements of the perfect woman.

Miles (2002: 103) argues that 'though the consumption of fashion offers women hope, it also reasserts their subordination ... this subordination is in the interests of consumer capitalism'. This is not limited to the world of fashion. It is also found in cosmetics advertisements that claim to help women have a better look whereas in reality they only make them feel worse by not being enough as they are.



Selecting these words represents an ideology that makes women feel less secure in their own skin because they are not acceptable to society as they look naturally. They are required to apply cosmetic products that serve as masks to hide the flawed skin, which according to the advertisement, should be covered. Some women may not feel good enough or beautiful enough because of the photoshopped images used of celebrities or models along with the harsh language used to express skin types or skin conditions as if they were mistakes. Beauty products such as foundation do not aim to cure women from dermatological symptoms. On the contrary, they encourage women to use cosmetics as a cover which on the long run will affect their skin negatively because of the chemicals used in the ingredients.

The second term used that is unrealistic is the adjective 'flawless' which is synonymous to 'perfect'. This feature is mentioned twice in this advertisement. Hence, women are expected to look 'perfect' which goes beyond the natural aspects of beauty making it an unattainable goal that women strive to obtain. The other adjective that describes the coverage of the foundation is 'refreshed'. It denotes that the coverage is freshened by the foundation. I think it could be a translation mistake where it was supposed to be translated into an equivalent of 'fresh' which in Arabic is 'refreshing' not 'refreshed' or it is the result of a different interpretation on the part of the translator. This sentence that illustrates two characteristics of the foundation's coverage does not include two features mentioned in the English version which are 'ultralight' and 'everlasting'. The reason behind omitting the adjective 'ultralight' could be the connotation that the Arabic equivalent has which would not complement the product where 'ultralight' could have the connotation that the 'coverage' is 'little' and thus not thick enough or not durable which would make the foundation unappealing.

Deleting the second adjective which is 'everlasting' might be for a religious reason, as I mentioned earlier in the analysis of the title of the advertisement, as it contained the same adjective but was replaced by 'lasts' preceding the duration of effectiveness of the product. In this sentence, the advertiser deleted the adjective completely which may be due to the Arabic connotations of the literal translation which are 'endless', 'permanent' and 'eternal'. All of these meanings attached to the adjective 'everlasting' make it difficult to include it in the Arabic text because in Islam, permanent changes to the appearance especially if the change is for beauty reasons not medical reasons is prohibited. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, exaggerations are considered a form of deception which is not tolerated (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989). Thus, mentioning that the coverage is permanent may not be perceived positively by the Arabic readers even if they know it is removable. The other religious reason is related to the idea of 'eternity', which defies the mortality of life.

After describing the features of the coverage, the text states the tool to reach this advertised goal which is through the application of the foundation. There is a clear mistranslation in this sentence, because it translates 'fluid' into 'liquid'. The sentence translation is 'with a liquid foundation in a refillable compact packaging', and it is clear the contradiction between the two descriptions 'liquid' and 'compact packaging'. The adjective in the English text is 'fluid', yet because this adjective has many equivalent translations in Arabic such as 'liquid' the meaning is delivered is not the one intended. The contradiction between two adjectives describing the same material that the product is made of is overlooked though it is very clear. Just like the English advertisement, it is mentioned that the foundation could be 'refilled' in its 'compact packaging'.

The third part of the copy has the same introductory noun 'innovation' followed by 'the formula' rather than 'its formula'. The Arabic translation of 'formula' has the same effect of using scientificised words; it gives the feeling that the product is complex and made in a medical lab similar to the preparation of medicine. Therefore, the reader may get the impression that this foundation would cure the symptoms and that it is healthy to use since it is made of a 'formula'. Describing this 'innovation', the text explains that the 'formula is enhanced' which is synonymous to 'enriched' mentioned in the English version of the advert. The special ingredient in the 'formula' which makes it an 'innovation' is 'the correcting essence for the signs of open pores'. Thus, the 'correcting essence' is the central effective factor in the product; yet it is not clear what it is. The noun 'essence' refers to "The intrinsic nature or indispensable quality of something, especially something abstract, which determines its character" according to Oxford Dictionaries.com. Hence, it connotes that this ingredient is essential to skincare but the reader would not be able to tell what this substance is. The focus in this sentence is on the purpose of this 'essence' which is 'correcting'. The supposed error to be corrected is the 'signs of pores' and it represents the problem where the product is the solution. Therefore, applying the foundation would correct the signs of pores by making them less visible. This last sentence might be considered parallel to 'the Poreless Effect skincare essence'. I find the difference in wording in the Arabic version of the advert makes part of the message slightly more straightforward since it mentions that the foundation deals with the 'signs' of the pores. Thus, it only improves the 'appearance' which supports Ringrow's argument on solution offered in cosmetics advertisements (2016). On the other hand, the English text is vague in its description 'poreless effect' because there is no known definition of this effect. The

effect of the formula is stated clearly as “for a skincare that eliminates shine and open pores”. At this point, the reader would know how this product would affect the skin. The choice of the verb ‘eliminates’ could be considered a hyperbole to emphasise the extent of how effective the ‘formula’ works since it denotes ‘completely’ removing the thing targeted. Ringrow (2016) considers verbs such as ‘eliminates’ as part of the solution that the advertisement proposes for the problem it creates. She refers to it as Transformation discourse that is exploited to ‘connote a feeling of offering a full, positive Response’ (Ringrow, 2016: 51). The two skin conditions mentioned in this sentence are the ‘shine’ and ‘open pores’.

The last part of the sentence ‘day after day’ connotes that the effects of the product would not change over time, on the contrary, they will last. At this point in the English text, the readers are informed about the number of shades available of the product in ‘Forever Perfect Cushion is available in 6 shades’. But here, in the Arabic advertisement, there is no mention of the variety of the shades available. There are two possible interpretations: either the international advertiser is not sure about the availability of the shades in the Arabic stores or the Arabic context is shorter and less detailed on purpose to suit the Arabic culture which is a high-context culture. Arabic culture depends on context for the interpretation of messages and hence it is considered to be a ‘high context culture’ as opposed to the American culture which depends on details of information and direct communication (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000: 73). Thus, Arabic advertisements tend to be shorter and arguably this could be the factor behind the difference in text length between the two Dior advertisements. The second, third and last parts of the copy in the Arabic version are one line shorter than the English version. The last sentence in the copy is almost identical to the English

version 'For more correction, rediscover 'Dior skin Forever' fluid foundation'. There are two exceptions; omission of two parts. The first part deleted is the adverb 'even' before 'more' and it could be because of the Arabic language structure which is known for its brevity that is part of the Arabic cultures being high-context (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000). The other part deleted is the phrase that 'now available in 22 shades' - this could be for the same reason the '6 shades available' part was deleted, either due to the lack of knowledge on the Arabic stores' available collection or the high-context nature of the Arabic culture as it does not include detailed information but depend on other resources than the advertisement to get it. In the following chapter, I analyse another advert that is found in both versions of ELLE with some modification. It is another direct comparative analysis for a foundation advert.

## Chapter 5

### Direct Comparative Analysis

CHANEL *Les Beige* Foundation (ELLE UK) vs. (ELLE ARABIA)



Figure 5. 1 Chanel ELLE UK



Figure 5. 2 Chanel ELLE ARABIA

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a direct comparative analysis of Chanel's foundation that appears in both versions of ELLE. The Chanel advertisement in the June 2017 issue of ELLE UK magazine runs over a double page spread on pages 22-23, preceded by the Dior's advertisement for men fragrance. This perfume advert runs over two pages where a man stands alone in the desert on one page and an image of the perfume bottle is presented on the other page with the name of the product 'Sauvage' and 'wild at heart' written under it. It is followed by Valentino bag advert that also runs over two pages. On one page, there are storage boxes stacked next to each other full of things that are not clear (they could be books, magazines or files) and in one of them, there is a Valentino bag. On the opposite page, there are two people (a man and a woman) in different framed pictures wearing different styles of Valentino studded bag. Under the three pictures of the bags, there is a post code of the location. Appearing between two different brands for two different products where the focus is not solely on women, the Chanel foundation stands out and arguably attracts the reader more because it addresses them especially with the close-up shot of the woman's face. The fact that it appears after the perfume advert which is about a man having a wild heart standing in the middle of nature could arguably make the reader compare that man with the woman here in Chanel foundation advert as both of them has a natural element to them, whether the view, the sunlight or the text. It could also feel like a continuous theme where the reader sees a natural man and then a natural woman; by 'natural' I mean according to the way the adverts depict them e.g. no or less make up and surrounded by nature.

The Chanel advertisement in the June 2017 issue of ELLE ARABIA runs over a double page spread on the inside of the cover and page 1. It is preceded by the magazine cover which has the image of a woman standing with mountains in the background behind her and the sun shining on her. She wears a glossy black leather jacket with her hair tied at the back so it cannot be seen. It is followed by a Louis Vuitton bags advertisement. The bag advert runs over two pages where we see a close-up of a woman holding a bag to her face. The background behind her depicts the desert sand and the blue sky. Thus, Chanel's foundation advertisement is the first advert readers will encounter after the cover when they read the magazine. Appearing between two women with tanned skin and dark brown hair that is tied at the back of their heads, Chanel's model would arguably be more noticeable and memorable because she is different as she has a lighter skin tone and blonde hair which flows with the wind on one page and surround her face on the other. The women in the surrounding adverts are wearing black and white clothes, whereas the Chanel woman is wearing three pieces that are completely beige which is almost identical to her skin tone and arguably the foundation she is wearing. Similar to the advert in ELLE UK, the surrounding adverts are related to nature through the background and neutral makeup. The Arabic foundation advert comes first in a competition between many advertisements in one issue and hence it might have more attention from the readers according to its order of appearance.

The advertisement includes two products: the '*Les Beiges Healthy Glow Foundation*' and the '*Gel Touch Healthy Glow Tint*'. The advertisement consists of four parts: one on the left side page and three on the right. The first part occupies the whole left-side page and it denotes the image of a woman's face and one line of text which

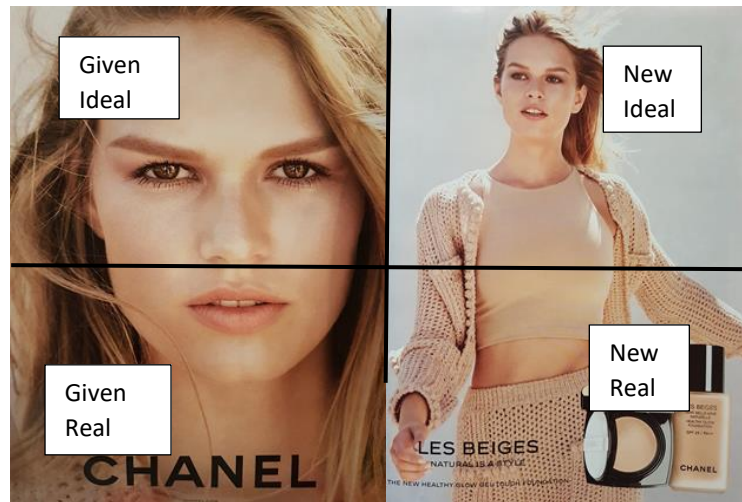


is the name of the brand written in English followed by the brand's official website in a very small font. There is no difference between the two versions of the advertisement in this page. The second part covers the other page and it denotes the image of the same woman, but in this image, we can see her body in motion, not only her face. The third part occupies one sixth of the space, covering some of the woman's lower body and it denotes two products. The last part is the text and it does not take a space of its own; but it only comprises of three lines that are written over the image. There are some differences on the right side of the page which includes the language of the text that is written in Arabic, the modified image of the woman and the change in the product presented. The visual information in this advertisement strikingly dominates the multimodal text and thus, the relationship between text and image is that of an 'anchorage' value (Barthes, 1977).

## **5.2 Object Analysis**

Kress' (2003) quadrant is applied to the Chanel advert in ELLE UK and the modified quadrant is applied to Chanel's advert in ELLE ARABIA as can be seen through the figures below:

Figure 5. 3 Chanel *Les Beige* Foundation advert (ELLE UK) according to Kress's (2003) quadrant:



<p><u>The woman's upper part of the face</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She represents a prototypical young, female face that symbolises women of the same generation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The woman's young, healthy-looking face is the promise, the thing that viewers would look forward to having.</li> <li>• The confidence in her eyes is a trait that readers might wish to have.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The woman's upper part of the body</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The woman is not staying still all the time, on the contrary, she goes outside in the sun and yet she still looks good.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers are expected to want to look like her when they are doing their chores outside with her healthy-looking skin and smooth hair.</li> </ul>
<p><u>The mouth, the neck, the brand's name and website</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plump lips and white teeth connote health and youth.</li> <li>• The brand's name 'CHANEL' is well-known to the readers.</li> <li>• The website is a known element that readers might already know about.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p>	<p><u>The lower part of the body, the products and the text</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not only the woman's face that she has been taking care of, but her body as well. The lower part is slim and toned.</li> <li>• The text explains the reason behind the woman's look through introducing the product.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chanel is the 'real' element that would help readers achieve the look through CHANEL's products.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The products are the reason behind the 'glowing' face of the model.</li> <li>The text explains the practical way to getting the 'ideal' depicted in the upper half.</li> </ul>
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Figure 5. 4 Chanel *Les Beige* Foundation advert (ELLE ARABIA) according to modified quadrant:



<p><u>The woman's upper part of the face</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The woman's face is new to the audience in the sense that they can see her closely and because she is directing her gaze to them, unlike the opposite page where they see her from some distance while she is looking at something else.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig. 5.3 <i>Ideal</i> analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The woman's upper part of the body</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This image of the woman walking represent a 'given' that readers are familiar with; the sight of a beautiful young woman. The woman's young, healthy-looking face and slim body occupies the upper part of the page and hence she represents the 'ideal'.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See fig. 5.3 <i>Ideal</i> analysis.</li> </ul>
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<p><u>The mouth, the neck, the brand's name and website</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting the brand name as new could reflect the advertiser's disregard to the Arabic reading path. It could be argued that CHANEL's name is 'new' to Arabic reader in sense that its presence under the close-up image presents Chanel as the 'real' reason this woman has the ideal skin.</li> <li>• The readers might not be familiar with the website and hence, it is a new element.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See fig. 5.3 <i>Real</i> analysis.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The lower part of the body, the products and the text</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It could be a familiar sight of beauty products.</li> <li>• The text connotes a description of a product they already know. As a result of using the same advert for two different languages that has different reading paths, the 'given/new' part of the adapted quadrant does not always reveal meaningful connotations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See fig. 5.3 <i>Real</i> analysis.</li> </ul>
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Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework is again utilized here to analyse objects in the images present in the advertisement. The analysis of objects in the Arabic version is the same of that in English ELLE with few exceptions that will be discussed later in this analysis. The images of the woman who looks in her twenties dominates the advertisement because she is depicted twice in the advert. Thus, the close-up shot allows readers to see her skin. On the other page, we see the woman as a whole depicted in motion; as if she is moving. The woman is represented in an abstract setting where no items are presented around her to indicate a specific setting. This strategy has several functions which are discussed earlier (Section 4.2). The depiction of the woman in an abstract setting conveys the meaning in an efficient and easy manner (Machin and Mayr, 2012) which could also be considered as the most economical way since the same advertisement can be distributed to many magazines

in different countries without the need to adjust the image's content from an office setting to a house setting, for example, according to the common situation in that society where the magazine is distributed.

On the left side of the page, we can see the woman's face and hair as well as the tip of her right shoulder. Her eyes are brown which highlights her white skin tone and therefore attracts the attention to her skin and the products she used to get such complexion. It is not clear in this image what she is wearing but we see a glimpse of a beige knit top. The choice of knit which is a natural fabric, combined with the woman's fresh face that looks as if she is not wearing any makeup and the loose hair around her face gives the woman a natural look which reinforces the concept introduced through the text slogan 'NATURAL IS A STYLE'. Williamson (2000: 122) investigates the way 'nature' is exploited in advertisements where she points out that 'nature as a referent, is hardly closer to raw nature than the manufactured product which it signifies as 'natural''. In the case of this advertisement, the products, a foundation and a tint, are not natural. They are used to cover what is natural; the facial skin. Hence, the concept of 'nature' is used to attract women to hide their natural skin by implying that to look 'natural', they should use the manufactured products. There is unity in the colour scheme used in this image between the colours of the main elements: the skin, the hair and the top as well as the products on the other page. This harmony leads to the focus on the colour 'beige' which is the product's name. The connection between the colour 'beige' and 'nature' implies that skin colours that are close to this shade represent the natural complexion, which excludes women who have fair and dark shades of skin. Such connotations may affect some women's perception of themselves and their satisfaction of their self-image. Therefore, women are presented with a

template that defines 'natural look', which only applies to a certain race as it is presented through Westernised ideals of beauty where whiteness is the dominant feature. This distorted concept of idealised natural beauty is part of the dominant advertising discourses that aims to create insecurities in women to encourage them to purchase cosmetics. Thus, advertisers direct women to use make-up to change their skin colour to look more natural and hence more acceptable. The woman in the image is not wearing any jewellery and her make-up is not very visible. Therefore, her image connotes and emphasises the concept of the 'natural look' and 'natural style', which in truth is partially artificial through makeup. This woman depicted in this 'natural look' likes to be free with loose hair and no accessories, so if targeted women reading the magazine identify with her they would try the foundation and tint since it is part of the free, simple, natural style woman.

The woman's hair is styled in such a way to look naturally dishevelled. From the image in the opposite page of this advert, readers can deduce that it is dishevelled because of the wind naturally going through her hair while she is walking. This shows that this woman enjoys being outside, which could connote freedom and nature and that she does not care about looking untidy if the wind blows. Thus, her personal pleasure is the priority, which is one of the things Gill (2007) mentioned as one of the shifts in magazines since the 1990s where she explains that magazines draw upon a feminist discourse where women should be in control and please themselves. Her eyebrows are taken care of; they are trimmed and arguably filled with colour to look full which is not 'natural', but it indicates that she takes care of her look and 'style'. She is wearing mascara and a bit of brown eyeshadow as well and it is a part of having a 'natural style' look. The lipstick she is wearing is of a natural hue. The woman's face

is the most salient element since it is the only element except for a glimpse of her top and her hair. Thus, its salience is due to its size and the fact that it is an advertisement for face products 'foundation and tint'. Therefore, the image of her face will arguably be the first thing that attracts readers' attention and they would look at it immediately. The colours of her image are of medium saturation, since they are neither intense nor dull which makes her skin look 'glowing' with 'health' and that supports the description mentioned in the text next to the products. The face image is toned because the colours seem less bright. The image has a high key lighting where the light tones are used to create an impression of optimism (Machin and Mayr, 2012). The woman's face is foregrounded through size, the lighting and the close-up shot that focuses on the effects of applying the products on her face. I believe that the purpose of the bright light is to give the skin radiance. The woman's slightly parted lips show a glimpse of her teeth. This can be a sign for telling and sharing the experience of the products.

The second image is on the right side of the spread and it covers the whole page. It depicts the same woman in another abstract setting, where the focus is not limited to her face; the reader sees her from distance where she seems to be walking outside, under the sun. In this image, the readers can see the woman's body as a whole except for the legs and left hand. Her hair is long, but we cannot see its length. Just like in the left image, her hair is loose and some of it is flying with the wind. The woman is wearing a beige crop vest, a beige knit blouse and a beige knit skirt. Her knit blouse is unbuttoned so we can see her crop vest and her slim, toned torso. Hence, she looks fit in a healthy way which echoes the 'healthy glow' provided by the product. She is not wearing any accessories, which shows her 'natural style'. On her right hand, she is

wearing 'beige' nail polish; an unnatural product that is part of the 'natural style' promoted in this advertisement. Thus, readers are encouraged to adopt a specific style, not only to buy the products. The promoted style is a combination of contradictory ideas of the natural as a life style or look and the synthetic products involved in the process of achieving this style. It is also contradictory in the fact that asking women to use a foundation or a tint to cover the skin and change its natural appearance is against the real 'natural' look these women were born with. Clear evidence of the dominant discourses of ideal femininity, which I discuss later in Chapter 10 (Section 10.1), can be seen here. Such hegemonic discourses found in advertisements are deceptive in their messages to women.

In the setting of this image, the woman seems to be walking outside; under the sun, because of her hair movement and hand position; one is in front of her body and the other is behind, and the hip position seems to show her moving with her legs in motion. Therefore, she is walking alone surrounded by nature, yet she is not content with her own nature'; her skin. Thus, this advert redefines what is 'natural' by saying in the text 'NATURAL IS A STYLE' and through the image with the skin products and the nail polish. Changing women's perceptions of what is natural is implied here. There is unity between colours in this image because we can see the 'beige' colour dominating the image, which draws attention to the products' line or name 'LES BEIGES' and linking image with text would make it easier to remember for readers. The other colour that stands out is black, which is found on the packaging of the compact tint and the lid of the liquid foundation as well as the names of the brands and the products. The colours of her image are toned and they are of medium saturation. High



key lighting is used and it is clear because of the background used behind the woman and the way the light is used that we can barely see shadows.

In the Arabic version of the advertisement, there is a major difference in the woman's appearance on the right page, specifically in terms of the model's outfit. As discussed by Zhang and Gelb (1996), it is important for advertisers who are promoting products and ideas from a very different culture to balance between their culture and the target culture to win the customers and evoke positive attitudes. In the ELLE UK version, the model is wearing a crop vest which reveals her waist, but in the ELLE ARABIA version, the top is not cropped and hence the skin is not revealed. The decision to modify the top into a full top that covers the waist is made for religious and cultural reasons as mentioned earlier (Section 4.2) media in the Gulf countries does not prefer to show women's skin in advertisements (Luqmani, Yavas and Quraeshi, 1989, Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000). Therefore, in this image, the top is edited to make the woman properly dressed according to the Arabic cultural standards which would make the image more acceptable and familiar to Arabic women. Media censorship care about the law, religion and tradition of the country, and therefore, the rules restrict some representations that are against the society rules. On the other hand, they cannot control the advertisers' choices of other elements such as the age, the race, the clothes and accessories as long as they do not break the rules. The woman can be seen to be representing western women through her facial features, skin tone, hair colour – all of which are different from Arabic women's looks since it is rare to have a blonde hair Arabic woman. Hence, the woman in the image promotes a Western beauty ideal that may not be suitable for the Arabic readers. Targeted readers may not identify with her because she does not depict the typical woman, which may affect

their attitude towards her and the suitability of the products to their needs and complexion tones. Depicting this woman as the symbol of 'natural' for Arabic readers is the opposite of the 'natural' look they know, as Arabs have dark hair, dark eyes and their skin colour is darker than that of the model. Therefore, the adverts' implied messages that the image represents 'natural' woman could arguably target women's identity as they might change their natural look to fit the depicted natural ideal.

### **5.3 The relationship between the woman and the viewer**

The relationship between the woman and the viewer is analysed according to van Leeuwen's framework (2008). The woman is presented as close to the viewers through a close-up shot. This strategy of close-up shots gives the impression that the depicted person is the speaker of the lines in the text (Machin and Mayr, 2012). In the left side image, the woman is gazing directly at the readers which has two functions according to Machin and Mayr (2012). The direct gaze connotes accessibility; the readers can feel that the woman is willing to communicate with them through this gaze. The other function of the direct gaze is to demand attention and action from the readers. In this case, she demands that the reader look at her and the capitalised, emboldened brand name 'CHANEL' below her face. She also demands that the reader look at the opposite page to share her experience with Chanel products. The angle from which we see the woman is a confrontational one which implies that the reader is being involved by being looked at and hence we create an intimate relationship with her. From a vertical angle, readers are positioned at the same height as the woman to signify that they are equal and there are no power differences between her and readers. The woman is the agent using the products. She is represented individually

to connote her independence. The woman symbolizes a generic, youthful, beautiful, and independent woman. The analysis of the woman's image on the left page in the Arabic advertisement is the parallel to that of the English version since there are no differences in the content.

The same woman is presented in a medium shot on the right side of the advert. In their analysis, Machin and Mayr (2012: 97) comment that it is typical of women's lifestyle magazines to present a woman in a close or medium shot, where 'Medium shots are used where it is important that we see what the woman is wearing and to connote her acting in modernist settings'. Therefore, in this image, the relationship between the representation and the viewers is not as intimate as in the image on the left side where readers see a close-up of the woman's face, but in this medium shot image, readers get to see the woman's clothes as well as the activity she is engaged in. Horizontally, the woman is not looking at the viewers, which signals her detachment, yet looking at her from the side implies that the readers share something with her; it could be the natural style, or the product consumption experience. This averted look is interpreted as an 'offer' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The woman is offered to the readers' gazes. This type of indirect address is uncommon in magazine advertisements. Choosing to go against the norm has one of two possible reasons according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 126) as mentioned in section (4.3). In this case, I believe that the advertiser is trying to be innovative where the images would show the readers the woman depicted from two different angles; once she is looking at them and then she is busy enjoying her life while applying the products. Hence, the woman wearing beige and Les beige walks outside pretending that the readers are not looking at her. Analysing the social relation from the vertical angle, we see the woman

from a low angle, which indicates that the readers are looking up at her and thus the woman has symbolic power over them.

#### **5.4 Products' image**

The third image in the advertisement is located to the right of the woman's image, at the bottom right corner of the page, and it denotes the products advertised. The products are reproduced as life-size. They are presented on a matte grey background and the woman's skirt. There are two products: the 'LES BEIGES HEALTHY GLOW FOUNDATION' which is packaged in a pump bottle, and the 'GEL TOUCH HEALTHY GLOW TINT' that is packaged in a compact case.

The liquid foundation is the main product advertised; since its name is mentioned in the title and because of its colour that matches the name of the product and the colour of the woman's clothes. The foundation is packaged in a transparent pump bottle which makes the colour beige easy to notice. The lid of the foundation is black, just like the text and the brand name on the bottle. The contrast between the colours beige and black enhance their intensity. The second product is the glow tint; a different type of foundation which comes in a cushion compact packaging that is opened in the image and hence readers can see the white puff applicator and the beige substance on a fabric mesh, this shade of beige matches the colour of the woman's crop top. The lid is beige framed by black and at the centre, there is Chanel's logo. The high key lighting draws attention to the glossy black packaging and it gives the effect that the products are glowing. High key lighting shows the products' two dimensions, which makes the products stand out from everything on the page and depicts them as if they were real. There is no text on the compact foundation except the logo of the

brand written in black on beige. The main product; which is the liquid foundation, has the name of the line 'Les beige' followed by French description which translates to 'beautiful natural complexion', followed by English description and the brand's name. The most salient feature about the products is the black packaging because it stands out and draws the readers' attention. The last multimodal technique used is the way the text is presented. The text is written in black on top of a grey and beige background. Characteristics of font are included in the text analysis below.

In the Arabic version of this advertisement, there is a second difference in the image, which is the change of one of the products depicted in the image; which is the 'Gel Touch Healthy Glow Tint'. In the Arabic ELLE advertisement, the gel touch foundation is replaced by 'Les Beiges Healthy Glow Luminous Colour', which is a bronzer. The product promoted in the English version is a *tint* which is supposed to be used as a foundation as stated on CHANEL's website, where they have ten shades available where five of them are light. The product CHANEL advertises in the Arabic version of Les Beiges is named *Colour* and is used as a bronzer or highlighter and is available in five shades in which only one is light and the rest are variety of medium and darker medium. I find the different choices of products displayed a strategic decision on the marketer's side for the main theme of the advertisement is 'natural' look or style. Therefore, by choosing a foundation which is usually a light shade for English readers and a bronzer which is usually used in medium or darker shades for Arabic readers, CHANEL is promoting the product that would arguably makes the readers feel that the product matches their natural skin colour and hence, even by applying such cosmetic product they will still think they look natural. This choice does not justify linking the application of cosmetic products to looking natural, as natural

look does not require the use of external products made up of chemicals and preservatives. The packaging for 'Les Beiges Healthy Glow Luminous *Colour*' is similar to the *Tint's* packaging, but Les Beiges Luminous *Colour* does not include a compartment for the puff applicator and its texture is powdery according to the brand's official website. The surface of the powder looks textured through horizontal lines and the shade presented is a little darker than the one chosen for the *Tint*, which is arguably more suitable to Arabic readers' skin tones.

## **5.5 Text analysis**

### **5.5.1 English version**

The textual part in the English version of Chanel's advertisement consists of the following:

CHANEL

CHANEL.COM

LES BEIGES

NATURAL IS A STYLE

THE NEW HEALTHY GLOW GEL TOUCH FOUNDATION

Text on the foundation bottle:

LES BEIGES

TEINT BELLE MINE NATURELLE (beautiful natural complexion)

HEALTHY GLOW FOUNDATION

SPF 25/ PA++

The first piece of text is at the bottom of the left-side page, under the image of the woman's face which is the brand's name CHANEL. It is written in a very large,

capitalised and emboldened font which connotes that Chanel is a stable and trustworthy company. This way of presenting the brand, draws the attention of the readers to it because of its size. It also foregrounds the brand's name. Below the brand's name, there is the official website of the brand written in a very small font. Thus, though the website is part of the known elements, the small font here connotes that it is less important or less known than the brand name.

On the right side page, the copy of the advert comprises of three lines. The first line consists of two words 'LES BEIGES', which is a noun phrase in French comprised of the definite article 'les' and the plural noun 'beiges'. Piller (2001) investigates the advertisements that include two languages in the text as when the title is written in one language and the copy is in another, in such cases, the expected reader is bilingual. According to Piller's point of view, in this advertisement, the reader is expected to know English and French. The use of French has other connotations; it gives the products a sense of sophistication and glamour because of the stereotypical image that the French are specialists in the beauty industry. This noun phrase is the name of the collection which is also part of the name of the product. Chanel is a French brand, so it is not a surprise that the collection name is written in French '*Les Beiges*' which means 'the beige'. It is a noun phrase that identifies the collection through the colour 'beige', though going to the website, I found that the collection includes a variety shades of beige and tan. The emphasis on Beige as a name of the collection could imply that even if your skin tone is tanned or dark, you will use a product that is from the Beige collection, you can consider yourself a 'Beige'. It also evokes the idea of 'Beige' as the new 'White', where beige skinned women are the attractive ones, which though the name is 'beige', the images are of a white woman, and hence it is a superficial

change. The first connotation is that the product presented is in a beige shade; thus, it refers to the colour of the product itself. It could also imply that this line of products is designed for women whose skin tones are close to beige, though as I mentioned earlier, there are some darker shades available, but the focus might be on the consumers of lighter skin tones. This phrase and colour are reflected in the visual elements accompanying the text through the woman's skin tone, the clothes she is wearing and the products presented. Linking 'beige' with 'natural' may connote that this is the normal or expected skin colour of their consumers or it could be the colours that the advertisers promote as normal. The link between nature and the colour beige enhances the white normativity where this ideology excludes women with other skin tones and hence they are not part of the nature/natural depicted as ideal in this advert. Such messages could arguably affect the self-esteem of British women with darker skin colours, as they don't consider their skin tones to be 'beige' and if 'nature' is always linked with goodness, being excluded could refer to them as 'not as good' as women with lighter skin tones.

The second line consists of a declarative sentence 'NATURAL IS A STYLE', where the structure of the sentence implies that there is an additional meaning other than the obvious one because the sentence 'natural is a style' states a fact. This sentence is a slogan, which is the 'phrases that come and go with particular lines of product and different campaigns' (Cook, 1992 as cited in Goddard, 2002:73). The (L) sounds catch the readers' attention because there is alliteration in the repetition of the consonant sound (L) at the end of two words. The sentence is capitalised and emboldened, though in a font that is smaller than the first line. It is written just below the title and in a smaller font, thus it looks like a definition of 'Les Beiges'. Therefore, beige is



connected with nature and style where the colour beige is the natural colour and wearing this natural colour is a form or type of style. Relating a cosmetic product to nature which does not need to be aestheticised is done for the sake of having a positive connotation since 'nature' is the source of 'good', 'unaltered' and 'healthy' materials. Williamson (2000: 125) explains the link between 'the natural' and 'the good' where she argues that it goes back to Romanticism which linked the two giving 'nature' a 'moral value'. The effect of Romanticism is not limited to this link, but it also created the 'concept of perfectibility' which does not exist in society but in 'nature' and then it turns into an ideal. According to Oxford online dictionaries, 'natural' is an adjective that refers to things derived from 'nature' or it could be a mass noun that means 'off-white colour'. In the current sentence, it is not an adjective that describes a noun or a mass noun. In this sentence; 'NATURAL IS A STYLE', NATURAL is an adjective that is treated as a noun. Positioning the adjective as a noun implies that it can stand independent on its own and that it has a meaning in its own. Analysing the sentence with the focus on the link between 'beige' and 'style', connotes that styling is based on colours. It could be the skin colours, the cosmetic products colour, and the colour of clothes or the coordination between them all. The last is applied in the woman's image, where her skin, her clothes and nail polish are all shades of beige.

In this context, there are three possible connotations. The reader may infer that *les beiges*; the makeup collection is made up of natural elements. In addition to that, there is the implication that using this collection is the natural thing to do because it is suitable for women. The last connotation and most powerful is the concept that using this collection's products will make women look natural, which presupposes that leaving skin without makeup and not applying cosmetic products would make them

look 'unnatural'. Williamson (2000: 128) points out that, in some advertisements, 'nature is both copied and improved' and that is when a product describes its effect as having natural characteristics, yet at the same time it helps nature do its work by improving the skin look or condition. Hence, the advertisers exploit the 'nature' appeal in feminine discourses to attract the readers. This 'natural' paradox found in dominant hegemonic discourses of consumerist femininity addressing women can affect women's perceptions of what is natural and it creates problems by convincing women that they do not look natural without consumerism, which is depicted as the right and desired look. Targeting women's perceptions of themselves and their own individual identities to win them as consumers, costs women more than money. It may affect their self-image and plants doubt in terms of whether they are natural enough to fit in and be acceptable in this society where Natural is a style which is advertised and sold.

The third line 'THE NEW HEALTHY GLOW GEL TOUCH FOUNDATION' consists of the product's name '*healthy glow foundation*' with the modifier 'the new' and the noun phrase 'gel touch'. The sentence starts with the definite article 'the' which introduces the adjective 'new' and thus it makes it a known thing, not any 'new', but 'The new' which is a try to make it stands out in a medium full of 'new' products' advertisements. The adjective 'new' is related to the relaunch of old products in some cases (Woods, 2006). CHANEL has a collection of different foundations, but in this advertisement, the text specifies that this new foundation is 'gel touch' foundation. Looking at the rest of the foundations available from CHANEL, 'les beiges' is the only collection that has this 'gel touch' feature. Hence, this must be the difference between this product and the previous ones which makes the products 'new' and not just old repackaged products. Another concept that is linked to the use of the adjective 'new'

is its role in encouraging consumerism (Ringrow, 2016). Thus, it is a discursive technique used to persuade women to purchase cosmetics and be part of the consumeristic society and can thus be seen as part of the dominant discourses of femininity. The effect of the advertising techniques on women is not limited to the financial aspect but it exceeds it to their identities where they are encouraged to keep changing the way they look by buying cosmetic products. As they are encouraged to keep up with the society's never-ending needs and ever-changing beauty standards, women's special and individual identities will transform into one globalised identity. Berger (2007) discusses the interrelations between identity and consumption in postmodern societies:

In postmodern societies, where there are no all-encompassing and dominating philosophical and ethical belief systems, the notion of a coherent identity is not valued and people are constantly changing their identities and 'looks', and these changes all are tied to purchasing the right products. Postmodern societies are consumption societies in which people are always looking for the next craze. (Berger, 2007: 36).

The second adjective in the adjective compound is 'healthy' and this describes the noun 'glow', which is ironic because using synthetic products made of chemicals do not help the skin be healthy, it does the opposite by creating skin problems, yet the effect of applying the product is described as having 'healthy glow'. Therefore, the foundation gives the skin a 'glow', but it is specified as 'healthy' which presupposes that there are other types of 'glow'. It could be an attempt to exclude the dramatic glow which can be achieved through other cosmetic products. Thus, the 'healthy glow', which is supposed to be the result of having a healthy lifestyle where the person follows a balanced food diet and exercise, has become an easy goal that could be achieved through the use of foundation. Changing ideologies such as the definition of

'healthy glow' has a great effect on women's health, since the focus will shift from 'being healthy from the inside' into 'just looking healthy'.

The third adjective is 'gel' and it describes the noun 'touch'. This noun phrase 'gel touch' is used in CHANEL's website as a part of the compact powder product's name 'LES BEIGES GEL TOUCH HEALTHY GLOW TINT BROAD SPECTRUM' and it is used here in the copy of the advertisement to describe the foundation's feel and texture. Hence, it connotes that applying the compact foundation will leave the skin moist, which is an exception since compact products are powdery because of their packaging restrictions, yet this Chanel foundation claims to have a different technique by including a 'fabric mesh' which helps deliver this 'gel touch' according to their website. Therefore, the text provides the readers with two effects of using the foundation, one that is related to the sight; which is the glow and the other is related to the touch; the 'gel touch'. The first would arguably affect her look; how would other people see her, because they will be the ones noticing the glow, whereas the second is affects the consumer herself for she will not suffer from a dry or flaky foundation.

The foundation packaging has the name of the products line '*LES BEIGES*' followed by 'TEINT BELLE MINE NATURELLE' which is translated to (beautiful natural complexion). It is ironic again to see how a formula made at a factory and packaged has a label that says 'natural'. Using such a lexical item arguably refers to having the look of natural, good looking skin. The third item on the bottle is the name of the product 'HEALTHY GLOW FOUNDATION', followed by the symbols indicating the degree of the product to protect the skin from the sun 'SPF 25/ PA++'.

### **5.5.2 Arabic version**

The textual part of Chanel's Arabic advertisement consists of the following:

CHANEL

CHANEL.COM

LES BEIGES

The next part is translated:

The natural look ... is a style

The new glowing colour for the healthy glow

The first three lines that consist of the brand's name, website and collection name are exactly the same as in the English version of the advertisement. The website is written in English and it cannot be translated. The names of the brand and the collection are French in both versions of the advertisement and they represent the brand's identity and the line of products' identity and thus they are not translated. According to Piller (2001), advertisements that include two languages, but here with Arabic, there is English and French. Thus, the expected reader is multilingual. The use of French connotes the chic and sophistication related to the French experience in the field of cosmetics, whereas the English connotes the globalisation

The first sentence in Arabic is translated to 'The natural look is a style' which echoes its English counterpart 'Natural is a style' though the English version sounds a bit ambiguous because 'Natural' is an adjective, yet the noun it describes is not specified. The Arabic noun phrase starts with 'the' which is a definite article and then it is followed by the adjective 'natural' which describes the noun 'look'. The Arabic version has a slight difference in articulating the concept of 'natural' by specifying it through the noun 'look'. Hence, the concept of being 'natural' is tied to women's

appearance through the use of 'look'. It is then defined as 'a style' and thus, creating an ideology of femininity where looking natural through cosmetic products is the ideal. This is a dominant discourse of femininity that the media promotes to be able to sell products to women. The concept of looking natural to be feminine is a deceitful ideology because there is nothing natural about applying chemically synthesised cosmetics to cover the skin which is the real natural feature.

The second sentence is 'The new glowing colour for the healthy glow' which is supposed to be the counterpart of 'THE NEW HEALTHY GLOW GEL TOUCH FOUNDATION'. These two sentences are not the same, for the English version indicates the name of the product whereas the Arabic one indicates the name of the product through translation 'the new glowing colour' and it describes the promise of the product 'for the healthy glow'. The beginning of both versions of the last sentence is identical which consists of the definite article 'the' and the adjective 'new'. Therefore, 'new' is an essential linguistic pervasive technique that is employed in both languages which reflects the global ideology of women as consumers of products (Gill, 2007). The adjective 'new' is followed by another adjective 'glowing' and both of them describe the noun 'colour' which refers to the noun 'foundation'. Stressing the importance of 'glowing' through the repetition of 'glow' and 'glowing' implies that it is part of femininity discourse; another feature added to the non-ending list that media and marketing promote as part of being a beautiful accepted female figure according to the standards they create through image and text.

In this chapter, I analysed two versions of Chanel's foundation *Les Beige* revealing various discourses of femininity such as whiteness as well as the lexical and

semiotic elements applied to make the advertising discourse persuasive. As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the adverts were almost identical and consequently, the comparative analysis process was direct between the two versions of the advert. In the following chapters (6, 7, 8), the adverts are different but the type of product advertised is the same or similar and hence, the comparative analysis between each two adverts is indirect.

## Chapter 6

### Indirect Comparative Analysis

Max Factor *Lasting Performance* Foundation (ELLE UK) vs. schnarwiler *Organic* Foundation (ELLE ARABIA)



Figure 6. 1 Max Factor ELLE UK



organic  
foundation  
to match  
your skin

schnarwiler  
make up

schnarwiler  
NATURAL/ORGANIC  
LIQUID-MINERAL FOUNDATION  
705  
NET WT. 1 FL. OZ./30ml

The Mall, Opposite Burj Al Arab  
Jumeira Road, Dubai.  
04 33807979/33807979

   
www.schnarwiler.ae

schnarwiler  
+ pure · natural · organic

Figure 6. 2 schnarwiler ELLE ARABIA

## 6.1 Introduction

This is the first indirect analysis chapter, where two different adverts that promote the same type of product are analysed. The comparative analysis is indirect because the adverts are not identical. Both adverts in this chapter; Max Factor and schnarwiler's, are for foundation. The Max Factor Lasting Performance Foundation advertisement comes from ELLE UK, February 2017 issue. The advertisement appears on page 124 and is preceded by a 'Beauty Directory' which consists of two pages consisting of small images of recommended products. The background of the pages is white while the text is black. There is a small image depicting the faces of two models. The page opposite the Max Factor advertisement is titled 'Sophie Says', a page where the beauty director of the magazine tells a story that is related to a lip gloss product. The page is mainly occupied by black text on a white background with a picture of the writer's face. There is a picture of lips covered with lip gloss and two tiny images of products at the bottom of the page. The advert is surrounded by white pages full of black text with small isolated images, which makes the woman's face in the Max Factor advert attention-grabbing due to its size and high saturation. Appearing between two sections of recommended products, the Max Factor advert has the advantage of having less text which could make it more attractive for the reader since it does not require any effort to look at the picture. The advertisement includes one product which is Max Factor *Lasting Performance Foundation* which, according to the text, gives "a natural looking skin finish that lasts". The page consists of three parts: the image of the woman, the image of the product and the text. The most dominant element is the image of the woman's face and shoulder which serves as a background for the rest of the elements.

The product advertised by schnarwiler is also a foundation, but the brand's name is not capitalised. It is unusual to have a lower case and this subtleness of approach will be discussed in the textual analysis. The schnarwiler advertisement takes place in ELLE ARABIA, May 2017 issue where it appears on page 41, between two pages of ELLE's section titled 'ELLE Trend'. It is preceded by a 'dress code' item that consists of blue jeans outfits, bags and shoes from several international brands. Then, it is followed by a page called 'it look' which is a section where the editor chooses a theme and puts together all the items that would make the reader achieve a look suitable for the theme. The theme of this issue is how to get the perfect summer style look which consists of summer fashionable dresses, sunglasses, high-heeled sandals, jewellery and a bag. Therefore, the advert appears in the middle of fashion pages where the focus is on clothing items and not on the models, since most of the items are presented in isolation rather than being worn by models. This helps the foundation advertisement to stand out through the contrasting close shot of the woman's face. The advertisement includes one product: schnarwiler *natural organic liquid mineral foundation*. The advertisement consists of three parts: the image of the woman, the image of the product, and the text. The image denoting the woman's face occupies the whole page and works as a background for the rest of the elements. The image of the product takes less than a quarter of the page and is positioned on the right side of the page. The text is divided into four parts; two parts are placed vertically on top of the product and the other two are placed horizontally below the woman's face.

This advert seems different from the rest in this thesis, since adverts usually use lighting to attract the readers' attention, but this one uses shadow as well as lighting. Though the advertisement is taken from ELLE ARABIA, the text is written in

English throughout the advertisement. Using the English language as the medium of communication in an Arabic context shows that their target market consists of readers who know English. It also reflects the globalisation of the brand and the product, as is mentioned on their website; schnarwiler states their mission (in English) on the introductory page as:

30 years ago, we have defined our promise to sell “100% Natural Products” only and today, this is still what we do with all our products.

As a manufacturer and distributor of exclusive brands related to Health, Beauty and Sleeping, we found a niche were (*sic.*) we successfully could establish our philosophy.

Our wide variety of distribution, working with pharmacies, health stores, therapists and eCommerce, we ensure that our products are easily accessible. In yet another milestone in our history, schnarwiler is going global, with a network of shops around the world. If you have a chance, please visit our first Store in Dubai, which has opened its doors in March 2016.

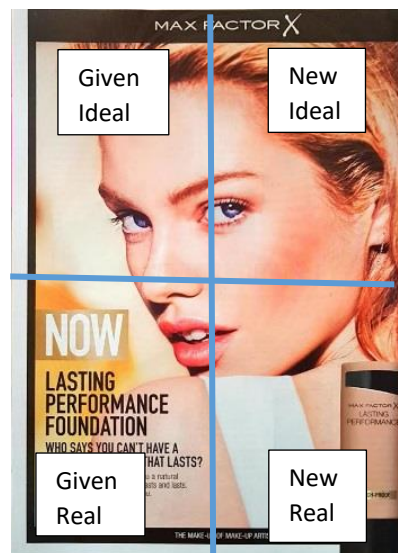
In relation to the adverts’ locations within the magazines, both seem to appear in the middle of pages that are written to advise readers on what to wear or what product to use. That could arguably put the reader’s mind into the mood of paying attention to experts’ advice and therefore, they might look at the advert with a perspective of a person who is advised to use the advertised product as part of the recommendations in the surrounding pages. In terms of the image, the similarity between the two adverts lies mainly in the way the women’s faces are presented. In both images, the reader can see one side of the woman’s face. This could be a strategy employed to direct the readers’ focus towards the skin rather than other facial features such as the lips or the eyes, given that the product advertised is foundation.

Though there is more text in those two adverts than in the previous ones, the image still dominates the multimodal text and thus, the relationship between image and text is that of ‘anchorage’ (Barthes, 1977).

## 6.2 Objects analysis

Kress’s (2003) quadrant applied to Max Factor advert and schnarwiler advert as well because though it appears in ELLE ARABIA, the text in schnarwiler advert is written in English.

Figure 6. 3 Max Factor *Lasting Performance* Foundation advert (ELLE UK) according to Kress’s (2003) quadrant:



<u>Glimpse of the right side of the woman’s face</u>	<u>The left side of the woman’s face</u>
<p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It connotes that there is a side that is hidden; a secret that is not seen by other people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mysterious part of this woman’s life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new part is her natural-looking skin, which is not a secret anymore because the product is depicted under her image.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers would arguably wish to have skin like the woman in the image.</li> </ul>

<u>Text/The slogan</u>	<u>The product/the slogan</u>
<p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The text connotes that having a foundation that lasts is usually hard. Though the adverb 'NOW' connotes a new element which proves that Kress's quadrant is not always applicable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claims stated in the text are real.</li> </ul>	<p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The product is new to the reader.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It connotes that the product is the tool behind the 'ideal', 'natural-looking' skin.</li> </ul>

Figure 6. 4 schwarwiler *Organic* foundation advert (ELLE ARABIA) according to Kress's (2003) quadrant:



<p><u>The illuminated half of the woman's face</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reader might see other women with skin like that which is depicted in the image.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This side represents the promise of the product that the reader would arguably wish to have.</li> </ul>	<p><u>'organic foundation to match your skin'/ schnarwiler make up</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It tells the news that there is a foundation out there that has these characteristics.</li> <li>• The brand 'schnarwiler' is new and the concept of organic cosmetic products</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women should be looking forward to having this foundation.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Store location/website/face book/ Instagram</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It could connote that readers are familiar with the mall mentioned in the location, though the magazine is distributed outside Dubai so it is not granted that people would know the place.</li> <li>• Social media and websites might be the 'given' elements that readers are familiar with.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding the location, website and social media accounts, they are considered 'real' in terms of being the channels that the readers can go to in order to get the product.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The product/The slogo</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The foundation is a new product.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schnarwiler foundation is the tool that would help readers achieve the 'ideal' look</li> <li>• The slogo is depicted as a 'real' element in terms of informing reader that natural, organic products are available and the source is the Swiss brand schnarwiler.</li> </ul>

To analyse objects, the framework proposed by Machin and Mayr (2012) is again utilised here. In the Max Factor advertisement, the image that dominates the page denotes a woman in her twenties. The woman is represented in an abstract setting because there are not any items around her, which arguably makes a larger audience identify with her because she could be a student, a housewife, or a professional and thus all of these women would find it easy to identify with her. The

image is framed in black that is surrounded by white in a way that makes it look like a Polaroid picture. This may create a link with the word 'NOW', which is used in the copy, as the Polaroid effect shows that the product is available at the time of taking the photo.

Readers would see the left side of the woman's face because she is turning her head. In relation to her body, the reader can only see the top of her left shoulder. She is wearing a white tank top. The fabric seems to be smooth as we do not see any wrinkles which may hint at the woman's flawless skin and perfect makeup. The top's strap seems to touch the woman's chin as if it was a white sign pointing at her face, which is the focus of the image. The white colour of her outfit draws attention to her white teeth and the whites of her eyes that perfectly aligns with the top's strap as well as the word 'NOW' on the top of the text. Thus, it works as a hint that she is living her life 'now', at the present time without any worries for the future, possibly because she is wearing the 'long lasting performance foundation'. The woman is wearing a gold thread earring which is not clearly visible since it is close to her hair which is also golden blonde. The choice of top and accessory combined with the loose hair and makeup may suggest that she is going out. The minimalistic look may lead to the inference that a woman – like the model in the advertisement - does not need a lot to shine. She just needs to wear the advertised product that compliments her skin because it gives 'a natural skin look', leaving her natural looking hair (with its uneven hairline) loose. The woman's hair is styled in soft loose waves which looks natural.

Looking at the advert, it connotes that it is possible to look beautiful and natural at the same time, but it contradicts this connotation by showing that it is done



through the use of makeup that would make women look as if they are not wearing any. The advert addresses the readers by saying that it is good to look natural, yet the readers' skin is not natural enough. Therefore, they need to use the foundation to make their skin look natural. Such contradictory messages might arguably affect women perceptions of what is 'natural', and consequently affects their acceptance of their own skin colour since the image depicts a white woman and a foundation that is a shade of beige. Thus, it would arguably make women of colour think that they are not considered good enough. Koller (2012: 31) describes that women are constructed in Boots catalogue 'as needing to consume to gain confidence and such confidence as linked to femininity'. Hence, cosmetics adverts target women insecurities to ensure that they buy the product advertised. In this advert, targeted readers might think that they are not good enough because their natural skin does not look as 'natural' as that depicted in the image; those who do not have white skin, blue eyes and blonde might feel like outsiders who do not belong in British society since they are not part of what is considered natural. Whiteness is considered 'typical' and, according to Morris (2016: 952), that is the function of white normativity; 'to make whites "standard" or "typical" but not always explicitly superior'. Morris defines the principle of 'white normativity' as follows: 'white people are people, and the members of other racial groups are people to the extent they resemble white people' (2016: 952).

The woman's face is the largest element in this image and in the advertisement page as a whole. Thus, it is the most salient in terms of size, and the most important feature in the advert since it shows the foundation on the woman's face. The woman's image is highly saturated in colour in relation to other elements on the page, i.e. the product's image and the text. The colours of the hair, eyes and lips gives warmth to

the face and skin in particular against the desaturated white elements present (her top, the white of her eyes and teeth). This use of colour emphasises the warming effect of using the foundation on her face. Another principle of salience that is used to make the face stand out is the tone, where the brightness plays a great role of making the skin glow and shine. The function of high key lighting technique which decreases shadows in an image is to reflect optimism (Machin and Mayr, 2012). The woman's face is foregrounded through a close shot to focus on her individual product experience regardless of setting and context since the woman is not presented in a specific setting such as office or house. All these salient elements combine to make the face the most attention-grabbing item.

In the schnarwiler advertisement, the illuminated half of the woman's face dominates the advertisement. The woman's face is depicted in a close shot in an abstract setting as in the Max Factor advert. The elimination of props that indicate certain places is a strategy used to make the product advertised the focus of the image (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 50). This strategy is employed here because the reader does not see the woman's clothes or her surroundings and thus, arguably their attention would go to the product. In the depicted setting, the reader can see almost half of the woman's face because of the hair falling on her face, and a glimpse of her neck. The woman is depicted in a non-traditional way in terms of an Arabic context, since locks of her hair are styled to loosely fall on her forehead and parts of her face, and dark eye makeup is used with a matte glossy lipstick. This unconventional portrayal of the model as the face of the brand is a reflection of the brand's special characteristic mentioned as the first word of the text 'organic', where the arguably 'naturally' styled look (that which is not the stereotypical look of models in cosmetics advertisements)

reflects the 'organic' elements. The low-key lighting applied through shadows and dark tones creates a mysterious and dramatic contrast between the illuminated parts of the face and the shadowed parts. As mentioned earlier (Section 4.2), darkness in Western cultures 'has associations of concealment, lack of clarity and the unknown' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 205). The first connotation of the contrast is that the difference between wearing an organic foundation and wearing other types that are not organic is like the difference between the two parts of the face where the light is illuminating the skin and the other side is dark in the shadow. The second connotation is that the darkness resembles women who have skin problems that they need to hide in the dark, whereas the use of schnarwiler's foundation will make them confident to go out and be under the light. Linking the concepts of light and knowledge to the product and its effect upon application makes the foundation a necessity and of high importance to women. As the connotations imply, it would elevate its user from darkness into light, from hiding into the spotlight and there will be no ignorance anymore and no hiding. The multimodal implications represent one of the feminine discourses targeting women through creating a problem. In this case, the problem is being left in the dark as a result of not having the ideal skin and making this product the solution. There is the other part which tackles the connotation of hiding when you do not have a foundation that is as good as the *organic schnarwiler foundation*.

The colour scheme that focuses on caramel and black is reflected through the low-key lighting, resembling the colours of the product and hence creating unity. The caramel of the liquid foundation matches the woman's skin tone as the text promises 'organic foundation to match your skin'. The glossy lips, on the other hand, echoes the mineral component of the foundation that is mentioned on the product packaging.

The image sends contradictory messages to the targeted women, as the foundation is promoted as natural and organic though it is a cosmetic product designed to hide the natural skin.

### **6.3 The woman and the viewer:**

In the adverts, the relationship between the women in the images with the viewers is analysed according to van Leeuwen (2008). Both women are depicted in a close shot and this makes them close to the viewers. According to Machin and Mayr (2012: 97), 'Close-ups are used when we are meant to imagine the woman as the agent of the feelings expressed in the text'. Both women gaze directly at the viewers and this type of gaze has two functions (Machin and Mayr, 2012) as mentioned in section (5.3). First, to establish a relationship by acknowledging the viewer. Second, this gaze demands an action or response from the viewer. By looking directly at the viewer, the woman is engaging with the viewer in a form of an interaction (van Leeuwen, 2008). The woman in the Max Factor advert has slightly parted lips which show a glimpse of her white teeth, signifiers of good health and beauty. She is turning her head to her left, so that the reader can see her face from two angles: front and side. Therefore, because readers see the woman from the front, they get the feeling that they are being looked at. Simultaneously, readers see the woman from the side; it looks as though she noticed the readers and turned around to look at them, creating a more intimate relationship. Thus, viewers may feel close to her because they share her life circumstances, her concerns or experiences. By aligning with her, we might as well share the products she is using and advertising. From a vertical angle, viewers are positioned at the same height as the woman to signify that she is an ordinary woman

and there is no power differences between her and the viewer since they are equal. The woman is the agent using the products.

The woman in schnarwiler's advert is presented in a close shot, just like the woman in the Max Factor advert, which connotes her closeness to the readers. Just like the woman in Max Factor, this model is gazing at the reader directly, connoting that she is accessible whilst also demanding their attention (Machin and Mayer, 2012). The direct gaze is also considered a form of interaction (van Leeuwen, 2008) where the woman is 'demanding' something from readers (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). It could be that she demands their attention and that they share her experience by trying the organic foundation of schnarwiler. Analysing the social relation from a vertical dimension, we see the woman at eye level, which indicates that we are equals and hence we can identify with her and share her experience. Though the eye contact may indicate that readers might feel equal to the woman, that does not necessarily connote that they identify with her because the woman's look and facial features are not typical of Arabic women (a point discussed further in section 9.1.3).

#### **6.4 The Product**

The second image in the Max Factor advertisement is located to the right of the woman, at the bottom right corner of the page where the product is presented on its own. The product is reproduced in the advertisement as life-size. The product is presented on the woman's skin as a background in an abstract setting, with a high key lighting that focuses on using light toned colours reducing shadow in the image.

Looking at the colour scheme, there are three main colours: beige, black and gold and all of them are desaturated. The brand's name 'MAX FACTOR X' is written in

black on the top of the product's packaging followed by the name of the product which is a modified noun 'Lasting Performance'. At the bottom of the tube, just above the lid, there is a gold rectangle with the compound noun 'touch-proof' in black which is semantically ambiguous. This implies that it lasts such a long time, one will not need to re-apply it. The use of black colour on the packaging seem to work as a frame for the text in between, whereas the gold represents a seal that guarantees the claim 'Touch-proof', giving the overall effect of a certificate or award. The most salient feature about the product is the tone, because it creates an illusion of the form of the tube as it is curved and the light on the word 'touch' makes the gold background glow.

The last multimodal technique used is the way the text is presented. First, the font style: the brand's name is capitalised (MAX FACTOR X) at the top of the image. Capitalisation could arguably signify stability and trustworthiness as a consequence of stability. It is written in white on a black background which looks like a frame for the image and the advertisement as a whole. At the lower part of the page, the slogan of the brand is written in white on the same black frame 'the makeup of makeup artists' bonding the two vertical parts together: the result or the 'ideal' is in the middle which is the most salient item on the page that readers will notice, and the 'real' (which is the product) is on the right. Thus, the brand's name and slogan are presented in white on top of black which are contrasting colours and this helps to make it noticeable.

The second image in the schnarwiler advertisement is located to the right of the page, and it denotes the product advertised. The product is reproduced as life-size. It is presented on a matte black background. The product advertised is schnarwiler's *Natural/Organic Liquid Mineral Foundation* which is packaged in a

transparent bottle which allows the viewer to see the shade of the foundation. The foundation and its packaging use the same colour scheme present in the woman's image and the text which are: caramel, black and white. The colours in the image of the product are desaturated which arguably makes it look softer and hence closer to natural skin tones, reflecting the natural ingredients used in the product. The caramel shade of the foundation is arguably suitable to Arabic readers' skin tones, and thus, it may seem 'natural' because of that closeness to the real skin colour of the reader. The lid of the bottle is black and it has the name of the brand, 'schnarwiler', written on it in white. The bottle has the name of the brand followed by three lines of description of the product and the number of the shade presented in the advertisement: 'NATURAL/ORGANIC LIQUID MINERAL FOUNDATION 705' written in black on the caramel background of the liquid foundation. The last line at the bottom of the bottle indicates the measurements of the product in black. The most salient feature about the product is the caramel colour of the foundation because it stands out from the black background like the light in the darkness, just like the illuminated side of the woman's face that stands out from the darkness around it. It draws the readers' attention by being the only colour in the dark side. There is a symbol of the Swiss flag at the bottom of the page near the slogan, referring to the brand's national identity since it is based in Switzerland. I found that the reference to foreign countries, languages or cultures, as in other analysed adverts (e.g. 'Lancôme's Monsieur Big mascara' in Chapter 7) suggests that references to foreign elements connote something good or special in advertising discourse. Maynard (1999: 305) found that foreign elements has 'higher status over the domestic'. While French connotes luxury and glamour, Swiss cultural references may be said to connote nature due to Swiss

stereotypes of outdoor activities and environmentalism. According to Vogel-Misicka (2010), 'Swissness' is 'a synonym for innovation, exclusive products and excellent services' and has 'connotations of precision, meticulousness, reliability and thoroughness'. In this sense, the miniature flag has another connotation, a deeper one; targeted women might get the impression that this brand is luxurious and its products are good for the skin because it comes from Switzerland. The last multimodal technique used is the way the text is presented. The text is written in white on top of a black background hence it brings light and echoes the effect of the product on the woman's face and the product's colour on the dark background illuminating darkness. Characteristics of the font are included in the text analysis below.

## **6.5 Textual analysis:**

### **6.5.1 Max Factor advert ELLE UK**

The text in Max Factor advertisement consists of the following parts:

MAX FACTOR X

NOW

LASTING PERFORMANCE FOUNDATION

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T HAVE A NATURAL SKIN LOOK THAT LASTS?

Our touch-proof formula gives you a natural looking skin finish that lasts and lasts and lasts.

Lasting Performance. Naturally You.

Put it to the test today.

THE MAKE-UP OF MAKE-UP ARTISTS

The text is written in four different font sizes starting with the largest at the top going to smaller sizes moving down. The shift from large size to small indicates the degree of importance since it could be assumed that readers would skip reading text written in smaller font. The textual part consists of the brand's name, the main text which is



called 'copy', and the brand's slogan. The name of the brand 'Max Factor X' which refers to the name of its founder is written in white at the top of the page, in the middle of the black frame. The copy is divided into four sections through different font size as well as content. It starts with the word 'NOW' followed by the name of the product, then a question and finally the information about the product. The first part is the adverb 'NOW', which is emboldened and capitalised. It resembles breaking news that pops up on TV screens in the middle of a broadcast announcing urgent and important information. In this sense, 'Now' is similar to the adjective 'new' which as stated earlier is usually associated with the relaunch of an old product. This adverb gives the impression that the product is new; that it's just released at the present moment and has not been there before, which is the 'LASTING PERFORMANCE FOUNDATION' capitalised and written in large bold font. The adjectival phrase 'lasting performance' is formed by the adjective 'lasting' describing the noun 'performance', which combined describes the quality of the noun 'foundation'. This part follows the structure that is used in many advertisements where the grammatical rules are not applied and verbs are dismissed and the focus is on the key quality of the product, in this case, 'lasting performance'. This is one of the persuasive techniques used in the context of advertising discourse (Woods, 2006). The second part in the copy is a rhetorical question 'WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T HAVE A NATURAL LOOK THAT LASTS?' which is another well-known tool of advertising (Blankenship and Craig, 2006). Blankenship and Craig (2006: 126) discuss the influence of using rhetorical questions as a persuasive tool in advertising by stating that it could be 'helpful in designing messages that will get people involved or at least thinking relatively more about the issues at hand'. The rhetorical question challenges the myths about foundations and

the problem that they do not last long providing the advertised product as the solution. Both rhetorical questions and problem-solving structures are two of the techniques used in the discourse of advertisements (Woods, 2006). This emboldened, capitalised question starts with the interrogative pronoun 'who' and the verb 'says' which combined forms the phrase 'who says' which is according to Lexico<sup>1</sup> is 'used to express disagreement with an established idea'. Thus, this phrase disagrees and challenges the next part of the question. The second part of the question starts with a synthetic personalisation through the use of the personal pronoun 'you' that makes the reader feel that she is addressed individually (Talbot, 1992). It is followed by the contracted negative form of the verb 'can' which in this case 'express doubt or surprise about the possibility of something's being the case' according to Lexico dictionary online, as it is used in a question and in the negative form as well. Hence, it connotes that there is doubt about the statement that follows 'have a natural look that lasts', which starts with the verb 'have' connoting possessiveness followed by the determiner 'a' that introduce the quality in question 'natural look'. The adjective 'natural' describes the noun 'look' and the adjectival phrase is followed by the pronoun 'that' which specifies the characteristic of the 'natural look' as a look that 'lasts' and remains for long period of time. The question includes a presupposition that there is a problem which is the doubt of not having a foundation that looks natural and at the same time is durable.

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<sup>1</sup> Lexico.com is a new collaboration between Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press.

Unlike the previous three parts, the fourth part in the copy is not emboldened or capitalised which may indicate that it has less importance. This part consists of four sentences:

Our touch-proof formula gives you a natural looking skin finish that lasts, and last and lasts.

Lasting Performance. Naturally You.

Put it to the test today.

The first sentence is a declarative presenting a statement about the product. It begins with the possessive determiner 'our' which suggests that the product is exclusive to this brand. It connotes that this product is special because it is limited to this brand. Thus, readers might feel the need to get the product from this brand. It sounds as if this product is created at a lab because of the employment of the scienticised terminology 'touch-proof' and 'formula'. Cosmetic companies use the 'scienticised' terminology to 'authenticate' their products (Ringrow, 2016: 82). It is part of the "cosmeccuticals": a blend of 'cosmetics' and 'pharmaceutical', which is often used to describe a cosmetic with a drug-like benefits.' (Ringrow, 2016: 82). Thus, it arguably gives the product some credibility; that it is created by scientists and hence readers would buy it. The advertiser claims that this product 'gives' the consumer skin that 'looks natural', but in doing so implies that applying the product is not, in itself, natural. This also implies that natural skin is not good enough. Following the verb 'gives', there is the personal pronoun 'you' that is used to create 'an illusion of personalised communication' (Woods, 2006) as well as 'synthetic personalisation' (Fairclough, 2001). The second part of the claim is the key quality of the product, that it is durable

and stable 'that lasts, and lasts and lasts'. The stress on the feature that the foundation 'lasts' could arguably indicate some characteristics of the targeted readers. First, they are busy and they will apply it once and then it would 'last' so they do not need to check and reapply. Second, they need an economic product in which one application would be enough and thus they will not need to buy a new one very frequently. Repetition of the verb 'lasts' attracts the attention to the unique feature they are claiming and promoting which arguably sets this product apart from its competitors. Repetition of 'lasts', in terms of sound, is similar to creating an echo, where the word is received by the reader and heard again and again – this helps it to be remembered. Repeating the verb three times may fall into the 'three-part list', an advertising technique that gives the readers a sense of 'completeness' (Woods, 2006). Though Woods (2006) does not refer to repetition in structure or three-word list made up of the same item, we can see here that this particular strategy in this advertisement comprises several techniques on different levels: sound repetition, word repetition and the three-part repetition which ensures that the word 'last' would stay in the reader's memory.

The second sentence consists of the name of the product only, '*Lasting Performance*'. It is followed by 'Naturally You', a typical advertising short and snappy structure which 'facilitates fast and easy comprehension' (Woods, 2006: 25). This is the third time 'natural' is mentioned, which shows that it is the second central quality after 'lasting'. The personal pronoun in 'Naturally You' is employed for the second time to give the impression that it addresses the reader individually and thus gets closer to the consumer. The final line in the copy 'Put it to the test today' is an imperative; a tool of pervasive discourse such as advertising. The imperative addresses the readers,

immediately engaging them through alliteration by repeating the sound 't' in all the lexical items except one; the definite article 'the'. Alliteration is used to draw the attention and to make the sentence unforgettable. Thus, in this last sentence, the advertiser invites the readers to purchase the item and test the claims they proposed earlier about the special features of the advertised product. One last piece of text is embedded in the black frame that surrounds the advertisement and it contains the brand's slogan, capitalised and written in white 'THE MAKE-UP OF MAKE-UP ARTISTS'. Like most of the slogans, it takes the snappy style that does not conform to the syntactic rules and usually excludes verbs. This slogan has the word 'MAKE-UP' repeated, maybe to indicate that this brand is specialised in terms of beauty products, and make-up in particular. The message in this slogan and the quality that presumably makes the brand stand out in the make-up industry is that this brand is the one used by professionals who are 'the make-up artists'.

Ideologically, the advertisement targets young women and it presupposes that they want and need their skin to look natural for a very long time. The advertiser provides the product as a solution and answer to this created need and to the proposed question 'Who says you can't have a natural skin look that lasts?'. The presupposition is not justified because having and keeping an appearance through the consumption of beauty products is not 'natural'. Hence, this advertisement tries to create unrealistic needs to market their product as a solution. This advertising technique arguably affects women's perceptions about themselves by creating insecurities. They may not feel good about their skin unless they consume the product to achieve a certain definition of looking natural for a long period of time which is not identified in the advertisement. This ideal 'natural-looking skin that lasts' highlights

the positive connotations of 'nature' where anything 'natural' is 'good' (Williamson, 2000) as well as the durability and longevity which may refer to looking young for a long time, even at a later age. Therefore, it implies that women should look good all the time, which puts a lot of pressure on women. The second ideology is that women should be able to use beauty products like professionals since this brand is used especially by them. The advertisement focuses on the importance of having a 'natural' look, yet it promotes unnatural solutions and products. Therefore, there is inconsistency in the definition of what is natural which may confuse women and change their understanding of what is natural. Trying to create unnecessary needs to encourage women to consume unnecessary products is one form of manipulation. Another form of manipulation is the promotion of chemical products in the name of looking natural, where using such products might affect the real, natural skin in the long term negatively, through getting allergies or pimples as a result of unsuitable ingredients.

### **6.5.2 schnarwiler advert ELLE ARABIA**

The textual part of the schnarwiler advertisement consists of the following parts:

organic foundation to match your skin

schnarwiler makeup

schnarwiler

pure. natural. organic

On the bottle:

schnarwiler

NATURAL/ORGANIC LIQUID MINERAL FOUNDATION 705

The first characteristic that draws attention to this advertisement is that the brand's name is typed in lower case as well as the rest of the text including the slogan and the copy. This subtleness of approach through the lower case is contrary to the traditional one where brands' names are totally capitalised, not only the first letter. The way schnarwiler introduce their brand is subtle, which is arguably one way to get the attention of the reader – by being different through the use of lower case for the brand name. It is similar to the unconventional way the brand introduces the effect of the product through lightness versus darkness by hiding half of the woman's face. Though the effectiveness of this approach is not measured, it certainly stands out by delivering the product to the readers in a discreet manner.

There are five textual parts distributed in different positions on the page. The first part is 'organic foundation to match your skin'. It starts with the adjective 'organic' which describes a key quality in the product that is also strongly related to important issues in society such as 'pollution, organic'. By looking to the BNC, the top ten collocates of 'organic' are 'matter, chemistry, compounds, molecules, farming, food, growth, material, farmers and synthesis'. The adjective 'organic' is part of the discourse Ringrow (2016: 96) refers to as 'Green Beauty' discourse where cosmetics brands advertise their products as 'natural' and 'organic'. She states that the 'trend is indicative of two recurrent themes in many contemporary western societies: a growing concern over 'toxins' in cosmetics (...) and a belief that natural is generally always preferable to synthetic or artificial' (Ringrow, 2016: 96). Thus, 'organic' is added to 'natural' in the advertisement to get credibility. It also has the connotation that this product is good for the skin (Ringrow, 2016: 97). From a feminist perspective, the reference to 'science' in the discourse of cosmetics is arguably misleading through the

use of scientific words that are not necessarily related or based on scientific research as well as the reference to nature where ingredients are not always reflecting the advertised quality (natural/ organic). It 'may simultaneously patronise and confuse women' (Ringrow, 2016: 111).

In this context, 'organic' denotes nature; though it is not stated *what* is organic, it is implied that some of the elements in the product are natural. The adjective 'organic' is the hook, which is 'the initial piece of attention-seeking verbal language used to draw the reader in' (Goddard, 2002: 74). Therefore, this single word is a strategic discourse tool to attract targeted women by promoting the foundation as a product made of natural components, where the term has a positive connotation since it is linked to goodness. Such evasive advertising discourse is typical of dominant hegemonic feminine discourse (Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013; Coupland, 2007; Ringrow, 2016). The adjective 'organic' is the key quality of the product as well as the brand and thus it is presented as the first word in the advertisement and is repeated three times throughout the text. The adjective describes the following noun 'foundation', which is the product advertised here. Thus, it specifies that the foundation is made of something organic which connotes natural ingredients. The key quality of the foundation advertised by schnarwiler is that it is an organic/ natural one which is supposedly the reason why it should stand out from the rest of the foundations available in the market. Marketing a product as a healthy option for women to apply on their skins for the sake of unnatural beauty represents a feminine hegemonic discourse; the discourse choices made by the advertiser encourage targeted women to purchase the organic foundation not because it is less harmful for women who have sensitive skin, but because it is 'natural'. The reference to 'nature'



is therefore exploited because 'nature as a referent, is hardly closer to raw nature than the manufactured product which it signifies as 'natural'' (Williamson, 2000: 122).

The noun phrase is followed by a prepositional phrase 'to match', identifying the purpose of the foundation; that is to suit and complement the skin tone of the reader/consumer. This sentence presupposes that the reader needs a foundation and that it should 'match' her skin tone, or that she already has a foundation but it is not matching. The addressee is personalised through the possessive determiner 'your' which creates a synthetic personalisation (Fairclough, 2001) as if the advertiser knows the reader personally (Woods, 2006). As we have seen already at various stages in this thesis, advertisers use persuasive rhetorical techniques to reach women. In this advertisement, schnarwiler employs dominant hegemonic feminine discourse where the reader would feel close to the producer of the text through this illusion of intimate relationships created by the personal pronoun. In the context of mass media, personalisation 'means that the audience is not conceived of as an anonymous and silent mass, but as a large group of individual readers' (Landert, 2014: 32). Such linguistic strategies may arguably give the reader a sense of intimacy, where the targeted reader feels that the text is addressing her individually and, hence, that the product advertiser cares about her and her personal needs. The last lexical item in the sentence is 'skin', the targeted part of the body since the foundation is to change or cover the colour of the skin. Thus, through the use of synthetic personalisation, the text gives the impression that the advertiser is aware of the reader's skin tone and can provide a suitable foundation which would suit it and complement it. Such a claim connotes that schnarwiler are experienced in different skin shades and hence this product would be suitable to everyone, since it addresses each reader as an individual

saying that it can offer the foundation that matches her skin colour. Such a claim would arguably meet the different expectations since it claims to give each reader a foundation that is suitable to her skin.

The second textual part is written on the top of the foundation image introducing the makeup brand 'schnarwiler makeup'. According to their website, schnarwiler is a manufacturer and distributor for products related to health, beauty and sleeping. Thus, cosmetics are arguably a new market for the brand and through this text, it is introducing their makeup line. This introduction consists of a noun phrase in which the proper noun schnarwiler is a premodifier for the mass noun makeup.

The third text in the advertisement consists of the brand's name 'schnarwiler' and its slogo: 'pure. natural. organic' which is the signature line that is positioned at the bottom near the brand's logo and it stands out through its font (Dybko, 2010). This is the second time the brand presents its name but this time in a larger font than in the copy of the advertisement which foregrounds the brand's name and attracts the reader's attention as well through the emphasis. Repetition is employed to make the brand's name function as a sign that could be recognized as a unit rather than a word, and it also helps to make the name more memorable for the readers. The slogo is general, unlike the slogan, because 'it expresses the global mission or the motto of the company' (Dybko, 2010: 24). Thus, schnarwiler's motto is to deliver products that are 'pure. natural. organic'. The term slogo also refers to 'a phrase that attaches to a product on all its adverts whatever the campaign' and usually it contains some of the words mentioned in the text (Goddard, 2002: 73). In this advertisement, the word 'organic' is mentioned in both the slogo and the text. Alliteration in the repetition of

the /r/ throughout the three words in the slogo makes it arguably catchier and more memorable.

The first word in the slogo is the adjective 'pure' which denotes that 'Not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material' (Oxford Dictionaries Online). The connotation of this adjective is that the brand delivers products that are made of good materials which ensures its good quality. The other connotation is that since the product is pure, then the woman's skin is 'impure' and thus it will help it to be pure. The second word in the slogo is the adjective 'natural', where the schnarwiler brand asserts their second unique quality which is having products that are derived from nature. This characteristic is a key one since it is written on the foundation bottle. The adjective 'organic' is the last word in the slogo, yet it is the first word in the copy of the advertisement and it is also printed on the product's packaging. schnarwiler's slogo implies that their products are different from what other brands offer because their products are unique, healthy to use and safe for humans. In the make-up context, especially for the liquid foundation advertised, these qualities may make the product less harmful on the skin, yet, it does not make the concept of covering skin with cosmetic products healthy or natural. It is a clear example of consumerist discourses since having a clean face is arguably the natural thing for everybody, yet, women are encouraged to hide their skin under layers of products in different names, a foundation, or a concealer and so on.

On the bottom left corner, in a very small font, there is the name of the place where readers can purchase this foundation; its location and telephone numbers. Below that, there are two icons; one for Instagram and the other for Facebook, which

are social networks where readers can check the products and other customers' comments. The last line in this corner is the official Arabic website of schnarwiler which contains all the brands and products in details.

The last textual part is the text printed on the foundation's bottle 'schnarwiler NATURAL/ORGANIC LIQUID MINERAL FOUNDATION 705' followed by the net weight. The name of the brand; schnarwiler, is printed on both, the lid and the bottle and that shows how the brand would make its name in the cosmetics industry more present and arguably more memorable. The qualities that set the foundation apart from other foundation products according to schnarwiler, are the characteristics printed on the bottle NATURAL/ORGANIC which have been mentioned in other textual parts of the advertisement. The second line on the bottle specifies the type of foundation as LIQUID MINERAL FOUNDATION. Thus, it specifies the substance as liquid which is made of mineral and those two adjectives describe the noun foundation which is the function of the product. Mineral makeup according to ([www.webmd.boots.com](http://www.webmd.boots.com)) is made up of minerals such as iron oxides, talc, zinc oxide and titanium dioxide whereas traditional make up uses preservatives like parabens, chemical dyes and fragrances. Hence, this type of makeup is suitable for sensitive skin because it has fewer irritants, but it has no benefits. Therefore, the connotation that it is a healthy type of makeup is not totally true. Creating a connection between 'natural', 'organic', 'mineral' and 'foundation' may lead some readers to think of it as a healthy good product because of the connotations related to the three adjectives.

As seen in this chapter, the two adverts promote different foundations to two different cultures. The advert in ELLE ARABIA is written in English and the model

depicted does not represent or reflect the Arabic beauty standards or Arabic women's style. The woman depicted represent a foreign culture that Arabic women are aspired to look to which is patronising. It is an imposition of the Western culture on the Arabic readers. Such imposition of the Western culture affects the readers' identity through creating a pseudo-culture (Yazdanparast et al., 2018) which is discussed earlier in sections (2.2.1) and (2.7). The advert in ELLE UK defined natural look through a white, blonde woman which does not reflect the multiracial British society where women could have dark skin, eyes and hair. Thus, it alienates a group of women who may not identify with the ideal presented. In the next chapter, I will move from foundation adverts to analyse two adverts of eye products: a mascara and an eyeliner.

## Chapter 7

### Indirect Comparative Analysis

Lancôme 'Monsieur Big' mascara: (ELLE UK) vs. SEPHORA 'Nuit Kajal' eyeliner (ELLE ARABIA)



Figure 7. 1 Lancôme ELLE UK

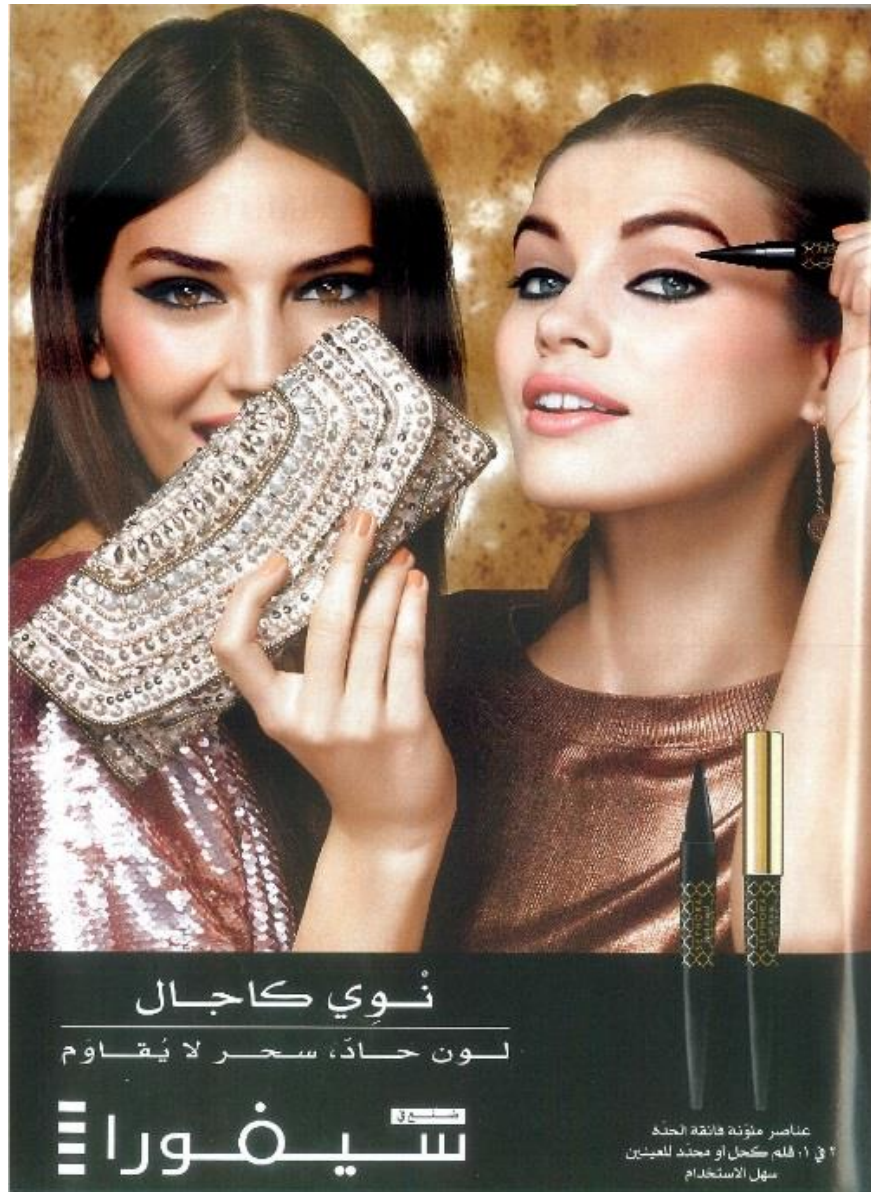


Figure 7. 2 SEPHORA ELLE ARABIA

### 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider two adverts for two eye products, the first is a mascara by Lancôme advertised in ELLE UK and the second is an eyeliner by Sephora advertised in ELLE ARABIA. Lancôme’s mascara advertisement comes from the ELLE UK, August 2017 issue. It appears on pages 18 and 19 of the magazine, in which it is preceded by an advert for ‘miu miu’ (an Italian high fashion women’s clothing and accessory brand), where the reader sees three women sitting on a doorstep wearing dresses and a

separate image on the side for a man playing music. The women's image is desaturated while the man's is monochromatic in black and white. Lancôme's advert is followed by a Dior perfume advert where there is an image of a woman and a perfume bottle on top of a natural scene of the sea waves. The image is very bright with high key lighting and the use of the gold and white colours. Appearing between two images of adverts, Lancôme's advertisement stands out through the highly saturated magenta used in the image as well as the huge size of the product, which is similar to the model's height. The product advertised is given a named persona through the noun phrase, 'Monsieur Big'; this is an 'image-creation' technique applied to integrate advertisements into 'social discourse' in a way that consumers can recognise (Beasley and Danesi, 2002: 12). In this advertisement, the image-creation is combined with another technique which is intertextuality in which 'intertext' refers to 'text which the participant perceive as belonging to other discourse, but which they associate with the text under consideration, and which affects their interpretation' (Cook, 2001: 4). In Lancôme's advert, the persona created for the mascara is inspired by a character in a fictional television show (*Sex in the City*), which would be discussed in the following section (7.2), that would be familiar to targeted readers who may therefore feel a connection with the product.

The product advertised by Sephora in this advertisement is made up of a neologism, blending together French and Hindi to make 'Nuit kajal', where 'nuit' is a French word that means 'night' and 'kajal' is a Hindi word for kohl. This is a black powder used in South Asia as a cosmetic, either around the eyes or as a mark on the forehead. Sephora's eyeliner advertisement in *ELLE ARABIA*, January 2017, appears on page 37 where it is preceded by the page titled 'ELLE fashion of the month' which is



themed 'for him –Havana'. This page consists of images of three models and different pieces of winter clothing and accessories which are supposedly the trend of the month such as trousers, jackets, sunglasses and shoes. The theme is 'Havana' where the colours of items range between brown, beige brown, copper brown and a hint of blue on a white background. Since this page is facing Sephora's advert, its colours are in harmony with the ones used in Sephora's image where there is brown, beige and copper brown as it will be discussed below in the object analysis. The page following Sephora's has an advert for the luggage company 'TUMI'. The page consists of four images of different places with the image of a plum TUMI suitcase on top of them where the whole image is framed with white space around it. Sephora's eyeliner advertisement appears between two pages with different scopes that are not related to women's fashion or beauty. Therefore, the image of the two women in Sephora's advertisement could arguably grab the readers' attention because it is more relevant to the targeted readers – women – than the images of suitcase or men's fashion. The advert also stands out because of the size of the image and the direction of the women's gaze which is towards the reader.

Both of these advertisements for cosmetics appear in the magazines where the neighbouring adverts are not related to cosmetics; arguably, this helps the adverts to attract the attention of female readers because they would feel that makeup is more relevant to them than the other products advertised. Another similarity is the presence of black colour in both adverts which is common in cosmetic eye products. It signifies the classic colour for eyeliners and mascaras; the deep black. In Sephora's advert, the black colour is in the product and it is used as a background for the text. The black is enhanced with the gold; giving the product a sense of luxury which is

reflected in the women's clothes and accessories. In Lancôme's advert, by comparison, it is in the product, the text and the jacket the woman is wearing. It is enriched with the magenta; this is a shiny colour that connotes romance rather than luxury. This choice of colour and its connotation in this context serves the theme of Monsieur big and the cupid's heart which connotes the theme of finding love and 'a match'. The black colour is foregrounded in Sephora's image to emphasise the sharpness of the colour as the unique characteristic advertised, whereas in Lancôme's image, the magenta is foregrounded to highlight the romantic theme and to make the packaging more memorable. The two adverts reflect different ideologies of femininity, where Lancôme's focus on looking attractive for the sake of finding a man, and Sephora's highlight friendship and using eye product to look nice in friends' gatherings. The visual information in both adverts dominates the multimodal text and thus the relationship between text and image here is that of an 'anchorage' value, (Barthes, 1977).

In relation to text, both advertisements use French words as part of the product's name 'Monsieur' in Lancôme's and 'Nuit' in Sephora's. Integrating the French language in the names of the products refers to the stereotype of French idealised beauty, whether as founders of companies or as marketers. The other connotation is the link people have in mind between French people and luxurious fashion which makes any reference to the French aspires glamour. The integration of the French language is arguably part of the globalisation process where the French language cut across the cultural divide in both the Arabic and English adverts, to signify the experience and allure of the French.

## **7.2 Objects analysis:**

Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework is used to analyse objects in the Lancôme's advert, and the modified quadrant is applied to the Sephora's advert.

Figure 7. 3 Lancôme Monsieur Big Mascara advert (ELLE UK) according to Kress's (2003) quadrant:



Name of the brand, the top of the heart with the mascara brush cutting through it like Cupid's arrow

**Given**

- The brand 'Lancôme' is treated as a well-known name.
- The concept of Cupid's heart is something readers will be familiar with. Hence, the reader might think about love when seeing this image; a connotation of this may be falling in love with a mascara or having the mascara that would help them to get them the love of their life.

**Ideal**

- The name of the brand and its origin 'Lancôme Paris' are depicted as ideal but it may not have the connotation of the

The upper half of the woman, the upper part of the mascara and part of the text.

**New**

- The woman leaning on a mascara represents a 'new' element to the readers. Seeing the woman with a human-size mascara holding the sign 'it's a match' is something readers are not used to see.
- The human-sized image of the mascara is new because readers are not used to seeing a mascara this size.

**Ideal**

- Readers would arguably wish to have the woman's look and someone to lean on.

<p>'ideal' which is something that readers would wish to have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The top of the heart and the mascara connotes that Lancôme mascara's brush and Cupid's heart are arguably things women look for.</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Bottom part of the heart, the brush holder and two images of the product under it</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The image of the mascara is familiar to readers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mascara handle is the practical, realistic way of finding love just as cupid arrow.</li> <li>• Real representation of the product is the achievable product that readers can purchase.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The lower part of the woman, the lower part of the mascara and the text</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The woman's skirt style is represented as a style that readers might not come across before.</li> <li>• They now know that she found her 'matching' mascara in Monsieur Big and her 'match' in love through it.</li> <li>• The text presents a new product with new features.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a 'monsieur' that is 'a match' is also something 'real' that targeted women could have, since the noun 'match' often refers to a potential romantic partner that people look for through dating.</li> <li>• The features mentioned in the text are real.</li> <li>• The website is a one way of having the mascara in real life, where the reader can check it and buy it.</li> </ul>

Figure 7. 4 Sephora *Nuit Kajal* eyeliner advert (ELLE ARABIA) according to modified quadrant:



<p><u>Upper part of the woman's face and the clutch</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This image of the woman covering her mouth represents a new element which could be the glamorous effect of applying the Sephora Nuit Kajal or the fact that this eyeliner could be used as a kohl pencil, by blending it to create the smoky look on this model.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women would arguably wish to have the look of this young woman who looks like she is enjoying her time.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The woman's face, hand and the eyeliner</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The woman holding the eyeliner is not a celebrity, and hence she connotes someone the reader might see in their daily life.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The woman represents a look that targeted readers would wish to have.</li> </ul>
<p><u>The top, the hand, the brand's name and text</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The name of the product is placed under the image along with the text mentioning the special features of the eyeliner and the brand's name. Therefore, they are all parts of</li> </ul>	<p><u>The product and text</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though products are usually presented as new, here, they are presented as given. This could be because readers would arguably be familiar with eye products.</li> </ul>

<p>the 'new' reveal of the secret behind the black eyeliner that the readers would look for.</p> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sephora (the brand) and Nuit Eyeliner (the product) are also real and if the readers wish to get the promised result, they can purchase the eyeliner product from the Sephora store, as is described in the text.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The eyeliner image represents the real tool which would help the reader achieve the ideal look on the upper section.</li> </ul>
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In the '*MONSIEUR BiG*' Lancôme mascara advertisement, the mascara is foregrounded through size. It is presented as being equivalent to a human's size, and indeed it appears longer than the woman in the image, as if it is a translation of the product's name 'monsieur big' (in terms of both the ideological expectation that men are taller than women, and the adjective 'big'). The size of the image connotes the effect of applying the mascara, in that it would give the 'big volume' mentioned in the text. The size of the mascara could also mean 'important' and that is clear through its central position. All of these connotations are arguably positive in relation to the idea of 'Monsieur Big' which signifies a man. The mascara is foregrounded through its central position where it stands in between the cupid's heart and the woman, arguably because it is the product to be sold. It also represents the mascara as standing in the way of the woman and love; where if she uses it, she will find love but, if she does not use it, she will not. In this sense, the mascara represents the means that would let the woman find love. Colour is another aspect that makes the big mascara stand out as the dark black attracts attention in the middle of the magenta, dominating the two pages. The black colour is the colour of the mascara's formula itself and it could arguably be a reference to masculinity since 'black' is the stereotypical colour for

men's products (Koller, 2008: 401). On the other hand, the magenta that is found in the background, the heart and on the packaging of the product, is the colour of the heart which connotes love, and as it is close to pink it typically connotes femininity (Koller, 2008: 401). The brand 'LANCOME' is foregrounded through repetition, as it is mentioned four times in this advert; two times on the product's packaging and twice on the white frame as part of the text.

The two images in Lancôme's advert are framed in black that is surrounded by white in a way that they look like Polaroid pictures. This could connote that these are photographs that have been taken to capture the moment where the mascara wins the heart of the woman and becomes her 'match'. Alternatively, it could represent a photograph taken of a couple, with the mascara as the man she has attracted and who now stands by her side. The advert represents women as weak and dependent, in need of love and for a male partner to feel complete and satisfied. It also reinforces heteronormative ideals of gender and sexuality. It presents the mascara as a 'solution' or 'part of the solution', which would be helping women to make men fall in love with them. It connotes that women need to wear makeup to make men fall in love with them because they are not good enough the way they look naturally. Hence, women would need to apply the mascara to fulfil that need and become regular consumers because the mascara to them is not a luxury anymore, but a necessity that fulfils the need. This underlying message is problematic because it affects women's self-esteem and confidence. It would arguably make women uneasy to go outside and meet people with a clean face, since such adverts imply that they do not look attractive enough without makeup. Therefore, they would not feel happy in their own skin, they would feel that they are deficient and hence insecure.

The name of the product as well as the execution of the advertisement arguably has a reference to popular culture and the television series 'Sex and the City'. The show tells the story of four women, in their mid-thirties who are best friends regardless of their different lives. The main character is Carrie Bradshaw and she is a columnist who is looking for a partner. The main male figure in this show is called 'Mr. Big' who ends up becoming Carrie's husband in the season finale. Thus, 'Monsieur Big' is the French translation of 'Mr. Big', and it implies that after trying different mascaras, readers would settle for this one, just like Carrie ended up with 'Mr. Big' who refers to a rich, successful man and a good catch as a husband in popular culture. The title is translated to French 'Monsieur', but the adjective 'Big' is still in English which could connote the global nature of the brand 'Lancôme' and the function of the mascara as a product. Its second connotation is that it refers to the targeted readers who are expected to have knowledge of both languages. The third connotation is that using the French title refers to the origin of the brand, which is French. Combining the two languages in the name of the product could arguably lead to making it more memorable due to its originality. The second reference to the 'Sex and the City' is the colour scheme used in the advertisement that relies on magenta and black, which are the colours used in the posters and covers of the series. A third similarity is the way the model is dressed in the image; a short, pleated skirt that attracts attention and a fashionable black leather jacket which resembles Carrie's fashion style. The last cue is the image of the heart and arrow, since Carrie in the show is hoping to find the love of her life. 'Sex and the City' is indexed here arguably for the following possible reasons. First, it could imply that the targeted women are those who are fans of the show and hence this reference would draw their attention to the advert and the product. This



could lead to them buying the mascara as a memento for sentimental reasons that it reminds them of the show. A second reason that is related to being a fan of the show is that women who watch it might share the same concerns and ambitions, and therefore would be looking for a partner just like the women in the show. Third, the reference to the show could connote that Carrie in the show or the actress in real life, Sarah Jessica Parker, uses Lancôme mascara. The online beauty magazine 'BYRDIE', (Barrionuevo, 2019), states that Parker said she uses Lancôme's Hypnose Drama mascara. Therefore, it seems that the advert is drawing on the link between Lancôme's mascaras, 'Sex and the City' and Sarah Jessica Parker to address certain women with a shared background, age group and concerns in order to create a theme of 'finding love' through consumption of cosmetics.

Lighting is used to give texture to surfaces such as the smooth heart and mascara tube, whereas the skirt and jacket are rough. It also gives the items a three-dimensional effect and hence they stand out from the flat page, with the heart looking like it is made of coloured glass. The mascara seems curvy and real as the result of the lighting directed towards it, which gives the impression that readers can touch it or pick it up from the page. Being close to the reader is arguably more engaging and attractive than a flat, distant image. Lastly, the skirt and jacket reflect the light, which shows the creases in them. The use of these opposing textures could arguably refer to the rough life the woman is going through since the text presents women in a state of looking for a partner 'meet monsieur big, forget the others', which arguably presents single women's life as difficult because they go through the dating phase where they 'meet' people in hope to find 'a match'. On the other hand, the smoothness of the heart signifies the love and its effect, which could be found by applying the smooth

mascara. The colours magenta, pink and red are analogous. Black is used in the mascara packaging, the leather jacket and the text, whereas the white colour is found in the top the woman is wearing, the sign she is holding and the frame surrounding the advertisement. Therefore, these neutral colours, black and white, are used as either a frame, background or text colour. Colours are highly saturated especially the magenta. Saturated colours give warmth to the image; in this advertisement, the colours surround the name of the product on the packaging which makes it the only colour other than the black of the product. Thus, it makes the product seem alive, like the magenta in the heart, and attractive, like the woman.

The woman in the image is an American model, as mentioned earlier, who is in her early twenties. She represents young women looking for 'a match'; whether it is in makeup or in their romantic life. She is depicted in a medium shot: most of her body is visible in the image, except for her legs and feet. There is nothing around her except for the mascara and in the other frame, there is the heart. Hence, she is in an abstract setting that is not limited to a certain place or occupation, making the advert targets more women who may feel like they identify with her. She has a medium tan skin and light brown hair. She resembles European and some British women and that makes it easier for targeted women to feel like they can use the same product she is using because they share her facial features, hair and/or skin colours which arguably makes them feel that it is possible to find their 'Mr. Big' just like her.

Looking at the woman's face, readers would arguably notice her eyes since she is looking at them and her mouth because she is tilting her head up and thus her lips are the closest to the camera. She is looking from under her lashes, which are heavily

applied with the 'big volume' of the mascara. Thus, through her outfit and mascara, the woman is presented as wanting to look attractive to 'meet' 'Monsieur Big' as mentioned in the copy of the advertisement, where 'Monsieur Big' would make the reader 'forget the others'. As the result of her finding her own match in 'Monsieur Big', she looks uninterested or indifferent. It could be that she is even smug for being able to find her 'match'. Thus, Lancôme are addressing women who are looking for 'a match', who want to look attractive and find love. Hence, it links social status to beauty and proposes the mascara as a solution or replacement. The woman is wearing a white top with a black leather jacket over it, in which this combination is in harmony with the white sign she is holding and the black ink or mascara used to write on it. It looks like it has been written with the mascara because it is not tidy, but dark and the font is thick which could be the effect of the mascara's volume on paper since it makes lashes look 'bigger'. It also shows that 'Monsieur Big' is big enough to be used on signs. The matt black jacket reflects the pink lighting and in this way it resembles the 'Monsieur Big' packaging. Her nail polish and skirt seem to have the same colour: red. The red skirt works as a part of the background used for the sign, along with black, white and magenta. The red skirt arguably attracts attention to the text below it because the colour 'red' in the image is shiny and the sharp end of the skirt work as a line separating elements on the image. Since 'volume' is related to thickness of hair, the woman's hair and eyebrows have volume and thus 'Monsieur Big' is 'a match' for her in this aspect by giving her eyelashes 'big volume' that matches her natural hair. The woman is leaning on 'Monsieur Big' as to signify that the readers can count on this mascara as if it is a friend which will not let them down, by giving their eyelashes extra volume. This connotation is problematic because it indicates two needs in women.

First, a woman needs to lean on a man who will not let her down which arguably shows women as weak, fragile and dependant. Second, women need their lashes to have extra volume and hence this arguably creates a problem in women's confidence because their natural lashes do not have 'extra volume' that might be their tool of getting 'a match'. Thus, the ideologies implied in the advertisement are problematic because they imply that women need to work to improve their appearance to be good enough, 'Women are never appreciated,..., just the way they are' (Ringrow, 2016: 111). Men, on the other hand, are not subjected to such measures in the media. Only women are supposed to change the way they look to fit the media's changing beauty standards.

Lancôme's advertisement promotes the product, 'Monsieur Big', in a frame where it is personified as a man; 'Monsieur' who provides love, because there is the Cupid heart. The readers would arguably 'meet' 'Monsieur Big' and then 'forget about the others', which connotes that he will be the one they will settle for, just like Carrie in 'Sex and the City', where she ended up marrying 'Monsieur Big' after trying to find the right person throughout the seasons of the series. This fits the Westernised culture of love and relationships, where women are often represented as trying to find 'the one' by dating many 'others'.

As a mascara, 'Monsieur Big' would arguably make the reader fall in love with it through the mascara brush, which resembles the arrow in the heart. It will make readers forget other mascaras if they try '*Monsieur Big*' because it provides volume: 'lashes look up to 12 x bigger'. There is an emphasis on women wanting to have bigger lashes which make their eyes look bigger; by creating more open, larger eyes, the

mascara would arguably make women look more innocent, child-like and youthful. Women are given a template that defines ideal femininity from the advertisers' point of view where women are expected to have childish-looking eyes to enhance their acceptance as eligible partners. Childish features seem to be portrayed as desirable through women depicted in magazine advertisements. Hildebrandt and Fitzgerald (1978: 159) describe those features, 'Prominent facial features include a short face in relation to a high and protruding forehead, large eyes placed in the middle of the face, rounded cheeks, and a small nose, mouth and chin'. Cunningham (1986: 925) investigated the relations between female facial characteristics and attractiveness, the results showed that 'Positively correlated with attractiveness ratings were the neonate features of large eyes, small nose, and small chin'. The hegemonic discourse of femininity in this advertisement creates a need for a relationship that is fulfilled by a man that the woman can lean on, but in this advertisement, the product is something that women can control and get on their own, unlike getting the right 'Monsieur'. This is similar to Lazar's (2006: 510) findings in her studies of postfeminist discourses in advertisements where she discusses the representations of power femininity in advertisements, where women are given the agentive power to take control of their bodies to look beautiful, in which this 'agentive power is directly tied to consumerism'. Lancôme's mascara is promoted as giving volume to lashes; linking that concept to the effect of having the person who 'matches' could arguably promote that ideology that men give women 'volume' or 'value' (or at least that it is necessary to find a 'match'). Therefore, targeted women are arguably treated as in need of someone or something to boost them. Such a type of discourse could affect women's self-esteem since they are judged to be incomplete or lacking something and thus need to engage in

consumerism in order to fill the gap. Readers could be more attracted to the product because they were supposedly attracted to the man that the protagonist loves in the show and having this mascara could be for the emotional effect.

In Sephora's advert, the image of the two women is foregrounded through size, since it covers most of the page. Thus, unlike Lancôme's advert, the women are more salient than the product which could refer to the importance they are given, or the effect of the eyeliner rather than the eyeliner itself. This could arguably reflect a sociocultural difference in the focus of the readers, where English readers focus on the tool that would give them the result advertised, whereas Arab readers focus on how the result would look on them. 'Cognition in Eastern adults is often more relational and in Western adults is more object focused.' (Kuwabara and Smith, 2012: 20). The lighting is also employed to make the women's image more prominent, because it highlights the hair, the skin, the eyes, as well as the pencil eyeliner, the tops they are wearing and the clutch bag. The lighting creates volume and texture and it helps make objects look three dimensional, which would give the impression that it is not an image but real and we are at the same place as the two women. The colours used are neutral and resemble pigmented eyeshadow palettes with the glittery beige, pink, gold and copper colours that are present in the image. This could be because such eyeshadows are usually linked to glamorous events and luxurious looks, which is the stereotype drawn on in the advert through jewellery and accessories and the mix of black and gold.

The colours are of medium saturation and thus there is a soft effect to this advert, unlike the high saturated colours in Lancôme's advert which catch viewers off-

guard (Stoppee and Stoppee, 2010). The women, who are in their twenties or early thirties, are depicted in a close shot since the viewers can see the upper part of their bodies and their heads. The women are depicted in an abstract setting where there is no furniture or other objects that belong to a specific setting, except for the clutch and the eyeliner. According to Machin and Mayr (2012: 50), depicting people in a setting that has no objects enhances the function of the image to deliver a message. The lighting is used in this image to create highlights on the women's eyes, lips, clothes, nail polish and the clutch bag. Highlights is a technique used to create 'visual excitement' for the viewer (Stoppee and Stoppee, 2010). The glamour and charm in the earrings and the sparkly clutch signify their style, demanding others' attention by standing out with shiny accessories and eye-catching makeup. Moving to the lower part, readers will see the women's glittery and shiny tops, the image of the product and the text on the matte black background.

The women in the image have a medium tan skin and dark brown hair. The brown hair and eyebrows would emphasise the darkness of the black eyeliner. They resemble Arabic women because of their hair colour, brown eye colour and facial features which may lead targeted women to identify with them and look forward to getting their look. When the reader looks at these women, they will see that they have full, neutral makeup where there is no striking colours in the choice of lipstick and eyeshadow and thus the eyeliner is the most dominant cosmetic product applied. This makeup style is typical for Arabic women, because the most important product they use is the dark black pencil eyeliner which is similar to the product advertised here; most of the women cover their faces when they are outside their homes, except for their eyes for religious reasons. In Arabic literature, too, poems stress the beauty of

women's eyes where 'big' and 'black' eyes are admired and likened to the eyes of the gazelle (Alharthi, 2010). I will talk about this in depth in the textual analysis of the advert. Therefore, Sephora is targeting Arabic women through advertising to the Arabs their own beauty concepts; by doing so they are appealing to their target market. On the other hand, from the consumers' view, this might work, because it suits them and encourages women to embrace their own identity, rather than adopting a globalised one. Lancôme's advert, on the other hand, addresses the target market by depending on the Western concept of finding a match through dating where the product would arguably help British women in this aspect. According to Sephora's websites, this product is available in the Sephora Middle East website, but not the international one. Thus, it is inspired by Arabic beauty standards and is produced for the Arabic market. The black of the eyeliner is very intense, which proves the text description of the product's feature as being a 'sharp colour', which is mentioned twice. The length of objects and lines seem to create unity and coherence in the image to draw the attention to the eyeliner. Length is expressed through the hands, fingers, neck and the image of the eyeliner at the bottom of the advert. Lines, on the other hand, are present in different types; curved and straight. Curved lines can be seen in the eyebrows, the eyeliner around the eyes, and the beads on the clutch, whereas the straight lines are visible in the brown top the woman is wearing, under the product's name and in Sephora's logo. This relates to the function of eyeliners, to draw lines. The concepts of length and the presence of lines may also connote the longevity of the product.

The woman on the right side, represents women who are in their twenties or early thirties who apply classic Arabic makeup which relies heavily on black eyeliner as a part of getting ready to go out for the evening. She is wearing glittery metallic clothes



and jewellery that sparkle under light and draw attention connoting that she is going to a party. Thus, it is an activity and a ritual that women know well; preparation before going outside for social gatherings. This advert shows a pair of women rather than one on her own as in the mascara advert. It could refer to the culture's expectations, that women should wear makeup when they are around other women in social gatherings because men are not present. In her article about the Middle Eastern beauty market, Grubow (2010: 20) states that 'Beauty regimens serve as a common reason for women to gather, and ceremonial traditions such as weddings, funerals and engagement parties require significant preparation'. Another possible connotation is that it shows women's social need to be accepted by their peers, and hence, they try to look glamorous. The woman is blue-eyed, an uncommon feature among Saudi people, yet few do have blue eyes. Hence, this could be a way of presenting a globalised ideal beauty through the image of a woman who looks Caucasian and can be Middle Eastern or European. On the other hand, it is common to see women wearing lenses and thus they would feel that this eyeliner would look good with their coloured lenses.

The woman is wearing gold earrings; we can see one of them next to her hand that is holding the eyeliner, with her hair as a background. It resembles the golden pattern and print on the black packaging of the eyeliner, in the sense that both look delicate and have a dark background. Gold is usually associated with richness and glamour. Her lips are parted, revealing white and healthy teeth, signifying her good health and beauty; these are qualities related to beauty, youth and femininity. Her slightly parted lips show her willingness to share her secret; she is holding her eyeliner to show readers that they can get the look she has if they use this eyeliner. Her hair is swept back in a bold style making a statement about her daring personality which

relates to her being the one who tells the secret of *Nuit Eyeliner* by holding it. It also allows the viewers to see her face clearly and focus on it rather than being distracted by her hair, as with the woman on the left side. She is wearing a peach lipstick that matches her nail polish, and a metallic bronze, short-sleeved top. The shiny metallic colour has arguably different functions in this image. It reflects the light directed at the woman and thus it makes the image look brighter. The shiny top resembles shiny metals that are associated with money, and the gold colour which is 'glamorous' and 'irresistible' just like the eyeliner is presented as being. Bouvier (2018: 199) states that 'shinier, silkier fabrics can suggest luxury, glamour, sensuality', and this is the case here. It looks as though the top is made of a synthetic fabric that fits the body and is not overly delicate, possibly connoting the product's durability.

The woman on the left side, who is holding the clutch, has light brown eyes that are directed at the readers, and under her image there is the names of the product and the brand as well as text: (*Nuit Kajal*, Sharp colour, irresistible glamour. Made in Sephora). The woman is covering her lips with the clutch, but readers can tell that her lips are parted because they see the corner of her mouth; the choice to hide the lips connotes that she has a secret. Her hair is parted and some of it is covering her face; it could be that she is shy or hiding her face as she is hiding her mouth. It could also connote revealing the secret of her eyeliner. She is wearing a metallic rose, short-sleeved sequined top which sparkles under the light and hence connotes the charm and glamour of using the *Nuit Kajal* and that suits the social event or party she looks prepared for. Both women stand for the 'glamour' mentioned in the text through their eye makeup where the black of the eyeliner is the only deep and sharp colour, whereas the rest of the items – shining tops, earrings and clutch bag – have neutral colours.

Thus, in this advertisement, the hegemonic discourse of beauty and femininity ties the ideal of being glamorous to the application of dark black eyeliner and wearing shimmery clothes; this arguably limits the concept of glamour and beauty to the application of cosmetics and having a specific style. Of course, a 'glamorous' image can also be achieved through one's outfit and accessories; it is not essential to use cosmetics, though this advert presents it as such. This emphasis on glamour evidently foregrounds the idea that there are certain criteria or measurements for concepts related to women's appearance; for the targeted readers of the *Monsieur Big* advertisement, this is about finding love by purchasing and applying a mascara, whereas the *Nuit Kajal* advert suggests that using the eyeliner would make them look fashionable. Unlike the Lancôme advert, the Sephora one does not directly imply that it is men who women would attract by wearing the product, though it does still imply that women would wear makeup for the sake of others' gaze and complements. Thus, the language used in these adverts forces women to adhere to expectations regarding their appearance. Following the analysis of the women's appearance, the next section focuses on the relationship between the women in the adverts and the readers of the magazines.

### **7.3 The woman and the viewer**

The relationship between the woman and the viewer is analysed according to van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. The woman in Lancôme's advertisement is depicted in a medium shot where the readers can see her face as well as her clothes which would provide them with more information on her, such as her taste in fashion or her destination. Thus, due to the medium shot, the woman seems to be a little far from

readers because of the distance between them, though not far enough to be a stranger. Her distant position could arguably be due to the fact that she 'met Monsieur Big and forgot the others' as the text promises. Hence, she is content with 'Monsieur Big' by her side and readers can share this experience they see in the image by buying the product. The gaze refers to accessibility and demand (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Thus, the woman in Lancôme's image is depicted as being open through her direct gaze at the readers. Yet, at the same time, she looks smug and proud of herself for having found her 'match' and that she is posing beside 'it'. She presses the viewers to look at her and to take an action. By gazing at the text, she is arguably insisting that readers should get the mascara and 'meet Monsieur Big'. The copy provides a direction where readers can meet 'Monsieur Big' at the official website of Lancôme. From a vertical angle, the reader sees the woman from below which indicates the power difference between them, in which she has 'symbolic power' over them. It could be arguably because she is in a higher position since she has 'Monsieur Big'. Horizontally, readers see the woman's face from the front which signals her involvement. She is involved with the viewers as well as the mascara 'Monsieur Big'.

In Sephora's advert, the women are presented in a close shot which would make them closer to the readers than they are to the model in Lancôme's advert. They are both looking directly at the readers, which refers to accessibility and demand according to Machin and Mayr (2012). Thus, the direct gaze connotes that they are accessible to the readers and thus readers can feel close to them. Both women in the image demand that readers look at their eyes, at the eyeliner and at the brand's name under the image, unlike the woman in Lancôme's advert, where eyelashes are not the focus but her upper body as a whole. The woman on the right side of the page is tilting

her head to the side, which is presumably to apply the eyeliner she is holding in her hand, yet her eyes are directed at the readers which connotes involvement; the readers can see that she is applying make-up. The angle of the tilted face is similar between this woman and Lancôme's, where both of them hold their heads high. The woman on the left side of the image is facing the readers, and therefore it connotes her symbolic involvement as well. From a vertical point of view, just as in Lancôme advert, the woman on the right side of the image has her head tilted up a little which connotes that she is employing 'imaginary symbolic power' over the readers (van Leeuwen, 2008: 139). Thus, readers would look up at her as an idol. There is a mix between the tilted head and the eyes looking directly, which may signify that, even though she is powerful for having the eyeliner, she is still equal to the readers in the chances of getting this tool of power and allure. The other woman; on the left of the image, is at eye level with the reader and hence readers feel equal with her which makes targeted readers identify with her.

Representation of the women in the advertisements differs between the two due to a range of different sociocultural differences. In Sephora's eyeliner, the women are depicted in a close shot signifying their closeness to the viewers which gives the opportunity to feeling intimate and to sharing the experience. Lancôme's mascara woman is depicted in a medium shot that makes her slightly distant from the viewers. This difference in the distance between the woman depicted and viewers could refer to the difference between the two cultures, where Arabs have smaller personal space whereas North Europeans' personal space is larger (Hall, 1966). The Sephora woman is depicted with another woman – a person with whom she is close, such as her friend or sister who is using an eyeliner just like the main woman who is holding her eyeliner

in her hand. This image is typical of Arabic society where women gather in women-only events and parties; 'gender separation in the Middle East is a common experience, and women there tend to spend the majority of their time with other women' (Grubow, 2010: 20). As the Arabic advert reflects Arab's culture, the woman in Lancôme's advert is presented with 'Monsieur big' next to her, emphasising the Western theme of dating where readers can 'meet' their 'Monsieur big'. Both advertisements stress the effect of eye contact, whereby products such as eyeliner and mascara might enhance that communication and improve their social relationships by attracting eligible partners or friends. The Lancôme advert implies that mascara can make your eyes prettier through 'bigger lashes', which would lead you to get your match. Sephora's advert, on the other hand, implies that the Nuit Kajal is 'irresistible' and so is the woman wearing it.

The advertisements reflect different ideologies of femininity. In the English advert, it reflects a western ideology where women would arguably want or need to look attractive in order to be seen as appealing to men. The Arabic advert, on the other hand, is foregrounding friendship. It focuses on women's desire to look glamorous, without any mention of men, since women in Saudi Arabia go to parties where there are no men. Still, there is the underlying ideology that to fit in society and culture, a woman needs to wear makeup too. Another difference found in the construction of the adverts is that the English advert is based on the construction of a problem which arguably affects women negatively, whereas the Arabic advert has a relatively positive connotations since it does not present any problems.

#### **7.4 The products**

The product in Lancôme's advertisement is presented twice, once open and then closed. It also appears next to the woman on the right page as well as with the heart image on the left page. Presenting the product four times indicates the emphasis given and its importance. The two images next to each other represent the product as life-size. Those two versions of the product are presented on top of the heart and the black frame which gives the viewer a sense that it is popping out of the page over the frame. Hence, it looks and feels close to the reader as if she can touch it. The mascara is packaged in a matt black tube that has the brand's name written in magenta. The product's name is written in black over magenta, with a black brush inside it. The matt black could arguably signify masculinity of 'Monsieur Big', whereas the magenta symbolises the femininity of the product as it is produced to make women's lashes look 'bigger' with 'Monsieur Big'. The colour scheme of the product packaging is in harmony with the colours of the background, the heart and the woman. The brush of the mascara is zoomed in when it is used as an arrow through the heart which emphasises the concept of the 'match'. The shape of the brush indicates its function; to add volume through the fibres of the brush. The last image of the product is the largest, where the mascara is depicted in a man-size next to the woman. Thus, this mascara is too big that readers will not miss it; as the text mentions that when readers 'meet' 'Monsieur Big' they will 'forget about the others'. Maximising the size of the mascara arguably signifies its position in the cosmetics market, which also shows that it stands on its own and hence it is reliable. Giving a product human characteristics through size or embedded connotations like reliability and stability arguably implicates that women are in need of such qualities. Therefore, it shows that women are lacking in some aspect; in this advert, women are socially and emotionally incomplete without

cupid's heart and the 'match'. Thus, even if the reader is not in need of lashes that look bigger, they still need someone to love and rely on as this woman relying on 'Monsieur Big'.

The image of the eyeliner in Sephora's advert and the text below it describes the product in an arguably objective way since the image is depicted in life-size and the text just describes the uses of the product. There are two images denoting the product; the eyeliner with and without the lid, both being reproduced as life-size. There is also the product in the woman's hand. It shows the readers what the eyeliner looks like with and without the lid on it since there are four types of eyeliner: pencil, liquid, gel and felt tip. Thus, readers need to see the product without the lid to know which type is advertised. The product advertised is 'Sephora's Nuit Kajal', one of a line of eyeliners produced for Sephora's Middle East stores to suit the women in the area. The eyeliner is packaged as a kohl pencil that is all black with some Arabic geometric pattern and the name of the product in English letters 'Nuit Kajal' in gold on the black background. The lid, on the other hand, is painted metallic gold which shines as the light is directed at it, just like the women's eyes, lips and shimmery tops. The gold colour resembles luxury and lastingness which are qualities of the metal gold that are symbolically transferred to the eyeliner through the golden lid and the label. Thus, the colour scheme corresponds with the one used in the women's image, where the black is around the eyes and the metallic colours of the tops covering their bodies. The sharp cone tip of the eyeliner resembles the sharp corners drawn on the eyes' corners. It goes with the text describing the eyeliner quality as having 'sharp' colour. The choice of black colour, out of the rest of the colours available from Nuit Kajal is a logical choice because it is the classic colour for eyeliner and kohl in the Arab world, whereas the



rest of the available colours: blue, beige and brown are not as popular or suitable for Arabic women eye and skin colours. These choices reflect that the advertisers are considerate of their targeted audience and their cultural background. It also affects targeted readers' sense of identity, where targeted women would arguably be attracted to the advert and willing to try it without the urge of choosing a product that does not suit their perception of ideal beauty or that sell a whole different identity with the product advertised. The reflection of light on the black eyeliner pencil makes it stand out from the matte black background because it gives the impression that it is three-dimensional. The black colour is foregrounded through size because almost a third of the page is covered in black, which acts as a background for the products' image and the text as well. It signifies the colour of the product which is called in the website 'fascinating black'. The text is written in white.

Both advertisements present the product twice in parallel images where it is pictured once with the lid and then once without it. The Sephora eyeliner is pictured with the woman to show how easy it is used, whereas Lancôme's mascara is pictured as cupid's arrow once and as a man in the other picture. Sephora's depiction of the product is realistic and informative which is the norm in Arabic advertisements in which the culture rejects exaggerations and treat them as deception (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989). Lancôme's depiction of the mascara, on the other hand, is symbolic and unrealistic. Thus, these differences represent a reflection of the sociocultural differences between the two societies.

## **7.5 Textual analysis**

### 7.5.1 Lancôme advert ELLE UK

The textual part of Lancôme's advert consists of the following:

LANCOME

PARIS

LASHES LOOK UP TO X12 BIGGER

It's a match!

MEET MONSIEUR BIG.

*FORGET THE OTHERS.*

NEW BIG VOLUME MASCARA

FIND OUT MORE AT [LANCOME.CO.UK](http://LANCOME.CO.UK)

On the product:

MONSIEUR *BiG*

LANCOME

The first text that readers encounter is on the top of the left page, which is the brand's name 'LANCOME', written in a very large font, capitalised and emboldened to connote the stability and reliability of Lancôme. It is written in black over the white background where the black resembles the black of the mascara. Under the brand's name, there is the place of its origin; the proper noun 'PARIS', capitalised, yet written in a normal font. These two lines work as a title at the top of the frame where the heart and the product are portrayed. The second textual part on the left page is 'LASHES LOOK UP TO 12X BIGGER', written in white on top of the magenta of the heart. It is capitalised but written in a small font that is very thin and positioned in the middle between the two brushes of the mascara where the one below is presented as in real size and the one above is much bigger. This could signify the difference between the

lashes before and after applying the Monsieur big mascara where they would look twelve times bigger. The small white font arguably symbolises how the lashes would look without having this mascara on, they would be barely visible since this piece of text is the smallest on the advertisement. Employing font, image and text to maximise the importance of having bigger eyelashes would arguably affect targeted women's perception of the importance of having big eyelashes as being crucial and effective on real life relationships. The sentence starts with the noun 'lashes'; the part of the woman targeted in this advert that should be treated and improved to have a better look. It is followed by the phrasal verb 'look up' indicating the effect of the mascara on the lashes; that it would make them 'improve' which is more effective than 'seem' which connotes 'giving the impression' or 'appear' that means 'be visible'. Then, the preposition 'to' expresses the result of applying the mascara, where the lashes' volume would arguably increase twelve times '12x' and be 'bigger'. The choice of writing the degree of improvement as a number and a sign is arguably more effective because it is easier to notice and understand. The adjective 'bigger' is a comparative tool which is a grammatical persuasive technique used to grab attention of the readers (McLoughlin, 2000).

On the right page, the exclamatory sentence 'it's a match!' is the first text that would be most likely to grab readers' attention first since it is written in black on top of a white sign that the woman is holding in front of her. The sign stands out through the white colour in the middle of the magenta shades and black. This is written in small letters, unlike the rest of the text which is capitalised. It has also been made to look as if it is handwritten, not typed, as if the woman wrote it using the super mascara next to her because the edges are not smooth and they are slightly smudged. The use of

this handwriting could be employed to make it a personal message that the woman wrote for the readers. Thus, it would be more intimate, due to it being informal, which makes the woman closer to the readers and hence they would arguably look at her note and be affected by it. It also shows the 'volume' and the 'colour' of the mascara. The sentence starts with the contraction 'it's' referring to 'Monsieur Big' as 'a match'; which is a noun phrase describing the product. The noun 'match' is a homograph that has two connotations. It connotes that this product is the right one for the eyelashes and it is suitable for the woman in the image. By sharing her opinion and experience with Monsieur Big, the woman is arguably telling the readers that it would be 'a match' for them as well; it would arguably suit them. The second connotation is that 'match' refers to a person who is eligible for marriage and a person to fall in love with. In this sense, 'Monsieur Big' would be the means targeted women should arguably use to 'meet' their 'match', or the mascara 'Monsieur Big' resembles the 'match' itself, meaning that the target audience might be so satisfied with their mascara that they will no longer need to find a person who is a match. Therefore, in all three interpretations; where 'Monsieur Big' is promoted as the mascara that fits, the mascara that would lead to the right person to date, or that it is the 'match' and hence no need for any other, targeted readers are encouraged to purchase the mascara. Arguably, purchasing the mascara would make them have a better look or solve a problem. As we have seen already with the previous analysis, it generates in the targeted readers an ideology of not looking good enough because their eyelashes are not 'big' which is treated as an imperfection that should be concealed and improved through the mascara. This is considered one of the advertising strategies employed to affect women's ideologies and perceptions (Coupland, 2007). The advert turns the

eyelashes into a tool of getting the right person 'match' and therefore, if women do not have bigger lashes their chances of meeting their matches would be arguably less since they might not be able to attract their attention with wide eyes and big lashes. The 'Monsieur big' mascara is promoted as enhancing the look of the lashes 'LASHES LOOK UP TO 12X BIGGER', and according to Lazar (2006) advertising products as tools of enhancing women appearance is a technique employed targeting women ideologies as well.

Below the sign, there is the verb phrase 'MEET MONSIEUR BIG', which is an imperative ordering and directing viewers to 'MEET' the new product 'MONSIEUR BIG'. There is a personification in using the verb 'meet' in relation to the proper noun 'MEET MONSIEUR BIG', which is an object – 'the mascara' – since 'meet' usually refers to encountering people. Personification is a persuasive device used to create a relationship, a link between the reader and the inanimate object as if it was a person whom the reader can 'meet' and consequently might 'like'. Under the first line of the copy, there is a second imperative that is italicised to emphasise its importance 'FORGET THE OTHERS'. The sentence starts with the verb 'forget' followed by the noun phrase 'the others'. This imperative follows the previous one, hence, meeting 'Monsieur Big' ensures that the reader would 'forget the others' in which 'the others' has various connotations. 'Others' could connote 'other mascaras' that readers would 'forget' and would not buy after they see and try 'Monsieur Big'. Following the implication that 'Monsieur Big' symbolises an eligible person to marry, 'the others' would refer to 'other suitors' or 'other men she dated in the past' as in the 'Sex and the City' dating culture. The use of imperatives is a structural persuasive technique (Woods, 2006). Imperatives are used in advertisements to push people into taking

action and buying the advertised product (Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013). Therefore, women are targeted as consumers.

The last textual part comprises of two lines written in black on the white background surrounding the black frame that contains the image. The first line states 'NEW BIG VOLUME MASCARA', where 'new' is written in a small font whereas the rest is written in a large and emboldened font. The new font indicates that the adjective 'new' is not part of the sentence, but a headline or a title introducing the sentence next to it. The adjective 'new' is highly connected to the concept of consumerism (Ringrow, 2016). It connotes that this product did not exist before and this is the first time readers would see such mascara. The sentence has a noun phrase describing a noun. The noun phrase begins with the adjective 'big' which is part of the product name 'Monsieur Big' and is represented semiotically through the size of the product next to the woman. The adjective 'big' describes the noun 'volume' which is the benefit that Lancôme's mascara is promising to give to the lashes. The word 'volume' is related to fullness and thickness which can be seen in the multimodal choices in the image through the woman's hair, the three-dimensional depiction of the mascara and the heart. The noun phrase 'big volume' describes the noun 'mascara' which is the product. The last line in the copy is 'FIND OUT MORE AT LANCOME.CO.UK' which is another imperative, directing readers to the brand's official website to explore more about the product in the advertisement. The sentence starts with the phrasal verb 'find out' an invitation to discover more information about the mascara. It is followed by the pronoun 'more' referring to the rest of details related to the product such as the price and specifications. Then, there is the preposition 'at' introducing the website.

Lancôme's advertisement employs some of the types of 'power femininity' discussed by Lazar (2006). There is the power that women can have a better look by making their own choices to have a good look 'Meet Monsieur Big' and have 'lashes look up to x12 bigger'. The second agentive power is through linking women to consumerism in order for them to feel confident which is represented here by the satisfied woman leaning on her mascara and relying on it. The sexual power is represented in the woman's pose and gaze where she looks like she is in control over 'Monsieur Big'.

### **7.5.2 Sephora advert ELLE ARABIA**

The textual part of Sephora's advert consists of the following:

Nuit Kajal

Sharp colour, irresistible glamour

Made in Sephora

*Under the product:*

Ultra-sharp colour elements

2 in 1: kohl pencil or eyeliner

Easy to use

The first line in the textual part of the advertisement states the name of the product which is translated into Arabic letters though it does not have any meaning in Arabic. It is emphasised and foregrounded through its position within the copy, the large font and being underlined. As mentioned earlier, the noun 'nuit' is the French word for 'night', whereas 'kajal' is a noun that has a Hindi origin and refers to black powder used as a cosmetic in South Asia. Thus, it is clear that though the product is

designed for women in the Gulf area, it has a multicultural references to it that are not related to the targeted audience. The native language of people in the Gulf area is Arabic and the second language taught at schools and used is English which makes the reference to French and Hindi unusual in that context. The French is used as a language related to luxury products as perfumes, fashion and so on. Hence, it could be used to give the product sophistication. It is also a reference to the brand's origin since Sephora is a French chain of cosmetics stores. Hindi, on the other hand, could be employed as a reference to the Indians who, as ancient Egyptians and then Arabs, are known to use Kohl or Eyeliner. Sephora focuses on making the readers know the name of the product by writing it in Arabic letters even if it has no meaning in Arabic, though there is no guarantee that targeted readers would recognise this as the name of the product.

The second line in the copy is 'Sharp colour, irresistible glamour' which introduces the supposedly special feature of the eyeliner as well as its effect. The first part is the noun phrase 'sharp colour', in which the adjective 'sharp' describes the quality of the eyeliner's colour as deep and rich. The adjective 'sharp' is not usually used to describe colours in Arabic, more usually being used to describe the texture of the edges of an object. Thus, it brings to the readers' minds the sharp ending of the eyeliner presented in the image. Sharpness of a colour may connote that it is intense since a black eyeliner's colour should be as dark as possible with no hints of grey. Therefore, the emphasis on describing the noun 'colour' and mentioning it as the feature that would arguably set their product apart from the rest, the advertiser introduces it in a large font and at the beginning of the copy. The second noun phrase 'irresistible glamour' mentions that there is 'glamour' related to Nuit Kajal eyeliner,



whether it describes the eyeliner itself or the effect it would give women after applying it. This noun 'glamour' is modified as being 'irresistible'; it could refer to the appeal of the eyeliner, where the readers will not be able to fight the temptation of buying it, or it could refer to the 'irresistible glamour' women would have over people because they applied the eyeliner. In Sephora's image, readers can see two women, one with the eyeliner in her hand and the other keeping her company and presumably wearing eyeliner as well. Having the second woman next to the one holding the product could connote the characteristic that the eyeliner is 'irresistible' because both of them applied Nait Kajal to their eyes. Another connotation is that the 'glamour' is 'irresistible', in terms that no one can ignore its presence. Thus, the eyeliner is too good to resist using it and when applied to the eyes, it demands people's attention in a way they cannot resist.

The last piece of text under the women's image is the noun phrase 'Made in Sephora'. The adjective 'made in' is written in a small black font on top of a white rectangular background to indicate where is the place that this product come from which is 'Sephora'; the brand. The proper noun 'SEPHORA' is written in a very large font with the four rectangles stacked diagonally next to it, which represents Sephora's slogan 'Where beauty beats' though it is not written in this advert. The brand's name 'SEPHORA' is emboldened which connotes its stability. The phrasal verb 'Made in Sephora' denotes that this advertised eyeliner was prepared and produced by the brand 'Sephora'; not any other brand, since Sephora stores sell cosmetics from many brands. Using the phrasal verb 'made in' signifies the huge size of Sephora as a company and a store since it is treated as a country because their products are labelled 'made in', which is normally used with a name of a geographical place. There is also

another connotation which is that Sephora has its own members; customers who are loyal to it through loyalty cards by being regular customers.

The text under the images of the product starts with the noun phrase 'Ultra-sharp colour elements'. This phrase focuses on the colour, just as in the second line of the copy 'sharp colour' which emphasises the importance of having eyeliner with a clear dark black colour. Therefore, Sephora is stressing this quality in their Nuit Kajal. The compound noun 'colour elements' which refers to the part of the eyeliner that gives the colour is the equivalent of 'pigments', but because of the way it is translated from English to Arabic, it sounds less technical, yet clearer. Those 'colour elements' are described as 'Ultra-sharp' which is a compound adjective that contains the hyperbolic 'ultra', connoting the extreme sharpness of the black colour of the eyeliner. This is the second time 'sharp' is mentioned in relation to 'colour' in the copy and this repetition foregrounds the concept; as stated earlier, sharpness is a very important feature in an eyeliner memorable for the readers.

The second line under the product's image is '2 in 1: kohl pencil or eyeliner'. It shows the different functions or uses of the 'kajal' as it could be used as a kohl pencil that could be blended to create a smoky look or it could be used as 'an eyeliner' that creates winged lines. The first option mentioned is using Nuit Kajal as 'kohl pencil' a compound noun where the noun 'pencil' is modified as 'kohl pencil', so it is used for the eyes. The second use of the eyeliner is 'eyeliner' which is a mass noun that has the same function of 'kohl pencil'. The last line in the textual part is the adjective phrase 'Easy to use' which is an adjective that describes the quality of the eyeliner as user friendly since it is easy to apply; applying kohl or eyeliner is not always straightforward

and can lead to mistakes, and since 'Kajal' has a long lasting colour, some women may be scared of trying it if they are not skilled at it. The fact that the woman applying the eyeliner does so without even looking in a mirror – or, if the camera is intended to represent the mirror, while smiling and engaging with her friend – reinforces the message that it is an easy product to use.

Sephora developed this new product to be sold in the Arab countries, and choosing a product that is for the eyes, and in black is a culturally suitable choice. As mentioned earlier, describing the beauty of women in the context of Arabic cultures relies heavily on the description of women's eyes. There are many reasons, such as the fact that many Arab women cover their faces and show their eyes only for religious reasons, which makes the eyes the only part uncovered for other people to see. Another reason is that beauty of women in Arabic literature stresses the 'Black big eyes' that poets such as Kuthayyir Azzah and Majnun Layla compare their beloved women to, such as a gazelle, a doe or a deer (Alharthi, 2010). Alharthi (2010: 106) investigates how Arabic classical poetry represents the body of the beloved, where she says that the perfect woman was described as having 'languid gaze and kohl-lined eye' among other characteristics. According to Abu-Haidar (2001: 185), 'women felt ennobled to be compared to the gazelle or the oryx on account of their elegance or on account of the beauty of their eyes'. This advertisement focuses on women looking young and attractive, enjoying their time as well as their friends' company where they have 'irresistible glamour' as mentioned in the text, which is portrayed in the image through the way these two women are wearing sparkling tops and accessories. It is produced for the Arabic readers of magazines in a way that respects that culture since the image only shows women faces, hands and arms. Another aspect is that the image

as well as the text never mentions men; this is related to the conservative nature of Arabs. Ironically, in reality, the ideology of being 'glamorous' and 'irresistible' as a result of buying and consuming synthetic products would arguably affect women's self-esteem and identity in a negative way, rather than empowering them, because they might feel less acceptable and not good enough without these products. The type of language used in the two advertisements is different because of the sociocultural differences that exist between the two societies. In Sephora's text, the language is mostly informative. It indicates the characteristics of the eyeliner and its uses which is the way advertisements are structured in Arabic print media (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989). Lancôme's text is full of persuasive techniques such as imperatives, homographs and figurative language which is typical of English advertisements (Birch, 1962). The following chapter comprise of another indirect analysis but for a different type of products as it focuses on two adverts of lip products.

## Chapter 8

### Indirect Comparative Analysis

Bourjois 'Rouge Laque' lipstick: (ELLE UK) vs. Chanel Rouge Allure Ink (ELLE ARABIA)



Figure 8. 1 Bourjois ELLE UK



Figure 8. 2 Chanel ELLE ARABIA

## 8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider advertisements for two lipsticks; the first produced by the brand Bourjois, advertised in ELLE UK, and the second by Chanel, featured in ELLE Arabia. Bourjois's advertisement comes from page 68 of ELLE UK, June 2017. The advertisement includes one product: a lipstick called *Bourjois Rouge Laque* in three different shades. It is preceded by another advertisement for ELLE eyewear where there is a young woman wearing sunglasses and the text 'ELLE the Parisians' lifestyle eyewear'. It is then followed by a feature titled 'THE GIRL: summer with spirit'. This page consists of an image of a woman wearing an outfit suitable for summer and around that image, there are other pieces of clothing, which are suggestions on what to wear for that season such as sunglasses, tops, and shoes. Therefore, the Bourjois advertisement appears between two pages that focus on fashion, where white is the main colour and there is a model looking at the reader in each.

The most eye-catching elements in Bourjois' advert are the red colour and the woman's face. The red colour covering most of the page is the visual equivalent of '*rouge laque*', meaning 'shiny, red coating', which is the name of the product. The woman is busy; she is not looking at the viewers, arguably drawing the reader's attention towards the thing she is preoccupied with. Thus, the position of the advert attracts readers' attention to the Bourjois page in two ways. Firstly, the bright red colour that appears between two pale coloured pages and, secondly, the woman who looks busy enjoying her time, not looking at readers unlike the other two women in the surrounding adverts. The page consists of three parts: the image of the woman, the image of the products, and the text. The image denoting the woman occupies most

of the page and works as a background for the rest of the elements. The image of the products takes less than a quarter of the page and is positioned on the right side of the page. The text is divided into three parts which are placed vertically on top of the products.

The product advertised by Chanel in the November 2016 issue of ELLE ARABIA is *Rouge Allure Ink* lipstick. The advert appears on page 31. It is preceded by the editor's page, which is the first page of proper content following many pages of advertisements, so the advert would likely have a higher chance of being looked at. The editor's page discusses the origin of the lyrics of a traditional Palestinian song and then he explains how olives are part of culture and even fashion. The advert is then followed by a page titled 'ELLE fashion of the month' written in Arabic except for the name 'ELLE', and the theme 'must haves' which are both written in English. This page consists of images of different pieces of clothing and accessories which are supposedly the trend of the month such as handbags, shoes and jewellery. The theme in common between most of the items is the image of eyes and lips on the products. The Chanel advert appears between two pages with different scopes of focus where the white and black colours dominate. The elements that arguably draw attention to this advert in the context of its surroundings are the red colour covering the whole page, which is the visual reflection of the textual part 'ROUGE' and 'INK', along with the face of the actress Kristen Stewart, with her gaze directed at the viewers. Therefore, the Chanel advert position would get the readers' attention arguably through two elements: the matte red colour that appears between two mainly white pages and the pose of the woman who looks at readers demanding their attention and response. The advert includes one product which is the matte liquid lip colour '*Rouge Allure Ink*'. The page



consists of three parts: the image of the woman, the image of the product, and the text. The image denoting the woman's head occupies the whole page and works as a background for the rest of the elements. The image of the product takes a very small part of the page and is positioned on the bottom right side of the page. The text is divided into three parts which are placed below the woman's face, next to the product.

In relation to the position of those two advertisements, both appear in the magazine where no other cosmetic advertisements are presented nearby. The most striking similarity is the way the red colour is foregrounded by covering most if not all of the page in both adverts, and the presence of the woman that also dominates the page, especially in relation to the space dedicated to the products. This emphasises the presence of women and the effect of the products, privileging this over the image of the product itself; this suggests that seeing the lipstick on the women is more attractive to the reader than the image of the lipstick itself. Therefore, the presence of women in these two images is essential to the strategy being used in the adverts. Due to the domination of the visual information in the multimodal text, the relationship between text and image in both adverts is that of an 'anchorage' value (Barthes, 1977).

## **8.2 Objects analysis**

Kress (2003) quadrant is applied to Bourjois advert and the modified quadrant is applied to Chanel advert as can be seen below.

Figure 8. 3 Bourjois lipstick advert (ELLE UK) according to Kress's (2003) quadrant:



<u>The woman's face</u>	<u>The liquid lipstick colourful bubbles/ the bubble blower/ the brand's name/Text</u>
<p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She connotes someone the reader might come across in their everyday life, i.e. she is not a celebrity. She represents women who are in their twenties or early thirties who apply bright makeup, nail polish and wear bright, smart clothes; a ruffled, red, long-sleeved blouse.</li> </ul>	<p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bubbles connote that this product has the same characteristics as those bubbles: 'light in weight'.</li> <li>• The news that this lipstick is light and intense in colour is 'new' which presupposes that other lipsticks do not have these qualities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She is shown to be professional through her glasses and the hair style, yet attractive and vibrant through the bright lipstick, immaculate makeup and the bubble blower. This is a look that readers may aspire to.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers are expected to want a liquid lipstick that is light as those bubbles.</li> <li>• They may also wish to enjoy their time doing something less serious, just like her, as blowing bubbles is frivolous in comparison to her smart, official look.</li> <li>• The reader is encouraged to desire a lipstick that is light and intense in colour because it is depicted as ideal.</li> </ul>

<p><u>The red blouse</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stereotypical ideal of femininity, because a cotton blouse is made of light material and is seen as an item of women’s clothing while the red colour and frills are linked to a feminine look.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a red blouse with frills is something that readers can find and have in real life.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The product/Text/Hashtag/Social media and YouTube symbols</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name ‘Rouge Laque’ represents a new product for the reader with new characteristics.</li> <li>• A hashtag appears next to the symbols of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube which direct readers to all new information and images related to this new product advertised and mentioned in the hashtag. Thus, it is an invitation for readers to find new ways to discover the product and read people’s feedback and comments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The product name and its samples represent ‘real’ elements as they are the tools to get the ‘ideal’ look.</li> <li>• The product can be purchased in real life to achieve the ‘ideal’ look.</li> </ul>
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Figure 8. 4 Chanel Rouge Allure Ink advert (ELLE ARABIA) according to modified quadrant:

<p><u>The shadowed side of her face</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The elements could be arranged in a way as if the advert targets English speaking readers where the supposedly 'new' is actually 'given' because it is illogical to move from light to darkness to reveal a 'new' element.</li> <li>• It could connote that celebrities have a private life that was not known before and thus it is new to the reader.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shadowed part connotes the privacy, or the mystery that women might look for as part of being attractive.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The right side of the face that is slightly less shadowed</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The side that people know about celebrities' life. It represents the small part of celebrities' life that they share with the public.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ideal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The eyes are looking directly in a powerful way demanding attention, this power connotes confidence and might arguably be what readers have seen and would like to have.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Text</u></p> <p><b>New</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rouge Allure Ink</i> is a new product advertised.</li> <li>• Chanel's website is not necessarily 'new', but the content is arguably written for an English reader.</li> <li>• The text 'let the red rule' could be considered 'new' as it symbolises the idea of making 'red lipstick' a trend.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name of the product is a tangible thing.</li> <li>• The website represents the shop where readers can check the product's shades and prices as well as other products and thus, it is 'real' and can be used to get the product and the look.</li> <li>• The text 'let the red rule' could be considered 'real' through the application of that lipstick.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The product/ Text/ the hashtag 'RED RULES'</u></p> <p><b>Given</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The product is supposed to be 'new', but the elements are arguably organised for English readers disregarding Arabic readers as mentioned earlier in previous analysis chapters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Real</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lips on the lower section connotes a 'real'; that is the way the actress looks in images and movies.</li> <li>• The product is a 'real' element that readers could see and buy in reality to achieve the 'ideal' look at the top part of the image.</li> <li>• The text in Arabic tells the readers that the attractive looking women are real and having such allure is achievable.</li> <li>• Red lipstick would arguably increase the visibility of women's appeal since 'red' is the colour that 'rules'.</li> </ul>

The central position of the brand's name makes it a combination of **'given'** and **'new'** which could be about the old and new products that Chanel have.

Machin and Mayr's (2012) framework is also utilized here to analyse objects in the images present in the advertisements. In the Bourjois advert, the woman's face dominates the page because it stands out through her white skin tone, which contrasts with the two bright, hot colours dominating the image: the red colour of the blouse and the fuchsia in the background. Readers will look at her face, which is full of amazement and admiration where her eyes are very open and her lips are separated, forming an 'ooh', though of course this also allows her to pout – emphasising her lips – and is suggestive of her blowing bubbles. Indeed, she is holding what looks like a wand from a toy bubble-blower, and the bubbles she has blown look like they are made of the liquid lipstick, hence the claim that the lipstick is as 'light as air'.

The colours are highly saturated which, according to Machin and Mayer reflects that they have 'the meaning potential for bolder passionate visual statements' (2012: 19) and 'emotional intensity' (2012: 205). Intensity is a characteristic the advert focuses on, since it is mentioned as a unique feature of the lipstick: 'intense colour'. Thus, such intense colour would arguably evoke intense feelings that attracts the readers to the image and the product. Machin and Mayer also find that the use of saturation is typical of advertisements' images, with a saturated red colour connoting sensuality (2012: 19). The saturated red in the lipstick the woman is wearing and her blouse and nail polish could connote that although she looks professional through the long sleeves and tied-back hair, she can still look attractive through wearing red. The red colour also reminds the readers of the name of the line of product advertised

*'ROUGE Laque'* which translates from French to mean 'shiny, bright red'. The lighting is used in this image to create highlights on the woman's eyes, the bubbles, the buttons and the edge of the lipstick bottles. Stoppee and Stoppee (2010) mention that the function of highlights in photography is to create 'visual excitement' for the viewer. Thus, the highlights in the image is the reflection of light on the bubbles and the woman's lips which draws a connection between the shiny lipstick and the shiny bubbles to emphasise that the lipstick is 'light as air' as mentioned in the text.

The woman, who is in her twenties or early thirties, is depicted in a close shot where the viewers can see the upper part of the body and the head. She is depicted in an abstract setting and thus, she could be anywhere since the background does not indicate any specific place. This makes the advertisement reach a wide range of women regardless of where they live or work and at the same time it shows that she can enjoy the lipstick anywhere. There are no specific objects around her except for the bubble blower which is in a different colour (blue) in the middle of the lipstick shades of red and fuchsia. The different colour makes it stand out and it has two functions. The circular tip of the bubble blower arguably works as a link between the rounded lips of the woman and the name of the brand which has two 'O' letters in it and hence it shows that to get those lips, women should go for BOURJOIS. The second function is to draw attention to the bubble blower because it is the tool that produced those shiny light liquid bubbles and in relation to the woman's shiny red lips, the reader needs the tool which is BOURJOIS liquid lipstick. It arguably shows that the ideal femininity is to have a balance between being smart and being fun, which is what 'Red BOURJOISE lipstick' would arguably help women achieve.

The woman's skin tone is pale white, her eyes are green and she has blonde hair, which is reminiscent of European women; white British readers may therefore identify with her but British women from other racial groups might not. Looking at the woman's face, the viewer would see that she is wearing full makeup; foundation, eyeliner, eyeshadow, mascara, blusher and lipstick. Her makeup details complement each other by creating a simple, yet glossy European look where the red lipstick is the most dominant product that reflects the line presented in this advertisement as 'ROUGE laque'; red, shiny coating. According to Ellenberg's (2014) article in (VOGUE), red lips represent one of 'The French Girl Beauty Rules'; this is relevant, given that the brand name includes the word 'PARIS' (its origin). The choice of 'red' for the liquid lipstick echoes the French adjective 'ROUGE' which is part of the name of the product, and the other English adjective 'intense', which describes the product's characteristic of having intense, extreme degrees of colours. She is wearing clear lens oversized round optical glasses with a gold metal frame, which surrounds her eyes and eyebrows; this creates a similarity between the shape of glasses and the bubble blower and the bubbles. The emphasis on roundness and circles in the glasses, the bubbles, the blower, the buttons and the woman's lips are significant; the circle shape represents infinity and smoothness, connected to the product being long lasting and smooth. The woman lips are also rounded; this shows that she has been blowing the bubbles and indicates her amazement at the way those bubbles look. It also shows that she is enjoying the lipstick; the bubble blower symbolises the lipstick applicator because both of them are tools. Where women need to dip the bubble blower to make bubbles, they also need to dip the lipstick applicator to apply and enjoy the lipstick.

This is similar to Lazar's (2006) findings about advertisements addressing young, modern women in Singapore, where she points out that:

part of popular postfeminist beauty empowerment is the giving of pleasure to oneself. Make-up, from this perspective, is not about looking good for men, but is about pleasure derived by women wearing it. (Lazar's, 2006: 508)

Thus, the advert approaches women by presenting the product as a tool that women can use to have fun and pleasure.

The model's hair is tied in a sleek, short ponytail which is a practical hairstyle that a woman may have for work. She is wearing a red, long-sleeved blouse which looks like it is made of cotton or silk fabric that is lightweight and soft, just like the liquid lipstick which is described as 'light as air' and the bubbles floating in the air. The lightweight fabric material symbolises celebration of life 'garments celebrating marriage, birth, and life are light and airy' whereas 'charismatic garments are heavy' (Barthes, 1990: 126). In this advert, the woman seems to be enjoying life while wearing this type of clothing just as she is enjoying the lipstick she is wearing, it is a part of the character depicted in the image. The material includes ruffles around the woman's neck and wrist, reflecting the popular style at that time; frills and ruffles were in fashion in Spring/Summer 2017. Cooper (2016) wrote an article in ELLE's Fashion Trends Online titled 'The Greatest Frills of SS17 Frill seekers, rejoice' in which she refers to the ruffles as a 'playful, feminine way of dressing'. Therefore, the woman in the image stands for 'femininity' through her makeup as well as her ruffled, red blouse. This dominant hegemonic discourse of femininity links the concept of femininity to a specific dress, hair and makeup style which arguably affects the identity of some women who would look at this image as a reference when they want to look feminine.



In terms of dress style, it arguably limits the concept of femininity to elegant or professional sophisticated women only. The depicted hairstyle, on the other hand, would not be a possible option for women with curly or African short hair, thus, arguably implying that such women are less feminine. Even the style of makeup might limit the range of women who would see themselves as beautiful because of the colour of the lipstick, since the advert implies that only red would make you look feminine enough. Hence, women of colour would have a different, potentially unpleasant experience when looking at the image in this advert because they might feel the lipstick colour is not suitable for them, or that the hairstyle is not a possible option. Even in relation to social class, women who come from a lower economic class may feel excluded looking at the professional looking woman in the image. Certain women may therefore be marginalised in this advertisement, then, it could make them feel that they do not fit in their society because they are underrepresented.

In the Chanel advert, the actress's face dominates the page; it is foregrounded through size. The actress's face connotes the charm and enigma of celebrities because she represents the Hollywood fame. The actress also represents youthfulness, since she is a young woman in her late twenties. She is well-known through her role in the movie *Twilight*, which is based on young adult fiction, where she plays the role of a human who falls in love with a vampire. The colour scheme is monochromatic because the viewers would see a single colour with different values and saturation. The colours in the image are shaded by adding black to the red and are less saturated than those of the Bourjois advert. The diluted colours suggest that there is 'something more subtle and measured' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 205). This is reflected in the muted colours and low-key lighting. The low-key lighting connotes mystery, which is part of

the 'allure' and 'attractiveness' mentioned in the text. The shadows created through the use of light 'convey a sense of three dimensional qualities' (Stoppee and Stoppee, 2010). Thus, it would give the viewers a closer look at the actress's lips. The lips are at the centre of the page, directed towards the reader. She is depicted in an abstract setting, through a close shot where the viewers can see her neck and head. The size of the woman's head makes her face look like it is real in terms of size. The second connotation is that since the head occupies the whole page, it arguably makes the woman look as though she is showing her lipstick to the readers to inspect it, close-up. It also signifies the importance of lips and lipsticks because of the central position.

The viewer would not be able to see the exact colour of the actress's skin, hair or eyes due to the fact that her image is covered with 'red' 'ink'; echoing the name of the product '*Rouge allure ink*' and shadowed with black and grey. Though the colours of the eyes and skin are not very clear, viewers can tell that she has dark hair and eyes which could be brown or black which arguably makes Arabic readers identify with her in terms of the hair colour, and at the same time, it suggests that red lipstick suits black haired women and brunettes. Her facial features are somewhat generic, because though she is American, her features can be that of a European, or a Middle Eastern. It is clear that she is wearing mascara and red lipstick, as in the Bourjois advert, two characteristics of makeup tied to French culture (Ellenberg, 2014), which are, therefore used to promote cosmetics, especially French brands. The result of such connotations is that women can embrace the French woman identity which is becoming an essential part of the red lipstick advertised and that could be achieved by applying the red lipstick and a mascara, just like the American actress in this image. Thus, it implies that by using the lipstick, women would arguably have the French

sophisticated look, or the feeling of sophistication and being stylish. Another implication of connecting red lipstick to French is the idea that 'red' lipstick is usually worn by French women and thus; whether to wear it to look like a French or not wear it at all because you do not desire to have that link to French depends on the viewer's reading of the connotation. Advertising the red 'rouge' lipstick as French connotes that all women wearing 'red' lipsticks are identified as having a French style/look, or French-loving people for adapting a certain colour of lipstick. It also advertises a European look. The swept-back wet hair look takes the reader to the 'ink' part of the text, because there is liquid on her hair which reminds the reader of the ink. There is a coordination between the red lipstick the actress is wearing, the red one packaged in the bottom right corner and the red all over the page which all works to emphasise 'ROUGE' and 'RED RULES' as stated in the text.

The actress's head is tilted a little towards the back resulting in her chin going up. The position of her head and the angle from which she is looking at the readers will be discussed in the following section. Her lips are closest to the readers and are slightly parted, which could connote her intention of telling the secret of her look to the readers as was the case in Dior's Foundation advertisement. Her hair is swept back in a wet look which is arguably a hairstyle that a confident woman would wear to make her face the centre of attention. This is a characteristic of the type of woman who the advertisers are presenting as daring to wear a strong colour like red as a lipstick. She would not only wear a red lipstick, she would flaunt it. Therefore, being bold and confident is part of being attractive and alluring. Thus, just as in the Bourjois advert, the ideal woman must have a specific feature which is limited to related characteristics. In Bourjois advert, the ideal woman should be feminine, in which

femininity refers to professionalism and sophistication. Chanel's advert, on the other hand, links the concept of allure and attractiveness to the characteristics of being bold and confident. Though her clothes are not clear, the reader can glimpse a pearl embellished top. This combination of the black colour of the top and the white pearls reflect the 'allure' and 'attractiveness' because of their associations in the world of fashion to luxury and glamour. Pearls represent a part of Chanel's fall/winter 2016-2017 theme (Foley, 2016), where pearls are integrated in many clothing pieces such as tops, bags, hats and gloves. Thus, it is a package of Chanel's modern French look, not only a lipstick, which they want the reader to embody. The personality Arabic readers are encouraged to look at as an ideal is that of a famous American actress who is adopting a European, assertive, rebellious and glamorous personality.

Conveying such hegemonic discourses of femininity assigns some personal and national characteristics to the image of ideal femininity. It arguably drives the targeted women to be less confident in their own identities, including their nationality, their personality and their taste in fashion. Linking 'allure' to the French language, nationality and style may arguably let targeted women exchange their heritage and traditional clothing style for that of the French for the sake of being 'attractive'. It arguably limits some women, who are shy for example, from wearing red which calls for attention. It may also make women feel that they are not attractive enough if they wear lipstick in shades other than red, or if they do not wear lipstick at all. In real life, attractiveness is not tied to a certain shade of lipstick or a specific personality trait. However, the discourse of advertisements continues to produce specific prototypes for femininity and beauty. 'In today's global environment, cultural ideas of beauty and attractiveness communicated and reinforced through mass media' (Xie and Zhang,

2013: 540). Thus, the western ideal depicted in the advert would arguably affect women's cultural identity. As in the Bourjois advertisement, this advertisement uses certain models and patterns as a global identity that suits every woman, falsely assuming and constructing homogeneity. The code mixing that combines the languages English and French, and English, Arabic and French shows that the adverts construct an ideal reader who is educated in more than one language.

### **8.3 The woman and the viewer**

The relationship between the woman and the viewer is analysed according to van Leeuwen's framework (2008). The woman in the Bourjois image is presented in a close shot and thus she is not far from the viewers. The woman's gaze is directed at the bubbles and not at the viewers, which connotes her detachment. But from the viewers' perspective, they can see her from the side which signifies that they are sharing this moment with her. It could imply that they share the liquid lipstick experience as well. The indirect look is interpreted as an 'offer' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) since she is offered to be looked at by the readers. Such indirect address is infrequent in magazine advertisements which usually shows people looking at readers to get their attention. Deciding to use indirect address goes against the norm as argued by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 126). In this image, it is an original way of getting the readers' attention to the bubbles of liquid lipstick because viewers would look at her but find her busy, thus they would be intrigued and look for the reason of her amazement. Vertically, readers see the woman at eye level, which indicates equality in power and thus readers may identify with her.

The actress in Chanel's advert is presented in a very close shot which connotes her closeness to the viewers. This nearness might be because they know her as an actress, which is ironic because they only know the roles she plays, not her. But this type of shot is utilised here to make readers get some sense of familiarity and intimacy, making it seem as though she is narrating the text in the advert (Machin and Mayr, 2012), and would help in making them trust the product's promise. Her gaze is directed at the viewers which is, according to Machin and Mayr (2012), a way of connoting accessibility and demand. It supports the function of the close shot by making the reader feel that the actress is communicating with them. It also demands readers' attention (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). She demands that viewers look at her face, her painted lips and at CHANEL printed in bold, white capitalised letters under the image of her face. She is depicted in an aggressive position that is softened by the slightly parted lips which indicate sensuality. The aggressive position arguably refers to the power that the red lipstick holds. It reflects the 'allure' promised, through showing how bold and confident the woman is. The parted lips could arguably connote that having such a powerful allure is combined with being attractive and sensual. Thus, the strength of character does not make a woman less attractive or less feminine. From a vertical point of view, the actress is holding her head up a little which makes her look as if she is looking down. This portrays her as 'exerting imaginary symbolic power' over the readers (van Leeuwen, 2008: 139). She has a powerful, upper position arguably due to her being famous; a role model and ideal. She is powerful because she is depicted as looking down because she is using the red lipstick which gives her 'allure' that makes her special and stands out, and consequently, look at others in this way. In this advert, 'red' gives her power; 'RED' is the best colour because it 'rules' and has

control, hence she is armoured with this red lipstick to dominate the space. Therefore, readers may look up at her as a role model to have similar power and confidence. Even though she is tilting her head which makes her look down, her eyes are looking straight at the reader and this may connote the power she feels or exerts while wearing the red lipstick. Thus, the viewers would arguably associate the image of the powerful woman with the red lipstick and hence feel the desire or the need to purchase this red lipstick and get this effect of having power. The implication of the advert is that women need makeup to feel powerful, and that without the application of cosmetics they would be weak. Depicting women as vulnerable in this way, where the lipstick is a tool of power, arguably represents women as weak and naïve, therefore in need of the product.

In both lipstick advertisements, the women in the images are depicted as close to the readers, though in Chanel's advert she is much closer. From a horizontal angle, the woman in Bourjois is detached because viewers see her from the side while in Chanel, the actress is involved with readers since she is confronting them. Both women are tilting their heads up which is arguably the best position to show the lipstick advertised. But their eyes are looking at different things. Bourjois's advert aims to attract viewers' attention through offer, whereas Chanel's does that through demand. From my point of view, I think women in adverts' images are participants or agents who promote the product advertised in one or both of the following: being an example, through 'offer', showing the results of applying the product or being a salesperson, through 'demand' whether it is done through direct eye contact or the language used imperatives, or personal pronouns.

## 8.4 The products

The second image in Bourjois's advertisement is located to the right of the woman's image, at the lower right side of the page where it occupies less than a quarter of the whole page. It denotes three shades of the product advertised which are reproduced as life-size. The product advertised is the Bourjois liquid lipstick '*ROUGE laque*'. It is packaged in a bottle that is painted in the same shade of the lipstick, so the viewer can know the different shades available of the lipsticks. The colour scheme of the products presented is similar to that used in the woman's image and the background because red/rouge is used in the blouse, the lipstick, the nail polish and the bubbles, and magenta is used in the bubbles as well. Peach is the least visible colour in the other elements, seen in the blush on the woman's cheek and slightly mixed with the fuchsia in the background of the image. Those three colours of lipstick could be the different shades of red 'rouge' that suits the different skin colours of women. This reflects how the brand's advertiser shows that they have in mind that targeted women come from different backgrounds and thus, their skin colours differ. Such choices on the behalf of the advertisement creator helps in making targeted women feel fine in their own skin and have the suitable shade of red for them. Nonetheless, even though there is ethnic diversity in the UK, the advertisers have chosen a white woman here, maintaining the dominance of white, thin, middle-class women and contributing to the marginalization of women from other backgrounds within British society.

The colours presented in the image are just some of the shades available; there are nine shades provided on the website. The black in the packaging of the bottle works as a border between the bottle and the lid. The colours are highly saturated,



which gives depth and warmth to the colours and the woman's appearance, and it echoes the characteristic mentioned in the accompanying text 'intense colour'. It also foregrounds the red colour in general and the lipstick especially as the main shade, and therefore foregrounds the line of liquid lipsticks named '*ROUGE laque*' which means shiny, red coating. 'Highly saturated colors tend to catch us off guard.' (Stoppee and Stoppee, 2010). Therefore, the high saturation of colours in the Bourjois advertisement is a multimodal technique that is employed to catch readers 'off-guard'. The name of the product is written in silver, on the side of the lipstick tube which shines through the red. The name of the brand, on the other hand, is embossed without adding any colour to the letters. Such a way of labelling the product with the brand's name connotes that Bourjois' packaging is well-known and thus it does not have to be written, since readers/consumers will recognise it. The last multimodal technique used is representation of text. The text is written in two colours on different backgrounds and hence, it is easy to read. The name of the brand 'BOURJOIS' and its origin 'PARIS' are written in white on top of the fuchsia background. The copy of the advertisement is written in black on top of white.

The second image in Chanel's advertisement is the product, which is situated at the bottom right side of the page, to the right of the actress' face. It denotes the product advertised which is *ROUGE ALLURE INK*; a matte liquid lip colour. It is reproduced as life-size in a red shade only, unlike the Bourjois lipstick which is presented in different shades. On the other hand, Chanel's lipstick is packaged in a transparent frosted tube allowing viewers to see the shade of the lipstick (red, echoing the text 'Rouge'), and a glossy black lid that holds the lipstick applicator. The glossy black lid resembles the wet black hair of the actress, while the red lipstick tube

resembles the red lipstick the actress is wearing and the red ink covering the whole page. The name of the brand is written in white on top of the black, as in the text where Chanel is written in white on top of the shaded red. The colour scheme used in this image is in harmony with the colours used in the rest of the image since it has black and matte red. The direction of light is the opposite, since the lipstick bottle is illuminated from the left side, whereas the actress' face is lit on the right. Muted and toned colours make the image darker, and darkness is associated with 'lack of clarity and the unknown' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 205). In this advert, 'the unknown' may be interpreted as part of the 'allure' which refers to being mysteriously attractive. The text is written in white over different backgrounds such as the name of the brand on the lid of the product, the rest is written on top of the actress' image and hence it is on top of shaded red which makes the white stand out.

The image of the lipstick in both advertisements is placed at the lower part of the page on the right side; which is to the right of the woman's image. Red and black are used in the packaging of both products; the 'red' is a major component since 'rouge' is mentioned in both adverts' texts, and the black is one used to break the red in the Bourjois' packaging and as a seal in Chanel's product. Though Chanel's theme is the allure through mystery, their packaging is almost transparent, perhaps connoting their transparency with their customers.

## **8.5 Textual analysis**

### **8.5.1 Bourjois advert ELLE UK**

BOURJOIS  
PARIS  
NEW LIQUID LIPSTICK

LIGHT AS AIR  
INTENSE COLOUR  
ROUGE  
Laque  
#ROUGELAQUE

The first text the reader will encounter is the name of the brand 'BOURJOIS' which is positioned on the top half of the image, next to the bubble blower, under the colourful bubbles and on top of the copy white box. It is capitalised and emboldened and written in a large font size which connotes stability in the brand's position in the industry. 'PARIS' is capitalised as well, yet it is not emboldened. It is written under the brand's name, thus it symbolises being the place of origin.

The first line of the copy, 'NEW LIQUID LIPSTICK' is written in black on a white background. It is an adjectival phrase where two adjectives describe the noun 'lipstick' which is the product advertised. The first adjective is 'NEW' the top word on the list of most frequently used adjectives in English and American television (Woods, 2006: 21). It attracts readers for the upcoming text and the product by introducing it as 'new'; it did not exist before and hence the readers may want to try it or be the 'first' to have it. The second adjective is 'LIQUID' which is the substance the lipstick is made of. The two adjectives describe the noun 'lipstick'; the products advertised.

The second line of the copy is 'LIGHT AS AIR', which is a simile where 'as' is used to compare the lightness of the liquid lipstick to that of 'air'. The simile is clear through the semiotic elements where the liquid lipstick bubbles float in the air. Focusing on this feature in the advertisement addresses the common issue of liquid lipsticks being quite sticky rather than light. Therefore, it claims that this 'new' product is 'light' in texture. The last line in the copy is 'INTENSE COLOUR', where the adjective 'INTENSE'

describes the extreme degree of clarity of the 'COLOUR' of lipsticks. This feature is also highlighted in the image through the highly saturated colours. '*ROUGE laque*' is the last piece of text on the page and is repeated twice, once under the copy and above the image of the products, and then on the side as a hashtag<sup>2</sup>. It constitutes the adjective 'ROUGE' and the adjective 'laque' which refers to a glossy coating. It is the name of the product and that is why it is repeated twice, to introduce the new lipstick and to promote the hashtag so people might share their experience of the product.

The first word in the text and the last two lines are written in French, whereas the three lines in the middle are in English. 'PARIS' is the same in both languages; its position under the brand's name and above the English copy therefore connotes the connection between the French origin and identity of the brand and the Englishness of the readers. The French text constitutes of the French family name of the person who made the brand international 'Bourjois', the adjective 'ROUGE' and the adjective 'laque'. The use of many adjectives e.g. (new, liquid, light, intense) is a technique used to give the product 'multiple-layers' of description (Woods, 2006: 21). The entire copy of the advertisement lacks verbs. Leech (1966: 154) explains that the lack of verbs is a characteristic of the language of advertisements, where grammatical rules are dismissed 'Advertising has furthermore developed its own disjunctive variety of English, in which verbs do not need to be used at all'. Furthermore, the integration of French, where half of the text is written in French despite the advertisement being positioned in ELLE UK implies that the intended reader is bilingual in those two

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<sup>2</sup> A hashtag is 'a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic', according to Oxford dictionaries.

languages (Piller, 2001). It could imply the socioeconomic status and education of the reader, reflecting the typical readership of the magazine and/or the ideal woman constructed for the readers. More importantly, it emphasises the French identity of the product which, at the same time, is presented to the readers to embrace. It is done in a way where the French language appeals to the targeted readers by working as a symbol of the stereotypical image of French sophistication as discussed in section (8.2). The strategy of integrating a different language, a symbol or a specific style related to a specific identity is used in many cosmetics advertisements such as Chanel's use of French language in the text of a British magazine and Schnarwiler's use of the Swiss flag as well as English text in an Arabic magazine (Chapter 6). It is part of the dominant discourses of femininity found in advertisements of women's products. It arguably connotes that well-educated women use this type of beauty product. Thus, the identity of the targeted reader is that of a professional, bilingual woman who comes from a certain social class who would arguably use makeup as a source of joy or power.

These types of ideologies embedded in advertisements addressed to women has many effects. They make targeted women admire foreign identities which they can get by buying the products advertised. Thus, ways of moulding women into marketing ideals does not stop at changing skin colour through foundation (as shown in Chapters 4 and 5), but goes beyond that to shaping their languages, preferences and cultures. It all aims at creating a global identity where women are consumers. Looking back at the image of the woman in Bourjois, it has several connotations related to the construction of ideal woman identity. It encourages women to be French looking through hairstyle and makeup, sensual through the use of red colour in clothing,

feminine through the frills in the blouse, bold through highly saturated colours used in clothing, lipstick, nail polish, and playful through wearing frills and playing with bubbles. Presenting the ideal woman as having all these qualities puts pressure on women because it limits femininity into a template that does not fit or represent all types of women. Relating ideal femininity to a certain skin colour, nationality, social or economic class arguably forces women who are ignored to change their appearance to feel accepted as feminine. Therefore, many women are at disadvantage because of their colour and/or class.

### **8.5.2 Chanel advert ELLE ARABIA**

Textual part of Chanel advertisement:

The sign of your attractiveness (written in Arabic)

ROUGE ALLURE INK

CHANEL

CHANEL.COM #REDRULES

Let the red rule (written in Arabic)

The first piece of text in the Chanel advertisement is the noun phrase written in Arabic 'The sign of your attractiveness'. It introduces the main quality that the product would arguably offer to the consumers, being attractive; the 'allure'. Thus, when a woman wears the red lipstick, she would arguably attract the attention of others, just as this red page in the magazine does. The noun phrase 'the sign' connotes that the product would arguably make the woman who applies the product special because she would have a 'sign' that would make her stand out. It is followed by the prepositional phrase 'of your attractiveness'; where the unique quality is 'attractiveness'. It begins with the

preposition 'of' and then the possessive determiner 'your' which personalises the following noun 'attractiveness'. The use of the pronoun 'your' creates a synthetic personalisation (Talbot, 1992; Fairclough, 2001) that creates a relationship between the text and the audience. The choice to link 'attractiveness' to having a 'sign' implies that it is a tangible characteristic related to looks only. It excludes that idea that women can be attractive because they have a nice personality or because they are compassionate, or any other characteristic that would make them attractive to others. The use of the possessive personal pronoun in this way connotes that the reader is arguably attractive as she is, but the red lipstick would be the 'sign'; the thing that would draw people's attention to her beauty. Such a way of addressing the readers as individuals implies that each one of them has her own charm but the cosmetic product would make that visible to others; this has two possible connotations. It could be interpreted that Chanel is emphasising the concept of the natural, personal beauty where the red lipstick only highlights it. The other interpretation is that if women do not apply the red lipstick, their 'allure' would not be seen or would not be clear to others. Hegemonic discourses of femininity continuously stereotype 'attractiveness' and link it to certain cosmetic products such as the 'red lipstick'. It makes it difficult for some women to feel good about themselves, feeling less attractive for not liking red lipstick. Though it is comprised of five lexical items in English, 'The sign of your attractiveness' is only two words in Arabic and it is the only clear visible Arabic text. There is another phrase written in Arabic, but it is situated on the margin, and it is barely visible due to the small font size. This could arguably connote that this piece is intended to be read by those readers who are intrigued by the image and are interested enough to look at the margin and try to read the small font, because it says

'let the red rule' which is an imperative message that calls for applying red lipstick. It might be also written in this way so that it does not offend readers who do not accept imperatives easily since some readers could receive the imperative as obtrusive, pushy and irritating which consequently would arguably make the advert has a counter effect.

The text presented next to 'The sign of your attractiveness' is the noun phrase 'ROUGE ALLURE INK' which is a combination of French and English. The first word is the adjective 'Rouge' which comes from the French language and means 'red' in English. It is then followed by the noun 'allure' which, according to the Oxford Online Dictionary refers to 'The quality of being powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating'. The French noun 'allure' has a variety of meanings, but the most relevant one is 'to be elegant' according to online Cambridge dictionaries. The difference in meaning between the two languages is that 'allure' in French refers to the general shape or look of a person which could be anything ranging from odd, to sporty or elegant, whereas the English equivalent takes it to be positive only and inclusive to elegance and attractiveness. The noun that the two adjectives are describing is 'ink'. Therefore, in the case of the lipstick here, 'ink' means a coloured fluid, but its function relates to painting lips rather than material. The use of 'ink' suggests that the lipstick is similar to ink since it is going to cover the lips with a liquid. This connotation is supported by the image where, as described above, the reader sees the actress' lips covered with red lipstick just as the whole page is covered with red 'ink'. The actress' pose and hair style along with the shading effect arguably creates a sense of mystery and charm when combined with the powerful flashing red, together representing the definition of 'allure' promised by the product: that of being powerfully and



mysteriously attractive. Thus, the image sends the message that is repeated through the text, which is a combination of Arabic and English sentences. The bilingual reader would arguably link the concept of being attractive to the application of the red liquid lipstick. Monolinguals who only speak Arabic would only understand the parts written in Arabic about looking 'attractive' and letting 'red rule' and then make their own inferences which would arguably be that 'applying red makes you look attractive' without the reference to 'ink' because it is not mentioned in Arabic. The fact that the advert combines languages refers to the intended multilingual reader on one hand, and at the same time it refers to the ideal of womanhood represented in the advert, which is a sophisticated, multicultural, mysteriously powerful woman.

The third lexical item in the copy is the proper noun 'CHANEL' which is the name of the brand. It is the most prominent text on the page; it is foregrounded through the font size, capitalisation and white colour. Due to the dark shades of 'red' and 'black' all over the page, the name 'CHANEL' seems to stand out through the 'white' colour of the font. The shadows create the impression that the image is not flat, but three dimensional which makes 'CHANEL' look on top of the actress' image not on the same flat level of the magazine paper. It is reinforced by the three-dimensional image of the product. Thus, the brand's name looks like it is on top of everything on the paper, which could imply that it is at the top in the cosmetics industry. It also connotes that 'CHANEL' is the reason behind the 'allure'; this would arguably affect the targeted readers' conceptualisation of charm and allure, where it comes from the help of the brands' products rather than from within or through being healthy. Creating a link between the choice of the brand and the quality of being attractive is one of the ideologies delivered through hegemonic discourses of

femininity. The way brand names are presented as the main element in advertisements arguably creates a link in the minds of readers between the brand's name and the effect of the product which is part of the hegemonic discourses of consumerism embedded within the feminine discourse.

The official website of CHANEL is written below the brand's name in a small font. The website represents the shop. It is also a channel where readers can communicate with people working at Chanel. Hence, the website is arguably making the readers feel that they can communicate with Chanel. The last part written in English is the hashtag 'RED RULES'. Just as in the image of the product, it seems that the organisation of the elements is based on the English readership of the English version of the advert. The verb phrase starts with the mass noun 'red' which is the first time it is mentioned in English and the second time in the text after 'rouge'. The colour 'red' is foregrounded through image and text. It is followed by the verb 'rules', which, according to online Oxford dictionaries is used 'informally' with 'no object' to mean 'Be very good or the best'. In this context, it is used to refer to the 'Red' colour as 'the best'. Therefore, the 'Red/Rouge' lipstick would arguably make women's attractiveness more visible because it is the best colour that 'rules'.

The last textual piece in this advertisement is a note written in Arabic and positioned diagonally on the side of the page saying 'let the red rule'. The sentence starts with the verb 'let', hence it implies that they want the reader to do this. The sentence here is an imperative which implies that the default is that women refrain from using the 'red' colour; especially in lipstick, freely or as a main colour. It could be that the assumption of the advertisers is that their targeted women are women who

prefer to use neutral, or pink shades of lipstick and hence, they are directing them through the imperative to give the 'red' colour a chance to be the central colour and focus of attention. The use of imperatives is one technique of pervasive discourse such as advertising, it is the advertisers' way of implicitly directing the readers to buy the 'red liquid lipstick'. There is another implication behind the use of the verb 'let', it implies that women have the freedom of choice of whether or not they 'let' 'red rule'. It connotes that a woman is the one who makes the decision, she can either give permission and 'let' the colour red rule or refuse that, which consequently connotes that she either purchase and apply the red lipstick or discard the advert and the product. It also implies that their permission is needed by the 'red'; or in reality by 'Chanel', for the 'red' to be the ruling colour. The direct address, where the pronoun 'you' is implied in the use of the female pronoun that comes as a suffix at the end of the verb, creates a kind of intimacy. The reader arguably would feel that the actress is the speaker behind the words, or maybe that the advertisement is designed for her. The verb 'let' is followed by the definite article 'the' which makes the noun after it a specific noun. It comes to introduce 'red' as 'the red', where the mass noun red is supposedly known by the reader. The last part of this sentence is the verb 'rule', which is the second time it appears in the text; after it was mentioned in the hashtag earlier. This verb embodies the same concept presented through the image, in which the red colour dominates and covers the whole page. Though Kress (1987: 135) posits that syntactic structure is employed to create 'a need' that is only overcome through buying the product, the structure here creates a need to buy the product but not a conventional need such as to make the lips fuller or more beautiful. The consumer needs to buy the red lipstick in order to make 'red rule', which would make 'red' lipstick

the latest trend. It is a new strategy and consumer discourse that targets women to buy cosmetics; the woman does not need the product, but the product needs her. Though the subject of the need is swapped, the objective remains the same: buy the red lipstick. This technique seems to create a false sense of empowerment for women where they would arguably feel some power in being in the position of deciding what colour can 'rule'. There is an alliteration created through the repetition of the sound /r/ in initial position in 'Rouge' and 'red' 'rules'. It arguably makes the text, especially as a hashtag, more attractive and memorable. Though the text is written in a very small font and on the side as if it is a note, the language used is forceful.

The concept that 'red' is 'feminine' is the focus of both lipstick adverts, but it is presented in two different ways. In ELLE UK's advert, the woman is wearing Bourjois lipstick for fun. She is applying the lipstick to enjoy it herself as she is enjoying her time blowing bubbles, because the lipstick is 'light' in weight and the colour is 'intense'. In ELLE ARABIA's advert, on the other hand, the woman is wearing Chanel's red lipstick to look attractive for others. It is also about having power, where women have the chance to decide and take action. In reality, femininity does not come in a specific lipstick colour or clothing design. Yet, advertising discourse keeps creating templates for beauty standards, attractiveness and femininity ignoring women of colour, women who are not thin, disabled women, as well as women from lower socio-economic classes. Such dominant hegemonic discourses promote a certain look that is advertised as a global, fit-all identity which is neither true nor healthy. Women who read the magazine may not like to wear red lipstick, but since it is tied to the image of a young woman with sleek hair and perfect makeup having fun in a professional top, they might feel the need to be as feminine and successful as this woman. This may be

unobtainable for many, in turn restricting the ways in which they feel able to present themselves in public. As this is the last analysis chapter, I move on to the discussion in the following chapter.

## Chapter 9

### Focus groups

I held two focus groups for this project; Saudi female postgraduate students' group and British female postgraduate students' group, in which each group represents a sample of real life readers of the magazine. Details on the participants' recruitment and Participants information are discussed earlier in Section 3.5.1. There were six participants in each focus group which is a sufficient number (Krueger, 1994; Linhorst, 2002; Bloor et al., 2000; Barbour 2007). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the focus group discussions were audiotaped and then transcribed. Each focus group was introduced to each advert and then I asked few questions for each advert. There were five questions that I asked for all the adverts in both groups (Section 3.5.1). The data collected from the focus groups is analysed and presented according to the themes.

#### 9.1 Dominant discourses of naturalness

In the focus group data, during a discussion of Les Beige (Chapter 5), the British participants' commentary on the colours agree with my findings about the dominant discourse of naturalness throughout the image:

Excerpt -1-

Felicity: she is less sexual than the other two, I think, she's more natural

Nada: is that good or bad?

Felicity: it appeals to me more than the overly sexual ones

Sandra: yeah

Emily: this definitely looks more natural to me than the other one we just looked at

Nada: that says naturally you? [Max Factor]?

Emily: yes

Becca: because you don't have to have words on that, the picture  
kind of matches  
Felicity: I'll be much more inclined to buy this than the other two

Compared to the women presented in the Lancôme (Chapter 7) and Max Factor (Chapter 6) adverts, this woman is considered 'natural' because she is not sexualised through a face that is obviously wearing makeup, clothes or facial expression. The participants' positive responses to this woman arguably demonstrate that the 'natural' woman depicted in the image is what they look for as a role model and Felicity's last comment shows how affected she is by the advert. Becca's comment reflects the great effect of the semiotic elements where naturalness is embedded in the image. Thus, the ideology of 'naturalness' has changed to be a result of applying a foundation.

Discourses of naturalness are entwined with those of colour in the field of foundations. While discussing Les Beige, participants' responses to my question "what is your definition of natural in relation to cosmetics?" show that interrelation:

Excerpt -2-

Becca: you can't really see it's there  
Sandra: it's like using and enhancing what's already there rather  
than making something drastically different  
Emily: the colours of something natural would be close to your own  
skin tone  
Nicole: you don't have like a foundation line or anything  
Becca: and how it sets on the skin  
Anne: you can't see that brush mark or anything

All of their interpretations stress the importance of the colour match between the skin and the foundation. Therefore, looking natural is important for them for aesthetic reasons. Felicity commented later that adverts are "always Photoshopped".

Therefore, though the image delivers the message that the foundation is so good that it blends in with the real skin, readers like Felicity would still have in mind that the images are not realistic. Sandra's comment proves Williamson's (2000) point of view mentioned in Chapter 5 about how adverts claim to help nature by improving what is natural.

When discussing the concept of 'natural' in the context of cosmetics in Les Beige, Saudi participants had similar interpretations to those of the British participants in the sense that it is related to colour:

Excerpt -3-

Mona: that it does not change my features, I will still look like myself, the person who would look at me would feel I look natural, they wouldn't feel there is a lot of makeup

Norah: it is about the colour, that it would not look different from the rest of the body

Laila: light coverage

Mona's response reveals that there is an attempt to maintain an aspect of individuals' personal identity, even though it would be a modified self. Amal questioned part of the dominant consumerist discourse that is part of the cosmetics advertising industry when she wondered about the trend of 'natural makeup':

Excerpt -4-

"is there a movement in the cosmetics industry to make products that help women to look more natural? ... is this the new language [of adverts] to reinforce the new makeup culture...?"

Thus, as a reader, Amal noticed the change in cosmetics trends from heavy classic colourful makeup, where it is very clear that a woman's face has been made up, to the



natural look that relies on nude colours. Amal said “more natural”, which is paradoxical for two reasons: firstly, using a product that has non-natural ingredients cannot be ‘natural’ and, secondly, how can a person be ‘more’ natural, when ‘natural’ is a fixed state? It could be argued that it refers to the creation of a new, modified, naturalised ‘self’ that does not appear to be altered or fake in comparison with the effect of classical makeup where lips are painted red and face is covered with white that people would immediately notice as cosmetics. There is a constant reminder in adverts that there are expectations of women to be perfect; beautiful and ideally feminine, in which femininity is having this idealised natural beauty promoted through advertisements.

The focus on the dominant discourses of naturalness in the adverts is mainly on how it ‘looks’ more than how it ‘feels’. Therefore, I asked the participants if they ‘feel’ natural wearing foundation and two answered ‘yes’. Amal said “it depends ... I don’t wear foundation daily, so I don’t feel natural” while Samar said “it is not natural for me at all to feel a layer on my skin, but when I feel that it is homogenising, blending in and absorbed by my skin, here I start feeling that it’s natural”. Hence, normalisation and naturalisation of the use of synthetic/chemical products lead to changes in the discourses of naturalness. ‘Natural’ in the context of appearance does not refer to God’s creation, but rather an *altered* nature where chemical cosmetic products cover up what are considered to be flaws in the discourses of advertising.

Participants in the British group pointed out to a new meaning of ‘natural’ in their discussion of the Max Factor advert (Chapter 6):

Excerpt -5-

Emily: maybe it's a current image of what natural means  
Becca: yeah, it's supposed to be wearing makeup looking natural while being able to say I'm wearing makeup  
Emily: so makeup that make you look like you are not really wearing makeup, whatever

The declarative sentence 'natural is a style' was positively evaluated by Anne in the British focus group as she commented:

Excerpt -6-

"I really quite like...'natural is a style' because at first I thought I don't like that because you don't need to style yourself as natural, but actually but that could be seen as quite strengthening to women and individuals...it's like the nude look enhancing what you already got".

Therefore, Anne's interpretation is that the product helps women improve and gives them power which aligns with Lazar's 'power of femininity' that I will discuss in the following chapter.

In the Saudi focus group, the declarative sentence is positively evaluated by four participants whereas the other two did not comment:

Excerpt -7-

Amal: the phrase is nice, I like it 'natural look is a style', nice sentence

Nada: what do you like about it?

Amal: ... marketing wise I find it very nice/very good, it tries to change the way you think

Norah: better than attractive and so on

Amal: yes, you know when you say you want something a life style , [like] healthy food, and so on, here it says 'natural look is a style' it is changing the idea that it would be clear that you are wearing makeup, here it is saying that you would look natural while you are wearing foundation, honestly , I like it

Mona: nice words

Laila: it is like an advice

New discourses of naturalness could affect women's perceptions of lifestyles and needs, as seen in Samar and Norah's explanations on why they might go and check the advertised product: "[suitable] for my lifestyle and because I need [one] truly, I need the glow, the freshness, something light that I can wear the whole day while I get out and do my activities" and "we need a natural look that suits our lifestyle". Thus, the consumerism of 'foundation' became 'a need', not merely a luxury, which supports Greig, Hamlett and Hannan's (2015: 126) views on advertisements where 'make up' is positioned as a 'modern necessity'. Though lifestyle affected Samar and Norah in a positive way, it did the opposite to Laila: "I felt...that this product is the most suitable if you have a fast lifestyle, you want something light, you are exposed to the sun ... it is suitable for this type of people". Thus, she does not identify with that style by resisting the lifestyle depicted and distancing herself through the third person construction "this type of people". On the other hand, Samar felt connected to the product through that lifestyle "I felt that I identify with the product, so maybe I would think of buying it". Samar's statement supports the postmodern consumption theory (Baudrillard, 1998), where consumption strengthens the link between the goods and the consumer's identity by classifying people's identities according to what they consume. Linking reader's identity to that of the woman in the advert through lifestyle also confirms Benwell and Stokoe's (2006) argument on the effect of 'lifestyle' and 'commodification' on the construction of the modern identity and how consumption became a way of refining identity. Hence, cosmetics adverts change women's outer

appearance through consumption of products, and during the process they alter their confidence and identity.

During the analysis of the Dior foundation (Chapter 4), the Saudi focus group participants were asked “How do you feel looking at this advert?”. Amal commented “natural/normal person” and Norah “natural” which supports the multimodal analysis in Chapter 4. Advertising producers communicated the discourses of naturalness in the advert without any direct reference to ‘nature’ through text or image, leading readers to feel that the woman is ‘natural’. Amal perceived the product as part of a lifestyle to which she would aspire “I can relate to this photo more, when I see her, I can see myself there, me in my home wearing a sweater”. Samar, on the other hand, expressed that she does not identify with the product “not related to me, so I don’t need it”. Hence, though both foundations (Chanel’s and Dior’s) are linked to two different lifestyles – the busy, natural and outgoing versus the relaxed, attractive and stay-at-home – both lifestyles were perceived as ‘natural’ but by different people reflecting the dominant hegemonic femininity where women are presented with one ideal even though it is not an ideal to every reader.

The concept of perfection is emphasised in the British Dior advert (Chapter 4) and it is interpreted as “high coverage” by Nicole, but then Anne and Felicity had different views:

Excerpt -8-

Anne: but then she looks remarkably natural, for that, for it to be high coverage

Felicity: but then she’s probably been Photoshopped, so all of her under eye bags even if they were covered with foundation aren’t gonna look like that in real life

Anne's comment shows that 'perfection' which is achieved through 'high coverage' is tied to 'naturalness', but this link made Felicity resist again, arguing the image was 'Photoshopped' (as she did while discussing Les Beige foundation).

Naturalness is part of being attractive according to participants in both groups. In her explanation of what she means by natural, Nicole said "like kind of, if you can't see, like kind of a lot of make, I don't know". Her response reveals that she is not sure about the meaning of 'natural' and that she is arguably affected by the 'natural makeup' trend discussed earlier in Chapters 4 and 5, where 'natural' refers to the use of nude colours to apply makeup. That demonstrates the effect of discourses of naturalness where a 'natural look' is defined not as a bare face but rather a hidden one that is covered with foundation.

However, naturalness delivered through an image is more attention-grabbing than text; the Max Factor foundation advert mentions naturalness in the text, 'who says you can't have a natural skin look that lasts', yet the British participants pointed out that it is not reflected through the image. Sandra commented "I think it's ironic how it's all about natural skin, but that picture is very obviously not natural". Nicole added "they've done something for the eye, I don't know anyone with that eye colour and also she's clearly got some blush going on, so it's not like natural". Those comments show their resistance as readers to the type of naturalness depicted through the image. The lexical choice that drew a participant's attention in this advert is the phrase 'Naturally You'. Anne commented "I like how the 'Naturally You' is capitalised", then, she interprets it as "This is important. This is you" which aligns with

the analytical position taken in Chapter 6 on the use of 'you' to create synthetic sisterhood (Talbot, 1995).

As seen in Chapter 6, the schnarwiler foundation is advertised as an organic/natural foundation and thus it implies that it has natural ingredients – part of the 'green beauty' phenomenon found in cosmetics adverts (Ringrow, 2016: 96). 'Organic' proved to be attention grabbing, as Fatimah commented "the name 'organic' is attractive, very attractive in a cosmetic product, especially something that is going to be on the skin, you should be using more natural materials". Thus, incorporating 'nature' using the terms 'organic/natural' affected the reader as it was perceived as harmless to the skin.

## **9.2 Dominant discourses of whiteness**

Discourses of whiteness in Les Beige advert received mixed responses from the participants in the British Focus group, who are all white. For instance, Nicole commented "again, another very white, very blonde woman". It seems that she might have felt excluded because of the skin and hair colours (note that she is a white brunette) or it could be the effect of my presence (an Arab with tanned skin and black hair) as the group moderator which created a 'halo effect', whereby "the perceived status of a group member influences the discussion" (Nyumba et al., 2018: 30). What Nicole's reaction clearly shows is that the dominant idealised femininity in British culture is being white and blonde; Redmond (2003: 188) states that in UK media 'Blondenness [is] one of the key signifiers of idealised white femininity'. Nicole's comment also proves Mbure and Aubrey's (2017: 341) finding that 'Persistent images idealizing a lighter skin tone ... impact both Whites and people of color'.

The discourses of whiteness are not limited to the foundation advert, as it is present in Bourjois' lipstick advert where the participants commented on the ideal feminine figure depicted:

Excerpt -9-

Anne: still, like a very pale,

Nicole: white blonde

Anne: white, blonde, all of them [women in the adverts discussed earlier] have been white blonde, haven't they?

Therefore, as white British women, they felt that they were seeing a lot of white, blonde women in the adverts and felt excluded and that is clear in their reaction towards the brunette model in Dior advertisement, (I will return to this point, below, in relation to the group's discussion of Dior).

However, the Saudi participants did not comment on the whiteness of the models directly, which could be due to the normalisation of white models in Arabic advertisements or because as students, they have been living in UK for some time and hence they may have got somewhat used to images of white women in advertisements. Thus, there were not any comments on skin colour except when Laila questioned the product's suitability in relation to the difference between the model's skin and hers "I feel that she looks European and her skin is completely different from ours". The fact that she mentions 'European', which is the idealised feminine in this advert, shows that she perceives of this idealised identity as 'other' that is linked to a certain geographical identity that she is not part of which she points out by saying "different from ours". Therefore, she does not appear to identify with the model in the image. This supports my argument earlier in Chapter 5 that the image represents a western woman and promotes a westernised beauty ideal that is not suitable for the

Arabic readers and their skin and hair colours. Though the British group has some negative interpretations of beige as a skin colour, their comments were mainly about the limited representation of beige through the white blonde woman. But the comment from the Saudi participant, on the other hand, reflects a bigger gap between the participant's identity and the idealised identity, expressed through the identity category 'European'. The British comments show they might be affected by the postfeminist discourse as their comments were individual-centred (Lazar, 2006), whereas the Saudi participants do not seem affected by such positioning

Discourses of whiteness were perceived differently in the Dior advert, as the British participants' attitudes were positive because the woman is a brunette. Answering my question on how they feel towards it, three of the participants said they identified with her and one said "I like it" referring to the advert. Later in the discussion, Nicole commented "I would say like, you open it up and it's not a blonde person, and it's like a white brunette and it's, like me, even though Natalie Portman and I look nothing alike, look, like there's some kind of similarity". The participants' responses clearly show how important it is for them to be able to identify with the woman in the advert through a process of similarity in representation. In Chapter 5, I highlighted that, if the reader identifies with an image, then she would be more likely to become a consumer of the foundation and this was confirmed through the British group responses later in the discussion, where four participants mentioned that they would purchase the product. Their impressions included: "I definitely want it" and "I would probably say that this is the advert I've seen that [I] like and would maybe be tempted to [get it]". The variety of shades represented through the card attached to Dior's advert affected the British participants positively, though Felicity pointed out



that those shades do not include the darker skin colours “but look, essentially, how many of them are white people shades? There is a very small, like, there is not one shade of black person, that’s not how it works”. Thus, she is resisting the representation of whiteness as the major skin tone which marginalises or excludes darker skin tones.

However, though the Saudi participants had generally positive responses towards Dior’s advert “I like it/good/nice” and Fatimah commented “out of 10, I would give it a 9”, they commented on the inclusivity of white women. Mona said “maybe we would give it 10 out of 10 if there is more than one model, with different skin colours ... that would give it more value, because the woman can see if it would suit her skin or not without the need to go check in the shop”. Therefore, to Mona, the representation of a wider range of skin colours would make the advert clearer, which supports Laila’s comment earlier on the suitability of Chanel’s foundation for Arabs. Mona’s reaction might be because the model is white or because the Arabic advert did not include the card that shows the shades. The fact that the participants rated the advert positively even though one of them commented on the limited representation of skin colour is important, a point I return to in the Conclusion (Chapter11).

### **9.3 Dominant discourses of exoticism**

In the British focus group, Anne seemed to resist the use of French as she commented as follows: “I still don’t know if I like the fact that it is called ... les beige” and two participants agreed with her. Emily’s perception of the use of discourses of exoticism was different as she interpreted the use of French as “obviously meant to add

sophistication”, but Anne interrupted “I think making it French adds nothing to it”. Becca’s response was “but French makeup supposed to be the best quality”.

When asked about their feelings toward the use of French in the Bourjois advert (Chapter 8), Becca said “I think it adds to the unique selling point which is this lipstick”. Emily commented “you would expect French words in cosmetics” and the group agreed with her. Therefore, the discourses of exoticism are normalised and are mostly evaluated positively which can be seen in the following discussion:

Excerpt -10-

Emily: and it’s a very clear sort of idea that French is meant to be sophisticated

Becca: yeah, exactly

Emily: fashionable

Anne: like Chanel is the origin of fashion

Emily: probably expensive or expensive looking and it’s sort of something we’re supposed to aspire to, isn’t it, being like French women

Thus, the connotations link French to expertise in the field of cosmetics. Emily’s last comment refers to the identity that is created through the advert which supports the findings in Chapter 8 that positioning the French woman as the ultimate, ideal feminine figure is one way of affecting the British identity of the participants where they would arguably be looking at the French ideal as their ideal.

The presence of the French noun ‘laque’ in the English Bourjois lipstick advert (Chapter 8), was perceived as odd by the British focus group participants:

Excerpt -11-

Becca: ... something you would refer to with nail ... Rather than lips, that's confusing but it also adds to the intensity of colour cause it implies that thickness

Emily and Felicity: and shininess

Felicity: I think lacquer as in paint

Emily: I find it quite off putting

Though 'lasting' was not mentioned in the advert, Anne thought this lipstick is long-lasting which could arguably be due to the use of 'lacquer' as she mentioned, which is related to nail polish which usually lasts. This discussion shows that the word seemed confusing because of its collocation in English and thus it received mixed reactions. Their reactions could be caused by the connotations they have of 'lacquer' in English, which is sticky and smelly paint.

The Saudi participants interpreted the semiotic choices as a reflection of the Arabic culture. Samar commented "The advert has a feeling of Arabic and eastern culture, the kohl/eyeliner, the design on the purse, the kohl itself and its design, Arabic design" and Amal added "even the looks of the models". Their interpretations back up the analysis in Chapter 7, in which I mention that the women's looks, their makeup style and the product's design all reflect Arabic culture. The name of the product 'Nuit Kajal' confused the participants as it is a foreign name but was written in Arabic letters, which made it difficult to read and understand, hence, mixing the French and Arabic to give the product an exotic ring to it was not perceived positively which is similar to the British participants' responses towards the use of 'laque'.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the text in Chanel's lipstick advert is a collection of Arabic, English and French words. I asked the participants "How do you feel reading foreign language in an Arabic advert in an Arabic magazine; English and

French, the name of the product 'allure', 'ink' 'Chanel', Arabic mixed with English?'. The answers were "it's ok for me" and "we are used to that". Their responses arguably reflect globalisation as well as the normalisation of foreign languages in cosmetics advertisements. In an effort to get more explanations, I asked them whether they find it difficult and Norah replied "frankly, not for me, but for my mom ... Because she does not know English... it is difficult for her. I think it is difficult for Saudis, for Arabs who do not know English". This could refer to the fact that Norah's mother is from a different generation, when English was not taught at schools. English was introduced in the intermediate level of Saudi school education in 1958 (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014), and its status has recently increased as it has been taught in primary schools since 2003 (Elyas and Picard, 2010). Therefore, the integration of English in ELLE ARABIA could be targeting readers of certain age, who are educated in English. Samar's reaction was that "there is no connection [between the text] with the image ... there is no description of what is the product, what would I gain out of it". Her response demonstrates that, to her, the advert lacks coherence as she sees no coordination between the linguistic and semiotic modes which lead the advert to lose its message.

Saudi participants were not attracted to the Western way of advertising that includes exaggeration which was clear as they answered my question "What do you think are the special characteristics of the product?" by saying "Nothing special" and then:

Excerpt -12-

Fatimah: It's not clear, even the shade [of the lipstick] is not clear.  
So, even if I see it on this [woman] I wouldn't like it.

Amal: if this is a red lipstick advert, I find it very bad because they didn't deliver the message

Therefore, they have a negative impression which could be because Saudi readers are used to advertisements based on factual appeals rather than exaggerations (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989).

Using English in ELLE ARABIA was not perceived positively by some participants as Mona commented: "I think it attracts a certain type of people...maybe British people because here [in the advert] is the Western side". Thus, she was not attracted by the presence of a foreign language but found it suitable for Western readers. That could be an additional reason why participants did not identify with the woman in the Chanel advert and did not positively evaluate the advert in general.

The schnarwiler foundation advert uses the English language throughout the page. This elicited a comment from Mona "I am wondering, there are no Arabic words, pure English" which was followed by the following discussion:

Excerpt -13-

Nada: How do you feel seeing English from the beginning to the end?

Norah: I did not like it

Fatimah: it is not nice

Nada: why you don't like it? Why not nice?

Fatimah: Arabic words, Arabic magazine, you would expect something, it is the thing that would attract you, you would immediately read the word, but here you need, we know English, but for those who don't, they need to translate

Nada: so you are bothered because it is completely in English because it is in an Arabic magazine?

Amal: I feel that even if you know English, you should make it in Arabic because it is our identity, they can leave the name of the brand in English but address us in our own language

Therefore, Norah, Fatimah and Amal are resistant readers who do not accept the text choice of the English language throughout the advert. Amal has pointed out directly that it is about 'identity' and she thinks that advertisers should address the readers using their language. This reaction reflects Amal's pride in her Arabic language as well as her dissatisfaction for excluding Arabic completely which is the target readers' identity. Samar is the only one with a different view as she said "I feel the opposite, the chic of the black colour combined with the English language, gives me the feeling that it's European, it's western, it would attract me to read it ... regardless, whether it is in Arabic magazine or not, I see the combination ... makes it attractive". Therefore, Samar is not only accepting the proposed language and westernised identity, she is also attracted to it. To clarify the point, I asked further questions:

Excerpt -14-

Nada: you mean that you feel the product is better because it comes from a western background?

Samar: yes

Laila: that the product is western/ foreign

Nada: Why would the foreign [product] is better? In relation to makeup?

Samar: everything we use is from Paris

Laila: because it is the norm, and after experience, when you try different types, and then you like certain things

Thus, arguably the foreign language added credibility to the product.

The schnarwiler advert model received very negative evaluation as she is described by Amal as "ugly, the makeup is ugly, makeup is supposed to make a person more beautiful". It could be because the image presented is not what is expected in Arabic cosmetics adverts as Samar's comment shows "it gives me a feeling that there

is a trick, a deception, the look it is a look of trickery". Mona asked "is this a man? I felt there is some masculinity" and Samar commented "true".

The presentation of colour in Chanel's lipstick advert in Arabic ELLE combined with the choice of low key lighting and the actress as a model might have been aiming to create an exotic image that reflects the French identity of Chanel, but it gave negative connotations to the Saudi participant Amal as she comments:

Excerpt -15-

I got a bad impression because of the colour, the background. You know night clubs; girls in the night clubs, these are the colours there

The atmosphere depicted gave the impression that this woman is in a night club which is not acceptable in the Arabic culture. To clarify, I asked her "You said you feel it is a scene because of the actress and the background is of a different place that we are not used to...?" and she replies "I don't know if it's real or not but it's a thing, a thing, that doesn't suit my morals". Therefore, Amal's morality affected her feelings towards the image and the concept presented through that image. Her morals directed her judgement of the advert as not suitable. As a resisting reader, Amal indicates that there is something wrong about the image and that she doesn't want to be associated with that place and its reputation. The fact that the woman in the image is an actress arguably adds to the negative connotations for two reasons. First, acting as a career is not favoured for women in Saudi Arabia as that career involves a lot of contact with men and could require women to go against cultural rules. Second, the Hollywood life

in which this actress comes from has drugs and alcohol addiction problems as well as sexual abuse which is not promising or suitable for Arabic women.

#### **9.4 Dominant discourses of feminism**

In Chanel's Les Beige advert, there is no direct reference to attractiveness, which is noticed by the British focus group:

Excerpt -16-

Felicity: I don't know whether it's purely in comparison to the other two [Lancôme and Max Factor], it makes me feel less pressured in a kind of, sexually, you need this to be attractive, since this is just I think will make you feel better about yourself

Anne: there is no reference to men in this which is really nice

Nicole: it actually is refreshing

Sandra: it is inviting on the onus of yourself rather than what putting makeup on means to other people

Commenting on the woman in Dior's advert, Mona uttered the following evaluative declarative "this one is attractive". In the British group, participants had similar perceptions, especially Becca as seen in the extract below. Nicole seemed happy that, in Dior's advert, the woman in the image is "not overtly kind of sexy". Her reaction demonstrates that some readers do not like the sexualisation of women and this started a debate on the topic, as the following discussion illustrates:

Excerpt -17-

Felicity: I think it's kind of, has been, it is, there is an element of sexuality cause she's got..

Emily: because she's doing this thing [finger touching the lips]



Felicity: And the hair is kind of seductively ..  
Anne: tousled  
Felicity: she looks like she's just got out of bed  
Becca: it's like a nice natural ..  
Anne: it's still really natural  
Anne: this is what you look like when you,,  
Becca: like that more close to my ideal to what I find attractive

Discussing the woman portrayed in Lancôme's advert, Nicole commented on the image "it's very, very pink, it's almost like in your face feminine ... this woman is staring at you is really, really feminine as well" which confirms my analysis of the advert in Chapter 7.

As Sephora's eyeliner advert uses the noun phrase 'irresistible glamour', I asked participants about their interpretation of 'irresistible' – their answers included "seductive, very beautiful and attractive". Samar commented: "this choice of word [irresistible glamour] is better than 'perfect' or 'attraction', this is what a woman wants" and Mona added "it moves your feelings of femininity". Therefore, to the Saudi participants, 'irresistible glamour' is more positively evaluated compared to the importance of looking 'perfect'. They preferred looking "beautiful and attractive", "neat and acceptable", and "feeling happy about my look". Mona added "being positioned in an Arabic or Gulf magazine is because in our Arabic society, the emphasis is on attracting man, so, including such adverts in an Arabic magazine would attract women more because the goal [for a woman] is to [look good] for her husband".

While discussing attractiveness in Bourjois' lipstick advert, the participants commented on the woman's thinness:

Excerpt -18-

Sandra: I think she's too thin ... I think I could break her wrist

Anne: she's quite sinewy, isn't she?

Felicity added "women think that they need to be thin, that's what's fashionable". This comment reflects Coupland's (2007) discussion on skin care adverts where women have to take care of their bodies to be able to match images of females in the media. Another aspect of femininity that came up during the discussion of Bourjois advert is intelligence.

Excerpt -19-

Anne: do you think they are giving her glasses to make her look more intelligent?

Nicole: yeah, to maybe kinda play down the fact that she is stereotypically quite beautiful

Anne: yeah, with the glasses on

Felicity: geeky, geek chic

Becca noticed another characteristic and commented "looking attentively at something and blowing bubbles, all those are childlike references". The participants' perceptions of beauty included "natural, strong, happy, content, clean and healthy". In her explanation of what she means by natural, Nicole said "like kind of, if you can't see (...) a lot of makeup". Nicole's comment reflects the 'natural makeup' trend discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The differences in perception of attractiveness between the participants and the advertisers demonstrates that advertisers try to implement their ideologies of what is attractive until they become readers' perceptions and this is clear in Nicole's comment as she was not sure about her definition of 'natural' when she said "like kind of, if you can't see ... a lot of makeup" in which nude colours and minimum makeup became equivalent to 'natural' which is what the adverts promote.

In Chanel's lipstick advert, the text comprises one phrase 'the sign of your attractiveness' in Arabic. Laila said "The red colour attracted my attention and because the advert says 'the sign of your attractiveness' and the lipstick is red so I think the red lipstick increases the attractiveness". Her reaction demonstrates the effect of the multimodal strategies implied on readers' perceptions as well as the power of advertising discourses in constructing concepts.

Saudi participants' answers regarding the characteristics of an attractive person:

Excerpt -20-

Samar: for me; it is the spirit and personality more than the looks

Norah: I am the opposite of you, I get impressions from the looks of a person

Fatimah: me too

Me: so, what are the features that are related to being attractive?

Group: smile

Norah: smile, cleanliness, organised, elegant, doesn't have to be chic or expensive

The fact that the group participants agreed that the 'smile' is the feature related to attractiveness raises three issues. First, 'smile' is part of a person's personality and look and therefore, it could be that 'attractiveness' is a combination of both. Second, lipstick is a product that may attract attention to one's 'smile'. Lastly, the woman in the advert is not smiling, which could be one of the reasons that the group did not like the image.

The focus group discussions revealed a number of recurrent discourses: discourses of naturalness, whiteness, exoticism and feminism. Discourses of naturalness proved to be the most dominant type in both versions of ELLE (English and

Arabic), revealing a new ideology of 'aesthesised natural self' that depends on consumption. This seems to affect the readers, as both groups agreed on the importance of having 'natural looking foundation' which emphasises the power of the 'new natural' ideology. Discourses of whiteness affected the British participants when it was combined with blondeness, but it evoked discourses of otherness in Saudi focus group as the European model is far from the targeted readers' looks. The discourses of exoticism received mixed responses that ranged between appreciation and disregard and, at one point, it was confronted with discourses of morality which came up through the Saudi group when the ideal was perceived as not suitable morally. In relation to ideal beauty, British comments indexed discourses of feminism as it exposed the gap between the advertisers' ideology and the readers'.

By including focus group responses in my analysis, I have enriched the subjective critical analysis of this thesis, adding validity to my own analysis as well as providing me with new perspectives. Below, I go on to evaluate the methodology used throughout this study, considering, in particular, the extent to which it has enabled me to answer my research questions.

## Chapter 10

### Discussion

Adverts of beauty products have been analysed using a range of different approaches in previous studies (Coupland, 2007; Lazar, 2002, Chafai, 2010 and Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013) but, to the best of my knowledge, only one thus far have used a multimodal critical discourse analysis (Baykal, 2016). In her analysis, Baykal used multimodality through MCDA to analyse one type of cosmetic adverts – those for mascara. McLoughlin (2013) applied multimodality through social semiotics and CDA to analyse ideal beauty presented through beauty/lifestyle features and skin care/fashion advertisements in *Asiana* magazine and conducted focus groups to examine the subject position of the readers. However, this thesis is the first study to use MCDA and CDA to analyse beauty adverts from two different cultures, for a range of products including (foundation, lipstick, eye products) and incorporate focus groups to investigate readers' views. Thus, the current study contributes to sociolinguistic research, MCDA in particular, by presenting a multimethod, triangulated approach to examine the ideologies concealed in multimodal data.

Comparative studies of advertisements addressing women have been conducted between English and French magazines (Ringrow, 2016) and Moroccan and British magazines (Chafai, 2010) but none to date have addressed cosmetic adverts comparing Saudi and British magazines. Thus, this is the first study to investigate that which brings a new understanding on the similarities and differences in the presentation of the ideal woman in those two cultures, as well as the effect of globalisation on that ideal. In this chapter, I present the discourses that dominated

both the adverts in the analysis (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) and the focus groups' discussions. Dominant discourses discussed in this chapter are the recurrent influential discourses produced by advertisers to change readers' perceptions towards certain concepts related to idealised femininity by naturalising those ideologies to be accepted as the norm. Dominant discourses of naturalness were the most salient, followed by discourses of whiteness, discourses of feminism and discourses of exoticism. Dominant discourses of naturalness are discussed in depth as the most recurrent theme. The discussion of dominant discourses starts with an account of the focus groups' comments and is followed by an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology.

As already detailed in Chapter 3, I held two focus groups in total, with each group consisting of six participants. Participants' feedback was elicited in order to provide insights into how readers may perceive and interpret the ideologies at play in the discourses of cosmetics advertisements, and to compare their interpretations to my analysis – whether they confirm or contradict the findings. Most importantly, it provides a comparison at the level of sociocultural practice between readers' responses to advertisements presented in ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK magazines. In the section below, I draw on the focus group participants' responses in order to provide an account of the readers' responses to the dominant discourses in the adverts.

## **10.1 Discourses**

### **10.1.1 Dominant discourses of naturalness**

The 'natural' theme in cosmetics' adverts contains elements of contradiction and irony (Williamson, 2000), as mentioned in Chapter 5. Discourses of naturalness represent

part of the rules of 'Consumer/Commodified femininity ideology' identified by Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 175) where 'Bare face (that is, no make-up) is bad, but simultaneously a 'natural' look is prized in all arenas'. Across the foundation adverts in this study, 'Nature' plays a central role, as it is mentioned in the text of four out of six adverts: two Chanel adverts, Max Factor and schnarwiler; in Chanel's it is reflected through both text and image. Excerpt 1 from the focus group data shows that the British participants agree with my findings about the dominant discourse of naturalness. Responses from both focus groups reveal that discourses of naturalness are interrelated with those of colour in the field of foundations as can be seen in excerpts 2 and 3.

The participants' perceptions of 'natural' in the world of makeup shows that there is a new hybrid meaning of natural; an aestheticised nature where manufactured products are labelled 'natural' by manufacturers and consumers. Such interpretation could arguably encourage some women to wear makeup because it is 'natural'. It also supports the creation of needs that are only satisfied by consumerism, which supports Lazar's (2006) findings whereby powerful consumerist discourses are tied to women's confidence. It also aligns with Benwell and Stokoe's discussion of consumer femininity where problems created are 'ultimately insoluble' (2006: 176). The consistent need for a foundation that 'looks natural', that others would not be able to notice, could arguably point to an issue in idealised feminine identity construction. To achieve this new ideal femininity and have a 'natural look', women should not show the actual skin, but instead buy a product that hides this in a strive for 'natural' flawless skin. The emphasis on the 'look' that builds upon 'hiding' supports Benwell and Stokoe's discussion on discourses of consumer femininity in which 'surface appearance' is a key

discourse (where verbs like 'look' and adjectives such as 'looking' are prominent). Benwell and Stokoe (2006:176) state that the 'obsession with appearance (...) embodies (...) the principle of duplicity and deception' and thus the product does not solve the problems posed but temporarily covers them up so the skin 'looks' better. Participants in the British group pointed out a different new meaning of 'natural' in their discussion of the Max Factor advert (Excerpt 5).

Another concept linked to naturalness in the context of cosmetics is that cosmetics empower women and help them improve as Anne's interpretation in excerpt 6 shows. That perspective aligns with Lazar's interpretation of the discourse of 'power femininity' in advertisements (2006) where cosmetics are empowering agents that help the 'natural' beauty in each woman improve. It also supports findings of previous studies which have looked at 'power femininity' (Williamson, 2000; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). I find the empowerment in the 'power femininity' discourse persuasive, yet fake, as it disempowers women through linking confidence to consumption of cosmetic products rather than to women's personalities, skills or achievements. Consequently, it turns women into dependant consumers whose power is shaped and controlled by the advertisers.

The effect of dominant discourses of naturalness in adverts is very powerful, as seen in the Saudi participants' responses towards the normalisation and naturalisation of the concept of using makeup to conceal natural skin as a daily ritual (Excerpt 7). Advertising language plays a role in integrating new ideas regarding gender identity into society, as Crymble (2012: 80) explains 'by naturalizing, legitimizing, and shifting gender regimes'. Laila's perception of the advert as giving 'advice' illustrates the effectiveness of the message as a form of consumerist discourse which supports



Talbot's (1995) notion of women's magazines as a 'synthetic sisterhood' where the text creates a 'false friendship', giving the advertiser a chance to deliver ideologies and getting the reader to accept them.

Naturalness is part of being attractive according to both British and Saudi participants' answers to my question about what they find attractive in a woman, which included the following qualities: natural, strong, happy, content, clean, neat and healthy. Thus, 'natural' is a quality women strive to have in both groups and that could be either the reason for and/or the result of the advertisements promoting 'naturalness' in the context of cosmetics. As noted in the analysis of Chapter 5, the advertisements' representation of idealised femininity also links discourses of naturalness to discourses of whiteness, in which natural refers to white skin tone. This theme is discussed below.

### **10.1.2 Dominant discourses of whiteness**

As already seen in Chapter 5, I argued that, through the linguistic and multimodal analysis of Chanel's advert, it links the concept of 'natural' through scenery and light makeup along with the text 'natural is a style' to the fair or 'beige' skin tone. This positioning of the beige, which is closer to the white skin as seen in the image, highlights white normativity, which according to Morris (2016: 295), 'functions to make whites "standard" or "typical" but not always explicitly superior'. As indicated by McLoughlin (2013: 26), 'whiteness (....) has attained the status of a universal beauty aesthetic'. Thus, in some way, it limits the natural range of skin tones to one, or arguably represents that specific shade as 'the natural' one. By doing so, it excludes the rest of the skin tones which includes a huge range in both Britain and Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, targeted readers may feel marginalised for not being included in the image or the product. Whiteness is not the only element that was noted as foreign by some participants, as the adverts in this study contained a variety of languages and cultural references. The discourses of exoticism and the groups' participants' perceptions towards them can be seen below.

### **10.1.3 Dominant discourses of exoticism**

By discourses of exoticism, I refer to Netto's (2015: 23) definition of it as 'a disputable way of addressing other cultures today'. The participants in my focus groups responded to adverts which included code-switching into different languages in varying ways. In the Chanel foundation advert (Chapter 5), the name of the product 'Les Beige' is French, while the rest of the text is in English. The British participants had mixed views towards the use of French in this advert (see 9.3). Some of the comments refer to the French quality which supports my analysis that the use of French text invokes luxury. It also provides further evidence that at least some of the consumers in UK who the advertising producers are trying to target perceive of French pharmacy brands as 'superior and more effective than some of their British ... equivalents' (Ringrow, 2016: 95), though clearly not all readers feel that this is successful. In their comments, the British participants refer to the French as experts in the cosmetics industry and they link that to French women as an ideal to aspire to look like. Therefore, the hegemonic discourses of exoticism could affect readers' perceptions of their own identity through recurrent exposure.

Discourses of exoticism refer to the idea that anything that is not you, that looks different from you, is exotic and better than what you have because you are not

interesting enough. Such discourses are very stressful to women as such concepts arguably make women think that they cannot reach the idealised feminine figure unless they treat their faces as clear sheets of paper that are customised according to what is fashionable at the time. The Saudi participants interpreted the semiotic choices of the models, the product packaging, and the purse in Sephora's eyeliner advert (Chapter 7) as a reflection of Arabic culture. This is the opposite of Chafai's (2010) finding that portrayal in Moroccan beauty adverts does not reflect Moroccan society.

In relation to the semiotic representation, the westernised way of exaggeration in advertising (Callister & Stern, 2007) which is part of the persuasive discourse was not accepted by the Saudi readers as can be seen in (Excerpt 12). That could be due to them being used to adverts in Saudi Arabia which are mostly based on facts.

The use of English in an advert positioned in an Arabic magazine could be viewed as a form of discourse of exoticism since English is a foreign language. This type of discourse was perceived as a form of disregard by Saudi readers as can be seen in Mona's response to schnarwiler's advert in excerpt 13 in (Section 9.3). This supports my analysis in Chapter 8 that the image advertised is a European one suitable for White people and Western cultures. It promotes a look that does not reflect the ideal feminine woman in the Arabic society, who stereotypically look more like the women in Sephora's advert who have long dark hair, big eyes defined with black eyeliner and smiling faces. The exposure to such ideals would arguably affect some readers' confidence and self-image on the long run as their features and colour is far from the ideal depicted.

Having English as the language of communicating the advert as the global, foreign language was resisted by some of the participants, which proves that discourses of exoticism does not necessarily appeal to all readers (see excerpts 13 and 14). Samar was the only participant with a positive attitude towards the English language in the advert and when asked for clarification it turns that foreign language added credibility to the product (Excerpt 14). The dominance of the French companies affected the consumers' perception of the product's quality in both groups; Saudi and British. That supports Maynard's (1999: 305) argument on the effects of foreign elements in advertising discourse and that it 'plays a hegemonic influence, a power relationship wherein the new and improved foreign, although always domesticated, gains higher status over the domestic'.

The model in the schnarwiler advert was not received positively which is clear in the Arabic participants responses as seen in in (9.3). Some examples include Amal's response "ugly", which might be because the image is not likely to be seen in Arabic adverts and it shows in Samar's comment "the look it is a look of trickery" which supports my analysis in Chapter 6; the shadow gives an air of mystery, and as Machin and Mayr (2012) argue the use of darkness gives the impression that there is some concealment. Hence, not being able to see half of the face had negative connotations. Mona had doubts about the gender of the model and another participant agreed that she looks masculine. Mona's comment supports the analysis in (Chapter 6) about the woman's look, as she is not the stereotypical model in Arabic magazines with long hair and feminine facial features. Thus, arguably due to the discourses of exoticism through the choice of foreign text and model, the participants could not identify positively with the model or the product.

The presentation of colour in Chanel's lipstick advert in Arabic ELLE combined with the choice of low key lighting and the actress as a model might have been aiming to create an exotic image that reflects the French identity of Chanel, but it gave negative connotations to some of the Saudi participants (Excerpt 15). Thus, the discourses of exoticism are faced with discourses of morality as the atmosphere depicted gave a negative impression. The use of westernised images in Arabic advertising delivers many ideologies other than marketing a product, therefore. As mentioned earlier, cosmetics advertising ties a product to a certain lifestyle, and by importing westernized adverts into the Arabic media, some foreign concepts which are not part of the Arabic culture can be implemented as part of the overall style. Discourses of exoticism received mixed responses in both focus groups which ranged between acceptance and resistance, and this is the case with the discourses of feminism as well. The discourses of feminism communicated through the adverts were interpreted and perceived differently in the two groups as can be seen in the following section.

#### **10.1.4 Dominant discourses of feminism**

Many of the advertisements in the dataset presuppose that women want to look attractive and that their products serve as the means to obtain that look. This is a key part of the dominant discourse of femininity which equals femininity to heterosexual sexual attractiveness by presenting women in magazines that are 'model-beautiful, with lush flowing hair. Their sexy clothes draw on traditional notions of female sexuality' (Machin and Thornborrow, 2003: 460). The British participants' comments (Excerpt 16) reveal that some women do not like to be presented in adverts as if they

want to look attractive for a man's sake, but they prefer to look good for their own pleasure which is part of the feminist discourse discussed by Gill (2007). It also reflects the postfeminist identity that Lazar (2009a) investigated, where women are deemed to be using cosmetics for their own pleasure.

The Saudi focus group have similar reactions to the discourse of attractiveness in Les Beige in relation to the linguistic elements. Amal positively evaluates the phrase 'natural look is a style' and then Norah commented that it is better than the use of 'attractive' (Excerpt 7). Thus, even the mention of 'attractive' seems to be unfavoured, which is part of the discourse of resistance in which the participants refuse certain representations of attractiveness.

British participants' responses on the woman in Dior's advert (Excerpt 17) and one Saudi participant response in (9.4) reveal that the readers' perceptions of sexuality as well as attractiveness is different. The participants' responses show that they have a conceptualisation of a 'natural sexy' which seems more acceptable to them. This emergent concept of 'natural sexy' would arguably put expectations on women as there is a prerequisite expectation that they are supposed to be sexy and that should be in a natural way. Thus, women are always supposed to take care of their appearance to be feminine enough. This is part of a discourse of femininity portrayed in magazines and postfeminist media culture that emphasises self-monitoring where women are supposed to pay attention to their looks and work to maintain an idealised femininity (Gill, 2007: 155). In this advert, the woman is supposed to look naturally sexy even if she is relaxing at her home. Such paradoxical concept places more pressure on women, especially if they do not resemble the ideal woman who is

perceived as naturally sexy because it would imply that they do not look sexy or natural enough. Participants' mention of 'natural' in the discussion of sexuality reflects the perception of nude colour makeup as natural and the pose as sexy. Hence, even when the look is perceived as 'natural sexy', make up is part of that look and thus women need the help of cosmetics to feel sexy.

The ideal, attractive woman portrayed in Lancôme's advert is feminine and dependant as she is leaning on Monsieur Big which signifies a man. Nicole comment on the image "it's almost like in your face feminine" which supports my analysis in Chapter 7. Thus, to be attractive, a woman should be feminine through clothes, makeup and interest in a (hetero)sexual relationship.

During the discussion of Sephora's eyeliner advert, 'irresistible glamour' was more positively evaluated by Saudi participants compared to the importance of looking 'perfect'. They preferred looking "beautiful and attractive", "neat and acceptable", and "feeling happy about my look". Mona explained why she thinks such type of advert is included in an Arabic magazine, which is the common assumption that Arabic women care about attracting their husbands.

In Bourjois' lipstick advert, the participants commented on the woman's thinness in a negative way as it was not perceived as attractive (Excerpt 18). This could be a response to hegemonic discourses of ideal beauty in the cultural discourses they were raised in where thin equals beautiful; by indexing a feminist position in their reactions to those adverts, the participants indicate their awareness of that problem. Intelligence is also linked to an idealised femininity and the participants noticed that (Excerpt 19), which backs up the analysis in Chapter 8. The third characteristic of the

idealised feminine is being childlike, which reflects postfeminist feminine identity presented through beauty adverts that Lazar (2009b: 394) describes as 'Girling women' achieved 'through elements of play ... the subject position offered to women is that of a child within a play situation'. It was commented on by Becca "looking attentively at something and blowing bubbles, all those are childlike references". This aligns with Chafai's (2010) finding in her analysis of a foundation advertised by Bourjois, that one form of idealised woman is being 'childish'.

In Chanel's lipstick advert, discourses of attractiveness in the Arabic context is linked to the colour red through the image. Participants' impressions reveal that the colour is attention grabbing. No feminist discourses emerged in the Saudi participants' responses to the question regarding the characteristics of an attractive person. But their answers did reveal that it is a controversial concept (Excerpt 20). This controversy reflects the differences in people's perceptions of the ideologies of attractiveness implied in discourses of advertising, as Samar is resisting them whereas Norah and Fatimah are not. Samar's resistance was clear when she described the text 'the sign of your attractiveness' as "misleading", which proves that she refuses that they promote the idea that links attractiveness to looks.

## **10.2 Cross-Cultural comparative data**

As mentioned earlier, this study is the first to compare cosmetic adverts in magazines from Britain and Saudi Arabia which would provide new understandings of how advertising discourse addresses women in those two different cultures. The first research question in this study is 'What types of identities are created in the discourse of cosmetics advertisements for women?'. Through the analysis Chapters (4, 5, 6, 7,



8), there were different identities presented to the readers. Since two adverts are the same in both ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA (Chanel *Les Beige* Foundation and Dior *Forever Perfect Cushion* Foundation), the identities in both versions of each of these adverts are the same. First, there is the busy, active woman who is walking outside in *Les Beige*. The second identity is the relaxing idle woman who is sitting indoors in *Forever Perfect Cushion*. These two identities are part of the rules of 'Consumer/Commodified femininity ideology' (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 174) where 'Activity/ fitness is good, and we are always busy ... But inactivity in the form of relaxation or 'indulgence' is equally encouraged'. The two identities are opposites in terms of lifestyle, but they are similar through their clothes colour 'beige' and their use of natural looking foundations. Thus, it could be that foundation is part of a woman's life regardless of which lifestyle she has and that would ensure that women from different classes would buy the foundation. The third identity is present in two different adverts: one from ELLE UK 'Max Factor's foundation' and the other is from ELLE ARABIA 'Sephora's eyeliner'. This third identity is the sociable woman who is getting ready to get out and have fun. This woman wears an outfit suitable for social gatherings, combined with full makeup and jewellery, unlike the previous two identities which depend on natural, minimal look.

The rest of the identities presented are specific to individual adverts. In ELLE UK's Bourjois' advert, a fourth identity is presented, which is that of a woman who has contradictory or complex personality traits as she is attractive, smart and childish at the same time. Lancôme's advert in ELLE UK presents a fifth identity, that of a young, dependant woman who needs a man in her life. In ELLE ARABIA, Chanel's lipstick advert presents the sixth identity which is a rebellious, ambitious and slightly dark

woman who is calling women to 'rule'. The seventh and last identity is the one presented through schnarwiler advert in ELLE ARABIA, where the woman's identity is not clear; she does not look like the stereotypical feminine woman usually found in Arabic magazines as her hair is short and her facial features are a bit masculine as one Saudi participant pointed out. The other factor that made her unclear is that half of her face is covered by shadow. Those conflicting identities might trouble targeted women as they feel the pressure to embody those inconsistent personalities at the same time or that they must fit one of those identified feminine identities.

The second research question in this study was 'How do these adverts represent the ideal feminine figure?' The ways in which ideal femininity is presented proved to be similar at some point as in the foundation adverts, where a 'natural' look is linked to the application of the product and the women are white. This could arguably be the result of globalisation, where the ideal is unified and/or white is presented as normative. The stereotypes depicted for the readers as ideal through images, in both versions of ELLE, are all white women with straight hair. In the English ELLE, all of them were blonde except for one brunette, whereas in the Arabic ELLE, all women depicted has dark hair except one blonde. Therefore, hair colour is a point that marketers seem to focus on as a key for women to identify with the ideal depicted. This proved true and clear in the Dior advert, where the British participants stated that they identify more with the woman because she is a brunette just like them. Thus, though the ideologies implied are mostly similar 'e.g. looking natural, attractive and perfect', the ways to achieve that is sometimes adjusted to suit the readers' culture (Zhang and Gelb, 1996) as in *Les Beige*, where the woman's skin is covered with clothes at some parts of her body. In Sephora's advert, the women are depicted together,

which is typical for Arabic women when preparing for or attending social gatherings (Grubow, 2010).

Through the analysis of the adverts, there were differences in the persuasive linguistic strategies e.g. imperatives and rhetorical questions as seen in the summary table below. English has more strategies than Arabic, as there are 21 strategies in the English adverts whereas Arabic adverts have 13 strategies which is shown in Table 10.1. Adjectives and/or modified adjectives are found in all the adverts from both ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA, which aligns with the findings of Baykal (2016) where all data included positive adjectives.

Table 10. 1 Persuasive Linguistic strategies used in Arabic and English adverts

Language	Advert	Imperative	Figurative Language	Scientised Terms	Personalisation	Rhetorical question	Adjective Compound	
Arabic	Chanel Lipstick	Let red rule			Sign of your			
	schnarwiler			Organic	Your skin			
	Sephora						Ultra-sharp colour	
	Dior		Redisc over		Formula			Fresh perfect
								Illuminated matte
								Unique matte
Flawless refreshed								
	refillable compact							
Chanel Foundation							New glowing	

English	<b>Bourjois</b>		Light as air				New liquid, intense colour	
	<b>Max Factor</b>	Put it to the test today		Touch proof formula	Naturally You	Who says you can't have a natural skin look that lasts?	Lasting performance foundation	
					Gives you			
	<b>Lancôme</b>	Meet Monsieur Big	Monsieur Big					New big volume
		Forget the others						
		Find out more						
	<b>Dior</b>	Rediscover			Formula			Perfect fresh
								Everlasting luminous matte
								Ultralight everlasting fluid
								refillable compact
<b>Chanel Foundation</b>							New healthy	

Persuasive strategies in the discourse of advertising such as imperatives and figurative language are typical linguistic features of English advertisements (Birch, 1962). Hyperbole, which is a lexical technique based on exaggerations, is not welcomed in Arabic media as it is interpreted as a form of deception (Luqmani, Quraeshi and Yavas, 1989). Though the adjective 'organic' is not classified as a hyperbole, it was received

negatively by one of the Saudi focus group participants in schnarwiler's advert, as Samar commented "it gives me a feeling that there is a trick, a deception, the look it is a look of trickery, the word 'organic' when there is nothing related to organic, it didn't give me any comfortable feelings". Hence, it could be due to the way the advert is presented because Samar commented on the image itself in the same sentence. Nevertheless, the choice of 'organic' is linked to the sense of trickery in the image since she thought that there is no link between the advert and the image or the product. Arabic culture is a 'high context culture' that depends on context for the interpretation of messages (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000: 73). Thus, Arabic adverts tend to be shorter.

In relation to semiotic techniques, all the adverts depicted a woman or women in an abstract setting which directs the focus to the product in the image rather than the place or the setting (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 50). It also serves international magazines in creating and maintaining a 'coherent' brand (Gill, 2007). This confirms the findings in Baykal's study (2016: 49) in which she interprets the abstract setting as promoting 'universal agency, individuality and consumerism.' The face is the most salient semiotic element in all of the adverts except in Lancôme's advert in which the mascara is the most salient visual element. The relationship between woman/women and viewers is detailed in Table 10.2 below.

Table 10. 2 Semiotic strategies used in Arabic and English adverts

Representation and viewer network (van Leeuwen, 2008: 141)

	<b>Advert</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Interaction</b>
<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Chanel lipstick</b>	Very close	Involved	She has power	Direct
	<b>schnarwiler</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Sephora 1</b>	Close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Sephora 2</b>	Close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Dior cushion</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Indirect
	<b>Chanel les Beige 1</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Chanel les Beige 2</b>	Medium	Detached	She has power	Indirect
<b>English</b>	<b>Bourjois</b>	Close	Detached	Equal	Indirect
	<b>Max Factor</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Lancôme</b>	Medium	Involved	She has power	Direct
	<b>Dior cushion</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Indirect
	<b>Chanel les Beige 1</b>	Very close	Involved	Equal	Direct
	<b>Chanel les Beige 2</b>	Medium	Detached	She has power	Indirect

It is clear through the cross-cultural comparison that though the ideal feminine is globalised, that ideal is Western and to promote such an ideal to the Arabic readers could result in the creation of a pseudo-culture that does not reflect the Arabic society and culture. The second element that plays a part in promoting a new imposed culture is the identity of the ideal woman in *schnarwiler* (Chapter 6) which is completely different from the Arabic feminine figure as discussed earlier in this chapter. The last cultural element is the linguistic integration of English and French in the Arabic adverts which also applies to the English adverts in which French is used.

### **10.3 Methodological Evaluation**

#### **10.3.1 Methodological triangulation**

One of the key strengths in this thesis is the methodological approach of triangulation (Carter, N. et al., 2014) as this study is the first to use multiple methods, by combining focus groups with MCDA and CDA. Previous studies of women's magazines have utilised content analysis (Napoli, Murgolo-Poore and Boudville, 2003; Tschla and Zotos 2016; Brown and Knight, 2015) and CDA (Haider, 2009; Lazar, 2009b; Conradie, 2011; Shuo, Wang and Wang, 2014; Kaur, Arumugam and Yunus, 2013). Chafai (2010) investigated adverts in women's magazines using a visual communication approach to examine functions of image elements, but the textual approach used is not clear as she does not specify any framework for the textual analysis of the data. Specifying a framework for the analysis of the textual part of adverts increases the analysis' reliability as there is a consistent set of tools which make the cross-cultural comparison between the adverts more viable. McLoughlin (2013) analysed skin care and fashion adverts in Asian magazine multimodally through CDA and social semiotics. McLoughlin

integrated a focus group as well to determine the subject positions of the audience. To the best of my knowledge, only one study thus far employed MCDA to analyse cosmetic adverts: Baykal's (2016) work, and as we have already established, her work only included mascara adverts. Thus, the current study has been the first to investigate different cosmetics adverts in two women's magazines from different cultures through a feminist MCDA and through an analysis of focus groups discussions. Analysing adverts of different cosmetics enables the examination of the discourses and identities embedded within a wide-range of adverts which shows the identities that are more dominant and are not limited to one type of product. The decision to look at two different versions of ELLE has allowed me to investigate the differences and similarities in the linguistic and semiotic choices made by advertisers addressing readers from those two cultures. Feminist MCDA has provided the tools that uncovered the ideologies related to the ideal feminine figure embedded in the adverts. Conducting focus groups has allowed me to investigate Saudi and British women's perceptions of the adverts in this study and how their contributions confirm or contradict the analysis.

A pilot study that investigated two adverts (one from an Arabic magazine and one from an English magazine) through CDA and MCDA confirmed the validity of the framework utilised. I chose CDA to analyse the textual part of the adverts because its core aim is to reveal power relations that make underlying ideologies within societies visible (Kress, 1990). Magazines are usually read in public waiting areas or in one's leisure time, and women arguably look through them and get attracted by those adverts occupying a whole page or two pages. It might not be easy to be critical and



aware that these adverts try to change the way women look at themselves to satisfy the market needs. Therefore, CDA and MCDA work on showing the hidden ideologies. The analysis of the dominant discourses found in the adverts and how they construct an ideal feminine figure for readers to adopt, would hopefully help women see adverts from a different perspective, at a deeper level. Knowledge and awareness can make readers more critical and less passive towards the ideologies targeting them, as El-daly (2011: 42) points out in his discussion on understanding the discourse of advertising: 'when the human mind is aware of the hidden codes in texts, it will be better able to fend off the undesirable effects that many texts may cause'. For the textual analysis of the data, Woods' (2006) framework of advertisement discourse analysis worked well as it focused on the discourse techniques frequently found in this genre. Whilst addressing the vocabulary, it proved effective in revealing implied ideologies, especially 'hyperbole' and 'scientised' terminology. In terms of structure, the adverts included several techniques mentioned by Woods, such as imperatives and rhetorical questions. Lastly, presupposition and personalisation were present in the adverts analysed, which affects the readers' perceptions of what they read.

Three multimodal frameworks have been utilised to analyse the images. First, the 'Quadrant of spatial meaning potential in Western image' developed by Kress (2003). This was chosen to examine the 'ideal/real' and 'given/new' elements in the images. This framework has proved to be insufficient for the data analysis as it proved to be inconsistent, for it did not apply to all the British adverts. The ideal/real as well as given/new classifications were not applicable to all the British data as some images contained 'new' aspects on the left side which is supposed to be dedicated for the 'given', according to Kress's quadrant (such as the Max Factor advert). The ideal/real

classification also proved to be inconsistent in its application, which supports Baykal's findings (2016), as in the Lancôme advert the brand name occupies the space of an 'ideal', which it does not represent. Even the modified quadrant that I developed to analyse Arabic adverts gave inconsistent results, as in the Sephora advert. In this advert, the products are presented on the right and hence as 'given' for Arabic readers when they are supposed to be 'new' and accordingly, should have been placed on the 'left' side of the page. This inconsistency could be due to the fact that the quadrant works as a general tool and thus it is not always precise. In relation to given/new classification in the Arabic adverts, the inconsistency could reflect the advertiser's disregard to the Arabic reading path. Therefore, I recommend that it is not used as a major, independent approach of analysis and when used, it would be necessary to anticipate its limitations. In this study, I used it in conjunction with other approaches to semiotic data which are Machin and Mayr's approach to object analysis as well as van Leeuwen's framework of visual representation of social actors. Therefore, the quadrant was used as a secondary tool as it was beneficial in pointing out the 'ideal/real' and 'new/given' elements but not independently as it proved its inconsistency.

The second framework applied here is Machin and Mayr's (2012) model, which I utilised to analyse objects' attributes, settings and salience. It has proved sufficient as it revealed the ideologies embedded within the advertisements through the analysis of their connotations. The settings in all the adverts are abstract, which delivers the message to all women regardless of their class or job. High key lighting is used in most of the adverts to indicate optimism (Machin and Mayr, 2012). In lipstick adverts, the lipstick colour is the most salient element on the page which reveals the

importance of the shade. The salience of the women's faces in the foundations' adverts reflects the products' focus and how its effect can be seen on the woman's face. The eye products, on the other hand, did not emphasise the eyes. The eye products' adverts focused on why and when would women want to apply, and hence, focused on the effect of 'having a match' in the advert by Lancôme and the setting 'with a friend' in the Sephora advert. In her analysis of mascara adverts, Baykal (2016) commented that women are presented alone, which makes them 'devoid of socioeconomic cultural context', but the results of the current study contradict that. In Sephora, there are two women and the social, cultural references are clear, whereas the Lancôme advert depicts the woman with the mascara as the partner 'Monsieur Big' and the reference to pop culture and the TV show *Sex and the City* is strong.

The third analytical framework is the model of visual representation of social actors, as presented by van Leeuwen (2008). It has helped to define distance, interaction and power relations between the representation and the viewer. All adverts have presented women as close to the reader through close shots to create an intimate relationship, except the Lancôme advert and part of the Chanel *Les Beige* advert (where the woman is walking). All women depicted in the adverts communicated accessibility and demanded a response from readers through the direct gaze, except in the adverts by Bourjois and part of Chanel *Les Beige* (where the woman is walking). Women in all of the adverts are presented at the same height as the reader which signals equality in power, except Lancôme's, Chanel's *Les Beige* (where the woman is walking) and Chanel's lipstick (through tilted head) where the woman depicted had power over readers. The women are depicted confronting the reader, which connotes their involvement except in Bourjois and Chanel's *Les Beige*

(where the woman is walking). Therefore, van Leeuwen's framework revealed that advertisements create a relationship between the woman in the image and the reader through close shots, direct gaze, similar height and a confrontational position which construct an intimate relationship that would arguably attract the reader to the advert and the product.

The combination of two methods of CDA and MCDA has allowed me to examine each advertisement as a whole (linguistic and semiotic elements) rather than in isolated parts. For each advert, the image is analysed using the three multimodal frameworks and the text is examined using the CDA framework. Consequently, it enabled me to denaturalise the hegemonic discourses delivered and the implied ideologies addressed to women in the form of friendly women enjoying the application of cosmetics to look natural and to match society's expectations. My analysis of the adverts is subjective, which is part of being a CDA/MCDA analyst (Machin and Mayr, 2012) and thus, conducting focus groups balanced the analysis by providing understanding of how women respond to advertising discourse (as explained next).

### **10.3.2 Focus groups**

Although the analyses reveal the dominant discourses communicated through each of the adverts shown in Chapters 4-7, these are informed by my own views and biases; as Machin and Mayr (2012: 210) state, '(a)n analysis may always tell more about the viewer than the image itself'. It was therefore important to conduct focus groups to explore potential readers' responses toward the adverts as well. Smithson (2000: 116) explains the value of conducting focus groups; they 'permit some insights into

rhetorical processes, or 'practical ideologies". The focus groups' responses provided insights into how Saudi and British women perceive of the adverts. Some responses supported the analysis, as when Laila commented on the woman in the *Les Beige* foundation advert by saying that she looks 'European' and that 'her skin is different from ours'. Another example is Becca's comment on the use of French language 'But French makeup supposed to be the best quality'. However, other responses provided a new, different perspective. For example, the British participants' found the use of the French noun 'laque' confusing because of its connotations in English (with 'laquer'). Another example is the Saudi participant's reaction to the image of Chanel's lipstick advert when she said that she 'got a bad impression' and that 'it doesn't suit her morals'.

I had a relatively small number of participants – six – in each focus group used in this study. This is typical of focus groups (Linhorst, 2002; Bloor et al., 2000), yet larger groups could have provided additional perceptions or new reflections – though that is not guaranteed, of course (Barbour, 2007). Although the participants in both groups are students at different study fields, they still represent postgraduates' views rather than non-academic, ordinary women regardless of their work background. Being postgraduate students might affect their views as it could make them more critical or more confident and unaffected. British students might be affected by the feminist movement in UK which arguably made them more aware and critical of the ideologies in the adverts. Saudi students, on the other hand, could be affected by their scholarship experience which affects confidence and priorities where they feel confident about themselves and 'looks' is not a top priority since they are studying most of the time. Participants in the British group were aged (23, 24, 24, 25, 29, 52)

and participants in the Saudi group aged (27, 29, 30, 30, 32, 33). Therefore, the participants are representative in terms of the age range as it is within the range of the targeted readers' as the COMSCORE2014 survey revealed 89.4 % of readers are above 21 and the majority of readers are age 18-49 (67.5%).

The results of this research provide a look into the most pervasive ideologies embedded in cosmetic adverts addressed to women in ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA. ELLE is 'the No. 1 fashion magazine brand in the world, with 45 editions, 34 websites and more than 158 supplements worldwide' ([www.hearst.com](http://www.hearst.com)). Therefore, it reaches a lot of women at different places and from a variety of backgrounds which would make it a powerful medium to embed ideologies in its adverts and contents to women. Though the findings revealed some similarities and differences in the representation of the ideal feminine depicted for Saudi and British readers, as well as the multimodal persuasive techniques, the results are not necessarily the same in advertisements of other magazines.

### **10.3.3 Data**

There is a variety of reasons behind this choice of data as discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.1). They include the visibility and availability of magazines, the quality of paper used, the size of adverts, the cross-cultural nature of the content and its being a source of relaxation to readers. Print magazines could be considered limited, as there are online magazines nowadays. However, I explained the argument behind my choice in section 3.6.1, in which the format of the online content affects the format of the adverts. Consequently, that affects the way readers interact with the adverts as they either delete them, read them or buy the items through a 'shop' button or through hyperlinks. Moreover, adverts presented are not necessarily related to beauty unless

the reader is in the beauty section. The size of adverts also differs online as they would not be as large as one or two page spread like print magazines which is more noticeable. In addition, the online magazine adverts depict the products in isolation which is pure, direct marketing within the article itself and thus, it does not embed any ideology or link it to a certain culture. Thus, it does not serve as suitable data for the study. Contrariwise, in print magazines, cosmetic products are presented within a specific lifestyle and it reflects a particular culture which makes print magazines the best source to investigate ideal femininities and cross-cultural differences in cosmetic adverts.

It could be argued that magazines are not popular nowadays and that the number of adverts is small, but as Andersons (2010) points out, the strengths of in-depth qualitative research, is that it is usually based on collecting data from a small number of cases and then 'findings can be transferable to other settings'. As we have seen the total number of advertisements analysed in this study is ten, five from ELLE ARABIA and five from ELLE UK. The data is limited to this number due to the reasons I discussed earlier in section 3.6.3. As I also explained in Chapter 3, the aim of this thesis was to conduct a close micro analysis where both semiotic and textual elements are thoroughly analysed to reveal the ideologies embedded within them through pointing out the features of that discourse. Having the cross-cultural focus in this thesis, the sample is limited to emphasise the comparative component by doing analysis. The focus groups are part of the study and therefore, they needed time to be conducted, transcribed, translated (Arabic to English) and analysed. The sample collected fits the criteria and enables MCDA by its close focus on a concentrated number of texts (as seen in research by Machin and Thornborrow, 2003; Lirola and Chovanec, 2012;

Ferreira and Heberle, 2013; Brookes and Harvey, 2015; Brookes, Harvey and Mullany, 2016; Baykal, 2016; Zuraidah and Kui Ling, 2018). Therefore, this study is representative of this type of study. Nonetheless, it would have been beneficial to examine a greater number of texts. I could have used corpus linguistics to look at more adverts, for example, but that would not have allowed the detailed, deep analysis which is necessary for studying the discourses of cosmetics' adverts that consist of images and a small yet important sample of words (discussed in section 3.1).



## **Chapter 11**

### **Conclusion**

In this thesis, I have explored the representation of women in cosmetic advertisements in ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA print magazines using a multimethod approach that combines CDA, MCDA and focus group analysis. Throughout the analysis, recurrent dominant discourses have emerged, as well as a series of pervasive linguistic and semiotic techniques. This final chapter presents the conclusion of this research, where I provide an overall summary of the thesis findings. It is followed by a consideration of the overall contribution of the research, divided into practical and methodological contributions. I then move on to highlight the limitations of the research. Finally, I provide suggestions for further research.



#### **11.1 Thesis summary**

This study set out to answer the following research questions: 1. What types of identities are created in the discourse of cosmetics advertisements for women?, 2. How do these adverts represent idealised femininity in each cultural context?, 3. What are the semiotic and linguistic strategies used in those adverts? 4. Do the semiotic and linguistic strategies used differ between Arabic and English magazines? Is there any evidence of a globalised femininity in the dataset? The adverts are analysed using feminist CDA and MCDA in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, to answer all of the research questions above.


More specifically, in relation to the identities presented (RQ1), I have shown that there are seven gendered identities constructed through the adverts in my data.

The identities are shown in Table 11.1 below. As can be seen in the table, some of those identities are contradictory e.g. (busy versus relaxed) and (friendly versus mysterious). Nevertheless, they all depict an ideal femininity that readers are arguably supposed to look for and wish to have. Such conflict could confuse readers as it would not be possible for them to be all of those identities at once. Even if a reader aspires to be like one of the depicted ideals, that would not be possible without the product advertised:

Table 11. 1 Gendered identities

Gendered identity	Advert	Image of advert
The busy, active woman	Chanel foundation	
	Max Factor foundation	
The relaxed, attractive woman	Dior Foundation	

<p>The sexualised, dependent woman in need of a relationship</p>	<p>Lancôme Mascara</p>	 <p>LANCÔME PARIS</p> <p>MONSIEUR Big</p> <p>it's a match!</p> <p>MEET MONSIEUR BIG. FORGET THE OTHERS.</p> <p>NEW BIG VOLUME MASCARA FIND OUT MORE AT LANCOME.CO.UK</p>
<p>The friendly woman</p>	<p>Sephora eyeliner</p>	
<p>The intelligent, attractive but childish woman</p>	<p>Bourjois lipstick</p>	 <p>BOURJOIS PARIS</p> <p>ROUGE Lipstick</p>
<p>The powerful rebel</p>	<p>Chanel lipstick</p>	 <p>CHANEL</p>

The mysterious woman	scharwiler foundation	 <p>organic foundation to match your skin</p> <p>scharwiler</p> <p>pure-natural-organic</p>
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In relation to the ideal feminine figure (RQ2), what both sets of advertisements put forward is an idealised woman who is young, white, attractive and natural-looking (through wearing makeup). The data analysed in this thesis emphasised a natural look as an integral part of femininity, which presents a conflict as achieving this type of naturalness requires the consumption of unnatural cosmetic products. The second problematic concept of ideal beauty found in this thesis is that natural refers to having white skin. Discourses of fair skin was also found in magazines targeting different cultures as in South Asian women's magazines (McLoughlin, 2017). Women in both UK and Saudi Arabia are presented with this ideal even though people in those two countries have different shades of skin other than pale white. Therefore, depicting whiteness as equal to femininity does not reflect the British or Saudi society but the gap between the ideal and women in Saudi Arabia is deeper as in one of the adverts the woman is blonde and her eyes are blue and that was discussed by one participant in the Saudi focus group where the woman depicted was referred to as 'European' and consequently the product is not suitable or will have the advertised effect. Even the British participants commented on the dominance of the pale skin in the adverts and the blonde hair.

The ideals depicted in ELLE ARABIA were suitable in terms of what they are wearing, and in Chanel *Les Beige* advert, the image was modified to cover certain parts of the body. Being sensitive to traditional and cultural aspects might be one of the marketing techniques but taking into consideration the women who represent that culture is more important as it affects the identity of the readers e.g. white blonde woman in Chanel's *Les Beige*. It is not limited to the way women look, because it applies to the lifestyles and personalities. Depicting roles that clashes with the social norms of the culture would arguably affect the readers as well e.g. Chanel's *Rouge Allure Ink* where the ideal represents a rebellious Western woman who is American with a French style. These hegemonic discourses of cosmetic advertising target the identities of women in various aspects and that would lead to an imposed 'pseudo-culture' discussed in Section 2.2.1, by implementing ideologies that contradict the ones existing in that society. On the other hand, ideals depicted in ELLE UK did not have extreme ideologies as UK is a Western country, but it still affected participants in the British focus group as they commented on the dominance of white skin and blonde hair while they are white brunettes which supports Mbure and Aubrey's (2017) view discussed in section (9.1.2). The other element that the participants noticed and were bothered by is the sexualisation of the female e.g. Lancôme's *Monsieur Big* and the childishness e.g. Bourjois' *Rouge Laque*. Thus, the roles depicted for them as ideal is not suitable.

The answer to (RQ3) is divided into two sections: semiotic and linguistic techniques. Analysing semiotic strategies revealed that most of the adverts depicted a woman/ women in an abstract setting where the face is the most salient element. The analysis of the relationship between the representation 'woman or women

depicted in the image' and the viewer is shown in Table 10.2 (section 9.2) in the Discussion Chapter. The majority of the adverts depicted the representation as close and equal to the reader. The representation in most of the adverts addressed readers directly through the direct gaze and is involved with them through the confrontational angle. Two adverts (Chanel's *Les Beige* and Lancôme's *Monsieur Big*) presented the woman at a medium distance and thus not so close to the readers and at the same time, they along with the woman in (Chanel's *Rouge Allure Ink*), are given symbolic power as they look down at the readers. In relation to the linguistic techniques that are detailed in Table 10.1 in (section 9.2), the adverts included the following strategies: adjective compounds, imperatives, scientised terms, personalisation, figurative language and rhetorical questions. Cosmetics adverts discourse revealed to be loaded with persuasive strategies that targets readers in order to attract their attention and encourage them to buy the products advertised rather than being informative focusing on the facts and characteristics of the products though there is some differences between adverts in ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA.

The comparative analysis answers RQ4 and shows that the semiotic techniques used in ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK are similar, except in three adverts: Chanel *Les Beige* (two versions), Lancôme and Sephora. In the Chanel *Les Beige* advert, the model's top is modified from a cropped top in ELLE UK to a full top in the ELLE ARABIA to suit the Saudi culture. Lancôme's advert is representative of western culture where the advert refers to pop culture and reference to dating through semiotic elements as discussed in Chapter 6. Sephora's advert, on the other hand, represents Arabic culture through the choice of models and other semiotic references as explained in Chapter 6. The femininity represented through Lancôme's advert is inspired by the Western culture

where women would apply cosmetics to look attractive and find male partners, whereas the ideal femininity depicted in Sephora's advert is typical of Arabic society where women use cosmetics to look glamorous between their friends in women only gatherings. These differences prove that advertisers pay attention to cultural differences to get the customers' approval (Zhang and Gelb, 1996). Thus, being sensitive or apprehensive to the targeted culture is arguably done only for marketing reasons; to be published and accepted by editors rather than out of respect for women's identities.

## **11.2 Contribution of the research**

### **11.2.1 Practical implications**

In the present study, I have focused on analysing cosmetics advertisements, as they aim to change women's appearance, focusing on faces in particular, which is an essential part of their identity performances and constructions. The findings of this research reveal that cosmetics advertising discourse includes a variety of multimodal techniques that deliver a number of ideologies regarding idealised femininity, as discussed in Chapter 10. Since advertising discourse affects the structures of power relations by assigning people the roles of consumers (Fairclough, 2015), I have aimed to reveal those dominant hegemonic discourses and ideologies through CDA, MCDA and focus groups to produce original research that contribute to the fields of MCDA and cultural studies. Through the triangulation of methodology and cross-cultural analysis, the findings of the analysed data would add to the existing literature on cosmetics advertising in general and print magazines' adverts in specific. The findings revealed various discourses implied in the adverts that targets women and affects

their identities and self-esteem. It also showed the semiotic and linguistic strategies used to create such persuasive content. For example, lifestyle is utilised as a link to identity to encourage consumption where discourses of naturalness dominated the foundation advertisements, in which women need to look naturally beautiful, but that could not be achieved without the help of the foundation. Discourses of whiteness, on the other hand, present unattainable aspirations to women who are not white in both UK and Saudi Arabia and thus the need created 'of looking white' might not even be met through the consumption of the products. The comparison between the two versions of ELLE revealed the promotion of a global identity and ideal femininity that exclude women from different races. Creating a fixed template or stereotype for all women from various races and cultures would lead to several problems including pseudo-cultures, low self-esteem, identity conflict and consumer-based femininity.

These insights into the ideologies contained within makeup adverts reveal how the use of 'make up' has become a 'modern necessity' as a consequence of the way it is presented and positioned in advertisements (Greig, Hamlett and Hannan, 2015: 126). It creates a necessity for women to be up to date with new cosmetics and at the same time to use products to make them look good enough according to society standards which will lead to their being accepted socially for following this created norm. This link between products and social acceptance is part of the consumer world we live in as Miles (2002:7) explains, 'Consumer capitalism was able to exploit a situation where the symbolic value of consumer goods was endowed with an increased social significance'. Thus, it should be of concern to parents and teachers at different levels of education, especially childhood and teenage phases. They could minimise the effects of the media messages by emphasising to girls their self-worth



which is not tied to their appearance and the importance of embracing unique individual differences that reflect their identities. Health education can be integrated where being healthy would help them look beautiful and feel better and thus the focus is on taking care of the inside before the outside. The findings provide the commercial sector with different perceptions that they need to take into consideration e.g. racial diversity, as McLoughlin (2013: 27) points out:

magazine text producers are optimally placed to play a vital re-educational role by featuring models who present a wider range of skin types thereby developing a positive sense of racial diversity.

As seen from the responses of participants in both focus groups (Chapter 9), integrating foreign language does not always evoke positive attitudes. Saudi focus group participants felt distance from the depicted ideal at some point where the ideal is perceived of as 'European'. Thus, advertisers should pay attention to the cultural differences which include the language, race, and religion of the targeted readers. The other element is the objective representation of products where advertisers should be more specific in their presentation of the products rather the exaggeration through hyperboles and semiotic techniques.

Another original contribution of this thesis is presenting the current discourses embedded in a variety of cosmetics adverts including foundations, lip products and eye products which adds originality to the existing knowledge on the representation of ideal femininity in cosmetics advertisements. This study investigated the adverts to identify the themes existing within them rather than looking at adverts to prove the presence of a specific theme or discourse, which resulted in the findings of the dominant discourses of naturalness, whiteness, exoticism and feminism. The

'power femininity' discussed by Lazar (2006) is present in Chanel's lipstick Rouge Allure Ink where both semiotic component (through the face position and gaze direction) and linguistic one (red rules, let the red rule). The portrayal of women in adverts reflects post-feminism in terms of using cosmetics for pleasure (Lazar, 2009a), women's constant need of self-monitoring (Gill, 2007) and 'girling women' (Lazar, 2009b).

### **11.2.2 Methodological Contribution**

Previous research on cosmetics advertisements studied the language of cosmetics mainly by applying one approach such as CDA, content analysis or MCDA with the exception of McLoughlin (2013) who applied CDA, social semiotics and focus group as mentioned in section 9.3.1. Therefore, this study provides an example of triangulation of methodology where CDA, MCDA and focus groups are utilised to investigate representations of the ideal woman in cosmetics advertisements in UK and Saudi Arabia through ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA. Applying those three qualitative methods shows that textual and semiotic techniques work side by side to deliver the hidden ideologies and hence, this study has demonstrated the benefits of applying both when exploring discourses that rely on text as well as image such as advertisements.

In relation to the analysis of images, this study analyses different semiotic aspects using three different frameworks which gives detailed more reliable findings as when the quadrant proved to be unreliable. Analysing the image elements in general through Kress's (2003) quadrant, and the details of the objects through Machin and Mayr (2012) allowed for depth and precision in the way the ideologies were examined. Looking at the representation depicted in the images through van Leeuwen's framework for representation of social actors illustrated the relationship

between the woman/women depicted in the images and the viewers and how it supports the text accompanying the image. Thus, it is the recommendation of this thesis that future scholars look to apply these three multimodal frameworks in order to give depth and reliability to their findings.

This study is the first to combine focus groups with CDA and MCDA, which should encourage CDA and MCDA analysts to implement a combined approach in their research; the findings of this study revealed that readers perceive advertising messages differently. Their interpretations are invaluable as they represent part of readers in real life and thus, through this approach, it is possible to ensure that an analysis is not completely subjective. The focus group participants shed light on which dominant discourses were more salient and more effective through their responses. Therefore, conducting focus groups is an effective tool that provides depth and credibility to the analysis, though the number of participants might be considered a limitation, as discussed in the following section.

### **11.3 Limitations of the research**

The data I collected from the magazine's advertisements (six foundation adverts, two lipstick adverts and two eye product adverts) is not representative of all advertising discourse addressed to women in cosmetics adverts due to three issues. First, the medium of data which is print magazines. Second, the scope of investigation as I only looked at adverts from two versions of ELLE (ELLE UK and ELLE ARABIA). Finally, the limited number of adverts investigated (ten adverts: five from each ELLE version). Though the findings cannot be representative of all discourses delivered in all cosmetics adverts, they provide a detailed, micro textual example of what hegemonic

discourses adverts could embed to keep power in the hands of the cosmetics markets, which turns readers into consumers through this type of discourse. Though the participants of the focus groups are of British and Saudi nationality and hence, they represent readers in those two countries, all of them are postgraduates and thus they might tend to be more critical than average readers. Therefore, the participants' responses are not representative of all readers from different educational backgrounds.

In relation to the methodology used in this study, it might be considered a limitation that the data is analysed through CDA and MCDA which are subjective frameworks rather than through another approach, such as corpus linguistics. My choice is based on two major reasons, the type of data which is mainly images with few texts (making the search for linguistic patterns through corpus software challenging), and the research questions I aimed to answer which are better examined through MCDA and CDA, as they focus on close examination of ideologies found in the data as well as the context in which it occurs. Furthermore, subjectivity of the analyst is balanced through examining the perceptions of the readers by conducting the focus groups. Detailed discussion on the methodology can be found in Chapter 3 and section 10.3.

#### **11.4 Directions for future research**

This study focused on analysing 10 cosmetics adverts in print magazines, including two versions of ELLE (ELLE ARABIA and ELLE UK) through CDA, MCDA and two focus groups (Saudi and British) where all participants are postgraduates. Therefore, further research could include larger sets of data and hence use methods such as corpus

linguistics. Regarding the medium of the adverts, future research could apply the methodology used in this study to examine adverts in online magazines or adverts in social media. The cross-cultural differences could be examined through looking at magazines that are produced in Saudi Arabia. Another possibility for future research into readers' perceptions of adverts is to conduct focus groups with participants who are not academics.

This thesis aimed at addressing the problematic discourse of cosmetics advertising as it has a powerful effect on women both on the individual and cultural levels. To be able to examine the themes implied in the adverts, I opted to combine methods to have a comprehensive analysis where I studied both the linguistic and semiotic elements through CDA and MCDA and conducted focus groups to reveal readers' perceptions of the adverts. The investigation of the adverts revealed that women are targeted as consumers through defining the ideal femininity that could not be achieved without applying the advertised products. The ideal feminine is global as seen through the cross-cultural comparison of the adverts where both Saudi and British women are presented with white, young models with flawless skin and sleek hair. I hope that through this thesis I offered an insight into some of the discourses and strategies found in cosmetics adverts that would facilitate further critical investigation of such discourses. Moreover, I hope that the triangulated analytical framework would encourage other academics to create the framework that suits their data and enables them to find answers to their questions rather than replicating frameworks that might not be as effective to their case studies.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Representation of Women in Advertisements in Arabic and English Magazines

1. You are asked to be a participant in a study titled 'Representation of Women in Advertisements in Arabic and English Magazines'. This study is conducted as part of Nada Altuwaijri's PhD project, School of English, University of Nottingham, aexnha@nottingham.ac.uk [07918023108]
2. In this study, you will look at several magazine advertisements and then you will be asked some questions regarding those advertisements.
3. There are no known risks or hazards involved in participating.
4. At any time you have a right to withdraw your participation. Also, after the data is collected, you may request that the data not be used.

Please read the following and tick accordingly:

YES  NO  I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained and that I have understood it.

YES  NO  I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been successfully answered.

YES  NO  I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without consequence.

YES  NO  I understand that all data are anonymous and that there will not be any connection between the personal information provided and the data.

YES  NO  I understand that there are no known risks or hazards associated with participating in this study.

YES  NO  I confirm that I am over 16 years old.

YES  NO  I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and that I agree to participate in this study.

YES  NO  I consent to my data being transcribed and wish to be referred to anonymously in written forms of dissemination.

YES  NO  I consent to an audio file of my participation to be used, but would like identifying factors (e.g. my name to be removed) from any presentation of my data.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Faculty of Arts Ethics Approval Form

Please submit this form to your School Ethics Officer **at least 2 months** before you plan to begin your research, along with:

- consent form
- written information sheet for participants
- signed declaration of ethical awareness
- questionnaire or focus group plan (if possible).

Please read the **Guidelines for Completing the Arts Ethics Form** (available on Workspace) before submitting the form to your School Ethics Officer.

<b>Researcher name</b>	Nada Altuwaijri
<b>School/Department</b>	English
<b>Project Title</b>	Representation of Women in Arabic and English Magazine Advertisements: a multimodal critical approach
<b>Date</b>	19/2/2018
<b>Email address</b>	aexnha@nottingham.ac.uk

#### (1) Researcher Information – please tick as appropriate

<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Staff
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Researcher

Supervisors: Prof. Louise Mullany, Dr. Lucy Jones

<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff obtaining approval for a module
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Module Code:

Module Name:

Is the research funded by an external body or part of an external funding bid?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Funding Body:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
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If yes, does the funding body require proof of ethics approval?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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#### (2) Research aims/questions

Provide a brief summary of the research aims/questions [max 100 words]

The study aims to investigate the similarities and differences between how women are represented in Arabic and English advertisements. The main focus of the research is on multimodal discourse analysis, focusing on the ideologies that are implied and communicated through advertisements found in Arabic and English women’s magazines. The research also uses focus groups of Arabic and English women to enhance my analysis and determine its accuracy.

### (3) Methods

a) Please indicate which methods you will be using:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Questionnaire
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Focus groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interviews
<input type="checkbox"/>	Observation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychophysiological measures (e.g. response time, eyetracking, ERP etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data found online
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data produced by students (e.g. their essays)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other; please specify:

b) Please give brief details of how you will be employing these methods [max 200 words]

I will post announcements on public announcements boards in the university (e.g. Portland building, Trent building and Hallward Library) to get participants.

The participant should be:

Female, student or staff, aged 25-50, English or Arabic native speaker (I wish to locate 6 of each), who is a reader of women’s magazines.

Participants will be told that the study is about ‘Representation of women in Arabic and English magazines’, as shown on the consent form that I will ask them to read and sign before the study takes place and after they have had the opportunity to ask any questions. They will be advised that their responses will remain anonymous; no information which could identify the participants will be taken. I will not tell respondents that my focus is on language specifically, as I do not want to influence their responses.

There will be two focus groups with 6 people in each.

Each focus group will take place in a classroom on the University Park campus, minimizing any risk to participants’ safety.

Each group will meet for 1 hour to discuss 5 advertisements.

They will be asked the following questions:

How does it make you feel?

What is the product being advertised?

What are the special features of the product?

How do you feel about the advert?

Would you buy this product? Why?

The focus groups will be recorded on a Dictaphone to allow me to listen again to the participants' responses. The recording will be transferred immediately to a secure, password-protected laptop, and destroyed after use. Anonymised quotes from the recording may be used in my thesis and future dissemination.

#### (4) Research Location

Please confirm where the research will take place:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On Campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside the UK
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elsewhere in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online

If you are conducting your research outside of the UK, please state where:

#### (5) Research topics

a) Please confirm if your research involves any of the following:

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Procedures likely to cause participants distress
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Misleading participants about your research or withholding information
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Investigation of sensitive issues (e.g. sexual, racial, religious or political attitudes, illegal activities etc.)
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Investigation of personal topics (e.g. personal health, learning disabilities etc.)
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Online data that requires a password to access

If you have ticked YES to any of the above, please provide more details below. Indicate any potential risk to participants, justify this risk and what steps will be taken to minimise it. For online data please provide details of the websites and how you will ensure consent is given.

## (6) Participants, access and inducements

a) Please confirm if your sample will involve any of the following:

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participants under the age of 16
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adults of limited mental capacity
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participants recruited from special sources (e.g. educational institutions, prisons, hospitals etc.)

If you have ticked YES, please provide more detail information and justification:

b) Please confirm if you will be offering inducements for taking part:

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If YES, please provide more detailed information and justification:

c) Please confirm if there is a risk of participants being identified in any form of dissemination

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
------------------------------	--

If you have answered YES please provide more detail information and justification

If you have answered NO please confirm how you will protect participants' identities

Transcripts will be anonymised and recordings deleted after transcription.

## (7) Data Storage & Dissemination

a) Please confirm that you will be storing your data in password-protected files

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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b) Please confirm if you will be destroying the data seven years after publication

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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If you have answered NO, please provide a justification and give details of where the data will be deposited

b) Please provide an indication of any intended dissemination or impact activities (if such activities are planned after the project is approved, please inform your School Ethics Officer of these changes and update consent procedures appropriately)

I would use the information gained from the focus groups in conferences and possibly in later publications, but the recording of the focus group will never be played in public.



**(8) Declaration**

Signed: Nada Altuwaijri

Date: 19/2/2018

Office use only:

Approved      Dominic Thompson  
(School Ethics Officer)

Date    27/02/18

Confirmed \_\_\_Jeremy Taylor (Humanities)\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_18 March 2018\_\_\_\_\_

(Second School Ethics Officer)

Send for full committee approval   

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

(Faculty Ethics Officer)