

ABSTRACT

The co-evolution of mass media and advertising in the 21st century has allowed the latter to exceed the function of a commercial tool. Advertisements today serve not only as the bridge between producers and consumers but the mirror of different aspects in everyday life, culture included. Gender role as one of the basic concept engraved in every culture, as a result, is of no exception. The interactive relationship between advertisements and culture as well as that between gender role and culture provided a solid foundation for this study on the American and Vietnamese gender role reflection in magazine advertisements.

To carry out the investigation, a total of 822 advertisements were collected from 48 issues of Vietnamese and American magazines published in 2010 through random sampling. Familial role, working role, recreational role, user/endorser role, decorative/symbolic role and dominant role were chosen to study the preference for each gender of the two cultures. The advertisements were analyzed systematically, role by role and culture after culture. Based on the statistics acquired, interpretation of the characteristics, similarities and differences of the gender roles in the two cultures were put forward. Last but not least, suggestions to bridge the cultural gap were made for the viewers of the advertisements and advertising agencies. Ways to exploit magazine advertisements as authentic materials were also proposed to improve the effectiveness of ESL classes.