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Genre and gender at work: the antithesis of man from pictorial analysis in Portuguese advertisements

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Abstract: This study presents a pictorial analysis of Portuguese advertisements from a visual semiotic perspective, particularly the symbolic attributive and suggestive processes. Aiming to elucidate the relationship between genre and gender, the study explored advertising genre, masculinity in advertisements, and the antithesis of man as primary theoretical concerns. The data consisted of five pictures from Portuguese advertisements. The analysis suggests that advertisements are a textual arena where not only genre but also gender is constructed and modified in collaboration. The image of the antithesis of man coexisting with the one of normative masculinity in the five Portuguese advertisements indicates that genre and gender are mutually and simultaneously fluid, with their boundary often blurred. That advertisements are often prone to changes in their function to attract customers implies new and evolving presentation forms of genre and gender. The combination of new and conventional images of masculinity, as shown in the analysis, impacts social and linguistic practices, particularly the fact that traditional norms of defining genre and gender, despite their resemblant quality, might be occasionally challenged or reconstructed in late-modern culture.

Keywords: language and masculinity; Portuguese advertisements; social semiotics; symbolic attributive and suggestive processes; the antithesis of man

1 Introduction

In Portuguese, the word “género” represents individuals’ sexual properties and modes of doing or expressing something. Simply speaking, it is translatable in English as “genre” or “gender.” In the study of linguistics, the word’s dual

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meaning interestingly concerns text linguistics, on the one hand, and sociolinguistics, on the other. As a result, there should be a relationship between the two areas of study even though this word refers to two different objects. This article serves as a determined, though small, attempt to bring the linguistics of genre, especially advertisements, and the study of gender, particularly masculinity, into connection via visual semiotic interpretation.

Much linguistic research has long concentrated on the study of genre and gender construction. For instance, the research works of Bazerman (1997, 2009), Caple (2009), as well as Coutinho and Miranda (2009) attempted to redefine and reexamine genre in terms of linguistic studies in various aspects: education, advertisements, and news coverage, whereas the works of Barrett (2009, 2010), Kiesling (2009, 2010), and Saisuwan (2016) explored masculinity and non-masculinity through language use in English and Thai contexts, respectively. Nonetheless, little attention was paid to the relationship between genre and gender. In other words, linguistic research on genre is often carried out separately from gender as text linguists are interested in the former, while sociolinguists and discourse analysts are in the latter.

Similarly, linguistic researchers usually explore advertisements since they can relate to and incorporate various areas of study, namely semiotics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and text linguistics, for discussion about language and social factors. Some research works, mainly those carried out by Alsalem (2020) and Chen (2020), have investigated how advertisements function to persuade people and influence society, whether directly or symbolically, in terms of verbal and visual languages; others, such as those done by Kervin (1990), Sarwono and Fayardi (2018), and Federici and Bernardelli (2018), have specifically examined gender, especially (non-)masculinity, construction through verbal and visual advertising languages of English, Indonesia, and Italy. Yet, the study of gender construction, whether masculinity and femininity, in Portuguese advertisements appears infrequent, not to mention those published in English.

Given the concern mentioned above, this research mainly explores the mutual relation between genre and gender exemplified by masculine construction in advertisements. The analyses were primarily based on pictorial presentations from Portuguese advertising texts. The aim of the research is two folds. On the one hand, it will investigate how normative masculinity and the antithesis of man are portrayed in the said advertisements. On the other hand, the analysis will uncover coexisting and interrelating qualities of genre and gender. In this regard, the research seeks to answer two primary questions: (1) how can pictorial presentation in the corpus construct masculinity and the antithesis of man? And (2) how does the analysis reflect and define the relationship between genre and gender?
To successfully discuss the issues earlier stated, this article begins with a general introduction to advertisements as a text genre and masculine gender construction in advertisements. Definition of the antithesis of man will then follow. After that, background information about the data: the five Portuguese advertisements to be analyzed in this research will be provided before presenting an analytical tool, methods, data analysis, and discussion of the present study.

2 Literature review

2.1 Advertisements as a genre

Originated within literary criticism to identify, characterize, and specify texts, genre has increasingly been of interest among literature scholars and linguists alike. It has been explored in linguistics for the sake of typified language use in a specific type of text and its influence on social activities.

In discourse analysis, genre can be defined as recurrent linguistic forms of a text used for communication by people in a specific sociocultural community (Johnstone 2018, pp. 198–199). In terms of text linguistics, namely the Socio-Discursive Interactionism (SDI) theoretical framework, genre is difficult to define precisely due to its nebulous characteristics. According to this framework, genre is considered by not only typified linguistic forms but also preexisting sociohistorical resources, both of which are adoptable and adaptable to create a new empirical text (Bronckart 2003, pp. 102–103, 2005, p. 65). Moreover, social semiotics refers to genre as a set of rules consisting of verbal and visual language resources used to serve specific communicative functions (van Leeuwen 2005, pp. 122–123).

Following the three theoretical linguistic frameworks mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that genre serves as a prime linguistic resource regulating textual construction and suggests how sociocultural influences affect human interaction. On the one hand, humans are competent language users who know how to select and tailor specific linguistic resources for successful communication. On the other hand, they must learn to be aware of historical, social, and cultural factors predominating their communicative context. In short, genre competence includes learning to identify text types and simultaneously realizing how text influences and is influenced by a speech community.

The earlier definition can also be employed to define advertisements as a genre. Cook (2006) claimed that the description of advertisements as a genre was “surprisingly hard to pin down” (p. 9). Some advertisements focus on hard sales; others are nonprofit and aim to raise social awareness. Some use verbal and visual components in their text; others opt for only one. Furthermore, many
Advertisements are typically persuasive, but some look and sound demanding or informative. Such versatile characteristics of advertisements presented here also correspond to the definition of genre, particularly the one proposed earlier by the SDI framework, which suggests that genre is almost impossible, and sometimes mystical, to describe even though one realizes its existence.

Furthermore, Cook (2006) addresses that advertisements as a text genre are hard to define because they are “parasitic” (pp. 10, 33). In short, according to the author, advertisements are socially and linguistically mutable, flexible, and even adaptable. To create an exciting and eye-catching advertisement, advertisers must combine, integrate, and incorporate other text types like a poem, an editorial, or a public announcement, thus resulting in a commercial that may sound linguistically superfluous, highly poetic, or extremely formal. Such parasitic quality of advertisements, regarded by Leech (1966) as “role borrowing” (p. 99) and Miranda (2010) as “intertextualization,” suggests that advertisers can use knowledge of genre to adopt social and linguistic resources available in it and adapt them to create a new text of their own. This phenomenon emphasizes a significant characteristic of genre proposed earlier by the theoretical frameworks of SDI (Bronckart 2003; 2005) and discourse analysis (Johnstone 2018), particularly in terms of the fact that humans generally have genre competence, which highlights sociocultural and linguistic knowledge available at all time for text concretization.

Although advertisements as a text genre are hard to define precisely, Cook (2006) attempted to solve the problem by using an important characteristic of the genre that social semiotics already highlighted. Such a feature is called “function” by Cook (2006, pp. 10, 12) and van Leeuwen (2005, p. 123). Both authors claim that a general function of advertisements is persuasive regardless of linguistic techniques and text types incorporated into them. As advertisements are parasitic, they do not use the same linguistic techniques to sell products. Some may use direct, plain, and straightforward language; others may do so with subtle and deceptive one. However, as long as its primary function is to capture people’s attention and ask them to buy or do something, a text is categorized as an advertisement.

Finally, and most importantly, although Cook (2006) did not directly include the use of language to define advertisements as a genre of text, it is already known intrinsically, following the author’s claims and analyses throughout his work, that language, whether verbal or visual, is indispensable and essential to materialize or concretize advertising genre in the form of text. Without linguistic components, advertisements remain as intangible and mystical as genre itself. This claim is undoubtedly relatable to the definition of genre proposed earlier by the approaches of text linguistics and social semiotics.
2.2 Gender, masculinity, and the antithesis of man

2.2.1 Defining gender

Definition of the term “gender” may sound as mythical as genre discussed earlier. In her works on gender, Coates (2007, pp. 62–68, 2012, pp. 90–103) explained that the study on gender construction has, since the 70s, struggled and firmly established itself from an analysis of a language’s grammatical feature to differences of human sexuality. Presenting four major theoretical perspectives on language and gender: the deficit approach (Coates 2007, pp. 65), the dominance approach, the difference approach, and the social constructionist approach (Coates 2007, pp. 65–66, 2012, p. 91); the author elucidates that gender is not defined only by inherent nature and biology but also by sociocultural power, bias, inequality, and difference. “In other words, speakers are born male or female, but it is the social and cultural influences which surround us which determine how we speak.” (Coates 2007, p. 63). Given this claim, gender can be defined as a socioculturally fluid, mutable and adaptable manifestation of sexes as people are considered actively doing, acting, and practicing gender rather than passively obtaining it. However, as proposed earlier by the author, gender will remain intangible and unperceivable unless it is expressed linguistically in interaction.

2.2.2 Defining masculinity in advertisements

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, pp. 33–34) suggest that masculinity typically consists of physical and technical elements. The former refers to physical power and the latter to professional and/or social capabilities. The authors added that the two types of power aim for only one thing – the ability to control and compete against others (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, p. 33). In this regard, normative males can be viewed as physically and professionally active, assertive, aggressive, and competitive against others, whether male or female.

The characteristics of normative masculinity mentioned above have been presented and emphasized by many authors in the study on advertisements and masculine gender. The works of Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) and O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002) mainly explored the issue in detail. Reviewing both works also implies the development of masculinity in advertising text from pre to post-millennium.

Vestergaard and Schroder (1985, pp. 104–106) and O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, pp. 245–251) agreed that, in advertisements, men were usually presented as physically tough, rough, wild, untamed as well as professionally competitive and
independent. They are often seen, in advertisements, outside domestic premises working and contacting other people because household chores are regarded as feminine activities (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985, pp. 79–81; O’Shaughnessy and Stadler 2002, pp. 243–245). On the contrary, when men are presented with women in advertisements, they often look less aggressive but more supportive and friendly (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985, p. 90; O’Shaughnessy and Stadler 2002, p. 243). However, the image of men in advertisements, with or without women, is principally heterosexual.

There is another type of men in advertisements: those advertising perfumes and skin care. Since the products traditionally aim for women who are typically concerned with physical beautification, advertising them to men requires careful consideration since men are usually judged by their natural and physical beauty (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985, p. 104). As a result, according to O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, pp. 254–255), advertisements for male cosmetics necessarily connect male presenters with physical strength and activities to foster the image of heterosexuality.

Given the discussion above, one can see that the ideal of masculinity in advertisements resembles the ideal of men in real life because society and the target group of products advertised regard masculinity in terms of physical strength and professional power. Men presented as tender, dependent, and beauty-oriented may be considered gay, effeminated, or homosexual. Consequently, a primary attempt of advertisers is to maintain the socially accepted ideal of masculinity in their textual presentation.

2.2.3 The antithesis of man

If power is used to define masculinity, losing it to or sharing it with others may be considered unmale or nonmasculine. This type of quality may, for some, be regarded as nonheterosexual or even homosexual. Not only does the phenomenon occur in advertisements but it can also be found in real-life interaction.

In the study carried out by Cameron and Kulick (2003, pp. 65–66) about a conversation among a group of male students, a gay student in the Age of Revolution class was raised as the central topic. Four students: Al, Bryan, Carl, and Ed labeled him as the antithesis of man, judging from his appearance and dress, such as “skinny legs,” “French cuts spandex,” “tube socks” (Cameron and Kulick 2003, p. 66), and combed leg hairs. Such a label stigmatizes the student about whom the four men talked since it suggests that he is somewhat effeminate, thus not as sufficiently masculine as the speakers are. Ironically, however, all the speakers unconsciously forgot that employing nonmasculine linguistic features, namely using the gossip genre, which highlights an intensely personal topic (how others
appear or look like) in a mocking way as well as overlaps and a supportive style of talking, might transform them into the antithesis of man as much as the person they had referred to.

If power is considered for the case study presented above, one will see that the irony existing in the talks of the four young men above downplays their masculine gender as much as the third person’s. Whether they realize it or not, such downplay deprives them of stereotypical masculinity, though within a temporary period, as the speakers opt for nonmasculine linguistic features instead of those described by Cameron (2011, p. 179) as competitive, informative, and impersonal. Consequently, the deprivation of masculinity also implies the loss of power.

Nevertheless, losing masculine power through language use in the conversation of the four male speakers does not permanently transform them into homosexuals. Unlike the student accused of being gay or the antithesis of man, the four speakers’ quality of normative males remains intact since the language style they used is typically ephemeral and does not basically pertain to themselves. Such talk phenomenon is called “Referee Design” (Bell 2007, p. 98) because speakers use a language style not belonging to their own but an absent group’s to communicate with others present in an interaction. In other words, Al, Bryan, Carl, and Ed are heterosexual men who talked homosexually about a gay man. Of course, those speakers might forfeit their masculine physical power through talks. Nevertheless, the loss of power is not for good, but only for a short while; hence the speakers’ normative masculinity is negotiated and maintained.

To sum up, the case study on the antithesis of man presented above can help define characteristics of gender, which is generally fluid according to purposes of language use highlighted by individual speakers in a specific period. It also differentiates sex from gender as the former is fixed and biologically inherent, but the latter is temporal and sociolinguistically constructed. A normative man can sound either heterosexual for some time or homosexual for another, relying on a language practice he does “with” and “about” someone in a particular situation.

3 The data

The data for analysis in this research include five pictures of Portuguese advertisements collected from December 2015 to March 2016. They were found in Lisbon, Portugal, during the period mentioned. In addition, the products advertised were frequently seen on television and YouTube, as well. Currently, only the advertisements for Surf liquid detergent and Planta margarine can still be found on YouTube. In contrast, the spot for David Carreira’s album may be outdated and difficult to find since the artist may now release a new album.
Regarding the advertising picture of David Carreira’s album: 3, it was publicly issued at the end of 2015. The image was seen in subway stations, bus stops, and other public areas around Lisbon, Portugal, when the album was released. A son of Tony Carreira, one of the most famous Portuguese pop singers, and a younger brother of Mickael Carreira, also a singer, David Carreira is a Portuguese actor and singer of pop music. He has released five music albums since 2011. As its name suggests, the album “3” is David’s third album and was as much-talked-about as the artist’s advertising picture to be analyzed here.

The second data, consisting of three images, are from the advertisement for Surf liquid detergent. The product belongs to Unilever Co. Ltd. and is sold worldwide, including in Portugal. In the summer of 2016, the company released a TV commercial for the product’s new formula in Portugal. The commercial, still available on YouTube, was made as three short series featuring three male Portuguese presenters. Advertising pictures of the product were also seen publicly and simultaneously when the TV commercial was on air in 2016.

The last advertising picture for the analysis here belongs to the Planta margarine. Unilever Co. Ltd also manufactures the product. Similar to Surf liquid detergent, Planta was advertised on TV toward the end of 2016. The picture, usually found in public spaces in Lisbon in the period, was as much-talked-about and eye-catching as the TV commercial.

The main reason why five advertising images were used for the analysis in this article is that they called for the attention of not only the public but also those interested in gender studies, after the advertisements were released in Portugal. It might be due to the advertisements’ presentation and the presenters themselves. For instance, few Portuguese male singers rarely had any photo shoot like David Carreira did before. Also, household product manufacturers, such as detergent, soap, and food, formerly used women as presenters as the target group is typically female. Consequently, for the case of the advertisements to be analyzed here, using male presenters in the advertisements and a new and creative way to represent the advertised products obviously became controversial.

All five advertising pictures mentioned in this section will be shown in the data analysis section.

4 Method and tool for analysis

4.1 Method

This research focuses on analyzing advertisements’ pictures, so it will ignore verbal components, though considered equally crucial if there are any in the
advertisements under study. In this regard, the analysis concentrates on the
construction of masculinity manifested exclusively from what Kress and van
Leeuwen (2006) called a “represented participant” (p. 47) in a picture. Represented
participants under analysis here do not limit to humans because objects whose
meaning can be related to human participants may be able to be investigated, as
well.

Since advertisements can hardly lack pictorial elements for textual construc-
tion, this research employs symbolic processes to read images and decode their
meaning to successfully analyze the data of which pictures are particularly
predominant.

4.2 Symbolic processes as a major tool for analysis

Introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), symbolic processes explore “what a
participant means or is” (p. 105). Used primarily to analyze pictorially represented
participants, the processes are divided into two types: the symbolic attributive and
the symbolic suggestive.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 105), the symbolic attributive
consists of at least two pictorial participants. The first one is called the symbolic
attribute because meaning or identity outshines from itself. The second pictorial
participant is regarded as the carrier since they relate the meaning or identity of the
symbolic attribute. Simply put, the symbolic attribute acts as a meaning provider
while the carrier acts as a meaning recipient.

The symbolic suggestive, as proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.
106), consists of only one pictorial participant as a carrier. In this case, meaning or
identity will be manifested from the carrier itself.

Following the description of the two types of symbolic processes mentioned
above, it can be concluded that the symbolic attributive is a representation of
meaning that is not from a participant but a quality borrowed from another. The
symbolic suggestive, on the contrary, represents meaning existing inherently from
a participant itself.

There are three main reasons why the symbolic processes are employed for the
analysis in this research.

The first reason corresponds with the claim made by Danesi (2002, p. 18), who
referred to the philosopher Cassirer’s proposal on media and their representation
of the world, that the world we live in is both physical and symbolic. This means
that not only can people perceive something directly, denotatively, and straight-
forwardly but also metaphorically, conceptually, and connotatively.
The second reason is that advertisements are generally multimodal, but their pictorial representation is indispensable. As claimed earlier in 4.1, an image can tell us a thousand words; it should, therefore, be explored as a representation of someone or something. This conforms to the symbolic processes’ definition presented earlier and underlines the objective of visual analysis claimed by van Leeuwen (2005, p. 120) that an image should be generally studied as a conceptualization of someone or something as well as a portrayal of their connotative meanings.

The third reason why symbolic processes are used to analyze the Portuguese advertisements in this article especially concerns gender construction in advertisements. According to Goffman (1979), images can provide us with information that text cannot do, hence casting light upon social understanding otherwise almost impossible. Moreover, the author claims that advertised gender and real-life one are not much different. As a result, it is worth a while for the analysis here.

5 Data analysis

The analysis pointed out a coexistence between the symbolic attributive and suggestive processes in all images of the above advertisements. To put it simply, the five advertising pictures in this section present both normative masculinity and the antithesis of man, respectively, via the symbolic suggestive and the attributive processes.

5.1 Representation of normative masculinity

In terms of the construction of normative masculinity, if the symbolic suggestive is employed for the analysis, one will realize that the five advertisements below make use of inherent natural qualities: good and robust physique, no make-up, and rugged face, as well as a Greek-god-like muscular body, to conceptualize the male presenters. According to the symbolic suggestive process, such qualities belong to the presenters, not from anything outside them. They may as well be overlooked as one may regard them as too banal and generic. However, the said qualities make the male presenters in all five advertisements carriers, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 106), since they possess them from within themselves.

How five advertisements showed the male presenters, as mentioned above, can be interpreted as a manifestation of male power, particularly masculine physical power. As claimed by Vestergaard and Schroder (1985, pp. 104–106) and O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, p. 246), men’s well-built body symbolizes
physical strength, brutishness, aggression, and assertiveness when it comes to advertisements in general.

The symbolic suggestive analysis above can be visualized for more understanding by the diagram in Figure 1, indicating how the five advertising pictures presented an image of normative masculinity according to the physical qualities existing in the male presenters themselves.

Although inherent physical qualities are the primary device used by the five advertising pictures to represent normative masculinity among the male presenters, there is a particular case, namely the advertisement for Planta margarine in Figure 7 below. If the symbolic attributive process is employed to analyze the picture, one will realize that normative masculinity is represented in that advertisement more subtly than the others.

In the advertisement for Planta margarine, a muscular male presenter is seen shirtless with the upper half of his body above the product as if he were born from it. On the right side of the product lies a sunflower, of which seeds are one of its main ingredients. Probably, it is a way that the advertisement attempts to claim that the product is pure and natural. The manufacturer’s website publicly also pointed out such quality (www.planta.pt), and Portuguese people realize it so well and frequently that they may forget.

Suppose the symbolic attributive process is used to analyze the advertising picture in Figure 7 below. In that case, one will learn that the margarine’s inherent natural quality is comparable to the male presenter’s. The advertising picture is trying to imply that the product is as natural as the presenter himself. The interpretation arises because the meaning of the product, which, in this case, is an attribute, is borrowed, and is transferred to the male presenter, which is a carrier. The symbolic attributive process helps elucidates the interpretation not only because of the relationship between the product’s built-in qualities and the presenter but also due to the position of the two visual participants. As mentioned earlier, the male presenter was located above the margarine box in the picture as if he rose from it. Consequently, it is interpretable that the advertised product shares the quality of being natural to the male presenter, who in turn uses it to re-emphasize himself, despite his own existing similar quality.
According to the above analysis, the diagram in (Figure 2) shows the process of interpretation concerning the construction of normative masculinity via the symbolic attributive.

5.2 Representation of the antithesis of man

Despite an attempt to maintain normative masculinity in the presenters, the quality of the antithesis of man appears, though implicitly and connotatively. The process of symbolic attributive, employed to analyze the data in this section, suggests that nonheterosexual characteristics come from objects surrounding the three male presenters in the picture. Suppose those objects are considered as an attribute and the presenters a carrier. In that case, one will realize that the first visual participant lent their quality to the second, whose identity is transformed via the first’s quality.

In Figure 3, the advertising picture depicts David Carreira embraced by a pair of hands. According to the symbolic attributive, the hands can be interpreted as an attribute because an act of embracing implies a specific meaning to the male singer, who can be considered as the carrier. In the case of this advertising picture, even though it might imply an expression of love and favor, the act of embracing downtones normative masculinity and highlights the antithesis of man. Following Vestergaard and Schroder (1985, p. 106), advertisements typically show male presenters as wild, active, independent, and free spirited. Men should be the ones who pursue, grab, and embrace others, particularly women, not those passively captured. The presentation of the Portuguese singer in the picture creates an ironic situation in which heterosexual masculinity loses freedom and persistence, becoming a tamed object of desire for others.

Similar to Figure 3, the advertising pictures of Surf liquid detergent in Figures 4–6 show a man posing next to the product, using it, and ironing his shirt. All three pictures may be interpretable as a sequence of doing domestic chores, especially washing clothes. This action conceptualizes the antithesis of man as male presenters in advertisements should be professional breadwinners who are
expected to not work at home but in an office (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler 2002, 246).

In addition, the setting in Figures 4–6 above is a home where one can see a washing machine in Figures 4 and 5, an iron, and an ironing board in Figure 6. They are all relatable to domestic chores, which primarily symbolize female work
in advertisements. Moreover, in all three pictures, bubbles can be seen with colorful flowers inside them. Suppose the symbolic attributive process is used to analyze all the said visual participants in the picture. In that case, it is explicable that the antithesis of man exists due to the qualities of the objects surrounding the male presenter. The liquid detergent, the iron, the ironing board, and the washing machine carry the meaning of products for homemakers. In advertisements, women are generally responsible for household chores (Vestergaard and Schroder...
1985, p. 95). Men seen with laundry products are consequently not masculine in advertisements as their typically normative image is toned down. The antithesis of man is, therefore, highlighted because, according to the symbolic attributive process, the male presenters in the three figures above can be interpreted as carriers who receive connotative meaning from the objects they are using, which, in this case, is a symbolic attribute.

Besides the home products mentioned earlier, flower bubbles seen in the three pictures above can emphasize the antithesis of man to the male presenters. The bubbles with colorful flowers suggest perfume fragrance produced by the liquid detergent. According to Vestergaard and Schroder (1985, p. 75), advertisements usually sell perfume directly to women, not men, because the product is considered a natural beauty transformer. Suppose the bubbles are regarded as attributes according to the symbolic attributive process. In that case, their figurative meaning of femininity is transferable to the carriers, who are the male presenters in the three advertisements above. As a result, the nonmasculine quality of the attributes, namely the flower bubbles, downplays the normative masculinity of the carrier: the male presenters of the advertisement, since the former make the latter appear mild and delicate.

Similarly, the advertising picture of Planta margarine in Figure 7 above suggests the antithesis of man as the male presenter is seen standing behind the product in a kitchen. As margarine and a kitchen are, like the case of the liquid detergent advertisements discussed earlier, household products often used by women for cooking, they imply feminine quality in themselves. According to the symbolic attributive process, the margarine and the kitchen can act as attributes. At the same time, the male presenter can be interpreted as a carrier who obtains some meanings from the attributes. In this regard, locating a man in a kitchen at home with margarine can create a new masculine image in which men appear

Figure 7: Advertising picture of Planta margarine.
Following the analysis in this section, it is understandable that the antithesis of man exists, though indirectly, in the five advertising pictures due to the position and the location between the male presenters and the surrounding objects. The phenomenon is different from the normative masculinity discussed above since the symbolic attributive process only represents the antithesis of man. In contrast, normative masculinity can exist via symbolic attributive and suggestive processes. The analysis in this section can be summarized by the diagram in Figure 8.

6 Discussion

The analysis from the previous section suggests that images of normative masculinity and the antithesis of man can co-occur in the advertisements, but the former is represented by the symbolic attributive and suggestive processes, whereas the latter is conceptualized exclusively by the symbolic attributive process. In terms of normative masculinity presented in the advertisements above, the symbolic suggestive process implies what the male presenters possess in themselves: natural physical qualities. Also, the symbolic attributive process helps re-emphasize the presenters’ qualities by highlighting the product’s natural qualities. In contrast, the antithesis of man in the advertisements above is implied by the meaning transfer process in which the male presenters, acting as carriers, are conceptualized by surrounding objects and the products advertised, acting as symbolic attributes. Such a process is understood as symbolic attributive. For more clarification, Table 1 summarizes the results of the analysis in the previous section.

Both the analysis in the preceding section and the results mentioned above can sufficiently answer the first research question concerning the construction of normative masculinity in the five Portuguese advertising pictures above because
the results indicated that, whether directly or indirectly, and whether one can realize it consciously or not, conventional and modern images of masculinity coexist in the advertisements.

Given the first question of the study answered, another equally important one concerns the relationship between genre and gender. The analysis of the five Portuguese advertisements in the previous section has shown that the five advertisements used visual symbols to represent masculine images as both traditionally perceived and currently viewed. The presenters are seen as physically strong in the advertising pictures already analyzed. This is a conventional image of real men one has recognized for a long time. Nonetheless, some modernized and unfamiliar images of men, such as being submissive and domestically bound, implicated in the advertisements suggest that masculinity is at present changing and evolving as much as genre itself.

As mentioned in Section 2, the earlier analysis, and the claims made here so far, the five advertising pictures emphasize that genre is as nonrigid, flexible, and dynamic as gender. If the five advertising pictures are exemplified as a genre, one will realize that their textual presentation as an advertisement is both retained and altered. In terms of alteration of the textual presentation, printed advertisements typically have written texts to describe a product along with some pictures, but the data introduced here are primarily visual. In terms of retainment of the textual presentation, that the advertisements analyzed here are visually oriented does not at all change the general advertising characteristic thanks to some conventional elements, such as the singer who serves as the presenter himself, the products, and their logos. This quality implies what Bronckart (2003, 2005), Johnstone (2018), and van Leeuwen (2005) already pointed out that genre is frequently adoptable and adaptable, depending on preexisting sociocultural and sociohistorical factors related to it.

### Table 1: Summary of the analysis.

| Portuguese advertisements under analysis | 
|-----------------------------------------|
| Normative masculinity | Via the symbolic suggestive process | The male presenters' physical qualities |
|                         | Via the symbolic attributive process | The presenters' physical qualities are implied by the natural and authentic qualities of the product advertised |
| The antithesis of man    | Via the symbolic attributive         | Non-normative masculine qualities of the product advertised and surrounding objects indirectly characterize the presenters |
The combination of normative masculinity as the antithesis of man as shown in the analysis also reflects how advertisements effectively function as a genre and how powerful masculinity is as a gender. Suppose the claims of Cook (2006) on advertisements’ function and the ones on masculine power in real life and in advertisements made by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013), O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002), and Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) are reconsidered here in terms of genre and gender, respectively. In that case, one probably realizes that the two overlapping images of masculinity found in the five advertising pictures above made male images an unconventional gender bending and the advertisements a parasitic genre bending.

The discussion on genre and gender bendings requires the earlier analysis since it might imply that the old type of advertisements and masculinity is being disrupted and replaced by a new one. For instance, some may feel that advertisements are becoming more visually than verbally dominant, and others may at the same time realize that normative masculinity is overthrown by bisexuality or homosexuality. The analysis results, however, indicated that genre and gender enjoy a similar collaborative relationship. Both are fluid and mutable in terms of sociolinguistic practices. The function of the five advertising pictures analyzed in this article is primarily informative and persuasive, even though they can be regarded as mere beautiful images or posters. Likewise, in terms of gender, the male presenters in the pictures do not lose their normative masculine power because their natural physical strength shown in the pictures implies the struggle to maintain their conventional gender identity no matter what situation they are in or facing. The creation of genre-and-gender bending like this might not be indelibly crafted without genre competence and gender awareness of advertisers, regarded in general as text producers.

What one needs to be especially aware of, following the claims that have been made until here, is that the collaborative relationship of genre and gender, as suggested by the analysis in the previous section, can exist as far as their sociolinguistic border is not crossed. In other words, genre and gender can harmonize traditional and modern qualities within themselves unless they change themselves completely. As suggested by the analysis, advertisements can be genre bending per se as far as they attempt to recover their equilibrium: presenting a new product innovatively, creatively, and persuasively without repelling the main target group. For instance, teenage girls and homemakers are, respectively, the primary buyers of David Carreira’s album, the liquid detergent, and the margarine, so the advertisers possibly needed to create a new advertising text in which new and unique normative masculinity symbolizes the products. Such a technique will enable advertisements to perpetuate their persuasive function, maintain a favor among the existing target group, and possibly acquire the approval of new buyers. At the
same time, the male presenters in the advertisements, though discreetly tame, domestic, and submissive, do not lose their heterosexuality since their natural appearance is obviously highlighted. Therefore, awareness of limitation and knowledge of compromise and negotiation in the construction of genre and gender not only maintain their existence but also prevent their ideology from sociolinguistic unacceptability.

7 Conclusion

The discussion in this article primarily concerns the mutual relationship of genre and gender as clearly understood by the dual meaning of the word, “género,” in Portuguese. The analysis suggests that both are flexible and evolving, thus almost impossible to precisely define them. However, a significant instrument that effectively casts light upon the coexistence of genre and gender lies in the social semiotic investigation since language, whether verbal or visual, reflects and is reflected by social practices. Otherwise, such coexistence might not be concretely perceivable.

This article aims to study advertising texts of a specific period and culture, so the results might appear somewhat synchronic since the construction of Portuguese advertisements, and masculine gender can be viewed as a feature of late modernity. Therefore, more research might be done using data from different periods and cultures. This may consume more time but will enable a better and deeper understanding of the relationship between genre and gender over time and cross-culturally.

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