

# Vietnamese Women's Representation in TV Commercials Related to Lunar New Year: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Nguyen Hong Lien\*

*Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education, Xuan Thuy, Cau Giay, Hanoi, Vietnam*

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**Abstract:** This research is placed within the critical discourse analysis perspective that assumes an entangled relationship between discourse and its underlying social meanings. Explicitly, the study of Vietnamese women's representation in 25 TV advertisements related to Lunar New Year with emphasis on gender roles has been conducted. The study, which is expected to fill the present gap, seeks an answer to how Vietnamese women are characterized in TV commercials and whether this reflection sustains or challenges the existing ideologies in the current society. Employing the framework of Fairclough (1989), Halliday (2014) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the research has reached the following findings: (1) laid in the domestic landscape, Vietnamese women are simultaneously portrayed as different characters; (2) the existing gender ideologies of Confucian ethics upon women can be said to be still upheld; and (3) there seems to be no opposition to the current belief.

**Keywords:** Critical discourse analysis, TV advertisements, women's representation, gender ideologies.

## 1. Introduction

According to the report of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women [1], Vietnam has invested great efforts for gender equality since 2006. Those include the approval of the Law on Gender Equality in November 2006, the ratification of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women by 2010 and the new National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period of 2011-2020. Theoretically, Vietnamese women can be said to have an equal position as men in the contemporary society.

Meanwhile, media has been of great importance in representing different groups in a society. The image of women and men in the media, particularly in TV advertisements, is likely to project the understanding of social practices, social interactions and ideology on gender differences. By analyzing the projection, underlying ideologies can be revealed on how the media conceptualizes women's identities in particular.

This study focuses on women's representation in a number of TV commercials during Lunar New Year. Lunar New Year is a special occasion for Vietnamese people to unite with their family. What stands prominently around this time is solidarity, intimacy, family

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\* Tel.: 84-966699091

Email: [nguyenhonglien.media@gmail.com](mailto:nguyenhonglien.media@gmail.com)

bonding with the images of parents and children, grandparents and family members, husband and wife or even friends. Hence, in this period, Vietnamese women are supposedly portrayed in a variety of familial relationships simultaneously via TV advertisements.

Regarding linguistic research, a number of existing studies have examined printed advertisements from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) ([2], [3], [4]). However, little is known by applying the CDA in TV commercials in the context of Vietnam. Nguyen [5] carried out a study on gender ideologies in Vietnamese media, which is seemingly the first author to initiate the trend. Nonetheless, she focused on printed media not TV advertisements. Meanwhile, Mohammadi [6] from Iran and Hag [7] from Bangladesh presented their investigation on the image of women in TV commercials. Hence, a study that combines CDA and women representation in Vietnamese TV advertisements should be worth carrying out.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How are Vietnamese women represented in TV advertisements related to Lunar New Year?
- (2) Does the representation sustain or challenge the existing gender ideologies?

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Contextual background of the study

This study adopts CDA perspective and one of the fundamental tenets of CDA is that discourse is socially embedded - "it is at once socially constructed, and also plays a role in constructing and perpetuating ("reproducing") social structures and relations" [8: 512]. In other words, contextual background is essential in doing CDA.

During China's domination in Vietnam in the past, Confucianism critically spread its values in various aspects namely politics,

culture, religions, predominantly in society. Confucianism has two fundamental viewpoints. Firstly, it is family that is the most indispensable element of a society. Chang and Holt [9], in their research, points out that three among five most basic relationships that Confucianism stresses are family relationships (father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger). Secondly, dependency is considered as an essence of relationships. Adler [10] explains the situation of women under the era of Confucianism as three dependence principles: "first to her father, then to her husband, and finally to her grown son." He adds, since men possess a natural authority in any social context, the proper place for women is at home, where the upbringing and education of children is women's job. Moreover, as women are a part of family and relationships, it is unavoidable that women have to obey those rules and norms which reflect an over-emphasis on the role of men in women's lives.

Although an orthodox form of the Confucian philosophical tradition might not be easily observed today, the Confucian mechanisms are, to some extent, still exerted in government, education, family rituals, and social ethics [11]. A reality like this should be reflected in social products of human beings and advertising is one of them.

### 2.2. Advertising landscape

This study selects TV commercials as the investigated data since they are considered effective information conveyance tool. Dastjerdi et al [12] agree there is no doubt that television commercials are among the most pervasive of all media products in the world.

Williamson [13: 12] states "advertisements are message systems designed to organize perceptions and create structures of meaning." That is, based on a code system of consumption, the meaning of these images or signs can be unearthed. Specifying the point, Fairclough [14] indicates that social products, such as advertisements are sites where language

and society intersect, with ideologies both being produced by and reproduced in the advertisement. Accordingly, advertising is an abundant source for investigating the relationship between what is being demonstrated and what is used to demonstrate.

### 2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

In order to investigate the use of power and ideology in discourse, critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be considered a useful tool. Traditionally, CDA practitioners focused on the verbal mode. Yet, visual elements have been increasingly gaining attention with research of Kress & van Leeuwen [15], Machin [16], Sheyholislami [17] or Jewitt [18]. While carrying out research, Fairclough [19] recognized the value of graphic factors as it was quite appropriate to extend the notion of discourse to cover other symbolic forms such as visual images, and texts which were combinations of words and images, for example in advertising. Later, van Leeuwen [20] argued that visual elements of images worked to convey and produce meaning, especially in relation to each other. Then on, this mode has received a lot of responses from the research communities.

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, Cook [21] stressed the importance of examining the meanings of advertisements based on how audiences constructed these meanings, based on their semiotic knowledge of images/signs, genre knowledge, needs, desires, and discourses applied to the advertisement. Therefore, images and languages can be considered as two schemes which project the underlying ideology, or even form, shape, influence and build one's mindset.

### 2.4. Analytical frameworks

The study applies the following analytical frameworks simultaneously: Fairclough [14] for textual analysis, discursive practice and social explanation; Halliday [22] for verbal

examination; Kress & van Leeuwen [15] for visual investigation.

#### ***Fairclough's 3-dimension model and Halliday's Functional Grammar***

As Fairclough's 3D model is capable of explicating what is beyond text, it is beneficial to this study. Hence, Fairclough's brainchild, besides describing the discourse, is used to interpret the discourse as well as analyze the social practice happening in the investigated data. Fairclough [14] defines 3 dimensions for every discursive event.

The first dimension represents "the object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts)" (Janks [23]). All semiotic indications such as images, different colors, signs, sounds, etc. are considered as text. However, the question list that Fairclough has given is not applicable to visual investigation. Therefore, the model "Grammar of visual design" by Kress and van Leeuwen [15] is incorporated in this stage for this study. Also, part of the system of Functional Grammar proposed by Halliday [22] is included in the verbal analysis for comprehensive findings. They are Transitivity, Mood and Theme.

The second dimension can be described as "the processes by which the object is produced and received by human subjects" (Janks, [23]). Interpretation should be processed in this stage as values of textual features only become real when they are put in social interaction.

Finally, the third dimension of discourse could be described as "power behind discourse" or as social practices, because it is containing "the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes [of production and reception]" (Janks [23]). It seeks to answer questions like: "with what kind(s) of discourse(s) or social practice(s) is the object of investigation interrelated?", "how does the discourse change or sustain certain social relationship in social structure?"

### ***Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design framework***

As TV commercials contain a series of images, the model of Kress and van Leeuwen [15] perfectly fits this study. For the present analysis of the advertisements, the author does not use the entire framework. The author agrees with Scollon and Scollon [24] when they contend that this model is overly complex. There are different aspects of this model, but this study only investigates the following: Participants, Distance, Angle, Gaze and Inter-mode relations.

Regarding this framework, though these aspects are present in the data of this study, not all are apparent. Participants are seen as the most frequently used tool in interpreting the data while others are less common. Nonetheless, in order to have a complete analysis, all elements are taken into investigation.

### **3. Research methodology**

The data of the study include 25 TV advertisements, each of which lasts from 30 to 45 seconds. They were broadcast during Lunar New Year in 2013, 2014 and 2015. These TV commercials are related to grocery products and household utensils namely food, beverage, liquid cleansers, detergents, etc. To ensure the authenticity of the data, only TV advertisements with the logo of broadcasting companies are chosen namely VTV, HTV, and so on. The 25 TV advertisements are classified with abbreviation and numbering (e.g., BIBI 2: the second frame of the advertisement "Bibica"). The list of all TV commercials used in this study is presented later.

The study proposes the integrated framework with three levels as follows:

a. Discourse description: The first layer draws on how the discourse is designed and depicted visually and verbally. Concerning visual elements, each frame is examined with Participant, Distance, Angle and Gaze.

Regarding verbal elements (if any), Vietnamese voiceover/text and its English translation is analyzed with Transitivity, Mood and Theme. For the Inter-mode relations, both visual and verbal elements are simultaneously evaluated.

b. Discourse interpretation: This section explores how the production and consumption of this discourse influences viewers.

c. Social explanation: The section explicates the hidden ideology that controls the production and consumption of this discourse.

For a comprehensive view of Vietnamese women's representation, it is also necessary to reveal how their opposite gender is reflected in those advertisements. Hence, this study focuses on the frames which relate to these portrayals only. The analysis is performed frame by frame. The chosen frames are ones in which either the women and/or the men appear in the frame or the verbal language contains gender difference.

### **4. Findings and discussions**

#### *4.1. Representation of Vietnamese women*

##### *The woman as a family cook*

Visually, this image of the woman is the most dominant of all as it is exhibited in 8 out of 25 investigated advertisements. In SAXI 1 and SAXI 2, the older woman is seen making a traditional dish named "bánh chưng" in a happy mood while the younger woman wearing an apron is tasting the food in the kitchen setting. The same topic can also be found in HALI1 as the woman is making "bánh chưng"; in MAG1, KN1.5 as the mother is holding a plate of food; in KN1.1, KN3.1, PEP1 as the mother is cooking; in K+1, HALI2 and KD1.1 as the woman is laying out the table.

Verbally, the representation of a home cook is also apparent. In KN1.1, the mother says "Từng chi tiết cả nhà vừa ý" – "Every detail the whole family satisfy." The statement commences with a marked theme "Every detail", suggesting a special focus on how the mother would like to ensure the food is

appreciated by every family member. Here, she not only fulfills her responsibility of cooking but also offers the enjoyment of the meal to the family. In terms of transitivity, the behavioral process is employed, denoting that this is a daily activity for the mother. The inter-mode relation of elaboration shows that the image specifies the voiceover, giving more emphasis on how the mother would like to satisfy the whole family as a cook.

*The woman as a teacher and caretaker of her children*

Visually, this role is also demonstrated in 8 out of 25 TV advertisements. In PHO1, the grandmother is seen teaching her grand-daughter how to arrange a five-fruit tray in Tet holiday. In addition, in PHO2, the mother is teaching her child the meaning of red flower seeds during this period. In both images, they are smiling happily and displaying actions to show the child the hands-on experience. The woman here acts as a teacher, educating their child since he/she is little.

Educating the children is considered women's role with examples in MAG1, KN1.2, KN2.2, HALI1, KD1 when the girl is standing next to the mother, either helping with cooking or watching her mother cook. The girl is probably receiving cooking lessons from the mother.

Rearing children is another supposed part of being a mother. In MILO1, the boy is given a glass of milk to drink by his mother, suggesting the woman is taking care of her child as she is giving him what is good for his physical development. Another instance can be found in HAO1 since the mother has seemingly prepared the food for her children. For KN1.6, the mother is taking food for her child with a loving look, which clearly shows the love towards the daughter.

In terms of verbal analysis, by saying "Cùng bày mâm ngũ quả nào" – "Let's arrange the five-fruit tray" in OMO1, the mother involves her children into this activity. Using "Let's", she lessens the strictness of a typical imperative, succeeding in acting like a friend to

educate the children naturally without any obligation. In PHO1, the grandmother is also teaching her grand-daughter by saying "Mâm ngũ quả vừa đủ tài sung" – "The five-fruit tray is just enough to wish for fortune and prosperity" while the mother says "Hạt dưa đỏ cầu cho may mắn" – "Watermelon seeds are to wish for luck." Parallel with the visual of smiling faces, the two declaratives project a gentle way of delivering information, revealing a strong bond between the grandmother, the mother and the child.

*The woman as a caretaker of her family members*

Concerning the verbal elements, in BIBI1, when the older son gives a box of biscuit to his father, the mother of the son immediately says "Gần 20 năm nay ông uống trà không thể thiếu bánh Bibica được" – "For nearly these 20 years now, your father hasn't been drinking tea without Bibica." This declarative with a behavioral process illustrates a habit that is maintained in the past 20 years, and the wife, with her caring nature, has always been aware of her husband's habit. The marked theme "Gần 20 năm nay" – "For nearly these 20 years now" draws viewers' focus to the long period that the wife has been caring for her husband.

Moreover, in KN1.1, the mother while cooking emphasizes "Chút sắc đỏ để ông may mắn" – "A little red for your grandfather's luck", "Chút tươi tắn thêm đẹp lòng bà" – "A little radiance for your grandmother's satisfaction", "Từng chi tiết cả nhà vừa ý" – "Every detail the whole family satisfy." It is apparent that the mother cares about her parents as well, other than her child. She would like to assure that all family members receive the same attention.

Regarding visual investigation, in KN2.3 and KN2.4, the woman is depicted as giving her child a bowl of food, and it appears that she reminds her child to present this bowl to the grandparents. The woman, indirectly, orients her thoughtfulness to her parents via the child.

The inter-mode relation of BIBI1, KN1.1 shows a specification of the image to the text with the smiling face of all participants. They are willing to do what they are doing.

*The woman as a subordinate partner of her man*

This portrait of the woman is shown in 11 out of 25 examined commercials as the man is always brought forward prior to the woman.

Verbally, when a parent is mentioned, the man always comes before the woman such as “ông bà” – “grandfather grandmother”, “bố mẹ” – “father mother”. This phenomenon can be found in BIBI3 (“Tết có đặc biệt mới trọn vẹn bố mẹ ạ” - “Tet should be special so that it can be comprehensive, dad and mom”), NEP3 (“Vậy sức khỏe của ông bà còn dồi dào không ba?” - “Is grandparents' health in good conditions papa?”), NEP4 (“Ông bà ơi” – Grandpa and grandma”), KN2.4 (“Con chúc ông bà luôn dồi dào sức khỏe” – “I wish grandpa and grandma to always be healthy”), CD1 (“Cháu chúc ông vui tính bà hiền hậu” – “I wish grandpa to stay happy and grandma to be gentle”), CD2 (“Con chúc bố tài ba mẹ duyên dáng” – “I wish dad to be talented and mom to be graceful” and DUTCH1 (“Chúng con chúc ba mẹ dồi dào sức khỏe” – “We wish dad and mom to always be healthy.”)

Regarding visual examination, actions of participants display the representation noticeably. In BIBI1, when giving the box of cake to the parents, the older son gives it directly to the father. In BIBI3, the younger son, after entering the house, also goes straight to his father and presents him with another box of cake. The mother in these two situations stands aside as an onlooker, letting her husband and the sons interact. Other illustrations fall on DUTCH1 and DUTCH2. In the former frame, the man does the act of wishing the parents whereas his wife stands next to him, showing her consideration. In the latter frame, the grandson would like to present his grandparent a bouquet of flower. Instead of giving it to his grandmother, he reaches his grandfather first.

Moreover, NEP1 and NEP2 also demonstrate the same indication as the father and the son are the ones that do the talking through the phone while the mother and the daughter, though sitting next to them, just listen.

*The woman as a household chores performer*

In CIF, an advertisement of a liquid cleanser, the woman is described as a cleaner. Visually, in CIF2, the mother is cleaning the basin while in CIF3, she is seen cleaning the wall. Verbally, the daughter says “Đón Tết về mẹ chăm từng góc nhỏ” - “To welcome Tet, Mom cleans every corner of the house” in CIF2. In CIF3, she states “Tổ ấm đây sáng bừng lộc xuân đến” - “Our cozy family is filled with spring lucks” as when the mother cleans the house, it brings all the lucks and thanks to her, the family can receive a lot of fortune. This is confirmed in CIF4 since the voiceover declares “Gia đình mình yêu mẹ vạn lần hơn” - “Our family loves Mom a thousand times more.”

In another TV advertisement, NEPTUNE, a cooking oil product, the woman is portrayed as doing the housework. In NEP2, while the husband is making a phone, she and her daughter, is arranging flower. In NEP3, the mother and daughter are doing the laundry. In both frames, the mother and daughter are not in focus (in an impersonal distance). Arranging flower is also what the mother is doing in CIF1 though in this case, she is portrayed directly in a more intimate distance.

*The woman, rather than the man, as a loving portrayal of parenthood to the children*

Parenting is considered a job of both a father and a mother; however, children can hold a closer bond to whoever they spend more time with. Among 25 advertisements, the woman displays a more affectionate side to raising the children, rather than the man.

In KN1.2, KN1.3, KN1.4, when the mother is teaching the daughter how to cook, they exchange a cordial look with a smiling face, denoting a greatly profound relationship. Another instance is set in HALI3 when the

mother is caressing her son, as if he has done something appreciative. In a clearer illustration, since the son is leaving the family to launch his business in VCAFE1.1, while the father pays him no attention, the mother is holding his hands, showing her support and belief in him. Besides, in VCAFE1.3, when the boy comes back home, the mother is the first one to stand up and welcome her son, saying “Ông ơi con về!” – “Hey, our son is home!” Her cheerful voice and the act of standing up at once to open the door show the eagerness, the love a mother offers to her son.

In addition, since the woman is portrayed as a family cook, a teacher and caretaker of her child, wherever the mother is, the child is next to her. Examples in the above-mentioned sections can be revisited to prove this representation.

#### 4.2. Portrayal of Vietnamese men

As for young men, they are mostly demonstrated as successful individuals. Commencing with KN2.1, the man wears uniform as a chef, which is a contrasting image of women when they are in casual clothes cooking a meal. This suggests that in the same situation, males and females are portrayed differently and to some extent, the male may be presented more superiorly. Especially, this is the only frame that possesses a direct look which signals the demand over viewers. In other words, it exhibits his confidence and invites TV viewers to purchase the product. In other instances, such as VCAFE1.2, the man is seen wearing formal clothes of white shirt and tie, sitting in a well-designed office. It is likely that he has succeeded in his career and currently he is having a stable business. Also depicted as successful, the man in HAO2, wearing smart

clothes, is delivering a box of noodles to a farmer, showing that he is in a higher social position. In addition, the man in SAM1 is a young man who wears shirt and tie as well, which leads to an impression of success. Another image that can be grouped as the same topic is the male representation in KN4.1. It is dinner time and the whole family is preparing for the meal; yet, the man is not home. It seems the daughter is waiting dauntingly and when she sees her father – a man wearing smart clothes – return home, she feels delightful instantly.

Regarding old men, sitting comfortably is the most frequently illustrated image among all 25 advertisements. In VCAFE1.1, when the boy is saying goodbye to leave the house, the father is seen reading newspapers while the mother is seeing the son at the door. When he comes back home in VCAFE1.3, the father is sipping a cup of tea and watching television. In another example of VCAFE2.1, reading newspapers is also what the father does when his son wants to give him a present. For HALI4, the old man in white hair is also relaxing when he is given a box of beer.

Briefly, Vietnamese males in 25 commercials related to Lunar New Year are mostly portrayed as either a successful young man or a relaxing old man.

#### 4.3. Underlying ideologies reflected in the TV commercials

As the ideology has been presented, traditional ethics of Vietnamese lifestyle have been deeply affected by Confucian beliefs which value the conventional ideal of male superiority. Consequently, Vietnamese women are said to take a secondary place in family. There is an old folk song that goes:

Ước gì mẹ có mười tay  
Tay này bắt cá, tay này bắt chim  
Một tay xe chỉ luôn kim  
Một tay cấy lúa, tay tìm hái rau

A mother wishes that she had ten hands  
One hand to fish, one hand to catch the bird  
One hand to knit and sew  
One hand to cultivate rice plants, another hand to pick up  
vegetables

Một tay ôm ấp con đau  
 Một tay vo gạo, tay cầu cúng ma  
 Một tay vung vãi đằng xa  
 Một tay bấp nức, cửa nhà nắng mưa

Một tay quơ củi, muối dưa  
 Một tay vâng lệnh, bằm thừa, đỡ đần  
 Tay này mẹ giữ lấy con  
 Tay nào lau nước mắt... mẹ còn thiếu tay!

This folk song illustrates a huge number of household tasks that a woman is supposed to perform such as cooking (“One hand to fish, one hand to catch the bird”), cleaning the house (“One hand to cook, to clean the house when it is rainy or sunny”), obeying the older (“One hand to obey and help others”), taking care of the child (“One hand to embrace the sick baby”, “One hand to hold the baby”) or doing miscellaneous things (“One hand to knit and sew”, “One hand to cultivate rice plants, another hand to pick up vegetables”). Yet, she has no time for herself, leading to the depression. It might not be the case for the modern Vietnamese women. However, part of this image is still visible and can be easily found if the situation is investigated.

Deep-seated in Vietnamese society is the idea of woman being a family cook and a household chores performer. It has been illustrated in old sayings such as “Vắng đàn ông quanh nhà – Vắng đàn bà quanh bếp” – “If the man is not at home, there is solitude in the house – if the woman is not at home, there is solitude in the kitchen” or “Đàn bà chẳng phải đàn bà – Thối cơm, cơm khét, muối cà, cà chua” – “A woman is not a woman if she fails to cook.” These have reflected a gender bias towards women regarding her cooking skill. A woman should be responsible for family meals including breakfast, lunch, and dinner even when she has entered the job market. Besides, household chores are regarded as women’s duty with cleaning, doing laundry, washing,... A

One hand to embrace the sick baby  
 One hand to clean rice, another hand to pray  
 One hand to take care of exterior events  
 One hand to cook, to clean the house when it is rainy or sunny  
 One hand to collect woods and make pickles  
 One hand to obey and help others  
 One hand to hold the baby  
 There is no hand left to wipe the tears... and the mother still does not have enough hands!

typical day of a woman can be filled with layers of jobs like this.

A woman is also in charge of educating her child. An old saying goes: “Con hư tại mẹ, cháu hư tại bà” – “If a child is naughty, it is the mother and the grandmother’s fault.” The women in this instance hold full accountability for the child’s behavior without mentioning the role of the father or the grandfather. Newly-born babies are often seen being taken care of by the grandmother and the mother. The image of women holding the baby and taking the baby outside is common these days. As the time is spent more with the grandmother and the mother, the child grows a strong bond with them and orients towards them as a more loving parent, rather than towards the grandfather and the father.

Taking care of all family members is part of a woman’s job as well. After getting married, the woman is supposed to fully devote her time to her family. She is expected to be well cognizant of her parents-in-law, even cousins-in-law and most importantly her husband and her child. She is advised to put everyone before herself to keep a happy family and to be seen as a good daughter-in-law.

Considered as a secondary place to the husband, the woman steps back for her man. Daily speech in greeting has proven as “ông” – “grandpa” always comes before “bà” – “grandma”, “bố” – “dad” always comes before “mẹ” – “mom” when the spouse is together. It is understandable that under Confucianism philosophy, men are superior to women and



greetings are likely to be influenced. The addressing system has been followed for thousands of year, naturally becoming a habit and it is difficult to change such a fixed communication pattern. This representation reflects the usual talking of Vietnamese people, leaving advertisers no other choice. Subsequent to this routine, words develop into actions. Being less appreciative, the women let the men take control. He is the one who carries out significant events as in the old sayings “Đàn ông xây nhà, đàn bà xây tổ ấm” – “Men make house, women make home” or “Tậu trâu, lấy vợ, làm nhà” – “Having a vehicle, getting married (to a girl), building house.”

In all investigated frames, women are seen smiling while doing their task. This can be interpreted as there is no pressure on them and they are willing to cover all these household chores. It is seemingly a joy when they can take care of their family. This image indicates that women show no objection to performing these routines and they are accustomed to their domestic side. Hence, the current beliefs about women’s roles are naturally revealed and can be easily accepted by TV viewers.

## 5. Conclusion

Employing the frameworks of Fairclough [14], Halliday [22] and Kress and van Leeuwen [15], some findings have been concluded from analyzing Vietnamese women’s representation in a number of TV commercials relating to Lunar New Year.

Vietnamese women have been illustrated in six roles. They range from the woman as a family cook, the woman as a teacher and caretaker of the children, the woman as a caretaker of family members to the woman as a household chores performer, the woman as a loving portrayal of parenthood to children and the woman as a subordinate partner of her man. These representations are shown visually and verbally. All the frames have a frontal angle, which denotes an involvement of viewers into

the actions of participants in the advertisements. Also, the lack of direct gaze of these frames displays an offer of viewers’ power over what they are watching. In other words, viewers are given freedom in evaluating the information they receive from these commercials. Verbally, there are not many voiceovers; hence, the verbal analysis is not conducted frequently.

Vietnamese men are reflected as either a young successful individual or a relaxing old man. The only direct gaze among all advertisements belongs to the image of a successful man, displaying dominant power of this gender. That the women are seen smiling while covering their job signifies their willingness as well as displays no resistance to change the current situation for Vietnamese women. Vietnamese women in the investigated TV advertisements are represented as they sacrifice more than men in the domestic domain with a lot more tasks to do. Therefore, it can be said that the existing gender ideologies are still maintained and there seems to be no opposition to this creed.

From what has been observed, the author has given some thoughts on the issue. Living in a Confucianism-affected society, Vietnamese women are likely to be dominated by men. Though the situation is less severe than it used to be, women these days should gain more equality as men can be in charge of what normally belongs to women’s jobs. Only then can women prove themselves in the public sphere. Less time spent on domestic chores certainly offers them more opportunities in the job market. By doing this, women can ascertain their aptitude for what men usually do, eliminating any superiority or inferiority. However, the circumstance should take a long time to change as there are men who feel embarrassed doing household chores or becoming too close to children. They mostly fear that they will lose their masculinity and gradually their dominance in the family if they often do women’s jobs. Hence, awareness should be raised via different means of information conveyance. The author believes

such a linguistic research can contribute partly to the process but many more studies on the same issue can suggest some changes to the situation. Experts on this subject are earnestly invited.

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# Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán về hình ảnh người phụ nữ Việt Nam trong các quảng cáo liên quan đến dịp Tết Âm lịch

Nguyễn Hồng Liên

*Khoa Tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội, Xuân Thủy, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam*

**Tóm tắt:** Bài báo mô tả hình ảnh người phụ nữ Việt Nam trong các quảng cáo liên quan đến dịp Tết Âm lịch dưới góc nhìn phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán. Sử dụng kết hợp khung phân tích của Fairclough (1989), Halliday (2014) và Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), bài báo đã đưa ra những kết quả nghiên cứu như sau: (1) người phụ nữ Việt Nam được thể hiện đồng thời trong nhiều vai trò khi đặt trong bối cảnh gia đình; (2) hệ tư tưởng Nho giáo - yếu tố được cho là có ảnh hưởng đến sự biểu hiện các vai trò này – đã được tìm thấy trong các quảng cáo; và (3) tuy có sự khác biệt về giới trong sự mô tả nhưng dường như không có sự phản kháng nào đối với hệ tư tưởng này.

**Từ khoá:** Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán, quảng cáo truyền hình, hình ảnh người phụ nữ, hệ tư tưởng về giới.

## LIST OF INVESTIGATED TV ADVERTISEMENTS

| No | Abbreviated name | Full name   | Type of products |
|----|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1  | BIBI             | Bibica      | Cookies          |
| 2  | CD               | Cung Đình   | Instant noodles  |
| 3  | CIF              | Cif         | Liquid cleanser  |
| 4  | COCA             | Cocacola    | Soft drink       |
| 5  | DUTCH            | Dutch Lady  | Milk             |
| 6  | HALI             | Halida      | Beer             |
| 7  | HAO              | Hào Hào     | Instant noodles  |
| 8  | K+               | K+          | Cable TV service |
| 9  | KD1              | Kinh Đô 1   | Cookies          |
| 10 | KD2              | Kinh Đô 2   | Cookies          |
| 11 | KN1              | Knorr 1     | Seasoning powder |
| 12 | KN2              | Knorr 2     | Seasoning powder |
| 13 | KN3              | Knorr 3     | Seasoning powder |
| 14 | KN4              | Knorr 4     | Seasoning powder |
| 15 | MAG              | Maggi       | Sauce            |
| 16 | MILO             | Milo        | Instant drink    |
| 17 | NCAFE            | Nescafe     | Instant drink    |
| 18 | NEP              | Neptune     | Cooking oil      |
| 19 | OMO              | OMO         | Detergent        |
| 20 | PEP              | Pepsi       | Soft drink       |
| 21 | PHO              | Con Bò Cười | Cheese           |
| 25 | SAM              | Samsung     | Mobile phone     |
| 23 | SAXI             | Sá Xì       | Soft drink       |
| 24 | VCAFE1           | Vinacafe 1  | Instant drink    |
| 25 | VCAFE2           | Vinacafe 2  | Instant drink    |