

# "Gender Stereotypes in Healthy Life Advertisements in the Media"

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Rišner, Iva

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij Engleskog jezika i književnosti i  
Njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Iva Rišner

**Rodni stereotipi u medijskom reklamiranju zdravog života**

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

Osijek, 2019.

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku  
Filozofski fakultet Osijek  
Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost  
Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij Engleskog jezika i  
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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Goran Milić, PhD

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Scientific area: humanities

Scientific field: philology

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U Osijeku 24. rujna 2019.

Iva Ristuer, 012074983

Ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

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## **Abstract**

This paper starts from the concept of stereotype and describes examples of Croatian gender stereotypes found on wall towels that were very popular in Croatian kitchens from the late 19th century to the 1960's. Upon that follows the analysis of language and style characteristics of slogans used in healthy food advertisements published in a blog for women, and the analysis of the structure, language and stylistic means in various ads and commercials. The analysis is focused not only on various gender stereotypes, such the one about childcare as primarily mother's duty, but also on other stereotypes, such as those about age. The analysis includes the ads for sun tanning and skin protection products, and luxurious advertising campaigns for two brands of table water that respect gender equality: *Evian* and *Jana*. Special attention is paid to Evian's campaign entitled "The Baby Bare Necessities" and Jana's "*Deep above all*". The end of the paper brings conclusions about language and paralanguage characteristics of commercials advertising the healthy way of living, and to what extent ads and commercials for healthy products observe or break gender stereotypes.

**Key words:** ads and commercials, healthy living, gender stereotypes, *Evian*, *Jana*



## 1. Introduction

This paper analyses gender stereotypes in healthy life advertisements in the media. The analysis is divided into two main parts. In the first part, stereotypes and healthy life advertisements in the media are analysed in general. This is followed by a comparison of healthy life advertisements that use pictures or text to specifically address the female or male public.

The analysis of healthy life advertising in the media starts from the assumption that ads for products intended for women use more adjectives, whereas ads for products targeting male public contain more verbs<sup>1</sup>. The author of this paper also checks her own assumption that colours in the illustrations of “feminine” ads will be softer and tenderer, as opposed to “masculine” ads, where the colours are expected to be stronger and more intensive and aggressive. Another assumption is that women are more frequently motivated to buy products that help them regulate their weight, whereas men are most frequently offered products for strengthening and building of muscles and for general body fitness.

A further hypothesis is that manufacturers are guided by four steps of advertising strategy in promoting their products: Attention, Interest, Desire and Action<sup>2</sup>; and that ads promoting alternative on these four steps.

The paper starts from the analysis of stereotypes in general and then focuses on the examples of Croatian gender stereotypes found on wall towels, the so-called “zidnjaci”, that were very popular in kitchens in Croatia from the late 19. Century to the 1960’s. Then follows the analysis of the language of slogans in healthy food advertisements published on a blog for women, and analysis of the structure of various ads and commercials related to the stereotype that child care is primarily a woman’s – mother’s duty. The analysis also includes ads for skin care and sun protection products and impressive advertising campaigns of two companies selling table water: *Evian* and *Jana*, both of

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that ads intended for women use more nouns than verbs is confirmed by the research conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, which analysed the language in several magazines intended either primarily for female or primarily for male readers (Vlastelić and Čunović 2016: 91-107).

<sup>2</sup> More details about advertising strategies can be found on: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/AIDA.htm>

which respect gender equality. The distinctive feature of *Evian*'s commercials is the engagement of children in the campaign, whereas *Jana* breaks gender stereotypes in every possible way.

The end of the paper brings conclusions about the use of language in slogans advertising healthy living and about the extent to which healthy products ads and commercials follow or break gender stereotypes.

## **2. Stereotypes in Linguistics and Culture**

Modern linguistics distinguishes the concepts of gender and sex. The research conducted in the 1970's shows that "it is not enough to directly connect a language characteristic with sex but that other variables, such as age or social group affiliation, must also be taken into account". (Pinter 2011: 393) D. Cameron (1988: 8) says: „(...) to 'stereotype' someone is to interpret their behavior, personality and so on in terms of a set of common-sense attributions which are applied to whole groups (...)".

There are many sex-related stereotypes in the society. A stereotype is regarded as a proven pattern that seems to represent the most acceptable behaviour at a given moment; it does not consider all characteristics of the observed phenomenon, but only the dominant (prevailing) ones. "Gender studies have disrupted stereotypes", says H. Hefer (2007: 169), and male-female stereotypes are confirmed only in relation to each other; "(...) neither femininity nor masculinity can be understood on its own: the concepts are essentially relational. In other words, masculinity is only meaningful when it is understood in relation to femininity and to the totality of gender relations." (Connell 1995: 68)

Numerous literary works and films are based on stereotypes (Snow White, Cinderella...), but today, these literary and movie stereotypes are more and more frequently twisted as in the movies *Shrek* or *Legally Blonde*.

### **2.1. Gender Stereotypes on Croatian Walls**

Women "belong" in the kitchen and they have been appraised on the basis of the food they were preparing. This kind of message could be observed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the late

1960's on the kitchen walls in many Croatian households, where "moral threads" hung embroidered on kitchen towels next to cookers, kitchen sinks or tables. These embroidered towels, locally known as *kuvarice* or *zidnjaci*<sup>3</sup>, with similar messages could be found throughout Central Europe.

These popular embroideries show that gender roles are defined based on stereotypes: the woman's (wife's) task is to clean the house, wash and cook, and man's (husband's) to provide the money. If the woman accepts the role intended for her, keeps her house tidy and cooks delicious meals, her man (husband) will be happy and content and they will have a stable marriage. This can be confirmed by the following examples:

*Kuharice zlato moje/ Tebe jelo hvali tvoje.*  
(Cook, my precious, my dear / You are praised by your meal)

*Vrijednog muža dobar ručak čeka, a u sobi postelja meka!*  
(For hard working husband fine lunch is made / In the bedroom waits a soft warm bed!)

*Ljubo peri, meti, čuvaj, kuhaj!*  
(Darling, wash, sweep, cook and keep!)

*Koja žena muža čuva, dobar ručak njemu kuha!*  
(If for her husband a woman cares, she for him good meals prepares!)

*Dobar objed mužu daj pa će u kući biti raj!*  
(Give your husband a good meal / And your home will like Eden feel!)

*Za svakog muža sreća je ta kada žena dobro kuhat zna!*  
(For every husband it's real bliss / When his wife a great cook is!)

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<sup>3</sup> More about these embroidered kitchen towels (*vezene krpe*, *zidnjaci* or *kuvarice*) can be found in a text by Božica Brkan on the link: <http://oblizeki.com/kuvarice-%E2%80%93-ljepota-mudrost-zivota-i-odgoj-s-kuhinjskih-zidova-7635>, <http://biologija.com.hr/modules/AMS/article.php?storyid=9271>, from which some of the illustrations and examples have been taken as well.



Image 1. Example of an embroidered kitchen towel with the slogan: *Give your husband a good meal / And your home will like Eden feel!*

Wall towels also confirm other stereotypes connected with male/female relations: the wife should be younger than her husband: *Kuharica što je mlađa, večera je odmah slađa!* (*If the cook is very young, the meal tastes better on your tongue!*); wives who talked much were never popular, as we can learn from one of the very popular wall towel slogans: *Kuharice manje zbori da ti ručak ne izgori!* (*Cook, you should better chatter less / Or your lunch will be a mess!*):



Image 2. Towel with the slogan: *Cook, beware and chatter less / Or your lunch will be a mess!*

Another stereotype is the wife's material dependence on her husband, which is indirectly suggested in the slogan: *Zašto gledaš sad u lonac kad mi nisi dao novac*<sup>4</sup>. (*Don't look in the pot now, honey / You know you did not give me money!*).

## 2.2. The Language of Men and the Language of Women

Differences between the language of men and the language of women were first more seriously scientifically discussed in 1975 in the book *Language and Woman's Place* by Robin Lakoff. The authoress made a list of similarities and especially of differences between the two versions of language. Lakoff considers the language of women as an aberration from norm which is set by the language of men (although this is not discussed) and she sets up the "gender deficit model" that has been widely criticised since<sup>5</sup>. In the 1980's, the relations between male and female language were in the focus of research of Deborah Frances Tannen, who set up the *difference theory*, also known as the *two cultures theory*. To date, results of numerous other scientific and popular scientific studies were published<sup>6</sup>. Among other things, men are said to have different relations to the world of colours than women: men can distinguish between several basic colours whereas women have a much more elaborate vocabulary in that sphere. One of the characteristics of the language of women is also frequent use of euphemisms, and avoidance of the clear expression of thoughts, especially if these thoughts are indelicate or "rough". Women also more frequently use expressions that soften their statements, eg., "I am sorry, but I think that...". In their language, women use fewer vulgar and non-standard words, so that they frequently don't understand „men's conversations“, such as those on sports with many specialised words and metaphoric and metonymically figurative meanings. A similar situation applies to women when they talk with each other about beauty, body care preparations or cosmetic products.

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<sup>4</sup> The example and the previous photograph are taken from a text by Željka Bonacin at the following Internet address: <https://dugopolje.org/kuharice-manje-zbori/>

<sup>5</sup> Lakoff was criticized because she considered the female language as a divergence from the gender-unmarked male norm (Bertoša 2001: 63).

<sup>6</sup> More details on the research can also be found in the following papers: Bertoša 2001, Savić 1995, Vlastelić and Čunović 2016.

### 3. Gender Stereotypes in Media Advertisements of Healthy Living

The internet is undoubtedly the fastest growing mass medium with greatest impact on the modern society. Therefore, the healthy products manufacturers also address their potential customers through the network. Texts promoting specific products and healthy living on some internet pages address primarily women, although the messages may apply to men as well. This fact leads to the assumption that women are believed to pay more attention and take more care about healthy living and that for them it is more important to look good because good appearance is connected with healthy habits and healthy food. Women are stereotypically considered beautiful only if they show no signs of ageing, and healthy life largely contributes to such looks. Thus the authoress of the text “Top 20 Healthy Food Quotes To Inspire You“<sup>7</sup> addresses women through the internet. Her target public is clearly identified by the symbol in the upper right corner of the photograph on the opening page of the site. Furthermore, slogans are illustrated with photographs showing only women and there is one photograph showing only a woman’s torso, but that torso could equally belong to a man, but with the head missing, the true identity and sex of the “owner of the body” remains uncertain.



Image 3. Cover photograph for the text “Top 20 Healthy Food Quotes To Inspire You“

<sup>7</sup> The text can be found on: <https://www.stylecraze.com/articles/slogans-on-healthy-food/>

The cover photograph shows a young, smiling woman eating her salad as “green food” – symbol of health. The photograph is dominated by strong colours of which only green is typical for healthy food advertisements, whereas other colours are primarily used to suggest vivacity and to draw the attention of potential readers. Here are the full texts of slogans that will be analysed:

“1. *‘You are what you eat, so don’t be fast, cheap, easy, or fake.’* – Unknown

It’s true – you are what you eat. Foods that contain unnatural ingredients are surprisingly quick to prepare and cheap. But you will pay a heavy price later. So, be mindful about the food choices you make now.

2. *‘If you keep good food in your fridge, you will eat good food.’* – Errick McAdams

One of the best pieces of advice I’ve ever got! Kitchen makeover (includes your fridge and pantry) is essential if you want to eat healthily. No matter how much self-control you have, if you have unhealthy food stashed in your fridge or kitchen cabinets, you will end up eating it. So, toss out the unhealthy foods and re-stock with healthy foods.

3. *‘By choosing healthy over skinny you are choosing self-love over self-judgement.’* – Steve Maraboli

Healthy doesn’t mean skinny<sup>8</sup>. We all have different genes, different body types, and different shapes. Eat healthy, stay active, and take less stress. Skinny or not, you will be in better shape than when you were eating unhealthy and not working out.

4. *‘Your diet is a bank account. Good food choices are good investments.’* – Bethenny Frankel

Think about it! Money is not the only type of investment. You invest in yourself as well. You learn new skills and also pay for your food. Why not pay for food that’s healthy and gives a return in terms of good health and a fit body and mind?

5. *‘Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper.’* – Adelle Davis

Never miss breakfast! Have a light lunch and a lighter dinner. Yes, just the opposite of what you’ve been doing!

6. *‘Healthy eating is a way of life, so it’s important to establish routines that are simple, realistically, and ultimately livable.’* – Horace

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting that the author of the statement uses the word “skinny” (potentially negative) instead of “slim”.

I am sure you have heard of thousands of diets. Most people fail to continue being on “a diet” because that’s not their lifestyle. Choose a diet that goes best with your food habits, make it a habit and part of your lifestyle over a period instead of a stint for three days. If you are used to eating rice, nothing wrong with it. Make sure you practice portion control and consume a source of protein and lots of veggies with it.

7. *‘Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food.’* – Hippocrates

**Food is medicine.** Fruits, veggies, whole grains, healthy fats, lean proteins, seeds, and nuts are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Consuming organic, whole foods will help you protect from various diseases.

8. *‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.’* – Lao Tzu

Take that step now. You might be craving for unhealthy food and going back and forth deciding whether or not to have it. Don’t! Stop yourself now, and you will not feel the same kind of craving tomorrow.

9. *‘Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.’* – Jim Rohn

Isn’t that true? It’s not the four walls, but your body is where you live. So, keep it clean, keep it healthy. Choose foods that are good for you.

10. *‘The greatest wealth is Health.’* – Unknown

Money cannot buy happiness or health. It sure can buy a little bit of time. But why settle for “a little bit” when you can **LIVE** a long and fulfilling life?

11. *‘If you can’t pronounce it, don’t eat it.’* – Common Sense

As simple as that! Check the ingredients list at the back of packaged/canned/bottled foods. If you see more than five ingredients, and you take some time to pronounce them, keep it back on the rack.

12. *‘You don’t have to eat less, you just have to eat right.’* – Unknown

Eating less is not going to make you healthy. It sure can make you skinny fat, which is not healthy either. Eat. But choose nutritious foods and practice portion control.

13. *‘An apple a day keeps the doctor away’* – Proverb

Apples and other fruits have a lot of health benefits. Include at least two fruits in your diet. Your health will improve, and so will your nails, skin, and hair.

14. *‘Health is a relationship between you and your body.’* – Terri Guillemets

The middleman is food. Depending on the type of food you consume, your health will either improve or deteriorate.



15. *'The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.'* – Ann Wigmore

Think fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, healthy fats, and plant and animal lean proteins. Compare with frozen food, deep fried food, ready-to-eat foods, and fast foods. Which do you think will slowly poison you?

16. *'A healthy outside starts from the inside.'* – Robert Urich

If your skin and/or hair looks dull and lifeless, you must take a look at what you are consuming. Consume healthy, and you will look healthy.

17. *'What you eat in private you wear in public.'* – Unknown

What do you eat when no one's looking? If you think no one will know, you are wrong. It will show on your body if you make it a habit of cheating every day. By the way, aren't you cheating yourself?

18. *'Moderation. Small helpings. Sample a little bit of everything. These are the secrets of happiness and good health.'* – Julia Child

Eating healthy doesn't mean you have to deprive yourself of the various, delicious food options. There's no harm in tasting a little bit of everything. Once again, portion control is the key.

19. *'Any food that requires enhancing by the use of chemical substances should in no way be considered a food.'* – John H. Tobe

Artificial flavouring, taste enhancers, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives are essentially chemicals. If your food predominantly contains these, it can cause a lot of harm to your health. Switch to whole, organic foods.

20. *'Success is the sum of small efforts—repeated day-in and day-out.'* – Robert Collier

You are trying to build a new lifestyle and a healthier future. And it won't happen in a day. You have to keep at it. Make it a habit, and you will see results.

There you go – 20 quotes that you can write or print and paste on sticky notes in places where you generally store food. Remember, Rome was not built in a day. It will take time to build a healthier and better YOU. Keep yourself inspired with these quotes, and you will certainly attain your health goals.

The analysis shows the following:

1. The text contains a great number of adjectives, some of which are frequently repeated (good, healthy, small, simple).

2. Imperatives are frequently used, e.g. in quotes 5, 7, 9, 11... These imperatives could use the adverb *now* to suggest faster and stronger effects, as in *Take that step now* (quote 8). Imperatives can also have the negative form to put stronger emphasis on recommendations or warnings: “*If you can’t pronounce it, don’t eat it.*” (quote 11).
3. In some of the slogans that have the structure A = (means) B there are metaphors: “*Your diet is a bank account.*” (4), “*Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food.*” (7), “*Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.*”(9), “*The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.*” (15).
4. In addition to metaphors, slogans also use other stylistic means:
  - contrasts: healthy – skinny (3), food = medicine / poison (15), outside – inside (16), private – public (17);
  - rhetorical questions: *Isn’t that true?* (9);
  - proverbs: “*Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper.*” (5), “*An apple a day keeps the doctor away*” (13).

It can be concluded that in the text on the slogans advertising healthy food, although it was published in a female blog (the author is a woman and it is primarily intended for the female recipients) there are not only many adjectives, but there is also frequent use of imperatives, which only partially confirms the hypothesis based on the study of the magazines in Croatian language intended primarily for female (*Elle*) or male (*Men’s Health*) reading audience (Vlastelić Čunović 2016: 91-107). Ads can be described as picturesque; they are based on contrast and metaphor and one of the very suggestive metaphors is that presenting the body as a vessel that needs to be filled with healthy food. The initial hypothesis of the author of this paper regarding the colours dominating the photograph in the ad is also only partially confirmed: they are not pastels but very intensive colours.

#### 4. Analysis of the Examples of Ads and Commercials for Healthy Products

One of the gender stereotypes that is being analysed in the ads refers to products for children: the assumption was that these products would be advertised by women, i.e. by mothers. Some products on the Croatian market carry the mark “Chosen by moms”, which, among other things, suggests that these products are of high quality and that they are healthy for children. Already the slogan “Chosen by moms, because moms know what is best for their families” (*odabrane mame.com*) confirms two stereotypes: the first is about women and the other is about the role of woman as mother. Woman-mother knows best what is good and therefore also healthy for her child. For example, in the monthly magazine “Ljepota i zdravlje” (May 2019: 146) there is an ad for a brand of puffs (Kanaan puffs), which says: “Mothers are the group through which Kanaan observes itself; they choose what is best for their families...”

Among the products intended for children are also prams, and modern parents want them to stimulate their babies into healthy sitting and lying positions. Prams are very important products bringing a significant percentage of income to the manufacturers of equipment for babies and toddlers. Therefore, popular brands advertise their products both in printed and electronic media, as well as in the internet. The “gb Qbit+” pram is advertised in different countries and in different media. In the monthly magazine *Ljepota i zdravlje* (May 2019) this model of pram is advertised by means of superlatives as “the most sold pram” and the advertisement brings a list of the pram’s good sides and advantages. To give it even more importance, the pram is personified and metaphorised; it is said to *have a multitude of smart functions and intelligent solutions*, and it is interesting that the text of the ad is accompanied by a photograph of a baby in the pram next to a young man. The stereotype has been broken: the pram is not advertised by a mother but by a father. The comparison of the described ad with the ads for the same pram for the English speaking market shows that Ads in English follow the stereotype because there the same pram is advertised by women, by mothers<sup>9</sup>. Ads for prams of the same manufacturer in other languages are much more frequently contrary to the

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<sup>9</sup> <https://youtu.be/tNKR2eFJuLw>

stereotype and use young men - fathers as subjects, as in the ads in Portuguese<sup>10</sup>, Spanish<sup>11</sup>, French<sup>12</sup> and Dutch<sup>13</sup>. It can be assumed that “gb Qbit+” intentionally breaks the stereotypes suggesting the awareness and cultural modernity of their brand, but this is not the case in the ads for the market of the United Kingdom where the stereotype of the woman, the mother being more closely connected to a baby than a father is still observed.

Recently, the retail chain *Lidl* has presented the web site *lupilu.hr* that deals with the health and development of babies and small children. This site proves that *Lidl* follows gender stereotypes. The article describing the event says that the promotion of the web site was attended by numerous blogger mothers with their children, although at the end of the report it is pointed out that future texts will deal with “everything that parents have to face when a sweet new-born baby enters their lives” (*Ljepota i zdravlje*, May 2019: 144). Photographs on the web site *lupilu.hr* also show children only with their mothers and not with fathers.

Health as a goal and as a result of certain treatments is also pointed out in ads for sun protection creams, all of which follow the stereotype and use women in advertisements. The hypothesis that skin care products would be advertised by women is confirmed in the ad of the brand *Ducray* published in Croatian monthly magazine *Ljepota i zdravlje* (May 2019: 31). The ad says that “the UV cream Melascreen SPF50+ lightens brown spots on the skin caused by exposure to Sun and guarantees a very high level of Sun protection, (...) blocks UVA and UVB rays, helps in confining brown spots and protects the skin against aging caused by exposure to Sun (...)”. The fact that there is a photograph of a young woman next to the text of the ad makes one draw the conclusion that men need no Sun cream although it helps them, too in maintaining the health of their skin. This ad may be regarded as a result of the stereotypical comprehension of women and men: a woman must care about the health of her skin and she must protect her skin against aging, whereas a few wrinkles on a man’s face are not a problem, in fact, they will make him look more manly and add to his charm! Another reason why the ad uses a photograph of a woman may be of purely commercial nature and

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mKUMrGDERE>

<sup>11</sup> <https://youtu.be/0jSqFokTDTI>

<sup>12</sup> <https://youtu.be/ONgv941XflY>

<sup>13</sup> [https://youtu.be/\\_7kgA\\_O0sJ4](https://youtu.be/_7kgA_O0sJ4)

resulting from marketing orientation: women are generally expected to take more care about themselves and about their beauty because men, but also other women, judge them on how young, beautiful and healthy they look.

However, if we visit the official web site of the brand *Ducray*<sup>14</sup> we may discover a difference between the ads in printed media and those in the internet. The ad for a similar but newer cream on the official *Ducray* web site in the internet is shorter, organized in notes and it uses different formatting for emphasis. The importance of the cream is amplified by the repetition of the adjective *now*, and confidence in the quality of the product is enhanced by presenting the results of clinical studies. Here is the text of the ad for the cream on the official Ducray web site:

Melascreen UV is the 1<sup>st</sup> photoprotector from Ducray Laboratories that limits and reduces brown spots and protects against photo-aging.

Triple-innovative formula:

- a new **patented filter system**, for maximum UVB and UVA protection
- a new **active, RonaCare®AP**, corrects brown spots and protects against cell damage with antioxidant action 100 times higher than vitamin E
- new **pleasant** texture "**dry touch**"

Results:

- **Improves evenness of skin tone: 93% satisfaction\***
- **Thanks to RonaCare®AP, cell damage is reduced: -87%\*\***

*\* Clinical study on 68 subjects with melasma or lentigo, product applied twice a day and before each sun exposure, for 29 days. % of satisfaction.*

*\*\* In vitro test: % of cell damage inhibition for keratinocytes irradiated by UVA.*

A click on the link about the routines for protection of the face and body against the Sun<sup>15</sup> brings up a photograph that is also used in the Croatian monthly magazine but with a slight difference: the photograph on the English web site is combined with an advertising slogan that is missing on the same photograph used in the Croatian magazine:

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ducray.com/en-gb/melascreen/melascreen-light-cream-spf-50-uva>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ducray.com/en-gb/care-routines/my-sun-protection-face-and-body-routine>



Image 4. Photograph from the official English Ducray web page; it is identical to that in the ad in the Croatian magazine, but with a slogan in the lower left corner.

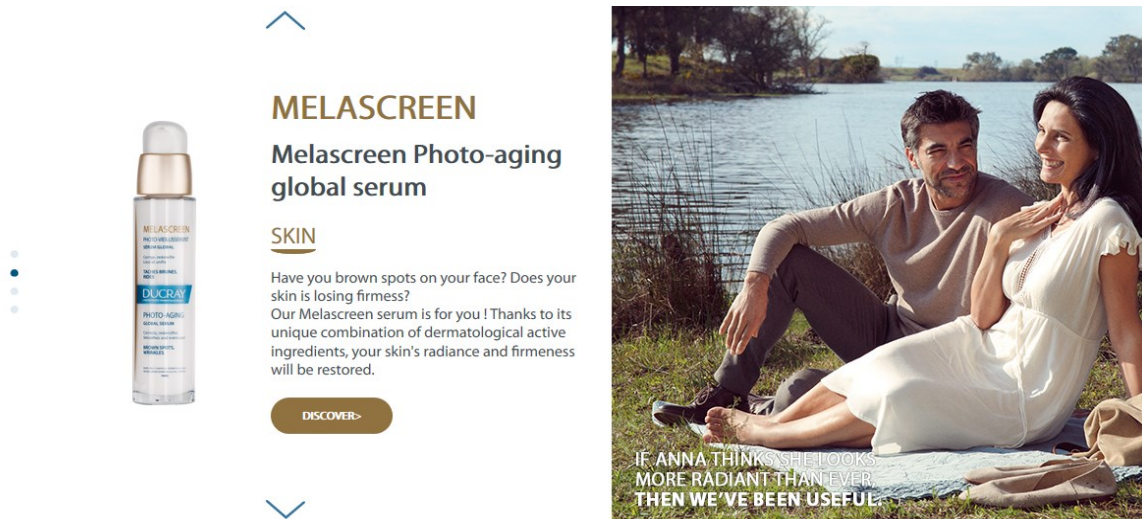
Croatian readers could connect the *Ducray* Sun protection cosmetics only with a photograph of a woman, thus maintaining the stereotype that only women need to care about their skin and protect it against Sun and aging. Official *Ducray* cosmetics web pages differ in their stereotypicality from the printed versions of the ad. The following example shows that the protection of the skin against Sun is associated with women, but when it comes to healthy and beautiful hair, this is something men should have as well.

Image 5. Photograph in a hair shampoo ad on the official English web site of the *Ducray* company

Ads for other *Ducray* products observe gender equality, and the targeted public in the ads for other products is the family as well.

On the Croatian web page of the representative of the *Ducray* brand,<sup>16</sup> there are the same photographs illustrating a range of products but unlike the ones on the British site, these photographs are without text in the lower left corner so that they are missing the intimate addressing of all individual recipients of the message as potential customers. Messages in the photographs illustrating the advertised products on the English web site begin with conditional clauses that contain different, usually female names (there are some ads with both female and male names as well). The following main clause is always the same and unchangeable: it suggests that *Ducray* as a brand (in the ad the company refers to itself in the first person plural – we) has a solution for everyone. Thus the messages in the English language start from the individual and get to the group, i.e. to all recipients, both male and female, especially in ads promoting hair shampoos and other products for hair treatment, although most photographs illustrating these ads show women.


Images 6a; 6b and 6c. Ads of the brand *Ducray* on its English web site also include personalized messages with names of the persons in the illustrations, which suggests authenticity of the message.




The advertisement is split into two main sections. On the left, there is a product shot of a white spray bottle with a gold cap, labeled 'MELASCREEN PHOTO-AGING GLOBAL SERUM' and 'DUCRAY'. To the right of the product, the text reads: 'MELASCREEN Melascreen Photo-aging global serum' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the word 'SKIN' is underlined. The main body of text asks, 'Have you brown spots on your face? Does your skin is losing firmness? Our Melascreen serum is for you ! Thanks to its unique combination of dermatological active ingredients, your skin's radiance and firmness will be restored.' At the bottom of this text block is a dark blue button with the word 'DISCOVER' in white. On the far right, there is a photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a blanket by a lake. The woman is wearing a white dress and has her hand on her face, looking towards the man. The man is wearing a grey sweater and is looking at the woman. At the bottom of the photograph, there is a white text overlay that reads: 'IF ANNA THINKS SHE LOOKS MORE RADIANT THAN EVER, THEN WE'VE BEEN USEFUL.'

Image 6a

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.oktal-pharma.hr/hr/zastupstva/ducray/melascreen-linija>







**DENSIMAGE**  
 DENSIMAGE redensifying  
 shampoo

**HAIR**

Discover our new complete anti-aging range  
 DENSIMAGE for the hair and scalp !


[DISCOVER >](#)






IF ISABEL'S HAIR HASN'T  
 LOST ITS LUSTER ,  
 THEN WE'VE BEEN USEFUL.

Image 6b







**KERACNYL**  
 Keracnyl Serum

**SKIN**

Do you have spots, marks or even first wrinkles?  
 Don't worry, discover our Keracnyl serum, a  
 comprehensive care for adult blemish-prone  
 skin !

[DISCOVER>](#)





IF AUDREY IS NO LONGER AFRAID OF STANDING OUT,  
 THEN WE'VE BEEN USEFUL.

Image 6c

Everything said above leads to the following conclusion: companies that advertise their products in printed media have only limited space available for their ads, so they must usually pick only one photograph as illustration for the advertised product. This frequently leads to stereotypical



emphasis of women as those who take more care about the health of their skin. Women whose faces and bodies are presented in advertisements look young, healthy and beautiful because, according to stereotypes, only such women are attractive to men, and it increasingly also includes the women's satisfaction with their looks and with themselves in general. Internet commercials and ads of the brand *Ducray* also include images of men and women advertising a product – hair shampoo – together, which shows that *Ducray* also counts with men as customers. However, the ads are not unified for all markets: on the web pages in English, each picture in the ads carries a written slogan using names of the photographed women, whereas on the Croatian web site these slogans are missing. Therefore, English ads leave the impression of being more individualised and of addressing the targeted public more intimately – a quality in communication with consumers that is missing in the Croatian version.

In the sphere of ads and commercials advertising healthy products, one section has special significance: the ads and commercials advertising water as the healthiest of all drink products. These ads are very common in modern media; for some time already, water has been a great source of profit, and the ever-growing competition forces companies to try to attract potential consumers with attractive ads and commercials. Advertising water should address as many senses of the consumers as possible. To that end, producers of ads and commercials combine pictures and video materials with sound. Their ads and commercials are presented by celebrities (*Evian*) or by people with a great personal story (*Jana*); they have well elaborated and directed scenarios and they use the high-end technology in production. As a result, such ads and commercials usually stand out in the advertising world. This paper brings a comparison of commercials for the brands *Evian* and *Jana* on the *YouTube*, and the analysis also includes the relation to gender stereotypes and stereotypes about youth and maturity (old age).

The comparison of advertising materials confirms that both brands observe gender equality. *Evian* also promotes racial equality, and they deliberately avoid stereotypes, as for example in the use of colours: *Evian* uses pink and blue in a way that suggests that both colours belong to both sexes<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>17</sup> Photographs are taken from the text on: <https://digitalagencynetwork.com/the-evian-babies-are-back-wearing-oversized-clothes-in-the-live-young-campaign/>



In the commercials for *Evian* the stereotypical relation between the young and the old changes as well. About a decade ago, special attention was drawn by commercials in which *Evian* uses children in the roles of and dressed up as adults. In 2017, Patricia Oliva, Global Marketing Director at *Evian*, explained the purpose of their advertising campaign with the following words:

For us, babies are a way to use the metaphor to explain our promise: that when you drink *Evian* we awake the baby inside you. There is joy and wonder when you see the world through the eyes of a baby. When you see yourself as a baby you see the world as oversized.<sup>18</sup>

The fundamental idea behind *Evian*'s commercials is that their water rejuvenates and it is realised by inverting the stereotypes about youth and adulthood or immaturity and maturity. This year, new commercials were launched and they again provoked comments from all over the world<sup>19</sup> because they once more brake the governing stereotypes and they also introduce intertextuality. The babies in the commercial were computer generated, and the title of the commercial - "The Baby Bare

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<sup>18</sup> Photographs are taken from the text on: <https://digitalagencynetwork.com/the-evian-babies-are-back-wearing-oversized-clothes-in-the-live-young-campaign/>

<sup>19</sup> There are several published texts about these commercials and some of them are cited in this paper; in 2013, the text on <https://www.klix.ba/magazin/zanimljivosti/evianove-bebe-su-se-vratile-i-sladje-su-nego-ikad/130423101> was published; the text referred to in note 10 was published in 2017, and the text about the *Evian* commercial babies on: <https://super1.telegram.hr/relax/evian-bebe-su-se-vratile-u-reklamu-i-dalje-plesu-ali-vise-nisu-tako-neozbiljne/> is from 2019.

Necessities”<sup>20</sup> reveals the source (animated film “The Jungle Book” and the music from it) used by the authors of the commercial to intertextually toy with. As Al-Siyami explains it, intertextuality can be understood as “a process of reference to textual and contextual features from which the user arouses the attention and memory of the readers to original sources that are similar in content and form” (Al-Siyami 2003: 42). This commercial connects the discourse and the social background, i.e. the cartoon *The Jungle Book* and the *Evian* water because it is intended to invoke positive memories of freedom, vivacity and cheerfulness and to associate water with youth, optimism and happiness. Everything is additionally underscored with hip-hop dancing which also points at a strong influence of para-lingual elements<sup>21</sup> on conveying the message of the commercial. The stereotype about the adults working and children playing and having fun<sup>22</sup> is intentionally twisted in the *Evian* commercial by means of funny dancing and images. By doing so, authors of the commercial emphasize the message that everyone who drinks the advertised water can do what they want – *Evian* makes everyone feel young and free. *Evian*, free of all gender, race or age prejudices, leads the consumers to health, freedom and youth.

Images 7a and 7b, Screenshots from *Evian's* commercial “The Baby Bare Necessities” in which toddlers were animated and dressed as business people:

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<sup>20</sup> <https://youtu.be/7zAo9rB7k5U>

<sup>21</sup> On para-lingual elements, see Vukelić 2013.

<sup>22</sup> The same stereotype also provided the foundation for some of the commercials for Haribo gummy bears: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56f3oG8iWno&feature=share> – The commercial shows adults at a business meeting, but what they are discussing is their experience with Haribo gummy bears, they become like children and talk with children's voices.



Image 7a



Image 7b

The viewers watching the said commercial are simultaneously exposed to various auditive, visual and para-lingual stimuli that intertwine on many levels: music and dancing invoke the memories of the world depicted in the popular cartoon *The Jungle Book* – a world in which little and simple things, the bare necessities, bring freedom and joy. In addition to this intertextual level, the commercials affect the viewers directly and indirectly. Direct effect is achieved through simple messages promoting the protection and preservation of our planet and emphasizing the qualities of *Evian* – its

purity and naturalness, all of which is rounded up in the central slogan of the campaign: “Live young”. Indirect effects are achieved by avoiding the use of strong bright colours that may seem aggressive. Instead, a neutral pastel colour is used suggesting relaxation, freedom, youth and health, which is illustrated by the following two screenshots:



Image 8a

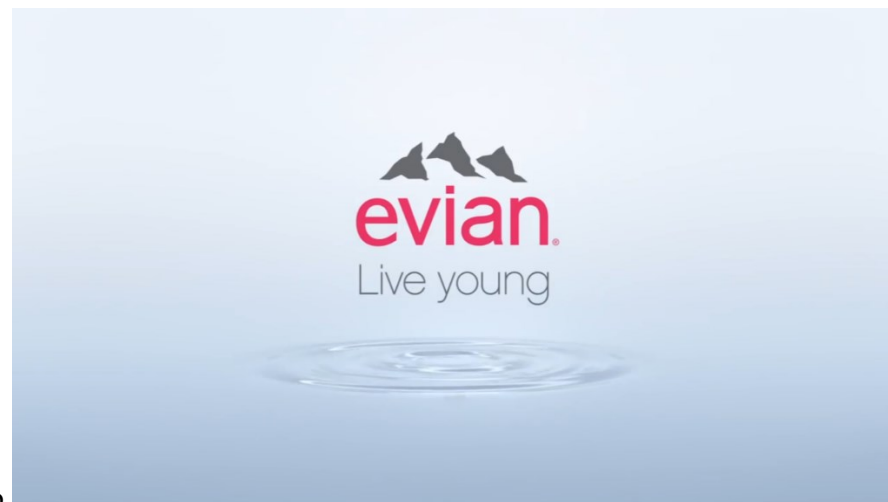


Image 8b

It can be concluded that the commercial for *Evian* water does not break gender stereotypes; the children advertising the water are of both male and female sex. Gender correctness is also present in advertisements of the Croatian water *Jana* that use a slogan with many adjectives: It is a water of “Primordial pristine pureness, with impeccable mineral composition, intact, hidden under ancient

dolomite rocks.” Jana presents itself as healthy water using the antithesis based on the opposites deep – high and down – up: the water coming up from the deep has a quality which is highly above all other spring waters. This is also confirmed in the slogan: “Deep above all”. In its advertising campaigns *Jana* carefully uses both men and women, and it is not advertised by professional actors or celebrities but by individuals with a story, by people who have risen above the others through their hard work and originality. Promoting its slogan “Deep above all” *Jana* has recorded commercials with Vernesa Smolčić<sup>23</sup>, an astrophysicist working at the Faculty of Science in Zagreb, and with Goran Čolak<sup>24</sup>, holder of several Croatian and world records in free diving. They have both told their unusual success stories. Both commercials are dominated by various shades of blue, a colour symbolising both the sea (the deep) and the sky (high and above):

Image 9 - A screenshot from Jana’s advertising campaign with the slogan “Deep above all” and featuring Vernesa Smolčić

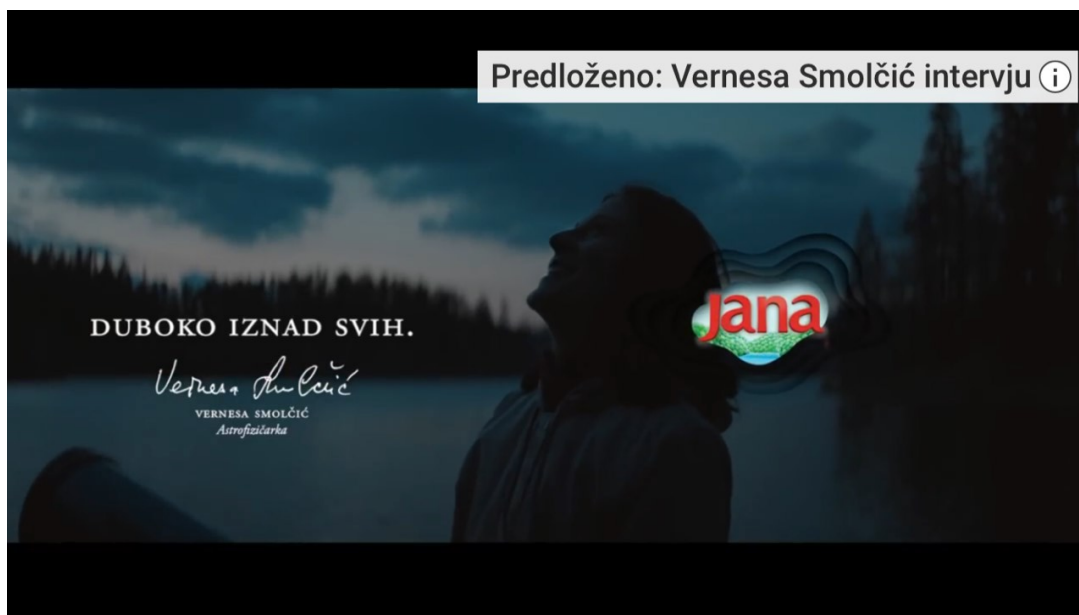


Image 10 - A screenshot from Jana’s advertising campaign with the slogan “Deep above all” and featuring Goran Čolak

<sup>23</sup> <https://youtu.be/8c-dEKUdyfI>

<sup>24</sup> [https://youtu.be/\\_w\\_UbZbuEhg](https://youtu.be/_w_UbZbuEhg)



#### 4. Conclusion

How important gender stereotypes are and how much attention is paid to gender correctness can be concluded from the law passed in the United Kingdom earlier this year (2019). Based on that law, two advertisers (*Volkswagen* and *Philadelphia*) were for the first time punished for gender incorrectness. Here is one of the comments of the verdict: “Ella Smillie from the Fawcett Society welcomed the ASA’s precedent rulings, saying: ‘It’s about time advertisers woke up and stopped reinforcing lazy, outmoded gender stereotypes. (...) he complaints insisted the ad perpetuated gender stereotypes by showing 'men engaged in adventurous activities in contrast to a woman in a care-giving role’ “. <sup>25</sup>

The British society no longer tolerates stereotypes about the social roles of men and women. This paper analyses to what extent some British and Croatian advertising campaigns follow stereotypes in their ads and commercials. Although the research was not complete, it indicated (un)observance of gender correctness in commercials advertising particular health promoting

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/watch-volkswagen-philadelphia-adverts-banned/>

products. The analysis of the slogans confirms that women are more interested in and more frequently deal with health issues, especially with those advertised on web sites intended for women. The language of women contains personifications and metaphors (such as the metaphor: *body is a vessel*) and it is also characterised by frequent use of adjectives and various stylistic means such as rhetorical questions, contrasts or antitheses (e.g. private /public; healthy/skinny, etc.).

The comparison of advertisements published in magazines (printed media) and on the web pages in the internet shows some differences: photographs posted in printed media may create a wrong impression about a certain brand and may refer to a gender stereotype. For example: the cream protecting the skin against aging is advertised by women, which refers to the stereotypes according to which, on the one hand, women age faster and on the other hand they are attractive and beautiful only as long as they are (or look) young. Some advertisements in Croatia confirm another stereotype, the stereotype of a woman as mother who knows best what her family needs and what is healthy and good for her children. The slogan “Chosen by mothers” used in an advertising campaign on the Croatian market is a typical example of a slogan based on the woman – mother stereotype.

This paper analysed two brands promoting gender equality in advertising, and natural spring water as a healthy product. These two brands are *Evian* and *Jana*. Ads and commercials for *Evian* in its “The Baby Bare Necessities” campaign are intertextual and they overturn the stereotype according to which children and young people have fun and adults work. Animated babies in *Evian* commercials both work and have fun, but the main point is that the babies wear business suits and neck ties, just like the adults. The message that *Evian* makes everything possible and erases boundaries and barriers between the young and the adult (or old) is contrary to the stereotype about the gap between the young and the old. Advertisements for *Jana* also break up with stereotypes; the main characters in ads and commercials in the campaign under the antithetic slogan “*Deep above all*” are a man and a woman who are both above all in their non-typical lines of work.

Finally, it can be concluded that if male-female stereotypes do exist in health products advertisements, they are often combined with other stereotypes, such as those about the young-old relations. Brands that successfully promote and advertise their products therefore knowingly twist stereotypes and turn them upside down.



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