CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background Information

Recent studies (e.g. Harrison, 2008; Kaye, 2009; Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010; McNeill & Douglas, 2011) and media reports (e.g. Aida Ahmad, 2014, in *The Star*; Costa, 2011, in *Marketing Week*; Holmes, 2012, in *The Wall Street Journal*; London, 2013, in *Daily Mail*) on socio-culture and global markets uncover rising interests in personal grooming among contemporary men. This new motivation in male grooming suggests the emergence of "New Man" -- "metrosexuals", coined by Simpson (2013/1994) and defined as:

> *The typical metrosexual is a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis — because that's where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference.* (Simpson, 2013/2002, in *Meet the Metrosexual*)

However, numerous research and media reveal uncertain social perception and acceptance (e.g. Cheng, Ooi, & Ting, 2010; McNeill & Douglas, 2011), due to its deviation from the cultural norms that associate beauty/vanity with females/femininity (e.g. Wolf, 2002; Zobaida Akhter, 2013). This becomes a great concern and dilemmas in marketing male grooming products, as metrosexuals' perception towards metrosexuality affect metrosexuals' consumption towards grooming products (Cheng, Ooi, & Ting, 2010).

Therefore, the study aims to analyse how metrosexuality is negotiated through social interactions within the packaging discourse of *L'Oréal Men Expert (LME)*. The term 'negotiate' reflects two main concepts of the study, i.e. the perception of "discourse as action" (Norris & Jones, 2005) (i.e. viewing text as social actions to achieve certain goal(s)) and the gender 'negotiation' between masculinity and femininity in metrosexuality.

Since the studies on advertisements have been overdone, the packaging of the products is chosen as the subject. The packaging discourse will be analysed using the core principle of Scollon's (2001, 2004) *Mediated Discourse Analysis (*MDA), i.e. "an action-oriented approach" (Wohlwend, 2013, p. 56), by focusing on 'discourse in action'. In other words, the study analyses how social actions (within the packaging discourse) are mediated by the multimodal features of the discourse (small 'd'), which are strategized by social practices/Discourse (big 'D')[i].

Incorporated along are the elements of structural semiotics, i.e. paradigmatic analysis and Barthesian Order of Signification. Due to the emphasis on binary opposition in paradigmatic analysis, the study will conduct a comparative analysis on LME's counterparts, *L'Oréal Paris (LP)* (refer Section 3.2.1, para. 2)*,* based on the linguistic framework constructed on the basis of the Difference Framework in language and gender.

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[i] The notion of small "d" and big "D" discourse/Discourse are based on Gee's (2010, cited in Gee and Handford, 2012) perspective of discourse.

1.1   Problem Statement

Issues addressed can be viewed from two perspectives, i.e. the marketers and researchers.

From the marketing context, the issues that need to be addressed are: 1) controversy on metrosexuality (*How to get the society (men in particular) to accept metrosexuality, i.e. vanity among men?)*; and 2) construction of desired brand/product image (*How to persuade men to accept feminine beauty products, especially those with strong feminine brand image, e.g. L'Oreal?*).

Like many studies, one of the research-based issues is to fill in the research gaps, i.e. the need of analysing packaging discourse (rare subject in linguistics) from the linguistic perspective (see Section 2.5.3). With reference to the differences between linguistic and marketing semiotics (see Section 2.6.2.8), this linguistic study emphasizes[ii] on: 1) *meaning producer* (packaging designers, not consumers/meaning receivers); 2) interpretation of discourse for meaning creation and producer's intention (i.e. how/why meaning is constructed, instead of meaning consumption and consumer's behaviour/purchasing intention); 3) critical literacy positioning (not only brand/marketing positioning); and 4) both linguistics and non-linguistics features (not only the overall aesthetics). The incorporation of both linguistic and marketing semiotic knowledge provide a more comprehensive linguistic framework. See Appendix A.

[ii] This linguistic emphasis refers to linguistic concerns and approaches. Although some marketing elements may be involved, they are not the ultimate goal of the study but assist in fulfilling the ultimate linguistic goal.

1.2   Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to analyse how metrosexuality is negotiated through social interactions within the packaging discourse of LME. As such, the objectives of this research are as follow:

1. To identify the social actions within the packaging discourse of LME.

2. To analyse how the packaging discourses of LME (in comparison with LP) are strategized in each social action to appeal to men[iii].

1.3 Research Questions

In order to address the research objectives mentioned, the following research questions have been devised:

1. What are the social actions presented in the packaging discourse of LME?

2. What are the multimodal features in the packaging that contribute to the social actions?

3. How are the multimodal features for each social action strategized for marketing and gendering purposes?

[iii] Although the buyers may be the opposite sex of the target consumers, Schwartz (2013) reveals that the gendering impact of packaging does not affect the buyers, but the consumers.

1.4   Significance of the Study

With reference to the problem statements (see Section 1.1), the study contributes in providing insights into 1) marketing strategies through semiotics; 2) language and gender; and 3) metrosexuals and metrosexuality. Like many other research, it also aims to fill in the gaps of the existing literature. The marketers, researchers, academics and interested readers on metrosexuality are expected to benefit from the study. Having LP and LME as examples or rather role models, the semiotic study aims to reveal the strategies of gender (metrosexual) marketing as well as gender (metrosexual) negotiation through a wide range of gendered signs, from verbal features to non-verbal features (e.g. colour, lines, shape, tactile/touch, olfactory/smell, etc.).

1.5   Scope and Limitation

According to Holmes (2012), the distinction between male and female skincare products goes beyond packaging design, as it also includes lower price and specific formula to suit male skin nature. Although the scope of study under MDA is wide (i.e. all elements that contribute to negotiating metrosexuality), the study limits its scope to gender stereotypes, packaging practices and packaging discourse. The rationale is to conduct an in-depth study and fulfil the aim of the study in analysing how a special gender identity can be negotiated (persuaded) within the stereotyped gender discourse.

Since the study focuses merely on L'Oréal, and especially upon L'Oréal products found in Malaysia, the findings cannot be generalised. In addition, the findings also cannot be generalized in terms of fixed gender notions and geographical locations, as the meanings of

gendered notions cannot be fixed and are constantly undergoing change. For instance, masculinity is an unfixed concept and is seen in different ways at different moments in time as well as in different geographical locales (Messerschmidt, 2012). Hence, the validity of the gender-based linguistic framework in this study is challenged. This applies equally to the notion of the beauty ideal, which L'Oréal tries to address through "geocosmetics" (*A world-wide approach to beauty rituals*, n.d.). Moreover, skin-whitening is mainly applied in the eastern countries (see Section 2.3.3). Hence, this also explains why the analysis on only L'Oréal products found in Malaysia and skin-whitening products cannot be generalised.

It is also important to note that the products are limited within the production year of 2013. Thus, old or new packaging before and after 2013 is not included in the analysis.

Last but not least, the reliability of the findings may be questioned due to the lack of validation (triangulation) from the social actors.

1.6   Thesis Organisation

This section provides an overview on metrosexuality, male grooming industry and the study. Further discussion will proceed with literature review (Chapter Two), research methodology (Chapter Three), findings and discussion (Chapter Four), and lastly, conclusion and recommendation (Chapter Five).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter provides insights into the related studies and theoretical framework that shape the body of knowledge underlying the study. The discussed topics can be classified into three main areas, i.e. 1) background information (sex, gender, beauty and metrosexuality, see Section 2.1 to 2.4.1); 2) main issues (social perception and marketing/negotiating metrosexuality, see Section 2.4.2 to 2.5); and lastly, 3) research approaches used (language and gender, semiotics and discourse analysis, see Section 2.6).

2.1   Traditional vs. Contemporary Concept of Sex and Gender

Both sex and gender are *traditionally* built on dichotomies (i.e. binary *difference*), categorized under male/female and masculine/feminine respectively. However, they differ in their categorization. Sex is determined through biological differences (nature), e.g. 'genitalia and other physiological differences' (Oakley, 1976) and 'chromosomal differences and hormonal production' (Wharton, 2005), cited in Foo (2010, p. 48). Nevertheless, sex and gender whilst differently defined, are still interconnected and often conflated in society.

On the contrary, gender refers to socially constructed behaviours (nurture) that are imposed upon these biological differences (Shapiro, 1981, cited in McElhinny, 2003; *see also* Cameron, 2005; Kilmartin, 2007; Talbot, 2010), and need to be learnt. As Simone de

Beauvoir (n.d.) explained, "there is a difference between the innate biological condition of being female and the achieved socio-cultural status of being a woman" (translated and cited in Cameron, 2005, p. 485). Ironically, sex (biological categorization) is the 'widely used criterion' for human division in 'all known cultures' (Martin & Halverson, 1981; Maccoby, 1988; Bussey & Bandura, 1999, cited in Ellis *et al*., 2013, p. xi), suggesting higher validity of the categorization it makes compared to gender.

Lorber (1994/2009, p. 112) defines gender as a 'process, stratification, and structure'. According to Deborah Tannen (1990, cited in Cameron, 2005), one of the advocates of the Difference Framework (see Section 2.6.1.1), gender is acquired in early life through socialization. Gender, described by Wharton (2005, p. 20), is "social understandings of what men and women are". (Cited in Foo, 2010, p. 48) Cialdini and Trost (1999, *ibid.*) define gender as 'rules and standards' of the social behaviour of a male/female. This aligns with Erving Goffman's (1983, cited in Lorber, 1994/2009, p. 118) gender concept as "Felicity's Condition" that enables critical judgment on an individual's act as (in)appropriate and normal/strange, based on how the individual's sex and behaviour correspond to the social practices, which underlines a set of appropriate acts for the respective sexes.

However, Connell (1995, cited in Foo, 2010) debates that these can be changed by 'social processes or reforms such as media and education' (p. 48). Moreover, many 'cultural semioticians' regard gender as stereotypes, known as 'myth or mythologies' (Chandler 2007, p. 143), that has been naturalized due to social convention, i.e. a social concept that is widely believed to be true, although it may not be the case (see Section 2.6.2.4). This explains the controversial perception towards metrosexuality (see Section 2.4.2).

Nonetheless, since the Third Wave feminism (early 1990s), the sex/gender distinction has been questioned and the concept of gender based on *binary difference/opposition* has been 'superseded' by the "*diversity* of gendered and sexual identities and practices" (Cameron, 2005, p. 482). See Ellis *et al*. (2013) for explanation on the indistinguishable sex/gender.

Shifting gender from dichotomy (binary difference) to diversity (continuum) witnesses a paradigm shift of gender concept from gender is 'something you have' to gender is 'something you do' (Cameron, 2005, p. 484). The latter focuses on the concept of 'performativity' (p. 484), i.e. Judith Butler's gender concept and a term derived from Austin's philosophical work (*ibid.*). It is also known as 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, cited in Messerschmidt 2012, p. 57).

Similarly, the shift of gender concept is reflected in psychological perspective as well. While gender identity is referring to the "bipolarity of individual traits" (Spence, 1984), some argue that everyone is capable of having both masculine and feminine traits (Gill *et al.*, 1987; Bem, 1974). (Cited in Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 86) Just as Bem (1974) proposed, an individual can be described as "masculine, feminine, undifferentiated or "androgynous[iv]"(*ibid.*).

The concept shift is both theoretical and material, from scholars' perspectives on world changes and from the changes in the world itself (Cameron, 2005). This is verified by Wickes and Emmison (2007) on its impact on theoretical and methodological practice, as well as Jurik and Siemson (2009) anticipating its impact on the future development of gender studies and theory (cited in Messerschmidt, 2012). Refer Section 2.1.1.

[iv] "Androgynous" describes individuals who possess an equal balance of both masculine and feminine traits. (Bem, 1974, cited in Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 86).

2.1.1   The Impact of Paradigm Shift in Sex/Gender on Academia

This shift of sex/gender concept has been aptly described by Cameron (2005) as 'Modern' feminist approach (Second Wave) and 'Postmodern' feminist approach (Third Wave), which the latter questions, challenges and deconstructs the former seemingly fixed construct. She stresses that the 'Postmodern' approach is not a new approach discarding or replacing the old one. Both approaches are "historically overlapped and coexisted" (p. 483), but the 'balance between the two has altered" (p. 484).

Although sex and gender are indistinguishable, Simpson and Myar (2010, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) claim that linguistic and gender studies often differentiate them, since 'gender' is used to 'discriminate' people based on socio-cultural behaviour, including speech. Like any studies, the subject (which in this study -- gender) needs to be identified, and thus, the traditional concept is 'preserved' in this study.

As for the gender shift towards diversity, research foci has moved from 'big stories' (universal differences between male and female) to 'local explanation' (masculinities and femininities in different social contexts). As mentioned in the limitation (see Section 1.5, para.2), the validity of the gender-based linguistic framework is questioned, due to the unfixed concept of masculinities (Messerscmidt, 2012). By saying so, the study acknowledges that masculinity is not universal but localised.

In addition, research diverts its 'mainstream focus' (generic "men" and "women") to "liminal" focus (non-mainstream and "queer" identities) (*ibid,* p.484). Some examples are Baker (2002, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) on gay language and Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011) on metrosexual's language. Likewise, the study on metrosexuality addresses the 'liminal focus' (i.e. non-mainstream focus) on the queer identity.

Lastly, sociolinguists started placing sex/gender on the continuum, which intra-group differences (e.g. plurality of masculinit(ies)) and inter-group similarities (cross-boundary between masculinity and femininity) are as significant as differences between groups (distinctive masculinity and femininity) (Cameron, 2005). While acknowledging the contemporary gender diversity, the study also addresses the traditional dichotomy by implementing the Difference Framework (see Section 2.6.1.1). In other words, it aims to depict the interaction (tension) between both traditional dichotomy (gender stereotypes) and contemporary diversity (queer identities, i.e. metrosexuality) of gender, which explains social controversy and uncovers marketers' manipulating strategies in overcoming traditional gender dichotomy to accept contemporary gender diversity.

2.2   Masculinity vs. Masculinities

Masculinity *(singular)* refers to the *hegemonic masculinity* that is conceptualized by Raewyn Connell (1987, 1995, cited in Messerschmidt, 2012, p. 58) as:

> *the form of masculinity in a given historical and society-wide setting that structures and legitimates hierarchical gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity, and among men.*

While studies have been conducted based on existing gender frameworks in academia, gender studies (Connell 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, cited in Messerschmidt, 2012) have revealed that the 'hegemonic masculinity' in academia is unfixed, although these 'masculinities' were originally constructed under the same ground -- "legitimating justification for gender inequality" (p. 64) in patriarchal society.

Hence, reformulation was proposed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 829) to construct "a more complex model of gender hierarchy" emphasizing women's agency; to

acknowledge masculinities at global, regional and local levels; and to recognise the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity, contradictions between masculinities and possible democracy in gender. Messerschmidt (2012) continues that: 1) women may be a salient factor in cultivating hegemonic masculinity, 2) hegemonic masculinities can be challenged and reproduced, and 3) how neoliberalism affects the construction of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities in *periphery* countries. All these new ideas proposed strongly reflect the current metrosexuality. This leads Messerschmidt (2012) to conclude that:

> *No social science concept is ever fixed and no social science scholar has a monopoly on its correct use.* (p.63)

The statement above is supported by Entwistle (2000, cited in Foo, 2010) that not all cultures adhere to the same masculinity and femininity, as well as Wodak (1997, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) and Badinter (1993, cited in Ourahmoune, 2009) who strongly believe that gender is not unchangeable or immutable, since they are culturally constructed and socially learnt. This challenges the validity of cultural-based research construct, e.g. theory or framework related to gender pragmatics.

2.3 Gender and Beauty

Beauty has been highly associated with femininity, due to its over-emphasis towards female (Gottschall et al., 2008); (stereotyped) ideal female body image (e.g. Wolf, 2002; Leong, 2006); conformity and suffering for beauty ideal (e.g. Wolf, 2002; Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009; Foo, 2010; Zobaida Akhter, 2013); and female beauty marketing (e.g. Jaya Ranee Shanmugam, 2002; Tan, 2010; Pan, 2013).

The emphasis on female physical attractiveness are widely justified by two main reasons, i.e. 1) evolutionary reason, as fertility indicator (Symon, 1979; Buss, 1989; Sugiyama, 2005; Gottschall 2007) and 2) cultural factors, promoting patriarchy and beauty myths are predominantly Western (Wolf, 2002). (cited in Gottschall *et al*., 2008) Gottschall *et al*.'s (2008) content analysis on a collection of folktales from diverse cultural areas reveals that this emphasis is evolutionary, judging from the cross-cultural emphasis that is (near) universal. The study further claims that there is no beauty myth, but overlapping of attractiveness judgments across cultures, which attractiveness are set by both evolutionary biology and cultural factors. However, the finding is rather questionable with scientific conclusion derived from non-scientific sources, i.e. folktales.

Regardless of any reasons, greater emphasis on female attractiveness is universally indisputable. The sufferings endured by females in conforming to ideal body image verify the femininity of beauty and vanity. Although historical facts reveal that male grooming is never current (Toyad & Gopinath, 2012), the current phenomenon -- metrosexuality -- works as a counter-discourse since it challenges the femininity of beauty and vanity.

2.3.1 Gender and Beauty Ideals

Since more emphasis has been given to female attractiveness (see Section 2.3), it gets more explicit consideration than male in most societies (Ford & Beach, 1951, cited in Gottschall et al., 2008). According to Tungate (2011, p. 162), the 'cliche of beauty' is "tall, thin, fair-skinned". Wolf (2002, p. 1), in her bestseller, *The Beauty Myth,* adds in with blond hair and flawless face, in other words, 'perfect' (also supported by Blood, 2005, cited in Foo, 2010). She further declares that such ideals are predominantly Western.

Although Dobzhansky (n.d., cited in Gottschall *et al.*, 2008) states that studies on physical attractiveness can only make sense by addressing both biological and cultural factors, the latter is emphasised in this study. Numerous scholars/authors claim that female beauty ideals (mainly skin fairness) are culturally constructed through many factors: 1) as physical markers for distinction, i.e. social status, gender and class (e.g. Leong, 2006; Pan, 2013); 2) for patriarchal interests (e.g. Wolf, 2002; Zobaida Akhter, 2013); 3) through media projection for commercialization of fashion and beauty (e.g. Pan, 2013; Tungate, 2011); 4) through dolls (e.g. Raynor, 2009; Winterman, 2009); and 5) through cultural values and histories, e.g. moral connotations (Dolan, 2008); religion and mythology (Chand & Chaudhary, 2012), colonisation (e.g. Farquharson, 2008), and cultural development that changes the beauty standards (*China - Tortured Beauties*, 2013).

Although the reasons behind beauty ideals may vary among the scholars, they share the same concept that beauty ideals are culturally constructed and (thus) inconsistent, supported by Baumann (2008, cited in Foo, 2010) and claimed by Tungate (2011) as having trends like fashion. This aligns with *L'Oréal's* belief that "beauty and diversity are intimately related" (*Diversities*, n.d.).

Initiatives taken by L'Oréal to address beauty diversity include diversifying human resources, marketing and purchasing (*Our approach to promoting diversities*, n.d.). To realise the goal to realise "beauty for all" (*Our ambition*, n.d.), its research teams develop a science of local observation on beauty rituals , i.e. "geocosmetics", to understand and fulfil the beauty needs accross cultures.

Another similarity of different beauty ideals is their association to femininity. First, the femininity in/of beauty ideals is attributed by their imposition on females (see Section 2.3).

As Entwistle (2000, p. 15) claims, female body is "heavily mediated by culture and expresses the social pressure brought on to bear on it". (Cited in Foo, 2010, p. 7) Hence, aptly described by Wolf (2002) and many other scholars as 'beauty myth', "women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it" (p. 12). Second, the beauty ideals serves the patriarchal interests. Wolf (2002) comments that beauty is 'not about women', but 'men's institutions and institutional power' (p. 13), also supported by Zobaida Akhter (2013) and Bartky (n.d., cited in Collins, 2011). Third, the belief that the female body is "conceptualized on the basis (of) masculine parameters" (Farganis, 1986), i.e. "the male body serves as a basis for metaphorical representations...which denies the relevance of women's bodies" (Keywood, 2000), cited in Foo (2010, p. 50). This explains the dilemma of women with athletic body in fulfilling the feminine notion (Krane et al., n.d.), as embodiment is highly engendered (Kimmer, 2000) and serves as a sexuality marker (Burke, 1996) that defines genders (Witz & Marshall, 2003; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Mahalik et. al. 2005; Libbon, 2007; Malacrida & Low, 2008) (*ibid.*).

2.3.2 Skin-Fairness as Beauty Ideal

Skin-fairness is one of the beauty ideals, which females have been using various methods to achieve (Foo, 2010), including the traditional Chinese myth on pearls (Leong, 2006). It has once been a universal beauty myth (Wolf, 2002; Tungate, 2011) until tan became trendy in the West in the twentieth century (see Section 2.3.3, para.2). Nevertheless, women's appreciation/obsession, for skin fairness prevails and thrives in the East, especially in Asia (Leong, 2006; Farquharson, 2008; Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009; *Skin-whitening big business in Asia*, 2009; Ashikari 2005 and Chong 2005, cited in Foo, 2010; Pan, 2013).

2.3.3 Cultural Factors of Skin-whitening

One of the cultural factors that contributes to the interest of skin-fairness is its role as a physical marker. According to Pan (2013, p. 6), fair skin has been a traditional indicator to "higher social status and wealth" in Asia, as higher status women did not work in the fields under the sun. Hence, dark skin is associated with labourers (Dikotter, 1992 and Siddle, 1997, cited in Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009). Likewise, in the 1700s and 1800s, Western aristocrats and rich burghers distinguished themselves from the working masses by applying lead oxide powder to preserve pale skin (Leong, 2006).

However, the fascination with skin-whitening made a drastic turn during the 'bronze skin' phenomenon spread across the West in the twentieth century (Leong, 2006, p. 168), perceiving tanned skin as the new ideal (Pan, 2013, p. 5). This creates skin-tone tension between cultures (Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009). Pan (2013) claims skin-tanning among modern Caucasian women as ironic, since they represent the hegemonic female, whose fair complexion is highly desired by most women. Although modern Westerners prefer a tan, it shares the same connotation, i.e. high social status and wealth, as only the rich ones could afford on costly vacations in far, exotic and sunny places (Featherstone, 1982, cited in Leong, 2006). Thus, tanned skin signifies affluent lifestyle (Foo, 2010).

Yet, this connotation is short-lived as mass tourism (1950s and 1960s) made such luxury possible for the working classes. (Leong, 2006) In relation to the growing medical awareness about the higher vulnerability of the fair-skinned towards sun damage and their higher tendency in getting skin cancer and premature ageing, the recent underlying meaning of a tan is "beauty and good health" (p. 168, *ibid.*).

Nevertheless, a study conducted at the University of Toronto (reported in Dolan, 2008) reveals that men prefer fair women, while women prefer dark men. Fair-skinned women are preferred among men from all races, due to associated moral assumptions that align with stereotyped female behavioural ideals, i.e. "innocence, purity, modesty, virginity, vulnerability and goodness". Conversely, darker men are attractive to women, along with the connotations -- virility, mystery and villainy.

2.3.4 Gender and Skin Fairness

With reference to the study on LME's *White Activ*, the issue of concern is not only one counter-discourse, i.e. metrosexuality (see Section 2.3), but also the possibility of having another counter-discourse, i.e. skin fairness as new male attractiveness (see Section 2.3.4). However, the first thing to clarify is the gender connotation of skin fairness.

Alhough the factors mentioned depict different reasons of obsession for fair complexion, they share similar interest as female beauty ideal, especially among Asian women. Thus, it connotes strong femininity (Leong 2006, Datta 2008 and Glenn 2008, cited in Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009). This is verified by Asian females' social pressures in employment and marital prospect, relative to skin-whitening (Leong, 2006; Dadie & Petit, 2009, cited in Foo, 2010; Pan, 2013).

Moreover, some perceive whitening for men attractiveness as a counter-discourse. First, Chand and Chaudhary (2012) claim the two advertisements analysed as counter-discourses, i.e. a female advertisements for skin-tanning and a male advertisement for skin-whitening. Second, Cheong's (2013) *Male Enlightenment*, published in *The Star* newspaper, suggests

the novelty/controversy of "skin-brightening" practice among men. Third, when *LME* was first launched in 2007, there were only Pure & Matte for oily skin, Hydra Energetic for dull/tired skin, and Vita Lift for anti-aging (*New Range Just for Him,* 2007). Skin-whitening series, *White Activ,* did not exist yet.

Fourth, skin fairness is extolled as female beauty in the Chinese culture. This is reflected by the saying, 'One whiteness can cover three kinds of ugliness' (Bray, 2002, cited in Krishen, LaTour, & Alishah, 2009; Leong, 2006) or "一白遮百丑"(yi bai zhe bai chou), translated to "one white can cover up a hundred uglinesses" (Pan, 2013), although challenged by Hao (2005, cited in Pan 2013). Conversely, fair-skinned Asian men are negatively perceived as "小白脸" (xiao bai lian) translated as "little white face". The term connotes (belittles) men who live/spend on women's money. Whereas, men with tanned skin signify masculinity with association to physical outdoor activities and health. Fifth, Dolan's (2008) *"Why men prefer fair-skinned maidens and women like dark, handsome strangers"* verifies the counter-discourse of male skin-whitening (see Section 2.3.3, last para.). Sixth, the euphemism "dusky" for dark-skinned women and marked term "black beauty" reflect its deviation from the beauty norm. Finally, the recent rise of male skin-brightening products (Cheong, 2013) shows that they were not present/popular before this.

However, some may suggest otherwise about the femininity of skin-whitening. First, according to Krishen, LaTour and Alishah (2009, p. 15), "there isn't a statistically significant difference between male and female skin tone tension within each ethnicity". Second, some (Draelos 2002 and Phelan 2002, cited in Foo, 2010) view skin colour as physical representation of one's health condition, attractiveness, social status and wealth. Third, while fair, soft, smooth and young are claimed by Jaya Ranee Shanmugam (2002) as

stereotypes in the language of female beauty, they are eventual results of skincare even to men (Cheong, 2013). Fair skin is the result of skincare with sun protection.

Fourth, it may have nothing to do with social contexts but rather geographical factors, just as L'Oréal's research team on 'geocosmetics' believes that "beauty ritual" are passed on "by tradition, influenced by climate and by local living conditions" defining "different ideals of perfection between cultures" (*A world-wide approach to beauty rituals*, n.d.). For instance, ideal ritual for preventing aging in hot and humid countries is sun protection (*ibid.*).

Fifth, since metrosexuality is a counter-discourse, the associated elements, e.g. fashion, grooming products/services, advertisements and attractiveness, work against hegemonic masculinity. Inevitably, attractiveness itself is connotated as feminine, regardless of fair or dark-skinned. Sixth, male's handsome ideals remains uncertain due to "little empirical work on men's beauty practices" (Barber, 2008, p. 459). Although there are some speculations, the body is focused instead. For instance, Harrison's (2008, p. 64) 'aspects of male beauty' are "handsome" facial features and "buff and muscular" body. However, her concept of a handsome face is not specified.

Although there are debates about skin-whitening as a counter-discourse for men, the femininity of skin-whitening remains indisputable. Thus, skin fairness will be perceived as a counter-discourse of masculinity. This is due to the "antifemininity" emphasis in the notion of masculinity, which has been widely acclaimed, e.g. Branon & Juni, 1984; Connell, 2005; Levant et al., 2007; Levant, 2011; Mahalik et al., 2003. (Cited in Beaglaoich, Sarma, & Morrison, 2013, p. 18).

2.3.5 Skin-whitening vs. Skin-brightening

Cheong's (2013) article, *Male Enlightenment*, highlights the general misconception between the terms "whitening" and "brightening", while discussing the issue of increasing skin-whitening (/brightening) practices among men. According to Dr Jason Yip (2013, *ibid.*), "the term 'whitening' is loosely used" on products that brighten the skin instead of making it "a few shades lighter", which the latter cannot be achieved without "harmful bleaching agents". See also Dr. Gonzalez (n.d., cited in *Skin-whitening big business in Asia,* 2009).

However, the examples given in Cheong (2013) suggest otherwise. For example, *Garnier Men TurboLight* is addressed as a 'skin-brightening' product, but the advertisement of its 'brother' product, *Garnier Men PowerLight* is analysed in Chand and Chaudhary (2012) as a counter-discourse of male attractiveness as it promotes skin fairness, which they classified it as "men's fairness cream" (p. 46) along with the brand, *Fair and Handsome.* Moreover, the features in the advertisement like "get up to 2 tones fairer" (p. 45) with the Garnier's symbolic of proof, 'fairness meter' (p.44) (*ibid.*), further verify the product's function for skin-whitening rather than skin-brightening.

Regardless of the confusion/accuracy between both terms, the study focuses more on how the products are presented to the consumers, keeping in mind the marketing/brand positioning and linguistic critical literacy positioning (see Section 2.6.2.8).

2.4   Metrosexuality

Despite all the discussion pertaining to sex, gender and beauty from Section 2.1 to 2.3, the current phenomenon, metrosexuality, challenges those concepts by introducing a type of masculinity that embraces beauty. It all started with the sudden rise in male grooming market that reflects contemporary men's growing interests on appearance (see Section 2.4.3), which have resulted in controversies and changing perceptions on masculine identity (see Section 2.4.2). This 'New Man' is widely known as the "metrosexuals", coined by Simpson (1994) but gained interests only in Simpson (2002).

According to Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011), some commonly addressed metrosexuals are David Beckham, Adam Lambert and Tom Cruise. Among all, David Beckham is the most 'cited' metrosexual who, according to Simpson (2002/2013), is "definitely an international-standard narcissist" and would be addressed as at least "a sissy" in the Anglo-world. This is supported by articles blaming Beckham, e.g. Simpson (2003/2013) and London (2013).

This leads to a wide coverage of media reports from the local context (e.g. Aida Ahmad, 2014; Cheong, 2012; Toyad & Gopinath, 2012; Valeo, n.d.; Veera, 2012; Zorra, 2008;) and Asian countries (e.g. Farquharson, 2008; Montague-Jones, 2008; Yeomans, 2012) to Western settings (e.g. Costa, 2011; Holmes, 2012; Lacey, 2012; London, 2013). These media articles mainly report the findings of conducted studies and/or experts' comments on metrosexuality, particularly on its development, controversies and marketing issues.

Similarly, metrosexuality also results in vast research interests in wide disciplines, ranging from masculine research (e.g. Anderson, 2008; Barber, 2008; Kaye, 2009); marketing studies (e.g. Cheng, Ooi, & Ting, 2010; Herdiyanti & Titus, 2013; McNeil & Douglas, 2011) to linguistics (e.g. Chand & Chaudhary, 2012; Coupland, 2007; Harrison, 2008).

2.4.1   The Factors of Metrosexuality

What are the factors that cause "men coming out and shopping for themselves" in their vanity pursuit, which in order to do this, involves "breaking through centuries of social stigma and psychological barriers"? (Toyad & Gopinath, 2012)

2.4.1.1   The Creation for New Market

According to Simpson (1994/2013), metrosexuals are the creation of new markets, as the traditional heterosexual men who are perceived as masculine are "the worst customers" and have "no future" in consumerism. Simpson (2002/2013) further justifies that these "stoic, self-denying, modest straight male" did not shop enough and held the role of earning money for his wife to spend instead. Hence, metrosexuality is an outcome of a process to feminize or "given the pink slip" by capitalism to "old-fashioned (re)productive, repressed, unmoisturized" heterosexuals, leading them to be less certain on gender identity but more interested in their image (*ibid.*), and eventually, shopping.

Creating new markets is also due to the nearly saturated female beauty sector (Toyad & Gopinath, 2012). Giddens (1991, cited in Harrison, 2008, p. 56) calls this 'commodity capitalism', standardising global consumption patterns for consistent economic growth. One of the primary tools is advertising that presents consumers with 'consumption packages', leading them to 'translate' themselves possessing desired goods and pursuing "artificially framed styles of life" (*ibid.*). Anderson (2008, p. 6) calls this the "disturbing truth" behind the popularity of metrosexuality, as it is merely a "consumer marketing ploy".

Like beauty ideals (see Section 2.3.1), this revised version of masculinity is commodified and media is the key factor to inculcate (market) the beauty culture among men. The increasing sexualisation of men (Bordo, 1999, cited in Barber, 2008; Connell, 2005; Edwards, 1997; Mort, 1996, cited in Coupland, 2007) projects men as objects of the gaze (Herek, 1987; MacKinnon, 2003, cited in Coupland, 2007; Barber, 2008). This leads to the modern pursuit of the body beautiful among men, turning themselves into projects (Brumberg, cited in Barber, 2008), resulting in metrosexuality. Popular TV shows like "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" further promote metrosexuality (Kaye, 2009).

Nonetheless, some (Bakewell *et al.,* 2006; Miller *et al.,* 2000; Katz & Farrow, 2000) also speculate that metrosexuality is a result of men playing a more active role in modern consumerism, and thus, seeking for "an identity construction", i.e. desired self identity, image and concept, attained through "a particular style of dress, body care, image and look" This leads to appearance-related behaviours (vanity), affecting "traditional masculine consumption behaviour" (Holt & Thompson, 2004). (Cited in Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 85).

Apparently, such marketing effort is a great success, judging from the emergence of another new identity -- 'yummy', an extension of metrosexuals who are willing to spend on luxurious fashion items (see Section 2.4.3, para. 8). This new identity is claimed as "the new saviour of the global economy" (Godwin, 2014).

2.4.1.2 The Effeminated Femininity

Another factor leading to (male) metrosexuality is the change of the gender notion among his female counterpart, who are getting "more independent, wealthy, self-centered and powerful", demanding for attractive and well-groomed men (Simpson, 2002/2013). In addition, with women getting less caring of men, men have to take care of themselves (*ibid.*). Some also suggest women as a major stimulus in male grooming to construct an attractive image (Firat, 1993; Sturrock & Pioch, 1998, cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011).

Similarly, as Zorra (2008) stated, "The Metrosexual Male is as primed, plucked and preened as his counterpart, the Sophisticate, a lady who has all his characteristics and is in control of her independence and individuality." It stems from male realisation that they can appropriate female behaviour and practices for their own liking too like what females have been doing, as well as the realisation that "if women won't be women for men anymore, why should men be men for women?" (Simpson, 2011). In other words, "female metrosexuality is the complement of male metrosexuality" (Simpson, 2002/2013).

This aligns with Kaye's (2009) claims about the marketing ploy behind metrosexuality that is not only meant for men, but also for women. In fact, the latter is claimed to be stronger. He illustrates with *"Queer Eye for the Straight Guy"*, in which most guys were forced by girlfriends/wives into the TV show. These females were portrayed to be happier when their boyfriends/husbands can take care of themselves after the makeover. This implies that his appearance take more pride in his woman than himself (*ibid.*).

2.4.1.3 The Emasculated Masculinity

According to Simpson (2002/2013), the emasculation of modern straight men is another factor of metrosexuality. This aligns with Valeo's (n.d.) documentation on the factors of "masculinity in flux" from three perspectives, i.e. 1) country crises that often affect masculinity, e.g. men losing jobs and control during industrialization (Sonya Michel, a history professor and co-author in "Engendered America: A Documentary History, 1865 to the Present"; 2) economic uncertainty causing current confusion about masculinity, e.g. the change of gender role at home/workplace challenges men's role as the breadwinner in two-income families (Rotundo, n.d., in "American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era"); and lastly, 3) the byproduct of forty-year feminism, as the "women's movement has arguably had at least as big an impact on men as on women", challenging traditional masculinity while increasing their rights (Salzman, Matathia, & O'Reilly, in *The Future of Men*). Robert Glover (cited in Valeo, n.d.), a marriage counselor and psychotherapist, explains that many men responded to the third point, feminism, by denying traditional masculine traits, fearing the feminists may be offended.

However, unlike Rotundo (n.d., cited in Valeo, n.d.), Toyad and Gopinath (2012) claim that having increasing working females and household chores sharing promote metrosexuality. More interactions and exchanges between both sexes opened up "new channels of conversation" like beauty and personal care.

All in all, metrosexuality is the result of consumerism and gender shift (Doublekova 2008, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011, p. 29). As detected by Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011, p. 30), it aligns with the second strand of postmodernist masculinity (*New Man*),

summarised from Mort (1996), Nixon (1996) and Edwards (1997) in Beynon's (2002)

Masculinities and Culture:

> *..the notion of the new man is based upon two strands. One (the nurturer) arose out of gender politics, particularly as a response to first wave feminism. The second (the narcissist) was a direct result of the commercial imaging of masculinity in the 1980s...the creation of the new lad in the 1990s was a commercial project and a regression in terms of gender politics*

Apparently, retail products traditionally perceived as feminine (e.g. skincare) show a sudden rise of consumption among modern men, due to the blur social notion of gender and the trend of bodily focus (Dodson, 2006, cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011, p. 448).

2.4.1.4 The Current Professional Demand

While most claimed gender shift and creating new market as factors of metrosexuality (Section 2.4.1.1 to 2.4.1.3), another claim suggests current professional demand that do not only require men working hard, but also looking good (Barber, 2008). Due to economic development that affects the job nature, men present themselves "from the laboring body to the flannel suit to the well-coiffed man" (*ibid.*, p. 459).

During the Fordist-era (industrialism), "scarred and weathered men" were more macho and "socially valuable" among the working-class (Paap 2006/2008, cited in Barber, 2008, p. 459). This includes the "sweat and blood", as masculinity was defined by men's capability and performance in labourious work (*ibid.*).

The next profession trend came in during the American postwar (1945-1960) that witnessed increasing corporations and white-collar (intellectual) jobs, due to the rapid economic

growth. This leads men to trade in "denim work-jumpers for grey flannel suits" (Barber, 2008, p. 459). According to Luciano (2001, cited in *ibid.*), due to the requirement for effective communication between the corporate man with their customers and clients, appearance becomes one of the "essential hiring and firing criteria", besides interpersonal skills and personality. He further illustrates how corporate men are encouraged to "package their bodies and personalities for success", and thus, increasing appearance concern emerged from capitalist notions of what makes a "successful professional-class man". For example, employers associate "softness with Communism, fatness with laziness" and "baldness as a detriment to sales" (*ibid.*).

This is verified by Assistant Professor Casanova's (n.d., cited in Lacey, 2012) interviews for men's perception on 'metrosexual', which discovered the tendencies of the term to be associated with white-collar culture. A survey of American men in 2003 also revealed that 89% agreed that grooming is an essential element in business (Salzman, Matathia, & O'Reilly 2005, cited in Barber, 2008, p. 459). This applied to the local context (Malaysia) as well, based on *L'Oréal Malaysia Men's Grooming Report* (2012) (cited in Veera 2012 and Cheong 2012), 39% of Malaysian metrosexuals groomed for success in work, i.e. to look more professional. This is also supported by the *The Star* Online poll results (Aida Ahmad, 2014).

In brief, this somehow redefines the presentation of masculinity that may be emasculated, but remains attached to masculine roles as a working man, breadwinner and professional worker (Appendix A). Hence, Barber (2008) discovers that the marketers produce "sales gimmicks" by associating grooming products with "professional success" (p. 459), which also serves as an excuse for metrosexuals in grooming to avoid masculine threat (p. 470).

2.4.2 Social Perception towards Metrosexuality

While Simpson provides the definition of the term "metrosexual" that he coined, the social understanding and acceptance of the concept remain questionable, judging from its various definitions that often contradict themselves (Popescu, 2009), as well as other identities that challenge metrosexuality, e.g. *retrosexual, homosexual*, *dandy* and *ubersexual.* According to Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011), since the coinage of the term 'metrosexuals' in 1994, it has created a huge wave of controversy among social scientists, particularly those who specializes in masculinity theory, e.g. Beynon (2002), Connell (1995) and Nixon (1996).

In response to the controversies, findings from some studies show uncertain social perception towards metrosexuality. Assistant Professor Casanova's (n.d., cited in Lacey, 2012) interviews reveal that respondents' perceptions and understandings on metrosexuality are contradictory, in which some have both negative and positive perceptions. Similarly, Cheng, Ooi and Teng's (2010) survey reveals uncertain perception among young Malaysian metrosexuals. Simpson also received "both praise and opprobium in almost equal amounts" for his comments on metrosexuality (*Insider Interview: author, journalist and 'motherfather' of the metrosexual Mark Simpson*, 2011).

There is also complete rejection towards the "feminization" of men. This results in social backlash seeking for "real men"/'macho men' with "appeals to virulent sexuality, violence, sport, machismo, and a lack of interest in fashion, etiquette, and health" (Anderson, 2008). Since 2004, there is 'a massive backlash against the metrosexual' in blogs and printed articles, which Anderson (2008, p. 4) claims the shift from 'metrosexual to retrosexual'. This includes the Iron John movement in the US (reported in *Daily Telegraph* 2005, cited

in Coupland, 2007) urging for the "return of stronger, more masculine man". Simpson (2006) calls them the "Metro-Warriors" (cited in Anderson, 2008, p. 4).

Nevertheless, Coupland (2007, p. 42) claims that another term "*retrosexual man*", defined by Collins English Dictionary (2005) as "*a heterosexual man who spends little time and money on personal appearance*", suggests "a growing cultural expectation that heterosexual males *should* and *do* attend...to bodily self-presentation and grooming". Actually, the words originates as a backlash term for 'metrosexual' (Anderson, 2008).

However, Simpson (2011(a)) confidently claimed in *How the new New Man won*,

> *some might say that male metrosexuality was an urge that really did need to be repressed. But love him or loathe him, or call him by any other name, the metrosexual and bronzed new masculine world he represents is here to stay.*

On the other hand, metrosexuality is also positively perceived and accepted by some, looking at it as emancipation of men and abolishment of patriarchal system (Section 2.4.2.3). According to Anderson (2008), metrosexuality is getting more acceptable and desired, due to the success of commodification among men via media. This is reflected in the statistics showing huge growth in grooming industry and polls on men's perception on metrosexuality (*ibid.*). The social acceptance and popularity of metrosexuality are also reflected "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" (a TV show launched in 2002) (*ibid.*). According to Kaye (2009, p. 107), this show is groundbreaking as it "opens a space in which heterosexual-identified men can indulge in homosocial/homoerotic behavior in culturally acceptable ways".

Nonetheless, looking at the different extents of social acceptance and perception towards metrosexuality, the next concern is "How does the society define (perceive/interpret) metrosexuality? And why?". Just as Ourahmoune (2009, p. 131) questions, "if men do

change, how do they change and how should those changes be interpreted?" This aligns with de Singly's (2001, p. 149-151, cited in *ibid*.) statement, "In sociology, change is an interpretative category, not a descriptive one".

2.4.2.1   Metrosexuality as Emasculated (Feminised) Masculinity

Metrosexuals are widely perceived as emasculated masculinity, or as claimed by Lertwannawit and Gulid (2010, p. 85), a new "feminized" masculinity. While there are many speculations about metrosexuals' feminine traits, interests and activities, their narcissism and vanity are the main concern (Section 2.4). As suggested in most of Simpson's and many other articles, metrosexuality is all about men trying to look good. This causes a man turning himself into a project (Brumberg 1997, cited in Barber, 2008) for body beautiful.

However, metrosexuals challenge the notion of traditional masculinity/heterosexuality, in which men do the looking while women are being looked at (Simpson, 1994/2013). As first proposed by Mulvey (1975) on cinematic spectatorship (media representation), turning oneself into a body project for gaze is a female enterprise, i.e. "woman as image" whilst "man as bearer of the look" (cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 42). This is supported by Chandler (2007) claiming women as "object of contemplation" (p. 143) and "code of looking" (p. 155) as important for gender differentiation. In fact, the idea of 'looking at'/'being looked at' reflects subjectivation/objectivation and active/passive in gender (see Appendix A). Besides, the body beautiful connotes femininity due to the traditional association with women and gays (Barber, 2008).

However, turning gaze towards men poses problems to men "in maintaining appropriate 'manliness'" (Coupland, 2007, p. 42). The sexualization of men in the media and increasing grooming practices destabilize traditional gender dichotomies (Barber, 2008), "with men increasingly being looked at, and looking at themselves" (MacKinnon, 2003 and Herek, 1987) (cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 37). Coupland's (2007) study on a corpus of magazines further reveals female appraising gaze that is gaining more salience. Apparently, David Beckham is a metrosexual "because he loves being looked at" and "men and women love to look at him" (Simpson, 2002/2013).

Besides vanity, body pampering (grooming) services that are held in traditionally feminized space, along with luxury, touch and vanity, is considered a feminised form of leisure (Barber, 2008, p. 464). This aligns with Sharma and Black's (2001, p. 918, cited in *ibid.*, p. 465) interviews that reveals the perception of 'pampering' as "a service which the stressed and hardworking (female) client deserved and needed". Similarly, according to Salzman *et al.* (2005, cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011, p. 450), grooming itself is still perceived by many as "a form of pampering".

Besides the femininity of vanity and body pampering, metrosexuals are claimed to be emasculated in other aspects, i.e. 'feminine' interests and activities (Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 85) as well as characteristics, e.g. shopping, emotionally liberated, colour-coordinated, uninhibited in showing affection (Zorra, 2008); can "remove a stain, sew a button...and iron" (Anderson, 2008, p. 3); wear make-up and apply nail polish (Dunk 2009, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011), etc. In addition, Anderson (2008) lists four areas of commodification that are included in metrosexuality, i.e. fashion, grooming, food and beverage, and culture. These are popularized by "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" with five

male hosts (''Fab 5''), who provide tips according to their expertise, i.e. food and wine, fashion, design, grooming and culture (cited in Kaye, 2009, p. 104).

Claiming that the term "metrosexuality" is often used without any empirical studies to verify its femininity speculations on their appearance-related behaviours, Lertwannawit and Gulid (2010, p. 85) conducted a study on the gender identity of these vain men, based on "appearance-related variables, i.e. self monitoring, status consumption, fashion consciousness, cloth concern, and body self-relation" and Bem sex role inventory. The findings reveal that heterosexual metropolitan men with feminine and androgynous[v] traits (with high scores for femininity) have "higher average scores for all appearance-related variables", compared to heterosexual metropolitan men with masculine and undifferentiated traits (*ibid.*, p. 89). Therefore, they conclude by defining "metrosexuals" as:

> *"heterosexual metropolitan men who possess feminine personality traits which focus closely on their appearance"* (*ibid.,* p. 90)

2.4.2.2   Metrosexuality as Homosexuality

Compared to its gender doubt, the sexuality of metrosexuality creates stronger debates (Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) and rejections. Based on some unkind remarks as stated in the American *GQ* (male fashion magazine), also known as the "Gay Quarterly" (Simpson, 1994/2013), metrosexuals are perceived as gays by some (e.g. Warren, 2003, cited in Cheng, Ooi, & Ting, 2010). Besides, some authors like Denk (2009, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) and Lacey (2012) define metrosexuals as gays, mainly due to the confusing lexical term (see para. 4 in this section). However, many authors argue that metrosexuality has nothing to do with sexuality, including Flocker (2003) and Hackbarth

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[v] According to Bem (1974, cited in Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 86), the term " androgynous" is used to describe individuals with balanced feminine and masculine traits.

(2003) (cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011); Simpson (2002/2013) stressing "don't call him gay"; and Zorra (2008) claiming that a metrosexual is "as confident of his sexuality as he is of himself". .

Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011) stresses the importance of following Simpson's (2002/2013) explanation on metrosexuality, i.e. "might be officially gay, straight or bisexual", which does not associate with sexuality, since Simpson is the person who coined the term. Nevertheless, metrosexuality is still tightly linked to, or rather, wrongly perceived as 'gay', especially in non-Western countries, where metrosexuality emerged later, and thus, not fully developed and comprehended. The next concern is "Why?".

According to Simpson (2002/2013), there is no wonder metrosexuals are wrongly associated with gays, because gays "provide the early prototype for metrosexuality", being "socially emasculated". He further claims that metrosexuality was first tested on gay consumers, as supported by Holmes (2012) that grooming and skincare has long been established among them. Hence, they are predominant in the grooming and fashion industries, claimed as the initiator of metrosexuality and blamed for feminizing men's fashion (Beynon, 2002, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011). The gay representation of metrosexuality continues with metrosexuals posing for gay magazines, e.g. David Beckham wearing pink shirt and even pink nail varnish (Simpson, 2002/2013).

The misconception gets worse when gays, being more open about metrosexuality, act as the "spokesperson" of metrosexuality, e.g. British gay columist Mark Simpson is the prominent figure in commenting metrosexuality. This aligns with Steve McQueen's (Simpson, 1994/2013) claim that having gays talking about metrosexuality will scare off straight men who are "just beginning to discover the joys of shopping".

Nonetheless, many accuse the 'main culprit' of the misconception of metrosexuals as gays is the term 'metrosexual' itself. Denk (2009, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011) and Lacey (2012), who claim metrosexuals as gays, look at the term as the combination of the prefix "metro-" and suffix "-sexual", forming mixed definition of urban man and homosexual.

As highlighted by Coupland (2007), the markedness of "metrosexual men" undeniably has embedded contrast with the (unmarked) term "heterosexual men". According to Chandler (2007, p. 94-96), marked signs/signifiers also mark its signifiers/meaning. The unmarked ('generic') term is typically dominant and thus, viewed as "neutral, normal and natural", drawing no attention to its status but implicitly positive. In contrast, the marked term, used in a "more specific sense", is presented as "extraordinary deviational special case" that is different from the standard and default unmarked term. Being 'out of ordinary', the marked term's deviance is salient and foregrounded, as well as carries negative connotation (*ibid.*).

Similar to *male nurse* and *female soldier*, *metrosexual* seems to deviate from the social norms, while reflecting the uncertain social acceptance. Hence, even the founder of the term, Simpson (2011(a); 2011 (b)) admits that the term is responsible in causing uncertain perception towards metrosexuality.

Nevertheless, Simpson predicts that the term 'metrosexual' will be eventually removed once heterosexuality and masculinity are no longer considered synonymous (*ibid.*). In other words, another reason of metrosexuals being perceived as 'gays' is due to the indistinctable concepts between sex and gender (see Section 2.1, para.5).

While the previous discussion in this section suggests metrosexuality being wrongly perceived as homosexuality, some warn the possibility that the gender shift in

metrosexuality may lead to sexuality shift when male feminization too far. (*Life And Style: Metrosexual Vs Homosexual*, 2008; *The ever misleading concept of metrosexuality*, 2008)

2.4.2.3   Metrosexuality as Emancipation of Men

Despite negative perception towards metrosexuality, some authors/scholars view it as a positive change for both sexes. According to Tungate (2011), metrosexuality is the "New Male Order", promoting the "emancipation of men" (p. 213) just as the way women is emancipated through feminist movement. Metrosexuality provides male freedom from the restriction of traditional masculinity on how to behave as a man. It is a state in which men are "achieving equilibrium", as they slowly realise that they "might be able to have it all", e.g. take care of their appearance and health, have a family life and high-powered job. (Tungate, 2008, p. 221) Instead of perceiving metrosexuality as emasculated masculinity (Section 2.4.2.1), we are witnessing modern men with less inhibited in behaviours and thoughts about issues on gender or sexuality (Simpson, 2011, cited in *Insider Interview: author, journalist and 'motherfather' of the metrosexual Mark Simpson*, 2011).

Although beauty is generally associated to females (see previous sections), men do care about their looks, unlike most absurd perceptions towards men (Tungate, 2008). The only difference is the extent of vanity, but many of them do place high concern on their appearances (*ibid.*). Hence, the social acceptance of metrosexuality will definitely legitimize men to express their identity (which in this case, their vain self) in a much freer manner (Kimmel 2006, cited in Anderson, 2008). This is supported by Simpson (1994/2013) who has been widely quoted, "male vanity's finally coming out of the closet". Based on Kaye's (2009, p. 106) observation on the TV show, "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy",

metrosexuality allows straight men to "engage in homosocial desire with gay men" with much freedom, while realizing that "this is not entirely distinct from homosexual desire".

With reference to Sedgwick's theories, however, metrosexuality is seen to be bridging the gap between homosocials and homosexuals, as well as "reinscribes heteronormativity" (Kaye, 2009, p. 106). This is supported by Casanova's (cited in Lacey, 2012) interview, in which some men perceived fashion as a way "to bridge gaps between gay and straight men" and they even admitted taking fashion advice from gays.

Besides men, some think metrosexuality will give a positive impact on women too. As explained by Anderson (2008, p. 6), while metrosexuality shows "men expressing femininity" and "masculinity being defined more broadly", it is "a great interest to the feminist quest of ending the gendered binary". He claims this as "a death to the theoretical patriarchy", in favour of the "increasingly gender neutral dominator", i.e. capitalism that is seeking a new market (Section 2.4.1).

2.4.2.4   Metrosexuality as Twenty-First-Century Victorian Dandyism

While metrosexuality is seen as the emergence of 'New Man', the term "dandy" referring to a man who pays attention to appearance suggests that such men have existed in the Victorian Age (Aishah Sandhera Abdullah 2010, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011). This is supported by Zorra (2008) claiming that metrosexual "comes in the mould of the 17th century, Beau Brummel", Kaye (2009) referring him as the "Twenty-First-Century Victorian Dandy" and Popescu (2009) as "a popular version of dandyism".

However, according to Popescu (2009), there are differences between 'dandyism' and 'metrosexuality'. Unlike metrosexuals, dandyism is 1) due to Aestheticism, Impressionism and the dull Victorian society, instead of industrialization and urbanization; 2) praising "idleness, flamboyancy, style and witticism" (implying men's extravaganza/eccentricity), rather than "superficial extolment of the body" without code of conduct; 3) a trendsetter with principles of sense, i.e. "individuality, singularity, and personality" (D'Aurevilly, 1995); 4) high culture due to promotion of literary works and its exclusiveness to certain men separated from the masses, as not anyone can be dandy (D'Aurevilly, 1995), whilst metrosexuality is a low/popular culture as any men can be metrosexuals; and lastly, 5) the 'history of the English manners'(D'Aurevilly, 1995), instead of a "mere mark of the consumerist popular culture". (Cited in Popescu, 2009) These are supported by Simpson (2004, cited in *ibid.*, p. 121) that dandyism comes from 'elite' and 'aristicratic' era, whilst metrosexuality is a mere 'mainstream, mass-consumer phenomenon'.

Nevertheless, dandy and metrosexual also share some similarities, i.e. both are triggered by vanity (Popescu, 2009) and invoke controversy (Kaye, 2009). Similar to metrosexuals, dandy is sometimes associated with homosexuality in terms of gay liberation (Kaye, 2009).

To sum up, while dandy shows the existence of vain men in the past, it also reflects that aesthetics or body beautiful, as innocent as it may seem, has always been feminine connotated and male involvement has been causing controversy and misperception. Although many (including Simpson) suggest "metrosexuals" as someone willing to spend for fashion pursuit, the coming masculinity -- ubersexual (claimed by Salzman, Matathia, & O'Reilly, 2003, cited in Valeo, n.d.) will add in individuality in style like dandy.

2.4.2.5 Metrosexuality vs. Ubersexuality

After metrosexuality, ubersexual is perceived as the next masculine ideal. The term is coined by Salzman (2003) in "The Future of Men", co-authored with O'Reilly and Matathia. Salzman (2003) distinguishes ubersexuals from metrosexuals in terms of: 1) having own style (less fashion-conscious); 2) concern on relationships (than self); 3) dress for themselves (than others); 4) having male best friends (than females); and 5) hold principles and values. The examples given are George Clooney and Bono. (Cited in Valeo, n.d.).

According to Salzman, Matathia and O'Reilly (2003), the ubersexuals possess the qualities of "M-ness," combining traditional masculinity ("strength, honor, character") with traditional femininity ("nurturance, communicativeness, cooperation"). This masculine version of metrosexual helps the current "integrated men", who may be feminized to please women but having identity crisis pertaining to his masculinity (Glover, n.d.), as they can always return as "macho" men. (Cited in Valeo, n.d.).

Nonetheless, Salzman admits that her interviews with men are not an in-depth sociological research (*ibid.*). Valeo (n.d.) also comments that Salzman may have underscored the fact that masculinity itself is questionable in the modern US society, when she claims that the new masculinity is ubersexual, succeeding metrosexuals. In addition, it is uncertain that the term "ubersexual" is accepted in the mainstream vocabulary.

2.4.3   The Development of Metrosexuality

Although academic research on the development of metrosexuality could not be found, it is widely discussed and reported in the media. Hence, the discussion in this section relies mostly on the media reports.

According to the survey on various media reports, the development of metrosexuality can be generally categorised into three stages, i.e. pre-metrosexuality (the emergence of the New Man); metrosexuality ("rise of the metrosexual"); and lastly, post-metrosexuality ("death of the metrosexual"). The last two terms (in brackets) are quoted from articles in Mail Online.

Pre-metrosexuality is reflected in Simpson's (1994), *Here Comes the Mirror Men,* that introduces the public exhibition of male vanity that has long been hidden. While metrosexuality was presented in the 80s in fashion magazines (e.g. GQ), TV commercials for Levis jeans and gay bars, it became public in the 90s (Simpson, 2006, cited in *Insider Interview: author, journalist and 'motherfather' of the metrosexual Mark Simpson*, 2011).

However, the marked "metrosexuality" implies uncertain social acceptance (Section 2.4.2.2, para.5). Nonetheless, Simpson predicted the rise of metrosexuality, claiming "male narcissism is here and we'd better get used to it" (Simpson, 1994/2013) and "it's much too late for second thoughts. Metrosexuality...learning to love itself. Even more." (Simpson, 2002/2013). Yet, the practice was not universally acknowledged as a culture until Simpson's 2002 return in *Meet the Metrosexual*, where the term 'metrosexual' turned global, as well as became American Dialect Society's *Word of the Year* in 2003 due to its pervasiveness (Valeo, n.d.; Nordquist, n.d.). Its inclusion into the mainstream vocabulary further marks the social, or rather, global acknowledgement of this culture.

The period of metrosexuality marks the rise of metrosexuals, which its popularity is reflected from the rapid growth of the grooming industry (Newman, 2007; Bird, 2009); marketing issues and strategies (Costa, 2011; Holmes, 2012); the phenomenon of men getting more vain (London, 2013) to the extent of spending more time getting ready than women (*Rise of the Metrosexual*, 2010) and embracing feminine traits, e.g. 'high maintenance' (needy and weedy) (Winter, 2013); and wide media report.

Recent articles (McDaugall, 2012; Lacey, 2012) question the possible "death of metrosexuality", which does not mean the end of metrosexuality, but rather its normalization that eventually enable it to be accepted as norms. In other words, this 'death" refers to the dying concept of the marked term, 'metrosexuality'. The moment when we stop referring vain men as 'metrosexuals' is the start of post-metrosexuality. According to Simpson (2011(a); 2011(b)), the symptoms of post-metrosexuality are: 1) metrosexuality is normalized and no longer considered girly/gay; and 2) metrosexuality is not a mere metropolitan culture anymore.

However, there are a few other identities that are claimed as a product of "post-metrosexual". Again, the fact that new terms are created for these identities shows social uncertainties through their markedness (see Section 2.4.2.2, para.5).

One of the identities is 'sporno', which according to Simpson (2006/2010/2013) is a "new gay porn" (claimed to have a "homoprovocative nature"), where sports stars flaunt their bodies due to the "postmetrosexual, increasingly pornolized world". Another claim of post-metrosexuality is taken from Salzman, Matathia, and O'Reilly (2003) in "The Future of Men", suggesting the next masculine ideal after metrosexuals is ubersexuals. (cited in Valeo, n.d.). Refer Section 2.4.2.5. Adding to the list, the third identity derives from a

recent research report of a London-based bank, HSBC entitled, "Rise of the Yummy", publicly declared in March 25, 2014 (Raczka, 2014). The report has been widely discussed in the media, e.g. Godwin, 2014; Maheshwari, 2014; Williams, 2014. The term "yummy" (i.e. young, urban male) coined by HSBC is claimed as metrosexuals who are willing to spend on luxurious branded items.

All in all, the development of metrosexuality shows increasing social acceptance towards metrosexuality that causes four main impacts, which according to the order are: 1) the reduction of its stigma with association to sissy/gay; 2) rising of the grooming industry; 3) wider gender (or for some -- sexuality) transgression to other feminine (or homosocial) traits; and lastly, 4) the dying term of "metrosexual" along with its dying stigma. The last one remains as a forecast. As Simpson's articles are creatively organised and categorised in the content page of his book, "Metrosexy: A 21st Century Self-Love Story" (2013), the development of metrosexuality starts from *greeting, gawping, pimping, stripping, to murdering (sexuality).*

2.4.4   Metrosexuality in the Local Context (Malaysia)

While Malaysia may perceive this phenomenon as a current issue, the metrosexual practices had long been observed in Western countries (e.g. US, Australia and European countries), since Simpson's first article in 1994. See also Paul Slavin's comment in Toyad and Gopinath (2012). The phenomenon has spread "beyond the English-speaking world' as well, e.g. India and China, where men's interest on fashion and grooming aids are reported in CHINADaily (2004); AsiaTimesOnline (2006); and India eNews (2007) (cited in

Harrison, 2008). Apparently, metrosexuality in Malaysia is relatively later (with the earliest article documented in 2008) and slower (refer Slavin's statement above).

While there are some earlier articles (Zorra, 2008; *Life And Style: Metrosexual Vs Homosexual*, 2008) suggesting metrosexuality in Malaysia, it became popular (the rise of metrosexuals) after a recent survey (May 2012), *Malaysian Men's Grooming Report,* that was conducted by L'Oréal Malaysia on 500 local men.

The survey findings were shared with the media (*L'Oréal Malaysia Men's Grooming Report,* n.d.) and widely reported around 2012, e.g. Veera (2012, in *NST*) and Cheong (2012, in *thestar.com*). The findings greatly revealed the changing perception towards masculinity and a new motivation in male grooming, which results in more attention to their appearance (Cheong, 2012) and purchasing habit of grooming products (Veera, 2012). The main motivation of Malaysian men's grooming interests, according to the survey, is confidence, followed by hygiene and professional success (cited in Veera, 2012).

A more current local survey conducted by *The Star* (May 2014) reveals a high social acceptance towards male "beauty regime" as 63% of 539 male respondents said "yes" to grooming and 82% stress its importance (Aida Ahmad, 2014). Some of the grooming factors, according to the poll results are: 1) presenting good personal image; 2) achieving/maintaining professional success; and 3) protecting one from external skin-harmful factors like pollution. Nevertheless, they stressed on the limitation in male grooming, in which make-up is a complete rejection (*ibid.*).

According to Mohd Khushairi Tohiar (2011, p. 3), Malaysian metrosexuality is widely portrayed in male fashion magazines, e.g. *FHM, Men's Health* and *Maskulin*. This also includes one of the popular women's magazines, Cleo, in its annual "Fifty Most Eligible

Bachelors" contest. Usually, the male contestants are single, young urban Malaysians; (semi-)professional; highly educated; good-looking and well-groomed; and lastly, have great style and fashion sense. They are judged based on looks and awareness in fashion and grooming, as well as arts and culture (*ibid.*).

Until 2013, increasing men grooming products are "beginning to rival the options that women have" and "more sophisticated" (*ibid.*), but the advertisements were rather rare in Malaysia from the day male skincare products are introduced until 2013. Based on personal observation, LME advertised new products through commercials only for a short period. Instead, more promotional efforts are done in virtual settings, i.e. Facebook (*LME Malaysia*) where promotional events, e.g. *24-Hour Man Challenge* (July, 2013) are advertised. Nevertheless, more advertisements, especially TV commercials are available for male skincare products starting in the year of 2014.

2.5   Marketing Issues of Male Grooming Industry

This section discusses the studies and media report on the development, dilemma and marketing strategies of male grooming industries.

2.5.1   The Growing Market of Male Grooming Industry

The growing market of male grooming industry is the manifestation of the growing metrosexuality within a society. This is strongly justified by *Market Research Report 2012-2013,* which are surveys conducted by Euromonitor in countries worldwide. Besides, Toyad and Gopinath (2012, in *The Edge Malaysia*) cited a few economic effects and

predictions caused by metrosexuality: 1) Global Industry Analysts (2010) predicted the sales of male grooming product will reach US$ 33.2 billion by 2015; 2) Euromonitor International (2010) reported global men grooming business of US$ 21.7 billion, growing steadily at 7.4% from 2009 to 2010; and lastly, 3) Malaysian men skincare business is estimated by *L'Oréal Malaysia* to be worth RM80 million in 2012 with a growth rate of 20%. Apparently, metrosexuality has become global, so has the grooming market.

The "significant boom" is driven by male skincare (Euromonitor International 2010, cited in Toyad & Gopinath, 2012), as claimed by Holmes (2012) is "one of the beauty industry's fastest-growing sectors". However, Datamonitor (a market research company) comments that the expanding male grooming industry may be slower than expected (Bird, 2009).

The growth in the male grooming industry has created a great impact on how the world treats men and how men treat themselves. As summarized in McNeill & Douglas (2011), the first impact is the increasing social attention and pressure (for men) on physical attractiveness (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998), which such visual portrayal (aesthetic) of men reformulates traditional masculinity defining men through profession (Salzman *et. al*, 2005). This also increases male focus on physical appearance (Sturrock & Pioch 1998; Salzman *et. al* 2005), as well as having more body satisfaction (Factio-Magazine.com, cited in Anderson, 2008) and participation on different plastic surgery/makeover television programmes. The second impact is male indulgence into the practices of looking after and pampering oneself for global health and self-care (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995), which are feminine (see Section 2.4.2.1, para. 4). Thus, the rise of male grooming that was initially dominated by females also attributed to the third and fourth impacts, the growth of male market in other female space, i.e. male fashion magazines (Byrnes, 2006), and the availability of grooming products, including market segmentation and brand extension of

female brands (e.g. *L'Oréal*) to add a male skincare line (Thompson, 2006; Alexander, 2006). (Cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011).

However, as discussed in Section 2.3, male 'beauty' or metrosexuality challenges masculinity and invokes controversy, as "their sense of self-worth is not supposed to be tied to how they look" (Barber, 2008, p. 470).

2.5.2   Marketing Dilemma of Grooming Industry

Aligned with the cliché "customer is always right", marketing generally places consumers in the highest position. Hence, although the study focuses on the packaging discourse, it is imperative to understand the target consumers.

2.5.2.1   Metrosexual's Perception and Attitudes towards Metrosexuality

> *Despite the widening of gender roles and acceptable 'masculine' behaviours, some authors question the degree of acceptance male grooming holds specifically with male consumers (e.g. Mason, 2002; Salzman et al., 2005).* (McNeill & Douglas, 2011, p. 448)

According to Cheng, Ooi and Ting (2010), while social expectation, self-image and celebrity endorsement affect metrosexuals' consumption towards grooming products, their perception towards metrosexuality moderates the relationships between these variables. Metrosexuals' perception, thus, is a great concern in marketing male grooming products.

Metrosexuals' perception on grooming, according to McNeill & Douglas (2011, p. 448), is largely dependent on the degree of masculinity in a particular social context. Along with

research justification on New Zealand having strong hegemonic masculinity, they claim metrosexuality as an interesting subject "from a socio-cultural perspective" (*ibid.*).

Some authors speculate that metrosexuality is already naturalised and fully accepted in the society, e.g. Simpson's (2011(a); 2011(b)) observation that men are not terrified of 'girly' stigma on grooming and Toyad & Gopinath (2012) stating men are not afraid of moisturising. Cheri Keating, from *Estée Lauder's Lab Series Skincare for Men*, also claims it "isn't taboo anymore" (cited in Holmes, 2012).

However, numerous authors claim that such situation ('naturalised' metrosexuality) is merely an eventual happening in the future, as the idea of male grooming is not fully embraced yet by all due to its feminine connotation, as claimed by Mason (2002), Salzman *et al.* (2005) and McNeill & Douglas (2011) (cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011). This is supported by media reports questioning the dying marked term of 'metrosexuals' (e.g. McDougall, 2012; Lacey, 2012). According to Rakesh Aggarwal, CEO of Escentual.com, men haven't got used to buying grooming products, as "there is still some stigma attached" and 21% women claim their boyfriends are too embarrassed to buy grooming products (cited in London, 2013). See also Section 2.4.2. In the local context, Cheng, Ooi, & Ting (2010) reveals the uncertain perception of metrosexuality among Malaysian men.

> *men experience tensions between conforming social expectations about what it means to be a man and the desire to break away from the constraints of hegemonic masculinity through consumption.* (Ourahmoune, 2009, p. 130)

According to Ourahmoune's (2009, p. 130) summary on studies related to consumer behaviour towards the consumption of "feminine" products like cosmetics, jewellery and lingerie, male consumers experience tensions (Kimmel & Tissier-Desbordes 2000; Otnes & McGrath 2001; Holt & Thompson 2004; Elliott & Elliott 2005; Tuncay & Otnes 2006;

Rinallo 2007). Kimmel and Tissier-Desbordes' (2000) interview findings reveal male consumers' social fears that lead them to deny the consumption of such products, i.e.:

> *fear of condoning traditional attitudes about male and female roles; fear of becoming a minority relative to the position of women in society; fear of admitting a feminine side to their self-image (and the corresponding fear of homosexuality); and fear of admitting that products and brands represent important aspects of their public and private self-images...* (cited in Ourahmoune, 2009, p. 130)

Besides denial, Diego Rinallo (2007, cited in *ibid.*) discovers the negotiation of masculinity in such consumption through a "safety zone", "where they can achieve a certain level of satisfaction with regards to their appearance while still conforming to social norms, therefore to avoid stigmatisation".

According to Mason (2002) and Salzman *et al.* (2005), metrosexuality that is not fully embraced is the main factor of metrosexual's consumer behaviour (e.g. purchasing attitudes) towards grooming products (cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011).

2.5.2.2   Metrosexual's Behaviour towards Grooming Products and Services

While there are numerous studies on consumer behavior with regards to gender (Dittmar *et al.* 1994 and Palan 2001, cited in Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010; Brauss 1990; Shim *et al.* 1991; Zinn 1992; Otnes & McGrath 2001; Galilee 2002, cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011), metrosexuality poses "new challenges for studies of masculinity in consumer behavior" (Lertwannawit & Gulid, 2010, p. 85). With reference to the metrosexual's uncertain perception towards grooming practices, studies have shown that male consumers have their own preferences or 'unwritten rules' in the consumption and purchase of these grooming products to avoid related social stigma. For example, according to McNeill &

Douglas (2011), the New Zealand metrosexuals' 'unwritten rules' are: "acceptable types of product, maximum number of products and packaging colour expectations" (p. 148), to evoke masculinity and replace the feminine luxury rationale of grooming with utilitarian.

First, based on a cross-cultural beauty survey, the universal attitude of metrosexuals towards grooming products is "the search for masculinity", and thus, "beauty companies should help encourage men to be masculine" (Montague-Jones, 2008) Likewise, *Aveda*'s research reveals that men prefer products that not only fulfill their grooming needs, but also "appeal to their masculine sensibilities" (cited in Newman, 2007). This aligns with research findings on male consumption emphasizing products that "enhance one's masculinity rather than threaten it" (Schouten & McAlexander 1995; Belk & Costa 1998, cited in McNeill & Douglas, 2011, p. 449).

Second, the grooming choice and behaviours among metrosexuals are best be seen as utilitarian (practical) instead of self-indulgence (luxury), in order to avoid the femininity of body pampering and the accusation of narcissism (McNeill & Douglas, 2011). This has been "frequently witnessed in the literature" on male's "traditionally appearance-related consumption", e.g. Schouten (1991). Cox & Dittman (1995), Salzman *et al.* (2005), Gill, et.al. (2005), and Bakewell *et al.* (2006). (*ibid.*, p. 450) The rationale is to legitimise grooming consumption through the "claims of functionality rather than appearance concerns" (*ibid.,* p. 452). This is verified by McIntyre's (2011, p. 349) interviews about perfume packaging that discovers "needs and function are masculine, luxury is feminine". According to Belknap (n.d., cited in Holmes, 2012) and Ullstein (n.d., cited in Costa, 2011), men often seek for grooming products to solve problems like dry/oily skin.

However, Moungkhem and Surakiatpinyo (2010, p. 2) reveal that both utilitarian and appearance concerns are the main factors, which arranged in order: "for improving skin, personal care, attractiveness and self confident". Whereas, luxury remains as the main factor of rejection, as the respondents' reasons for not using skincare products are: "products are not necessary" and "expensive and lavish" (*ibid.*). This aligns with Datamonitor's survey (cited in Bird, 2009) that reveals price to be one of the factors in metrosexuals' product preference.

Similarly, utilitarian is also claimed as the metrosexuals' rationale behind grooming services (e.g. hairstyling), i.e. "to look good to succeed professionally" for successful interactions with customers/clients, based on the "unwritten appearance rules" (Barber, 2008, p. 470). Hence, these metrosexuals "make sense of their participation in salon hair care" to professionalism, constructing themselves as a class of "new men", who are "progressive, stylish, and professional" (p. 472).

Third, brand image plays a major role, as a research from *SPA Future Thinking* (cited in Costa, 2011) shows brands that exclusively invest in male grooming, e.g. *Lynx* and *Gillete* tends to be more successful. Whereas, brands like *Hugo Boss* and *Adidas* that "aren't known for beauty products" and *Elizabeth Arden* and *Maybelline* that are overtly female have lower sales in male grooming (*ibid.*). This is supported by McNeill & Douglas (2011) that reveals male preference for male-only brands over male-female brands.

> *The idea that you can take something that has traditionally been sold to women and repackaged as a 'for men' version has been holding back the development of the male skincare market...I associate L'Oréal and Nivea with my mum. Before we started this business, there was nothing created by men for men. We set out to be masculine. We don't do female products and never will.*

> Simon Duffy, Managing director of Bulldog Natural Grooming, cited in Costa (2011)

Despite the emphasis on masculinity, there are studies addressing the issues of men using female beauty products, especially from their female partners. For instance, Herdiyanti and Titus (2013) analyzed why Indonesian men are still using female beauty products despite the availability of male grooming products. This phenomenon is observed in the West as well, based on a survey conducted by Escentual.com (cited in London, 2013), which also reveals another interesting fact that counters the anti-luxury concept of male consumer behaviour towards grooming products,

> *'What is especially cheeky is that the men generally turned their nose up at cheaper high-street moisturisers and only want to use their girlfriend's more expensive premium brands like Clarins and Avene.'*

<div align="right">Rakesh Aggarwal, CEO of Escentual.com, cited in London (2013)</div>

Apart from avoiding femininity, another reason of not using female brand skincare product is the skin difference between both sexes (Yuswohady, 2004, cited in Herdiyanti & Titus, 2013; Foo,cited in Cheong, 2013)

Last but not least, McNeill and Douglas (2011) discover that women play a major role as drivers for the consumption of male grooming products, which explains the ads of grooming products in women's magazines (Galilee, 2002; Alexander, 2006, cited in *ibid.*). Hence, as stated by Herdiyanti and Titus (2013), women's recommendation is also the factor affecting metrosexuals' decision making in choosing and purchasing grooming products.

2.5.2.3   The Implication Towards Marketing Strategies

With reference to the different behaviours between men (metrosexuals) and women towards grooming practice and product/service (see Section 2.5.2.2), a Datamonitor report reveals that marketers have to find ways to engage with male consumers (Bird, 2009) with a markedly different approach than the female market in order to succeed (Taylor, n.d., cited in Bird, 2009).

Previous studies uncover many marketing strategies in male grooming industry. To overcome femininity, male exclusiveness is highlighted by launching male-only lines (Coles, 2008) and creating men personal care sections (KMI, 2005, cited in Cheng, Ooi, & Ting, 2010). Besides, studies on marketing tools for male grooming product/service reveal emphasis on masculinity in social representation of metrosexual(ity) and image construction on products, brands and organisations (see Section 2.5.3).

2.5.3   Gendering Marketing Tools Using Semiotics

At best it's shorthand for preening – and at worst it's seen as effeminate. Product development is not the problem…...The problem lies in engaging with men using the appropriate language and persuading them to try new things.

Margaret Jobling, global brand director of male grooming at Unilever.
cited in Tungate (2008, p. 14)

With reference to the citation above, studies have shown that semiotics (signs) are the key element in strategizing marketing tools. Alreck (1994) had even constructed a gendering formula using symbols that are mediated through gender practices, including sex roles, gender attributes and gendered aesthetics.

Through multimodal discourse analysis, past linguistic studies (e.g. Coupland, 2007; Harrison, 2008; Chand & Chaudhary, 2012) show that verbal and visual features in male grooming advertisements negotiate metrosexuality. For instance, Harrison (2008) shows how femininity is downplayed through masculinity (e.g. rationality and technological skills) in a male mascara advertisement. Coupland's (2007, p. 37) study on a corpus of grooming advertisements and features in magazines reveals the current development of metrosexuality, i.e. "the salience of the female appraising gaze", while the "use of highly masculinized images and text" prevails. Aligns with Diego Rinallo's (2007, cited in Ourahmoune, 2009, p. 130) claim on metrosexual's consumption behaviour that is negotiated through a "safety zone" (see Section 2.5.2.1, para.6), another common feature in grooming ads (Edley & Wetherell 1997; Coupland 2007; Harrison 2008) is the *'push–pull' effect –*

> *a 'push' to make men more aware and critical of their faces and bodies in order to promote sales while, at the same, respecting the 'pull' of values identified as traditionally male.* (Harrison, 2008, p. 56)

On the other hand, related marketing studies emphasise on gendering brands and products through mainly aesthetics. Ritnamkam and Sahachaisaeree (2012) uncovers a distinctive perceptual response between male and female in graphical and formal design in the packaging of toiletries and grooming products. McIntyre's (2011) interview and observation regarding luxury packaging (perfume packaging) reveals that luxury appeals to female, while utilitarian for male. In addition, Veg's (2007) study on advertisements stresses that cross-gender brand extension (feminine brand selling male product or vice versa) will be successful only if the product projects the image that appeals to the target consumer, i.e. brand equity. McNeill and Douglas (2011) also uncovers the metrosexuals' consumption behaviour towards grooming products, including packaging (see Section 2.5.4, para.2).

Overall, the review of related linguistic and marketing studies reveals the deficiencies of research practices and gaps in both realms. For linguistics, there is no/lack of packaging discourse as subject and participants as co-researchers (except Chand & Chaudhary, 2012) to validate findings. Whereas, marketing lacks verbal analysis in marketing and detailed discourse (text) analysis to uncover meaning creation. These differences are due to different concerns and approaches between linguistics and marketing (see Section 2.6.2.8).

2.5.4   The Role of Packaging in Negotiating Metrosexuality

Packaging, being 'the silent salesman' (Kornblau 1961) or 'the salesman on the shelf' (Silayoi & Speece, 2004), plays an important role in marketing (cited in Vilnai-Yavetz & Koren, 2013, p. 394). This is supported by Global Industry Analysts (2010, cited in Toyad & Gopinath, 2012) and Kline's 2012 research report (cited in McDougall, 2012; Yeomans, 2012), which emphasize on "innovative" packaging to be one of the contributing factors in male grooming industry. Other elements contributing to the sales include the rise of metrosexuals, middle-class and Internet accessibility (Global Industry Analysts 2010, cited in Toyad & Gopinath, 2012), as well as more men accepting the idea of male grooming, new products in grooming market, high-tech products and smart male-exclusive marketing strategies (Kline's 2012 research report, cited in McDougall, 2012; Yeomans, 2012).

Nonetheless, according to McNeill and Douglas (2011, p. 453),

> *The final arbiter in the debate on the legitimacy of grooming products amongst participants was the image of individual products as constructed by branding, on-shelf positioning and packaging.*

Apparently, packaging is more important since among the three elements mentioned in the citation above, as branding and packaging can be projected through packaging design. This

is verified by Popescu, Iosim, and Iancu (2010) claiming that the packaging role has been extended from product differentiation to brand differentiation:

> *Consumers make a brand purchase just as much as they make a product purchase. They may in reality be buying a face cream but their choice is affected by their perception of the brand and its inherent promise.*

According to Anthony Sosnick, the founder of *Anthony Brands Inc.,* men prefer having the words "for men" on labels (Holmes, 2012), which is further verified by the study conducted by McNeill and Douglas (2011), as well as Coupland's (2007, p. 57) statement that claims male grooming products are 'lexically *marked*'. However, McNeill and Douglas (2011) reveal that packaging colour, has been given the primary concern to the extent of 'outweigh(ing) the importance of the 'For Men' labelling' (p. 453).

Despite marketing studies that focused on packaging function in brand positioning, Kumar (2006) claims that it also functions in communicating and advertising

2.6   Relevant Linguistic Model and Approaches

This section discusses the relevant theories and approaches employed in the study.

2.6.1   Language and Gender

There are three main frameworks in language and gender, i.e. *Deficit, Dominance* and *Difference.* The first two focus mainly on gender inequality, in which *Deficit* proposed by Lakoff 's (1975) "*Language and Women's Place"* rationalizes 'weak' women's language (especially in conversation) to their lower/subordinate social status, whereas *Dominance*

reveals male dominance and oppression over women through language. (Cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011). While *Dominance* focuses on sexist English language, the *Deficit* framework is mainly based on Lakoff's anecdotal evidence and generic assumptions, and thus, invoke controversy. Hence, another framework, the Difference Framework, arose in 1980s and became more prominent in the realm of language and gender (*ibid.*).

2.6.1.1   The Difference Framework

As opposed to the other two frameworks in language and gender – *Deficit and Dominance, Difference* provides another alternative justification in gender-differentiated linguistic behaviour. While *Dominance and Deficit* agitate the feminists by "legitimizing" oppression on female social and linguistic status, similar to the intention of hegemonic masculinity (refer Section 2.2), *Difference Framework,* according to Talbot (2010), proposes ′feminist celebration', as it acknowledges and values female distinctive social practices. It perceives females as equal, although it ironically originates from *Dominance*.

Instead of gender power, gendered linguistic behaviour, according to the *Difference* Framework, is the cultural product constructed through social arrangement that separates both sexes since young into distinctive gender-specific cultures, to learn different ways of speaking in the same-sex peer groups where the socialization is undertaken (Tannen, 1990, cited in Cameron, 2005). This aligns with Simpson and Myar (2010, cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011, p. 39) claiming these cultures as subcultures (besides other subcultures formed by demographic features like ethnicity and age), in which the respective sexes are "socialized from an early age into different gender roles". Other advocates include

Tannen (1990), Holmes (1995; 2008), Coates (1996) and Sunderland (2004) (cited in Mohd Khushairi Tohiar, 2011).

To sum up, this framework gives rise to gender stereotyping on characteristics and behaviours of both sexes, instead of gender dominance/subordination. One of the well-known works under *Difference Framework* is Tannen's (1986, 1991, 1995) use of a variety of binary oppositions to depict distinctive male and female conversational style (cited in Talbot, 2010, p. 92), included in the linguistic analytical framework (see Table 3.1.2.4 in Appendix A).

2.6.2 Semiotics

Semiotics, though closely associated to structuralism, is "not tied to any particular theory or methodology" (Chandler, 2007, p. 212). Nevertheless, semiotics is mainly derived from the two models in structural semiotics, i.e. *Saussurean Dyadic Model* and *Peircean Triadic Model*. The study includes other concepts, i.e. Barthesian *Order of Signification* and *Mythologies*, as well as concepts of structural semiotics in *paradigmatic dimension* and *opposition.* Nevertheless, the study favours Barthesian concept and way of analysis.

2.6.2.1 Saussurean Dyadic Model

According to Saussure (n.d.), a sign is a two-sided entity that is constructed through the combination of two elements, i.e. signifier (the *tangible form* which is taken by the sign) and signified (the *abstract concept* represented by the sign). The relationship between the two elements within the sign is arbitrary, depicted through the process of signification that

enables numerous matching of various signifieds to the same signifier, or various signifiers to the same signified. (Cited in Chandler, 2007)

However, Barthes argues that signs (associated with connotation and myth) are 'motivated' instead of 'arbitrary', as arbitrariness is only a linguistic way of seeing the relationship between signifier and signified (Chandler, 2007; Robinson, 2011). "Best-known for showing the social constructedness of language", Barthes perceives signs as 'neither irrational nor natural', based on the strong belief that nothing is meaningless and the act of signifying itself is 'guilty' to project intended image for specific interests (Robinson, 2011). Hence, connotation was the 'primary concern' for Barthes. (Chandler, 2007, p. 216)

2.6.2.2   Peircean Triadic Model

Peircean semiotic system consists of more elements, i.e. *representamen* (the *form* taken by the sign, not necessarily material), *object* (to which the sign refers) and *interpretant* (the *interpretation* determined by an individual's experience and mental process). The extension from the Saussurean Model broadens the dimension in the *form* (taken by the sign) to intangible or abstract nature, which further proposes different types of sign with the three most prominent ones, i.e. icons, symbols and indexes.

The broadened dimension in the *form* of sign (*representamen*) and the inclusion of *interpretant* in the semiotic system initiates the perception of signs as multimodal mediational means, as well as the differences in meaning creation and consumption relative to one's social knowledge and personal experience.

2.6.2.3   Barthesian *Order of Signification*

The focus of Saussurean model on denotation (literal meaning), i.e. merely one level of signification, was criticized by Barthes (1967), who broaden the dimension of meaning for signs through the orders of signification, drawing from Hjelmslev's framework that suggested multi-level of meaning. (Chandler, 2007) Being a structuralist, Barthes has strong interest on the 'deep structure' of the sign, which are the social practices, ideologies, etc. underlying the cultural tools (meditational means), since the focus of sign is on symbols defined by Peirce as conventional signs (socially constructed).

Barthesian *Order of Signification* uncovers layers of meaning underlying a sign (usually a symbol) from the first order of signification (denotation: literal/primary meaning) to the second (connotation: suggested associative/ secondary meaning). The higher the order of signification, the deeper the structure of the symbol (social practices) is revealed.

2.6.2.4   Barthesian *Mythologies*

The highest order of signification is, nonetheless, mythologies, which reveal the social beliefs derived from repetitive social practices over a long period in wide societies. Thus, myth is a socially constructed knowledge that is universally believed to be the truth, though in most circumstances they are not. Just as Barthes puts it, "myths are the dominant ideologies of our time" (cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 144). This explains the relationship between signifier and signified that is less arbitrary, or rather, has become permanent, to the extent that it does not need to be "deciphered, interpreted or demystified" (Chandler, 2007, p. 145). In other words, myths are naturalized connotation. It is as Hjelmslev named "a

metasemiotic" and Barthes claimed the "metalinguistic semiotic system", which integrates both their content (ideology) and their form as *codes* (*ibid.*).

As Levi-Strauss (n.d.) claimed, it is "not how men think in myths, but how myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact" (Chandler, 2007, p. 145). The most popular example of myths is the gender myth, or also known as gender stereotypes.

2.6.2.5 Structural Semiotics (Paradigmatic Dimension)

Structural semiotics emphasizes the structural relations (oppositions, correlations and logical relations) function in the signifying system at a particular time (synchronic). The structure of any signs can be seen in two dimensions, i.e. in Roman Jakobson's terms: paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions, which explains through 'meaningful contrasts and permitted/forbidden combinations' respectively (Culler, 1975) (cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 83). While syntagmatic looks for possible combinations, paradigmatic looks for 'functional contrasts' (p. 84).

Unlike Saussure, Barthes emphasizes more on paradigms, as he approaches paradigmatic parts first before the syntagmatic whole ('surface structure'), i.e. divide texts "into significant units…group these units into paradigmatic classes, and finally classify the syntagmatic relations which link these units." (Barthes 1967; Levi-Strauss 1972; Leymore 1975, cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 87) Basically, paradigmatic relations can function on two semiotic levels, i.e. signifier and signified, from 'the choice of word, image or sound to the level of the choice of style, genre and medium' (p. 88). Hence, a paradigm is a set of connected signifiers/signifieds classified within defining categories, in which members of

the category (paradigm set) is "structurally replaceable with another" and "the choice of one excludes the choice of another" (p. 85).

Since the choice made will shape the desired meaning, paradigmatic relations often refer intertextually to absent signifiers/signifieds, and thus, such relations are held *'in absentia'* (p. 87), i.e. by questioning why a particular choice is made instead of another workable alternative in a specific context. This is supported by William James (n.d., cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 88), "the absence of an item is a determinant of our representations quite as positive as its presence can ever be".

2.6.2.6   Structural Semiotics (Oppositions)

Binarism or binary opposition is widely accepted as the essential element in the language structure (Aristotle, n.d.; Jakobson, 1973; Lyons, 1977, cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 90). Hence, Saussure often emphasizes the differences between signs, with the belief that meaning of signs derives from 'how they differ from each other' (p. 80) or 'antonyms' (p. 90). The two main types of opposition are 1) digital/binary oppositions (logical 'contradictories') that are mutually exclusive (either/or) e.g. alive/dead, and 2) analogue oppositions (logical 'contraries') that are comparatively graded (more-or-less) e.g. good/bad, where 'not good' is not necessarily 'bad') (Barthes, 1967; Leymore, 1975; Lyons, 1977, cited in Chandler, 2007, p. 91). Hence, structuralists emphasize the importance of opposition in the paradigmatic relations, e.g. Jakobson, 1976; 1973) (p. 91).

2.6.2.7   From Structural Semiotics to 'Cultural Semiotics'

According to Chandler (2007), while structural semiotics is often associated to textual analysis, it is criticized by cultural semioticians, who supported Barthes' perspective of sign as 'motivated' rather than 'arbitrary'.

Cultural semioticians do not believe in 'ideologically neutral sign-systems', as the function of signs is to 'persuade' (largely refers to interpellation or critical literacy positioning) or 'refer' (to show social identity) (p. 214). As Valentin Voloshinov (1973) claimed, "Whenever a sign is present, ideology is present too" (p. 214). The sign-systems function to naturalize and enhance the 'particular framings of the way things are', although the 'operation of ideology' done through signification is usually hidden (p. 214). Hence, Barthesian analytical approach on semiotics focuses on denaturalization of dominant codes to show how the embedded ideology (or social practice) works and how it can be challenged or reproduced in the reality *(ibid.)*.

Besides ideology, the sign-systems, being socially constructed, index our social identities. As declared by Hall (1977), our "systems of signs… *speak us* as much as we speak in and through them" (p. 216). We are the "subjects of our sign-systems" and "shaped by them", instead of the "instrumental users" who controls them (p. 216). Hence, semiotic analysis is always as associated to ideological analysis *(ibid.)*.

2.6.2.8   Linguistic Semiotics vs. Marketing Semiotics

The interdisciplinary semiotics encompasses vast research interests. Nevertheless, the review on previous studies in linguistic and marketing semiotics reveals different concerns and approaches between both realms.

According to Chand & Chaudhary (2012), linguists and marketers have different interests, i.e. meaning creation and meaning consumption respectively. Hence, meaning creation, meaning producers and critical literacy positioning are emphasised in linguistics, while meaning consumption, meaning receiver (consumers) and brand positioning in marketing. The latter is verified by Gupta (2013), explaining the notion of 'positioning' in marketing as "the action of framing the brand in the minds of target consumers".

One significant example is the treatment of colours. Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, p. 355) represents the linguistic perspective, discussing how colour meaning is created to fulfil three metafunctions, i.e. ideational, interpersonal and compositional meanings for communication. Whereas, marketing concerns on how colours affect consumer's perception of brand/products (e.g. Aslam, 2006; Labrecque & Milne, 2011; Akcay, Dalgin & Bhatnagar, 2011), consumer's response/psychology towards brand/products (e.g. Sable & Akcay, 2010; Morris, 2013, *Color Meanings in Business*, n.d.), and preferences (e.g. Shin, Westland, Moore, & Cheung, 2012), as reflected by their positioning that emphasises consumers' perception and preferences (Gupta, 2013). The same goes to other modes, e.g. typography, as observed in Van Leeuwen (2006), Nørgaard (2009) and Serafini & Clausen (2012) representing linguistics, while Grohmann, Giese, & Parkman (2012) in marketing.

Another difference between linguistic and marketing semiotics is the concern in semiotic modes, in which linguistic emphasises multimodality, as claimed by Nørgaard (2009),

In Multimodal Discourse, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) present a view of communication that invites us to view all types of communication as involving more than one semiotic mode...such as sound, gesture, music, visual images, written and spoken language... (p. 159)

On the contrary, marketing is more aesthetic-oriented. The latter is verified by marketing that is more aesthetic-established (more research) to the extent of constructing "aesthetic and gender", adapted in the linguistic framework (refer Table 3.1.2.1 in Appendix A).

As a result, the differences between linguistic and marketing semiotics in concerns and approaches lead to distinctive research approaches and gaps between both realms. (See Section 2.5.3, last paragraph) See also the review of theoretical models for packaging analysis, summarised by Vilnai-Yavetz and Koren (2013, pp. 398-400), depicting marketing research approach that is more non-verbal (/aesthetic) focused.

2.6.3 Scollon's Mediated Discourse Analysis

This section discusses the important features of Scollon's (2001, 2004) MDA.

2.6.3.1 The Notion of Discourse

In contrast to *sender-receiver communication model* that misleads the perception of *social interactions* within texts are merely between the producer (encoder) and the receiver (decoder), MDA shares the views of interactional sociolinguists like Gumperz and Goffman, that social interaction occurs in texts is a negotiated communication between social actors in real time (Scollon, 2004), in which actions are strategized, to achieve desired social meanings derived from complex intersection or linkage of social practices, e.g. social

identities, gender policies, etc. Subsequently, this leads to other definition of discourse as "a mediated social interaction" (Scollon, 2004) taken place in a *nexus of practice.* This statement is further verified by Scollon (2004), "all discourse is mediated and all mediations...are discursive".

The interdisciplinary MDA shares the perspective of '*discourse as action'* with many traditions among North American and European linguistics, e.g. Austin's (1962) *Performative Hypothesis*; Searle's (1969) *Speech Act Theory*; *new literacy studies* (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Scollon & Scollon, 1981, etc.); and *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 1996, etc.). (Norris & Jones, 2005) Hence, language is no longer perceived as an abstract code but mediational tools taken with social actions, and discourse is not a matter of texts but social action (*ibid.*). To some extent, MDA undeniably shares the same notion of discourse analysis with CDA and new literacy studies, defined by Gee (1999) as the study of Discourse (social practices) in discourse (language in use) (*ibid.*).

2.6.3.2   The Dynamic Relationship between Discourse and Practice

The dynamic relationship between discourse and social practice is described as "discourse 'cycling' around social action", as mediational means/cultural tools work their way into social practices that will in turn reproduce them (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 9). Thus, discourse and practice are mutually constitutive. Yet, the tension relationship between social action and discourse is inevitable as each mediational means/cultural tool inherits certain affordances and constraints (Van Leeuwen, n.d., cited in Norris & Jones, 2005). For instance, the packaging discourse in the study has limited space.

2.6.3.3　Mediated Action as the Unit of Analysis

The difference between MDA and any other discourse analysis is the focus on the actions of social actors who may use texts in communication, not on the texts themselves. (Scollon, 2004)

The citation above presents a much up-to-date definition derived from Scollon's students, Norris and Jones (2005), claiming MDA as the analysis of "*Discourse in Action"*, which further highlights the primary concept in MDA and how it differs from other schools of thought/methodologies. The transformation of notion from *discourse as action* to *discourse in action* distinguishes the 'theory of social action' (Scollon, 2004) from the approaches of other DA, though it clearly borrows some insights from other traditions mentioned earlier. The unit of analysis has thus transferred from text discourse to the mediated actions, which are undertaken by the social actors through mediational means (e.g. language) or cultural tools (Scollon, 2004) (e.g. product packaging), appropriated within the social practices in the world and the *habitus* of social actors in real time.

The first concern is to identify the action(s) undertaken within the discourse, followed by the analysis on the role of discourse in realizing the action(s), i.e. how discourse functions as action (Scollon, 2001, 2002; Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon, S.W. & de Saint-Georges, 2012; Scollon & Scollon, n.d.). As explained by Norris and Jones (2005),

"rather than approaching the question of how discourse is a social action through the discourse, MDA approaches it through the action." (p. 9)

2.6.3.4　The Multimodality of MDA

Without initial limitation to the analysed text, MDA broadens the scope of DA by including *any possible* modes (mediational means), linguistic or non-linguistic, which are taken with

the particular social action and appropriated within the nexus of practice to achieve the desired social meanings, positioning, etc (Norris & Jones, 2005). This explains why data in MDA is *multimodal* (Jones, 2001, *ibid.*), or even more multimodal than other DA, through "action-oriented approach to critical discourse analysis" (Wohlwend, 2013, p. 56).

According to Gee (2010), "Any aspect of context can affect the meaning of an (oral or written) utterance (cited in Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 4). Hence, the validity of qualitative analysis is unlike quantitative analysis, especially in the analysis of 'situated meaning', or also known as 'utterance-token meaning'. It is determined by what he called the 'frame problem', in which widening the contexts will stabilize interpretation and in turn enhance the validity of DA (*ibid.*). As claimed by Gee & Handford, 2012),

> *The frame problem is both a problem and a tool. It is a problem because our discourse analytic interpretations...are always vulnerable to changing as we widen the context within which we interpret a piece of language. It is a tool because we can use it ⎯ by widening the context ⎯ to see what information and values are being left unsaid or effaced...* (p. 5)

2.6.3.5 The Multiperspectived MDA

Besides *multimodal*, the data in MDA is claimed to be *multiperspectived,* (Jones 2001, cited in Norris & Jones, 2005), having collaboration with the participants as co-researchers. The subjectivities or diverse perspectives align with Ruesch and Bateson's (1951; 1968) 'four kinds of ethnographic data", i.e. 1) members' generalizations about their social practices at the particular nexus of practice; 2) individual experiences that may differ from the generalizations; 3) 'objective' observations from the researchers; and 4) comparisons between the perspective of researchers and the participants (cited in Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 202, *see also* Scollon & Scollon, n.d.).

Nevertheless, there are two other models of "perspectives". Developed by Suzanne Scollon (n.d., cited in Scollon, 2004), in *Methodological Assumptions in Intercultural Communication,* are "four different perspectives", i.e. members' generalization, individual experience, 'neutral'/'objective' data and 'playback' response. Members' generalization, according to Scollon (2004), has the tendency to be 'powerful and highly resistant to change', whilst individual experience produces perspectives that may be different but 'within the limits of the group's acceptance of difference'. Another version has five types of perspective, i.e. members' generalization; individual experience; 'neutral'/'objective' data; interaction with the participants; and 'playback' response.

Regardless of the different models, the multiperspectived data undeniably serves as a bonus to any DA, as data analysed by the researcher is validated by social actors. Perceived as a "triangulation" by Scollon (2004), MDA addresses the discrepancy of most DA, which Scollon & Scollon (2005) claimed *habitus* is not enough for CDA. Thus, it can overcome the common weakness of DA, which according to Robinson (2011), has the tendency of committing 'intellectual imperialism', i.e. interpreting data for the researcher's interests.

2.6.3.6   MDA as *Nexus Analysis*: The Three Basic Steps

MDA, often referred as *nexus analysis* (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, cited in Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 201), does not have a strict methodology but rather "a set of heuristic tools" (*ibid.*) that combines possible research practices under the "sophisticated ethnography" (Blommaert, 2010), i.e. the researchers "immerse" in the participants' social practices and collaborate with participants in the analysis. Basically, Scollon and Scollon (2004) divide

MDA into three steps, i.e. (1) engaging the nexus of practice; (2) navigating the nexus of practice; and (3) changing the nexus of practice (cited in Norris & Jones, 2005).

First, engaging the nexus of practice, is a reflective process in which Scollon & Scollon (2004, *ibid.*, p. 201) named, 'establishing the zone of identification' where researchers' and participants' interests overlap, as well as the achievement of an *emic* or also known as *insider's* (Pike, 1967) (p. 202), i.e. the participants' (social actors) point of view. Thus, MDA is participatory (Jones, 2002; Jones *et al.*, 1997) as participants play the role as co-researchers (p. 202). This initial step is not meant for data collection, but to determine the kinds of data to be collected (*ibid.*), as well as understanding the kinds of social practices, mediational means/cultural tools and discourse that may be taken into consideration. It is also a step where the researchers 'immerse' as the participants in the social practice to gain more understanding on the social practices of interest. Some methods proposed for this step are Discourses survey (media content surveys and public opinion) about the issue(s) of interest; scene survey/ informal observation at relevant sites; interviews (individual or group) and surveys on social actors (Scollon & Scollon, n.d.; Norris & Jones, 2005).

The second step, navigating the nexus of practice, begins data collection and analysis. Unlike other DA, MDA's data is multimodal and multiperspectived as participants again act as co-researchers, to whom the researchers' 'objective' findings will refer to. The aim is to find out how close is the researchers' understanding matches the participants who are the social actors in the discourse analysed. The analysis may involve the analysis of the social actors; discourse and other mediational means (using any appropriate DA to see how discourse is 're-semiotized' by mediational means/cultural tools or transformed into cultural tools and social practices); motives, etc. (Norris & Jones, 2005). Apparently, there are no explicit restrictions on the number and type of analyses involve.

Last but not least, changing the nexus of practice, the last step "emphasizing the underlying goal of all MDA to produce positive social change" (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 203), i.e. how the *nexus of practice* changes throughout the research. The reflexive and analytic approach enables participants to analyse and reflect on their own actions. Hence, according to Scollon & Scollon (2004), this step aims to answer "What actions can you take as a participant-analyst in this nexus of practice that will transform discourses into actions and actions into new discourses and practices?" (*ibid.*).

2.7   Summary

This chapter provides an account of the body of knowledge underlying the study, which will help to explain numerous aspects of the present study. These include research problem (social issue), the significance of the study, limitation, objectives, etc. in Chapter One: Introduction; the choice of research framework, data, plan, etc. in Chapter Two: Research Methodology; and lastly, justifying data interpretation in Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the theory and methodology of this study. As mentioned in Chapter One, the study aims to analyse how metrosexuality is negotiated through social interactions within the packaging discourse of LME, in comparison with LP.

A brief recap of the research questions (RQ) will help to facilitate this discussion.

1. What are the social actions presented in the packaging discourse of LME?

2. What are the multimodal features in the packaging that contribute to the social actions?

3. How are the multimodal features for each social action strategized for marketing and gendering purposes?

3.1   Research Framework

The research framework of the study can be divided into two categories, i.e. theoretical framework (see Section 3.1.1) and linguistic framework (see Section 3.1.2). Kindly refer Figure 3.1 for the illustration.
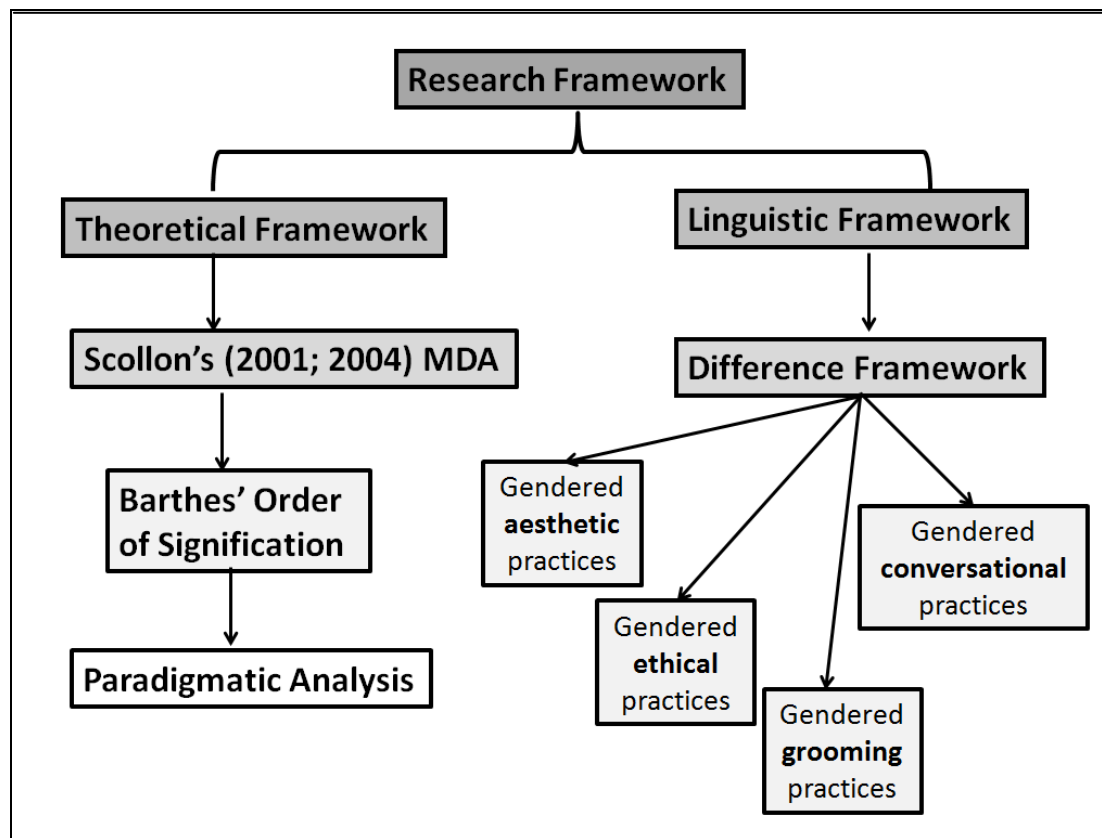
Figure 3.1:   The Overview of Research Framework

3.1.1   Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study uses Scollon's (2001, 2004) MDA (see Section 2.6.3). It is also known as *nexus analysis* (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, cited in Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 201), as it does not have a strict methodology but rather serves as "a set of heuristic tools", which enables different intersections of research theories and practices. Hence, the first rationale of choosing this methodology is to overcome the rigidness of DA by providing the autonomy of selecting and managing research practices/theories, which best fulfill the research objectives. This flexibility is important to semiotic studies that often have complicated research methodology combining different theories, e.g. Chand & Chaudhary

(2012) used an amalgamation of Fairclough's CDA and Chandler's compilation of semiotics. MDA simplifies research framework by placing different theories under one umbrella, i.e. MDA.

In this study, Scollon's MDA is incorporated with the elements of structural semiotics, i.e. paradigmatic analysis and Barthesian Order of Signification. Furthermore, this "heuristic tool" is an added bonus to explorative analysis of complicated discourses like packaging that are rarely/never analysed in linguistics and involves more semiotic modes, ranging from verbal, visual, tactile to ophthalmological features.

Being an "action-oriented approach" (Wohlwend, 2013, p. 56), the concept of nexus analysis takes a step further with wider, all-inclusive context of analysis. Analyzing "discourse in action" (Norris & Jones, 2005) opens up DA to all possible contexts where actions take place, e.g. mediational means (multimodal features) in small 'd' discourse, as well as cultural tools, nexus of social practices, social actors, historical, cultural and institutional settings, etc in big 'D' discourses. This contrasts with other DA that approach from text, which specify (limit) the mode(s) and/or social practices before the research begins. Thus, the second rationale of using MDA is to address another discrepancy of most DA, i.e. the 'Frame Problem", which according to Gee (2010, cited in Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 4) determines the validity of a qualitative analysis. See Section 2.6.3.4.

However, the study narrows down the scope of the elements for a smaller scale of analysis, in order to fulfill the requirements of a master's dissertation (see Section 1.6). Although the study narrows the context to only multimodal features and social practices contributing to the social interactions within the packaging discourse, this study is still more valid than other DA, as it widens the modality of DA by approaching text through actions.

In addition to a more valid interpretation, the third rationale of using MDA is to allow for multilayered interpretation (instead of monocausal interpretation), through 'nexus analysis' of all elements involved in the discourse ('d') and social practices ('D'), as well as the tight bonding among these elements that makes mediated discourse (text) multi-causal.

Claiming to be the "sophisticated ethnography" (Blommaert, 2010), Scollon's MDA allows the researcher to "immerse" (intellectually) in the participants' social practices and collaborate with participants as co-researchers. Nevertheless, the latter feature is removed from this study to conduct a small-scale analysis that suits a Master's level research. As for the former, it is conducted through Discourse survey in the first step of MDA (see Section 3.1.1). This leads to the fourth rationale of using MDA, i.e. stresses on the importance of social understanding before conducting a socio-cultural analysis.

With reference to the three basic steps of MDA (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), the study was conducted as follow:

3.1.1.1　Engaging the Nexus of Practice

This step aims to 'immerse' and gain understanding about the related gendered practices (including gendered packaging) pertaining to metrosexuality. The method employed is Discourse survey, including media content surveys, public opinions and scholarly articles. Nevertheless, the first step of MDA is not meant for data collection, but rather to determine the kinds of data to be collected (Norris & Jones, 2005), and thus, sets the direction of the study and data analysis. The findings are embedded in the discussion of literature review, especially in Section 2.4.3 and Section 2.4.4 that discuss the development of metrosexuality in general and local contexts through media survey of news articles.

3.1.1.2   Navigating the Nexus of Practice

This step marks the start of data analysis with the aim to answer the research questions. Based on the direction set by the previous step, e.g. the consideration of social practices like sex role, gender behaviour, aesthetic and gender activity, a linguistic analytical framework was constructed (see Section 3.1.2). Next, the packaging discourse was analysed based on the linguistic analytical framework and elements of structural semiotics, i.e. paradigmatic analysis (see Section 2.6.2.5) and Barthesian Order of Signification (see Section 2.6.2.3). With emphasis on binarism/binary opposition (see Section 2.6.2.6) in paradigmatic analysis, the packaging discourse of LME was analysed through comparison with its counterpart, *L'Oréal Paris*.

3.1.1.3   Changing the Nexus of Practice

Due to the various limitations set by the Master's dissertation that eventually demand for a small-scale study, this step was removed from the study and social actors were not included as co-researchers. However, this suggests the limitation of the study, in terms of the comprehensiveness in employing Scollon's *Mediated Discourse Analysis* and the validation of data through possible triangulations.

3.1.2   Linguistic Analytical Framework

The linguistic analytical framework is constructed from research findings in linguistics, marketing and gender, based on the Difference Framework in language and gender. However, its validity may be questioned due to the unfixed notion of masculinity,

especially in academic context (Messerschmidt, 2012). Hence, this leads Messerschmidt to claim that a social concept such as gender "is ever fixed and no social science scholar has a monopoly on its correct use" (*ibid.*, p. 63).

Difference Framework is chosen as the study concerns gender stereotypes that are not created due to gender and power (proposed by the other two frameworks -- *Dominance* and *Deficit*) but rather due to socialization (see Section 2.6.1.1; See also Tannen 1990, cited in Cameron 2005). Moreover, since gender stereotypes are seen as "something you have" and strict dichotomy between masculine and feminine (see Section 2.1.2), Difference Framework was chosen over gender performativity. Kindly refer Appendix A for the linguistic analytical framework constructed based on the Difference Framework.

3.2   Data Description

This section discusses the three components of data description: 1) data choice (Section 3.2.1); 2) data selection (Section 3.2.2); and 3) data collection (Section 3.2.3).

3.2.1   Data Choice

The study analyses the packaging discourses of LME and LP. Male skincare, rather than cosmetics and fashion, is focused due to the "significant boom" in male grooming industry (Euromonitor International 2010, cited in Toyad & Gopinath, 2012), supported by Holmes (2012). Thus, male skincare best represents metrosexuality today. Besides suggesting novelty and filling gaps in both linguistics and marketing (see Section 1.4), packaging is chosen because LME's marketing is highly dependent on packaging and social media

(Facebook), since its advertisements are less frequent (last update in December 2013, see Section 2.4.4, last para.).

Although LME is the focus, LP is used for comparison, due to the emphasis on 'absent' opposition (*in absentia)* in paradigmatic dimension of structural semiotics. LP, being a "tangible" opposition, helps to ease the process of DA by detecting both gendering efforts and 'extraneous' factors (i.e. other than gender factors).

The company, *L'Oréal* is chosen due to the fact that *L'Oréal* is one of the most reputable beauty producers. In addition, its original brand, *L'Oréal Paris,* is a famous brand for female beauty that has extended its beauty line to male grooming, *L'Oréal (Paris) Men Expert,* through cross-gender brand extension. Although some perceive the brand as feminine, e.g. Simon Duffy (2011, cited in Costa, 2011), it is an undeniable fact that the marketing of LME is a success in the grooming industry. (See *L'Oréal's Annual Report* (2013) and *Financial News Releases* (Clichy, 2012)) Hence, it serves as a good sample to find out how product packaging is strategized to separate from its strong female image, allowing it to thrive in both female and male markets.

In other words, this case study aims to investigate *L'Oréal's* success story in marketing their male products that stem from mere market segmentation, while their female market *LP* dominates in the company. This market segmentation is supported by the fact that LME is described as "a branch of L'Oréal Paris" (*L'Oréal Men Expert,* 2013) and initially known as "L'Oréal Paris Men Expert" (*New Range Just for Him,* 2007).

Another plus point about *L'Oréal* is its obvious marketing effort in promoting male grooming products in Malaysia. This is evident from its initiative in conducting a recent survey (May 2012), *Malaysian Men's Grooming Report* (cited in Veera, 2012 & Cheong,

2012), which was shared and widely reported by the media. This also includes their efforts in research and development towards packaging design, as reported in *Sommaire* (2007).

Furthermore, *L'Oréal Paris* is not a high end product, i.e. classified as "consumer products" along with *Garnier* and *Maybelline* for mass market. They are separated from other *L'Oréal*'s products that are classified as "professional products" (e.g. *L'Oréal Professionnel* and *Redken*) and "luxury products" (e.g. *Biotherm* and *Lancome*). Thus, they serve as the cultural tools of the society, being affordable to the majority and largely accessible in most pharmacies.

3.2.2   Data Selection

The data were selected from the packaging of the skincare products from the whitening series in both LME (*White* Activ) and LP (*White Perfect*). The rationale of choosing whitening series, which aligns with feminine beauty but opposes to masculine attractiveness (see Section 2.3.4), is to analyse how marketers deal with gender stereotype of ideal body image as well.

A total of twelve (12) product packaging were analysed. The types of products chosen are cleanser, toner and moisturizer, representing the three basic steps in skincare regime. The products are limited within the manufacturing year between 2012 and 2013. Refer the illustrations in Figure 3.2.2 (a) and 3.2.2 (b).

Figure 3.2.2 (a): A collection of LP (arranged in order from AC to AM3)

Figure 3.2.2 (b): A collection of LME (arranged in order from BC1 to BM2)

The data selection involved a wide variety of product packaging from different ranges (LME and LP), different types (cleanser, toner and moisturizer), and even varieties within the same range and type (e.g. different types of cleanser in LME).

To avoid confusion, the packaging of the analysed products were coded (see Table 3.2.2 (b)), based on the coding guide presented in Table 3.2.2 (a).

Table 3.2.2 (a): Coding Guide for Product Packaging

Code	Explanation
Collection of Product	
A	Collection A: *L'Oréal Paris White Perfect*
B	Collection B: *L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ*
Type of Product	
C	Cleanser
T	Toner
M	Moisturiser
Varieties in the Same Type of Product within the Same Collection	
-	No varieties from the same type of product are found.
1	Type 1
2	Type 2
3	Type 3
4	Type 4

Table 3.2.2 (b): Coding for Product Packaging

Code	Skin Care Product
AC	*L'Oréal Paris White Perfect Purifies & Brightens* Milky Foam
AT	*L'Oréal Paris White Perfect Whitening & Moisturizing* Toner
AM1	*L'Oréal Paris White Perfect Fairness Control* Moisturizing Watery Cream (*day*)
AM2	*L'Oréal Paris White Perfect Fairness Control* Moisturizing Cream (*day*)
AM3	*L'Oréal Paris White Perfect Fairness Revealing* Soothing Cream (*night*)
BC1[vi]	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Brightening* Foam
BC2	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Bright + Oil Control* White Foam
BC3	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Anti-Spots + Oil Control* Charcoal Foam
BC4	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Total Skin Renewer* Volcano Red Foam
BT	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Bright + Oil Control* Powered Water
BM1	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Bright + Oil Control* Moisturiser
BM2	*L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ Power 4 Whitening* Moisturiser

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[vi] BC1 to BC4 are arranged according to the time they are launched from the earliest (BC1) to the latest (BC4).

3.2.3   Data Collection

The product packaging analysed are bought from various pharmacies in Malaysia.

3.3   Plan of Analysis

Based on Scollon's (2001, 2004) MDA, the unit of analysis in this "action-oriented approach" (Wohlwend, 2013) is the mediated action. Hence, the first step is to identify the mediated social actions in the packaging discourse, as proposed in RQ (1). This unit of analysis was later coded with A1, A2, A3 ......, in which the letter 'A' represents 'action'.

RQ (2) leads to the next step of the analysis, i.e. identifying the multimodal features contributing to each social action identified in RQ (1) through paradigmatic dimension (comparing the choice of signifiers between LP and LME).

To answer RQ (3), multimodal features[vii] were analysed paradigmatically as well, in which each multimodal feature (signifiers) was broken down (based on Barthesian Order of Signification) into three levels of signification (signifieds), i.e. denotative, connotative[viii] and myth. The last, myth, is important to uncover the related gendered practices, which will later uncover the gender construction (or rather, manipulation) within the packaging discourse. As claimed by many 'cultural semioticians', gender is regarded as stereotypes, known as 'myth or mythologies' (Chandler 2007, p. 143) that are naturalized as social truth.

[vii] Kindly note that not all multimodal features identified in RQ (2) will be analysed. Only the common trend of multimodal features will be analysed in RQ (3).

[viii] While connotative meanings/connotations are subjective (referring to the individual's world knowledge and experiences), the study seeks for guidance and validation from various studies in its interpretation, e.g. colour interpretation is mainly based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002).

Since LP serves as the detector of extraneous factors (not gender-related), similarities between LP and LME are mostly ignored. Representing the initial/old concept, norm and default, LP is analysed and presented before LME (that represents novelty, deviation and marked notion) to show how LME differs from the old and default LP. Moreover, the juxtaposition of LP and LME in data presentation shows marketers' gendering effort, i.e. separating male products from dominant female products.

3.4   Summary

This chapter explains the research methodology implemented in the study in three aspects, namely the research framework, data description and plan of analysis. The findings will be analysed and discussed in the next chapter -- Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter provides insights into both data analysis and discussion of the findings. Like any qualitative studies, the data analysis began with identifying the unit of analysis, which based on Scollon's MDA will be the mediated social actions, discussed in Section 4.1. This is followed by Section 4.2 that discusses the identified multimodal features of each social action. Finally, Section 4.3 displays and interprets how the multimodal features were strategised based on gender construction, in order to appeal to the respective sexes.

4.1   Identification of the Unit of Analysis: (Mediated) Social Action

This section answers RQ (1), *"What are the social actions presented in the packaging discourse of LME?"* It marks the start of data analysis by identifying the unit of analysis based on the "action-oriented approach" (Wohlwend, 2013) of Scollon's (2001, 2004) MDA. The unit of analysis, i.e. (mediated) actions identified in the packaging discourse, were coded for easier data analysis with A1, A2, A3...... in which "A" refers to "action".

Based on the packaging discourses of LP and LME, fourteen (14) social actions were identified (see Table 4.1[ix]). A1-A7 are presented at the front packaging (except A7 that

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[ix] See also Figure 4.1 for the sample illustrations on the identification of social actions. Further illustrations with labelling of social actions for each product packaging are presented in Appendix B.

refers to the whole packaging, although the front packaging is more important), while A8-A14 are presented at the back.

Table 4.1: Coding for (Mediated) Social Actions (Unit of Analysis)

Code	(Mediated) Social Action
At the front packaging	
A1	Presenting Brand Name/Logo
A2	Presenting Brand Image[x]
A3	Presenting Trademark
A4	Classifying Product Series
A5	Describing Product Type[xi]
A6	Highlighting Key Ingredient(s)
A7	Highlighting Key Function(s)
At the back packaging[xii]	
A8	Introducing Product
A9	Describing Functions
A10	Promising Expected Results
A11	Describing Texture
A12	Giving Instructions
A13	Listing Ingredients
A14	Giving Assurance

[x] Refer to the whole packaging, although the front was more important especially in its display on the shelf.

[xi] A5 is presented at the front packaging of all products, except LP's moisturisers AM1 - AM3.

[xii] Not all social actions at the back packaging are taken into account. This refers to social actions that are explicitly fixed (not manipulated by other factors, particularly gender), e.g. manufacturing date, barcode, postal address, email address, volume, etc.
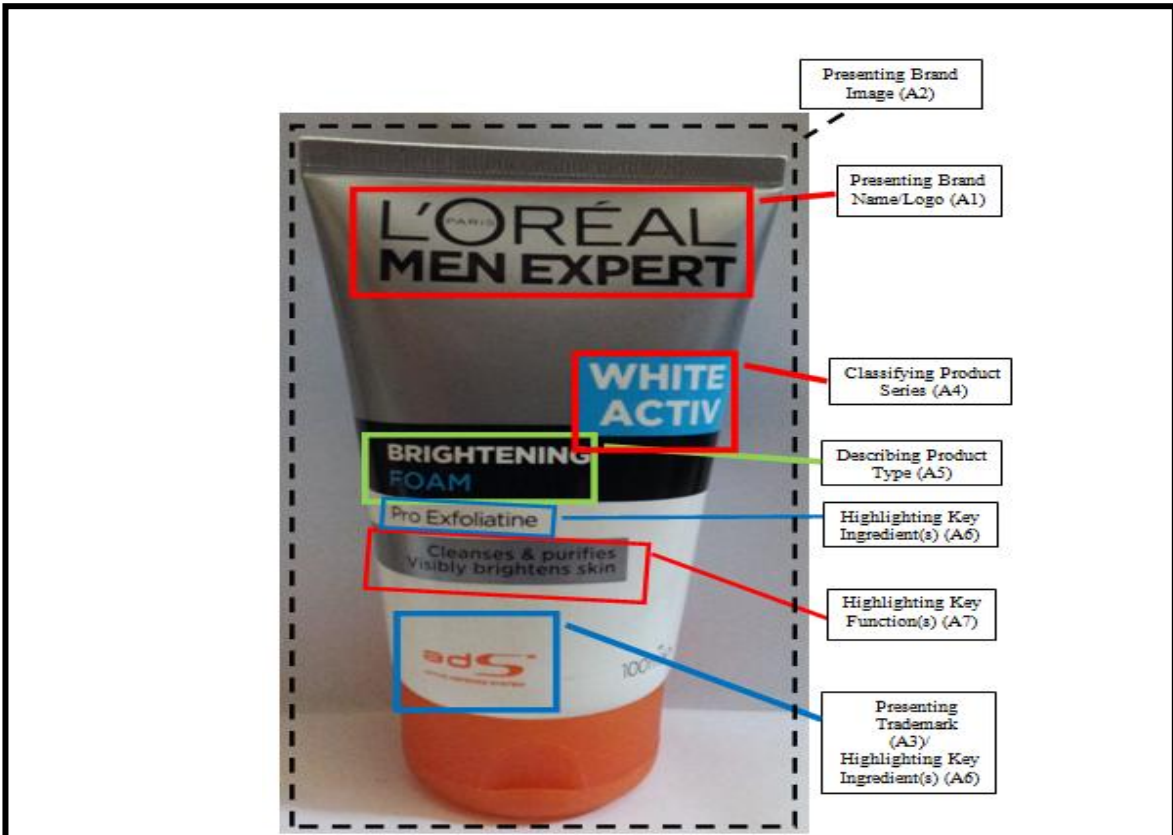
Figure 4.1.7 (a): *L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ* Brightening Foam (BC1) *(front)*
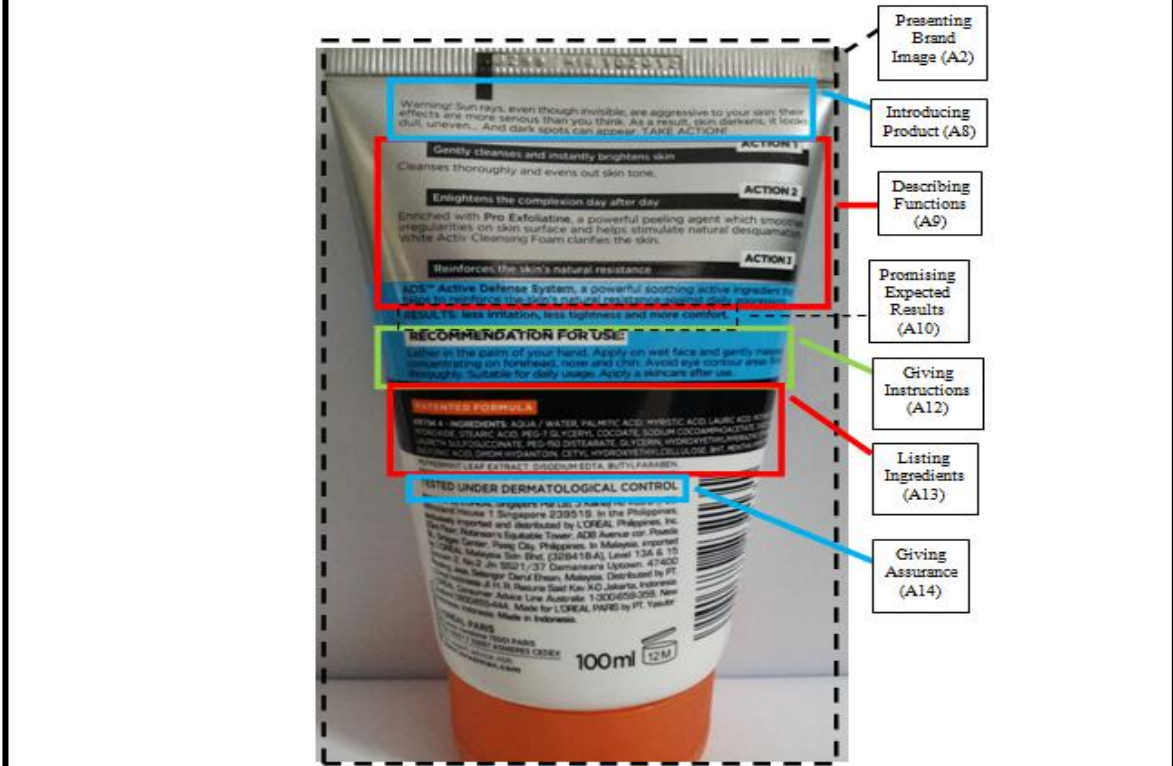
Figure 4.1.7 (b): *L'Oréal Men Expert White Activ* Brightening Foam (BC1) *(back)*

Figure 4.1: Sample Illustrations on the Identification of Social Actions

However, it is important to note that these social actions are not necessarily presented in all packaging discourses. In cases where social actions were embedded in other actions, analysis was conducted under the main social actions, i.e. the main actions where other actions were embedded. For example, A5 (describing product type) in AC, "Purifies & Brightens Milky Foam" embeds elements from A7 (highlighting key function) -- "Purifies & Brightens" and A11 (describing texture) -- "milky". Nevertheless, based on the way the social actions is presented (e.g. position on the packaging, labels, etc.), supported by the comparison with similar social action presented in other product packaging, the main intention of the signs/action is taken into account, i.e. the main social action.

Besides, there were also times when more than one main actions were undertaken in a single action, i.e. overlapping social actions. For instance, "Active Defense System" in LME that is defined as "a powerful soothing active ingredient that helps to reinforce the skin's natural resistance against daily aggressions" is the key ingredient, and thus, A6 in LME. Yet, judging from the way it is symbolised as "AdS" and marked with "TM" sign, it is also presented as a trademark, i.e. A3 of LME. When such cases occur, both actions will be analysed according to the interests of respective social actions. In other words, how "Active Defense System"/ "AdS" is presented as A6 and A3 respectively.

Below are the social actions identified with their respective definition:

4.1.1   Presenting Brand Name/Logo (A1)

Brand name is the "elemental building block of a brand" (Wu, Klink, & Guo, 2013, p. 319). Although brand names are frequently presented with semantic information (e.g. printed ads), they are also presented in isolation (e.g. on logos) (Grohmann *et al.*, 2012, p. 390). For the latter, type fonts become "the only cue to brand personality marketers can initially employ" (p. 390). Marketing scholars claim that physical properties of type fonts in brand names affect consumers' impression (Tantillo *et al.*, 1995; Henderson *et al.*, 2004) and understanding (Batra *et al*, 1995; Childers & Jass, 2002) of the brand, which later affect their attitudes towards the brand and purchasing intentions, especially in terms of its gender association (Pan & Schmitt, 1996) (*ibid.*).

Hence, Action A1 does not only refer to the brand name, but also the way it is visually presented, i.e. type fonts.

4.1.2   Presenting Brand Image (A2)

According to Hine (1995, cited in Pantin-Sohier, 2009, p. 54), there are two elements that project brand image: 1) the graphic elements (e.g. logo and colours) and 2) the structural elements (e.g. size, material and shape). Packaging aesthetics is apparently the focus in this action, as claimed by Valdillez (2012) is "the first thing that a customer sees" (p. 6).

Nevertheless, this nexus analysis also takes into account other forms of aesthetics, i.e. olfactory (sense) and tactile (touch), which similar to visuals, they are the first thing that a consumer senses. Since the brand name is presented in logo, logo has been analysed in A1 (see Section 4.3.1).

Brand image, according to Rossolatos (2012), are attributes that are represented through brand personality metaphor like human personalities (Aaker, 1997; Stern, 2006, cited in Labrecque & Milne, 2012) that consumers wish to 'consume' as their self image.

This mediated action focuses on the overall aesthetics in a holistic manner, aligns with the marketing concept of brand positioning that is aesthetic-oriented. While acknowledging the marketing perspective of packaging (brand/marketing positioning), the linguistic analysis of A2 is not merely presenting brand image for consumer's perception, but also concerns with how meaning is created by designers through signs, in order to persuade receivers to accept the ideology presented in the social context, i.e. critical literacy positioning.

4.1.3   Presenting Trademark (A3)

According to UK Trade Marks Act 1994 (cited in *Brand Channel.com*, http://www.brandchannel.com/education_glossary.asp), a trademark is "any sign capable of being represented graphically which is capable of distinguishing goods or services of one undertaking from those of another undertaking." In other words, Action A3 refers to the way marketers and packaging designers express individuality of the brand and differentiation from other brands through various types of signs, which according to Rossolatos (2012), may be "visual, verbal, aural modality, such as words, letters, numbers, symbols, shapes, drawings, unique sound compositions" (p. 27).

Although the brand name/logo is a common trademark (Rossolatos, 2012), it has been analysed under Action A1 (presenting brand name). Thus, Action A3 considers other possible signs that are presented in (almost) all products of LP and LME but not in other

brands (e.g. "Dermo-Expertise" in LP and "AdS"/"Active Defense System" in LME), or better still -- signs that are marked with the trademark symbol, "TM" (e.g. "AdS" in LME and "Melanin Block" in BM2).

4.1.4   Classifying Product Series (A4)

A4 gives information about the product series, target consumers and function, e.g. whitening and anti-aging. Whitening series will provide skin-whitening functions for consumers (particularly dark-skinned) with concern on skin tone, whilst anti-aging series targets on older consumers to curb skin-aging. The way it is presented, verbally or visually, will be usually shared by other products (e.g. cleansers, toners, moisturisers) within the same series, in order to indicate that they come from the same series (group).

In this study, products from the whitening series from both LP and LME are analysed. Hence, A4 refers to LP's "White Perfect" and LME's "White Activ".

4.1.5   Describing Product Type (A5)

A5 provides information about the product type. Unlike A4 that explains the function of the product in skincare (i.e. whitening function), this action provides information about the product type/instrument (e.g. cleanser, toner and moisturiser).

With reference to how A5 is conducted, there are two sub-actions, i.e. 1) describing product function/functionality (descriptor) and 2) naming product type/instrument (base). Both are determined by the colour difference in the packaging discourse. Both components form the

"full name" of the products, like "first name" and "last name", in which the former is about the product's unique self (e.g. which type of cleansers) and the latter product's root (instrument) (e.g. cleanser), e.g. *Whitening & Moisturizing* Toner.

4.1.6 Highlighting Key Ingredient(s) (A6)

A6 highlights the key ingredient(s) by presenting them at the front packaging. According to Tungate (2011), this action is one of the crucial actions in marketing skincare products and competing with other brands, as it determines the skincare trends. For instance, the popular trend of using plant extracts has been shifted to other focuses, e.g. stem cells. Such trends are quick and dynamic like fashion.

4.1.7 Highlighting Key Function(s) (A7)

A7 highlights the key function(s) of the product by presenting them at the front packaging, e.g. "transparent rosy whitening", "purifying action", "visibly multi-action", etc.

4.1.8 Introducing Product (A8)

A8 marks the beginning of the back packaging discourse. Besides introducing the products, this action is meant for captivating (potential) consumers to read further about other practical information of the product stated at the back packaging, which are written in small fonts in considerable length.

4.1.9 Describing Functions (A9)

Unlike A7 that presents key functions at the front packaging, A9 is provides information about the function(ality) of the products at the back packaging. Another difference is that A9 will be more lengthy and descriptive, as it serves as an elaboration of A7. For example, "Cleanses skin perfectly from impurities."

4.1.10 Promising Expected Results (A10)

A10 describes the expected outcome of the skin after using the products, e.g. "instantly cleaned from impurities, your skin is refreshed and...", "less iritation", "more comfort", etc.

4.1.11 Describing Texture (A11)

A11 describes the texture of the products, e.g. "ulra-soft texture", "no greasiness", "soft and fresh", etc.

4.1.12 Giving Instructions (A12)

A12 provides instructions (or steps) on how to use the product, e.g. "Avoid eye contour.", "Lather in the palm of your hand.", "Apply on wet face...", etc.

4.1.13 Listing Ingredients (A13)

A13 lists the ingredients (i.e. formula) of the products. Although A13 shows a list of scientific names, the interest of this linguistic study lies on how they are presented, e.g. label/caption, type fonts, etc.

4.1.14 Giving Assurance (A14)

A14 assures the consumers that the product is safe and poses no harm, e.g. has been tested and safe to use (for all/particular skin types). For example, "Tested on Asian skin".

4.2   Multimodal Features[xiii] of Each Social Action

This section investigates how each social action identified in RQ (1) is mediated by multimodal features (signifier). It addresses RQ (2): *"What are the multimodal features in the packaging that contribute to the social actions?"*

Since (cross-)gendering effort is the concern and the comparative analysis with LP serves as the detector of "extraneous" (non-gender) factors, not all multimodal features will be analysed. Instead, only the contrasting multimodal features between LME and LP are taken into account as gendering effort. This is due to the assumption that the similarities of multimodal features between LME and LP are not meant for gendering, but rather shared concepts or values under the same company. The results are presented in Appendix C.

[xiii] The multimodal features include visual composition adapted from the 'compositional metafunction' by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). While Kress and Van Leeuwen focus on the visual layout of the whole text, this study focuses more on the visual layout within the limited space where the particular action is conducted (unless specified).

4.3   Gender Construction through Multimodal Features for Each Social Action

While social actions are linked to multimodal features from Section 4.1 to 4.2, the third step of the analysis discussed in this section extends the link to their gendered signification. Based on the Barthesian Order of Signification, the meanings (signifieds) of each multimodal feature (signifier) are uncovered in three levels, i.e. denotation, connotation and myths, with reference to the gendered practices presented in the linguistic framework (refer Appendix A). The intention is to uncover the gender construction to answer RQ (3), *"How are the multimodal features for each social action strategized for marketing and gendering purposes?"* The results are presented and discussed with illustrations[xiv] in the following sections. While the discussion includes complete tables and/or excerpts, the complete table of findings for all social actions can be found in Appendix D.

4.3.1   Presenting Brand Name/ Logo (A1)

This section analyses how brand name is presented (A1). Since A1 is presented in the form of brand logo, the features of the logo were analysed as well, i.e. typography, colour and visual composition, besides analysing the word choice in the brand name that focuses on the semantic notion. Figure 4.3.1(a) and Figure 4.3.1(b) depict the sample illustration of Action A1 in LP and LME respectively.

[xiv] The illustrations given are mostly sample images of representative products from LP and LME. Hence, please take into account of variation across products within the same brand (LP or LME).

Figure 4.3.1 (a): Sample illustration of how brand name/logo is presented (A1) in LP

Figure 4.3.1 (b): Sample illustration of how brand name/logo is presented (A1) in LME

The results of analysis on A1 are presented below:

Table 4.3.1: Gender Construction in Presenting Brand Name/Logo (A1)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth	Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth
			Denotation	Connotation			Denotation	Connotation	
Verbal	**Word choice**	*PARiS*	Capital of Fashion	Sophistication/ Luxury/ aesthetic	F	*PARiS*	Capital of Fashion	Sophistication/ Luxury/ aesthetic	F
			City of Romance	Love/ seduction *(Emotional Expressiveness)*			City of Romance	Love / seduction *(Emotional Expressiveness)*	
						MEN EXPERT	Expert on men (skin)	Expertise	
Visual	**Typo-graphy** xv (of the whole brand name)	Light colour, smaller, not bolded	Light & not compressed (light font & colour)	Sophistication	F	Dark colour (except BT & BM1); big, bolded & compressed	Heavy & compressed *(dense font & colour)*	Ruggedness & competence	M
		irregular	Unconventional	Aesthetic		Regular (all caps)	Conventional	Non-aesthetic	
						Straight fonts & all caps	Sharply angular	rationality, functionality	
	Colour choice	Gold font	Colour of gold	Luxury		Black font (except BT & BM1)	Colour of men business clothing/ fashion items	power, authority, control	M
								Sophistication, luxury	F
	Compo-sition	*PARIS* (way smaller) under *L'Oréal*	*L'Oréal* as ideal info; *Paris* as practical info (description) for the brand	*L'Oréal* as a sophisticated/ luxury brand for beauty (aesthetic)		*MEN EXPERT* (big, bolded & compressed) under *L'Oréal* (*bigger but not bolded*)	*L'Oréal* & *MEN EXPERT* has almost the same prominence, but *MEN EXPERT* is more prominent	*L'Oréal Men Expert* as a brand **EXCLUSIVELY** for men.	M
						PARIS (very small font) embedded in the letter 'O' of *L'Oréal*	*PARIS* has the least salience & almost unnoticeable	Less sophistication/ aesthetic	Less F

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xv The typography is analysed in a holistic manner, analysing the whole brand name, "*L'ORÉAL PARiS*" and "*L'ORÉAL MEN EXPERT*". The latter does not include the word "PARiS" in the analysis for LME, since it is given the less prominence (less significance), based on the composition of the presented brand name.

4.3.1.1   Hiding the Masculine "Threat" -- *Paris*

Table 4.3.1.1: Excerpt from Table 4.3.1 on word choice and (selected) visual composition

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)			Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth		Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word choice	*PARiS*	Capital of Fashion	Sophistication/ Luxury/ aesthetic	F	*PARiS*	Capital of Fashion	Sophistication/ Luxury/ aesthetic	F
			City of Romance	Love/ seduction *(Emotional Expressiveness)*			City of Romance	Love / seduction *(Emotional Expressiveness)*	
						MEN EXPERT	Expert on men (skin)	Expertise	M
Visual	Compo- sition	***PARIS*** (way smaller) under *L'Oréal*	*L'Oréal* as ideal info; *Paris* as practical info (description) for the brand	*L'Oréal* as a sophisticated/ luxury brand for beauty (aesthetic)	F	*PARIS* (very small font) embedded in the letter 'O' of *L'Oréal*	*PARIS* has the least salience & almost unnoticeable	Less sophistication/ aesthetic	Less F

Based on Table 4.3.1.1, it is clear that the word "Paris" is deliberately hidden in LME. Paris, widely known as the Capital of Fashion, is the home for luxurious cosmetics and fashion. Like many other cosmetic brands from Paris, e.g. *Clarins* and *Lancome*, the word *Paris* would usually be placed below the brand, due to its reputation in producing cosmetics and its strong sense of femininity. Hence, besides signifying its origin, it connotes a strong notion of sophistication, luxury and aesthetic (beauty).

While luxury and sophistication may not signal femininity, aesthetic does. Nonetheless, the fact that neither aesthetic nor skincare products is a need for survival connotes luxury and sophistication. Thus, in the discourse of beauty, sophistication and luxury are highly associated to

femininity. This is verified by McIntyre's (2011, p. 349) research that "needs and function are masculine, luxury is feminine". (See also Section 2.5.2.2, para. 3.)

The typography of '*Paris',* i.e. light, not compressed fonts, reflects and enhances this feminine concept of Paris. Adding to the sense of femininity, Paris is also well-known as the City of Romance, connoting seduction and emotional expressiveness. With this regards LME clearly shows the effort of downplaying femininity by placing the tiny word "*Paris"* in the bolded letter "O" of *L'Oréal*.

4.3.1.2   Constructing Masculinity through Word Choice

Besides downplaying the femininity in "Paris", masculinity in LME is constructed in A1 through the phrase "Men Expert". Refer to the word choice in Table 4.3.1.1.

Besides using *"men"* to signal a skincare product 'for men', masculinity is enhanced by the word *"expert"* that appeals to masculine expertise. "Men Expert" implies that LME as a brand for men who are expert about men (skin). In other words, those who choose LME automatically become "men experts", which somehow empowers men.

Furthermore, masculinity is constructed through less verbally marked brand. The word choice, '*Men Expert'* rather than '*For Men'* avoid the preposition "for" that places *"Men"* as the explicit descriptor and marking for the head noun, *L'Oréal*. The same goes to the choice of "*L'Oréal Men"* implying embedded preposition "for". With reference to the English sentence convention that places description/modifiers in front, followed by the head noun, LME confuses the direction of markedness from '*L'Oréal'* to "Expert" (compare with "L'Oréal Expert Men"). Hence, the avoidance of "for" and addition of "Expert" makes the

brand name less verbally marked, although it is marked conceptually due to the high reputation of *L'Oréal* leading any words around it to be marked.

4.3.1.3 Constructing Masculinity through Typography

Table 4.3.1.3: Excerpt from Table 4.3.1 on the typography in A1

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris					L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	**Typo-graphy[xvi]** (of the whole brand name)	Light colour, smaller, not bolded	Light & not compressed (light font & colour)	Sophistication	F		Dark colour, big, bolded, compressed	Heavy & compressed *(dense font & colour)*	Ruggedness & competence	M
		irregular	Unconventional	Aesthetic			Regular (all caps)	Conventional	Non-aesthetic	
							Straight fonts & all caps	Sharply angular	rationality, functionality	

The study of Grohmann *et al*. (2012) represents the marketing perspectives in typography as a sign "communicating brand personality". Masculinity in LME is also constructed through the typography that is heavy and compressed, which signals ruggedness and competence of the brand (p. 392), as well as enhances 'prominence but diminish natural' (p. 390). This opposes to the light fonts in LP that signals 'sophistication' (*ibid.,* p. 392). LME's "heavy and compressed" fonts is constructed by big, dark (dense) coloured (except BT and BM1) and bolded *'Men Expert'*, in which dark colour[xvii] -- the manifestation of high saturation[xviii] (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002); thick fonts (Van Leeuwen, 2006; Serafini & Clausen, 2012); and horizontal orientation (Van Leeuwen, 2006) contribute weight.

[xvi] The typography is analysed in a holistic manner, analysing the whole brand name, "*L'ORÉAL PARiS"* and "*L'ORÉAL MEN EXPERT"*. The latter does not include the word "PARiS" in the analysis for LME, since it is given the less prominence (less significance), based on the composition of the presented brand name.

[xvii] Nørgaard (2009) highlighted 'colour' as the missing element in Van Leeuwen's (2006) 'grammar' of typography, although she acknowledges that the inclusion of colour will be more complicated, with colour saturation, hues, etc.. While Nørgaard (2009) provides a more comprehensive framework, extended from Van Leeuwen (2006), the study opts for a more simplified yet sufficient analysis and reserves a deeper analysis for further study.

[xviii] Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002, p. 356) claim dark colours as highly saturated (in our case, signals density), yet black and white are claimed de-saturated. However, according to the colour expert, Kate Smith (n.d.(a)), the value (lightness/darkness) of a colour is gauged through "how close it is to white or black", and blending black and white with a colour would darken and lighten it respectively. Hence, the study takes the stand that black as the darkest colour with maximal saturation, conversely for white.

The meaning of "ruggedness and competence" can be explained through Van Leeuwen's (2006) "grammar" of typography. According to Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 148), thicker fonts (heavier) signify ideational meaning of 'daring', 'assertive', 'solid', 'substantial', 'domineering' and 'overbearing'; interpersonal meaning that "typographically 'hector' readers"; and compositional meaning that signals salience (prominence). This aligns with Serafini & Clausen (2012) claims for thicker fonts that,

> *...... weighted sans serif font, suggesting power and dominance. Whereas the lighter-weighted words in the title appear feminine and fairy-tale-like, the heavier-weighted words appear more masculine and are used to suggest a more powerful position or perspective......*

In addition, horizontal orientation that contributes to the font weight also connotes 'solidity' and 'self-satisfaction' (Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 149), which reflect masculinity.

Besides features that increase weight, *Men Expert* in straight fonts stress angularity that connotes 'abrasive', 'harsh', 'technical' and 'masculine', which are favoured by 'modernity', 'rationality' and 'functionality' (*ibid.*, p. 149). This is further enhanced by *Men Expert* that are all caps, avoiding any curvature in small caps of some letters like 'e' and 'n'), while challenges the round letter 'O' of *L'Oréal.* Serafini and Clausen (2012) add that all caps in the convention of electronic mail (email) are used as emphasis, "making the readers feel as though the characters are yelling" and the same goes to enlarged words that "make you want to read them out loud with more emphasis". Hence, all caps and big fonts connote assertiveness and prominence. With reference to the interest of the study, the typographical meanings of *Men Expert* undoubtedly connote a strong sense of masculinity to overcome the femininity of *L'Oréal*.

4.3.1.4 Negotiating Masculine Sophistication via Colours

Table 4.3.1.4: Excerpt from Table 4.3.1 on the colour choice in A1

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris					L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Colour choice	Gold font	Colour of gold	Luxury	F		Black font (except BT & BM1)	Colour of men business clothing/ fashion items	power, authority, control	M
									Sophistica-tion, luxury	F

According to Grohmann *et al.* (2012, p. 399), consumers' perception of brand is "influenced independently by font and color" and marketers may use "either type font or color, or both" without concerning both interactions for brand positioning. They further stress that type font should be given more attention, as it has stronger impact than the colour. However, in this study that goes beyond the concern of brand image and focuses more on meaning creation, all semiotic modes and features matter and should be given equal attention, as each creates separate meanings that will integrate with meanings from other semiotic modes (features) to produce a wholesome message.

> *In the fashion world, black expresses status, elegance, richness, and dignity (e.g., black limousines, black tie events, little black dresses, tuxedos, suits).* (Labrecque & Milne, 2012, p. 714)

Apparently, black is mostly associated to fashion and luxurious items associated to men. LME replaces the gold fonts in LP, i.e. "the color of extravagance, wealth, riches, and excess" (Bourn, 2010 (b)), with black connoting sophistication and elegance (Fraser & Banks, 2004; Mahnke, 1996; Wright, 1988) and luxury in a more masculine sense with power and authority (Odbert *et al.* 1942; Wexner 1954) (cited in Labrecque & Milne, 2012).

Known as the "control font" (Grohmann *et al.*, 2012, p. 398), black is "a serious color and can communicate sophistication" (*The Color Connection Book Series: International Color Guide*, cited in Valdillez, 2012, p. 32). This is due to the fact that, besides its association to sophisticated and fashionable items, black is claimed as "the ultimate power color when it comes to clothing" (Wagner, 1988) and "the number one color for business clothing" (Paul, 2002; Nicholson, 2002) (cited in Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 2011, p. 44). Hence, Morris (2013) states that,

> *The color black should be used alongside marketing campaigns to help contribute to the seriousness and formality of either the product or service being sold.*

4.3.1.5 Presenting One-Brand Entity via Visual Composition[xix]

Table 4.3.1.5: Excerpt from Table 4.3.1 on the (selected) visual composition in A1

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris					L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Compo-sition	*PARIS* (way smaller) under *L'Oréal*	*L'Oréal* as ideal info; *Paris* as practical info (description) for the brand	*L'Oréal* as a sophisticated/ luxury brand for beauty (aesthetic)	F		*MEN EXPERT* (big, bolded & compressed) under *L'Oréal (bigger but not bolded)*	*L'Oréal & MEN EXPERT* has almost the same prominence, but *MEN EXPERT* is more prominent	*L'Oréal Men Expert* as a brand **EXCLUSIVE-LY** for men.	M

Based on Table 4.3.1.5 above, *Men Expert* is designed using heavy and compressed type fonts to have almost the same salience (prominence) as *L'Oréal*, to enable *LME* to be read as one entity without '*Paris'* (hidden in the letter "O" of *L'Oréal*) as the divider/separator.

[xix] The concept, 'visual composition' is adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) 'compositional metafunction', which in this case, concerns on 'salience' (based on visual clues, like colour contrast, size, weight, etc., see p. 202) and 'framing' (p. 203-204). While Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) focus on the visual layout of the whole text, this section merely focuses on the particular space where A1 is conducted.

This effect is enhanced by the letters of '*Men Expert'* that are all caps and similar colour as *L'Oréal* in LME. This is supported by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006),

> *The more the elements of the spatial composition are connected, the more they are presented as belonging together, as a single unit of information.* (p. 203-204)

The rationale is to construct a whole new brand, LME that is exclusively for men (enhanced by *Men Expert* being more prominent than *L'Oréal* with heavier and more compressed fonts), by overshadowing its mother brand, *L'Oréal Paris* that has a strong reputation of producing female beauty products. By doing so, LME could somehow 'deny' the fact that it is "a branch of L'Oréal Paris" (*L'Oréal Men Expert,* 2013) constructed through market segmentation*,* where its female market still dominates. Hence, the male line, initially known as "*L'Oréal Paris Men Expert"* (*New Range Just for Him,* 2007), is addressed as *L'Oréal Men Expert* today and the female products, sometimes known as *L'Oréal,* are more often referred as *L'Oréal Paris* ever since LME was launched. The rationale is to give the impression of having two brands, exclusively designed for the respective sexes.

4.3.1.6   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A1

This analysis witnesses three major gendering strategies, i.e. 1) downplaying femininity, i.e. hiding *Paris* and using more masculine sophisticated black than feminine luxurious gold; 2) constructing masculinity, e.g. replacing the word '*Paris'* with '*Men* Expert' as well as replacing 'feminine fonts' with 'masculine fonts'; 3) denying femininity, by creating one-individual-brand illusion. The last point will be discussed thoroughly from the marketing dilemma in A1 to LME's solution (gendering/marketing strategy) as follows:

Although men like to see the label "For Men" (McNeill & Douglas, 2011; Anthony Sosnick, n.d., cited in Holmes, 2012) in male grooming products, it is undeniable that these male grooming products are 'lexically *marked*' (Coupland, 2007, p. 57). According to Simon Duffy, the managing director of *Bulldog Natural Grooming,* the "repackaged 'for men' version" is a hold back to the male grooming market, further verified by a research conducted by *SPA Future Thinking* that reveals brands exclusively invest in male grooming are more successful (cited in Costa, 2011). This is also supported by Coles' (2008, cited in Cheong, Ooi, & Ting, 2010) proposal to launch male-only lines.

According to Chandler (2007, p. 94 – 96), a marked term is usually negatively connoted as 'out of ordinary', i.e. a deviation from the norm (unmarked term), and worst still, it draws attention. In other words, placing the label *"For Men"* in grooming products actually indicates that the brand sells products for females, but this product with *"For Men"* label is catered specially to men. Such brands reflect two brands, i.e. 1) the mother brand ('the norm') and 2) the mother brand plus "For Men" ('deviation'). Hence, the femininity of the brand is actually highlighted.

Based on Section 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.1.5, LME is presented as an individual brand, although it merely derives from the illusion created verbally and visually. Despite the gendering effort, the additional words surrounding *L'Oréal* will signal markedness, due to its high reputation as a beauty producer. However, unlike the common marked "men" that signals negative "out of ordinary", the positively marked "men expert" connotes positive "extraordinary".

In brief, the less-verbally-marked-yet-visually-unmarked LME, masculine construction and feminine reduction in A1 show marketing effort in both "masculinising" the LME brand and "preserving" the brand *L'Oréal Paris.* Besides projecting skincare products as men

products, feminine grooming concept -- luxury is also negotiated with masculine sophisticated black.

4.3.2 Presenting Brand Image (A2)

A2 focuses on the overall aesthetic features. These include: 1) visuals, e.g. colour features and choice, non-colour graphic elements (line, typography and patterns), distribution of colours and lines, and structural elements (shape, size, material and optical properties of the packaging; 2) tactile/touch (surface, hardness and weight); as well as 3) olfactory (presence/absence of smell and types of smell). Comprising all elements except verbal features, A2 requires the most analysis, leading the findings to be presented in a 5-page table. While A2 involves the overall packaging, it is important to note that the front packaging that provides the first impression (first eye contact) is given more emphasis.

Due to the lengthy table, the discussion in this section merely depicts the excerpts of the table. Kindly refer Appendix D (Table 4.3.2) for the complete table. See also Figure 4.3.2 for the sample illustration of A2.

| Front view of the product packaging | Back view of the product packaging |

Top view of the product packaging

Figure 4.3.2: Sample illustration of brand image presentation (A2)

4.3.2.1   Gender Negotiation through Colours: Continuum

This section presents the most challenging part of the study as it deals with colours, which does not only concern with gender construction/negotiation to overcome the femininity of skincare products, the brand and metrosexuality, but also concerns with gender negotiation on another aspect of colour -- skin colour. While it is widely known that colour choice

signals "personality and self-image" (Aslam, 2006, p. 24), supported by Choungourian (1972) and Lüscher (1969) (cited in Labrecque & Milne, 2012), Trinkaus (1991, cited in Aslam, 2006) adds that the colours of our belongings are chosen according to our desired self image. The same goes to packaging colours. Hence, in marketing whitening products for men, LME *White Activ* encounters another challenge – gender negotiation on skin fairness from feminine beauty to a new male attractiveness.

While most whitening products are covered in white and light/pastel colours, like *LP White Perfect*, appealing to females' desire of fair beauty ideal and femininity, both gender negotiation and skin tone tensions can be witnessed in LME through three colour continuums: 1) black and white; 2) light and dark; and lastly, 3) bright and dull, 'challenging' the whiteness, lightness and brightness of LP bottles, as well as the feminine fair beauty and softness. See Figure 4.3.2.1(a) and Figure 4.3.2.1 (b) for illustration.

Figure 4.3.2.1(a): A collection of LP (arranged in order from AC to AM3)

Figure 4.3.2.1(b): A collection of LME (arranged in order from BC1 to BM2)

The findings on the colour continuums will be discussed based on the table below:

Table 4.3.2.1: Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 on the colour feature in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual 1. Graphic Element Colour[xx]	Feature of colour	**Light, Bright** (mostly white)	Not dense colour	Light & less prominent;			**Neutral (grey)** (Top of bottle & The most coverage)	"a neutral tone, intermediate between black & white, that has no hue; reflects & transmits only a little light"	Negotiation between M & F in visuals/skin colour	**M / F**
				ideal fair beauty (lighter skin tone)	**F**				inexpressive & emotionless	**M**
									Dull (skin)	**-**
			Not dull colours	expressiveness & excitement			**Bright**	Not dull colours	Expressiveness; excitement	**F**
									bright skin	**-**
				bright skin complexion	**-**		**Light**	Low colour value (Nearer to white)	Euphemism of skin fairness; Not pastel/pale (light) colours with low saturation	**Less F**
		Pastel	Soft colours	Softness/ tenderness	**F**		**Dark**	Dense (saturated) colour	Prominence; solid	**M**
				soft skin						
			Less saturated, light	less prominent					Dark skin	
				light skin tone						

(A)   Negotiation through Black-White Continuum

Based on Table 4.2.2 (see Appendix C), the colour "negotiation" between black-white continuum can clearly be seen in the first two cleansers of LME -- BC1 and BC2, which existed before another two -- BC3 and BC4. The overall colour arrangement of BC1 and BC2 (excluding caps) starts from the top with grey to black and white. Unlike the emphasis of white in LP (almost full coverage in AC and AT, except cover; almost full on top of the cover in AMs), grey seems to be the most significant colour among LME (except BM1), being the top colour and having the most coverage, i.e. almost half of BCs and BT, and almost full in BM2. See Figure 4.3.2.1 (b).

According to Collins Dictionary.com (2013), grey is as an "intermediate between black and white". Black and white have long been perceived as skin tone tension between fair and dark skin. Hence, the emphasis on grey in LME connotes the negotiation between feminine fair beauty and masculine dark attractiveness.

LME products that best represent this skin tone tension are BC1 and BC2, having grey at the top and the most coverage (approximately half the bottle), followed by black (less than a quarter) and at the bottom before the cap -- white (more than a quarter), although there are some slight "interference" from other colours. This is an obvious downplaying of feminine fair beauty through grey emphasis on top and masculine darkness (black) in between. The downplaying of feminine fair beauty becomes more "intended" in other LME products, as white becomes more insignificant, i.e. reduced to white fonts. For instance, BM2 is mostly covered in grey and BC3 in black, as well as other LME products implementing other colour continuums for negotiation (refer Section (B) and (C)).

As for gender construction in general, white, being the colour of a clean sheet of white paper, connotes purity, innocence and cleanliness (Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 2011; Fraser & Banks, 2004; Mahnke, 1996; Wright, 1988) and conveys "sincerity" of the brand. (Cited in Labrecque & Milne, 2012, p. 714) Since clean and pure signify having no dirty spots, white also connotes perfection, as supported by Morris (2013),

> *The color white is especially useful for businesses that deal primarily with alternative medicine, natural health, and health products due to the feelings of goodness and perfection that the color white invokes.*

These connotations do not only appeal to femininity in general, but also reflects the feminine vanity -- the pursue of body perfect (Wolf, 2002; Blood, 2005, cited in Foo, 2010).

In LME, this femininity is downplayed by black and grey (except BT and BM1 that are mainly blue). Like black (Section 4.3.1.1), grey -- "color in men's business attire" (Wagner, 1988) connotes elegance with strong masculine sense, e.g. practicality, dependability, etc. (cited in Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 2011, p. 45). In LME, the shades of grey can be perceived as grey silver that connotes "very positive connotations of sophistication" (Paul, 2002; pcimag.com, 2002, *ibid.*) (also supported by Bourn, 2010(c)) or male technological expertise, as it represents the colour of silver metal. Despite sophistication, Morris (2013) emphasises on the masculinity in grey and silver:

> *Gray and silver are also colors that exemplify business wisdom, seriousness, and confidence therefore making them ideal colors to use with advertisement campaigns for lawyers, medical professionals, and even financial advisers.*

Hence, besides the negotiation between skin tones, grey and its shades reflect obvious negotiation of gender in general. Just as Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar (2011, p. 45) stated, the colour "suffers from a lack of assertiveness" and "confusion, as in 'gray area'". In brief, grey is, after all, defined by Collins Dictionary.com (2013) -- "a neutral tone", as well as labelled as the "color of detachment, indecision and compromise" (*The Color Gray*, n.d.).

(B)   Negotiation through Light-Dark Continuum

This section deals with gender negotiation within the continuum of light-dark colour. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002), lightness and darkness of the colour can be determined by value,

> *the scale from maximally light (white) to maximally dark (black)* (p. 355)

and saturation,

> *the scale from the most intensely saturated or 'pure' manifestations of a colour to its softest, most 'pale' or 'pastel', or dull and dark manifestations...... High saturation may be positive, exuberant, adventurous, but also vulgar or garish. Low saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold and repressed, or brooding and moody.* (p. 356)

Lightness (also softness) in colour saturation are undoubtedly feminine connoting tenderness and lack of prominence (*ibid.*), as well as feminine soft, fair skin beauty ideals. The feminine lightness and softness of white and pastel colours in LP (except the cap) present light-dark continuum based on saturation, whereas LME projects different versions of light-dark colour contrasts, i.e. value. Hence, from the aesthetic perspectives, the masculinity of LME remains by using dense (saturated) colours, opposes to LP's light, pastel (less saturated) colours.

Based on Table 4.3.2.1, the negotiation within light-dark continuum based on colour value can clearly be seen in LME. For example, the packaging that has the most black (maximally dark) - BC3; the darker packaging in black and red -- BC4; and bottles in dark blue-ultramarine -- BT and BM1. Nevertheless, maximally light (white), light colours (light blue and light grey), and maximally dark black exist in all LME products analysed with different levels of coverage. Hence, there is no complete rejection of femininity in LME, but different levels of "negotiation".

(C)   Negotiation through Bright-Dull Continuum[xxi]

Based on *SOMMAIRE* (2007), an R&D report on the new packaging design for LME, the colour code of LME is "blue, grey and orange" (p. 6). Apparently, besides grey -- the key "negotiating colour" within white-black and light-dark continuums (discussed in the previous two sections), bright orange is another signature colour of LME, also supported by Pitman (2005). Colours from bright-dull continuum are given interest in the analysis due to the obvious use of bright colours in LME, which connotes feminine aesthetics and expressiveness that may "threaten" masculinity. This includes the juxtaposition between bright and dull in the brighter version of the dull grey[xxii] -- silver.

In LP, the main colour is white, "the total reflection of all colors" (Labrecque & Milne, 2012, p. 714), that is undoubtedly bright. Bright colours do not only connote feminine aesthetics and expressiveness, they may also connote brighter skin, judging from the beauty/grooming discourse in concern. However, in feminine beauty context, it is the lighter skin tone that matters (see Section 2.3.4). It is reflected by the maximally light white and light/pastel colours of LP, which focus mainly on lightness of colour, signifying fair beauty, or even, paleness of excessive skin-whitening practice (reflected through extremely low saturated colours). Paleness (excessive fairness) is a traditional feminine ideal beauty, verified by the 11th century Japanese epic, "The Tale of Genji" penned, "the feminine ideal during the Han period for women of the court was almost unearthly light white skin" (Anne Rose Kitagawa, cited in *Skin-whitening big business in Asia*, 2009).

[xxi] Comparing to light-dark continuum that can be measured by value and saturation (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002), bright-dull continuum is more complicated, as it involves colour value, tonal contrast, hue choice, colour saturation, etc. For example, not all dark colours are dull (e.g. dark red and orange) and not all dull colours are dark (e.g. light grey or pastel brown). Hence, although colour value (closer to white/black) may be the closest determination for bright-dull colours, brightness can be affected by various other factors.

[xxii] According to Collins Dictionary.com, grey colour "has no hue and reflects and transmits only a little light", and thus, is dull.

On the contrary, LME displays a more colourful version with many bright colours, i.e. orange, bright light blue and white, in which white is slowly reduced from BC1 and 2 to only fonts in other LME products. However, with reference to the femininity of colourfulness and brightness, LME products balance this with masculine maximally dark and dull black; bright-but-dark red (in BC4); brighter version of dark blue-ultramarine (in BT & BM1); and brighter version of dull grey -- silver, i.e. "the color of illumination and reflection" (*The Color Silver*, n.d.).

In other words, brightness remains as one of the key features in LME, though its femininity is mainly reduced by non-white bright colours and brighter version of dark/dull colours. While anti-femininity is as important as masculinity in male grooming products, this emphasized brightness may signal a different gender negotiation of brighter skin tone to overcome feminine skin-fairness pursuit within LME's whitening products, *White Activ*. This is further verified by the explicit emphasis of skin-brightening function in LME through word choice, e.g. in Action A7.

4.3.2.2   Gender Negotiation through Colours: Choice

Although there are numerous interpretations of a colour, the study chooses the relevant meanings of beauty (grooming) discourse, related to fashion, aesthetics, sophistication, gender, marketing, etc., aligned with the study interests. Refer Table 4.3.2.2.

Table 4.3.2.2: Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.1) on the colour choice in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris			Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)				Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth		Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual 1. Graphic Element Colour	Choice of Colour	White (the most)	Colour of clean paper sheet	Sincerity, Purity, innocence, perfection	F	White (all: fonts; almost 1/2 in BC1 & 2)	Colour of a clean sheet of paper	Sincerity, purity, innocence, perfection	F
			Colour of fair skin	Female ideal facial complexion			Colour of fair skin	Female ideal complexion	
						Grey^xxiii	btw black & white	Neutral, emotionless,	M
							colour in men's business attire	formal, serious, practicality, wisdom;	
								elegance	F
		Gold	Colour of gold	Luxury		Silver	Colour of silver metal	Sophistication; hi tech	F/M
		Purple (AM3)	Royal colour	Luxury/ Sophistication		Black	Colour of men formal/ business clothing/ fashion items	Seriousness, power & authority	M/ F
		Pink (AM2)	Colour of girl's stuff	Youth / Femininity (include sweet, nice, playful, cute, romantic)				elegance/ sophistication	
						Red (Only BC4)	Colour of blood & fire	adventurous, risk-taker, courage, assertive	M
						Orange	bright color btw yellow & red, mostly on kid's stuff	Adventurous, energetic, affordable; individuality; captivating, assertive	M
		Blue^xxiv	Colour of boy's stuff	Masculinity	M	Blue	Colour of boy's stuff	Masculinity	M

xxiii The grey colour of LME can be perceived in two different shades, i.e. light grey or silver.

xxiv Since both LP and LME use blue and white, there are some factors that are not due to gendering effort.

White is the most threatening colour in LME for its feminine innocence, body perfect and skin fairness, and thus, is downplayed. On the contrary, the emphasis of grey in LME signals "compromise" and gender negotiation. See Section 4.3.2.1(a).

In addition, masculine sophistication is connoted by black, grey (or silver) and blue-ultramarine. Like the euphemism -- "grooming", these colours can be perceived as "colour euphemisms" of sophistication in male grooming discourse (metrosexuality). However, this sophistication may also suggest luxury, but is challenged by the signature colour -- orange (except BC3 and BC4) that connotes "affordability" (Morris, 2013) and "inexpensiveness" (Akcay *et al.*, 2011, p. 45). This is partly due to its fun characteristic that makes it a popular colour in "businesses that promote energy and playfulness", especially in children stuffs like Nickelodeon (children's television network) and Reese's (the candy company) (Morris, 2013). Usually, these products are cheap.

> *Ampacet has unveiled the 16 colours for plastics beauty packaging that it believes will set the trend for cosmetic and toiletry products during the course of the next two years - and it is orange that looks set to make it big...... Backing up Ampacet's theory ...... is the recent launch of L'Oreal Men's Expert range of skincare products. The packaging, which is highlighted with bold orange trim and detail, has helped to make the line a tremendous success, despite early reservations by some about the color choice.* (Pitman, 2005)

With reference to the citation above, orange is the potential popular color packaging in 2006, which according to Linda Carroll (Ampacet's market development manager) is due to the "growing demand for individuality from consumers", i.e. "colours that express personalisation and strength" (cited in Pitman, 2005). "Combining the physical energy and stimulation of red with the cheerfulness of yellow", orange is associated with energy and adventure. (*The Color Orange,* n.d., see also Akcay *et al.*, 2011), which propose masculine appeal of autonomy, freedom and independence.

As for the interpersonal meaning of colour (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002), orange possesses "luminous qualities" and thus, "attention-grabbing" (Akcay *et al*, 2011, p. 44), making it the color of "social communication" (*The Color Orange,* n.d). Compared to red, orange is "less stimulating" (Akcay *et al.*, 2011) and "carries less aggression and fierceness" (Bourn, 2011(b)), which "invites" and "politely demands the attention of the audience" (Butler 2013) and assists in decision-making (Bourn, 2011(b)). Along with its stimulating and attention-grabbing features and individuality connotation, orange persuades skin fairness and metrosexuality among men for a unique personal style.

However, claiming to be a "stiff competition with the ever-popular red" (Pitman, 2005), the replacement of orange with red in the latest LME product -- BC4, communicates a stronger demand for action, i.e. stronger assertiveness, which in turn communicates stronger masculinity. Unlike orange that politely invites, red demands for "attention quickly and get people to make quick decisions" (Bourn, 2011(c))

Moreover, red -- "the colour of blood and fire" (Bourn, 2011(c)) connotes 'daring', 'activeness', 'aggression', 'danger' and 'courage' (Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 2011; Bourn, 2011(c)), projecting a stronger masculine appeal to male consumers that does not merely asserts "act now" (Morris, 2011), but also challenges consumers -- dare to act.

4.3.2.3   Gender Negotiation through Colours: Shades

The two most sensitive colours in any gendered discourses are pink and blue, which are (near) universal feminine and masculine colours respectively. According to Koller's (2008, p. 401) statement about pink, in *'Not just a colour': pink as a gender and sexuality marker in visual communication*, "it takes no genius to realize that the colour is associated with

femininity". Likewise, numerous scholars from different disciplines (e.g. Koller, 2008; Paul, 2002 & Jacobs et al., 1991, cited in Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 201; Valdillez, 2012) claim blue as a masculine colour.

Table 4.3.2.3: Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.1) on the colour choice in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Pink	Pastel	Soft girlish colour	Femininity, softness	F		None	-	Anti-femininity	M
1. Graphic Element Colour	Blue	Light Ultramarine	Soft boyish colour	Feminine softness + M	More F		Bright, light	bright, light boyish colour	Feminine expressiveness & softness + M	Less M
			Made of expensive pigments (the past)	Luxury/ sophistication	F		Bright Dark Blue-ultramarine	Bright, dense boyish expensive colour	Prominence; Masculinity	M / F

With reference to Table 4.3.2.3, unlike LP that uses pink, it is expected that LME avoided the colour to construct masculinity through anti-femininity, just as LME is expected to use blue as one of the brand's colour codes (*SOMMAIRE*, 2007) to construct and enhance the masculine sense. However, the use of blue in LP (their comparative model) questions the implemented gendering effort and intention through blue colour. Hence, it is important to find out: 1) why the masculine blue is used in both 'counter' gendered discourse and 2) how LME can construct a separate masculine identity from its 'female counterpart' -- LP that also serves as its mother brand, when both LP and LME are using the masculine blue.

> *Blue is considered a business color because it reflects reliability. Blue is often considered to be the safest global color and variations of blue are the most popular of all the colors (pcimag.com, 2002)* (cited in Akcay, Dalgin, & Bhatnagar, 2011, p. 44).

With reference to the quotation above, the use of blue in both LP and LME is not completely meant for gendering effort, but other 'extraneous' factors. In the marketing (branding) context, blue is "the most common colors" (Morris, 2013) and "more appropriate for brands with functional benefits" (Bottomley & Doyle, 2006, cited in Grohmann, 2012, p. 396). This is explained by Labrecque and Milne (2012) who claim that blue provides the "competence" of brand perception, due to its association with values like trust, intelligence, efficiency, duty, etc. (Fraser & Banks 2004; Mahnke 1996;Wright 1988). These associations are derived from "the corporate blue power suit and the blue uniforms of police officers and firefighter". (Bourn, 2011(a)) Hence, blue is "the color of trust and responsibility" (*The Color Blue*, n.d.). In many marketing tools, blue is used to promote 'the brand you can trust'.

In addition, blue is viewed as "a secure color" (Schaie 1961; Murray & Deabler 1957; Wexner 1954). It is "a safe and non-threatening color", and thus, "the most universally liked color of all" particularly in business (*The Color Blue*, n.d.) Blue is also the most favorable colour for both sexes (Akcay, *et al.* 2011; Sable & Akcay 2010; Funk & Ndubisi 2006; and Khouw 2003, cited in Akcay & Sun 2013). This is verified by a survey conducted on behalf of Dulux Paints. Despite "colour preference varies more by gender and age than it does by geographic location" (Rob McDonald, Marketing Director for Dulux Paints Stores), blue is the most favourable and the "least disliked by most cultures" with insignificant difference between sexes. (*Blue Most Popular Colour Worldwide, Finds Dulux Paints Survey*, 2011) However, this survey may be questioned for its application (wall-painting) and ever-changing trends in interior design. Nonetheless, when yellow is

claimed to be the most popular in a similar survey conducted in 2013, blue remains as the 'measuring standard'. (*Yellow Most Popular Colour Worldwide, Finds Dulux Paints Survey*, 2013)

While blue is promotional and favourable, it may not be a safe colour in gender-sensitive discourses. Using blue in LP does not only threaten its femininity, but also threaten LME's masculinity. Hence, the next concern is to analyse how LME can be separated from the feminine image of LP (also its mother brand) and construct a separate masculine identity.

According to Bourne (2011), "different shades, tints, and hues of blue" will carry different meanings. LP 'negotiates' more femininity through another shade of blue -- ultramarine[xxv] that connotes expensiveness, luxury and sophistication. This is due to the fact that ultramarine in the past was made from expensive elements (lapis lazuli), and thus, was merely used in valuable motifs like "the mantle of the Virgin Mary"(Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002, p. 351). The femininity in LP is enhanced with lighter tone and lower coverage (caps only). See Figure 4.3.2.3 (a) and 4.3.2.3 (b) for illustration.

Figure 4.3.2.3 (a): Sample LP packaging with lighter shade and less coverage of blue in another hue -- ultramarine

Figure 4.3.2.3 (b): Sample LME packaging with darker shade and wider coverage of blue.

[xxv] Kindly note that ultramarine is purely determined through personal perception, based on external sources of information provided in books and websites. Hence, further validation may be needed.

Surprisingly, gender construction of blue in LME (BT and BM1) is more complicated. LME does not only construct stronger masculinity using blue with darker tone and wider coverage, it also negotiates gender using colour between true blue[xxvi] (masculine) and ultramarine (feminine sophistication), as well as darker tone (masculine) yet brighter shade (feminine). In addition, all LME products display another shade of blue -- bright, light blue that merge masculine blue with feminine brighter and lighter tone. See Figure 4.3.2.3 (c).

Blue colour that intermediates between true blue and ultramarine

Bright, light blue
(that is dark due to high colour saturation, but light and bright due to lower colour value)

Figure 4.3.2.3 (c): Sample illustration of LME packaging with variations of blue

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[xxvi] Kindly note that like ultramarine, true blue is also determined through personal perception, based on external sources of information provided in books and websites. Hence, further validation may be needed.

Nevertheless, the masculinity of blue is more dominant than other connotations, just as the femininity of pink. As stated by Koller (2008, p. 404),

> *Although the respective shades of blue differ, hue proved to be the overriding factor so that blue became associated with masculinity. By extension, pink, which was already available as its counterpart, was established as the mark of femininity, so that the gender binarism could stay intact.*

4.3.2.4   Constructing Masculinity through Non-Colour Graphic Elements

While Section 4.3.2.1 to 4.3.2.3 discuss colour-related features, this section discusses the findings of non-colour graphic elements in A2 that are presented in Table 4.3.2.4.

Table 4.3.2.4: Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.2) on the non-colour graphic elements in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual **1. Graphic Element** Non-colour Graphic element	**Lines & Pattern**	Lack straight lines & Blended/ natural	Lack of mechanical & technological elements	Naturalness, less technological	F		Many Straight lines (angularity) Solid, geometry (squares & rectangles)	Element of the mechanical, technological order	Technological skill & expertise; rationality	M
								Separate elements/ info (framing)	Disconnection	
			All elements & info are not separated & not highlighted	Foster connection				Prominent (Salience) (highlight each info)	Exert control & status	
				Establish equality					Report style	
	Typo-graphy	Smaller, less bolded, black & pastel colours	Light & not compressed	Sophistication/ Luxury			Large, bolded fonts (black & white fonts)	Heavy & compressed	Ruggedness & competence	

Based on Table 4.3.2.4, LME projects masculine aesthetic through visual patterns, i.e. many straight lines with solid geometry, which masculinity is explained by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006),

> *Angularity we associate with the inorganic, crystalline world, or with the world of technology, which is a world we have made ourselves, and therefore a world we can/ at least in principle, understand fully and rationally.* (p. 55)

Straight lines and angularity (including squares and rectangles) in LME connote rationality and masculine expertise (in technological and mechanical skills), being "the elements of the mechanical, technological order" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 54). This is further verified by Dondis (1973) claiming the square for representing 'honesty, straightness and workmanlike meaning', as well as Thompson and Davenport (1982) stating that it 'represents the world and denotes order' (*ibid.*).

Based on the compositional meaning of lines and geometrical shapes that serve as framing and/or salience (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006), the solid, geometrical patterns may imply masculine conversational style. LME's framing connotes lack of connection between signs in the packaging discourse, avoiding feminine conversational style that foster connections as seen in the lack of straight lines in LP. Besides, the shapes highlight each information presented with prominence (salience), connoting the masculine conversational style that exerts control and status (among signs), as well as the report style of conversation (with consumers) by making informational details easier to be found, i.e. straight to the point.

4.3.2.5   Constructing Masculinity through Visual Texture

Based on Table 4.3.2.5 (a) below, it is clear that the tactile differences between LP and LME are insignificant.

Table 4.3.2.5 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.4) on tactile features in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
3. Tactile	Surface	All products from LP and LME are similarly smooth.								
	Hard-ness	Same hardness & softness overall, based on product types.								
	Weight	Same weight among cleansers.								
		Heavier (AT & all AMs)	Heavy & stable	Rugged-ness & competence	M		Slightly lighter (BT & all BMs)	Less heavy	Less ruggedness & competence	Less M

Nevertheless, according to Djonov and Van Leeuwen (2011), in "*The semiotics of texture: from tactile to visual"*, visuals may provide images of tactile texture. According to them, the visual texture is:

> *an illusion of tangibility, brought about visually, by shifts in focus and colour and by patterns of lines and shapes* (*ibid*, p. 541).

The overall visual pattern in LME constructs the visual texture of roughness, toughness (hardness) and density. The meanings derived from visual texture are the same as tactile (Djonov & Van Leeuwen, 2011). Refer Table 4.3.2.5 (b) for the findings on the overall graphic elements (or visual patterns) that provide the 'visual tactile'.

Table 4.3.2.5 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.2) on the overall graphic elements in A2

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual Overall Graphic element	Distri-bution of colours & lines	More Gradual / light/ pastel colours / lacking lines	Smooth texture with less relief; low density	Fragile, delicate	F		More abrupt / dark, bright & light colours arranged disorderly / many lines	Rough texture more relief; high density	Strength & tough (hard)	M

Based on Table 4.3.2.5 (b), both LP and LME depict a total contrast in overall visual patterns. Having light, bright, dull and dark colours arranged disorderly, visual roughness in LME is achieved through the abrupt distribution of colours and lines, as well as the relief that is constructed through the presence of jagged lines and variations in colour value from maximally light (white) to maximally dark (black) (p. 553) This overcomes the femininity in LME's surface having less *tactile relief*, i.e. flat tactile surface that "feel smooth, suggesting youth and unblemished purity" (p. 550) (Djonov & Van Leeuwen, 2011).

In addition, the distribution of lines, solid geometrical shapes, heavy and compressed fonts, and dark, dense colours across the surface of LME project higher density (visually heavier), in which according to Djonov and Van Leeuwen (2011, p. 551), represents a more durable substance and may "suggest solidity, the ability to withstand wear and tear, as well as high quality due to abundance". Thus, it connotes masculine strength and toughness.

4.3.2.6 Constructing Masculinity through Structural Elements

This section discusses the structural elements of the packaging, which involves the packaging shape and optical properties.

(a) Packaging Shape

Packaging shape is defined as the characteristics of an object that remain unchangeable under the modification of its "size, place, material and time" (Alluisi 1960; Attneave & Arnoult 1956, cited in Pantin-Sohier 2009, p. 57). Refer Table 4.3.2.6 (a) for the related results.

Table 4.3.2.6 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.3) on the packaging shape in A2

Mode/ Feature	Contrasting Aspect	L'Oréal Paris					L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth
			Denotation	Connotation				Denotation	Connotation	
Visual	**Shape & size**	Straight, less angular, tall & slim, smaller base (AC)	Less represent technological order	Less rationality	F		Straight, more angular (BCs)	Element of the mechanical, technological order	Technological skill & expertise; rationality	M
			Elongated shape but unstable	Sophistication; expensive			broader base (BCs)	More stable	Stability, strength	
	of the bottle			Instability, less practical			Broader body; less rounded (All BCs)	Sturdy, crude, thick & wide	Strength & power	
2.			female ideal body	Beauty ideal				visually larger		
								Buff & muscular	masculine body ideal	
Structural element		tall & slim (AT)	Elongated shape	Sophistication			Much shorter (All BCs & BT)	Smaller, size & shape fit palm	Practicality	
			female ideal body	Beauty ideal						
		Round, Shorter with broad base (all AMs)	Spherical shape, curve lines & circles represent natural processes	Naturalness, Softness			taller, round ends (but with transparent cap showing the pump) (all BM)	Visually straight, not round; Straight lines & angularity are technological element	Technological skill & expertise; rationality (less rounded)	
								Visually no difference in size; shape & size fit palm	Practicality/ functionality	

While lighter weight in BT and all BMs connote femininity, the smaller size and shape that fit the palm are meant for easy-to-use purpose (practicality) that appeals to men in product choice (Datamonitor's survey, cited in Bird, 2009). This includes LME cleansers (all BCs) that are wider in shape, although same size with AC.

Unlike the tall elongated shape of AC and AT, which according to Pantin-Sohier (2009), connotes "sophistication" and "expensiveness" (p. 63) but "less practical" (p. 61) especially with the instability of a small base, "short wide" shape of BCs and BT "associated with athletes" (p. 61) connote "practical" and "sporty" (p. 63) especially with the stability of a broader base. This is enhanced by angularity of LME in BCs and BT that does not only project "sturdy, crude, thick and wide shapes" that signals "strength and power" (Van den Berg-Weitzel & Van de Laar, 2006), but also connotes "effectiveness and protection" through "angularity and uniform angles" (Dichter, 1971) (cited in Pantin-Sohier, 2009, p. 57). In addition, angularity connotes masculine rationality and expertise in technological skills (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, see Section 4.3.2.4, para.1).

Besides representing masculine aesthetic traits, angularity in BCs, along with heavy and hard visual texture (see Section 4.3.2.5, last paragraph), create the illusion of 'large and heavy' on the product. Hence, although both products contain the same amount (100 ml), LME looks larger and heavier. The gendering intention is apparent in constructing the image of a "sturdy oak", which according to Brannon (1985), represents the masculine strength and toughness. In contrasts to the slim LP, such illusion in LME may also imply the male attractive physique, i.e. muscular and buff.

In addition, the gender negotiation between straightness and roundness is obvious among LP and LME moisturizers. Numerous scholars claim straight and curve lines to be

masculine and feminine respectively. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) claim straight lines to connote masculine rationality as they signify mechanical, technological order, whilst circle and curve forms connote natural order. (See also Section 4.3.2.4). This includes Hevner (1935) who states that gender differentiation in "affective significations of shapes" through lines:

> *The author distinguishes two types of lines: slow curves (circles) and fast curves (undulations) for curved lines; and squares and angles for straight lines. His results show that curves are more sentimental, nostalgic, cheeky, graceful and serene, whereas straight lines are more serious, but also more energetic, robust and dignified.*

(cited in Pantin-Sohier, 2009, p. 57)

(b) Optical Properties

This section discusses the next structural elements of the packaging, i.e. optical properties, which results are presented in Table 4.3.2.6 (b).

Table 4.3.2.6 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.3) on the optical properties in A2

Mode/ Feature	Contrasting Aspect	L'Oréal Paris Signifier	Denotation	Connotation	Myth		L'Oréal Men Expert Signifier	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual 2. Structu-ral element	Light transmis-sion + Material	Opaque (AC)	Can't see product	disconnection	M		Opaque (All)	Can't see product	Disconnection	
		Translucent (AT)	vaguely see product	Foster connection	F		Transparent cap + plastic (all AMs)	Can see pump that is technologically invented.	Technological skill; functionality	M
		Transparent/ translucent body with 2 layers +	Can clearly/ vaguely see the product							
		Glass material (all AMs)	Multiple light transmission & reflection, & fragile, like crystal	Luxury				Cheaper material	Less luxurious	
				Fragility, delicate						
Optical propert-ies	Light reflection	Glossy/shiny surface (AC)	Smooth surface & shiny object	Smoothness; sophistication			Glossy/ Shiny surface (except cap) (BC)	Smooth body (Except caps)	Smoothness; sophistication (except caps)	M / F

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While LP moisturisers' (all AMs) short, broad and round shape represent spheres that connote "softness" (Dichter, 1971, cited in Pantin-Sohier, 2009). LME BMs' taller shape and transparent cap that shows pump present straightness and avoidance of roundness, in which the latter signals anti-femininity to construct masculinity.

LP products, AT and AMs that are either translucent or transparent on the body of the bottles allow visual connection between the consumers and the product (liquid), representing feminine conversational style that fosters connection. Unlike LP, LME are mostly opaque and the transparency is on the cap of the moisturizers, BM1 and BM2. This shows contrasting gendering effort between LP and LME, as transparent caps in BM1 and 2 allow visual connection with the pump representing technological innovation, instead of visual connection with the product. The pump that is technologically created connotes masculine expertise in technology, as well as the functionality of the packaging.

Unlike the two-layered glass container in AM1 and 2 representing luxurious, sophisticated and delicate crystal, BMs' transparent plastic caps are simple and made of cheaper material -- plastic, avoiding expensiveness (feminine luxury). Gender negotiation through light reflection can clearly be seen in cleansers between LP and LME. The feminine smoothness and sophistication represented by glossy and shiny surface of the body are balanced by the non-shiny caps in all BCs. This is different from AC that looks shiny and glossy throughout the whole product, although the tactile smoothness is about the same for both LP and LME.

4.3.2.7   Negating Femininity in Scent and Flower Pattern

Unlike AC in LP that has sweet smell suggesting perfume (luxury), LME have no smell, signalling masculine anti-femininity. Another anti-femininity -- the flowery pattern of the product logo[xxvii] is not present in BCs and BMs, as well as hidden (or rather, camouflaged) in BT by having the same colour with the background colour.

Refer Figure 4.3.2.7 for illustration and Table 4.3.2.7 for the related findings.

Gold flowery image of the product logo in all three AMs (moisturisers) of LP

The only "camouflaged" flowery image of product logo in LP, presented in AT (toner)

The only LME products (BT/toner)with flowery image of the product logo,

but it is "camouflaged"
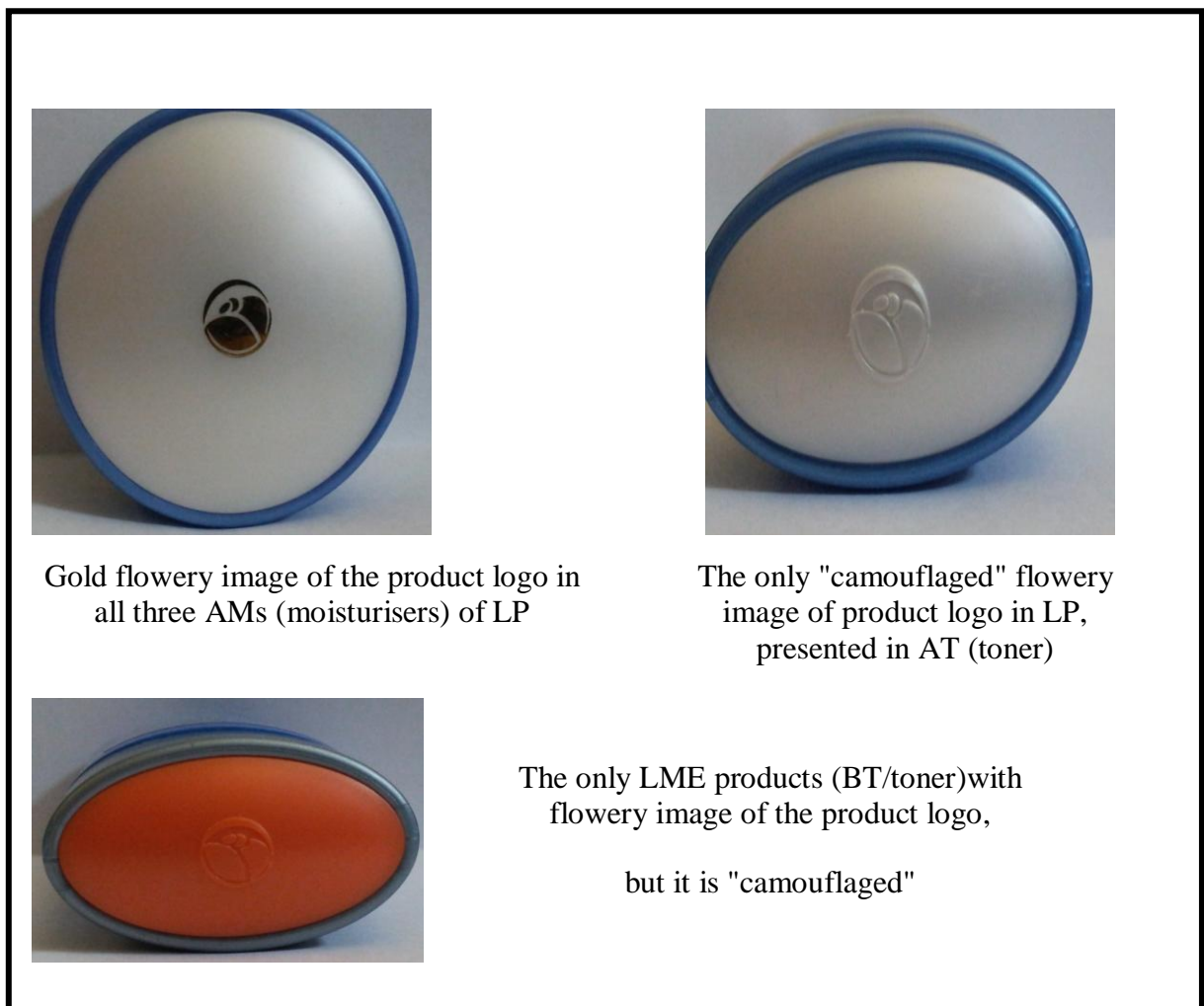
Figure 4.3.2.7: Illustration on flowery pattern of product logo in LP and LME packaging

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[xxvii] Unlike the brand logo in A1, product logo above the product cap is not presented in other marketing tools, like advertisements and social media (Facebook), and even in its official website.

Table 4.3.2.7: Excerpt from Table 4.3.2 (Cont.4) on the other additional features in A2

Mode/ Feature	Contrasting Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
4. additional features	**Olfactory (Smell)**	Sweet (only AC)	Smell like perfume/ flower	Sophistication/ Luxury/ natural	F		No smell (all products)	Does not smell like perfume/ flower	Do not connote sophistication/Luxury/ natural	**Not F**
	Product logo (above cap)	Rose bud (same colour with backgrd) (AT)	Less noticeable flower	Less feminine	**Less F**		Rose bud (same colour with backgrd) (BT)	Less noticeable flower	Less feminine	**Less F**
		Rose bud (in gold) (AMs)	Favourite item in romance; colour of gold metal	romance (emotional); luxury	F		None (BMs)	No flower	Anti-femininity	**M**

4.3.2.8   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A2

This section uncovers LME's gendering strategies using mainly aesthetics, i.e. visuals and tactile features, as well as smell (olfactory) -- a new aesthetics identified in the study. Visuals include graphic elements (colours and non-colour) and structural elements of the bottle.

Besides the two main concerns: A) negotiating skin-whitening through colour continuums; and B) negotiating metrosexuality from different perspectives, the study also reveals C) overcoming gendering constraints of semiotic modes, packaging and marketing; D) projecting male practical tool (stress packaging functionality); and E) avoiding 'taboo' elements in masculine discourse.

A) Negotiating skin-whitening through colour continuums

In Section 4.3.2.1, colour continuums are not only cleverly used for gender negotiation in terms of "gender colour", but also skin colour. While the light-dark continuum in LP is based on saturation, LME is mainly based on value, although LME's brightness is also derived from other factors. Although a (near) balanced negotiation can be seen in white-black and light-dark continuums, the bright-dull continuum witnesses more deviation (biased negotiation) towards brightness. This may signal the marketing gendering strategies using "colour euphemism" from feminine skin-whitening practice (Section 2.3.4) to less feminine skin-brightening, in order to negotiate skin fairness as a new male attractiveness.

B) Negotiating metrosexuality from different perspectives

The negotiation of metrosexuality is conducted from three different perspectives, namely masculine affordable sophistication, sophistication with style and the emancipation of men.

Masculine sophisticated-but-affordable is emphasised with masculine sophisticated-and-luxury black, silver and blue-ultramarine plus affordable orange, which "should be avoided" in sites "expressing sophistication, elegance and luxury" (Akcay *et al.*, 2011, p. 45). This suggests "colour euphemism" from feminine luxury/sophistication in beauty to masculine affordable sophistication in metrosexuality. This aligns with the emphasis of utilitarian in male grooming, opposed to self-indulgence (luxury) in beauty, to avoid the femininity of body pampering and the accusations of narcissim. (see Section 2.5.2.2, para. 3)

Besides suggesting that men can be sophisticated too without spending too much, the demand for individuality of orange enhances the masculine appeal that men can be sophisticated with style, i.e. not acted upon by fashion (autonomy). This will overcome the criticisms of metrosexuality for lacking personal style, compared to its 'ancestral' identity – dandy and its claimed 'successor' – ubersexual. See Section 2.4.2.4 and 2.4.2.5. This helps in negotiating metrosexuality that is positively marked as a deviation from the norms, i.e. from negative "out of ordinary" (Chandler, 2007) to a positive "extraordinary".

Lastly, the overall aesthetic features of LME (male products) with mixture of both feminine and masculine representations reflect male grooming practice (metrosexuality) as the emancipation of men (see Section 2.4.2.3), i.e. men who are not bound by gender restrictions, and thus, can have both feminine and masculine qualities and/or activities.

C) Overcoming gendering constraints of semiotic modes, packaging and marketing

Besides strategies of gender construction, strategies in handling affordances and constraints of semiotic modes, packaging and marketing for gendering purposes are important too, i.e. 1) appropriating promotional-yet-masculine blue; 2) 'speaking' genders through visuals; and 3) creating visual illusions to overcome tactile constraints.

1) Appropriating promotional-yet-masculine blue

Blue, like pink, is gender-sensitive. However, it is a famous and useful colour in marketing discourse. Hence, Section 4.3.2.3 reveals the affordance of colour in constructing different meanings through different shades, by depicting how the promoting-yet-masculine blue presented in different shades in LME to serve both marketing and gendering purposes.

2) 'Speaking' genders through visuals

The study depicts that visuals can overcome the lacking of words and sounds to 'speak', based on the concept of interpersonal meaning derived through visuals, infamously introduced and applied by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The gendering of "visual conversation" in LME is done through 1) colour choice (Section 4.3.2.2), e.g. the stimulating orange and more assertive red, demanding people to act in different tones; 2) non-colour graphic elements (salience/framing in lines and shapes) exert control and status, avoid connection, as well as report style in conversation (Section 4.3.2.4), and 3) light transmitting properties (Section 4.3.2.6 (b)), in which light transmitting on the body of LP fosters connection between the product and consumer, whilst opaque body of LME doesn't.

3) Creating visual illusions to overcome tactile constraints

Based on Table 4.3.2 (cont.4), the tactile features do not contribute much in constructing masculinity. This is due to *L'Oréal*'s effort in environmental sustainability in packaging material (Elks, 2013; Sustainable Packaging, 2010; *Environment Trophy for L'Oréal*, n.d.), which reduces 'packaging weight and volume', as well as uses "renewable resources and materials" (Sustainable Packaging, 2010). Besides, male preference for easy-to-use also causes some LME products being smaller and lighter (see Section 4.3.2.6). With reference to the constraints mentioned, roughness, hardness, weight and size of the material are somehow restricted for gendering purposes.

Section 4.3.2.5 reveals the strategies of visual design in creating illusions to overcome the constraints of tactile in producing texture for gender differentiation, i.e. roughness, hardness and weight. Another visual illusion of largeness is created by angularity of the packaging (Section 4.3.2.6).

D) Projecting male practical tool -- stress packaging functionality

The most significant feature of LME's moisturisers, all BMs, is the pump that creates attention through the transparency of the cap (see Section 4.3.2.6(b)), boasting technological innovation and packaging functionality. Interestingly, the pump connotes another possible masculine appeal -- the packaging functionality, rather than product functionality. This is enhanced by LME's smaller (/same-sized) but easy-to-handle (palm-fitting) packaging, compared to LP.

Both technological innovation and packaging functionality align with Tungate's (2011, p. 215) "formula for selling cosmetic products to men", which includes "language of technology" and "functional products", as well as the example given -- "Clinique with smart gunmetal packaging". The same goes to Tungate's (2008, p. 61) "branding toolkit" for men's clothes, which stresses "technical, performance or quality elements".

> *men will buy into science, technology or engineering. It's almost as though they yearn to strengthen and improve their own physical capabilities (this may also explain their love of gadgets) (ibid, p. 219).*

To sum up, the projection of male practical tool challenges the negative perception of skincare products as female products.

E) Avoiding 'taboo' elements in masculine discourse

Besides pink, Section 4.3.2.7 discovers other masculine "taboo elements", i.e. scent and flowery image. While olfactory features are rarely or not analysed, it is as important as packaging design in the gendering effort, especially in skincare products. This is also supported by Daniel Giles and Simon Duffy from male skincare industry, commenting "feminine packaging, names and scents" as "a turn-off for men" (cited in Costa, 2011).

4.3.3 Presenting Trademark (A3)

A3 defines the individuality/uniqueness of the product/brand, i.e. specific elements/ characteristics that only the product/brand possesses. Usually, the trademark is presented with the symbol "TM" by the side. However, the trademarks are only presented in the cleansers and toners of LP and LME.

See Figure 4.3.3 (a) and Figure 4.3.3 (b) for the illustrations on A3 in LP and LME respectively. See also Table 4.3.3 for the findings, which will be discussed from Section 4.3.3.1 to Section 4.3.3.5.

Figure 4.3.3 (a): Illustration on trademark
presentation (A3) in LP

Figure 4.3.3 (b): Illustration on trademark
presentation (A3) in LME

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xxviii Kindly note that while most LME products have "AdS" as their trademarks, BM2 presents an additional trademark -- Melanin Block.

Table 4.3.3: Gender Construction in Presenting Trademark (A3)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT) Denotation	Connotation	Myth	Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC & BT) Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	**Word choice**	*Dermo-Expertise*	Having skills & knowledge in skin care	Feminine Expertise (Vanity)		*Active Defense System (all, except BM2)*	Active ingredient that helps to reinforce the natural resistance of the skin	Active	**M**
								Independence; Strong/tough	
						Melanin Block (BM2)	Ingredients that block dark pigment, melanin	Force; power	
Visual	**Symbol**		-	-	**F**	'adS' *(all, except BM2)*	Symbolised "Active Defense System", differs from others like professional logo	**Competence** (competitiveness, professionalism, expertise)	
						'TM" sign	Registered trademark that distinguish them from other competitors		
							a professional legal procedure		
	Typography	Small, narrow fonts	Light & not compressed fonts	Sophistication		Bigger, bolded (symbol)	Heavy & compressed font.	Ruggedness & (enhanced) competence	
						Unnoticeable	- (Insignificant)	-	
	Colour	White fonts on shiny gold-plated surface	Words etched on gold metal.	Luxury		**Orange** (BC1 & 2)	a bright color between yellow & red on the spectrum; colour of kid's stuff	Individuality; Affordable	
						Dark green (BC3)	Colour of leaf (nature / outdoor)	Ruggedness;	**M**
								Skin freshness	**-**
						White (BC4 & BT)	clean sheet of paper	Purity, perfection	**F**
							Colour of fair skin	Female ideal beauty	
	Composi-tion	(way smaller) under the brand, *L'Oréal Paris*	*LP* as ideal info; *DERMO-EXPERTISE* as practical info (description) for the brand	**Dependence** *L'Oréal* as a brand specialised in skincare that you can rely on.		At the bottom packaging (near the cap)	As real/ practical info (like most trademarks)	**Functionality** expected functional element (providing ADS) in *LME*	**M**
						Symbol is much bigger than words	Symbol (similar to logo with registered TM) is more prominent (salience)than words	(Emphasised) Competence	

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4.3.3.1 Empowering Men through Word Choice

Unlike the word "men expert" in the brand LME that signals expertise on the part of the male consumers on men (skin), '*Dermo-Expertise*' in LP's trademark signals expertise on the part of *L'Oréal* on skin, which connotes feminine expertise and vanity.

On the contrary, LME empowers men with its trademark. This is due to the marketers' selection of words by using "defense" rather than the common terms, "protection" or "whitening" that are more applicable to the functions of whitening products, i.e. protecting skin from sun rays (UV) and lightening skin tone respectively. The term "*Active Defense System*" gives an impression of 'immune system' that empowers one to be tougher and stronger. This is verified by the definition on ADS provided on the back packaging of BM1,

> *a powerful soothing active ingredient that helps to reinforce the skin's natural resistance against daily aggressions.*

The same goes to "Melanin Block" in BM2, which signifies blocking against internal harm (the dark pigment, melanin) within the skin, like "immune system" that protects against virus in the body. This is unlike the usual practice of whitening products with SPF protecting users from the external harm (UV ray), as shown in the term "sun block".

4.3.3.2 Empowering Products through Word Choice

While LP's trademark empowers the product with feminine expertise on skin (vanity), LME empowers with masculine sense of activity ('*Active*' and '*Defense*'), as well as force and power ('*Block*'). This projects LME as powerful products, especially when the trademarks are actually the key ingredients.

4.3.3.3 Projecting Masculine Sense of Competence through Symbol/Typography

Compared to LP's trademark with light, non-compressed fonts projecting sophistication, LME's trademark that has been registered and/or symbolized connotes strong masculine sense of competence, as it reflects competitiveness, professionalism and expertise. This competence is further enhanced by heavy and compressed font symbol "adS", as well as emphasized being more prominent than its unnoticeable verbal counterpart, "Active Defense System".

4.3.3.4 Negotiating Grooming Rationale through Colours and Composition[xxix]

The luxury and sophistication sense of trademark in LP that is presented on shiny gold-plated surface is replaced by other colours that connote less sophistication and luxury, especially orange (BC1 and BC2) that connotes affordability (refer Section 4.3.2.2, para.3) and green colour (BC3) that signals more ruggedness and less sophistication due to its association "with the outdoors" (Grohmann *et al.*, 2012, p. 397-398).

Besides, the product functionality is also presented in orange that allows individuality (personal style) (see Section 4.3.2.2, para.4); green that connotes freshness (Morris, 2013) (in skin); and white that signals perfection and skin fairness (see Section 4.3.2.1(a)). Only the last one connotes femininity in female ideal body image, i.e. skin fairness.

From visual composition, LP's trademark is presented right under *L'Oréal* to imply "*a brand specialised in skincare that you can rely on"*, which appeals to feminine dependence.

[xxix] The term, 'visual composition' refers to the compositional meaning of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) regarding the information value, based on the visual layout of a text. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), info presented on the bottom serves as practical and real info.

Whereas, LME's trademark presented at the bottom as practical information implies "an expected element in LME*"*, connoting the functionality of LME in providing ADS.

All these reflect the contrasting concept between female beauty and male grooming practices that focus on luxury and utilitarian respectively.

4.3.3.5   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A3

The two main gendering strategies of LME in A3 are: 1) promoting LME as a brand masculinising (empowering) men; and 2) emphasising functionality of ingredients, which both signal the gendered marketing strategies of 3) promoting LME as powerful pragmatic products "worth-buying" "because it's worth it".

Unlike LP that encourages dependence, LME encourages independence among its male consumers, by empowering them (their skin) through word choice (Section 4.3.3.1). Hence, unlike the negative perception of metrosexuality as emasculated or feminised masculinity (see Section 2.4.2.1), using LME (skincare products) does not emasculate men, but masculinises them instead.

While LP's trademark is based on the brand's feminine expertise and luxury, LME's on its key ingredients, along with emphasised and upgraded functionality in: 1) quantity and uniqueness (not only in enhancing appearance, but also in empowering men); 2) quality (empowered products). The emphasis of functionality (utilitarian) and avoidance of luxury (self-indulgence) reflect the masculine rationale of grooming practice, which avoid the accusation of narcissism and somehow legitimise men's grooming (McNeill & Douglas, 2011). Refer Section 2.5.2.2, para.3.

In overall, while LP's trademark promotes as luxurious products "worth-spending", LME's promote powerful pragmatic products "worth-buying". Although both "spending" and "buying" involves money taken from the consumers, they show different concepts and values. Spending is done on money, i.e. "spend money", which are usually connoted as luxury or even a wastage on unnecessary things, as in "spendthrift" on unnecessary products and/or too expensive products that do not match its value or buyers' financial affordability. Conversely, buying is done on product, i.e. "buy product", which usually concerns on the value of the product and the need or affordability of buying it. Hence, while LP sells the concept of "Because you're worth it" (worth to be pampered, which the money value lies on self), LME sells the concept of "Because it's worth it" (product value, based on the benefits and price).

4.3.4   Classifying Product Series (A4)

This action gives information about the function of the products and their target consumers. Since the focus of the study lies on the whitening series of both LP and LME, A4 will be action that informs consumers that these are skin-whitening products. See Figure 4.3.4 (a) and 4.3.4 (b) for illustrations. The findings are presented in Table 4.3.4.

Figure 4.3.4 (a): Illustration on A4 in LP

Figure 4.3.4 (b):
Illustration on A4 in LME

Table 4.3.4: Gender Construction in Classifying Product Series (A4)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth	Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth
			Denotation	Connotation			Denotation	Connotation	
Verbal	Word choice	*WHITE PERFECT*	Fair & flawless	Feminine ideal complexion	F	*WHITE ACTIV*	Fair	Feminine ideal facial complexion	F
			Perfect image	Object of contemplation			Doing action *(Active lookers)*	Object of action	M
Visual	Typo-graphy	Medium-sized, narrow	Light & not compressed fonts	Sophistication		Large, bolded,	Heavy & compressed	Ruggedness & Competence	
	Colourˣˣˣ	gold fonts	Colour of gold	Luxury/ sophistication		White fonts	Skin Fairness	Feminine ideal body	F
		black fonts	colour of fashionable/ luxury items			Light background	Lighter skin tone		
						Bright background	Not dull	Bright skin	Les s F
		White/ pastel background	White skin/ lighter skin tone (fair)	Feminine ideal complexion		Blue background	Colour of boy's stuff	Masculinity	M
	Compo-sition/ pattern	Natural/ blended	All elements & info are not separated and not highlighted	Foster connection		solid geometry	Separate elements/ info (framing)	Disconnection	
				Establish equality			Salience (highlight each info)	Exert control & status	
								Report style	
		Lack of straight lines	Lack of mechanical & technological elements	Naturalness, less technological		straight lines/ rectangle	Element of the mechanical, technological order	Technological skill & expertise; rationality	

ˣˣˣ Unlike presenting brand image (A2), the colour interpretation for A4 is more specific, as it focuses on how the colour helps to classify the products as whitening products.

Besides gendering efforts in typography and visual composition/patterns that are discussed in Section 4.3.1.3 and 4.3.2.4 respectively, this section discusses the gendering efforts of A4 that differ from the previous actions.

4.3.4.1 Challenging Passive Role in Grooming with *Activ*

LP and LME shares the similarity of having the word "white" that suggests the ideal fair beauty, as well as their whitening function. However, unlike LP's *White* and *Perfect* that complement each other to connote feminine ideal facial complexion -- fair and flawless, LME's *White* and *Activ* juxtapose feminine fair beauty and masculine traits respectively. This also questions why "active" is used to juxtapose with the feminine "white", when there are many other words that could signal other masculine traits, e.g. power, strength, etc.

LP's *Perfect* and LME's *Activ* connote feminine and masculine role in grooming respectively. *Perfect* signifies the traditional perception of female bodies as "always need fixing" (Talbot, 1995, cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 42) and 'women's preoccupation' as constantly fixing their appearance for men's appraisal, i.e. male gaze (Coupland, 2007, p. 42). Hence, it connotes the feminine passive role as "object of contemplation" (Chandler, 2007, p. 143), i.e. being looked at. Whereas, LME's *Activ* connotes the masculine active role as the "object of action", i.e. looking at.

The juxtaposition of *White* and *Activ* challenges the gendered grooming role between constructing fair skin for 'object of contemplation' and being *Activ* as 'object of action'.

4.3.4.2   Projecting Ideal Masculine Image through Colours

The background colour of A4 is white and pastel in LP that connotes lighter skin tone and fair beauty, as though projecting a beautiful fair woman. In contrast, LME's bright light blue background with white font project 'ideal' masculine (blue) facial image with bright and light complexion, after using the whitening product (presented in white fonts).

Nevertheless, the choice of bright light blue instead of pastel blue verifies the claim in A2 (see Section 4.3.2.1(b)) about the possible 'colour euphemism' of feminine skin fairness (lighter skin tone) with less feminine skin brightness, which is mainly determined by higher value (closer to white) rather than lower saturation (low saturated colour pigments).

4.3.4.3   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A4

This section discusses the gendering strategies in marketing LME *White Activ* as skin-whitening products. Using "conceptual euphemism" of metrosexuality and skin-whitening through word and colour respectively, LME persuades consumers from "masculine" perspectives to accept grooming that is undoubtedly a body beautiful pursuit for a perfect image and whitening products that lighten skin tone for fair beauty.

To negotiate metrosexuality, Section 4.3.4.1 depicts how the word *"Activ"* is used to avoid the criticisms of metrosexuality as emasculated (feminized) masculinity, due to the gaze problem (see Section 2.4.2.1, para.2). This is similar to the euphemism of 'grooming' towards 'beauty', in which active grooming refers to object of action/activity/subjectivity, whilst beauty is for passive image, i.e. object of contemplation/passivity/objectivity).

Similar to the emphasis on brightness as 'colour euphemism' for skin-whitening discussed in A2 (see Section 4.3.2), A4 presents the same euphemism using the bright light blue to negotiate, or rather, downplay the femininity of fair beauty (see Section 2.3.4), to persuade lighter skin tone as a new masculine ideal. Nevertheless, the key function in skin-whitening is reminded in the white, bolded fonts of *White Activ* as well as the word "White", which femininity is juxtaposed with the "colour euphemism" presented in the bright background. In other words, despite the "colour euphemism" suggested, the marketing role in presenting accurate information about the product inevitably constraints the gendering effort.

4.3.5   Describing Product Type (A5)

This action informs the product type, i.e. how it serves as an instrument in skincare (e.g. cleanser, toner and moisturiser). Besides gendering efforts in typography and visual composition/patterns discussed in Section 4.3.1.3 and Section 4.3.2.4 respectively, this section discusses the gendering efforts of A5 have not been discussed.

Kindly refer Table 4.3.5 for the results. The findings will be discussed from Section 4.3.5.1 to Section 4.3.5.6.

Table 4.3.5: Gender Construction in Describing Product Type (A5)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)			Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth		Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word Choice (descrip-tor[xxxi]/ function)	Fairness (all AMs)/	Skin whitening for feminine fair beauty	Fair beauty/ aesthetic	F	Brightening/ Bright (Mostly)	Skin-brightening/ bright skin	Fair beauty (less explicit)	Less F
		Whitening (AT)		Functionality					
		Purifies & brightens (AC)	Other description for fair skin	Fair beauty (less explicit)		Whitening (only BM2)	Skin whitening for fair beauty	Fair beauty functionality	
		(Fairness) Control (AM1 & 2)/ Revealing (AM2)	Types of fair beauty (Control = not too pale.)	Aesthetic/ perfection		(Oil) Control[xxxii] (BC2 &3; BT& BM1)	Takes control (of negative elements)	Performance Power, authority & strength	M
						Anti-(spot) (BC3)	Fight against... negative elements		
		Moisturizing (Only AT)	How the product makes the skin feel. (skin texture)	Sensuality		Power (BM2)	"the ability/right to control people or things" OR "ability to act/ produce an effect"		
						Total Skin Renewer (BC4)	Complete effectiveness	Instrumentality	
	Word Choice (base/ identity)	Foam (AC)	Product function/ identity as cleanser	Instrumentality /Identity	M/-	Foam (All BCs)	Product function/ identity as cleanser	Instrumentality /Identity	M/-
		Milky (AC)	Product texture	Sensuality	F	White (BC2)	Foam with whitening effect	Functionality	M
						Charcoal (BC3)	Multi health benefits material		
							Natural products; rough, dirty & black	Ruggedness	
						Volcano Red (BC4)	Dangerous liquid; colour marking "danger"	Courage	
							Volcanic mineral with skincare benefits	Functionality	
		Toner (AT)	Product function/ identity as toner	Instrumentality /Identity	M/-	Powered Water (BT)	Liquid that is charged with power.	Power	M
		Moisturizing (AM1 & 2)/ Soothing (AM3)	How the product makes the skin feel. (skin texture)	Sensuality	F	Moisturiser (all BMs)	Product function/ identity	Instrumentality /Identity	M/-
		Watery (AM1)/ Cream (All AMs)	Product texture						

[xxxi] The descriptor and base are determined by the difference in colour during the presentation of this social action (A5) in the packaging discourse.
[xxxii] While there are a number of LME products that mention "oil control", it is due to the different nature of men's skin, and thus, not considered a gendering strategy/effort.

Table 4.3.5: Gender Construction in Describing Product Type (A5) (cont.)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)			Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth		Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Typo-graphy	Small, narrow	Light & not compressed fonts	Sophistication	F	Large, bolded	Heavy & compressed	Ruggedness & Competence	M
	Symbol (descriptor)	&	And; curved symbol	Naturalness	F	+ / 4	Symbol of mathematics.	Rationality; problem-solving	
	Colourxxxiii (descriptor)	Insigni-ficant	-	-	-	White fonts	Skin Fairness	Feminine ideal fair beauty	F
	Colour (base)	Blue (Ultramarine) (AC & AT)	Colour of boy's stuff	Masculine colour	M	Bright (except BC3)	Brighter skin	Skin fairness (less explicit)	Less F
						Light (except BC3&4)	lighter skin	Feminine fair beauty	F
						Blue (BC1 & BM2)	Colour of boy's stuff	Masculine colour	M
			Made of expensive pigments (in the past)	Luxury/ sophistication	F	Green (BC2; BT; BM1)	Colour of leaf (nature)/ outdoor	Ruggedness;	
								Skin freshness	-
						Dark Red (BC4)	Colour of blood & fire	courage, assertive	M
	Colour (b/ground)	White/ pastel	White skin/ lighter skin tone (fair)	Feminine ideal fair beauty	F	Black	Opposite of white; maximally dark colour	Darker skin tone	M
	Compo-sition/ pattern	Natural/ blended	All elements & info are not separated; and not significantly highlighted	Foster connection	F	solid geometry (Except BC3)	Separate elements/ info (framing)	Disconnection	M
				Establish equality			Prominent (Salience) (highlight each info)	Exert control & status	
								Report style	
		Lack of straight lines	Lack of mechanical & technological elements	Naturalness, less technological		straight lines/ rectangle	Element of the mechanical, technological order	Technological skill & expertise; rationality	

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xxxiii Unlike presenting brand image (A2), the colour interpretation for A5 is more specific, as it focuses on how the colour helps to describe the product type in whitening series.

4.3.5.1   Negotiating Feminine Fair Beauty via Word-Colour Euphemisms

Based on Table 4.3.5, LP uses "fairness" and "whitening", which explicitly signify fair beauty ideal along with other descriptions like 'purifies', 'brightens' and 'revealing' that indirectly imply the particular beauty ideal. Conversely, LME products completely avoid using the explicit "fairness", but mainly use "brightening" or "bright" instead, i.e. a near synonym for "fairness", and thus, less feminine. Besides, the usage of "whitening" that is less feminine (also connotes functionality) than "fairness" (aesthetic/appearance) but more feminine than "brightening" is limited only to one LME product -- BM2.

The verbal euphemism explicitly verifies the previous claims about the use of bright colours as "colour euphemism" (Section 4.3.2.1 (B) and (C)). These 'colour euphemisms' are used in A5 too, as shown in the 'base' typefonts that are mainly bright coloured, which are mostly light due to colour value rather than colour saturation. See Table 4.3.5 (cont.)

This action is significant as the word euphemism verifies the claims about the packaging designers' intention of using colour euphemisms in previous actions. However, LME's descriptors in white fonts 'remind' the key feminine function of the whitening product

4.3.5.2   Challenging Skin Fairness with Black-White Juxtaposition

Similar to Section 4.3.2.1, negotiation of skin fairness using both continuums of black-white and light-dark (colour value) is obvious in LME within the small box (where A5 is conducted). However, this negotiation becomes more aggressive with juxtaposition of maximally dark black background and descriptors in maximally light white font, while 'bases' in mainly bright fonts serve as colour euphemisms. See Table 4.3.5 (cont.).

4.3.5.3   Masculinising Functionality with Masculine Performance

Based on Table 4.3.5, LP's functionality of skin-whitening is expressed through aesthetic value, i.e. (*fairness) revealing* and (*fairness) control*, as well as sensuality (*moisturizing*). Instead of aesthetic and sensuality, LME expresses its functionality with masculine performance, e.g. through powerful performance, e.g. "control", "anti-", "power", as well as instrumentality with maximum performance, e.g. "total skin renewer".

4.3.5.4   Constructing Masculine Instrumentality

Unlike descriptor that presents function(ality) of the products, this sub-action of A5 present the product identity as an instrument, i.e. cleanser, toner and moisturiser. See Table 4.3.5.

LP promotes the texture of both product and skin using words like *Milky*, *Moisturizing, Soothing*, *Watery* and *Cream,* implying feminine sense of sensuality. Whereas, LME presents masculine instrumentality through words connoting functionality, i.e. "white" connoting skin-whitening function; "charcoal" that is recently famous for multi-functional health benefits; "volcano" signifying "volcanic minerals" that have skincare benefits (see the back bottle of BC4). Some also connotes masculine image through ruggedness (black, dirty and rough "charcoal"); courage ("volcano red"); and power ("powered water"). The last one, "Powered Water" also serves as euphemism for 'toner'. Unlike LP, the information about the product texture in LME is not disclosed, to avoid the femininity of sensuality.

From colour aspects, the ultramarine colour in LP (AC and AT), although with embedded masculine blue, signals luxury and sophistication. As for LME, the masculine traits presented through words are emphasised by the respective typographical colours (see Table

4.3.5 (cont.)). For instance, green colour that connotes ruggedness due to its association with outdoor activities (Grohmann *et al.*, 2012) enhances the ruggedness of "charcoal"; red enhances the danger of "volcano" plus masculine conversational style with stronger assertiveness to "act now" or evoking courage with "dare to act" tone (see Section 4.3.2.2, last para.); and blue enhances masculinity, being the universal masculine colour.

More importantly, these colours are not connoting luxury and sophistication that are the main concept of female beauty practice. Furthermore, the (mostly) bright typographical colours of 'base' present 'colour euphemism' of skin-whitening. See Section 4.3.5.1.

4.3.5.5   Constructing Masculinity through Mathematical Symbols

To maximise the use of limited packaging space, LP and LME use "&" and "+" respectively to replace the word, "and". See Table 4.3.5 (cont.). This clearly shows gendering effort. The mathematical symbols "+" and "4" are presented in LME to construct masculinity, through rationality and problem-solving connoted in 'masculine field', i.e. mathematics.

As cited in Francis (2010, p. 325 - 326), the school's curriculum subject "remains strongly gender-differentiated" (Arnot *et al.,* 1999; Francis, 2000, 2002; EOC, 2001, 2004). Mathematics and science are popular and highly achieved among boys (Francis, 2000; Boaler, 2002; Francis et al., 2003; Calabrese Barton & Brickhouse, 2006; OECD, 2007), whilst for girls in humanities subjects (Francis & Skelton, 2005) *(ibid.).*

4.3.5.6   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A5

The main gendering strategies in A5 are: 1) downplaying femininity of skin-whitening with word-colour euphemisms; 2) challenging feminine skin-whitening with maximally dark black; 3) replacing feminine functionality -- sensuality and aesthetic with power performance; and lastly, 4) constructing overall masculine representation of LME as a powerful male practical tool.

While A2 depicts 'gender negotiation' of skin-whitening through colour continuum (see Section 4.3.2.1), the first strategy in A5 (refer previous paragraph) downplays femininity with another version of light-dark continuum and the second uses a more direct and drastic negotiation (challenge/confrontation) by juxtaposing white (fair beauty) and black (masculine dark attractiveness) (see Section 4.3.5.2).

Action A5 identifies another two masculine threats -- aesthetic and sensuality, which connote feminine vanity and body pampering (see Section 2.4.2.1, para.4) respectively. Replaced by LME's functionality (i.e. masculine performance), A5 in LME promotes the product as "worth-buying" (Because it's worth it), rather than LP's "worth-spending" (Because you're worth it), similar to A3 (see Section 4.3.3.4, para.3).

In overall, having 'masculine functionality' (see Section 4.3.5.3) and 'masculine instrumentality' (see Section 4.3.5.4), LME is presented as a powerful male practical tool, which can fulfil feminine functions, i.e. skin-whitening. On the contrary, LP is presented as a luxurious female body pampering product.

4.3.6 Highlighting Key Ingredient(s) (A6)

As suggested by the name of the action, A6 highlights the key ingredient(s) of the products by presenting the ingredient(s) at the front of the packaging. Masculine image constructed by the common semiotic features, i.e. non-pink colours (see Section 4.3.2.3, para.1) and masculine typography (see Section 4.3.1.3) have been discussed in previous sections. Hence, this section covers other significant features that have not been discussed before.

The findings are presented in Table 4.3.6 and discussed from Section 4.3.6.1 to Section 4.3.6.3.

Table 4.3.6: Gender Construction in Highlighting Key Ingredient(s) (A6)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris (AC)				L'Oréal Men Expert			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth	Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth
			Denotation	Connotation			Denotation	Connotation	
Verbal	Word choice	Tourmaline Gemstone	An ingredient, *Tourmaline* (without '*gemstone*') in the ingredient list.	**Luxury**	**F**	Pro Exfoliatine (BC1)	A scientific term that is not in the ingredient list	Masculine field; Expertise	**M**
							"A powerful peeling agent"	**Functionality**	
							"Pro": the short form for "professional".	**Competence**	
						Active Defense System (all, not BM2)	Active ingredient that helps to reinforce the natural resistance of the skin	**Functionality** Active; Strong/tough	
							"System", popular term in science & tech: e.g. ecological system, computer system	Masculine field; Expertise	
						Melanin Block (BM2)	Melanin: scientific term of dark pigment	Masculine field; Expertise	
							Ingredients blocking dark pigment	Functionality, force	
						Vitamin C (BM2)	Substance to enhance immune system.	Functionality	
Visual	Symbol		-	-		'adS' *(all, except BM2)*	Symbolised "adS" differs from others like professional logo	**Individuality**	
						'TM" sign	Registered trademark that distinguish them from other competitors		
	Typogra-phy	Small, narrow fonts	Light & not compressed fonts	Sophistica-tion		Bigger fonts (BC1)	More salient	**Prominence**	
						Bigger, bolded (symbol)	Heavy & compressed font.	Ruggedness & (enhanced) competence	
						Unnoticeable *(all, not BM2)*	- (Insignificant)	-	
	Colour	Pink	Popular colour of girlish stuff	Feminine		Non-Pink colours	Does not have the popular colour of girlish stuff	Anti-femininity	

4.3.6.1   Constructing Masculinity through Scientific Terms

Scientific elements, like mathematics, are considered masculine as it connotes rationality and "masculine field" (see Section 4.3.5.5, last para.). However, in A6 that focuses on ingredients that are mainly chemical elements forming the scientific formula of the skincare product, scientifically associated elements connotes the expertise of the brand and producer. Hence, LME shows great attempt in constructing the image of scientific by 'inventing' a few scientific and scientifc-related terms, *Pro Exfoliatine, Melanin Block* and *Active Defense System* that are not within the ingredient list. The expertise sense is further enhanced in BC1 by the word "pro" that means "professional". Conversely, '*gemstone'* is deliberately added beside the scientific term, '*Tourmaline'* in LP to reduce the scientific sense, i.e. masculinity.

Instead of using the scientific names of the key ingredients, the function of the key ingredients are "scientised" instead, to stress masculinity in both scientific expertise and functionality. For example, *Pro Exfoliatine* is assumed to be originated from the word "exfoliating", since it is not found in the ingredient list and is defined in the back bottle as a 'powerful peeling agent'. As for *Melanin Block,* the term itself tells how the ingredient(s) function, i.e. blocking dark pigments (melanin). This includes *Active Defense System* that connotes "immune system" empowering men (see Section 4.3.3.1). The same goes to *Vitamin C*, that are not created, but is chosen instead of its scientific name, due to its famous function in enhancing immune system. On the contrary, the addition of "gemstone" in LP does not only define *Tourmaline* in a more familiar term, but also brings out its luxury element, which connotes femininity in beauty discourse.

Besides functionality that connotes pragmatic elements, the "masculine words" accompanying those scientific terms, i.e. "block" and "defense", enhance the functionality of LME in a masculine way, i.e. -- power-oriented. This empowers the ingredients as powerful elements. Conversely, LP chooses luxury "gemstone" to downplay the expertise portrayed by the scientific term, "Tourmaline".

4.3.6.2 Projecting Individuality through Trademark Symbols

Similar to LME's trademarks in A3 (see Section 4.3.3.3), key ingredients that are presented as trademarks, whether symbolized ("adS") or registered (with "TM" sign) or both, connote masculine sense of individuality in style and exclusiveness. In other words, these ingredients are exclusively produced by LME.

4.3.6.3 Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A6

The main gendering and marketing strategies of LME in A6 are: 1) constructing masculinity with scientific language, while overcoming gendering constraints of scientific term in marketing skincare products; 2) masculinising the science 'drama'; 3) 'trade marking' ingredients; and lastly, 4) projecting key ingredients as powerful pragmatic elements can only be produced by LME's scientific expertise.

One of the important points highlighted in Tungate's (2008) "branding toolkit" for marketing men's skincare products is to "borrow the language of sports and science: stress functionality" (p. 37). This aligns with the claims of science as a "masculine field" (see Section 4.3.5.5, last para.). This makes gendering effort of A6 the easiest among all by

using the scientific name of the key ingredient. Nonetheless, LME creates scientific terms for the key ingredients, which connote less scientific sense instead. Hence, this suggests possible gendering constraints in the scientific names of ingredients, i.e. 1) signify harmful chemical elements and 2) are unfamiliar among laymen. (This is verifies by the fact that LP does not use the original scientific names as well.) Thus, LME 'scientizes' the functionality of the ingredients instead, using the "language of science" and "stress(ing) functionality" (*ibid.*).

Another point highlighted by Tungate (2011) in marketing skincare products is to "dramatize science" (p. 141), i.e. narrating "a story" about new "active ingredients" (p. 140) in skincare marketing, as "everything starts with a concept" (p. 142). Both LP and LME apply this in A6, but show gendering effort by "narrating" through different gendered perspectives. While LP tells about the story of a luxurious product made of precious stone (like magical stone), LME narrates about the scientific creation of a powerful panacea that empowers men, produced only by the hero (expert) -- LME. In other words, LP and LME narrate a fairy tale and a science fiction respectively.

Another interesting gendering effort is the 'trademarking' of ingredients, which signals masculine sense of individuality and competence.

Overall, LME's key ingredients are projected as powerful pragmatic elements exclusively produced by LME's scientific expertise, with emphasised and enhanced functionality in its "scientific terms" (Section 4.3.6.1), as well as trademarks that signal exclusive production (Section 4.3.6.2, para. 2 & 3) from high scientific expertise (Section 4.3.6.1, para.1). This further projects the expertise image of the brand name, *L'Oréal Men Expert.* Conversely, LP's ingredient is portrayed as a luxurious element. In other words, LME negotiates

skincare products as male scientific tools, instead of female luxury products. This again depicts masculine grooming rationale -- utilitarian, as opposed to feminine luxury. This is verified by the fact that most LME products (except BM1) perform A6, but only AC in LP.

4.3.7 Highlighting Key Function(s) (A7)

Due to the nature of A7, functionality is considered an expected element rather than a deliberate gendering effort. However, the type and emphasis on functionality may. While highlighting key function, some may include elaborations (additional descriptions) that are placed under the key functions (separated by different colours in background and font) or appear less salient.

Other than gendering efforts in visual composition/patterns discussed in Section 4.3.2.4 (which report style is also presented in BC4's use of bullets), this section discusses gendering efforts in A7 that have not been discussed. Refer Figure 4.3.7(a) and Figure 4.3.7(b) for illustrations on A7 in LP and LME respectively.
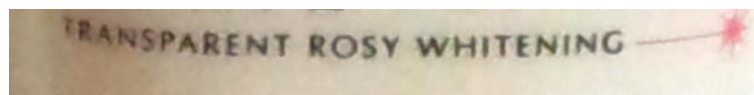
Figure 4.3.7 (a): Sample Illustration on A7 in LP
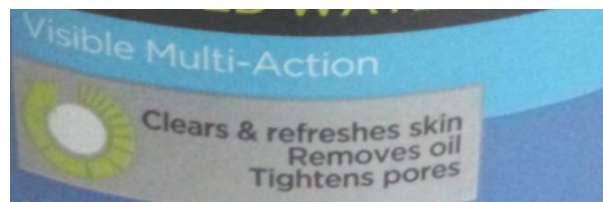
Figure 4.3.7 (b): Sample Illustration on A7 in LME

See also Table 4.3.7 and Table 4.3.7 (cont.) for data analysis. The findings will be discussed from Section 4.3.7.1 to Section 4.3.7.7.

Table 4.3.7: Gender Construction in Highlighting Key Function(s) (A7)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word choice	Transparent Rosy	Translucent, rosy type of fairness	**Aesthetic**	F		**Action** (except BC1 & 4; BM2)	Do something, especially to achieve an aim.	Take action (agent)	M
	Key function/ Intro		Not only fair	**Perfection**			**Exfoliatine** (BC1); **Purifying** (BC2); **Magnetic** (BC3); **Multi-action** (BT & BM1)	Non-whitening function; multi-functional	Not for fair beauty ideal/ functionality	
		Whitening	White skin (fair)	Fair beauty ideal			**Melanin Block**[xxxiv] (BM2)	Block dark pigment, Melanin.	Avoid darkening for fair beauty	Less F
			Skin-whitening function				**Visibly** (BT&BM1)	Perceivable results	(Visible) Efficiency	F
							100% men sees results (BC4) (intro)	Proven Perceivable results	(Proven) Efficiency	
	Elabo-ration						**'Brighten'** (BC1, 2 & 4)	Skin-brightening (function)	Euphemism of fair beauty	M/F
							Dull (cell)(BC2)	Dull skin complexion (problem)		
							Fairness (BM1)	Lighten skin tone (effect)	Aesthetic/ fair beauty	F
							Darkening (BM2)	Darker skin (problem); dark in colour value/saturation	Euphemism/ Fair beauty ideal	M/F
							Captures (BC3)	Action involves force and aggression	Power	M
							Fights (BC3, BM1&2)			
							Dull dead cell; oil; dirt; pimple; blackheads......	Problems that need to be solved	Solve problem	
							Oil control; Acne-reducing; Pore-minimizing (BC4)	Problem-solving		
							Visibly (BC1)	Perceivable results	Efficiency	
							Instant (BM1)	Quick results		

[xxxiv]Pro Exfoliatine (in BC1) and Melanin Block (in BM2) can also be key functions, as they are created names of the key ingredients that suggest product function. This is further verified by the fact that they are placed above the elaboration, like most key functions (except BC4).

Table 4.3.7: Gender Construction in Highlighting Key Function(s) (A7) (cont.)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier (L'Oréal Paris)	Denotation	Connotation	Myth	Signifier (L'Oréal Men Expert)	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Symbol	A straight line with 'spark' end	transparent bright fairness	Aesthetic/ perfection	F	Arrow (clockwise)	24-hours result	(Lasting) performance	F
						Broken line	Not a curved line	Not natural process	
							Image of gear	Technological skill	
	Colour (font)	Black[xxxv]	Writing convention	-	-	**Mostly White** (key function)	White skin (fairness)	Fair beauty ideal	F
							Whitening Function	Functionality	-
						Black (elaboration)	Writing convention	-	-
							Dark-skinned	Masculine ideal attractiveness	M
	B/grd of key func.	White	White skin (fairness)	Fair beauty ideal	F	**Bright light blue** (most)	Brighter & lighter skin	Euphemism of fair beauty	M/F
							Colour of boy's stuff	Masculine colour	
						White (BC1; BM2)	White skin (fairness)	Fair beauty ideal	F
	B/grd of elaboration symbol	-	-	-	-	**Grey (all)**	Between black & white	Negotiation between fair & dark skin	M/F
		Pink	Rosy fairness	Aesthetic/ perfection		**Green**	Colour of leaf (nature)	Skin freshness (not whitening)	-
	Compo- sition/ pattern	Lack of straight lines	Natural process	Naturalness	F	straight lines/ rectangle	Element of the mechanical, technological order	Technological skill & expertise; rationality	M
		Natural/ blended	All elements are not separated; & not highlighted	Foster connection		solid geometry	Separate elements/ info (framing)	Disconnection	
							Salience (highlight each info)	Exert control & status	
								Report style	
				Establish equality		Presented in bullets	Info presented in point form	Report style	

xxxv Black fonts in LME are not considered gendering effort because they are merely writing convention. This is verified by LP -- the detector of extraneous factor, which also uses black font colour.

4.3.7.1   Projecting "Product in Action"

While LP directly explains 'whitening' function that is feminine, LME does not mention the feminine function, but rather stresses on the word 'action'. Hence, LME is presented as a "Product in Action", providing the masculine appeal of "Man in Action". Refer Table 4.3.7.

4.3.7.2   Negotiation between Whitening and Non-Whitening Functionality

Instead of mentioning the feminine skin-whitening as the key function (shown in LP), LME downplays the femininity with other non-whitening functions e.g. 'Exfoliatine' (exfoliating) (BC1), 'purifying' (BC2) and 'magnetic' (BC3). This is verified by "Melanin Block" (BM2) that indirectly implies skin-whitening, but emphasises more on blocking dark pigments.

With reference to the non-whitening functions, they are mainly the functions of respective product types. For instance, A7 of LME cleansers depict the functions of a cleanser, i.e. 'exfoliatine' (BC1), 'purifying' (BC2) and 'magnetic' ('captures dirt & oil') (BC3).

Similarly, LME's symbol projects non-whitening function, i.e. skin refreshing (see Section 4.3.7.6). Nevertheless, whitening functions (though not emphasised as key functions) are implied through euphemisms in verbal elaboration (see Section 4.3.7.4).

4.3.7.3   Enhancing Functionality the "Masculine Way"

As discussed in the previous actions, functionality connotes masculinity in grooming. Based on Section 4.3.7.2, the non-whitening functions do not only downplay the feminine function, but also present LME as products with multiple functions (since the skin-

whitening function has been notified in A4 that classify them in whitening series). This is further verified by the word 'multi-action' in BT and BM1.

In addition, LME enhances its functionality with verbal statement on its efficiency -- 'visibly' and '100 % Men sees results', especially with the salience of "100%" in visual composition. Conversely, LP enhances whitening function with aesthetic "transparent" and "rosy", driving whitening into a better image of skin fairness, as well as signalling feminine orientation on aesthetic, appearance and perfection in grooming practice.

While functionality is not considered as a gendering effort (as it is expected in A7), the difference in its emphasis does. Unlike LP that presents A7 briefly, LME has elaboration for its key functions, which emphasis on functionality reflects the grooming rationale of utilitarian. The elaboration further enhances the masculine appeal with: 1) power-oriented performance ('capture and fight', Section 4.3.5.3); 2) problem-solving ('acne-reducing'... and problems like 'oil', 'dirt', 'pimple'..., etc.) ; and lastly, 3) efficiency ('visibly' and 'instant', see previous paragraph).

4.3.7.4   Negotiating Skin Fairness through Word and Colour Euphemisms

Similar to A5 (Section 4.3.5.1), euphemisms are mainly emphasised (e.g. "brighten" and "dull") to downplay the feminine fair, as compared to "fairness" that is only used in BM1 and "darkening" in BM2. The same goes to the background colour of key function that mostly uses bright light blue, projecting ideal masculine image (see Section 4.3.4.2).

4.3.7.5   Negotiating Skin Fairness via Black-White Continuum

Similar to A2 (Section 4.3.2.1), skin tone negotiation is presented in LME through key functions that are mostly in white fonts and grey background colour of elaboration. In addition, the elaboration in black fonts adds in to the skin tone tension with maximally dark, black. However, black fonts may be connoted as a mere writing convention.

4.3.7.6   Constructing Masculinity through Symbol

LP ends its written function, *Transparency Rosy Whitening*, with a short and straight pink line with 'spark' end (like light transmission), which reflects the written words that enhances the aesthetic value and perfection. On the contrary, LME uses a green clockwise arrow to signal long-lasting effect (24 hours) on skin freshness. This signals a masculine sense of performance, as well as the avoidance of feminine whitening function through non-whitening function (Section 4.3.7.2). Furthermore, the use of broken line avoids the femininity of curved lines, as well as connotes masculine technological skills and expertise through its gear-like image.

4.3.7.7   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A7

In order to overcome the femininity of skin-whitening, A7 in LME provides an unexpected way of projecting its key function as a whitening product. The gendering strategies include: 1) replacing feminine functionality (of the whitening series) with non-whitening functions (of the product type); 2) reducing the feminine functionality with word-colour euphemisms in elaboration; 3) negotiating fairness as a new masculine ideal (bright light blue); 4)

negotiating fairness through skin tone tension using masculine dark (black), neutral grey and feminine fair (white); and 5) avoiding feminine aesthetic sense but enhancing masculine performance.

Generally, A7 projects LME as a 'masculine' agent (Product in Action) that is effective, multi-functional and powerful in problem-solving. This opposes to "feminine" product of LP that focuses on aesthetic and perfection. In other words, LME sells male practical tools that solve problems, while LP sells vanity products. In addition, LME avoids aesthetic sense that may lead to the accusation of vanity. Instead, the emphasis on problems, efficiency and functionality depicts the need of grooming products to solve problems and LME as the best choice to do so. This aligns with male consumer behaviour that legitimise grooming consumption through the "claims of functionality rather than appearance concerns" (McNeill & Douglas, 2011, p. 452, see also Section 2.5.2.2, para.3). Moreover, the multi-functional LME further enhances the concept of "worth-buying" "because it is worth it" (Section 4.3.3.5, last paragraph).

4.3.8 Introducing Product (A8)

A8 is an action that draws the consumers' attention to read the lengthy and wordy information the back of the packaging. Hence, it is usually placed at the top-most position of the back packaging. Refer Table 4.3.8 for data analysis. The findings will be discussed from Section 4.3.8.1 to Section 4.3.8.4.

Table 4.3.8: Gender Construction in Introducing Product (A8)

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word choice	A) Noun phrase Front focus	whitening routine	A product for daily practice/care of skin-whitening	Vanity	F		(Sun rays; stress; pollution *); urban jungle; sweat; dirt......	Daily problems faced by those who often go out & work; Harmful elements to the skin	Masculine problems (Athlete; working man; outdoor)	M
		whitening care range		Feminine Fair beauty						
	End focus	"Product name"	skincare product	Vanity			Consequences	Negative: Bad happenings need to be solved	Problem-solving	
							Skin	Face/ Appearance	Vanity	F
	Skin focus	Skin	Face/ Appearance				spots; sebum; (pores, impurities, oil**)	Negative: Problematic elements on the skin need to be solved	Problem-solving	M
	B) Adjectives (the skin)	Perfectly cleansed	Positive: Perfect image	attractiveness/ perfection			dull; uneven; shiny; unclean; oily	Negative: Problematic skin that need to be solved	Unattractiveness; Problem-solving	
	(Others)	Daily/ complete whitening	Whitening is an essential practice	Vanity/ Fair beauty			(sun rays) invisible; aggressive; serious; dark (spots); Excess (sebum)	Negative: Serious problems to the skin (need to solve)		
	(subject) & Verb	(LP) Presents	Subject: LP (a skincare brand)	Vanity			(*)Trigger... (**) accumulate... (Skin) Darkens...	Subject (Negative): problematic element/skin (need to solve)	Problem-solving (calling for active viewer)	F
			present tense: actively doing sth	Active vanity (passive viewer				present tense: actively doing sth	Active problems (passive victim)	
							(viewer) Take action	Subject: Viewer	active viewer (Taking action)	M
								Imperative: being told to do sth		

Table 4.3.8: Gender Construction in Introducing Product (A8) (cont.)

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal **2.** Linguis-tic Style	**a) Mood structure**	Declarative	Giving info (common practice of packaging description)	-	-		**Declarative** (all)	Giving info	-	-
							Exclamation (BC1) (warning!)	Demand attention; Highlight urgency	Direct (Assertive/ authoritative);	M
							Exclamation & imperative (BC1 & 2) (Take action!)	Demand action; Highlight urgency	Exert control & status; Task-oriented;	
							Interrogative (BC3 & BT) 'oily skin?/ who is it for?..'	Rhetorical questions to demand thoughts of the viewer, while the speaker has the answers.	to prove oneself & negotiate prestige	
	b) Possible Genre	**Formal Introduction in grand event ...** *LP* presents:	'Grand opening'	Process-oriented	F		**Awareness talk**	Create awareness to the audience (viewer) about current problems/ issues, making them to join in the effort of solving the problems.	Task oriented	M
									Problem-solving; taking action	
				Sophistication; luxury/ glamour				Own problem	narcissism	

4.3.8.1   Shadowing Vanity behind 'Problem' Words

While word choice in LP focuses on vanity, LME focuses on problems. Hence, LME does not only reduce/avoid the feminine vanity, but also portrays the masculine activity of problem-solving. Refer Table 4.3.8.1.

Table 4.3.8.1: Excerpt from Table 4.3.8 on the Word Choice in A8

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal **1.** Word choice	**A) Noun phrase** Front focus	whitening routine	A product for daily practice/care of skin-whitening	Vanity	F		(Sun rays; stress; pollution *); urban jungle; sweat; dirt......	Daily problems faced by those who often go out & work; Harmful elements to the skin	**Masculine problems** (Athlete; working man; outdoor)	M
		whitening care range		Feminine Fair beauty						
	End focus	"Product name"	skincare product	Vanity			Consequences	**Negative:** Bad happenings need to be solved	Problem-solving	
	Skin focus	Skin	Face/ Appearance				Skin	Face/ Appearance	Vanity	F
							spots; sebum; (pores, impurities, oil**)	**Negative:** Problematic elements on the skin need to be solved	Problem-solving	
	B) Adjectives (the skin)	Perfectly cleansed	**Positive:** Perfect image	attractiveness/ perfection			dull; uneven; shiny; unclean; oily	**Negative:** Problematic skin need to be solved;	Unattractiveness; Problem-solving	M
	(Others)	Daily/ complete whitening	Whitening is an essential practice	Vanity/ Fair beauty			(sun rays) invisible; aggressive; serious; dark (spots); Excess (sebum)	**Negative:** Serious problems to the skin (need to solve)		

In terms of noun phrases, the front, end and skin focuses in LP are whitening practice for fair beauty (i.e. "whitening routine" and "whitening care range"), the skincare product ('product name') and skin respectively, as compared to LME's masculine problems as working men and athletes outdoor (e.g. 'sun rays', 'stress', 'pollution', 'urban jungle', 'sweat', 'dirt', etc.), negative 'consequences' and problematic elements of the skin (e.g. 'spots', 'sebum', 'pores', 'impurities', 'oil', etc.). Apparently, LME's noun phrases depict problematic entities that need to be solved. Both LME and LP, nonetheless, show of concern on the skin reflects the common theme of vanity. However, LME's vanity concern is limited only by the word, "skin", while overshadowed by problems.

Similarly, the contrasting concept between LP's vanity (yearning for attractive image) and LME's problem orientation (solving unattractive aspects) can also be observed in the adjectives used that serve as modifiers, reflecting packaging designers' treatment towards the nominal elements. For instance, the skin projected in LP is the expected result of perfect attractive (positive) image (i.e. 'perfectly cleansed'), whilst LME depicts unattractive (negative) image (e.g. dull, uneven, shiny, unclean and oily) that need to be solved.

Hence, while the positively connoted skin image enhances vanity in LP, negative skin image in LME problematizes vanity. This contrast is further enhanced by the adjectives for other elements, which LP concerns on positive whitening practice (i.e. 'daily whitening' and 'complete whitening'), whilst LME focuses on negative effects of problematic elements, e.g. sun rays (i.e. 'invisible', 'aggressive' and 'serious'), spots ('dark') and sebum ('excess').

In brief, LP focuses on vanity, while LME on problem-solving. This is verified by the subject choice of LP and LME, which are LP (the product) and problems respectively.

4.3.8.2   Reversing Masculine Role from Passive Victim to Active Agent

Table 4.3.8.2: Excerpt from Table 4.3.8 on the Use of Subject and Verb in A8

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word choice	(subject) & Verb	(LP) Presents	Subject: LP (a skincare brand)	Vanity	F		(Sun rays; stress; pollution)Trigger..... (pores, impurities, oil) accumulate...... (Skin) Darkens... (viewer) Take action	Subject (Negative): problematic element/skin (need to solve)	Problem-solving (calling for active viewer)	
			present tense: actively doing sth	Active vanity (passive viewer				present tense: actively doing sth	Active problems (passive victim)	F
								Subject: Viewer	active viewer (Taking action)	M
								Imperative: being told to do sth		

Based on Table 4.3.8.2, having LP as the subject (which beauty products connoting vanity), the vanity is 'activated' by the verb in present tense ('presents'). This depicts LP as an active vanity for passive female consumers. Conversely, LME has 'problems' as subjects, which are also 'activated' by verbs in present tense, denoting active problems acted upon passive viewers (victims) that need to be solved.

However, the connoted need of problem-solving in LME on the part of the consumers urges them to take the masculine active role to solve problems. This is further verified by the imperative verb ('take') in the last sentence of BC1 and BC2, 'Take action!' that explicitly reverses the consumer's role from passive victim to active agent.

4.3.8.3   Speaking Like a Man through Linguistic Style

Table 4.3.8.3 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.8 on the Use of Mood Structure in A8

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 2. Linguis-tic Style	**a) Mood structure**	Declarative	Giving info (common practice of packaging description)	-	-		**Declarative** (all)	Giving info	-	-
							Exclamation (BC1) (warning!)	Demand attention; Highlight urgency	Direct (Assertive/ authoritative);	
							Exclamation & imperative (BC1 & 2) (Take action!)	Demand action; Highlight urgency	Exert control & status; Task-oriented;	**M**
							Interrogative (BC3 & BT) 'oily skin?/ who is it for?..'	Rhetorical questions to demand thoughts of the viewer, while the speaker has the answers.	to prove oneself & negotiate prestige	

Based on Table 4.3.8.3(a) above, LME clearly shows extra gendering effort by deviating from the common practice of using declarative sentences on the back packaging to provide information. Unlike LP that uses all declaratives, LME adds in other moods of sentence, i.e. exclamation, imperatives and (rhetorical) interrogative, demanding attention, actions and thought respectively. In other words, LME's linguistic style reflects masculine conversational style, i.e. direct (assertive and authoritative) and task-oriented, which exert control and status, in order to prove oneself and negotiate prestige.

Table 4.3.8.3 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.8 on the "Genre" in A8

Mode/ Feature + aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 3; BT)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 2. Linguistic style	**b) Possible Genre**	**Formal Introduction in grand event** ... *LP* presents:	'Grand opening'	Process-oriented	**F**		**Awareness talk**	Create awareness to the audience (viewer) about current problems/ issues, making them to join in the effort of solving the problems.	Task oriented	**M**
									Problem-solving; taking action	
				Sophistication; luxury/ glamour				Own problem	narcissism	

In addition, the genre-alike of A8 in LP and LME also presents gendered difference in conversational style between feminine process-oriented and masculine task-oriented. LP products are given formal introduction like a grand opening in a glamour event, which also provides the sense of sophistication, glamour and luxury. As for LME, its A8 is presented like an awareness talk that is task-oriented, which highlights problems and urges the audience to take action, as shown in the problem-focused word choice (see Section 4.3.8.1) and task-oriented linguistic style.

Nevertheless, unlike the usual awareness talks that demand for action to solve certain issues in making a better world, this 'awareness talk' concerns about personal skin problems. Thus, this implies embedded narcissism that is feminine in the grooming context.

4.3.8.4 Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A8

The main gendering strategies of LME in A8 are: 1) highlighting the 'problematic' side of vanity and narcissism, while shadowing them; 2) projecting vanity as a negative problems that need to be solved, rather than a perfect positive image that wish to be constructed; 3) urging men to be the masculine 'object of action' for feminine vanity -- 'object of contemplation'; and 4) portraying packaging like a man through conversational style.

While the masculinised representations of LME and consumers in the previous actions assist men to accept metrosexuality, LME's first and second strategy masculinise men's thoughts of vanity, by projecting it as a problem that need to be solved, rather than a perfect (positive) image that wish to be constructed. Instead of feminising men's thought to accept vanity, the problematic vanity evokes readers' masculine sense of problem-solving, leading to the third strategy. LME's consumers, who are referred as metrosexuals, are defined as skin problem-solvers. This aligns with Clinique's vice president, Jenny Belknap's statement on the interest of men in products that solve problems. (Cited in Holmes, 2012)

Similar statement is also suggested by SPA Future Thinking research director, Will Ullstein (cited in Costa, 2011). The emphasises on problems emphasises the need of grooming and using the products, aligns with the male consumer behaviours towards grooming products that concern on utilitarian instead of appearance (vanity) to avoid the accusation of narcissism (McNeill & Douglas, 2011, see also Section 2.5.2.2, para.3).

In summary, besides projecting LME as practical skin care products for men, metrosexuality is negotiated as active 'grooming' (i.e. problem-solving), instead of passive 'beauty'. Relatively, skincare products are negotiated as a necessary tool to solve problems, rather than unnecessary and luxurious products for vanity.

4.3.9 Describing Functions (A9)

A9 is meant to provide information about the function(ality) of the products. However, functionality is a gender-sensitive aspect, connoted as masculine in the grooming practice. Hence, it can be gender-neutral in A9, as well as masculine in general.

In general, A9 can be divided into three sub-actions, i.e. 1) naming A9 (Subheading 1); 2) highlighting key points (Subheading 2); and 3) elaborating (elaboration). These sub-actions are differentiated through visual compositions, i.e. contrasts in visual presentation, such as different font colours, underlined, etc.

Since the findings are presented in a lengthy four-page table, this section discusses the findings based on the excerpts from the complete table (Table 4.3.9) in Appendix D.

4.3.9.1 Highlighting Functionality through Word Positioning and Choice

LME emphasises on functionality by providing it important roles: 1) as "Subheading 1" (all, except BC1) that defines A9; and 2) as the key subject that is expressed via ingredients (i.e. elements that provide skincare functions). This is a total contrasts from LP that avoid the functionality (masculine appeal) by vaguely defines A9 as 'Action' in Subheading 1, which carries the ambiguity between the products' action and the viewers/consumers' action. Thus, this leads to the confusion between feminine passivity and masculine activeness respectively. The same goes to LP's key subject -- the skincare product itself that carries feminine vanity, while product names are ellipsed in LME. Refer Table 4.3.9.1.

Table 4.3.9.1: Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 on the Word Positioning and Choice in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	Naming A9 (Sub-heading 1)		**Action** (AC & AT)	The action of the products/ viewers	Active products/ consumers	**M/F**		**Action** (only BC1)	The action of the product/ viewers	Active product/ consumers	**M/F**
								Bright + Oil Control (BC2; BT; BM1)	Function of the products	Functionality/ A9	**M/ -**
								Power (BC3 & 4); **Multi-Action** (BC3 & BT); **in 1 Gesture** (BM2)	Practicality of the products		
								Visible Multi-Action (BC3 & BT)	Visible effectiveness and practicality of the products		
								Charcoal (BC3); **Volcano** (BC4)	Materials with skincare function		
	Elabo-ration (Noun)	Subject	**Key subject:** 'product name'	skincare product	vanity			'Product' is ellipsed (All, except BC4)	skincare product is embedded	hidden vanity	**less F**
			Key ingredients	elements that provide skincare functions	functionality/ A9	**less M / -**		**Key subject:** Key ingredients	elements that provide skincare functions	More emphasised on functionality/ A9	**More M / -**

Besides 'positioning', functionality is also stressed via word choice, as shown in LME's Subheadings (1) that are more descriptive about practicality (e.g. *power*, *multi-action* and *in 1 gesture*), including materials with skincare functions (e.g. *charcoal* and *volcano*), as well as visible effectiveness and practicality (e.g. *visible multi-action*).

4.3.9.2   Masculinising Functionality with Negative Words

Another masculinising effort of LME is the use of negative words to express masculine functionality in problem-solving (i.e. fighting against unattractive elements) and/or avoid femininity of attractiveness (vanity).

Table 4.3.9.2 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 on the Negative Words in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT) Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all) Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choic	**Key points** (Sub-heading 2)	cleanses; refreshes; tonifies, brightens, ... (all)	present tense = Active products	Passive viewers			Anti-; shine, dullness, spots...(problems) (Mostly: BC2 &3; BT)	**Anti-** = Negative-connoted; against negative skin condition	Problem-solving/ unattractive-ness	**M**
			positive verb: promote (construct) positive skin condition	attractiveness/ vanity	**F**			Negative-connoted 'shine, spots, dullness..'' **= problems**		

Based on Table 4.3.9.2 (a), the key points (Subheading 2) that largely use the negative term "anti-", paired with negative-connoted description (e.g. *spots* and *dullness*), signal opposition against problematic skin elements/condition that are unattractive, which need to be solved. This is a total contrast with LP that mainly uses "positive verbs[xxxvi]" (e.g. *cleanses, refreshes* and *brightens*) that are meant to construct a better skin condition. Femininity is constructed in these verbs as such positivity connotes attractiveness (vanity) and present tense signals active products but passive consumers.

[xxxvi] Positive verbs in this discussion refer to verbs that promote, construct or encourage something, while negative verbs are verbs that go against something.

The same goes to the negative verbs in LME's elaboration, i.e. *traps/captures and washes off, rubbing out* and *removes*, as compared to LP's positive verbs, *cleanses, purifies* and *clarifies*. See Table 4.3.9.2 (b).

Table 4.3.9.2 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.2) on Different Expressions of "Cleansing" in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	Elabo-ration Descrip-tion	Verbs (How "clean-sing" is express-ed)	cleanses; purifies; clarifies	cleanse/ purify/ clarify **skin**	Vanity (skin-related)	F		cleanses; purifies; clarifies	cleanse/ purify/ clarify **skin**	Vanity/ purity/ attractiveness	F
				cleanliness	Purity			[Traps/captures & washes off; rubbing out; removes]	Negative verbs: [..] **impurities/ dead cells; get rid of** problematic elements	**problem-solving**	M
				Positive verbs: construct attractiveness	Attractive-ness			purge; frees	less frequent verbs in skincare	less skin-related (less vanity)	
								mattifying	producing dull surface (remove oil that makes skin shiny)	**unattractiveness** (Dull)	

These verbs refer to the same function (i.e. cleansing) expressed in different 'positivity', suggesting possible euphemisms (see Section 4.3.9.5).

Based on Table 4.3.9.2 (c) below, LME projects more problematic elements than LP, as shown in LME's main objects that are negatively connoted, e.g. *impurities, blackheads, dead cells, pores* and *acne.* Again, masculinity is constructed as more problems are posed, which depicts a stronger sense of problem-solving.

Table 4.3.9.2 (c): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.1) on the Main Objects in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
			skin/ complexion	appearance	vanity	F		skin/ complexion	appearance	vanity	F
Verbal 1. Word Choice	Elabo-ration (Noun)	Object	**less problems per product** impurities (make-up, dirt, sebum); dead cells...	less problems that need to be solved	Less problem-solving	**less M**		**More problems per product** (impurities; blackheads; dead cells; pores; acne..)	Negative-connoted: more unwanted elements/ problems that need to be solved	more problem-solving	M

This is enhanced by the negative-connoted adjectives (e.g. *dull* and *dilated*) (see Table 4.3.9.2 (d) below) in the elaboration that serve as the modifiers of the problematic elements, which in this case, serving as a negative enhancer to project more severe problems. As the tougher the problem-solving is connoted, LME's claims on its ability in solving these problems will enhance its functionality. As for LP, the expression "all sorts of" (impurities) connotes perfection, which according to Wolf (2002) is a female "beauty myth".

Table 4.3.9.2 (d): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.2) on the Use of Adjectives in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	**Elabo- ration** Descrip- tion	**Object** (problem)	**all sorts of** (impurities)	remove all unwanted elements	Perfection	F		**dull** (dead cells); **dilated** (pores)	Negative description on problematic elements = more serious	**Enhanced Functionality** (tougher problem-solving)	M

4.3.9.3 Masculinising Functionality with Science and Technical Features

LME promotes functionality (A9) in a masculine way, by using multimodal features to project scientific and technological expertise (i.e. masculine fields, see Section 4.3.5.5, last paragraph). While LP stresses on its functionality through the expression, "a powerful peeling agent" that may be considered as masculinising or merely an expected element in A9 (gender-neutral), LME names the key subject (ingredients) with scientific term -- "the formula" and the use of symbols that resemble technical symbols.

The results of analysis are presented in Table 4.3.9.3(a) and Table 4.3.9.3 (b). See also Figure 4.3.9.3 for the illustration on the symbols used for A9 in LME.

Table 4.3.9.3 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.1) on the Use of Scientific Term in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	Elabo-ration (Descrip-tion)	Subject (content / Ingre-dient)	a powerful peeling agent	effective elements	Functionality/ A9	M/ -		the formula (all, except BC1)	chemical compound	scientific expertise	M

Table 4.3.9.3 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.3) on the Symbols in A9

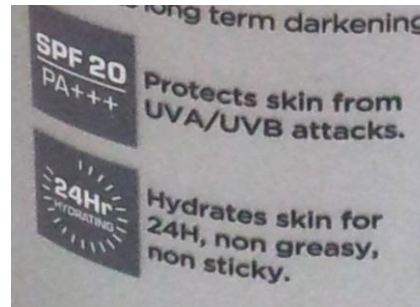| Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	symbol	-	-	-	-		include symbol (BM1 & 2)	like standardised technical symbol	Technological skills	M
								concise (1 pic 'speaks' more than words)	direct	

Figure 4.3.9.3: Illustration on the Use of Symbols in LME (BM2) for A9

4.3.9.4 Masculinising Functionality by 'Masculinising' Verbs

Similar to LP, LME uses verbs that merely state functions (e.g. *clarifies, cleanses* and *brighten*) that signal masculinity of functionality, as well as femininity of passive consumer through present tense. However, LME also masculinises (enhances) functionality in a masculine way through the addition of adverbs and verb choice. First, the "prepositional" adverbs, i.e. *(evens) out, (washes) off*, *(rubbing) out* and *(brightens) up*, 'activate' the verbs and enable the visualization of product/ingredients in action. Hence, the enhanced functionality connotes masculinity of taking action. Second, verb choices, e.g. *reinforce*, *traps, captures, protects* and *fights*, "empower" verbs and depict power, strength and/or violence in functionality.

Table 4.3.9.4: Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.2) on the Use of Scientific Term in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	**Elabo-ration** (description)	**Verbs** (in general)	cleanses; purifies; brightens; makes.....	verbs in present tense = product/ ingredient's action/ function	passive consumers			clarifies; cleanses; brighten...	verbs in present tense = product/ ingredient's action/ function	passive consumers	F
										Functionality/ -	M/ -
					Functionality	M/ -		evens out; washes off; rubbing out; brightens up	(Verb + adverb):enhanced product/ ingredient's action/ function	**Enhanced Functionality** (taking action)	M
								reinforce; traps; captures; protects; fights	actions involving power, strength &/ violence	**Enhanced Functionality** (power-oriented)	
								mattifying	producing dull surface (remove oil that makes skin shiny)	**unattractiveness** (Dull)	

4.3.9.5　　　　　Downplaying Femininity with Verbal Euphemisms

LME downplays femininity by replacing common terms in beauty context with near synonyms and other similar expressions, and thus, are perceived as euphemisms. The related findings are presented in Table 4.3.9.5 (a) (the next page) and discussed as follow:

The word 'sebum' that are used in LP and limited only in BC4 connotes feminine vanity (appearance) as it is skin-related, defined as an oily secretion of the sebaceous glands in the skin. In contrast, LME mainly uses "oil" in a more general context (not skin-related), since it merely refers to the state of a substance, i.e. a viscous liquid, which can also mean cooking oil. In BM1, another euphemism is detected - "shine" that refers to glossy surface that are not skin-related (vanity), though signal general appearance and aesthetic.

Besides *enriched* that describes product content (ingredients) in feminine luxury sense, other euphemisms in LME are detected, i.e. *charged, fuelled* and *loaded*, connoting masculine power and strength. Moreover, *charged* and *fuelled* refer to the masculine discourses, i.e. technical (electronic) and cars (petrol) respectively.

LME also uses other terms to describe clean skin and fair complexion. While LP promotes cleanliness with adverbs (i.e. *impeccably clean* and *well cleansed*), LME downplays the connoted feminine purity with *neat* (rare skin description/non-vanity) and *fresh* (not related to purity/cleanliness), as well as *matte* (negative-connoted dullness). As for fair complexion, LP's *fairness* and *whitening* that explicitly refer to feminine fair beauty ideal are replaced by *bright* and *healthy* in LME. In previous actions, *Bright* has been claimed a euphemism, negotiating gender through another version of light-dark continuum (colour value). This provides another masculine rationale, i.e. *health* purpose of skin-brightening (see Section 2.3.5) rather than vanity intention of skin-whitening.

The results of the analysis discussed in this section are presented in the table below:

Table 4.3.9.5 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 on Verbal Euphemisms in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)			Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)				Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth		Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	**Elabo-ration** (Noun)	**Object**	sebum	an oily secretion of the sebaceous glands in the skin.	Vanity (skin-related)	**F**	oil (mostly)	A viscous liquid, e.g. cooking oil	not skin-related	**-**
							shine (BM1)	glossy surface	appearance/ aesthetic **(not skin related)**	**less F**
							sebum (BC4)	an oily secretion of the sebaceous glands **in the skin.**	Vanity (skin-related)	**F**
			make-up	cosmetic products	Vanity		Sweat	excreted liquid from perspiration usually due to physical activities &/ hot temperature (usually in hot, humid environment)	Active; Physical/Outdoor activities	**M**
	Elabo-ration (Descrip-tion)	**Subject** (content / Ingre-dient)	a powerful peeling agent	effective elements	Functionality/ A9	**M/ -**	the formula (all, except BC1)	chemical compound	scientific expertise	
			enriched	rich of...	luxury	**F**	enriched	rich of...	luxury	**F**
							charged	powered/ energized (electricity)	Power & strength + masculine discourse	**M**
							fuelled	powered up by fuel (petrol)		
							loaded	carrying a heavy load.		
		Object (skin)	impeccably clean; well cleansed;	stressed (adverb) positive skin description	enhanced attractiveness		neat; fresh	positive skin description (without adverbs: not stressed)	attractiveness	**less F**
							neat	(rare description on skin)	Non-vanity (not skin-related)	**M**
				cleanliness	purity		matte	Negative: dull, non-shiny	unattractiveness	
			prepared for the Whitening care.; fairness	skin-whitening for fair beauty	feminine fair beauty ideal		bright and healthy look/ healthier looking skin	Bright skin= euphemism for fair	skin fairness (indirect)	**less F**
								Healthy = good physical condition	strong (healthy)	**M**

While the healthy image of skin-brightening aligns with Teong's (2013, cited in Cheong, 2013) claim that such products "promote a natural and healthy complexion", LME *White Activ* concerning on "melanin block" (e.g. BM2) may refer to whitening products, as explained by Gonzalez（n.d., cited in *Skin-whitening big business in Asia*, 2009) will reduce the dark pigment, "melanin". This again suggests possible gendering effort in LME.

Moving to Table 4.3.9.5 (b), euphemisms are used in verbs describing cleaning function. Like LP, LME also uses verbs, such as *cleanses*, *purifies* and *clarifies*, which are positive verbs directly refer to skin (appearance/vanity) and connote feminine purity. Nevertheless, these verbs are sometimes expressed in different terms as well in LME to downplay the femininity. This includes: 1) negative verbs (*e.g. traps/captures and washes off, rubbing out* and *removes*) that directly refer to problems, and thus, connote problem-solving; 2) less frequent verbs in skincare (e.g. *purge* and *frees*) that are less skin-related (non-vanity); and 3) verbs producing negative outcome (unattractiveness), i.e. *mattifying,* which actually signifies removing excess sebum.

The findings discussed above are based on the results presented in Table 4.3.9.5 (b) (see next page). Kindly note that Table 4.3.9.5 (b) is similar to Table 4.3.9.2 (b). However, both tables present the same findings that are discussed for different purposes.

Table 4.3.9.5 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.2) on Verbal Euphemisms of "Cleansing" in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal 1. Word Choice	**Elabo-ration** Descrip-tion	**Verbs** (How "clean-sing" is express-ed)	cleanses; purifies; clarifies	cleanse/ purify/ clarify **skin**	Vanity (skin-related)	**F**		cleanses; purifies; clarifies	cleanse/ purify/ clarify **skin**	Vanity/ purity/ attractiveness	**F**
				cleanliness	Purity			[Traps/captures & washes off; rubbing out; removes]	Negative verbs: [..] **impurities/ dead cells;** get rid of problematic elements	**problem-solving**	**M**
				Positive verbs: construct attractiveness	Attractive-ness			purge; frees	less frequent verbs in skincare	less skin-related (less vanity)	
								mattifying	producing dull surface (remove oil that makes skin shiny)	**unattractiveness** (Dull)	

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4.3.9.6   Speaking like a Man through Verbal Communication

Unlike LP that fosters connection and building rapport by placing the products as key subject and (consumers') skin as key object, LME avoids mentioning the products. (See Table 4.3.9.1) Besides, LME uses more concise and direct linguistic style (report style). See Table 4.3.9.6 below.

Table 4.3.9.6: Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.2) on the Linguistic Style in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
2. Lingui-stic Style	**Key points** Subheading 2	Less concise	less direct (descriptive/ expressive)	rapport/ indirect	**F**		**concise** (All, except BC1)	irect; less descriptive/ expressive	report/ direct	**M**
	Elaboration	More lengthy/ wordy					Less lengthy/ wordy than LP (overall)			

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4.3.9.7   **'Speaking' like a Man through Visual Communication**

Besides verbal features that connote masculine conversational style, i.e. disconnection, directness and report-style (see Section 4.3.9.6), these

features are also constructed through visual features in LME. Refer Table 4.3.9.7.

Table 4.3.9.7: Excerpt from Table 4.3.9 (Cont.3) on the Visual Features in A9

Mode/ Feature + Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (all)		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	**symbol**	-	-	-	-		include symbol (BM1 & 2)	like standardised technical symbol	Technological skills	**M**
								concise (1 pic 'speaks' more than words)	direct	
	Composition	Subheading1 underlined; Subheadings in different colour	less framing & salience; harder to identify details than LME & less prominent.	Less direct & assertive; establish equality	**M**		Subheadings in different coloured boxes (most BCs & BT)	More framing & salience; easier to identify details than LP & more prominent.	More direct & assertive	
									Exert control and status	
							elaboration presented in distinct bullets & arranged in order (BMs)	More framing: easier to identify details than LP	More direct	
	Pattern	Natural/ blended	info connects to each other (less framing)	foster connection	**F**		solid geometry (box)	disconnect from others (more framing)	disconnection	**M**
							Natural/ blended	info connects to each other (less framing)	foster connection	**F**

While LP fosters connection and establishes equality through visual composition and pattern that has less framing/salience and natural/blended respectively, LME constructs disconnection as well as exerts control and status doing otherwise (see Table 4.3.9.7, cont.3). Subheadings in different coloured boxes (in most BCs and BT) and elaboration presented in distinct bullets arranged in order (BMs) separate and highlight information more effectively (having more framing and salience) than LP's underlined subheadings and/or subheadings in different colour, as frame shapes are more salient and separated. This is further verified by solid geometry pattern (all LME products, except BMs) that disconnects information in LME, compared to LP that "blends" them together in natural/blended pattern.

In addition, concise linguistic style is also expressed visually in LME through symbols that speak more than words.

4.3.9.8   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A9

The main gendering strategies of A9 in LME are: 1) maximising functionality (see Section 4.3.9.1); 2) masculinising functionality, projecting skincare products as male powerful pragmatic tools (for scientific and/or technical use) for problem-solving (see Section 4.3.9.2 to 4.3.9.4), as well as portraying vanity (skin) as a negative image (problems) that need to be solved like A8 (see Section 4.3.8.3) ; 3) downplaying femininity with euphemisms (see Section 4.3.9.5), which with quantity and frequency will eventually construct masculine space in grooming, like 'handsome' and 'grooming'; 4) constructing masculine image through verbal and visual 'conversation' (see Section 4.3.9.6 to 4.3.9.7).

4.3.10   Promising Expected Results (A10)

A10 describes the positive outcome of the skin after using the products. Thus, multimodal features (especially the verbal features) in A10 will inevitably signal feminine vanity (aesthetic) and sensuality, as they describe skin image and skin texture respectively. The results are presented in Table 4.3.10 and discussed from Section 4.3.10.1 to Section 4.3.10.4.

Table 4.3.10: Gender Construction in Promising Expected Results (A10)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 only)		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word Choice	Description (skin)	All Adjectives (see Table 4.2.10)	skin image / texture	**vanity (aesthetic)/ sensuality**	F		less irritation; less tightness; more comfort	only describe skin texture, not image	**sensuality/ non-vanity**	less F
				positive descriptions	attractiveness/ tenderness				not soft texture	Non-tenderness/ different skin needs	M / -
									less positive connotation	less positive sensuality (unattractiveness)	less F
		Comparative adjectives	more; -er	positive comparatives				less (2) ; more (1)	more negative comparatives		
	Linguistic Style		Wordy	descriptive & expressive language	**Feminine conversational style** expressiveness/ indirect/ rapport			concise	straight to the point	**Masculine conversational style** inexpressiveness/ direct/ assertive/ report style	M
Visual	Composition		**subheading:** underlined & in different font colour **Description:** bolded key points	More salience (prominence)	enhanced vanity/ sensuality			No lines/ shapes (but embedded in A9)	Less salience, to the extent of hiding.	**anti-femininity** (hidden sensuality)	

4.3.10.1 Overcoming Feminine Descriptions on the Skin via Word Choice and Negativity

As LP fulfils the aim of A10 in describing the desirable skin outcome, it projects femininity through more verbal descriptions of the skin, which are further enhanced by the positive connotations attached. This is due to the fact that positive skin image (e.g. 'brightened', 'more transparent with a healthy glow', etc.) and positive skin texture (e.g. 'refreshed', 'smoother', 'more supple', etc.) do not only connote aesthetic (vanity) and sensuality respectively, but also signal feminine concept of attractiveness and tenderness (for the description on soft skin). The use of positive comparatives like 'more' and 'adjective + -er' further verifies the statement.

On the contrary, LME attempts to reduce feminine aesthetic (vanity) by not describing the skin complexion. While its description on skin texture may connote feminine sensuality, it minimises femininity through less positive-connoted descriptions (unattractiveness), i.e. 'less irritation' and 'less tightness', which is further verified by more usage of negative comparatives 'less' than positive comparatives 'more'.

In addition, the descriptions on skin texture in LME are less feminine than LP, as they do not signify tenderness or softness of the skin. However, this may also due to the skin difference between both sexes, which may not involve deliberate gendering effort (as concerned in A11).

4.3.10.2   Hiding Feminine Descriptions via Visual Composition

Despite LME's gendering effort to overcome feminine descriptions in A10, LME takes a more drastic move by 'hiding' A10 within A9, without lines or shapes (shapes) to mark its presence. This is totally different from LP that has subheading underlined and presented in different font colour, as well as bolded key description. Refer illustrations below:
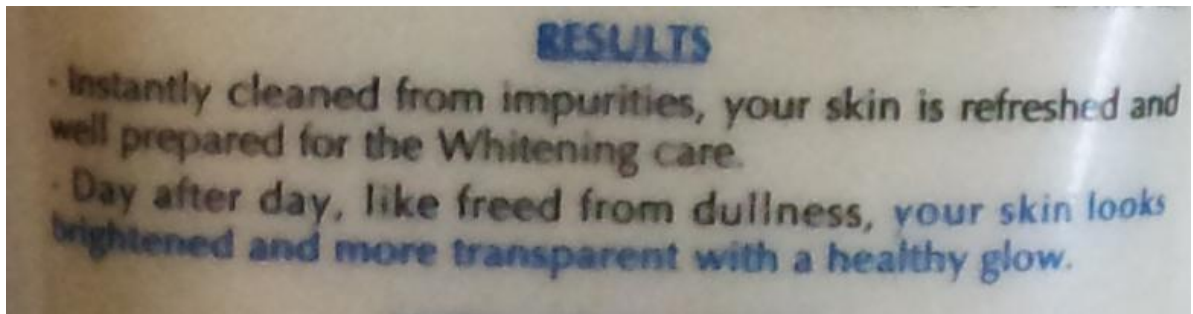

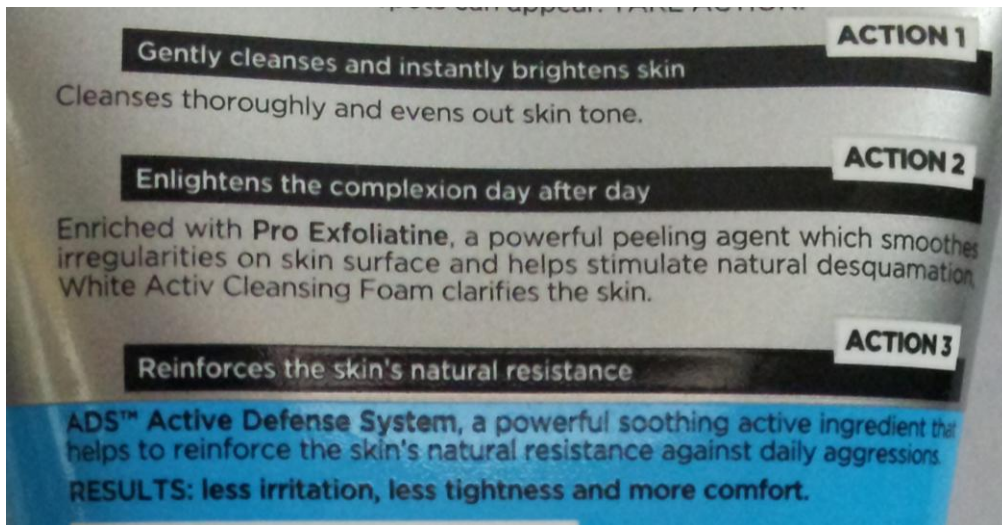Figure 4.3.10.2 (a): A10 in LP

Figure 4.3.10.2 (b): A10 in LME (last sentence) that is embedded in A9 (describing functions)

4.3.10.3   Speaking Like a Man through Concise Language

The difference of linguistic style between LP and LME shows gendered conversational styles. While LP uses descriptive language (wordy) signalling feminine speech that are indirect, expressive ("skin looks brightened and more transparent with healthy glow") and rapport-oriented (use personal pronoun "your"), LME uses concise language that connotes direct, inexpressive, assertive and report-oriented masculine talk ("less irritation, less tightness and more comfort").

4.3.10.4   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A10

While A10 in BC1 depicts ways of handling feminine descriptions of the skin (see Section 4.3.10.1 and 4.3.10.3), the ultimate gendering strategies of LME in A10 are to avoid having A10 and downplaying (hiding) its presence (see Section 4.3.10.2) through visual composition. This is verified by A10 that is emphasised in LP (all except AMs, due to limited space), but not LME (only BC1). Hence, masculinising effort of LME is apparent through anti-femininity, to avoid association of LME and metrosexuality with vanity. In other words, while A10 plays an important role in skincare marketing by evoking consumer's desire for attractive skin condition and their buying intention, it poses masculine threats, i.e. vanity.

4.3.11 Describing Texture (A11)

This social action is not analysed as it is largely affected by different skin condition between men and women, i.e. non-gendering factor ('extraneous factor'). Moreover, this social action is insignificant in LME, as it is only presented in BT. With reference to Table 4.2.11 (see Appendix C), the gendering efforts in LME are also difficult to detect, as the differences between both products are insignificant, other than the description of texture that may be caused by different skin conditions between both sexes.

4.3.11.1 Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A11

Similar to A10, A11 is undeniably feminine, as it provides information about texture (sensuality). The fact that A11 is more emphasised in LP (all except AMs, due to limited space) than LME (presented only in BT) shows masculinising effort of LME by denying the femininity of sensuality. This avoids posing LME and metrosexuality as body pampering practice, which along with vanity, luxury and touch, is considered a feminised form of leisure (Barber, 2008, p. 464).

4.3.12 Giving Instructions (A12)

This action provides the instructions and/or steps in using the product. Since the findings are presented in a lengthy three-page table (Refer Table 4.3.12 in Appendix D), the findings are discussed in the following sections with excerpts from Table 4.3.12.

4.3.12.1 Constructing Masculinity through Manual-Related Words and Style

One of the significant features in A12 of LME is the use of manual-related words. Manual (noun) refers to a book of instructions, usually to operate machines and technical gadgets, whist its adjective form describes something related and/or operated by hands. Thus, manual -- both noun and adjective, connote masculinity as they signify technical skills (masculine expertise) of handy man and handy man respectively.

Table 4.3.12.1 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the Subheading in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word Choice (Sub-heading)	Ultra-soft texture (AC)	gentle to the skin/ for A11	Sensuality/ Tender-ness	F		Recommendation for use/ How to use	subheading in manual (technical document)	Technical skills; Handy man	M

With reference to Table 4.3.12.1 (a), A12 in LME is presented like a manual, using common subheadings in manual, i.e. "recommendation for use" and "how to use". Conversely, LP's AC presents A12 like A11 (see Table 4.3.11 in Appendix C) with "ultra-soft texture", signifying sensuality and tenderness, while other LP's products do not have subheadings. In other words, LP attempts to downplay A12, by manipulating A12 to A11 and putting it in 'low profile' without subheadings.

Table 4.3.12.1 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the Use of Pronouns in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word Choice B) pronoun	Your (skin)	connection btw product & skin	vanity (skin)	F		Your (hand)	connection btw product & hand (manual)	Handy man	M

Besides, based on Table 4.3.12.1 (b), the emphasis on the hand in LME's word choice signifies manual concept of a handy man. In terms of nouns for body elements, LME includes manual body parts -- "palm" and "hand" in A12, which are not presented in LP. Moreover, with the possessive pronoun -- "your", LME connects with the "hand", whilst LP connects with consumers' "skin" implying vanity.

Table 4.3.12.1 (c): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 and Table 4.3.12 (Cont.1) on the Use of Verbs and Adverbs in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	1. Word Choice (instructions)	C) Verbs	lathers; rinses; leaves (AC)	present tense: active AC	passive viewers	F		most verbs (lather; apply..)	imperative verbs	active viewer	M
								massage; rub; pat	manual actions	Handy man	
			avoid (AT); use (AMs)	imperative verbs	active viewer	M		soothes (1 sentence in BMs)	present tense: active AC	passive viewers	F
				non-manual	not handy man						
		D) (verb) + adverb	(lathers) abundantly	**adverb of manner** (LP: skincare product)	Quality Vanity	F		gently (massage); lightly (rub); (pat) gently	**adverb of manner** (consumers: how to use)	handy man	M
				abundant = a lot	luxury				gentle: (remind rough men)	gentleness/ rough	M/F
			(rinses) off easily	**adverb of manner** (LP: skincare product)	Quality Vanity			(rinse) immediately	**adverb of manner** (consumers: how to use)	handy man	M

Unlike LP's non-manual imperative verbs ("avoid" and "use"), LME uses manual imperative verbs, i.e. 'massage', 'rub' and 'pat', which refer to actions involving hands. Along with adverbs of manner ("gently", "immediately", etc.) with imperative verbs, LME instructs consumers on how to handle the product like a handy man. On the contrary, LP's adverbs of manner connote "quality vanity" provided by LP, as they are used to modify the verbs in present tense, i.e. LP's actions as a skincare product. Refer Table 4.3.12.1 (c).

Table 4.3.12.1 (d): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the Linguistic Style in A12

Mode/Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	2. Linguistic Style	A) Mood structure	Imperatives (AT & AMs)	demanding actions from viewers	active viewer	M		Imperatives (all)	demanding actions from viewers	active viewer	M
			Declaratives (AC)	giving info; not demanding action	does not connote active viewer	-		Declaratives (only 1 sentence in BMs)	giving info; not demanding action	does not connote active viewer	-
		B) writing style	wordy (AC)	descriptive; indirect	F. conversational style	F		Concise	direct; report style	masculine conversational style	M
			slightly wordy (AMs)	between descriptive & report; direct & indirect	between M & F conversational style	M/F					
			Concise (AT)	direct; report style	M. conversational style	M					
		C) steps elaboration	brief	doesn't look like a manual (technical document)	Non-technical	F		wordy	many steps, e.g. step-by-step guide (manual)	technical skills/ handy man	M
				users may know how to use; common practice	common practice of feminine vanity			brief (all AMs)	insignificant (due to limited space)	-	-

Based on Table 4.3.12.1 (d), LME's linguistic style also helps to construct this 'manual'. Unlike LP that provides brief steps, LME's A12 is presented like a manual, i.e. the use of imperatives, elaborated with systematic steps yet concise in language. The same goes to the use of imperatives (see Section 4.3.12.4).

4.3.12.2 Overcoming Feminine Vanity through Word Choice

In order to overcome femininity, words are carefully selected in LME to avoid any association to its female counterparts. This section will discuss specifically on the word choice, with reference to the findings presented in the table below:

Table 4.3.12.2: Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the Word Choice in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth		Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert Signified (Order of Signification)		Myth
				Denotation	Connotation				Denotation	Connotation	
Verbal	1. Word Choice (instruc-tions)	A) Noun (phrase) Body[xxxvii]	Skin (all, except AT)	Skin complexion; the concern of skincare product	vanity			palm; hand (BCs & BT)	manual	handy man	
								face (all)	body part/ skin complexion	non-vanity/ vanity	M/F
								forehead; nose; chin (BCs)	Parts of the face		
								Skin (1 sentence in BMs)	Skin complexion.	Vanity	F
		Additional element	Whitening care (AC)	Skin-whitening for fair beauty	feminine practice/vanity			Shaving; razor burn (BMs)	Shaving facial hair that only men have to look good.	Masculine practice/ vanity	M/F
		B) Adjectives (skin/face)	perfectly cleansed	perfect (positive) image	attractiveness/perfection			cleansed	clean	unattractiveness	
			Refreshed; well prepared	positive image	attractiveness			wet	negative image		

[xxxvii] Eyes are not included in the analysis, as they are presented in both LP and LME, and thus, not meant for gendering.

While LP emphasises on the noun "skin" that associated to vanity especially in skincare practice, all LME products avoid mentioning "skin" (except a sentence in BMs) and replace it with the body part -- "face" instead. This is further verified by BCs that explicitly point out the facial parts, i.e. 'forehead', 'nose' and 'chin'. Besides gender neutral body parts, face also refer to facial appearance, in which the beauty concern of facial skincare products lies, i.e. skin complexion. In other words, 'face' serves as a 'euphemism' for the 'skin'.

Unsurprisingly, the same attempt of avoiding vanity connotation can be observed in the choice of adjectives for skin or face, which serve as the modifiers and packaging designers' treatment towards these nouns. Unlike LP's adjectives for the skin that are positively connoted (e.g. 'refreshed' and 'well prepared') to the extent of perfection (i.e. 'perfectly cleansed'), LME depicts non-positive descriptions with neutral ("cleansed") and negative ("wet") connoted adjectives that are not associated to feminine sense of attractiveness.

While "face" and non-positive descriptions downplay and avoid vanity respectively, the third gendering effort negotiates the gender of vanity. In the aspect of additional elements (noun), LP's 'Whitening care" refers to feminine vanity practice, whilst LME's 'shaving' and 'razor burns' depict traditional masculine vanity practice. This aligns with Tungate's (2008) suggestion in marketing male grooming products -- "link skincare products to the shaving ritual" (p. 37). The purpose is to challenge the criticisms on metrosexuality for its deviation from traditional norms and emasculated practice.

4.3.12.3   Compromising between Femininity and Masculinity

Besides constructing masculinity or downplaying femininity, LME also displays compromise of gender in certain circumstances.

Table 4.3.12.3 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the Provided Autonomy in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	1. Word Choice (instructions)	soft; milk	soft texture	Sensuality/ Tenderness	F		Suitable (for) daily usage	can use it every day (as skincare routine)	autonomy (in vanity)	M/F

According to Table 4.3.12.3 (a), LP commands consumers to practice feminine skincare routine through imperative verb "use", along with the adverb of frequency -- "daily". However, LME replaces LP's phrase "use daily" with "suitable for daily usage", allowing more autonomy to its male consumers in vanity issue.

Table 4.3.12.3 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 (Cont.1) on Compromising Gentleness in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	1. Word Choice (instruc-tions)	D) (verb) + adverb	(lathers) abundantly	adverb of manner (LP: skincare product)	Quality Vanity	F		gently (massage); lightly (rub); (pat) gently	adverb of manner (consumers: how to use)	handy man	M
				abundant = a lot	luxury				gentle: remind rough men	gentleness/ rough	M/F

In addition, LME requests for feminine gentleness from rough macho consumers, as it frequently uses adverbs of manner that remind gentleness in actions (imperative verbs), i.e. *gently (massage), lightly (rub)* and *(pat) gently*. While they connote femininity in terms of gentleness, they also imply that the consumers using the LME products -- men, are usually rough. In contrast, LP does not use such adverbs of manner, implying the expected gentleness from the female consumers.

4.3.12.4   Maximising Masculine Active Role through Imperatives

While A12 is expected to use imperatives (both verb and sentence), the study shows obvious gendering effort in LP, especially in AC that uses mostly verbs in present tense and declarative sentences that refer to active product, and thus, passive viewers. The other LP's products, nevertheless, use imperatives, and thus, connote the masculine active role on the part of the viewers (consumers). On the contrary, LME maximises the use of imperative verbs and sentences, although there are a few exceptional-yet-insignificant cases. Refer tables as follow:

Table 4.3.12.4 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 on the (Imperative) Verbs in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	1. Word Choice (instructions) C) Verbs	lathers; rinses; leaves (AC)	present tense: active AC	passive viewers	F		most verbs (lather; apply..)	imperative verbs	active viewer	M
		avoid (AT); use (AMs)	imperative verbs	active viewer	M		soothes (1 sentence in BMs)	present tense: active AC	passive viewers	F
			non-manual	not handy man						

Table 4.3.12.4 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 (Cont.1) on the (Imperative) Sentences in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	2. Lingui -stic Style	A) Mood struc- ture	Imperatives (AT & AMs)	demanding actions from viewers	active viewer	M		Imperatives (all)	demanding actions from viewers	active viewer	M
			Declaratives (AC)	giving info; not demanding action	does not connote active viewer	-		Declaratives (only 1 sentence in BMs)	giving info; not demanding action	does not connote active viewer	-

4.3.12.5 Speaking Like a Man via Direct Verbal and Visual

In order to construct masculine image through linguistic style, LME uses concise language and visual framings are used to signal masculine direct and assertive conversational style. This is further enhanced by the visual features (see discussion on similar findings in Section 4.3.9.7). Kindly refer Table 4.3.12.5 (a) and Table 4.3.12.5 (b) for the related findings.

Table 4.3.12.5 (a): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 (Cont.1) on the Linguistic (Writing) Style in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect		Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
				Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
				Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	2. Lingui-stic Style	B) writing style	wordy (AC)	descriptive; indirect	F. conversational style	**F**		Concise	direct; report style	masculine conversational style	M
			slightly wordy (AMs)	between descriptive & report; direct & indirect	between M & F conversational style	**M/F**					
			Concise (AT)	direct; report style	M. conversational style	**M**					

Table 4.3.12.5 (b): Excerpt from Table 4.3.12 (Cont.2) on the Visual Features in A12

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	Signifier	L'Oréal Paris				Signifier	L'Oréal Men Expert		
			Signified (Order of Signification)					Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Visual	Compo-sition	**subheading** underlined & different font colour **(only AC)**	Salient subheading (ultra-soft texture)	enhanced sensuality & tenderness	F		**subheading:** white box & different box colour	Salient subheading (Recommendation for use/ How to use)	Enhanced Technical skills; Handy man	**M**
			less framing & salience than shape.	less direct & assertive than LME	**less M**			**frame shape:** more salience & framing than a line; point out A12	more direct & assertive than LP	
		No subheading/ framing (others)	not highlighted/ framed; do not point out A12	Indirect & unassertive	F					
	pattern	Natural/blended	info connects to each other (less framing)	foster connection			solid geometry (box)	disconnect from others (more framing)	disconnection	

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4.3.12.6   Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A12

Unlike A10 and A11, A12 is more masculine driven, and thus, not emphasised by LP to the extent of presenting it through A11. This is largely due to the use of imperatives, which provide viewers the masculine active role as they are commanded to do something. Hence, emphasising A12 itself is a gendering strategy for LME.

The main gendering strategies of LME in A12 are: 1) diverting the attention on skin vanity to 'hand' (see Section 4.3.12.1, para.3), which promotes 'active grooming' instead of 'passive beauty (image)'; 2) downplaying vanity by using the 'euphemism' for skin -- 'face' (see Section 4.3.12.2, para.1); 3) downplaying feminine vanity via unattractiveness (see Section 4.3.12.2, para.2); 4) negotiating vanity's 'gender' through traditional masculine grooming practice (see Section 4.3.12.2, para.3); 5) negotiating metrosexual's gender with the compromise between feminine and masculine traits (see Section 4.3.12.3); and 6) the overall projection of LME as technical products operated by handy men (Section 4.3.12.1).

4.3.13   Listing Ingredients (A13)

With reference to Table 4.3.13, A13 has the least gendering effort among the fourteen social actions. This is due to the fact that A13 in LME products are the same as LP's, except BC1 with the subheading -- *Patented Formula.*

Table 4.3.13: Gender Construction in Listing Ingredients (A13)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)					L'Oréal Men Expert (BC & BT)			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	**Word Choice**	Ingredients xxxviii	elements that form the product	-	**-**		Ingredients (all)	elements that form the product	-	**-**
							Patented (BC1)	A grant given on an innovation, usually science & technology	Expertise/ Competitive	**M**
							Formula (BC1)	An established method of doing/ producing something	Problem-solving/ instrumental	
Visual	**Colour**	Insignificant xxxix	-	-	**-**		**Bright orange** (b/grd colour of "patented formula")	bright color btw yellow & red	Individuality	
	Compo- sition/ pattern	Lack of straight lines; Natural/ blended	All elements & info are not separated and not highlighted	No prominence element	**-**		straight lines/ rectangle ("patented formula")	Salience	Prominence	
									enhance masculine connotation of "patented formula"	

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xxxviii The word, "ingredients" in this study is not analysed, as it is presented similarly in both LP and LME. Any elements in LME that are the same as LP, the "filter" of non-gendering factors, will not bring any significance in this study that analyses gender differences/negotiation.

xxxix The font colour black is insignificant due to two (2) factors, i.e. 1) being the conventional font colour and 2) having the same font colour (except the phrase, "Patented Formula" that presents only in LME) with LP (the "filter" of non-gendering factors),

Other than gendering efforts in visual composition/patterns (discussed in Section 4.3.2.4), masculine image in BC1 is also constructed through verbal language as discussed below.

4.3.13.1 Constructing Masculinity with Scientific Language

Patented Formula upgrades ingredient list in BC1 to a well-established and acknowledged formula exclusively from LME for problem-solving. Hence, it signals masculine sense of instrumentality and competitiveness that also enhance the expertise of LME.

4.3.13.2 Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A13

Since only one product (i.e. BC1, among LP and LME analysed) depicts gendering, the overall gendering effort of LME in A13 is considerably insignificant.

4.3.14 Giving Assurance (A14)

Table 4.3.14: Gender Construction in Giving Assurance (A14)

Mode/ Feature	Aspect	L'Oréal Paris (AC & AT)					L'Oréal Men Expert (BC1 - 4; BT)			
		Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)				Signifier	Signified (Order of Signification)		
			Denotation	Connotation	Myth			Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Verbal	Word Choice	Dermato-logically tested	Safe to use	**Insecurity** (of female consumers)	F		Tested under dermatol-ogical control	Everything is under control.	**Take control** (power & authority of male consumers)	M
		Asian skin	Appear-ance	Vanity			Asian men	Male, not female	Exclusively for men	

The discussion of findings is presented from Section 4.3.14.1 to Section 4.3.14.2.

4.3.14.1 Constructing Masculine Assurance through Word Choice

While LP uses "dermatologically tested" to imply it is safe to use, LME uses "tested under dermatological control" to imply everything is under control. LP reflects feminine insecurity and the need to be protected among female consumers, whist LME portrays masculine need to take control, which also connotes masculine power and authority. Unlike LP's "Asian skin" reflecting its feminine concern on vanity, LME replaces the "skin" with "men" to stress anti-femininity, i.e. exclusively for men.

4.3.14.2 Uncovering Marketing and Gendering Strategies in A14

The difference of A14 between LP and LME reflects the deepest fear and concern of both sexes, especially in using skincare products. LP assures female consumers that their safety and appearance are taken care of. On the contrary, LME attends to its male consumers' deepest concern as 'handy men' and "macho men", by affirming that the product is easy to handle (control) and exclusively for men respectively. Indirectly, LME products are projected as technical tools and male products, reflecting metrosexual(ity) as masculine.

4.4 Summary

This section discusses the gendering and marketing strategies of LME in comparison with LP, as shown in the strategized multimodal features to negotiate metrosexuality. Apparently, each social action depicts different strategies. See Appendix E for the summary of findings. The implications and recommendation for future research will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This section marks the conclusion of the dissertation with a summary of the findings, implications of the study and recommendation for further study.

5.1   Summary of Findings

The analysis of the fourteen (14) social actions displayed different ways of negotiating metrosexuality. The summary of gender negotiation of each action is stated below:

1. Presenting Brand Name/ Logo (A1)

   a. Hiding the Masculine "Threat"- Paris

   b. Constructing Masculinity through Word Choice

   c. Constructing Masculinity through Typography

   d. Negotiating Masculine Sophistication via Colours

   e. Presenting One-Brand Entity via Visual Composition

2. Presenting Brand Image (A2)

   a. Gender Negotiation through Colours: Continuum

      i.   Black-white, light-dark and bright-dull

   b. Gender Negotiation through Colours: Choice

   c. Gender Negotiation through Colours: Shades

   d. Constructing Masculinity through Non-Colour Graphic Elements

e. Constructing Masculinity through Visual Texture

f. Constructing Masculinity through Structural Elements

g. Negating Femininity in Scent and Flower Pattern

3. Presenting Trademark (A3)

a. Empowering Men through Word Choice

b. Empowering Products through Word Choice

c. Projecting Masculine Sense of Competence through Symbol/Typography

d. Negotiating Grooming Rationale through Colours and Composition

4. Classifying Product Series (A4)

a. Challenging Passive Role in Grooming with Activ

b. Projecting Ideal Masculine Image through Colours

c. Constructing Masculine Image through typography & visual composition/pattern

5. Describing Product Type (A5)

a. Negotiating Feminine Fair Beauty via Word-Colour Euphemisms

b. Challenging Skin Fairness with Black-White Juxtaposition

c. Masculinising Functionality with Masculine Performance

d. Expressing Masculine Instrumentality

e. Constructing Masculinity through Mathematical Symbols

f. Constructing Masculine Image through typography & visual composition/ pattern

6. Highlighting Key Ingredient(s) (A6)

a. Constructing Masculinity through Scientific Terms

b. Projecting Individuality through Trademark Symbols

c. Constructing Masculine Image through colours & typography

7. Highlighting Key Functions (A7)

a. Projecting "Product in Action"

    b. Negotiation between Whitening & Non-Whitening Functionality

    c. Enhancing Functionality the "Masculine Way"

    d. Negotiating Skin Fairness through Word & Colour Euphemisms

    e. Negotiating Skin Fairness via Black-White Continuum

    f. Constructing Masculinity through Symbol

    g. Constructing Masculine Image through typography & visual composition/ pattern

8. Introducing Product (A8)

    a. Shadowing Vanity behind 'Problem' Words (stress words with negative connotation)

    b. Reversing Masculine Role from Passive Victim to Active Agent

    c. Speaking Like a Man through Linguistic Style

9. Describing Functions (A9)

    a. Highlighting Functionality through Word Positioning & Choice

    b. Masculinising Functionality with Negative Words

    c. Masculinising Functionality with Science and Technical Features

    d. Masculinising Functionality by 'Masculinising' Verbs

    e. Downplaying Femininity with Verbal Euphemisms

    f. Speaking like a Man through Verbal Communication

    g. 'Speaking' like a Man through Visual Communication

10.   Promising Expected Results (A10)

    a. Overcoming Feminine Descriptions on the Skin via Word Choice & Negativity

    b. Hiding Feminine Descriptions via Visual Composition

    c. Speaking Like a Man through Concise Language

11.   Describing Texture (A11) (not analysed, refer Table 5.1 in Appendix E for reasons)

12.   Giving Instructions (A12)

    a. Constructing Masculinity through Manual-Related Words and Style

b. Overcoming Feminine Vanity through Word Choice

c. Compromising between Femininity and Masculinity

d. Maximising Masculine Active Role through Imperatives

e. Speaking Like a Man via Direct Verbal and Visual

13. Listing Ingredients (A13)

a. Constructing Masculinity with Scientific Language

14. Giving Assurance (A14)

a. Constructing Masculine Assurance through Word Choice

For further elaboration, kindly refer Table 5.1 (Appendix E) for the summary of findings.

In addition, the study revealed different conceptual emphasis between female (LP) and male (LME) skincare products. For female skincare, luxury, aesthetic, sensuality, (skin) vanity, attractiveness (beauty), passivity, femininity and skin-whitening are emphasised, while expertise, problems, functionality/performance, manual (hand), unattractiveness, activeness, masculinity/anti-femininity and skin-brightening for male. These propose two different sets of gendered concepts especially in the beauty/grooming context, separating metrosexuality from femininity.

Due to the different emphasis on the gendered concepts mentioned above, some social actions (both main and sub/embedded) involving these concepts are emphasised or downplayed/avoided in LME, due to their potential in constructing masculinity or posing masculine threats respectively. For instance, A6, A7 and A12 are encouraged in LME, whilst A10 and A11 are downplayed or avoided.

Last but not least, the findings also depict the strategies of negotiating metrosexuality in LME through both gender dichotomy and gender diversity (refer Section 5.2.1), different portrayal between LP and LME for the same concepts (refer Section 5.2.2). In addition, the study also proposes the potential collaboration between both marketing and linguistics that complements each other (refer Section 5.2.3).

Overall, it has been proven that packaging is not merely constructing brand image as a 'marketing tool' that "serves to communicate information, create brand impressions, and provide brand cues" (Littel & Orth, 2012; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), "cut through the clutter" (Louw & Kimber, 2007) and "create purchase intention" (Mueller & Szolnoki, 2010; Silayoi & Speece, 2007) (cited in Vilnai-Yavetz & Koren, 2013, p. 394). This study depicts that it also functions as an effective communicating and advertising tool (Kumar, 2006) that are known as "discursive practice" in the linguistic context, which according to Fairclough (1992, cited in Chand & Chaudhary, 2012, p. 41),

> *Discursive practice…contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet also contributes to transforming society.*

5.2   Implications of the Study

The following sections discuss the implications of the study.

5.2.1   Negotiating Metrosexuality from Gender Dichotomy to Diversity

The ultimate aim of negotiating metrosexuality is to negotiate from gender dichotomy (forming gender stereotypes that spark criticisms of metrosexuality as emasculated) to gender diversity (embracing both masculinity and femininity to accept metrosexuality as the emancipation of men).

Nevertheless, the findings show that negotiation is not done through gender diversity alone, but collaboration between both gender diversity and gender dichotomy. In other words, if gender is perceived as a continuum, it is fully utilized in the negotiation through gender dichotomy representing the two ends and gender diversity representing those in between.

Similar to the past research pertaining to consumer (metrosexual) behaviour and marketers' gendering effort, the negotiation of metrosexuality is done through the "safety zone" (Diego Rinallo, 2007, cited in Ourahmoune, 2009, p. 130) (refer Section 2.5.2.1, para.6) and 'push–pull' effect (Edley & Wetherell 1997; Coupland 2007; Harrison 2008, cited in Harrison, 2008) (see Section 2.5.3, para.2).

In addition, the findings reveal that the dichotomy and diversity of 'gender binarism' (masculinity and femininity) can be presented through 'language binarism', i.e. binary/digital and analogue oppositions.

5.2.1.1 Negotiating through Gender Dichotomy

This negotiation is done through three ways, i.e. 1) construct masculinity [xl] (claiming masculinity); 2) avoid femininity (denying femininity); and 3) juxtapose masculinity and femininity (challenging femininity). Nonetheless, the second way can be considered as the first way, since anti-femininity itself is masculine.

Findings of the present study depict that negotiation through gender dichotomy can be done through binary oppositions/digital oppositions (either/or) of both signifiers (multimodal features) and signifieds (meaning).

[xl] Constructing masculinity does not only refer to direct construction, but also indirect construction of potential masculinity (i.e. masculinising men, if the consumer use it), e.g. take action; solve problems and 'active defense system' that empowers their skin.

5.2.1.2 Negotiating through Gender Diversity

Such negotiation is conducted through three ways: 1) downplay femininity (reduce femininity); 2) overshadow femininity (add too much masculinity); and 3) compromise femininity (add autonomy in femininity/add femininity in masculinity).

The most significant negotiation through gender diversity is the use of near synonyms (analogue opposition). Some examples are bright skin (fair); oil or shine (sebum); charged, fuelled or loaded (enriched); neat, fresh or matte (clean skin); and washes off, rubbing out, removes, purge, frees or mattifying (cleanses, purifies and clarifies). These near synonyms will not only downplay femininity as euphemisms, their quantity and frequency for the same context may also claim male territory (construct masculinity) within the feminine space in the future. This is proven by the term 'handsome' (beautiful) and 'grooming' (beauty), which have been universally acknowledged as masculine, i.e. can only be used when referring to men.

Although the ultimate negotiation via gender diversity focuses on gendered concepts in analogue oppositions (more/less), the process of negotiation does not only involve analogue oppositions, but may also include binary/digital oppositions. For instance, positive and negative skin-related words (binary/digital oppositions) in A8 and A9 downplay the feminine connotation (analogue opposition) of the skin (vanity), i.e. projecting masculine version of vanity as negative image (problems) that need to be solved. This reflects the euphemism of active 'grooming', compared to passive 'beauty'.

5.2.2 Different Portrayal for the Same Concepts

Besides the negotiation for metrosexuality, the study uncovers different portrayal between LP and LME for similar concepts in the beauty/grooming contexts, as presented below:

Table 5.2.2: Different Portrayal for the Same Concepts

Concept	LP	LME
Skincare Product	female beauty products	male practical tools (technical tool/ male products/technologically advanced products)
	luxurious (unnecessary) products for vanity/ body pampering	a necessary tool to solve problems
Skincare Practice	luxury/ body pampering	masculine affordable sophistication
		sophistication with style
		The emancipation of men
		masculinising men with stronger (skin) & 'man in action'
Vanity (skin)	**perfect & positive image** that **wish** to be constructed (demand for image: appearance/ aesthetic/ **passive beauty**)	**negative image/ problems** that **need** to be solved (demand for action: utilitarian/ **Active grooming**)
Functionality/ effectiveness of Skincare Products (Quality)	based on the type of aesthetic effect (constructing attractiveness)	based on functions, performance, effectiveness in solving problems (solving attractiveness)
Skincare Rationale	for passive beauty (image) (aesthetic/ appearance/ object of contemplation)	for active grooming (problem-solving/ object of action)
	for fair beauty	for stronger men (skin)/ for brighter (healthier) complexion
Skincare Products Users	feminine passive users yearning for perfect image	masculine active users solving problems (handy) & macho
Skin-Whitening Practice	lighter skin tone	brighter skin complexion
	Fair beauty	new masculine ideal
Attractiveness	fair; translucent; rosy	bright & healthy looking
	tall, slim	broad, sturdy
The Brand	feminine brand	masculine brand
	worth-**spending** (luxury)	worth-**buying** (high functionality & cheap/affordable)
	Because **you're** worth it.	Because **it's** worth it.
	from expert brand	for expert men
	Two separate brands, sharing the same company -- *L'Oréal*. (i.e. LME is **less** presented as segmentation under LP)	

5.2.3   The Collaboration between Linguistic and Marketing Semiotics

Based on literature review (especially Section 2.6.2.8) and research findings, the study also uncovers the (potential) collaboration between linguistic and marketing semiotics that complements each other, for a more comprehensive insights and research approach.

5.2.3.1   Meaning Creation vs. Meaning Consumption

Author-focused linguistics and consumer-focused marketing deal with the subject matter (particularly the marketing tools) from different perspectives, i.e. meaning creation and meaning consumption respectively. Hence, the collaboration between both perspectives will provide a more comprehensive understanding on the subject matter.

This study that analyses packaging from linguistic perspectives adds to the body of knowledge about packaging and metrosexuality in marketing, i.e. how packaging can serve as discourse (discursive practice that represents and transform society); how gender can be negotiated; and the marketers/packaging designers' intention.

In addition, marketing helps to overcome linguistic discrepancies and vice versa in many aspects. Refer Section 5.2.3.2 to 5.2.3.4.

5.2.3.2   "Language and Gender" vs. "Aesthetic and Gender"

In the context of meaning consumption, the subjects (e.g. packaging) are dealt in a more holistic and aesthetic-oriented manner, and thus, more "aesthetically established", i.e. having more studies and frameworks. Hence, marketing will help to fill in the aesthetic gap

in linguistic semiotics, e.g. "aesthetic and gender" for a more comprehensive framework of language and gender. Refer the linguistic framework in Table 3.1.2.1 (Appendix A).

On the contrary, linguistics -- that focuses on verbal-oriented (in general) or multimodality (in semiotics) in uncovering meaning creation, fills in the non-aesthetic gap of marketing, i.e. conversational style. Hence, in language and gender, linguistics contributes in "verbal and gender". Refer the linguistic framework in Table 3.1.2.4 (Appendix A).

Thus, merging the knowledge of both marketing and linguistics will construct a more comprehensive framework in language and gender.

5.2.3.3 'Heuristic/Explanation Tool' vs. 'Verification Tool'

If both linguistic and marketing concepts are merged together, the research approach will be improved with respective discrepancies overcome by each other, especially in multimodal discourse analysis.

Linguistic DA is often criticised for "intellectual imperialism" (Robinson, 2011) that demand for validation, due to the lack of participants' involvement as co-researchers to validate the findings, i.e. prove that meaning is perceived/ produced as claimed. In other words, the small 'd' discourse (text) is not validated by the social actors in the big 'D' discourse (real social context). On the contrary, marketing DA that mainly involves focus groups and surveys focuses on participants (representing consumers) and their meaning consumption, but could not answer how the meanings (mainly on aesthetics) are derived. Therefore, while marketing approach could provide the 'verification tool' for linguistics

representing triangulation method, linguistics serves as the 'heuristic/explanation tool' for marketing to explore how meaning is created.

Without triangulation (validation from participants), this linguistic study, like many DA, addresses the lack of verification as the limitation. Although the study does not have external validation, it uncovers the usefulness of marketing knowledge in linguistic semiotics, for providing internal validation (internal triangulation/ verification tool) in data analysis on aesthetic features. Unlike verbal meanings that can be referred in dictionaries, aesthetics is mainly based on perception, and thus, need validation. Marketing, being more aesthetic-established and perception-oriented (consumer-focused), has conducted numerous studies on how people perceive the particular aesthetic features. Hence, while linguistics explains how aesthetic meaning is constructed, previous marketing studies verify the linguistic researchers' claims of aesthetic meaning.

One significant example is the typography -- "heavy and compressed" in A1 (Section 4.3.1.3), which previous marketing studies have proven that the particular type font provides the brand perception of "ruggedness and competence" (masculinity), However, the construction of the characteristics － "heavy and compressed" and the meaning derivation of "ruggedness and competence" are rather vague. Based on Barthesian Order of Signification, the linguistic study questions the creation of meaning, i.e. 1) how the meaning, "heavy and compressed" are constructed and 2) how the meaning, "ruggedness and competence" is derived and connoted. Apparently, interpretation is needed. Hence, related linguistic studies are referred for a more valid interpretation, e.g. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2002) and Van Leeuwen (2006), which provide more comprehensive insights into meaning creation － the linguistic focus.

Nonetheless, linguistics, being more verbal-focused, serves as the 'verification tool" for the gender framework of conversational practices (refer 3.2.4 in Appendix A). However, unlike marketing that verifies gendered aesthetic practices from meaning consumption (consumer perception), previous linguistic studies on participant's speech production merely validates gendered conversational practices from meaning creation (speaker/marketer production) that has not been proven to be meaningfully perceived.

In other words, if linguistics framework is 'grammar' (as famously claimed by Kress and van Leeuwen), marketing framework is 'dictionary'.

5.2.3.4 "Brand/Marketing Positioning" vs. 'Critical Literacy Positioning"

Due to the different perspectives, approaches and concerns discussed, marketing and linguistic differ in their ultimate goals, i.e. positioning. Hence, collaboration between the two will provide a more comprehensive discovery on packaging strategies in constructing desired brand image on consumer's mind (marketing positioning), as well as constructing packaging discourse to negotiate certain ideolog(ies) (critical literacy positioning).

While the linguistic study focuses on how metrosexuality is negotiated (critical literacy positioning), aesthetic framework (including colours interpretation) proven for brand/marketing positioning in previous marketing research helps in the analysis. Nevertheless, brand/marketing positioning through aesthetics is not the ultimate aim of the study, but rather focuses on how brand image (brand/marketing positioning) will also help in negotiating metrosexuality (critical literacy positioning).

In addition, the consideration of brand image also provides a more valid interpretation for linguistic analysis on marketing discourses. For example, the use of masculine-yet-promoting blue in both LP and LME that reveals the conflict of interests between marketing and gendering efforts. Such cases need to be interpreted through both marketing and linguistic perspectives, i.e. co-justification is needed.

5.3   Recommendation for Future Research

The study highly recommends the complete implementation of Scollon's (2001, 2004) *MDA*, i.e. following the three basic steps (Section 2.6.3.6), as well as including social actors (acting and/or acted upon) as co-researchers and analysing other cultural tools/mediational means (e.g. advertisements, geosemiotics, etc.) that contribute to the social action -- negotiating metrosexuality. This will enhance validity and reliability through multiperspectived data, triangulated "ethnographic" approach and nexus analysis.

In order to generalise the findings, the study should extends from LME to other brands. This also encourages a comparative analysis to analyse gendering and marketing strategies of male grooming products across brands (i.e. other competitors).

While this study concentrates on gendered practices in general, further research can also use a more specific cultural approach by conducting the study in a country or community to investigate how metrosexuality is negotiated in the particular context. Comparison between countries/communities can be conducted to uncover the diversity of gendered practices and concepts, as the study extends to other contexts.