

## Example of commentary on a TV advertisement

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The Concord «Ziyāra» spot ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACbzDB1J\\_Wk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACbzDB1J_Wk)), directed by André Chammas from Wonderful Productions (Middle East Marketing and Advertising Company (Memac)-Ogilvy) was produced in Beirut in 2011. Ogilvy is one of the top five agency groups in the MENA area, and has been operating in the Middle-East since 1986, where they presently have 12 bureaux.

The announcer, Concord, is one the main home appliances company in Lebanon, and manufactures its products locally. According to their website (<http://www.concord.com.lb/who-we-are>), they are part of the international group Lematic and have several factories located in Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia, totalizing more than 2500 employees. The company distributes its products in the same area, including Irak, Jordan, and Turkey.

There is no explanation on the website for the choice of the brand's name, and the selection of an English version of this word instead of the French one (Concorde), and of a non-Arabic name (compare with Al Hafedh home appliances in Saudi/Irak). The name might allude to its plain signification (agreement, *tawāfuq*) or to Place de la Concorde in Paris, or to the famous Franco-British aircraft. At any rate, the choice of a non-Arabic name makes Concord appear as an international brand, which is probably thought of as giving more credibility. The website is entirely in English and has no Arabic version. The company's logo exists in latin script only, and does not have an Arabic declension.

The film is 40 seconds long, and can be divided into 3 sequences :

1- a narrative comedy section, in which a Lebanese housewife (30-35 years old, pretty without being too stunning, modern, taking good care of herself) shows around her (upper middle-class) apartment to a friend of hers (face hardly visible, apparently same size and age), who came to visit. Shots are centered on the housewife, colors are bright, saturated, with a slight pinkish dominant (culturally designed to signify a feminine atmosphere), suggesting the house is hers (she is also dressed in pink). This traditional part of the visit takes approx. 10 seconds before it turns to home appliances : refrigerator, washing machine, stove, AC device, large flat-screen television. Each appliance is described and advocated for in a short sentence (see script). The viewer notices fast editing, and sentences are pasted together to leave no blanks between elements.

2- Corporate voice (masculine) stating the brand's name, and the brand's baseline/tagline. On the screen appears first the brand in latin script, address of showrooms in Beirut, catering to different confessional areas (Hamra, Dahyeh, etc), then replaced by the tagline in Lebanese Arabic, Arabic script.

- Return to a comedy scene for 3 seconds «Ah, and this is my husband Salīm» (seen before in the previous sequence, shot from the back, while sitting on a couch in front of the

television, wearing a generic white tanktop of the « wifebeater » sort). This end sequence is a humorous conclusion to the marital issues that have been repeatedly alluded to in the first section.

### النص:

ربة البيت [بالعامية اللبنانية]:

[لصديقتها عند استقبالها] وأخيرا ! هيدا الصالون ؛ هيدي أوضة الولاد: ريم، حلیم، فهيم ؛ أوضة السفارة ؛ أوضتنا أنا وسليم [تقولها بامتعاض واضح معبرة عن عدم رضاها] ؛ تتخينة [مخزن المونة] والكوريدور.

هيدا براد Concord بابين، No Frost ، ما تتخيلي قديه بيبرد، أبرد من جوزي  
وهيدي غسالة Concord ، full automatic ، ولا أنعم symphony ، بغفي ع صوتا.  
شوفي الفرن، خمسة عيون، يخزي العين، كل عين أحلى م الثانية.  
هيدا المكيف، بس دوره بكيف، بالصيف بيورد وبالشتي بصيف.  
شو بدي خبرك ع ال-TV ؟ بتحسي حالك بطة فيلم، مش معقول شو بيضعف !

صوت الماركة [رجالي]:

Concord، أدوات وأجهزة منزلية [مع إمالة الألف الوسطية والتاء المربوطة] بتشوفي حالك فيا



بتشوفي حالك فيا

ربة المنزل:

### Translation of the script :

**Housewife:** [*Lebanese colloquial Arabic/Talking to a female friend she is welcoming home*] And at last, this is the living room [*fr. salon*]. And this is the children's room : Rim, Halim, Fahim. The dining room. Our room, Salim and I [*said with tone of clear dissatisfaction*]. The cellar. The corridor [*fr/eng. corridor*].

This is a Concord refrigerator, two-doors, No-Frost, you have no idea how much it cools, it's colder than my husband!

And this is a Concord laundry washer, full automatic, better than the nicest symphony, its sound brings me to sleep.

Look at the stove, five burners [*in Arabic « eyes »*], may God repel the evil eye, each burner/ eye nicer than the next.

And this is the AC, just switch it on it makes you feel well, in the summer it cools you, in the winter, you feel you're in the summer !

What can I tell you about the TV ? You feel like the star of the movie, it's amazing how thin it makes you look.

**Corporate voice-over** [*male, Lebanese Arabic*]: Concord, home appliances

*betshūfī ḥālik fīhā =*

-> litt. in which you see yourself

-> in which you recognize yourself

-> that make you feel proud

**Housewife:** Ah, and this is my husband, Salim.

### Elements for analysis

The offer consists of 5 different home appliances of the high-end type (double-door refrigerator, big flat-screen TV, etc). It is probably a challenge to present so many items in a unique TV spot, since, unlike many campaigns in Lebanon and Egypt that decline a recurring script in a series of spots, the budget allowed was obviously limited to a unique advertisement for all these products. The «apartment visit» scenario therefore seems the best solution. But in order to limit the «hard-selling» approach this traditional script supposes (each appliance is praised with its qualities, the objective «reasons why» the customer should acquire the offer are clearly stated: efficiency and silence), the copy includes humor, artistic choices on the directing level, and various textual rhetorical devices are deployed.

The appliances are modern and efficient. We can notice some *code-switching* while the housewife states the refrigerator is of the «no frost» type, since the Arabic translation would be either paraphrastic in Lebanese Arabic or pedantic in Standard Arabic, and the Lebanese market is reputed to accept high levels of code-mixing. Some ironic distance is taken with the «reasons why» : the washing machine's purr is compared as a symphony (other

instance of code-switching) that helps the housewife sleeping (i.e. unlike her husband's snoring, which seems to be implied) while the TV screen is used as a huge thinning mirror, while the actual TV is confiscated by the husband, watching sports as expected while not moving from his couch (as opposed to the woman's energy). The old «testimonial» technique is used, both seriously (she is a mother of three, she needs quality appliances), but with a twist.

Who is the target: both women and men (husbands) who actually buy the appliances. The gendered distribution of roles is highly conventional, although ironic at the same time. The man is supposed to buy appliances and therefore «satisfy» his wife, who influences the buyer. Notice the necessary choice of unmarked names for the family (Rīm, Ḥalīm, Fahīm, Salīm), with no possible confessional association for the viewer, and the wink made to this Lebanese social convention in advertisement through the selection of rhyming names, a «gag» that adds to humor.

The viewer understands that those appliances have been chosen by the wife and ultimately replace the lymphatic husband: each one of them is described in sentimental and intimate terms, with plays on words (the «eyes» / burners of the stove). Those appliances «please» the wife (tukayyifuhā), note the various sexual innuendos throughout the ad, as opposed to useless husband (except probably for buying them). Of course, the «pleasing the wife» motif is highly traditional, but humor is supposed to render it acceptable to all viewers. She literally «sees herself» in all these appliances: the director has subtly multiplied the shots in which the woman is looking at herself in a mirror or is seen in a reflection. The average viewer might not consciously notice this, but it is part of applying the baseline's idea and turning it into images. The pun is quite brilliant, since the baseline can be understood on three different levels (see translation).

Concord being a small company probably does not have a brand idea, but the campaign idea is obviously about self-confident, strong women who know what to choose for their comfort, including the submissive husband, although he proves not as satisfying as what she «sees herself» in (not him). And since those appliances resemble you and make you proud, comedy (necessarily in colloquial Arabic) is an efficient way to give a lighter tone to the testimonial, where as the virile masculine corporate voice offers the needed credibility by contrast, and replaces the absent husband.

## عناصر التحليل :

العرض، الوعد، تبرير الوعد

خمس أجهزة منزلية لازمة في كل بيت عصري في الشرق الأوسط  
الوعد : أجهزة فعالة، تكنولوجيا حديثة no frost, code switching، مكيف يقوم أيضا بوظيفة التدفئة،  
غسالة لا تصدر صوتا مزعجا، تلفزيون عريض الشاشة (إذ تستخدمها كمرآة ترى نفسها فيها رشيقة)

التبرير : شهادة المستخدمة، أم ثلاثة أطفال، ربة منزل لبنانية عصرية

المستهدف : الرجل الذي يشتري الأجهزة و«يرضي بها» زوجته، ربة المنزل التي تطلب هذا المنتج  
وتؤثر على المشتري. لاحظوا ضرورة اختيار الأسماء المحايدة في مجتمع طائفي : هناك «إفيه» حين  
تقدم الأولاد، إذ تنتهي أسماؤهم كلهم بـ «يم»، ولكنها أسماء غير طائفية، يتجنب أسماء كمحمد أو جورج.

النبرة : كوميديا، الأجهزة تحل محل الزوج ، وتوصف بنوع متصلة بالحميمية والعاطفة، هذه الأدوات  
«تكيف» المستهلكة عوضا عن زوجها المهمل. ترى نفسها فيها (لاحظ تكرار صورة المرأة والتصوير  
المعكوس في المرأة، الذي يعمل على صعيد الإخراج كتطبيق للـ baseline)

موقعة الماركة

أدوات تشبهك، فعالة، مليئة بالحيوية، توحى بالحميمية (anthropomorphism)

كيف يظهر الفيلم ذلك وكيف يعبر عنه لغويا؟

بما أنها أدوات تشبهك ولا تبهرك، فاللغة هي لغتك، وبالتالي فكرة تقنية الشهادة، ولكي لا تكون مكررة  
(الشهادة التي تدعي الجديدة) يتم اختيار المشهد الكوميدي، المرتبط بالعامية. توزيع الأدوار بين صاحبة  
الشهادة والصوت الرجالي المطمئن في النهاية، الذي يأتي بالمصداقية ويحل محل الزوج الغائب عن  
الصورة. سرعة الكلام نشي بالمونتاج الصوتي السريع، لا توقف بين الجمل.

With JWT on the Arab Market Research Bureau

Concord :

من كبرى شركات الأدوات والأجهزة المنزلية المصنوعة في لبنان (صناعة محلية)، ٢٥٠٠ موظف حسب الموقع، توزع منتجاتها في الشرق الاوسط، سوريا، العراق، السعودية، بل تركيا وأوربا لا شرح لاختيار اسم غير عربي للشركة، واختيار الصيغة الانجليزية بدلا من الفرنسية. إحياء : المعنى الحرفي ، توافق، أو ميدان الكونكورد في باريس ؟ الطائرة البريطانية الفرنسية ؟ ثم الإحياء بأنها ماركة عالمية أو تصبو إلى العالمية فتتجنب اسما عربيا. لا صعوبة في التلفظ بهذا الاسم نلاحظ عدم استخدام الحروف العربية عند كتابة علامة الماركة

الفيلم مدته ٤٠ ثانية، منقسم إلى ٣ أقسام :

- جزء قصصي كوميدي، حيث تعرض ربة بيت لبنانية شقتها على إحدى الصديقات أتت لزيارتها. تستغرق الزيارة التقليدية ١٠ ثوان قبل الانتقال إلى الأجهزة المنزلية : براد، غسالة، فرن، جهاز تكييف، تلفزيون

- صوت الماركة، اسمها ومعلومات عن معارضها في بيروت، شعار (baseline) مكتوب على الشاشة بالحروف العربية وبالعامية، ينطق به صوت الماركة وهو يظهر على الشاشة : بتشوفي حالك فيا

- عودة إلى المشهد الكوميدي لمدة ٣ ثوان يختم بجملة «آه، وهيدا جوزي سليم»، خاتمة هزلية للخلاف الزوجي المشار إليه بشكل ملحّ وطريف في المشهد.

