

## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistan T.V. Advertisements

MARYAM SAEED

M.phil Applied Linguistic (Scholar)  
Department of Applied Linguistics  
The Riphah International University  
Pakistan

IRUM KANWAL

M.phil Applied Linguistic (Scholar)  
Department of Applied Linguistics  
The Riphah International University  
Pakistan

Dedicated to SABAHAH MUSHTAK

### Abstract:

*Advertisements have become very common. In Pakistan, we see ads in print media and electronic media nowadays. We find advertisements on Buses, Truck and Rickshaws. The language used in advertisements automatically influences our behavior and thoughts. Media study is the study of the mass media as an academic subject. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how media promote the commodification through ads and promotes a modern lifestyle. The researchers tried to analyze the language used in Pakistani ads. The researchers tried to see how ads consciously or unconsciously influence people, everyday life and promote modern life style. For this analysis of ads, the researcher used three dimensional framework of Norman Fairclough. The questionnaire is used in this paper. The questionnaire is filled by the students of Government College University Faisalabad.*

**Key words:** T.V. advertisements, Pakistan, critical discourse, media study

## **Introduction:**

Advertisements are a notice, such as a poster or a paid announcement in the print, broadcast or electronic media designed to attract public attention or patronage Kernerman (1991). Language is an important medium of communication. Nowadays, advertisements communicate a message through language and signs. Crystal (1992) defined language as the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression. The ads reflect social aspects such as political and economic issues, but also have the power to maintain and further spread social issues among the audiences. According to EL-Daly (2011), advertising is any type of form of public announcement intended to direct people's attention to the availability, qualities, and/or cost of specific commodities or services" (p. 25). It is essential that a critical look at advertising be done so that we, as consumers, are not fooled by its persuasive power and end up buying that product not because we need it, but we want it, a process known as commodification (Govindasamy and Hassan Khan). The present study is an extension of the study of adverts in Malaysia conducted by IhsanIbadurrahman (2012) by applying the same approach to critical discourse analysis in a different context, which is in Pakistan.

## **Hypothesis:**

Media promotes commodification through advertisements.

## **Research questions:**

Q1. How Advertisements consciously or unconsciously influence our everyday life?

Q2. How do advertisements promote modern life styles?

## **Literature review:**

Before going through a brief survey of the literature, it would be imperative to discuss some of the theoretical underpinnings of critical discourse analysis of advertisements. Unlike the conventional discourse analysis, which merely looks at the forms and features of texts, critical discourse analysis delves deeper into that it seeks to reveal the ideological assumption of language use (Esposito, 2011). Van Dijk (1998) defines ideology as a system of ideas, beliefs, and values, which provides a limited view on the world. Ideology is rendered effective only when a majority of people deems it to be common sense (Gramsci, 1971 as cited in Esposito, 2011). Once things have become a common sense, shared by many people, we would tend to regard it as normal and therefore, would never tend to look at them critically. Texts and contexts are closely intertwined in the discourse. In the discourse of advertising, text refers to the language itself. Context, on the other hand, is the setting in which the language is used, such as substance or the physical material from the text, music and pictures, paralanguage, situation and context. CDA largely concerns language as social practice, it must consider the context of language use (Wodak, 2001). This is supported by Cook (2001), who asserts that a study of language should always take context into account. He goes on to argue that language without context is like a 'journey without destination' (p. 5). It could be said that the discourse of advertisements is inter-discursive and inter-textual in nature (Fairclough, 2001).

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, Guy Cook (2001) argues that advertising is a discourse itself constituting the meaning of both the text (the ad itself) and the context in which people are responding to the ad. He argues that is important to examine the meanings of ads based on how audiences construct these meanings based on their semiotic knowledge of images/signs, genre knowledge, needs, desires,

and discourses applied to the ad. He describes the following components of context (p. 4):

Substance: the physical material which carries or relays text.

Music and pictures: designed to entertain and capture people's attention.

Paralanguage: meaningful behavior accompanying language, such as voice quality, gestures, facial expressions and touch (in speech), and choice of typeface and letter sizes (in writing).

Situation: the properties and relations of objects and people in the vicinity of the texts, as perceived by the participants.

Co-text: text which precedes or follows that under analysis, and which participants judge to belong to the same discourse.

Inter text: texts which the participants perceive as belonging to other discourses, but which they associated with the text under construction, and, which affects their interpretation.

Participants: their intentions and interpretations, knowledge and beliefs, attitudes, affiliations and feelings. Each participant is simultaneously a part of the context and an observer of it. Participants are usually described as senders and receivers (The sender of a message is not always the same as the addressees, however, the person who relays it. In a television ad, for example, the addressee may be an actor, though the sender is an advertising agency. Neither is the receiver always the addressee, the person for which it is intended. The addressees may be a specific target group, but the receiver is anyone who sees the ad.)

Function: what the text is intended to do by the senders and addressers, or perceived to do with the receivers and addressees.

Another recent study on the critical discourse analysis of advertisements is undertaken by Esposito (2001) who utilizes CDA as a pedagogical means of enhancing critical-thinking skills in a Japanese EFL classroom. Using a multidimensional approach to the discourse of advertising, the study involves 37 university students taking an elective course of Critical Discourse Analysis in their third or fourth year of study.

Students are asked to bring their own ads from magazines and analyze them using a three-dimensional approach: linguistic analysis, social analysis, and cultural analysis. Linguistic analysis primarily deals with a careful description of how the language is used in the advertisements. During this stage of analysis, elements such as text and images are identified. The social analysis deals with a thorough explanation of how ads might appeal to specific audiences. The researcher believes that because they are part of the target audience, they could relate better to the ad's messages.

The last part of the analysis, the cultural analysis, specifically aims at examining how advertising influences modern life. The findings reveal that Japanese ads convey their messages primarily through a clever combination of language and imagery. For example, in an advertisement for Kewpie Mayonese, the word „SUGAO“, also translated as sugar, is boldly written in red capital letters against a white background denoting naturalness for working women wearing no makeup, which are their intended target-audience. Other common features found in Japanese ads are the use of allusions, puns, and metaphors.

Dr. Kamran Siddique studied the history of advertising in Pakistan. He presented the historical overview of advertising in Pakistan, categorizes the evaluation in different eras and highlighted major developments within a particular era. A researcher used discourse analysis as the main methodological and analytical tool. The main purpose of his research was to fill the gap of the salient features of advertisement in Pakistan

(2011). Our purpose of the study is to analyze the TV advertisements and analyses the language that is used in ads in Pakistan and how it influences consciously or unconsciously our daily lives. Very few literatures are available on media discourse in Pakistani perspective. My work would fill the gap in Pakistani perspectives.

### **Aims and objectives:**

Aims and objectives of our study are to investigate the ways media promotes commodification through ads and how ads promote modern life style. The next goal of our study is to investigate what type of language is used in advertisements in Pakistan and how it influences person's daily life consciously or unconsciously.

### **A Norman Fairclough's framework for analyzing discourse:**

Three frameworks of Norman Fairclough analyzing discourse

1. Text (linguistic analysis)
2. Discourse practices
3. Sociocultural practices (social and cultural analysis)

### **Methodology/Participants:**

The researchers applied the first and third level of Faircloughs framework for analyzing ads. The present study employed a qualitative approach as it relies mostly on text and image data, and focus is on learning the meaning that participants have on the ads (Creswell, 2009). The participants involved in this study is the student of Government College, University Faisalabad from English linguistic department. Ten participants were participating in this study. The students were reading critical discourse analysis as major subject. We showed them videos of T.V advertisements. The videos were taken from [www.vidpk.com.pk](http://www.vidpk.com.pk) and tune.

Pack<<http://www.vidpk.com.pk>>. For this study, an open-ended 3-page questionnaire was used. As pointed out by Nunan (1992), questionnaires are convenient and thus popular means of collecting data. The questionnaire included the three-dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis of advertisements proposed by Esposito (2011): linguistic analysis, social analysis, and cultural analysis. Each ten participants were asked to closely look at the ad, and analyze it using the three aforementioned analyses.

### **Analysis:**

**The first ad** is taken from TV advertisements and downloads from [www.vidpk.com](http://www.vidpk.com). This is a fruit juice ad. In the ad, firstly, the sentence [PURE is beautiful] tells that the things which have not impurities are beautiful and beautiful things are those which are naturally pure, with no artificial food extract added. The appearance of Oranges in the advertisements shows that the juice is made from fresh oranges only, and it appeals audience to buy this juice because it is made of reviving oranges and no artificial color, food and flavor is added to this juice, and is healthy for the audience. [Pure is natural] this sentence tells that only nature is pure, and this juice is 100% pure, so juice is made from natural ingredients without artificial ingredients. [PURE is refreshing] this tells that only pure juice refreshes us, any addition of impurity is harmful to our health. 100% natural, 100% refreshing, 100% PURE juice this shows that the juice is only made of 100% natural oranges. [The complete fruit experience] At the end of the ad this sentence shows that this is made of fruit and the people who want to take the taste of fruit this is best for them. The appearance of a tree and natural scene in the ad is to capture the attention of audiences. PURE correlates with the name of the product which is 100% juice without any artificial flavor. The ad is trying to connote the idea that the drink is healthier and purer than other products.

**The 2nd ad** is taken from Pakistani TV channel. This ad is also a juice ad. At the start of the ad the brand of Juice Company appears and attracts the audience attention. This ad is NESTLE FRUITA VITAL AD, the monologue of nestle Fruita vital appears in the ad all the time and as a critical point of view it's for the people who are conscious about brands and they use products of famous brands. The appearance of pomegranate in the ad shows that this is not a mix fruit juice, but only pomegranate juice and its red color also attracts audience. Red is the sign of passion, love and intensity of emotion and in this ad it increases the sale of product because it shows that juice produces more blood in our body so that's why they used red color in this ad. Pomegranates generate blood so this signifies that this juice is made of red pomegranate that generates blood. At the end of the commercial, the use of the phrase GO ROYAL shows that this juice is made for people who are privileged, belonging to a royal family and having high status in the society. This ad also shows the class conflict in Pakistan society which is the part of our culture. People give value to rich people so this ad influences on person's behaviors to use this product.

**3rd ad** is also taken from Pakistani TV channel and downloaded from [www.vidpk](http://www.vidpk). This ad is about Fair & lovely beauty cream. At the start of this ad, the logo of UNILEVER brand is used. This logo is used for getting the attention of people who have a craze for brands, and more people buy this product. The girl in the ad is sitting on a stage for singing a song, but there is no audience for her performance. The absence of audience is due to her dark complexion. This shows that the women whose complexion is dark cannot get success. For the solution to this problem fair and lovely is available for women who want to get success in their lives. The use of fair and lovely beauty cream make their complexion fair and without fair complexion, women cannot do anything. [Change your face], the use of this phrase in the ad is for the women who have black complexion and now the time is to change their lives, and they



can change it with the use of fair and lovely cream. This ad is consciously and unconsciously influencing women in general to buy this product to get success in their lives.

**4th ad** is taken from Pakistan TV channel and downloaded from tune.pk. This ad is Royal Fan ad. In this ad a couple has been shown. A song is sung by couple “YE JO SATH HAI TERA MERA YONHI REHY, REHY SADA” this signifies the relationship between Fan and the couple. It implies the meaning that a couple always remains together, the Fan also remains with them and without the fan life is nothing for them. This ad also shows that happiness in life is due to Royal Fan. “Sath Zindagi bhar ka” this sentence implies the meaning that this fan will work whole life and it will never leave you like a relation between husband and wife. The repetition of the sentence “Ye Jo Seth ha tera mera” attracts the attention of the audience to see what relation is there between fan and human beings. The relation which is for whole life and will never break. Through language this ad attracts people to buy product.

**5th ad** is also taken from Pakistan t.v channel and downloaded from tune. pk. This is the ad of a shoe company. The company name is Aerosoft. This brand is very famous for shoes. This ad attracts the attention of the audience towards the name of the branded company AEROSOFT. Firstly, look at the name of the company; SOFT this implies the meaning that all shoes of this company are soft. With this ad's appearance of water and the sentence “PANIO KO CHO K DAIKHA HAI” signifies the meaning that shoes of that company will not get damaged in water and can be used everywhere in every situation even at the river. Colors of shoes also remain constant it will not be faded even in the sun. The sentence, “QADAM QADAM RAHTIEN” at the end of the commercial is used to attract viewers attention because people need a shoe that is easy to wear and easy to walk. This sentence implies the meaning that this shoe is very comfortable for walking. This type of language is used in ads to make people conscious about

their necessities of life and they choose easy things in their life. This ad attracts audience due to its language game.

**6th ad** is also taken from PAKISTAN T.V, Channel and downloaded from tune. Pk. At the start of the commercial there is appearance scene of a mosque and people wear religious dresses, signifying the event of EID. Eid is a religious and cultural event of Pakistan. So this ad represents its cultural values. Actually, this is the ad of detergent . In this ad ,two children are present and they do good things to attract people toward them. “AGR KUCH ACHA KRNY MEIN DAGH LAG JAY, DAGH TO PHIR ACHY HUY NA”; the sentence implies the meaning that children learn through getting stained. “DAGH TO ACHY HOTY HAIN”; the sentence signifies double meaning. One signifies the use of this surf will remove the stains and second, mothers don’t get worried about stains and feel relaxed as stains are indispensable for children to learn and to do good things. Positive word is used for stain in this commercial for attracting audience attention “DAGH TO ACHY HOTY HAIN”.

**7th ad** is also taken from PAKISTAN T.V. Channel and downloaded from tune. Pk. This is the energy saver ad. This ad has got a very high rating in Pakistan because we have electricity problem. In this ad use of second person pronoun “YOU” shows that this is the collective problem of all the people who are watching this ad and it discusses all peoples' problems. This ad is meant to move for saving electricity. The monologue of DAWLANCE all the time appeared in commercial to attract people attention and influence people to buy energy saver not the other one. Choice of words that are used in the ad “ETNI BIJLI BACHAY KY ROSHAN HOON MULK KY 50,000 SCHOOL ROZANA” signifies the meaning that the use of this energy saver can save electricity and can provide this to the schools of Pakistan. This is very emotional sentence in the ad and it attracts the people to save energy for their country, for students and due to this use of language people will buy this

energy saver. “DAWLANCE MAKING PAKISTAN PROUD”; the sentence is made to feel people proud of Dawlance Company who made for them such type of energy saver that is very helpful in their country progress. At the end of the ad's appearance of the sentence “DAWLANCE RELIABLE HAI” implies the meaning that people can believe in it and this will not discourage them.

**The last ad** is also taken from Pakistan TV and downloaded from tune. Pk. This ad is the shampoo ad. Women are very conscious about their beauty and long, healthy and dandruff free hair are the part of their beauty. At the start of the ad, bottle of shampoo with egg yolk and yogurt attract audience attention. A woman comes with long hair she walks with confidence due to her long and shiny hair. Her long hairs are due to use of this shampoo. She points out the women who are worried about their hair and use old methods for getting dandruff free and shiny long hair. This ad shows that time has passed on, one has no time to wait for the slow result of homemade prescriptions. The use of yogurt and egg yolk will not give you quick results. You can get dandruff free and long hair with the use of SUNSILK BLUE shampoo that is made from egg yolk and yogurt and shampoo will not make you wait for the results. This ad influences women to buy this shampoo and care for their hair. In this ad very tricky language is used for getting women attention and good sale of SUNSILK SHAMPOO. At the end of the ad the sentence “LIFE CAN'T WAIT” signifies the meaning that women who use the old method of getting long and dandruff free hair need to use this shampoo because our lives are very busy now and nobody has time to wait. SunsilK is the only shampoo that can help and promotes a modern lifestyle to the audiences. This ad promotes a modern life style.

## **Findings:**

The findings and analysis of ads suggest that ads in Pakistan tend to use of parallelism to sell their products. For example, in the juice ad, the repeated use of the word [PURE] emphasizes that the juice is pure and no artificial food extracts are included in it. PURE IS BEAUTIFUL, PURE IS NATURAL, PURE IS REFRESHING; show the parallelism in Pakistani ads.

Culture is also an important part of advertisements of Pakistan. Cook (2001) mentions that culture is an inseparable component in the task of discourse analysis in advertisements because it is needed to describe the phenomenon that occurs in the text and context of a discourse. For example, in the surf excel commercial there is very clear cultural and religious aspect. Eid is our cultural and religious event that is presented in this ad.

It is not wrong to say that ads have impact towards the audience who watch these ads. Ads influence audience consciously and unconsciously to buy these products. As Cook (2001), ads can make people feel dissatisfied with what they have and thus consume more. People now feel themselves inferior to another; they are trying to buy more products than others. These products also promote modern life style. For example, in the ad of the SUNSILK SHAMPOO, we can clearly see that before shampoo, people used homemade things to finish dandruff and now due to this shampoo they choose a modern lifestyle. This ad shows that the media promote modern life style through ads.

## **Conclusion:**

Analysis of ads concluded that we cannot separate text from its context. This means that in order to critically analyze ads, one must look into the substance, picture, music, paralanguage (font color and size), intertextuality and interdiscursivity that

prevail in the text. (Fairclough, 2001). We concluded that after analyzing ads, media promote the commodification through ads and it promotes a modern lifestyle. The study also suggests that we should be vigilant of the persuasive power of ads which results in commodification, where we buy the product not because we need it but want it (Govindasamy & Khan, 2007). Our study opens the new ways for researchers to analyze ads. The future researches can be conducted on broader area of ads. We try to narrow down the area. Our area of research was TV ads, future researchers can be conducted on newspaper ads, magazine ads, radio ads, and internet ads.

## REFERENCES

- Cook, G. 2001. *The discourse of advertising*. New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. 2009. *Research Design*. California: SAGE Publication.
- Crystal, D. 1992. *An Encyclopedic: Dictionary of Language and Languages*. England: Penguin Books.
- El-daly, H. M. 2011. "Towards an Understanding of the Discourse of Advertising: Review of Research with Special Reference to Egyptian Media." *African Nebula* 3: 25-47.
- Esposito, J. 2011. "A Critical Approach to the Analysis of Advertisements." *The Linguistics Journal* 5: 197-219.
- Govindasamy, S. & Khan, M. H. 2007. "Selling the Global Popular: Reading Adverts in Malaysia." In *Discourses on culture and identity: an interdisciplinary perspective*, edited by P. Krish, 47-70. Selangor: Pearson Malaysia.
- Neuman, L. 2011. *Social Research Methods*. Boston: Pearson.
- Rehman, I. 2011. *A Critical discourse analysis of advertisements in Malaysia*. Malaysia: International Islamic University Malaysia.

Siddique, K. 2011. *History of advertising in Pakistan*. Karachi.

Wodak, R. 2001. "What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, edited by R. Wodak & M. Meyer, 1- 13. London: Sage.

www.vidpk.com.

www.tune.pk

## Appendix A: Open-Ended Questionnaire

### A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTAN T.V ADVERTISEMENTS: A Mini Survey

Following are three approaches to the analysis of Advertisement taken from a study by Esposito (2011). Please kindly answer the following questions based on the product advertisement that has been chosen for you. Thank you for your time and kind help in filling up the survey.

Name of the product :

---

#### Level One (Linguistic Analysis)

1. What information is given about the product?

---

---

---

2. How is the product presented in terms of words and images?

---

---

---

3. What symbols are used to promote the product?

4. What associations are made with the product?

---

---

---

5. What is the relationship between the product and people?

---

---

---

### **Level Two (Social Analysis)**

1. Who is the main audience for the product?

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Why should the product be purchased?

---

---

---

---

3. What evidence is given to support the ad's claims?

---

---

---

---

4. What values does the ad reflect and/or promote?

5. How is the ad designed to make one feel?

---

---

---

**Level Three (Cultural Analysis)**

1. What are the most salient messages found in advertising?

---

---

---

2. How does advertising create particular identities?

---

---

---

3. What stories do advertisements tell about the world?

---

---

---

4. What influence does advertising have on cultural behavior?

---

---

---

5. What type of lifestyle(s) does advertising promote?

---

---



Adopted from Esposito (2011). 'A critical approach to the analysis of advertisement', *the linguistics Journal*, Vol. 5, pp.197-219.

## **Appendix B: Samples of the Advertisement**

The following links are the links of all the eight advertisements used in this study.

<http://tune.pk/video/3239374/aerosoft-shoes-pakistani-tv-commercials>

<http://tune.pk/video/2587282/royal-fans-shaan-ad-nice-couple-pakistani-tv-commercials>

<http://tune.pk/video/3737019/nestle-fruita-vital-tv-ad>

<http://tune.pk/video/2885648/surf-excel-eid-sarfaraz-khan>

<http://tune.pk/video/2941031/dawlance-energy-saver>

[http://vidpk.com/view\\_video.php?vid=6834&search\\_id=Ad%20Commercial%20Advertisement%20sialkot%20Frangoz#.U5q0IHKsZ45](http://vidpk.com/view_video.php?vid=6834&search_id=Ad%20Commercial%20Advertisement%20sialkot%20Frangoz#.U5q0IHKsZ45)

<http://vidpk.com/1674/Shezan-Juice-Commercial#.U5q0GHKSz45>