



Qamar Sumaira¹, Majid Hussain², Sidra Khalil³

Abstract

Fairclough (1994) claims that language is not only a tool of communication but also constructs social interactions and meaning in specific contexts. Advertisement is one of the most effective and influential genre in non-literary texts which informs, persuades and impacts its audience in a limited time frame. Impact can be equally positive or negative on the target audience but it is more dependent on the ideological representation through signs and symbols portrayed in it. In the present study, two Pakistani advertisements have been analyzed through Fairclough’s (1994) 3-Dimensional Approach, which suggests that a text along with its embedded ideology is constructed to create its own social domain. The findings exposed that adverts are the main source to bring cultural change and ideological shift about a woman in society. *Fashion Trends* are adopted and eradicated as suggested in ads so it acts like an opinion-maker and compliment to shape the physical appearance of a woman apart of what society believes in her on regional and religious grounds. The conclusion suggests that the government and related bodies must have a check on ill-considerations to produce such content which may cultivate some unethical norms in the society. Also, unlike men, women are negatively portrayed and objectified in multiple ways in media campaigns.

Keywords: Media, Advertisements, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Objectification of women

1. Introduction

Critical discourse analysis is a functional approach in linguistics which distinguishes it from other applied branches in a sense that it narrates not only the explicit nature but also the implied ideology exposed in a certain discourse. No doubt much has been achieved in first and second wave of feminism to protect and achieve women’s rights but still the women in many spheres are not provided freedom to choose their occupation or to secure good positions at high ranks. From 1990’s, they rose again to get that equal share from men in power to excel them in the field work so that they would be able to live an independent, confident and free life of their own choice. Sufferings of females have been reduced to some extent but still the growing age and awareness need some direction to the thoughts of men to think these living beings not sheer but as a central and vigorous element in society. Women are exposed to several issues to be objectified in multiple spheres especially at workplace and media. In the last decade, the feminist scholars added much to raise its related issues at various levels being a part of this movement. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is known for its overtly political stance and is concerned with all forms of social inequality and injustice. The debate in CDA owed to feminist approaches in women’s studies (van Dijk 1991). Mills’ (1995) feminist stylistics, Christie’s (2000) feminist pragmatics and Kitzinger’s (2000) feminist conversation analysis paved new ways to see literary and non-literary texts with new insights. The need to identify and establish a feminist perspective in language and discourse studies is a part of what feminists in the academia have for many years criticized and sought to change across male-stream disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and sciences (Spender, 1981). All literary and non-literary areas study feminism in their own way to expose the foregrounded thoughts by using the related frameworks. In non-literary texts, advertisements are one of the most significant and effective tool to convey meaning and to sell product according to audience’s demand.

1.1. Types of objectification

- Self-objectification- A view of oneself as an object that is valued for use by others.
- State self-objectification- It is situational prompted objectification defined in some geographical area as a legal act.
- Fat-talk- A self-deprecating body talk that occurs in peer groups and appears to contain an element of social influence for the purpose of entertainment. But it is just confined to personal talks in informal conversations.

Self-objectification is more personal and harmful as far as feministic ideology or social norms are connected to it. Although women are depicted in various roles and status in advertising ranging from homemaker to business executive and from striking object to superwoman. The shift has touched the new ideology in the respective area in 20th century to show case the woman as an attractive and seductive object than that of a sheer house-hold creature. It changed the above said concept from self-objectification to fat-talk because media or likewise internet exposed every event as a street talk which can even be observed by a common (illiterate) man when it is related to Asian societies. The phenomenon of global village for media has influenced every small strata of society from all aspects.

The following study inquires the embedded ideologies which contribute to change the normative attributes of a Pakistani woman in advertisements (media). The main objective of the study is to explicate the factors which result in the objectification of females in advertisements. Moreover, the study focuses to describe how the female agency is exploited and portrayed in adverts through their looks and words as mere objects.

Entertainment media including movies, TV, magazines and music videos target the teenage audience and provide a vast array of messages on falling in love, relationships, and sexual desires; therefore, it may shape negative attitudes, values, and practices in society to take woman as an object of discussion. The internet, with its easy access and highly explicit sexual content, has become another important source of information. Feminists argue that these ads are a sort of ‘systematic propaganda’. Propaganda is defined as ‘Disseminating or promoting particular ideals, with the objective of endeavoring to reinforce or modify the attitudes or behavior of a particular audience’.

¹ Lecturer in English, Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan, Pakistan, qsumaira1985@gmail.com

² English Language Instructor, Nishat Group of Schools and Colleges, Multan, Pakistan, majjidejaz1122@gmail.com

³ Ph.D scholar and Lecturer in English, Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan, Pakistan, sanaalina60@gmail.com

2. Literature Review

Gearhart & Bernardino (2022) in their research work *'As Seen on Tv: Representation of Women in Advertisements and The Effects on Women's Self on Women's Self-perceptions, Self-Objectification, And Self-dehumanization'* narrate that the portrayals of women as objects for male consumption affect women's psychological outcomes. Barber (2011) declared through his study; *'Objectification of Women in Media'*, that the target audience is subconsciously enticed to buy products of companies who believe that it is okay to use women's objectification in an advertisement. A trend that is developing in entertainment media today is the objectification of women in society. Specifically in movies, music videos and television, there is strong focus on women as sexual objects rather than an individual. This is detrimental to society because the media is creating social stereotypes for both men and women that can result in unhealthy social and physical equilibrium (Barber, 2011). The issue is especially prevalent because the more the media uses sexual content regarding women, the more viewers would be attracted towards them. Thus, the media is able to shape the culture's sense of social actions whether personal or impersonal and what is 'ideal' within society. Especially the college going and school-goings young children's attitudes are shaped that can affect all demographics of society. This media action is allowed to proceed because sex sells and this objectification of women is what society has proven they want to see in entertainment media.



Gor (2018) in *'Objectification of Woman in Media'* shed a light on the use of women bodies in advertisements. She also narrates the marketing strategies as *"The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives."* Advertising is one of the "promotional tools" used in marketing endeavors, as one means of communication between the seller (advertiser) and the buyer (consumer or organization). Hence advertising is defined as: *"Any paid form of non-personal presentation of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor (advertiser)"* (Berkowitz et al., 1991). This definition separates advertising from other forms of promotion, namely publicity and personal selling. Advertising is 'paid' for, it is just an opposite idea of publicity; which is 'free'. Women are one of the key focuses of product marketing. Similar to what Kuppelwieser & Sarstedt (2014) reported, advertisements in magazines are particularly eye-catching at first glance, and models often appear in ads simply as attractive objects or gendered symbols. Cook (2001) points out that ads inform, persuade, remind, influence and change opinions, emotions and attitudes. In other words, his contention is that ads do not only sell products but change society shape and make people buy things they do not want or need. He also feels that advertisements do give warnings or information to people. *Women*, according to Stankiewicz and Rossell (2014), *solely have image value for the purpose of selling items, and their identities have practically always been valued and promoted alongside objects.* It only erodes the respect and self-worth that many women have in society and intensifies the male gaze. Batool (2016) defined *Objectification as an attitude or behavior pattern that treats a living person as a thing or a commodity that can be used, with a minimal or in many cases no regard of that person possessing a personality may it be emotional or intellectual.*

Goffman (1987) has turned his attention to the ways in which men and women specifically women are pictured in advertisements. He believes that advertisements depict for us not necessarily how we actually behave as men and women but how we think men and women should behave. Dimpleby and Burton (1998) in their book *'More Than Words: An Introduction to Communication'* also stress the same effects of media through advertisements on young generation. In 2004, Godiva launched an advertising campaign, GoDiva, aimed at promoting an indulgent lifestyle to women between 25 and 30. Godiva's efforts to appeal to the new consumers were not particularly successful because the campaign exploited women rather than empowering them. Furthermore, her posture places her at the disposal of the implied chocolate consumer, reinforcing the notion that the woman is just show-cased as an object in a seductive way rather than a living entity.

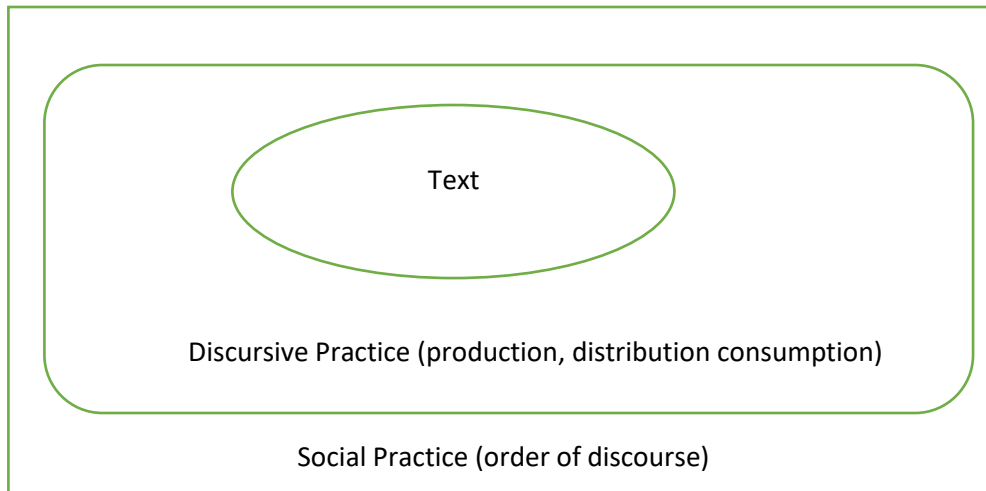
3. Theoretical Framework

Discourse is analyzed in terms of power dynamics, social structures, and the ways in which language shapes and reflects our understanding of the world (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough (1995) defines it as just a particular form of social practice that in its center power and ideology influence and interact with one another. His model in CDA consists of three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are text, discourse practice and social practice. This model is used to analyze the role of language in the construction of knowledge, ideology and power. Fairclough (1995) believes that language is a form of social practice and is influenced by various social factors. Fairclough's approach to CDA is useful because it provides multiple points of analytical entry, interconnections of interesting patterns and interpretation of the text as per reader's perception. His approach carries following levels of textual analysis which are qualitative and interpretative in their nature.

- Text: This level contains the object of analysis, where the main structures of the text contain words, signs, symbols and semiotic features and whatever are provided in the selected text.

- Discursive Practice: This level has to explain linguistic features of the text from phonetic level to its discourse level. It explains production, distribution and consumption of the text.
- Social Practice: It shows the social implications and the magnitude of social acceptance of a text with respect to its order as an established discourse.



Fairclough's 3-D Model

4. Data Analysis

This research provides two ways to analyze the text (advertisement) while applying Fairclough's (1995) theoretical stance on it.

Advertisement 1: 'Lux'



Picture 1 (featured in 2019)

A) Dialogues: English script of the selected advertisement (Linguistic and extra-linguistic evidence)

Maira: (In a captivating voice) welcome to the world of Lux, where beauty meets luxury. Today, we bring you a celebration of timeless elegance with two iconic beauties - the enchanting Mawra Hocane and the captivating Mahira Khan.

(Cut to Mawra Hocane gracefully applying Lux soap, reveling in the rich lather and delicate fragrance.)

Mawra: (Voiceover) Mawra, a symbol of grace and sophistication, embodies the essence of Lux. Lux, with its signature fragrances crafted by world-class perfumers, brings you a sensorial experience like no other.

(Switch to Mahira Khan stepping into a glamorous scene, exuding confidence and radiance)

Mahira: (Voiceover) Mahira, the epitome of timeless beauty, trusts Lux to enhance her natural glow. Lux soap, enriched with fine fragrance oils, not only cleanses but leaves your skin feeling irresistibly soft and delicately perfumed.

(Both Mawra and Mahira join together in a visually stunning setting, showcasing Lux as the choice of beauty for women who appreciate the finer things in life.)

Mawra and Mahira: Lux, a symbol of timeless beauty, chosen by women who know they deserve the best. Pamper yourself with Lux and embrace the luxury that you deserve.

(The screen fades to black, and the Lux logo appears along with the tagline: "Lux - Embrace Timeless Beauty.")

- Mahira: Me kesi lg rhi the?
- Mawra Hocane: Me ne kya pehna tha?
- Maya Ali: Mere heeron me kitni chamak the?
- Mahira: Shayd yad na rhe!
- Maya: Magar hmesha yad rhega....
- "Aik **Aanso** (Mahira), Aik **Ada** (Maya), Aik **Muskan** (Mawra),
- bilkul hmare naye LUX **perfumed** collection ki trah..."

B) Semiotic Features

The colors are selected with cautious mode that are precisely attractive, captivating and charming, which represents femininity. For example, in the selected ad, RED color symbolizes power, passion, desire, ambition, vitality, power of blood and confidence. Smith (2018) states in his article 'Sensational Color', "Red is the color of heightened emotion, strength, and power. It's invigorating, intimidating, and it's never boring." It strengthens this study that colors are those semiotic features in any form of discourse which speaks louder than words. Moreover, the pink color (wore in ad by Mavra) is the mixture of red's passion and white's purity. Pink symbolizes love, nurture and compassion. It evokes feelings of comfort, warmth and hope. Pink is also a sign of good health. For Smith, as an expert of Color Psychology, the meaning of pink is sweetness, femininity, romantic, innocence and playfulness. It stands for nurturing femininity in the selected advertisement. White and silver (as wore by Maya Ali in the ad) are associated with the higher self and spirituality. Where gold is masculine, silver goes with feminine energy. It is associated with the moon as well as the ebb and flow of tides which represents innocence, cleanliness, perfection and flawless beauty. It is also synonymous with divinity, power and success in synchronized settings with other colors to show its dominancy. The close observation of color study also suggests that the selected colors in the product as well as in the dresses have a strong relationship between dominancy, power and success which reflects the ad for the women of elite class in the society and idealizes them as the perfect ones to reflect culture and its society.

C) Linguistic Analysis

The words are also feminist indicators in the dialogues, which are associated with female beauty, like 'Aanso whose literal meaning is 'Tear' but in literature, it stands as a symbol of realization of truth, acceptance of reality and embracement of a new self. 'Ada' has many semantic and pragmatic meanings in English like grace, beauty; elegance; graceful manner on carriage; charm, fascination; blandishment; amorous signs and gestures' which is also used to define feminist beauty and her moves. The other word is 'Muskan' which means a smile, smirk, grin and particularly used in the language for woman's smile means pragmatically as friendship, affection, care, acceptance, happiness and love. All the glamour, physical appearance and the setting is developed to create an image of 'an ideal figure' of society but when the things are analyzed in cultural percepts the meanings of all these things seem to alien to this situation because in advertisements these are symbolized with perfection scale of idealism while in reality majority of the women in Asian societies are deprived from these luxurious ornaments (clothes, shoes, jewelry, perfume, ornaments...etc.) and especially the way these models are exposed.

It shows an unrealistic picture of society where women are objectified with materialistic ornaments and not with personal qualities just to sell the products. Idealism is just an imaginative metaphor which is not found in this world but things are depicted with such an illusion that the reality remains hidden in many coverings of manipulation. Sometimes this exaggeration turns into an unhealthy and unethical atmosphere which exerts a strong pressure on target population (females) to achieve those realms. So, the expectations demand to do more for achieving their goals in life. Such sort of ads create a contrastive image between realistic and visualized women. It results in females with many personality disorders like low self-esteem, depression, lack of motivation, criminal acts, abusive life style and many other social and psychological complications. Teen age girls rank entertainment as their top most and favorite way to adopt style and to get information about style. Without proper training and knowledge, this practice also effects in raising many feminine issues in family systems. In Asian societies, especially in Pakistan, this dual thought has created the greatest hurdle for a female whether being a student, house wife or a working woman to adopt herself in her existing conditions as their males want or as the society wants to put a mask on her face. Men want stylish friends but modest wives at home. These concerns are questionable and need to address as a riddle for the females for what to follow and what not. Women are born beautiful, they need no ornaments to beautify themselves. But advertisements are inculcating an awareness to show what they are not or to expose themselves to look confident.

Advertisement 2: FAIR & LOVELY

There is a blog post by Mawra Hocane about the Fair & Lovely BB Cream who also worked on a TV commercial for the above proct. She mentions that the product is available in pink and white packaging and is suitable for Asian skin tones. The product is cost effective and easily available for the target population.



Picture 2 (featured in 2019)



Picture 3 (featured in 2019)

The ad of Fair & Lovely inculcates the same ideology in young girls that beauty is more important than that of personal traits to excel in life, contradictory with the phrase that beauty requires no ornaments. The linguistic and extra-linguistic analysis of the selected ad is given as under:

A) Dialogues

Mavra: Movies...Shopping...ya hangout ka scene (inquiring and informing with eye gestures)!

To phir use kro ek hi cream...

Fair and Lovely BB Cream...

B) Foregrounding

- The main actress is Mavra Hocane who is taken as a tycoon of beauty and glamour now a days for young girls.
- Target caption of the advertisement is; “For perfect college look get ready in 2 minutes”.
- The whole story of her day exposes her beauty, fairness, glamour and symbolizes elite class teen-age girl where she is pictured as a perfect model for a college girl.
- The key metaphor for beauty is ‘perfect style’ and not to be hard-work, intelligent girl.

C) Pictorial analysis

- a. College girl in two bold dresses: one as night wear in white and the last shot in pink having deep-neck and down shouldered shirt making a heart sign with hands at the end.
- b. Happiness/energy and freshness is explicitly remarkable
- c. The room setting shows her life style and class status
- d. The usage of product along with self-objectification image
- e. A **PERFECT** complete model look of a college girl with Love as a tag on her body (neckline choker and the sign she makes at the end with seductive smile)
- f. The sting line is “Stay Beautiful” that is also questionable about the scale of beauty.
- g. Another feature is added to ‘Ideal and Perfection scale’.

The *Physical Appearance Perfectionism Scale (PAPS)* explains a particular type of perfectionism - the desire for a perfect physical appearance. Daniels & Price (2000) defined the term as the quest for the truth that tends to dissociate themselves from their flaws seeking the illusion of virtue to hide their own vices.

D) Linguistic analysis

Words are positive in their sense but they contain implied ideology as the veiled things are exposed in background setting, clothes, color imagery and the use of words for her target audience. It exposes the empowerment of elite class that is again an untruthful picture of the said society. The ideal scale includes ‘White-complexion’ as a standard of perfection and enforces the other thought in the advertisement of ‘A Perfect Look’. It raises a question for target audience if they are perfect or not. This thing is alarming as the young college girls follow the trends and fashion styles from media. Fashion or cultural norms is a part of any society which is mostly adopted by the audience from television, fashion shows, internet and social websites which they encounter several times a day. And advertisement is one of the biggest platform on all the above said media resources which affects and attracts the target audience in the most obvious way. So the image of a college girl is shifted from hard worker, study-seeker, career designer and intelligent one to a glamorous, shimmery and fashionable look (which is a part of self-objectification). Even the accessories, she wears, have been changed from books and bags to make over and ‘A Funky Choker’. As she makes a heart sign with her hand gesture and gives a seductive look at the end of the story, she confuses her audience between a complete model look for a model-girl or a perfect college-girl.

E) Interpretation

- White complexion: a standard symbol of feminine beauty for Asian women
- Flawless skin enhances a female’s confidence
- Thin and lean figures with naked clothes also act like a symbol of modern society and intensifies an ‘Ideal Image’ of a female in the linked society
- Adding female factor in ads promotes production and demand
- Ads depict idealism, fantasy and falsehood: the ads sell values, contrastive images, fake love stories, and promote sexuality...etc.

Stereotypical role of a woman in Asian society particularly demands ethical and normative look of a female being a wife, daughter, sister or as a mother. What is portrayed in the advertisements, is far away from reality which is a more liberal and a fabricated image of a woman. But the text construction and media moves have changed the realms of real picture and there is seen a visible change in the society which is just possible because of these discourses like ads, dramas and movies. Fairclough (1995) also suggests that text is interpreted, produced and circulated as it affects specific society for its consumption. The societal demands are getting increased for such a false representation of a woman and people want to do more to be successful in industry and at work place. A great social change has banged the nations living on these border lines where the stereotypes, prejudice and cultural fixtures are more common. They measure their worth through looks, age, physical bodies, clothes, skin tone (fair, smooth, flawless and glowing), glamour and fashion adaptations. Beauty quotients have taken another shape like the utility of soaps, perfumes, Fair & Lovely, shampoos (Sunsilk, Palmolive and Pantene...etc.) and other skin care products while changing the metaphor of ‘beauty’ which requires no ‘ornaments’.

5. Conclusion

CDA exposes the textual construction with its powerful use of language for a selected audience. As a non-literary form of discourse, advertisements can help create awareness, construct identities and attitude of their target population in an effective and productive

way, but the results show its negative impact on ethical grounds to elevate moral values especially in Asian societies which is densely populated and affected in a quick way to accept the change in society through its young generation as a face and pillar of society. Being the most influential and persuasive content on media, it influences the target population through its strategic use of language, setting and information. It provides information in a swift and hasty way as produced by the actors. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) is bombarded with public complaints on daily basis pinpointing 'inappropriate content in ads' on TV channels that exploit female models in the most incongruous way, demanding of the state-run regulator to play its role to have these ads stopped. Resultantly, some ads have been put off air but a lot needs to be done on this very count. The selected content for analysis also suggests some measures to be taken for promoting and designing such a vile and deviated content against societal norms in Pakistan which results in a remarkable change of behaviors not only in females but also to some extent in males. A Muslim women should be represented following the norms in society which can be a role model for the Muslim females in society. More awareness is needed to create an image of a girl on ethical grounds rather than to objectify her body and feminine features to elevate her image in society. This can be easily achieved through ads, dramas and films. Unethical and immoral literature of exploiting females must be banned to save their dignity. Equality rules are applied on both entities to create a balance in society.

References

- Abercrombie, N., Hill, S. and Turner, B. S. (1980). *The Dominant Ideology Thesis*. London: Allen and Unwin
- Berkowitz, B. D. (1991). *America's Welfare State*
- Calvin Klein's Scandalous Advertising - Morality vs Money. IBS Center for management Research.
- Daniel & Price (2000). *The Development and Validation of the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification (MASO)*
- Dimbleby R. & Burton, G. (1998). *More Than Word: An Introduction to Communication* Routeledge London.
- Gee, J. P. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Gee, J. P. (2001). *An Introduction to discourse Analysis*. London, Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1987). *Gender Advertisements*, London, Harper Torchbooks.
- Krijnen, T. & Van Bauwel, S, (2022). *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*
- Kang, M. (December 1997). The portrayal of women's images in magazine advertisements: Goffman's gender analysis revisited. *Sex Roles*. 37 (11–12): 979–996.
- Kuppelwieser, V. G., & Sarstedt, M. (2014). Applying the future time perspective scale to advertising research. *International Journal of Advertising: The Quarterly Review of Marketing Communications*, 33(1), 113–136.
- Laura R. Ramsey and Tiffany Hoyt (2015). The Object of Desire: How Being Objectified Creates Sexual Pressure for Women in Heterosexual Relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 39 (2), 151–170.
- Lindner, Katharina (2004). Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002. *Sex Roles*. 51 (7/8), 409–421.
- McKay, Tanjare (2013). Female Self-Objectification: Causes, Consequences and Prevention. *McNair Scholars Research Journal*.
- Stankiewicz, Julie M.; Rosselli, Francine (2008). Women as Sex Objects and Victims in Print Advertisements. *Sex Roles*, 58 (7–8), 579–89.
- The Effect of Exploitation of Women in Mass Media. *hhw8452*. 2016-05-17. Retrieved 2018-10-15.
- Gor, A.K. (2018). Objectification of Woman in Media' Kachchh University. *International Journal of Research in all Subjects in Multi Languages*, 6, 2321 – 2853.