

Interdiscursivity in International Beauty Brands Slogans: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This descriptive qualitative study conducts a critical discourse analysis of international beauty brands' slogans to highlight how international beauty brands employ interdiscursivity and how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society under Fairclough's 3D model. The originality of this study lies in uncovering how these slogans challenge societal norms by blending apparent discourse with covert ideological cues to resonate with the target audience. The findings of the study reveal that interdiscursivity is a prevalent element of international beauty brands' slogans with 100% of analyzed examples illustrating explicit attempts to reshape traditional perceptions of gender roles. It provides a critical perspective for the students of critical discourse analysis and marketing to have an advanced knowledge of business language and its social implications. Thus, the mechanism of interpreting the process behind the discourse of international beauty brands' slogans leads to a critical insight into communication in a broader setting.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, interdiscursivity, slogans, beauty brands, Feminism, Pakistani society.

Introduction

The current study aims to explore the concept of "interdiscursivity" in international beauty brands' slogans. By employing the lens of critical discourse analysis, this research seeks to provide insights into the broader dynamics of the interplay between society, language, and business communication i.e., slogans. Moreover, by probing the interdiscursive nature of international beauty brands' slogans, this study tends to unveil the role of these slogans in challenging the traditional position of women in Pakistani society where culture and modernity often collide.

Strategically, this research dissects the textual elements of the international beauty brands' slogans to scrutinize the underlying discourses and ideologies they bring. This interchange of discourses in the slogans provides a unique lens through which these slogans challenge the traditional notions of femininity in Pakistan. Thus, this study is primarily

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dedicated to the idea of interdiscursivity in the broader social context and business communication.

Background of the Study

The world of business is complex and highly competitive, where language is not only used for communication but to create a distinct identity in the market, build a strong connection with customers, and finally promote the desired products. This is because words have power, and language can influence perceptions about the world. One significant aspect of using language in social settings like advertisements is through slogans.

A slogan is a catchy set of sentences or phrases, which is used in business communications and advertisements to give a basic idea of the product and is easy to remember. Slogans are deeply rooted in the social structure of the audience using them. These slogans are used in the advertisements and this advertising language has variations in style (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994). Thus, these slogans may be innocent in their words, but they are not innocent in their ideologies incorporating interdiscursivity in their veins.

The term “interdiscursivity” was proposed by Fairclough (1992) as an overarching concept of “intertextuality”. Intertextuality is described as “the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 84). He further proposes the classification of intertextuality as manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality. Manifest intertextuality is the explicit presence of one text in another text through the strategies used in the representation of discourse: presupposition, negation, meta-discourse, and irony.

On the other hand, constitutive intertextuality illustrates the mixing of discourse conventions such as activity type, genre, and style related to different types of discourse. Thus, Fairclough (1992) has introduced the term “interdiscursivity” to replace constitutive intertextuality to emphasize that the point of concern is discourse conventions rather than other texts. It is further argued that interdiscursivity is more than just a stylistic expression; it possesses significant implications for social practices (Fairclough, 1992). These social practices also include business communication and marketing advertisements.

To illustrate further, the cases of interdiscursivity have been explored in business advertising, legal documents, news reporting, public administration, and bureaucratic communications. According to Bhatia (1995), the mixing of personal intentions with socially acknowledged

communicative purpose is widely used in a range of professional domains, which results in the mixing and blending of genres.

Against this background of this deep-rooted concept, interdiscursivity, it is stated that this complexity of communication is the result of various factors, “including the ever-increasing use of multi-media, explosion of information technology, multi-disciplinary contexts of the world of work, increasingly competitive professional (academic/business) environment, and the overwhelmingly compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities” (Bhatia, 1995, p. 1).

Therefore, interdiscursivity as it goes beyond the domain of literature to be a part of people’s daily routine in the form of advertisements and news becomes more complex. In this regard, it is pointed out that the construction of social identity in news discourse is an extremely interdiscursive process (Scollon, 2002). However, the meanings of these discourses need an in-depth examination under the domain of critical discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysis deals with each level and aspect of language use including business communication like slogans which have multiple discourses, and the discourses have a variety of meanings hidden underneath the hard shell of the poetic words. The expression of meanings is thus an important and sensitive point in the analysis of a discourse. Moreover, it will continue to be like this until human knowledge progresses surpassing its current state (Bloomfield, 1933).

Therefore, the functioning of interdiscursivity as a special kind of linguistic phenomenon is closely examined in the slogans of international beauty brands in this study. In this exploration, various kinds of communicative functions under the interpretation of interdiscursivity have been observed when these slogans are placed in the lens of critical discourse analysis and the treatment of these functions lies within the scope of discussion concerning the adaptability of language use in terms of interdiscursivity. Due to the differences in the mechanisms behind the working of interdiscursivity, there are different kinds of communicative functions associated with international beauty brands’ slogans. Thus, the interdiscursive nature of the slogans along with the exploration of how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society is the focus of this research.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the concept of interdiscursivity employed in the international beauty brands slogans
2. To analyze how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society

Research Questions

1. How do international beauty brands employ interdiscursivity in their slogans?
2. How do these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society?

Statement of the Problem

The exploration in the domain of interdiscursivity in the slogans of international beauty brands is limited which becomes the basis of this research to fill the gap in the existing literature. The unexplored interdiscursive nature of the slogans particularly of international beauty brands and the way these multifaceted discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society creates a need for the investigation of these points. Moreover, in this study, these areas have been critically examined under critical discourse analysis which has been found deficient in the previous studies in the related field of research.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its detailed investigation to unveil the interdiscursive nature of the international beauty brands slogans which significantly contributes to the domain of critical discourse analysis, especially in the media discourses. In an academic context, it provides a unique and critical perspective to the students of critical discourse analysis as well as marketing to have an advanced knowledge of business language and its social implications. This knowledge can be used for further research on perceptions of consumers and purchasing decisions via surveys and interviews.

Limitations of the Study

The limitation of the study lies in this particularity to beauty brand slogans which restricts its application to other fields. Therefore, while international beauty brands draw an interdiscursive sketch in their slogans incorporating multifaceted meanings, at the same time, the findings of the study may not be relevant to the slogans of the other brands. Therefore, the study may not be applicable and generalized beyond the context of beauty brands which limits its broader application. Moreover, it lacks real-world responses on the idea of feminism from the consumers of these products through practical fieldwork via surveys, questionnaires, etc. which leaves a significant gap for further studies in this domain.

Literature Review

The current study deals with the exploration of interdiscursivity in the international beauty brands' slogans. It also analyzes how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society through the dissection of the words and meanings under critical discourse analysis. Many terms and concepts need to be viewed in depth while carrying out critical discourse analysis. They include vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, and symbols in the Selected text or discourse while investigating their context in a social setting, as it is stated that "Our words are never neutral" (Fiske, 1994, p. 27), thus these slogans are important to be examined critically to determine how ideology and power are embedded in the words of a discourse. However, before analyzing the discourse of these slogans it is important to know what discourse means.

Discourse

Discourse concerns the use of language as a social practice (Fairclough, 1992). Being a social phenomenon, it can be viewed in historical, political, and institutional structures and processes (Pietikainen & Dufva, 2006). It is considered a context-dependent practice that is socially constructed. 'Discourse' has some advantages over 'language' because of the different meanings it covers. It studies the processes and structures, language and thought, social phenomena and meanings around by their analysis. Discourse plays an important role in shaping people's beliefs, making the influence of media on the modern world undeniable (Arshad & Khan, 2021).

Generally, analysis comes from Greek ana-lysis, which means breaking up something or loosening (lysis) the bonds, which implies a destructive approach when combined with 'critical' analysis. Together with discourse, it focuses on the examination of discourse. Thus, the term Discourse Analysis illustrates the idea that it is the relation of language and context (McCarthy, 2009). A discourse and its context are in close relationship; the discourse elaborates its context, and the context helps interpret the meaning of utterances in the discourse. The knowledge of context is a premise of the analysis of a discourse. It studies the language being used, either a spoken dialogue or written text of any kind. According to Van Dijk, (1995), discourse includes words and ideologies from informal conversation to formal institutionalized forms of discussion.

Discourse and Ideology

The discourse incorporates different kinds of ideologies. They are "significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the

forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 87). Additionally, they are “serving the interests of certain groups with social power, ensuring that events, practices, and behaviors come to be regarded as legitimate and common-sense. Ideologies do this subtly, because they inform the way people interpret the world around them, hence hegemony” (Mayr, 2008, p. 11).

Furthermore, Ideologies are systems in mind that are social representations that concern the control towards how people speak, write, act, or understand the social practices of people. These ideologies as socio-cognition conciliate between society and discourse and coincide with the system of mental processes of group members (Van Dijk, 1995). Such ideologies can only be revealed through critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis as a major discipline aims to investigate any phenomena within language variances in social contexts. CDA provides a framework to study the relationship between society and discourse, text and context, and power, and Language (Luke, 1995, Breeze, 2011). As discourse, power, identity, and ideology are nearly associated with each other, critical discourse analysis concerns how discourses produce, reproduce, or challenge power relations and dominance in a society (Van Dijk, 2001).

In addition, CDA addresses broader social problems and external factors, such as ideology, power, discrimination, etc. by drawing on social and philosophical theories to critically interpret multifaceted written and spoken texts (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). CDA thus explores how the microstructures of discourse are linked with and assist in building the macrostructures of society (Mayr, 2008) which is an integral part of the study of how the discourses of the beauty brands' slogans challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society, as it is argued that the researcher in CDA has to unmask the ideology in the text (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Power

Consequently, critical discourse analysis identifies the traces of ideology in a text and investigates power use and abuse via language to exert power (Widdowson, 2007). However, power can be understood in a wider symbolic term, ranging from the power to represent something in a specific way to symbolic power via representational practices. Thus, CDA even assesses the interdiscursive nature of a text by analyzing the power of words. In addition, the data in CDA is empirical and closely linked to

the real use of language, collected from reliable non-literary discourse (Breeze, 2011).

As a text can be comprehended in various ways by different people, because of the difference in knowledge, background, and power position, thus the true and only explanations do not exist (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999). This statement gives the authority to the interpreter to analyze the discourse in many possible ways under critical discourse analysis, without restricting the aura of interpretation. This is because the “right” of one person may vary from the other.

On account of these significant concepts, this research utilizes the CDA approach to analyze interdiscursivity in international beauty brand slogans as it has several advantages over other approaches. It moves beyond the surface-level analysis and helps to explain how and why interdiscursivity is shaped. Therefore, by applying the 3D model to critical discourse analysis, this study explores the interdiscursivity present in international beauty brand slogans.

Theoretical Framework

The media discourse is one of the focal points in critical discourse analysis and the international beauty brands slogans come directly under it. Critical discourse analysis, being a major approach, helps to analyze how language plays a crucial role in society. It is a theoretical view of understanding discourse structures to explore the relationship between power and domination in society (Van Dijk, 2001). There are several notable proponents of the CDA, but Fairclough is the most significant. Thus, this study uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model as a framework to critically analyze international beauty brands' slogans. Fairclough is the pioneer of critical discourse analysis and has given several approaches including a 3D model in his book, "Language and Power," published in 1989, operating language as a discourse. This approach is the backbone of CDA which consists of three important interrelated dimensions; text analysis (description), Processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation), (Fairclough, 1989).

The first stage treats text as an object and its formal properties, which include the linguistic features, such as syntax, lexeme, and structure of text are examined. The second step is interpretation, which focuses on the relationship between the discourse and production. At this point, the analyst interprets the relation between the text and its discursive interface. This is because the text is seen as the end product of the text production process. More explicitly, to comprehend the meanings of the text, it is important to see the relation between the text and its context or creation.

Thus, interpretation is closely linked to the interaction, and an analysis beyond the micro level is carried out at this stage.

The third stage of explanation considers how a certain discourse is linked to the broader social and cultural reality. It is argued that this level of explanation must make everything explicit by explaining how an interaction is linked to the social context (Fairclough, 1989). It must analyze the role of society in the discourse production process and its interpretation in the sense of which social effects it will generate. Its comprehension must be observed concerning the social settings in which

it is spoken or written as Fairclough (1989) argues that all languages are a part of social practice. Therefore, it explores ideology, identity, and power reflected in any kind of discourse ranging from literary to non-literary, such as slogans which remain the main focus of the study. Thus, the selected international beauty brands' slogans have been critically analyzed to uncover their interdiscursive nature.

Research Methodology

This study descriptively examines interdiscursivity employed in the international beauty brands' slogans and analyzes how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Fairclough's 3-dimensional framework, which allows for a thorough exploration of the linguistic, social, and contextual dimensions of the selected slogans.

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is qualitative and exploratory, aimed at uncovering hidden facts and motives behind the selected slogans.

Data Collection

To achieve the objectives of the study, three well-known and globally recognized beauty brands' slogans have been selected as a sample for the study. The three selected slogans of the international beauty brands have been gathered from reliable official websites and social pages of the brands via online sources. The sample of the study is kept at a minimum for maximum accuracy in the results of the research.

Data Analysis Procedure

The chosen international beauty brands' slogans have been analyzed under the Fairclough 3-dimensional framework focusing on the textual, discursive practice, and social practice dimensions. Thus, the study follows the qualitative method of slogans analysis as the investigation is descriptive (Ullah et al., 2020) keeping in view the selected theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis in the next section.

Data Analysis

This section of the study analyzes the selected slogans of international beauty brands using the above-mentioned concept of interdiscursivity under critical discourse analysis through the Fairclough 3D model to unveil the hidden ideologies. The chosen slogans are discussed in detail to examine their interdiscursive nature and how they challenge the role of women in Pakistani society. These brands along with their slogans are L'Oreal Paris: "Because you're Worth It".[‡] Revlon: "Live boldly".[§] And Avon: "Embrace your power".^{**}

Interdiscursivity in International Beauty Brands Slogans

The concept of interdiscursivity in the selected international beauty brands' slogans has been highlighted separately below.

L'Oréal Paris

L'Oréal Paris is a well-known international beauty brand that is famous for its huge range of skincare and cosmetics to cater to diverse beauty requirements. This brand comes with a slogan; "Because You're Worth It" for marketing purposes.

Beginning from the textual level analysis of this slogan, as a part of the Fairclough 3D model, which focuses on the critical examination of the language and words, the discourse of the slogan is direct. The contraction 'you're' emphasizes individuality and involves a straightforward address to women. Similarly, the word "worth" expresses the idea of value and self-worth. Moreover, the use of the conjunction, 'because' suggests that the upcoming discourse is a justification for something.

Moving forward to the interpretation stage of the Fairclough 3D model, the specific selection of words in the slogan of L'Oréal Paris

[‡] <https://www.lorealparisusa.com/>

[§] <https://www.instagram.com/avonworldwide/>

^{**} <https://www.revlon.com/>

indicates that the writer or the marketer has consciously used such vocabulary to change the ideology of women by giving them a sense of confidence in themselves.

Explaining further from the third dimension of the 3D model, this tagline resonates with the idea of feminism prevailing in society. It encourages females in the broader social context for self-care and well-being promoting gender equality. Certainly, such words tap into the concept that this slogan goes beyond the surface-level purpose of marketing (discourse) to the deep-rooted ideology to empower women (discourse) as discourses are important constructions of reality (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, the critical discourse analysis of the slogan reveals that it encompasses interdiscursivity.

Revlon

Revlon is a famous global cosmetics brand that has a rich history of producing and delivering beauty-related products. It has designed its brand's slogan as; "Live Boldly" for promotional purposes. To unveil, when it is textually analyzed with the Fairclough 3D model, it is observed that it cleverly owns a verb like "live", which indicates vibrancy and action. This word is directly associated with life. On the other hand, the use of an adverb of manner, such as "boldly" expresses confidence, courage, and taking risks.

To interpret, it is an assertive call to action by the writer of the tagline to its audience i.e., women. The purpose behind using such linguistic elements is to suggest women gain confidence by applying their product. Finally, to explain this slogan in the social context, it aligns with the increasing emphasis on the rights of women (feminism) in society. It suggests that women also have the right to live boldly like men.

Thus, through the above critical analysis of the discourse present in the slogan of Revlon, it is revealed that it firmly holds interdiscursivity. One discourse is the apparent promotional discourse, and the other one is the feminist discourse. It is because of the complexity of the media discourse which represents different ideological processes (Fairclough, 1995).

Avon

Avon is an internationally recognized brand with a significant contribution in the domain of cosmetics and beauty, having an attractive slogan; "Embrace your Power". Under textual analysis, the construction of the slogan with linguistic elements is quite powerful. It directly incorporates the word "power" to explicitly make women realize their power. Also, the use of the possessive pronoun "your" personalizes the power of women. Moreover, the pairing of power with "your" makes a

strong phrase; "your power" which further implies the agency and autonomy of an individual.

In addition to it, the verb "embrace" in the slogan indicates an action, which has to be taken by the women for themselves. It sounds like an immediate call by the advertiser for the women to take a stand for themselves and accept their power by holding a prestigious position. This signifies an idea related to self-confidence and independence. This shortest construction of the phrase also indicates the focus of the objective and intention.

To call spell on the target audience of this slogan, these words are interpreted under the 3D model as an enforcing idea that the products of Avon are not merely about superficial beauty but are connected with a deeper sense of self-worth for women. The ideology behind using such words is to get aligned with the self-identity of women. As the language used in the beauty product slogans and advertisements is ideologically contested, it celebrates the autonomy of women.

To explain in a broader social context under this 3D model, this slogan explicitly promotes the idea of women's empowerment in society which opposes the existing power structure. It encourages women to know their worth and accept their power. Also, this tagline communicates that a woman can also be confident like male members of society and can face anyone with courage if they embrace their worth and power. Hence, the traces of women's rights (discourse) along with the promotion of the beauty products (discourse) in this slogan favor the presence of interdiscursivity, which has been explored after critically analyzing the discourse under the Fairclough 3D model.

Challenging the Traditional Role of Women in Pakistani Society

After the application of the 3D model, it is clear that these slogans have interdiscursivity hidden in them. This is because, on one hand, these slogans are ways of promoting the products, but on the other hand, they propose a sense of empowerment for the females by using the words like "bold", "worth", and "power" explicitly. This expresses the idea that women are not worthless or trivial objects, rather they are a significant part of society, thus taking feminism on board, under the broader social perspective of the 3D model.

Feminism has acquired some institutional power and thus cannot be ignored or rejected. Feminism refers to a movement having a specific set of beliefs related to gender inequality. It argues that females have been subordinated and suppressed by the power of men, expressed in various arenas (Prus, 1999). It is a projection towards the equality of social, political, and economic power for women in the society. Thus, by incorporating interdiscursivity in the international beauty brands slogans;

for promoting products and promoting feminism, these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society.

The traditional role of women in Pakistani society is seen as homemakers, inferior to men, and possesses no significance. It further emphasizes the exclusion of women in the domains of power and dominance. Layering with the balm of subjugation polished with submissive acts in front of male members of the society, they are pulled out of the ideology of empowerment, self-expression, and confidence in Pakistani society. Therefore, the selected slogans of beauty brands question this traditional ideology and bring forth the concepts of self-assurance, boldness, and independence.

These slogans leave behind the fact that the media rejects to present women truthfully (Anusha, 2008) by focusing on how they want to live, such as “boldly”, being accepted as “worthy” as male members of society, and holding “power” equally, as the influence of media on the world is undeniable and discourse plays an important role to shape people's beliefs. (Arshad & Khan, 2021). Thus, the multi-layered discourses in these slogans seen as ‘interpretative art’ (Fairclough, 1995) have been successfully interpreted and critically analyzed under the 3D model given by Norman Fairclough.

Conclusion

The current study has examined the concept of interdiscursivity employed in the international beauty brands' slogans and has analyzed how these discourses challenge the traditional role of women in Pakistani society. It is clear from the critical discourse analysis of the international beauty brands' slogans that they carry interdiscursivity incorporating different ideologies in the form of discourse. They include the apparent product promotional discourse and the hidden women empowerment discourse which are revealed through the dissection of these slogans with the lens of the Fairclough 3D model in critical discourse analysis. Thus, it is revealed that these slogans cleverly blend the elements of empowerment and marketing.

Consequently, such discourse has a broader social implication leading to question the traditional role of women in Pakistani society. These slogans challenge the existing ideology attached to women as being domestic. Such discourse has the potential to bring societal change, urging women to go beyond the domestic role. Thus, such media discourse shapes people's beliefs (Arshad & Khan, 2021) and reshapes the conventional dynamics of Pakistani society associated with women by promoting equal rights (feminism) for them through the power of words.

Thus, this study highlights the interdiscursive nature of international beauty brand slogans and their implications in the broader social context. Because of this, it holds great significance in the domains of critical discourse analysis and marketing communication. It also sets the stage for further research on the consumers' (women) perceptions of beauty brands to investigate the practical and real-life influence of the discourses hidden in these slogans.

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