



Linguistic analysis of e-print media advertisements in Pakistan: practices and functions

Ambreen Shahnaz

Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS IIT WahCantt, Pakistan.

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ABSTRACT

Language is an important medium of communication. Keeping in mind the importance of language in the mind making process, this study aims to examine the language of e-print media advertisements of Pakistan. The linguistic analysis has been done at semantic, phonological, morphological and syntactic level. The practices along with the functions of these linguistic devices have been analyzed. E-print media advertisements from various domains have been selected for the present study. Qualitative Discourse Analytic Approach to Text was used to analyze the linguistic devices. Through the linguistic analysis, it has been observed that language of advertisements has a very innovative and peculiar form which is unique, fascinating and memorable. Despite the fact that language of advertisements is breaking the set rules of language, it appears to be very attractive and contributing towards the success of advertisements which ultimately lead towards the sale of the product. It has been found that the language of advertisements is very rich area to be investigated by the linguists.

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Introduction

Aim

This study presents linguistic analysis of e-print media advertisements in Pakistan at phonological (Alliteration, Rhyme, Repetition, and Onomatopoeic) morphological (Blending, Acronym, autographic modification) syntax (emphatic constructions, interrogatives and deixis) and semantics (pun, metaphor, cliché, epigram) level with best suited examples and critical analysis of the effects achieved through these linguistic devices in advertisements.

Background

Advertising is one of the most important marketing strategies which explicitly affect our behavior. Advertisements of radio, print media, e-print media and television are achieving sublime importance in society nowadays. A successful organization owes a lot to good advertisement in this competitive era (Akhtar *et al.*, 2011). The basic purpose of advertisement is to increase the profitability or in other words sale of the product. According to the present marketing strategies, the basic purpose of advertisement is to create a desire and thirst in consumer's mind which may ultimately affect the consumer in such a way that it can lead to the sale of the product. (Singh, 1998).

History of Advertisements in Pakistan

In Pakistan also, advertisement industry has been developed a lot as it uses innovative techniques to keep pace with the world. As Siddiqui (n.d) asserts that the advertising process evolved and developed quite speedily. As far as Pakistan is concerned, the only significant work related to historical background of advertisements have been found by Siddiqui.(n.d) who categorizes the history of Pakistani advertisements into six distinct categories. He analyses that the advertisements of first era (1947-1964) were limited to print media and radio and were not that much developed. In the second phase (1964-1978),

television made a tremendous change in advertisement style and trend. Third era (1978 – 1988) and fourth era (1988 – 1998) saw a revolutionary change due to arrival of colored TV and introduction of new technology. In the fifth (1998 –2008) and sixth era (2008 – to date), the new technology completely overpowered the whole industry with a more focus on famous celebrities.

Language of Advertisement

Language of advertisements is manipulated in a very technical and fascinating way to make the client remember it for a longer time which may ultimately lead towards sale of product. However, Leech in his book (1972) writes that the language of advertising belongs to so called 'loaded language'. Leech sets following principles of advertising texts: Attention value, Readability (by means of simple, personal, and colloquial style), Memorability (most important in the process of advertising is to remember the name of the product) and Selling power (P 25-27). Leech (1966) refers to rhyme, alliteration and parallelism as "special patterns of regularity" in language of advertisement. (P. 175).

Since 1980, after the arrival of multinational company, advertisers have started giving special attention towards the language of advertisements in Pakistan. After examination, researcher has observed that though role of advertisements in Pakistani society has been explored to some extent but the linguistic analysis of advertisements in Pakistan still needs attention of linguists. In order to fill this gap, the researcher has attempted to analyze the language of e-print media advertisements

Significance

The research can be useful for the copy writers who write advertising texts and all those people who are working in advertisement industry. The present work can also be useful for the students of English language and all those people who are

interested in language of advertisements. This research establishes the fact that various linguistic devices are used in Pakistani e-print media advertisements as a marketing strategy. It is observed that the copywriters use particular vocabulary and language structure to target the specific domain of audience.

Research Questions

- 1-How various linguistic devices at semantic, syntactical and phonological levels are exploited in e-print media advertisements of Pakistan?
- 2-Which function is performed by these linguistic devices in advertisements?

Literature Review

Akinbode (2012) talks about advertising as one of the oldest professions of the world. He talks about the role of language as a powerful tool which makes advertising unique and effective. He has discussed all the essential elements of advertising language which enables advertisers reach the target audience and influence the consumer's purchasing attitude. This sociolinguistic analysis proves that apart from the language used in advertising to persuade consumers, some extra-linguistic factors such as context of situation and illustrations also play significant role in deciding the overall texture of an advertisement and its effectiveness.

Emodi (2011) has analyzed the language of advertisements from semantic point of view and is of the view that language of advertisement is highly innovative and fascinating. In order to keep the information in the minds of audience for a longer time, the advertisers manipulate the language in a very persuasive way. "Therefore the novelty and freshness of advertising language is justified for the purpose of attracting people's attention, winning their trust and swaying their thinking". (P.10)

Charles (2001) talks about the language of advertisement in this way, although advertisements take liberties as far as linguistic conventions are concerned, they still do not disregard all of the conventions..... Advertisements disregard rules and conventions that end up affecting mainly the reference to the product and would make readers have to reconstruct them and insert a referent. In doing so, readers will arrive back at a certain entity as the referent and at the product as the focus of the advertisement. This pattern of rule-breaking then is very valuable and beneficial to the realm of advertising as it helps advertisers achieve their goal of marketing a product as one that is desirable. (P .25)

Ezejideaku and Ugwa (2010) have explored the language of African advertisements. They have observed various linguistic devices at phonological, semantic, syntax and morphological level. They have proved that language of African print media advertisements is more focused on 'aesthetic' issue than commerce. All these linguistic devices contribute in success of advertising and leave a permanent impression on the mind of the reader. (p.15)

Kagira (2009) is of the view that the language of advertisement not only informs the audience about the product but also possessing persuasive effect. "From a linguistic point of view, it is evident that, among other things, designers of adverts pay attention to the morpho-syntactic, semantic and phonological aspects of the language used in an advert". (P.1)

Djafarova (2008) has analyzed the function of pun in advertisements. Through qualitative content and pragmatic analysis, the ambiguous nature of pun is explained as it can be interpreted differently according to the context. Pun not only conveys double meaning but also creates a sense of humor and

sometimes ambiguity which gives readers liberty to interpret the meanings according to their cultural context.

Methodology

Qualitative Discourse Analytic Approach to Text was used to analyze the linguistic devices used by the e-print media advertisements of Pakistan. For the linguistic analysis of advertisements, the basic framework was taken from Ezejideaku and Ugwa (2010). They have analyzed the advertisements of Nigeria by using certain divisions. However the original framework has been modified to fulfill the requirements of the present study as some categories have been included or excluded.

Population

A population of e-print media advertisements was selected for linguistic analysis.

Sampling

A sample of forty advertisements from e- print media of Pakistan was selected from five different domains: Telecom (4), Beverages (12), Automobile (3), Services (6) and Home appliances (5)

Data Analysis

In order to convey the data in a more understandable way, the linguistic analysis will be done at four levels; namely the phonological, morphological, syntactical and semantic levels. The critical analysis of the function of these linguistic devices in advertisement has also been examined.

The Phonological Analysis of Advertising

Phonology is a branch of linguistics which deals with sound patterns in language. It deals with the sound patterns in the language which not only unconsciously affects the subconscious of the readers by making the adverts a part of the subconscious for a longer time. Phonological aspects can increase the charm of the language of advertisements in order to fascinate the readers. The copy writer of advertisements does use phonological devices to attract readers' attention through the melodious effect. In the present study, the phonological devices of my concern are alliteration, repetition, and onomatopoeia.

Alliteration

Alliteration employs the repetition of a particular sound in the first syllables of a series of words or phrases. These sounds are usually consonant sounds. An example can be seen from the following whitening milk advert:

Chaika chaska chai ka

It has been found that the phonemes /tʃ/, /k/, /ɔɪ/ and /ɑ:/ are at the initial, middle and final positions respectively in the four key words: Chaika, Chaska, Chaey and ka. The basic purpose behind is to attract reader's attention due to melodious effect. One can also notice the contrast between the vowel sounds /ɔɪ/ //, in / tʃ ɔɪkə / and /ɑ:/, in /k ɑ:/ . Due to these sound patterns, the slogan can become memorable for the reader.

Do the dew

The use of /d/ sound which is part of the brand name of the product 'dew' as well as part of the word 'do' is alliterative. The sound /u:/ in Do and /ʊə/ in Dew along with repetition of /d/ sound is very fascinating to listen. This musical effect creates a remarkable impression on the imagination of reader.

Another good use of alliteration can be seen in the *Pizza Hut* advert in which the sound /p/ is exploited for sound effects

Personal Pan Pizza

This repetition of /p/ sound is creating a very melodious effect and makes it possible to remember the advertisement for a longer time due to the melodious effect. The melodious effects help in remembering the adverts for a more longer time.

Repetition

The second feature is repetition. This repetition can be of any particular word or brand name to appeal the aesthetic sense of the reader. The advertisers intentionally use repetition as a persuasive strategy. Repetition of certain words effect the psychology of consumer through emphasis strategy. It creates a strong emotional impact upon the reader. The strategy of repetition is creating a very strong effect in Pizza Hut add.

Aik aur Rupya, Aik aur Pizza, Aik or baar

Here repetition of *aik aur* is not only creating a very melodious effect but also motivating the client to use the pizza through the emphasis by repetition of word *aik aur*.

In the advert of New Collection the repetition of New has created a very fascinating effect.

New Colletion : *New Tiles, New Look, New collection of tiles in store*

Here New is not only emphasizing the newness of tiles but also conveying the message that the use of these tiles will give a new look and freshness to the life.

Another example can be found in Pizza One ad

Grand Opening, Grand Celebration, Grand offer

There is a repetition of the word *Grand* with capital *G* giving the impression that everything related to Pizza one is grand and gorgeous. This repetition is convincing the reader to test their services once to check the grandeur associated with their services. By establishing a credible position, they want the client trust their quality and services.

One good example can be found in *Master Celeste foam* adverts where repetition of *get up* and *go* is not only giving melodious effect but also creating the impression that whosoever will get up after sleeping on this mattress will go out in the world with a new vigor and energy.

get up get up and go go go

One can observe that both the word *get up* and *go* are not just repetition, rather they are conveying the implicit meanings relating these two words with the comfort and later on with freshness and activeness of the body

Rhyme

Rhyme refers to the repetition of similar sounds which might create a relationship between two contrasting words. Rhyme increases the pleasantness of words and makes them memorable for a longer time period.

Telenor: Talk more win Crore

One can observe the rhyme between *more* and *crore* giving a very melodious and rhythmic effect. The underlying message is that while talking through *Telenor*, one is not wasting his money as it usually happens when one avail any service rather one is getting opportunity to win more money.

Call melao Talk shawk say faida uthao !

Again the repetition of identical sound can be observed in *melao* and *uthao* which is creating a very soothing audible effect.

DEW: Wohi Dew ik Naya View

Similarity of sound between *Dew* and *View* is very much evident. It is also implying that by drinking dew one can have a new view of everything around him.

Onomatopoeia

This is a poetic device which involves the resemblance between sound and meaning for its effect. An example of this is seen in the Oolala milk advert.

Oolala! ...oooo.Illllaaa

The sounds *oooo* and *laalaa* are very meaningful. It is suggesting the delicious quality of milk which can be experienced by this milk. These sounds are not only creating onomatopoeic effect but its name of the milk as well.

Another very good example of onomatopoeic effect can be observed in the advert of Pakola Flavoured Milk

aaahaa... coool

Again the interjection *aaahaa* has been used which is suggesting the freshness and taste of milk. The delicious and cool taste of the milk has been very beautifully suggested through this interjection.

The Morphological Analysis of Advertising

Morphology deals with the internal structure of the word. It deals with the word formation and derivation as well as relationship between words. Advertisers often manipulate these morphological elements through blending, acronyms, coinage and orthographic modification, among others. All the above mentioned innovative morphological techniques enhance the effectiveness of adverts along with giving new words to the language.

Blending

Blending is a morphological process in which two words combine to make one word. These words are not part of common vocabulary that is why; they give more startling and memorable effect. It is human nature to remember unusual things and happenings. A very good example of blending has been observed in Canolive oil commercial.

Canolive

The above mentioned word is combination of canola and olive oil emphasizing the double qualities of *oil* i.e. it is mixture of *Canola* and *Olive* oil.

Another example can be observed in advert of Pakola Flavoured Milk

FLavouRite

This word is combination of flavor and right employing that the milk is Flavor of right milk for health.

The traditional words might not have attracted the audience's attention but the new coined words immediately catch the unforgettable attention.

The same example can be observed in advert of beauty and skin care advert where we see the following word

COSMOSURGE

This word is combination of cosmetics and surgery which hints towards the center where cosmetics surgery takes place

Word Coinage

The advertisers try to be innovative in language. They give new words which might not be existing in vocabulary before. The new words are coined by putting either the prefix or suffix with the base. For example, in the advert of **Cheetos**, we observe new word coinage. *Cheeta* is an Urdu word and by combining affix *os* with it a new, unique word *Cheetos* has been introduced to give a startling effect.

Same is true in the advert of *Sugarita* where joining an affix *rita* with an already well known words *sugar*, a new word has been introduced. Being different and unique, the word is supposed to remain in the mind of readers for a longer time.

Acronyms

Acronym is combination of first letter of words which itself becomes a new word. Advertisers use this special strategy to be short as well memorable in the competitive world of advertisements. An example of this is found in the *Boss plastic furniture* where they used the following acronym.

RED: Reliable Economical Durable

Sometimes simple abbreviations are used. A very good example can be found in *LG* advertisement where the name of the product itself is abbreviation of its caption

LG: life is good

Another very good example is found in *Sprite* ad where a very famous acronym has been used

BOGO: buy one get one

The use of these abbreviations not only makes the statement pithy and concise but also makes it possible for the client to remember the product through this association for a longer time.

Orthographic Modification

Orthographic modification is deviation from the traditional correct spellings in order to catch reader's attention. Let us consider the following examples:

U fone

Here one can observe that the traditional spellings of *Phone* have not been used. Thus the misspellings attract the reader's attention more forcefully than the traditional spellings.

Soooper biscuit

Where again the word *supper* has been misspelled to make it more unique and startling for the reader

Bigg Apple

One can see a clear example of misspellings where *bigg* has been pronounced wrongly again to keep these odd spellings in reader's mind which ultimately may lead to the sale of product.

The Syntactical Analysis of Advertising

Syntax is the study of sentence construction in a particular language. In advertising, the word might not be joined in a traditional way but even then the sentences convey clear intended meanings. I will analyze the emphatic, interrogative and deictic constructions of sentences where the sentences might not follow the tradition SVO or in Urdu SOV structure conventionally but still they have clarity of meanings. The unusual construction of sentences does not baffle the readers at any stage rather they give a sense of more creativity by making the language of advertisements as an art.

Emphatic Constructions

Emphatic construction means sentence construction where quality of the product is emphasized through the use of series of adjectives or adverbs together. Some of the examples have been given below.

Canolive oil: *switch to a healthier, happier, smarter life-only with CanOlive*

Mc Swirl Ice-cream: *Swirling, twirling and loving MC Swirl*

Telenor Persona: **Easy** to join, **simple** to save & **freedom** to do more!

Colgate Herbal: **Mazboot** dant, **sayhatmand** masuray... naturally!

Diamond Paints: **Luxurious** Silk Emulsion, **Superior** Scrub Resistant. **High** Stain Resistibility. Anti Fungal

The use of consecutive adjectives and adverbs leave the reader in no doubt about the quality of the product. These modifiers have been used to enhance the effectiveness of the product. In the above mentioned advertisement, the modifiers

can serve as a reminder for the reader besides ensuring the quality of product.

Interrogatives

In interrogative statements, questions are asked rhetorically in such a way that answers of those questions are very much evident. This syntactic strategy is adopted to make the reader brainstorm their mind to find answer of the question which may ultimately lead to better understanding and remembrance of the product. For example, the rhetorical question has been used in the advertisement of NJI Life insurance

IS your next move INSURED?

The above simple question inspires the reader to think about the secure future which is the real purpose behind this question. The same technique has been used in the advertisement of a bank namely UBL

Does your money work as hard as you do?

In this example the reader has been forced to think that earning money is a difficult process, and it is necessary that risk should not be taken by keeping the money at some insecure place. Another example can be seen in *Junior Horlicks* baby food

What is A-Z NUTRITION?

This alludes to the food perfection in providing nutrition to the children.

Advertisers do this in order to attract the attention of client towards their problems and the expected solution which is provided by the company

Deixis

The advertisers attract the emotional attention of the audience by using the second person pronoun. Through this strategy, it appears as if the consumer has been addressed directly. The advertisers do this to give personal touch and make them do a favorable decision about the product being advertised.

Canolive: *Give yourself the olive advantage*

Pure Life: *Striving to serve you!*

The above mentioned analysis shows that advertisers attract the attention of client by making them a participant in communication either by asking question or by using second person pronoun.

The thorough analysis of syntactic of advertising manifests that "the advertiser tantalizes the consumer by making them part of the advert, either by posing questions to them or by the use of the second person pronoun" (Ezejideaku and Ugwa: 2010). The advertisers also employ emphatic expressions by the use of various adjectives or adverbs together and of course the ultimate aim is to allure the audience through all these tricks.

The Semantic Analysis of Advertising

Semantics deal with the inherent meanings of expressions. Advertisers do their best to catch the attention of the audience through their catchy words and sentences. In order to get the desired result, advertisers make use of different strategies at semantic level to ensure that the message is informative as well as effective. However, in the present study, I will consider use of pun (play upon words) metaphors, clichés and epigram in advertisements.

Pun

Pun is a form of witticism which involves a play upon words to achieve different meanings. The use of pun is shown remarkably in the advert of the *U fone*:

Celebrating it with U!

Here we can observe pun upon the word *U. U phone* is the name of the company as well but here double meanings can be

suggested by considering that reader is being addressed as *you* rather than *U fone Company*. On one hand, it is suggesting that *U Phone Company* is celebrating with U-you, the consumers. On the other hand, the hint is related to the celebration with the *U phone company*.

Another very good example of pun can be observed in *Handi cooking oil*

Handi khuli to ghar mehak utha

In Pakistani culture, *Handi* is a special utensil used for cooking. The above sentence is suggesting that once *Handi* is uncovered, the smell of food is enough to fascinate *ghar* means the whole family and *Handi* is the name of cooking oil as well so pun upon the word is very much evident.

Another very good example of pun can be observed in *Meezan Oil & Banaspati* advertisement

Har Cheez Meezan Mein Achi Lagti hay

Here, the advertiser plays upon the word *Meezan*, contrasting the original meaning of the word with the name of the oil. *Meezan* literally means to be in balance. On one hand, it has been emphasized that everything should be balanced in life in order to make it worth living. On the other hand, the statement is stressing upon the use of *Meezan cooking oil* which can make our food more tasty and acceptable

Metaphor

A metaphor is a literary figure of speech which makes a comparison between two apparently different things or where one attribute is shifted to other entity by claiming that one thing is the other. Some of the similarities between two different objects are highlighted due to common characteristics. The advertisement of Yunas Metal Work Pvt. Ltd uses a very beautiful metaphor for their fan.

Guranteed Life Partners

One can see a clear instance in the above mentioned example where metaphor of life partner has been used for *Yunas Fan*. In our society, the term life partner is used for spouse depicting someone who is going to join one throughout one's life. But here *Yunas Fan* has been characterized with this quality of life time partnership due to its quality and durability.

Metaphor refers to the similarity between things that are otherwise far apart from each other in time and space. This can be seen through the advert of *Swift Car*

Feel Youung Drive Young !

You can feel the connection between young and Swift car. It can be replaced as

Feel youung Drive SWIFT

But the copywriters intentionally use this strategy to build up a relationship between youth and SWIFT. By this substitution, he wants to imply that energies and vigor associated with youth can be experienced through this car as this car has all that is positive related

Clichés

Cliché is a trite or overused expression or idea. It is a statement which becomes trite due to its overuse. Such kinds of clichés are intentionally used to evoke feelings of intimacy between product being advertised and the client. The basic idea behind is to develop feelings of familiarity with the consumer who is already habitual to use these clichés and can remember the product due to this feature.

U phone: *Soch hay app ki*

WAVES: *Naam hi kaafi hay*

Suzuki Liana: *Music is food for the soul*

The above mentioned clichés are very famous particularly among the youth and are memorable for the client which is the ultimate aim of the copywriter.

Sometimes clichés are modified as per the need of the product. By breaking the old monotonous pattern, the modified clichés give more effective and startling effect and look beautiful and attractive in their essence. By changing the original cliché, they manipulate the basic demand of the client who wants to save money along with the quality product.

Nido Fortified: Doodh ka Doodh budget mein aasani

Keeping in mind high inflation rate in Pakistan and consumer's concern before spending each single rupee, the above cliché has been deconstructed in a very effective way to target the intended audience. Most of the times, advertisements exploit the inner desires of client and this is what they have done in this advertisement as well where they have subjugated their desire of saving money. Here, the real cliché is

Doodh ka doodh pani ka pani

Another example can be observed in the advertisement of bread and butter café where they modify famous cliché

Once upon a time

As

Once upon a thyme

The basic purpose is to make the audience remember the name of their café by using a well-known cliché.

One more example of modification can be observed in the advertisement of a hotel NANDO'S

Where they modify the famous cliché

Birds of feather flock together

As

Friends of a feather share together

to highlight the facilities offered by hotel where 'friends of feather' can have a very memorable time together. Another example can be observed in the advertisement of bread and butter café where the advertisers modify famous cliché

Two heads are better than one

Is modified as

2 are better than 1!

in order to emphasize the attractive package offered by this café.

The modified clichés are in fact breaking the monotonous, old trite and providing a new startling effect to the readers

Epigram

Epigram is a short and pithy statement which carries paradoxical meanings. The statements might have denotative as well connotative meanings. The beauty of this paradoxical remark can be observed in the ad of *Mercedes E Class*

Having a great name means having a great deal of responsibility

Feelings of responsibility are found in human beings not in non-living object like Mercedes car but, this particular car carries a great name so it means it is taking responsibility of standard and good quality in order to maintain its great name.

Again in the advertisement of Toyota *Altis 1.8 VVT-I* a very tricky remark has been used.

Upgrade your Life Style

Apparently, it appears to be just a suggestion to upgrade the life style but it has been employed that by buying Toyota Altis one will be able to automatically upgrade the life style. The copywriter is directly hitting the common urge of today's man who wants to raise his life standard.

Conclusion

The primary motivation behind the present study was to fill the gap in knowledge regarding language practices and function of advertisement in Pakistan. The present linguistic analysis of Pakistani e-print media advertisements establishes the fact that advertisements have their own peculiar style which makes the language of advertisements a science as well as art. It has been observed that the copy writers use various linguistic techniques at phonological, morphological, syntax and semantic level to make advertisements more attractive and memorable. It has also been examined that the language of advertisements also carries explicit as well as implicit meanings. Advertisements are usually full of various linguistic devices like clichés, blending, repetition, alliteration, emphatic constructions etc. to grab the attention of consumer. Vaicenoniene (2006) also establishes the fact the advertising texts use a variety of manipulative language devices to capture attention, convey the message and persuade the consumer. The language of advertisements appears to be pithy as well as witty. It is so attractive and fascinating that it creates a possibility to retain in the long term memory of the client which is ultimate objective of the advertisers. Some set traditional grammatical rules have also been negated at various places but it adds further beauty and charm to the language without creating any ambiguity. Linghong (2006) is also of the view that

Along with the rapid development of social economy , advertising is becoming increasingly popular. In order to secure a number of readers and to compete with many other similar advertising messages advertisers try to make their advertisements ads as effective as possible. They use various linguistic devices to catch attention arouse desire , induce action and contribute towards satisfaction. (1)

This study also provides a ground to investigate the more fascinating linguistic devices used by the copywriters as the devices which have been examined in this study show a very limited picture of linguistics of advertisements.

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