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MEDIA DISCOURSE: A PRAGMA-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at investigating the role of speech acts and choice of distinctive language style in understanding the hidden message in advertisements through using pragma-stylistic analysis approach. The Pragmatic-Stylistic approach is a language strategy that focuses on the linguistic abilities of interlocutors to convey the intended meaning, as well as the speaker's own distinctive style of conveying a piece of information. The data consists of nine advertisements collected online from social media forums such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. The first three advertisements are about beauty products, the fourth, fifth and sixth advertisements are about health products, and the last three advertisements are regarding food products. The discourse and linguistic style of social media advertisements is analysed with the help of speech act theory, textual conceptual functions, and AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Attention) principles. The analysis concludes that by employing different linguistic devices, sounds, rhymes, figurative language, graphology, speech acts and AIDA principles, the advertisers attract the people and reach to their ultimate goal, which is to sell their products. This study contributes in the field of media discourse analysis and pave a path for other researchers to conduct studies in the field.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The role of language in advertisements is an important tool to persuade others to have a specific outcome. Language can be used to manipulate a message, or to create a particular aspect or essence of a message by using different authorial styles of a language that could also become identity markups. Every writer has his or her own writing style as they are free to use different literary devices, figurative language, choose different lexical items to create their own writing style, and also play with different syntactic structures.

Bach and Harnish (1978) stated that one may inquire or research these linguistic styles, but there are various factors that affect the writing styles of the linguistic variation of a writer or a specific era, i.e., such as social status, class, education, beliefs, culture, and the contextual background too. The styles of language can be interpreted in a true sense when the listener is fully aware of the intended or hidden meanings known as pragmatics. In pragma-stylistics, familiar with the styles of a language and also with the pragmatics, because a certain message can have a particular impact after being set in a particular context.

Advertising is content created for the purpose of persuading audiences, readers, viewers, or listeners to act on products, services, or ideas. The goal is to influence consumer behaviour in relation to a product, service, or concept. Commercials can entertain, inform, misinform, concern, or warn Cook (1992). Text, music, video, photography, and graphic designs are all examples of advertisements. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television broadcasts, stage events, websites, billboards, posters, wall paintings, autos, and other media can also be used for advertising a product. An advertisement to be effective, it must be strategically placed where it could be easily visible to the target audience and have a language that is distinctive in style for attracting an eye of the audience.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study is set out with these objectives:

- To identify the pragma-stylistic devices used in the Pakistani advertisements on the social media
- To explore the pragmatic effect of the linguistic style of language used in the Pakistani advertisements on social media

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of media discourse and pragma-stylistics. The study further highlights the different linguistic styles of a language used in the Pakistani advertisements to have impact on the audience. It also gives insight into the effects of different pragmatic aspects of the speech in Pakistani commercials. This study addresses different pragmatic aspects of the speech acts performed by social media advertisements.

DELIMITATION OF STUDY

This study is limited to the geographical area of Pakistan as the social media advertisements selected deal with the products of Pakistan or Pakistani advertisers. This study is limited in terms of time span as well. The data has been collected from November, 2021 to April 2022.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant number of studies have been conducted in the disciplines of pragmatics, stylistics, media discourse, social media advertisements, and the discourse of social media advertisements.

Fomukong (2016) has analysed different lexical structures, words, and the figurative language employed by the writer or speaker in commercials. In the paper, the researcher has analysed the different discourse structures of advertisements to investigate the impact of the language on the target audience actions, thoughts, concepts and ideas. The researcher has collected data of a Dangote cement advertisement in Bamenda-Cameroon and focused structural and textual analysis of advertisements and the impact of context in revealing the text's functions and underlying meanings. This research suggests that the marketers or the advertisers use a variety of creative methods or multiple linguistic expressions to establish a trust of consumers on the product.

Ibrahim & Waheeb (2017) have discussed the Pragma-stylistic approach as an interdisciplinary field of stylistics and pragmatics by analysing the speech act (SAT) in drama texts. The research data for this study has been taken from the eight excerpts of Harold Pinter's play "A Night Out and the Birthday Party" to explore the stylistic effects of themes of the play and the intentions of the characters with the help of the theoretical framework of Speech Act theory. They concluded that the significance of these speech acts in delivering the dramatist's intended message via the contextual elements which are presented about the characters and events are also shown by the pragma-stylistics analysis of hybrid speech acts in the play, and that these nuances may help to ensure that the socio-psychological links between the characters and the audience of the play are properly interpreted.

Abuya (2012) uses a pragma-stylistic approach to the inaugural speech of the newly elected president of Nigeria in the General Election of the year 2011 to investigate the speech acts, locutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts as the research aims to explore the speech act theory of Austin (1962) and Searl (1969). The researcher has analysed the speech of the President of Nigeria with the help of the theoretical framework of Pragma-stylistic and Speech Act theory to investigate the speech act types and answer the question as to how the identified speech acts have significant meaning in political speech. The Inaugural Speech of the President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, is taken as the research data to be analysed. Twenty sentences were extorted out of the speech from which almost forty speech acts were driven out. The findings suggest that there are speech acts that are assertive 55%, directive 10%, verdictive 15%, commissive 75%, and declarative 45% of the total inaugural speech. The paper concludes that in his inaugural speech, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan concentrated on words that conducted commissive actions more than other speech acts, which indicates

that politicians are more likely to express gratitude to voters following a victory in the polls.

Namwandi (2019) has analysed the stylistic analysis of advertisements to explore the stylistic devices in advertisements. A sample of the study has been conducted in the Oshana region with the theoretical basis of knowledge of AIDA (attention, interest, desire, and action). The study suggests that a suitable linguistic style has its own prominence among advertisements. Namwandi in her thesis followed an explorative research design within a qualitative research approach, and the method of analysis was content analysis of the sample advertisements. Total advertisements were taken as the population of the study, then a judgemental and convenience sampling method was followed to narrow down the population to the sample of twenty SME advertisements in the Oshana region. This paper follows a theoretical framework of textual conceptual function to analyse the text function of the advertisements, linguistic stylistic theory to analyse the stylistic devices in advertisements, critical discourse analysis to analyse the discourse or language use in advertisements, and the AIDA functions of advertisements, which are attention, interest, desire, and action. These theoretical frameworks prove to be a theoretical lens to analyse the data. This research concluded that the advertisers of the chosen commercials employed language devices (word classes) such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, pronouns, and verbs. The study has also adopted diverse designs to create some interest and attention among the viewers by using colours, slogans, font sizes, font faces, pictures, and other elements such as grammatical, phonological, graphological, lexical, and semantic levels that are used in the advertisement to create a particular sense of engagement. The study has suggested that the marketers or the advertisers' use of language contains figurative stylistic devices, such as allusion, metaphor, visual onomatopoeia, allusion, assonance, alliteration, imagery, neologism, affixation, synecdoche, and other AIDA principles to grab the attention of prospective consumers and enhance sales.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The philosophical research worldview is a pragmatic worldview, which, according to Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey (1992), Murphy (1990), Patton (1990), and Rorty (1990), investigates "what works" for objective reality. The data was taken from the advertisements on Pakistani social media. The study addresses the research problem as a phenomenon where a pragma-stylistic approach is used to analyse the advertisements on social media in Pakistan. According to Cresswell & Cresswell (2018), a research sample is formulated which is representative of the population. Etikan, and Bala, (2017) also advocate that "Sampling and sampling methods", the judgmental and purposive sampling methods under the non-probability technique addresses the required sample. The same has been adopted for the study to meet the objectives. So the best suited research sample for the study in hand is narrowed to three categories or themes of data: 1) beauty products, 2) health products, and 3) food products to analyse the pragma-stylistic effect of social media advertisements.

Total 9 advertisements in number have been taken as sample run on digital media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and google. The advertisements consist on images, posters, slideshows, and videos. The advertisements were downloaded with the help of IDM. Those ads which were in the form of videos have been transcribed.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is followed as a method of analysis to explore the pragma stylistic devices and their impact on the target audience with the help of theoretical framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pragma-Stylistic is a linguistic strategy that focuses on the speaker's intended meaning and what he wants to convey, and their unique style. Individual modes of expression are seen to be different and have characteristics that distinguish them from others. Babjide (1990) defines stylistics as the study of styles. Holman (1980) states that stylistics is the arrangement of authorial narratives and the expression of an idea and the intention of the author as the same as what Crystal and Davy (1969) looks at the manner of writing; Coleridge and Wetheril (1974) define it as a way of creating meaning and its impact through art. Wales (2001) sees the style as an exclusive way of expression through writing or speaking. She believes that various styles are appropriate for different settings, and even the same action could have stylistic variance. According to Leech (1981), pragmatic analysis of language aims to explore the element of meaning generated by the way utterances or articulations are used and how they contribute to the context in which they are used. The Speech Acts theory is a field of pragmatics, fundamentally concerned with how interlocutors (speakers and listeners) comprehend one another in the face of their potential to say what they do or do not intend to convey and communicate contextually and pragmatically.

Additionally, the Speech Acts theory is referred to as the "How to Do Things with Words Theory." Austin (1962) divides speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Lesley Jeffries' Textual Conceptual Functions (TCFs) hypothesis is also applied in this study. Stylistic judgments are made based on textual data from social media advertisements in Pakistan, as the current study addresses the linguistic styles of advertorials, which brings stylistics into a critical context inside the text. And here, we also analyse the language of advertorials with the lens of the AIDA principle of commerce, which studies how we can use language to get the viewers' attention to constructing interest and desire to take action by buying a product.

DATA ANALYSIS

The discourse and linguistic style of social media advertisements is analysed with the help of speech act theory, textual conceptual functions, and AIDA principles. The first three advertisements are about beauty products, the advertisements from forth to sixth are about health products and the last three advertisements are about food products. All of the advertisements are analysed one by one.

Advertisement: 1**Video URL:**

<https://www.facebook.com/474653995929343/posts/4791700374224662/?app=fbl>

Product: Lux Soap (Beauty Product)**ANALYSIS:**

The very first advertisement for the "LUX" soap, which was downloaded from Facebook, is about beauty and skin glow:

Don't let winter dull your glow" "velvet glow", "Jasmine & Vitamin E" "7 beauty ingredients", "Chand sa roshan chehra" "brings out your natural glow with moisturizer enriched formula.

In this ad, the advertisers performed different speech acts through the stylistic linguistic devices to persuade the audience to take action, as per AIDA, by using the metaphorical statement "chand sa roshan chehra and velvet Glow," then the different speech acts were locutionary "Don't let winters dim your glow" illocutionary "7 beauty ingredients" and perlocutionary "brings out your natural glow with moisturiser enriched formula". Textual conceptual functions in this advertisement develop a sense of beauty as their identity, which draws the attention of the listener or reader, and it arouses the desire to look beautiful according to the standard set by commercials, so the audience takes an interest in buying this product. Pragmatically, advertisers are only interested in selling products, but stylistically, they have beautifully summarized the textual and conceptual functions.

Advertisement: 2

Video URL: <https://youtu.be/NKlcWKxHSxo>

Product: Sapphire's great Friday deal (Beauty Product)**ANALYSIS:**

The second advertisement is about Sapphire's great Friday deal, which was accessed through YouTube, and is about the Friday sale of cosmetic products. The text was written in a white font over a blue background, which is quite prominent to attract the audiences' attention. According to AIDA, "Sale" was written in the biggest font and can be clearly seen, and it catches the attention of the reader at first sight, and the "upto 50% off" written with a separate background has its own importance in creating interest in the readers and arouses a desire to take action to buy these sale products.

Advertisement: 3**Video URL:**

https://www.instagram.com/p/CF9zkEeB-Wb/?utm_medium=copy_link

Product: Faiza Beauty Cream (Beauty Product)**ANALYSIS:**

The third advertisement is for "Faiza Beauty Cream" which was taken from instagaram. The discourse of this advertisement is transcribed as Main Aiza Khan, Ap meri kamyabi ki wajja janna chahty hein." Mera Jawab hay Aitmad, jissy hasil krna hy boht mushkil, Aitmad mery fans ka mgh pay, Aitmad mery parents ka unki beti par, apni riwayat par, sub say barh k mera khud par aitmad, aur mghy ye aitmad dya Faiza Beauty cream nay, jiss sy bnai main nay apni pehchan, Faiza beauty cream, Pehchan lo khud ko.

In this ad, the advertisers use the sense of confidence gained through the textual and conceptual function of beauty. As different speech acts are performed, locutionary "Ap meri kamyabi ki wajja janna chahty hein", illocutionary "Mera Jawab hay Aitmad, jissy hasil krna hy boht mushkil" and perlocutionary "aur mghy ye aitmad dya Faiza Beauty cream nay, jiss sy bnai main nay apni pehchan". This advertisement is setting a standard of beauty and relate the same standard to confidence. This concept of confidence caused by Faiza beauty cream creates a sense of inferiority as the style of language implies that confidence can only be achieved through fair colour and those whose colour is not fair are lacking the confidence. So, the target audience are encouraged to buy this product for gaining beauty and confidence, and in return achieve the lost identity.

Advertisement: 4***Video URL:***

<https://www.facebook.com/farooqkhan702/videos/2487400248216109/?app=fb>

Product: Sensodyne Rapid Action (Health Product)**ANALYSIS:**

The fourth advertisement is for "Sensodyne Rapid Action" which was downloaded from YouTube. The ad says, "

You are about to see real people experiencing real sensitivity pain, (then some people with sensitivity pain are shown), Ever felt this way? Beat sensitivity pain, Sensodyne rapid action k sath, clinically proven relief in sixty seconds, long lasting protection, Daily fast relief toothpaste.

In this advertisement, the speech act and the textual conceptual functions first arouse a sense of sensitivity to pain and then relief from Sensodyne toothpaste. Locutionary "You are about to see real people experiencing real sensitivity to pain", illocutionary "Ever felt this way? Beat sensitivity pain", perlocutionary "Long lasting protection". AIDA principle contributed in a sense that some people affected by pain were shown relieved after the use of this product. The

concept triggers the audiences' interest in the product keeping the severity of the tooth pain in mind.

Advertisement: 5

Video URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_NV8cuxLWI&t=3s

Product: Dettol (Health Product)

ANALYSIS:

Ye wada hy ye irada hy apny hathon sy mulk ko bachana hy, Ye wada hy ye irada hy apny hathon sy mustaqbil mehfoz bnana hy, Hathon ko dhona itna Mushkil tou nhi, pooraay 20 seconds hath dhoona bholna nhi, Jab hm naw hongy healthy, mulk apna agy barhay ga nhi, lana hay aik waqat jab ho na koi bemar, aur mil ky ho aik roshan Mustaqbil tayyar. Wear a mask, hand wash, vaccinate, maintain 6 feet distance, Is global handwashing day, detol partner kr rha hy Dunya k sub sy baray school network TCF ky sath, dettol products khareden aur TCF ky aik classroom k bachon ko poray saal ki taleem mein hamara sath dein, aur Pakistan ka mustaqbil Mehfoz aur roshan kren.

The advertisement downloaded from the Youtube is a lyrical based song made for the international day of hand washing where the use of linguistic devices makes it surprisingly interesting to viewers as the repetition of consonance and assonance in sentences has been repeated many times at the end of words, such as wadda irada, bachana banana, bholna dhona, and bemar tayyar, where vowels "a" are repeated multiple times, similarly consonant "d,n,r" are repeated which derives attention from viewers by creating the rhyme of this song. The catchy linguistic features have been used for persuasive effect to make the audiences conscience of side effect if the product is not denied by the audience. The persuasive language entails in developing interest in the target audience to keep themselves healthy. To sell the product more effectively, the company recourses to lexical items 'Pakistan ka mustaqbil Mehfoz aur roshan kren' that incite the sympathy of the audience. For example, the school's name TCF is mentioned in the ad to arouse the sympathy of the audience. The audience are made to believe that the more product is sold out, the more charity would be invested in imparting free education to the poor kids Dunya k sub sy baray school network TCF ky sath, dettol products khareden aur TCF ky aik classroom k bachon ko poray saal ki taleem mein hamara sath dein .

Advertisement: 6

Video URL:

<https://www.facebook.com/Whs.NxtEnt/videos/460447074677566/?app=fbl>

Product: Panadol (Health Product)

ANALYSIS:

Har roz Emergency, is nimatna meri zindagi ka hissa hy, Kam ky doran aur ghar mein bhi, kiu kay ye sub mgh par bharosa krty hein, isi lye main koi bhi chance

nhi lay sakti, khaas tour par aam dard aur takleef mein, tabhi mein is bat ka pora khyal rakhti hon kay meray paas panadol moujod ho, Pakistan mein Doctors ki sub sy zyada tajweez karda panadol, dard mein moassar aram dilaye ta k ye sb younhi mgh pr hmesha bharosa krty rahein, Panadol mera bharoosa.

This ad is taken from Facebook. Different speech acts have been performed to meet the AIDA features of advertisements to drive the attention of viewers by creating a scene of anxiety due to fatigue and work load. The locutionary speech act "mein is bat ka pora khyal rakhti hon kay meray paas panadol moujod ho" urges the interest of the viewers to buy this product because of the confidence provided in the advertisement via the illocutionary act "Doctors ki sub sy zyada tajweez karda panadol, dard mein moassar aram dilaye", so they can take some action by buying this product as it creates a sense of satisfaction because of the statement given by a doctor, which is a perlocutionary speech act "Panadol mera bharoosa".

Advertisement: 7

Video URL:

<https://www.facebook.com/foodpanda.pk/>

Product: Food Panda (Food Product)

ANALYSIS:

The seventh advertisement is related to the delivery of food items by "**Food Panda**" boosed via facebook page of Food panda:

mood ho daaal chawal ka, ya crispy burger ka, home chef par hy sari variety, tu abhi celebratte kro, foodpanda kro. Homechef celebrate kro, foodpanda kro! Home chef pe tap karo!

This commercial is related to the category of food items, and lyrical stylistic techniques are used by creating rhyming words, which sound so fresh. The repetition of food panda home chef service has been repeated again and again to get the attention of the viewers and to help them remember the name and products of the food service. The use of rhyming words and also mentioning different food items creates interest among viewers and urges the desire to order some food items. After all, the stylistic approach of language may influence the appetite of viewers to take an action, and the pragmatic approach of advertisements mostly competes with their competitors to use the textual features of the language in a sense that may force the audience to take some action, according to the AIDA principle of commercials.

Advertisement: 8

Video URL:

<https://twitter.com/Waleedkaleem1/status/1418264851269525511>

Product: Knorr Noodles (Food Product)**ANALYSIS:**

Eighth advertisement was taken from Twitter, which is about Knorr Noodles. ye insan boht bewafa hy, phly safi school sy ata, aur lunch box ka maal bhai kay sath sharing scaring kr jata, kbhi sandwich kbhi kabab rooll, aur ami ko dikhata khaali lunch box, Hooshiyar!... phr bus zindagi barbad hogai safi ata hy aur no lift, lunch box bhi khali, jab sy ammi nay knorr noodles isko lunch me dena shuro kia hy sub badal gya hy, Maana boht yummy hy aur pait full ho jata hy magar ye nainsfi hy akely akelay tiffin chat kr dya jaye, Afsoos ka makam hy. Knoooooorrr, iska magic hi aur, Hoga mghy kia?

This advertisement is in the food category, but by creating an irony and pun with the cat, the advertisers articulated their discourse beautifully through the locutionary act "Hooshiyar!", which gets the audience's attention with reference to the lunch box, and then it develops an interest through the illocutionary act "Jab sy ammi nay knorr noodles isko lunch me dena shuro kia hy sub badal gya hy" which pragmatically denotes the change of attitude by changing the food items and arise a desire to taste this food. The perlocutionary act "Knoooooorrrrrrrrrrrrrrr, iska magic hi aur" is to urge the viewers to take action to buy this item. The textual features of this advertisement depict the repetition of sounds, such as via assonance, and consonance, which deal with the repetition of vowels and consonants in a word. Here some of the sounds are repeated, such as "ata jata, dikhata", the "t" consonant is repeated, and the vowel "a" is also repeated at the end of the words. On a surface structure it looks like that cat is complaining of infidelity but actually advertisers created a suspense among the viewers to buy the product and its taste is as it seems so yummy.

Advertisement: 9***Video URL:***

<https://www.nidolove.com/Video>

Product: NIDO (Food Product)**ANALYSIS:**

The ninth advertisement is also about the food product "NIDO", having taken the image from Google advertisers. The ad to protect their toddler's self-discovery "with a unique blend of nutrients." It mentions "stronger immunity, brain development, strong bones," and "one plus growing up formula." The textual elements in this advertisement for "NIDO" are forming a concept of a mother's care for her children. The pragma-stylistic aspects of advertisement strongly correlate with the worry of mothers about the health of their children, as it binds imaginative powers of health to persuade a mother to make their child stronger, to make his or her immunity stronger, and to develop their brain by following this one-plus-growing formula of Nido, but the commercial language is pragmatically dealing with the selling of products only.

CONCLUSION

The current study employed the Pragma–Stylistic approach, which is a language strategy that emphasizes the speaker's intended meaning and the message he or she wants to express in his or her own distinctive style, as the individual styles of expression are seen to be distinct and hence possess features that set them apart from others. The online data of advertisements taken by social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc, helped to analyze the pragma-stylistic features of the social media advertisements under the lens of AIDA and the textual conceptual features of language to inquire into the different speech acts performed via language. This study concluded that pragma-stylistic devices have been found in social media advertisements that arouse the attention, interest, desire, and action of the viewers by using different stylistic devices through the linguistic abilities of speech acts. 1) Locutionary, 2) Illocutionary, and 3) Perlocutionary. By employing different linguistic devices, sounds, rhymes, figurative language, graphology, speech acts and AIDA principles, the advertisers attract the people and reach to their ultimate goal, which is to sell their products.

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