

A Semantic Analysis of Language of TV Commercial Slogans

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Abstract

This paper highlights the semantics types of meanings of the slogans of TV commercials. In this paper, the researcher will discuss Semantic types of meaning by Geoffrey Leech (1981). Semantics deals with the meaning whether it is literal or non-literal. This study focuses on the semantic analysis of Pakistani TV commercials and the researcher has selected the data with very keen observation to highlight the objectives of this research paper. The researcher has limited the study only to Pakistani TV ads. The data for this study is selected year-wise from 2019- 2021. This research data highlights Emotive, Associative, Reflective, and Social meanings that are projected in a sample of the study.

Keywords: Semantics, Associative Meaning, Emotive Meaning, Reflective Meaning, Social Meaning.

Introduction

In this paper, the researcher wants to show how Pakistani TV commercials have hidden meaning in their content. These meanings can be associative, stylistic social, reflective, or emotive. This researcher has collected sample studies of ads including Amreli Steel (2020), Surf Excel (2019), Surf Excel (2021), Glow & Lovely (2020), Sufi Cooking Oil (2018), and Shan Masala (2020). In this study, the researcher will elaborate and describe how semantic meanings are represented in code as well as core words. This is descriptive and qualitative research. The outcomes of this research will represent how cultural, societal, ideological, and power relations can be projected through adds with the mean of semantic meanings.

Many other researchers have done work already that is related to this research paper. This paper will address the issues of how meaning is misunderstood especially when it involves culture. It is because meanings are changing over time and it varies from culture to culture. Many advertisements are banned in Pakistan; it is because of language problems. The problem of language is not in the sense of why a particular language should be used; it is about the choice or choice of words. Advertisements are viewed by everyone, including all social classes, so it is important to look at commercial language and what it means (Abdullayeva, 2022).

TV commercial slogans are concise and memorable phrases designed to capture the essence of a brand, product, or service. These slogans employ linguistic strategies to convey meaning, create associations, and persuade audiences. Semantic analysis, a subfield of linguistics, provides a framework for examining the language used in TV commercial slogans to uncover their underlying meanings and persuasive mechanisms (Emodi, 2011).

Significance

This study will pinpoint every minute detail that has been projected on electronic media. After analysis of the corpus, we will find the relationship between language, identity, and culture. The researcher will try to fill the gaps that have been misrepresented or highlighted as identity markers and misinterpretations of commercials. The researcher will also mention social class relationships and how they use language as a powerful tool to convey their message to the audience. This study will also discuss emotive and emphatic effects that have been projected in TV ads and the audience admires those who are natives of Pakistan and love their culture but live in a foreign country.

Objectives

This study aims to:

- Highlight how language is used for marketing purposes
- Content-focused to make an emotive and associative effect on the audience

Research Questions

- How do Pakistani TV commercials represent cultural meanings?

- Why there is a need to project semantic meanings by using cultural context in Pakistani TV advertisements?

Delimitation of Research

This research is limited to Pakistani commercials only. The study focuses on semantic analysis of Pakistani TV commercials that have been selected for the sample of study. The research study is selected from 2019-2021. It is important to mention the years because the research will describe how meanings are changing over time.

Theoretical Framework

Semantic analysis of TV commercial slogans draws from various theoretical perspectives:

- Structural Semantics i.e. to analyse the relationships between words, phrases, and concepts to identify patterns and meanings.
- Pragmatic Theory i.e. to examine how language is used in context to communicate effectively.
- Cognitive Linguistics i.e. to investigate how language influences thought and perception.
- Critical Discourse Analysis i.e. to explore how language reflects and shapes social relationships and power dynamics.
- Semantic Strategies in TV Commercial Slogans i.e. TV commercial slogans employ various semantic strategies to convey meaning and persuade audiences:
 - Metaphor: Creates associations between concepts (e.g., "The Ultimate Driving Machine" - BMW).
 - Alliteration: Enhances memorability through repetitive sounds (e.g., "Finger Lickin' Good" - KFC).
 - Hyperbole: Exaggerates benefits or features (e.g., "The Best Part of Waking Up" - Folgers Coffee).
 - Puns: Exploits wordplay to create humor or cleverness (e.g., "I'm Lovin' It" - McDonald's).
 - Inference: Implies benefits or values without explicit statements (e.g., "Just Do It" - Nike).
 - Emotional Appeal: Evokes emotions to create connections (e.g., "The Happiest Place on Earth" - Disney).
 - Semantic Fields: Activates networks of associated concepts (e.g., "Think Different" - Apple).

Semantic Analysis of Selected TV Commercial Slogans

- "I'm Lovin' It" (McDonald's): Uses a pun to create a positive emotional association, implying enjoyment and satisfaction.
- "The Ultimate Driving Machine" (BMW): Employs metaphor to convey performance, precision, and luxury.
- "Just Do It" (Nike): Utilizes inference to encourage action, implying empowerment and motivation.
- "Finger-Lickin' Good" (KFC): Combines alliteration and sensory language to create a memorable and appetizing phrase.

Literature Review

Many researchers have worked on semantic analysis in advertisement and how wisely language is used. Choice of words plays an important role in content because it attracts the audience to buy products. Ahmad et al. (2019) state that language has power and can manipulate the audience's mind because when we are watching something, it affects our minds, and the content of commercials for marketing purposes is described in a way to achieve their target product living opportunities including health services.

The paper aims to reveal underlying semantic meanings to obtain the mentioned purpose. Andina, Pratiwi, and Utami's (2021) study focuses on English code-mixing in French advertisements. Mixing English has become common in the Pakistani context as well; the researcher will also discuss English mixing in Pakistani TV commercials. Barclay, Earley, and Boone (2019) state that language is a meta-discourse that begins with 'informing' the audience and then 'manipulating' the audience.

Many sociolinguists have done work on language in the world of linguistics (Bulut, & Yurdaisik, 2005). The current study fills the gap found in semantics studies concerning the Urdu language.

The research is significant for TV viewers as well as the researchers who are related to the field of semantics. It is useful information which covers the previous work that has been done. Another researcher has done on TV commercials slogans that make the audience attracted towards the products so that people consume and benefits go to the company.

Data Collection

The researcher has selected a corpus for study from Pakistani TV Channels that are mostly viewed by the audience, especially Geo TV, Hum TV, and ARY. Some ads are collected from YouTube by mentioning the year. The sample of this study includes Amreli Steel (2020), Surf Excel (2021), Glow & Lovely (2020), Dalda Cooking oil (2021), and Shan Masala (2020).

Methodology

This is a qualitative type of research and it is descriptive. The data is collected from year-wise advertisements from YouTube and the most viewed Pakistani Channels including HUM, Geo, and ARY. The purpose is to elaborate on how meanings have changed over time and the study is categorized according to product categories such as detergents, cooking oil, beauty products, steel companies, and spices. The corpus of the sample study is Amreli Steel (2020), Surf Excel (2021), Surf Excel (2019), Glow & Lovely (2020), Sufi Cooking Oil (2018), and Shan Masala (2020). Semantics is the branch of linguistics that deals with the study of meanings. Geoffrey Leech (1981) described the types of meaning as, conceptual or denotative meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective or emotive meaning, reflected meaning, collective meaning, and thematic meaning. In this paper, the researcher will only focus on Associative, Reflective, Emotive, and Stylistic or Social meanings.

Associative meaning is an expression of individual mental understanding of a speaker by hearer and it is associated with ideas or images. It is affected by context, background, time, and culture. Reflective meaning describes more than one conceptual meaning. Emotive meaning, in this type of meaning emotions or feelings are attached to the word or phrase. Stylistic or Social meaning defines meaning in the social context in which the word or phrase has been used or uttered.

The researcher will discuss types of meaning step by step by analyzing the commercial and will discuss what kind of meanings have been hidden or conveyed. The researcher has applied semantic analysis and has taken some Urdu version lines from ads and then translated them into English. The researcher will apply Leech's types of meaning to the corpus of study. In some ads, the researcher has found stylistic meanings more prominent than associative and in some others, emotive meanings are more dominant than reflective meanings. The researcher has described that an advertisement is a combination of different types of meanings and the language is used as a manipulation that affects the minds of the audience and companies benefit from it. The depiction of social classes is also symbolic in advertisements as it creates an emotional and harmonious effect on the viewers.

Analysis

The researcher has applied Leech's type of meaning to the sample of study to analyze what kind of meanings are conveyed in these commercials. The researcher is going to analyze one by one each commercial and will discuss in types of meanings.

Associative Meaning

In Associative meaning analysis, the researcher will describe the associated images or ideas that are used in the ads. In Amreli Steel's (2020) ad, we see a lower-class family and a girl who wants to study abroad her father supports her but their other family members get angry with them and they haven't talked for four years. The famous slogan of this commercial is 'Apki Tarhan Solid', which means 'Solid as you are'. It does not mean you are 'Solid' in the sense of stone or concrete but the idea behind this statement is 'When your decisions are strong then nobody can harm you'. Another statement from this commercial is 'Hmari society achy admi bnati ha sahi admi nhi', which means 'Our society made good man but not right man'. The image and idea behind this statement is that in our society a person who says yes to anything is a good man whether that matter is right or wrong. There are very few who say no to wrong deeds and society does not accept them. This is how this message is conveyed indirectly. 'Mai aka khyal rkhu ga', means 'I will take care of you', the image behind this statement is

that if anyone wants another one to do his/her work as soon as possible or do any sort of illegal work, then a handsome amount of money is offered to take advantage of it.

Surf Excel (2021) takes very heart-touching and emotional ads during the month of Ramadan. In this commercial, Saaya home orphan child visits the Old Age Home. Sahara old age home is full of life without their loved ones. The slogan or hashtag of this commercial has an associative image or idea that is 'ek mukammal jahan' which means 'A perfect place'. The idea or image of this commercial is a way to help families experience happiness.

Surf Excel (2019), in this commercial there is a little girl who wants to eat Biryani but her mother cannot make her brother make it for her by mixing rice and soup and presenting it as Biryani and the girl becomes happy. In this commercial the associative meaning is in the statement 'Itni tezi sy kaise bany gi?' it means 'How can I make it (Biryani) quickly?'. It is impossible to cook Biryani quickly because it's a long procedure and as in the commercial the little girl didn't eat anything she only wanted to eat Biryani and her brother made it for her.

Glow & Lovely (2020) commercial has given the idea of Fair & Lovely replaced with the name glow & Lovely. Because "nikhar say bhar k milay ga HD glow" means that 'you get more HD glow. It has the image that the beauty product will not give you a glow anymore and the company has added something new to the product name. The statement 'fair & lovely' ka naya naam ab 'glow and lovely is associated with the name of the product. It will give you an extra HD glow to your skin.

Shan Masala (2020), in this commercial, we see a duo of a daughter and a father. The daughter is a working woman and the father stays back at home. When the girls come home, she cooks for her father. The slogan of this commercial is "khana banana sirf tumhara kaam tu nahi" which means that 'cooking is not just your job'. The image and idea behind this sentence divide the rules equally and does not define work for only one gender.

Dalda Cooking Oil (2021), in this commercial a stepmother prepares food for his child, and the mother forbids the child to eat unhealthy things. The hashtag of the Dalda brand has an associated meaning as 'Maa ki Mamta' which means 'mother's love'. And the other is 'jahan mamta, wahan dada' which means that 'where there is love, there is dada'. This statement gives the feeling of a mother's love. The idea behind the Dalda brand is to have quality products and one can easily trust that their products are Halal and fresh.

Reflective Meaning

In this type of meaning the researcher will analyze those statements that have more than one conceptual meaning.

Surf Excel (2021), has a statement that reflects more than one meaning 'sath rahe gy, tu koi b akela nahi rahe ga' It means, 'If we stay together, no one will be left alone'.

The meaning of this statement is that during the situation of orphanages and old age homes, their lives are empty with the color of happiness and love of a family. They can live together then they live happily. Another meaning can be if they live together and feel each other happiness then no one can be left with the affection and love of their loved one.

In Amreli Steel's (2020) ad, the statement 'Apny bal pe kuch kry ga to zyada maza aye ga', means 'If he works on his behalf, then it will be better'. This statement can be interpreted in two ways. First, it means if one works by his/her efforts then it will give happiness and satisfaction to one's parents more rather than seeking help or finding any shortcut to get out of problems. Another meaning can be if one does not work on his/her behalf then one's parents will not be satisfied because they know their son/daughter might have done the particular task with the help of another person or maybe has done it from an illegal source.

Surf Excel (2019), in this commercial there is a rhythm of a song by a little boy as 'Tez tez tez ye hath chalaye, tez tez tez ye hal nikaly, tez tez tez sb kch kry', it means that 'Very quickly it works, solves and do everything'. This statement has more than one meaning as the little boy did everything very fast and this could mean that he is working and removing stains from clothes quickly.

Glow & Lovely (2020), in this commercial the reflective meaning, can be analyzed through the statement 'Q k nikhar say bhar k mily ga HD glow', which means 'Because you get more HD glow'. This statement gives multiple meanings as; the company has changed the ingredients with the name or added something new that will brighten up the skin. Another meaning can be, might this product be out of range because the name of the product has changed and the formula of beauty product costs more so it is not easy to approach.

Shan Masala's (2020) Father's statement from this commercial is "tumhari ami hoti naw, tu kehti waqat py ghar a jaya karu" which means 'If your mother was here, she would tell you to come home on time'. The reflective meaning is that coming home on time or it is not safe and the other reflective meaning is that her father would stay home alone all day waiting for his daughter.

Emotive Meaning

In this type of meaning the researcher will analyze a sample of study based on the emotive effect that is conveyed in commercials. In Amreli Steel (2020) commercial, there is a line 'Ghar walo ki khwahishain, kbhi social pressure lekin Abba ko kbi Hilty nhi dekha', it means 'Desires of family members, sometimes social pressure but I have never seen my father lose his strength in any way'. The emotive meaning of this statement is that whatever situation one faces in his/her life, but never loses his/her strength. There is an emotive feeling that is associated with the father. It is because the father is like the backbone of the family, who bears everything and always wants to make his family happy.

Surf Excel (2021), in this commercial the emotive meanings are associated with the happiness of orphans and adults in old age homes. The line creates an emotive effect when the children go to the bus after finishing off their day and both sides don't want to leave each other environment, especially one child who wants to stay back with an elderly man. The old man used very emotional lines are. "inhu ny apnoo ko khoya hy, or hum ny b", which means "they have lost someone and so we have" and one child responded with a suggestion that "sath reh lain gy tu koi nah akela rahe ga", that means "if we stay together, no one will be left alone". It is a color of happiness in their life.

Surf Excel (2019), in this commercial there are emotive effects, as in the commercial a little boy tries his best to make Biryani for her younger sister and he does so and presents it to her like a real plate of Biryani and she becomes happy. This commercial has shown brother-sister bonding and love for each other.

Shan Masala (2020), in this commercial many statements, have emotive effects especially "tumhari ami hoti tu kehti, kay khana banana sirf tumhara kaam tu nahi" which means that 'if were your mother here, she would say that cooking is not only your job'. This makes this commercial emotional, it is like when a mother cooks food for her family, it is filled with love and the food is delicious. But when the mother passed away, food was not only the responsibility of a daughter or a sister. It is the responsibility of the whole family.

Dalda Cooking Oil (2021), the stamen that has an emotive effect is 'meri mummy benaw, easa hi khana banti thi', which means 'My mother used to cook like this'. This gives the mother-son relationship a feeling like a son knows how his mother cooks food. This is the true feeling of this beautiful Mother-son relationship and even after the mother left, the son did not forget the taste of the mother's food.

Stylistics or Social Meaning

In this type of meaning, the researcher will analyze the sample of study based on stylistics or social meanings that are used in the social context. In Amreli Steel (2020), 'Purani gari, Ghr sarkari lekin phr b khush', means 'old car, public property but happy'. This statement has social meaning as you have an old car but you are satisfied, you do not have your property but are still happy. It means that a person, who has an old old-fashioned car or house, does not complain about anything in his/her life. Another statement in this commercial that has social meaning is 'Khandan ki lrki Bahir print jaye gi', which means 'Girl from the family goes abroad for studies'. It is an injustice that boys are allowed to study abroad but girls are not and in Pakistani culture it is not allowed. But now societies have accepted this reality and allow them to study abroad. In this commercial, some elements of Pakistani culture have been projected.

Surf Excel (2021), in this commercial, has a statement that can be analyzed in light of social means that if we stay together we can find our family and love. No one will lose the love of another. This statement gives a very strong message to the audience that if you are determined to do anything then you can do it in any way.

Surf Excel (2019), in this commercial the little girl, has used the word 'Biryani' but the real one is 'Biryani', so it has a stylistic effect because the word 'Biryani' is associated with Pakistani food and culture.

Glow & Lovely (2020), the famous line in this commercial is "Ab har chehra karey glow" which means, 'Now the glow every face'. The idea behind this statement is that according to the new name of

Fair & Lovely, every face shines with an extra glow. This commercial has the stylistic word 'Extra HD Glow'; it attracts the audience and makes them curious about what it does with the skin.

Shan Masala (2020), in this commercial, shan Masala shows that refining gender stereotypes by sending a message 'khana khana or khilana kisi ek ka kaam nahi' means that 'eating and feeding is no one's business' and another statement ' khana banana sirf tumhara kaam tu nahi' means that ' cooking is not just your job'. In these two statements, the culture and society's terms are reflected. Like all other equity of gender, there is no specifying work for only one.

Dalda Cooking Oil (2021) In this commercial the statement 'jahan mumta, wahan dalda' gives meaning to a mother's love for a child and every day she cooks different types of food for her child. It gives social meaning every day we see so many brands with so many titles but this Dalda brand title ensures the consumer that you are in trusted hands. There is nothing to doubt about the quality of our product. This is for marketing purposes only and as we see in this commercial Dalda products are also available in Toronto so that means now this brand is exporting their products to other countries as well.

Conclusion

In this paper, the researcher has discussed how meanings are presented in commercials. Some statements in commercials have a double meaning and convey a literal message to the audience. In some commercials, the researcher has highlighted the powerful statements that impact on audience and bring a change in society. It is not easy to accept the change but we can do it if we are determined to. Language is a powerful tool to convey a message and if this tool is used with a special kind of word choice then it affects more than ordinary words.

Discussion

There are some statements in commercials that have double meanings and convey a literal message to the audience. In some commercials, the researcher has highlighted the powerful statements that impact on audience and bring a change in society. It is not easy to accept the change but we can do it if we are determined to. Language is a powerful tool to convey a message and if this tool is used with a special kind of word choice then it affects more than ordinary words. The findings of this study favored these studies (Noor, et al., 2015; Robert, 2013); Shah, & Saher, 2019; Shariq, 2020; Skorupa, & Dubovičienė, 2015; Syarifuddin, & Hasyim, 2020).

Implications

Semantic analysis of TV commercial slogans reveals the complex linguistic mechanisms underlying their persuasive power. By understanding these strategies, advertisers can craft more effective slogans that resonate with their target audience. Additionally, this analysis highlights the importance of language in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes.

Future Research Directions

1. Investigate cultural variations in slogan interpretation.
2. Examine the impact of slogan semantics on consumer behavior.
3. Analyse the evolution of slogan language over time.
4. Explore the relationship between slogan semantics and brand identity.
5. By exploring the semantic analysis of language in TV commercial slogans, researchers and advertisers can gain valuable insights into the ways language influences consumer perception and behavior.

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