

Intertextuality: An Effective Tool in Selling Products Through Advertisements

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Abstract

The study explores that how intertextuality is used to put certain effects on the readers and attract them to buy that particular products. The main goal of advertising is to gain readers' trust and interest positively. This is achieved through such advertisements which appeal to the readers. Sillars (1991, p. 35-63) has explained that the effects are gained when the advertisement and the reader share the knowledge. The study is qualitative in nature and CDA, discourse practice analysis model is applied to conduct the research study. Six different advertisements are used from different newspapers to analyze and to illustrate the functionality of intertextuality. The results of the study are that when advertisements are relevant to the identity of the society, it creates curiosity in the reader to buy it. Thus intertextuality is very effective tool in the selling of products.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Advertisements, Media, Reader's Trust

Introduction

Advertisement is one of the most common tools for getting attention of the people to some particular product. According to Merriam Webster dictionary (Heller & Merriam-Webster, Inc, 2005, p. 21), it is the action of calling something to the attention of the public through paid announcements in media is done by the sellers especially to attract the consumers by using different means. They use their slogan in a very attractive way, most of the times these slogans are taken from saying, proverbs, social environment as well as according to the psyches of the people and they mold it according to their product and instill the ideas in the minds of the masses. This research focuses on the advertisements published in print media of Pakistani newspapers and analyzes their intertextual links with the people and society. Critical discourse analysis used as a tool to interpret the discourse.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach. CDA sees language as form of social practice. This is the field which emerged from critical linguistics and it is commonly used in sociolinguistics. In development of CDA Norman Fairclough is the most important one. CDA works as tool to access and understand what the language meant. Fairclough explains:

“to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between, (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such

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practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 80-90).

According to Fairclough, text, communication, and language should always be considered in their social contexts. The major function of text is just not to explain the things in the world or world itself but to connect it with some meaning, fabricate and shape the perspectives. Discourse can be considered as an active relation to reality (Fairclough, 1992, p. 18-52). Fairclough has delineated three characteristics of discourse which describe its operation within social life, as 'part of the action.' These are:

- Genres (ways of acting)
- Discourses (ways of representing)
- Styles (ways of being)

Genre refers to some particular way of manipulating and framing discourse. Examples of genre are the lectures, church sermons, interviews and political speeches. Discourse is crucial in accessing the means by which apparent aspects of the world can be mold into different positions or perspectives. This social effect is dependent upon the audience accessing, comprehending, using and resisting this discourse. Discourse should not be considered in isolation; rather, discourses act upon and influence one another in an act of intertextuality.

Intertextuality is very common in advertising, the term intertextuality is often discussed in terms of analyzing the literary text and finding their links to the existing work of literature but these days these techniques are commonly used in media research which helps in analyzing films, advertisements, cartoons and finding their links of origin.

Intertextuality is the application of a communal, media or literary “text” within another communal, media or literary text. Intertextuality involves cultural interest, emotions, individual opinions behaviors and attitudes of target readers. In literature or in Advertisements most of the times authors or producers use material that is relevant to the caliber of target audience or readers. Intertextuality involves “common practices” that add to the reshaping of existing ideas, attitudes and identities. It can also be taken as a kind of Remix or Restructuring of already existing thoughts. At times it is also seen as a method of referencing text and its background. Intertextuality is sometimes used “to decode” the particular message to make it understandable for the audience.

Origin of Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality is connected to post-modernism and most particularly to that part of post-modernism which was having impact of critical theory. Intertextuality is used by most of the modern writers like T.S. Eliot and David Jones. They have used references of the previous works in their writings. According to supporters of this theory the basic thing for existence in this world is language and the entire world seems full of texts. In intertextuality all the contexts seems to be represented by the text itself.

This word was first used by Julia Kristeva in her work “Word, Dialogue and Novel”. She was a French linguist. Her notion of intertextuality refers that every text is presentation of another text. A text according to Julia Kristeva is reshaping of text which already exists. Intertextuality is molding of one text in which many utterances are taken from one text and are employed to another text (Allen, 2000, p. 222). She related this intertextuality mostly to the literary texts but today it’s having a bit different interpretation. Today people take intertextuality as any concept, idea or thought that has been used prior by somebody.

It could also be said that the origin of intertextuality is present in linguistics of 20th century especially in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure’s sign system’s influence on intertextuality can be seen from two points; one point is that “Sign” is not an indication of an object in the real world rather it is a blend of both “Signifier” and “signified”. The other point is that Sign, signifier and signified are referential. For example, “tree” can refer to other similar sounds like, “bee” and “see”. Above mentioned was some information about origin of intertextuality. Further there are some forms of intertextuality which is further categorized into two types:

1. Book in a book

This form of intertextuality refers to an extract mentioned in another book or secondary text. In this form of intertextuality author basically refers to the title, name, famous character or a scene of a text into secondary text. This kind of intertextuality can be taken as an assessment of the scene or a character in the primary work that how it was presented in the primary work. It could also be taken as remix of the previous work according to one’s own understanding.

2. Other “Text” in a book

This is the second form of intertextuality. In it a brief reference of social “text” or media is given in another text. For example, reference of film, TV show, Movie or song. The difference between literary texts and these texts is this that literary texts have narrative quality.

Intertextuality in Advertisement

Intertextuality is commonly found in advertisements these days Julia Kristeva distributed text into two axes, one the horizontal and the other is vertical. Horizontal refers to connection of author and reader to a text and vertical defines the connection and relationship of one text to the other text (Kristeva & Moi, 1986, p. 109-147). Many of the researchers like Tanaka (1994), Cook (2001), and Chandler (1997) proposed that how intertextuality is used in social sciences and the world of media. They said that intertextuality in media is used as a tool illustrate connection and relationship between the present and previous text of the same genre and in advertisements the sellers try to arouse the attention and memory of their readers through peoples existing experiences. What they already have in their mind about that particular idea. Intertextuality explains the texts within advertisements itself which helps in interpreting the meaning of the advertisement. The second text employed in an advertisement does not need to work hard

in order to get their readers to the message it is conveying but the meaning of the text is easily transmitted to the reader because of his background knowledge of the subject.

The nature of intertextuality does not remain same throughout but it keeps changing according to the occasions and festivals, as we can see very common examples of advertisements in our society, here the source text of the advertisements are changed. On the occasion of EidulFitr which is considered as the occasion in which sweet dishes are made and distributed in the neighbors, so the advertisements are also revolve around such things for example, kheer, rasmalai, shahitukry and may more dishes like that we can find on our media channels and in newspapers. Such kinds of advertisements are advertised by food companies.

Research Questions

1. What is intertextuality and how it is used in advertisement to gain particular effects about the products?
2. How advertisements gain the attention of the people and reflect social norms of a particular society?

Literature Review

Woods proposes advertisement as a form of communication. The sole aim of the advertisement is to persuade the reader what they are saying and showing and gain the trust of their consumers of the promoted product. This intension of sellers is fulfilled when the advertisement share the values and knowledge which the readers are already having in their minds (Woods, 2006, p. 30). Wood, as explained by (Sillars, 1991) he says that, advertisements reflect culture and manipulate readers existing knowledge as well as daily experiences and for that manipulation intertextuality is used to gain their goals” (Sillars, 1991, p. 10). And many others anticipated that intertextuality is slanting in media and public studies. They gave the concept of intertextuality as a technique or process with the help of which advertiser creates a relationship between the present text and transformation of previous text that is used to provoke the memory and concentration of readers.

Communication form is developed between the reader and the text of the advertisement as illustrated by Tanaka (1994) that studied that how the readers of the advertisements are able to decode the meaning behind the text and the intensions of the advertiser (Tanaka, 1994, p. 10). For her study she adopted the Theory of Relevance as theoretical framework for her study to discuss the intertextuality in advertising. There are two basic notions of intertextuality in advertisement, one is the source text and the other is the intertextual marks. Source text through which the ideas and messages are derived. The advertisements rely on both the text as well as on images in the advertisements. These text and images can be further classified into; text, music, painting, figures cartoons and the social norms and values (Han, 2005, pp. 19-85). Source text in advertisement is the key feature without that understanding of the advertisement may not be possible. Images in advertisements are used in order to arisen the feelings and attention more easily and quickly than text itself.

The other notion of intertextuality is the intertextual marks. Han jinlong first used this term. He said that the main work of intertextual marks is to help reader to know the source of an advertisement. Intertextual marks of an advertisement can be words, phrases, images or expression. For example as quotation marks are used to tell the primary source (Han, 2005, pp. 19-34). Text in an advertisement which contains direct marks is called explicit intertexts and without those marks is considered as implicit intertexts. Advertising discourse comes under implicit intertextuality. The focus of this research is on explicit intertextuality of the advertisements.

Methodology

A total no of six advertisements are selected as a sample for this study which are taken from different Pakistani newspapers. The researcher found those personally appealing and according to the social contexts of Pakistani society. The intertextual, content and semiotic method of analysis of the advertisement is done. The modal of the research is based upon Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis. Analysis is limited to the discourse practice analysis (interpretation).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Fig. 1 **Eid Mubarak (Blessed Eid)**



The expression of Eid Mubarak is extensively used in newspapers and on Televisions in the last ten days of Ramadan. This expression is used specifically to greet people for Eid. It gives pleasure to the audiences or readers and it also instigates them to buy new products for their Eid preparation. Few brands or companies give special offers on this occasion. To enhance the effectiveness of advertisement advertisers use beautiful pictures and this text “Eid Mubarak” to capture the attention of audience and to make them feel that they are also with them in their Eid celebrations. Everyone wants to get new clothes,

shoes, furniture etc. for Eid, that's another reason to greet the people and appreciate them to buy new things. For example, in the picture above a mobile company is giving an offer of free minutes or low call rates to capture the audience or to make feel that they are also with them in their happiness. The dress and preparation of girl can also arouse the feeling of buying clothes like this or to have other accessories like this actor. So, intertextuality is present in this add between the text message and the pictures. Pictures are having a connection with the text messages given in the ads.

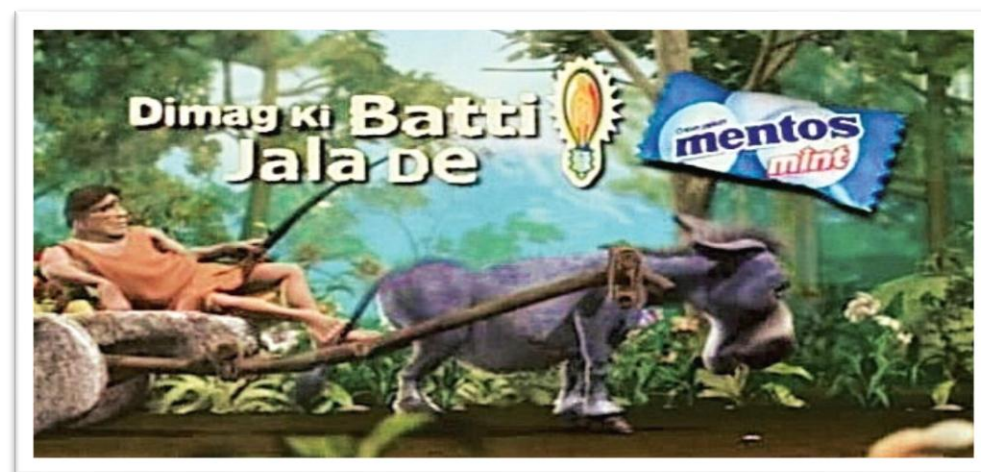
Fig. 2 **Ramadan Kareem (Generous Month of Ramadan)**



Ramadan is another special occasion for all the Muslims. In Ramadan almost all the companies and brands want to get attention of the customers to have a good sale. For this purpose they intertextualize different images and texts to attract the audience. In one picture above there is a family which is celebrating their child's first Ramadan. Advertiser has displayed few food items there so that other children may also see it and ask their parents to celebrate their Ramadan also like this by doing same arrangement. In this way the advertiser can get good sale of the particular product by catching the attention of children. Here, in this picture advertiser has intertextualized the images with the text "Rashad's Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr". I have skipped Eid-ul-Fitr here because I have already discussed it before.

Fig. 3 **Ramadan Kareem (Generous Month of Ramadan)**

In the above picture so many people are opening the fast together. This picture itself is giving two messages. One message is that all people should try to arrange this kind of “Aftar Parties” for their family and for the poor as well. This is direct message conveyed by them. The hidden message or intention of the advertiser behind this all is to make more and more sale of his products. When people will arrange this kind of Aftar Parties so they would must buy these kinds of items as shown in the picture, as they are getting idea from here. Thus, in this picture advertiser has intertextualized the picture with the message “Ramadan Kareem” that he shows at the end of add.

Fig. 4 **Mentos Toffee (Lightens the Mind)**

Mentos is a refreshing sweet having a cool effect. This company has made an ad in which they have shown the evolution process of Man. It's like an allegorical story because

animals are being used here. This ad starts where a Monkey is pulling a cart, without wheels. And Donkey is just riding on that cart. First message which audience gets is that Donkey is superior. The cart is without wheels, this gives another message that human race is not developed still. Then Monkey finds a Mentos from the ground and offers it to the Donkey. Donkey refuses, and monkey eats Mentos. After eating Mentos monkey takes a round of Earth and through a process of evolution turns into a man. This thing correlates with the slogan of this ad that Mentos “Dimaag kee batti jalade” which means that after eating Mentos Monkey's mind has got lighten up and he developed suddenly. This ad is giving another message also that a man who first became dull and worse than animal even, that he was pulling the cart for the donkey (in form of Monkey) has now become active again by eating Mentos. So here intertextuality is very clearly depicted by creating a relation between the story and slogan of the ad, like even monkey has turned into man by eating Mentos because its brain got lighten up.

Fig. 5 **Lipton (Change has Come)**



In the picture displayed above the slogan of this ad is being taken from the “motto” of a political party. This is an ad of Lipton Tea. The company has actually reduced the price. To gain the attention of audience towards this offer advertiser has transformed or modified the “motto” of a political leader which is a very strong source to attract customers. A link has been created between offer on tea and slogan. The previous context is explaining the slogan of tea.

Fig. 6 Tarang (Perfect Match for Tea)

This ad belongs to a milk production company. Slogan of this ad is “chae ka sahi jorr” mean this milk is perfect match for the tea. This slogan is not copied from somewhere but the idea is taken from an existing idea. In this advertisement a couple is shown as a perfect match. As we at times that the particular couple is perfect match for each other. So the same concept is used in this ad to show the perfection of milk for tea. Intertextualization is used here by showing the picture of couple that brings the context in the mind and from that already existing idea a new thought has been generated. Intertextulization can be seen here in the relationship between tea and milk and the couple. The sole purpose behind all this is to get the attention and likeness of the audience.

Limitations

The study is limited to the media research in particular the intertextual analysis of the advertisements. No other field of media is taken under study. Advertisements are taken from Pakistani newspapers and their analysis id done according to the Pakistani social context.

Conclusion

By using intertextuality, the advertising agencies purposefully reflect the culture, norms, religion, and allusion in their advertisements to attract their audiences. The study extracted different composition and presentation of the advertisements taken from newspapers which were appealing to the interests. Although such things which are shown in the pictures are common in the society but intention of the advertising is to keep the interest of the readers to the promoted products. Intertextulity in the genre of media is used to provoke authority and reliability of advertising. To conclude I will say that

intertextuality is an effective to arise feeling and attention of its readers which are important to them.

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