

Multimedia Discourse Analysis of Tehran and Shiraz Commercial Billboards

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

In recent decades, social scientists have been increasingly interested in research that examines the role of language in creating reality around us. This interest has been associated with developments and new disciplines in the study of language use and its role in human societies. The present study investigates advertisements in the area of business. In today's commercial world, advertisement is of paramount importance, which, if done improperly, can bring about detrimental effects rather than profits. The objectives of the present study are determining linguistic and visual factors employed in billboard texts, linguistic analysis of discourse-oriented structures and presenting a practical discourse model of advertising using language. Since every organization benefiting from the propaganda tool try to attract public opinion to create a positive attitude toward itself, so access to the easiest, the most economic and effective method can be of great help to them. Because in regard to the commercial advertising billboards in Iran has not been so far a comprehensive study, an all-inclusive research can provide the organizations with such solutions. So this research can be useful to factories, organizations, enterprises that tent to have the best billboards advertising in the city of all kinds of goods and services produced. The billboards developers and designers can also benefit of these solutions in their construct

2. Methodology

In this study, Tehran and Shiraz billboards are analyzed based on critical discourse analysis with emphasis on their positive and constructive dimensions and within the framework of Halliday's textual analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. These billboards are examined according to their written text and color and the way their elements are arranged, as well as they are examined based on the location of the billboard, its height, two or three-dimensional being, the size of writings, the shapes and other factors that affect the attention of passers. All billboards (37 cases) were photographed in Shiraz and Tehran. Among all, 20 billboards were chosen to be

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analyzed which were commercial and multimodal. Then due to the systematic approach of Fairclough, his three-dimensional model was determined as the theoretical base of the research. But as the tools introduced by Fairclough are more suited to writing texts, by using social semiotics and applying Iedema, Rose and Kress and Van Leeuwen's approaches and integrating these approaches in Fairclough three-dimensional model, a good model is achieved for images or films' analytics.

3. Results and Discussion

After linguistic analysis of data, they are compared with other advertising texts to evaluate their discursive level. In this kind of discourse, adjectives and adverbs are of the most use as well as the majority of sentences are stated in imperative or affirmative aspects. In fact, 79/1% of adjectives and 29/2% of adverbs were used. 25% are imperative sentences and 75% are affirmative. So it can be said that adjectives are used more to describe the product features in billboard advertising in Iran and the aspect of most sentences and semi-sentences is affirmative and not imperative.

Data semiotic analysis based on critical discourse analysis examines two matters, that is, social distance and social relationships. According to the social distance in a visual semiotic system, people who appear in the distant are considered as strangers and people with close-show are subjects that are considered as part of us and social relationships have different meanings based on camera angle, and upward or downward look at subjects. Looking from above at someone means applying symbolic power on him or her. The viewer's look from the bottom to up shows that the person displayed has a symbolic power on the viewer. Look into the eyes of the same level represents equality. 15% of these research advertising billboards show the demand element and 85% the supply one. This means that advertisement in Iran is presented quite independently of demand and the customer and so there is not enough customers to be attracted. The ratio of 40% close up and 40% medium shot to the distant view reflects a desire to establish friendly individual and social relations between advertising promotional images with the audience. The zero percent and the lack of image with high camera angles in data indicates a lack of interest in Iran advertising to provide power to the spectator. 80% of advertising pictures with the same level and across from camera angle detects the inclusivity and the equality of the audience so that the advertisements tends to consider the spectator as a part of advertisement.

4. Conclusion

The linguistic and visual elements influence the word selection and sentence grammatical structure that is the verbal arrangement. That is why the advertisements try to affect the customer mind to change his or her view on its side. Deep analyzing the discourses, we can find out the concealed ideas in them. To do so, examining a number of billboards, we tried to detect their concealed signs and discursive practices. So the research data are analyzed based on the integrated model of this research. Analyzing the elements used by the advertisements for customer attraction shows that how advertisements change the audience attitude and how highlights a

matter. This research is one of the first attempts in Iran to provide a practical model to study advertising discourse. This pattern is in the early stages and should be perfected with using other components of sociological and semantic. Fairclough's three-dimensional pattern in combination with Iedema, Rose, Van Leeuwen and Kress can be capable in the analysis of verbal and visual elements to some extents, but there is still a need for a more perfected modle in this field.

Key words: Discourse analysis, Critical discourse analysis, Advertisements, Billboard, Effectiveness.

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