

Commodification and breast-cancer-ization: Multimodal interaction analysis of advertising campaigns in Pakistani apparel fashion discourses

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Abstract

The present paper explores the gender identity production and interaction of brands with their consumers on social media platforms. The paper examines lower-level, higher-level and frozen mediated action employed in the promotional videos through the framework of multimodal inter(action) analysis (henceforth MIA) (Norris, 2019, 2020, 2021). For this research paper, I have selected five fashion campaigns on the theme of breast cancer awareness from three different apparel brands in Pakistan. The purpose of the paper is to examine the exploitation of linguistic and semiotic resources for gender identity production, and discourse reception by the audiences. The paper examines the video discourse using MIA and for the audience reception by Hall's theory of audience reception that segments the viewers' positioning into three hypothetical categories: dominant, negotiating, and oppositional. The analysis of the video data shows that apparel brands have been employing covert and overt semiotic resources and strategies to spread awareness on this health concern. However, there are several anomalies and inconsistencies in the information presented for breast self-examination and some brands have been pushing gender ideologies through these health-related campaigns. The audience reception reveals that majorly the audiences are dominant and oppositional, however there are a few who have shown their negotiating the brand's portrayal of gender ideologies. Finally, linguistic and semiotic analysis allows the researchers to unearth the hidden agenda of the brands.

Keywords

breast cancer, digital discourse, multimodal, interaction, advertising, fashion

Bio

I am a lecturer in English specializing in ESP courses for fashion and design graduates, while concurrently pursuing a PhD in Linguistics. With a fervent interest in the intersectionality of fashion, dress, discourses, and multimodality, I have been exploring research to unravel the complex connections between language and fashion. My PhD dissertation is an

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interdisciplinary research exploring the fuzzy boundaries of language, fashion, multimodality, advertising and digital communication employed by the apparel brands to produce gender identity and its recurrent portrayal. My recent conference presentation at Commonwealth fashion council symposium was 'Fashion and gender identity: Hegemony of colonized and westernized Pakistani fashion designers'.

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