ABSTRACT

Advertising today has become inextricable from contemporary society; it is fast-paced, competitive, comprehensive and all pervasive in the present-day consumer-oriented market economy. It plays a central role for the survival and success of brands, for capturing consumers’ mindshare and stimulating economic growth. Massively influential is its social aspect where the semantic connotations portrayed in advertisements do not just instigate and develop interest among the consumers at large but also are impressionable, long-lasting and have powerful societal impact. Understandably, the language, symbolism, meanings and ideas disseminated through artistically crafted advertisements reveal considerable perceptual insights about how a society perceives and contextualizes the subjects that are shown in the advertisements. These perceptual insights become even more thought-provoking and impressionable if the advertisements are oriented around women. This study delves deeper into the perceptual realities of women-oriented advertisements in India, primarily from the analytical viewpoint of linguistic elements and the language of advertising. The same narrative is reflected in, “Advertising is not some external curiosity which we examine, from which we are separate and superior, but something of which we are part, and which is part of us” (Cook, 1996).

According to Durant & Lambrou (2009), at the same time, “Advertising conveys information, so that consumers know what is available, who makes it, and where and how they can get it”.

Advertising is a form of marketing communication mix employed to encourage or persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to continue or take some new action. It can be defined as a system of persuasive techniques useful to promote selling. In an advertisement, persuasive strategies are used to achieve two purposes: the first is short term and is linked to the immediate purchase of the product (or service) and the second is the long term purpose which is linked to the creation of an attitude favorable for buying that product (reliability).

The first chapter of the thesis is introductory account which briefly explains the concept and language of advertising. The main concern of this chapter is to cover main sections of this research work broadly. The historical development of advertising and media and language specialties in advertising has been discussed to
provide a sense of context to the overall study. A brief account has also been given about advertising as a kind of communication. Aspects of gender in advertising and language use have been highlighted to showcase the stark differences in the language used in advertisements governed by gender roles. A comprehensive discussion on the chief categories of media used for advertising popularly has been done in the last section. Relevance of this study with reference to the contemporary media scene is also discussed.

The second chapter is structured around identifying, studying and organizing published literature connected to the current research area. Through a comprehensive literature review, we aim to scan, deepen and contextualize our understanding of the subject and identify prominent research gaps to provide a relevant direction to our research purpose. A better understanding of the themes/topics studied in this field shall enable us to position our research theme fittingly in the current linguistic research base.

The reach and impact of advertising in today’s world is enormous, all-pervasive and touches upon each one of our lives’. It affects us in the ways we live, the ways we think and the ways we form mental perceptions.

In the literature review, the researcher has attempted to explore, analyze and classify all high quality researches conducted in the field of women-oriented advertising. Some scholars have focused gender-oriented perceptions in advertising while others have examined the socio-linguistic aspects with reference to media and gender. However, there is a dearth of significant works on the language of women-oriented advertisements, which creates a substantial gap in existing literature and a prospective opportunity to take this academic challenge further.

Leech (1966), in his pioneering book ‘English in Advertising’ has analyzed in detail different aspects pertaining to grammar, vocabulary, discourse, rhyme and rhetoric of advertising with special reference to television. He has efficiently related these aspects with the functional factors such as attention value, listen ability/readability, memorability and selling power. Illustration, display typography, vocal emphasis, prompt spelling, grammatical solecism, metaphor and paradox are some of the aspects linked with attention value. Simple and colloquial style and well-known vocabulary are connected with readability. Phonological regularities such as alliteration, rhythm, rhyme and jingle are related to memorability.
Pandya’s, (1977), ‘English in Advertising’ talked about the creativity and deviation in the language of advertising. According to her, for catching interest, ad creators deviate the language grammatically, semantically and lexically. She also discussed the usage of literary devices like simile metaphor and rhetoric etc. In the Indian context, Kumar (1978), has analyzed the linguistic and stylistic aspects of radio advertisements in Hindi, structured along the lines of the model of Leech (1966), and identified the structures related to different advertising functions. According to him, the use of parataxis, compounds, layers of natural and natiﬁzized vocabulary, devices of non-segmental phonology are some of the aspects that make communication more readable/listenable.

In similar context, Geis (1982), language comprehensively examined language related dynamics of American advertising and its primary linguistic characteristics. According to him, advertising claims which feature the word ‘help’ as in phrases like ‘helps to achieve’ and comparative phrases like ‘more or less’ are striking because they are indistinguishable from the generic claims of scientists. He has concluded that advertisers in general tend to prefer vague language rather than language with unambiguous empirical consequences and to prefer subjective claims to objective claims. Another scholar, Redferen (1982), has produced a resourceful guide for studying the language of advertising. Another prominent academic work by Vestergaard and Schroder(1985), ‘The Language of Advertising’ has studied the use of language in commercial press advertising in relationship with the communicative functions of language, primarily expressive, directive, informational, meta-lingual, interactional, contextual and poetic and the five advertising functions. Different textual aspects such as coherence and cohesion, topicalization, presupposition and entailment and participant roles have been studied in detail. Some common linguistic features of the English language in Indian newspaper advertising were explored by Dhongde (1987), with focus on the graphological and phonological, lexical, phrasal, clausal and sentence level features of advertising English. Mathur (1987), explored British press advertisements and evaluated different brands of toothpastes, with a recurring focus on linguistic elements of advertising. Fatihi’s (1991), work on the language of advertisements with reference to television commercials is an insightful study with utmost relevance to the contemporary advertising scenario. Language use in advertising communication has
been examined in detail, with a wide coverage of linguistic elements used to conceptualize and execute copywriting. Tanaka’s famous book ‘Advertising Language: A Pragmatic approach to advertisements in Britain and Japan’ (1994), covers both linguistic as well as semiotic aspects of advertising and puts forward relevance theory as the basis for explaining the comprehension of utterances. The work is particularly significant as it examines women oriented advertising with aspects of metaphorical language use.

Nayak (2002), conducted a detailed assessment of grammatical aspects of Tamil Advertising while explaining certain figures of speech and discourse analysis. A host of researches have been carried out to compare the socio-cultural aspects of the language of advertising and its impact across different cultures and distinct linguistic dialects (Habiba, 2005; Shartiely, 2005; Akinbode, 2012).

The long and illustrious history of women in advertising offers a candid reflection of the socio-cultural attitudes towards women. The world of advertising has really transformed over the years with rapid growth and magnanimous reach. Quite naturally, the construction of women identities in advertisements catches the attention of many eminent researchers. They examine different aspects in the advertising discourse in regard to how women identities are constructed, what is the role of women in media, women and semiotics and so on.

The third chapter provides a systematic description of all the design and execution elements utilized for this study. The principles which form the basis of this study, its operational elements, methods and tools adapted to design and execute this research in a scientific manner have been presented in detail. The framework or blue-print utilized to conduct the study forms the foundation for successful research. Unless the design stage is comprehensive and refined, the results of the study cannot be generalized. The methodology part of this thesis shall clearly define the research problem, need for research, research objectives, hypotheses, research design, sample design, questionnaire preparation, questionnaire reliability and validity, data collection and data analysis techniques. A solid methodology is like a directive and clear instruction manual, which guides a researcher at every step of the complex process of study and assists the researcher in maintaining coherence with the overall vision of the endeavor.
The present study is centered on investigating the various elements and characteristics of the language of advertising in women oriented advertisements in electronic and print media. This shall be explored through the linguistic features used in these advertisements through various theoretical linguistics characteristics like Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics. Here, women-oriented advertisements mean those advertisements which are meant for women and advertisements in which women are being employed, whether overtly or covertly. This study also seeks to analyze the image of women in advertising media; how women are represented in the roles of housewives, babysitters, glamour and beauty representatives and are objectified in order to sell products. Popularly, women have been used to incite interest and garner instant visibility for the brands they appear with, thus raising questions about unfair portrayal from a gender-oriented perspective. To achieve the research objectives and test hypotheses, a mixed method design was utilized in the present study. The first part of the research deals with qualitative analysis of language of women oriented advertising; while in the second part of the research, quantitative approach is used to accomplish the objectives. The motive behind employing this dual method design was to qualitatively explore the peculiar language elements used in advertisements for women at the theoretical level; whereas the quantitative approach was utilized to draw inferences from the results of hypotheses testing and generate empirical inferences from the data analysis.

The objectives of this study were categorized into two parts depending upon the approach utilized for analysis i.e. qualitative and quantitative.

- To explore the role of women in women-oriented advertisements in electronic and print media, with special reference to vocabulary elements.
- To assess linguistic elements in women-oriented advertisements.
- To analyze and highlight the use of women in advertising media.
- To find significant differences in perception of women oriented advertisements among different respondents characterized by different genders, age groups and educational status.

A self-developed, structured questionnaire was used to measure the perception of respondents regarding women-oriented advertisements. The questionnaire contained 20 items representing different aspects of women representation. The questionnaire
was based on ‘5 point likert scale’ ranging from (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. An open-ended question about what is the individual respondent’s opinion about the portrayal of women in contemporary advertising was also part of the questionnaire to enable more profundity and clarity in responses. Such an open approach would encourage spontaneous insights and real feelings, opinions and beliefs that people hold about this issue.

The aim of this chapter is to clearly define the research methods used to conduct the study. This chapter clearly explains the steps and methods which are used to test the hypotheses. A well-illustrated, pre-planned and systematic research methodology should be given prime importance to maintain high academic standards and worthy research. The thorough methodology adopted for this study has been presented in this chapter to give a comprehensive layout of all the design elements incorporated to conduct the study. All the conceptual principles, methods, stages of data collection and preparation, and statistical/conceptual tools utilized to design and carry out this study has been presented in this part of the thesis.

The data collected will be recorded, screened and prepared for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-21), and shall be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using different indicators and theoretical concepts. Given below are the tools employed in this study to enable systematic and in-depth analysis of the data collected in order to generate valid conclusions later on.

The data for linguistic analysis was taken from secondary sources (electronic and print media), women-oriented advertisements and relevant data from newspaper and magazines were preserved in the form of downloaded video clips and cuttings of newspapers and magazines. Data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. In order to answer the research questions, t-test was applied on the factors of age, gender and education.

The statement of the research problem and objectives, formulation of hypothesis, data collection and sampling decisions along with data analysis techniques has been explained in this chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of data, its interpretation and enumeration of results. Employing a mix of statistical and conceptual methods and tools, the data collected has been analyzed thoroughly and insightful inferences have been drawn.
from those results to give meaning to the findings and link it with the objectives formulated at the beginning of this study. The results of hypothesis testing have been presented, along with subjective explanations of the language elements in advertising. This chapter deals with the analysis of the data collected and its interpretation, thus coherently bringing together the objectives and how those objectives have been reached at after the research analysis ‘Data analysis & interpretation’ is a final stage of any study; the collected data must be processed and analyzed in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan. For scientific validity of any research effort, the analysis must be done carefully and meaningful interpretations must be made out of those results.

This is very crucial for any scientific study. At this step, the collected data was refined, processed, classified, analyzed and the measured results have been presented systematically. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the present study is conducted on two planes (qualitative & quantitative), therefore the results will also be presented in two sections, and in the present chapter the two segments deal with the following:

- Language of advertising is analyzed with the help of linguistic tools (Phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics).

- Statistical analysis of the data using a t-test, along with the descriptive statistics of the primary data generated through a systematic survey.

**Techniques for Data Analysis**

- The first section of the thesis deals with the qualitative analysis of women-oriented advertisements, analyzed through language elements of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The data for qualitative analysis was taken in the form of recorded audios and videos of advertising jingles; whereas the print media data was preserved in the form of newspaper and magazine cuttings. In this section, we have made analysis of women oriented ads with the help of linguistic tools, at various linguistic levels like, phonology, morphology, syntax & semantics

- The second section of the thesis deals with empirical analysis of the data collected, using SPSS, in order to find significant differences in perception of
women oriented advertisements among different respondents characterized by different genders, age groups and educational status. The *independent samples T-test* technique was utilized to test for significant differences between groups and lead to hypotheses testing. The data for this was collected through a structured survey instrument (questionnaire) which had questions on various prominent aspects of women-oriented advertising and garnered efficient responses from the target group. The data was then refined, classified and readied for analysis including inferential and descriptive analysis, which shall be presented in this chapter.

The fifth chapter incorporates conclusion and discussions, giving an overall sense of meaning to the study. The future research directions and limitations of the study have been discussed, with a view to summarize our key findings and provide rightful justifications for the research objectives of this study. This chapter discusses the interpretations and suggestions drawn from the results and findings of the analyzed data. It contains the findings, and future research recommendations for further study based on two major planes which includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis of collected data. One of the major sections of this chapter will represent the insightful findings and limitations of the study.

**Summary of the findings:**

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this research undertakes a systematic and insightful study with a new view to highlighting and finding answers for the following research questions:

- How linguistic elements are used in women-oriented advertisements, with special reference to print and electronic media ads?
- What is the actual perception of respondents regarding the women orientness of advertising media?

Moreover, the primary research objectives of this academic venture were:

i. To explore the role of women in women-oriented advertisements in electronic and print media, with special reference to vocabulary elements.

- To assess linguistic elements in women-oriented advertisements.
To analyze and highlight the use of women as a symbol in advertising media.

To find significant differences in perception of women-oriented advertisements among different respondents characterized by differences in genders, age groups, and educational status.

Some very perceptive findings have emerged from the study. Given below is a succinct summary of key findings, which can be segmented on two broader planes:

**Findings from Qualitative Analysis**

At this level of analysis, the language of advertising was analyzed with the help of linguistic tools (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics). A list of collected advertising jingles was analyzed, as a result of which we found that the language of advertising is full of rhetorical devices or figures of speech which are used to grab instant attention of customers. Moreover, the language of advertisements analyzed was full of rhymes, rhythms, verb and noun phrases, adjectives, and deixes, etc. The qualitative study has been conducted at four linguistic levels, as a result of which it was observed that the language of women-oriented ads are full of persuasive elements. This study has shown that language, gender and advertising are very complex and intermingled issues. We have seen how these elements affect and influence each other in connection with other linguistic aspects. Therefore, we can say that language is the main distinctive function in advertising, and is of vital importance in all advertising campaigns.

The study has also revealed that copywriters need to choose the language they design in a very special way, in order to successfully achieve the brand’s overall communication and marketing objective. For this purpose, linguistic usages and manipulations are exploited to the core. Thus, they often play with words of common usage to modify their everyday meaning, which results in a perfect and powerful advertising tag line. One of the most significant findings has also revealed that the figures of speech are employed on regular basis within advertisements, which make them more mesmerizing and attention grabbing. It provides a tool to the copywriters, to generate a possibility to express their ideas indirectly or symbolically with the help of word formation processes.
Additionally, the insights gained through the viewpoints of the respondents during the course of this study, leave us with a functional tool about the design elements and finer nuances of language employed especially for advertising purposes, which is sufficiently distinctive from language used in other fields. This can act as a benchmark and standardized database from which not only advertising specialists but also linguists, students, researchers and professionals from interdisciplinary streams can benefit, whenever they want a closer look at the fabric of what goes into the writing of an iconic advertising campaign. Therefore, this study serves of immense practical as well as theoretical relevance in today’s contemporary world.

In view of all the above mentioned findings, the most crucial observation of the study is regarding the use and creation of distinctive vocabulary in women-oriented ads. Copywriters frequently use or create powerful and unique vocabulary because it is the most dominant tool which can spice any advertising message. It is very obvious that the key words of advertising are adjectives which specify individual features of products. It is a well known fact that advertising is a good medium for bringing new words into a language. Therefore, various word-formation processes were discussed throughout this work for showing that there have indeed been many new words frequently coined in order to increase originality of advertising text.

**Findings from Quantitative Analysis**

To achieve the results of quantitative analysis, statistical analysis was done. It was done through using a t-test, along with the descriptive statistics of the primary data generated through a systematic survey. To bring out the findings of the quantitative analysis, a survey was done using a structured questionnaire to see the significant differences in the actual perceptions of respondents.

Hypotheses were tested through the questionnaire developed for the same, which was based on five-point likert scale. The findings of the study revealed that the two hypotheses, H2 and H3, are supported by the results of analysis while hypothesis H1 is unsupported.

On the basis of the results achieved from the statistic analysis, it was found that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of respondents on the basis of age and education. However, on the basis of gender we found no differences in the
perceptions of the respondents, which clearly indicates that the majority of respondents show a certain degree of agreement on the adage: ‘women-oriented aspects of advertising.’

The study has also shown that the ideas and opinions of people regarding the women-orientness of advertising media through an open-ended question could be obtained. The responses received from the respondents have shown some noteworthy observations about the statement ‘advertising media is becoming women-oriented’. It is seen that 81% of the respondents were in favor of the statements. On the other hand, 7% of respondents were not sure about the statements and the rest 12% of the total respondents did not agree with the ideas.

Majority of the respondents agreed that the advertising media is becoming women-oriented which sufficiently supports that objectives of the study. The role of women is portrayed as very crucial and significant for advertising media as well, because they are represented in multiple ways like, as a mother: caring and inspiring; a homemaker: as a back-bone for every household and strong career-oriented women which play a very progressive role in the society. Quite often, these multiple roles are dynamically and successfully played by the same woman who efficiently juggles between these roles in her everyday life.

All the above roles of women are very carefully and strategically portrayed by the advertisers to persuade the consumers. The importance or the motive behind this role portrayal of women in advertising is discussed and understood by a major section of the society, who have substantial opinions regarding this issue.

**Conclusions**

On the basis of findings which are achieved from the results of the data analyzed, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The analysis of language elements are key for all studies across disciplines, however it is paramount for any research activity based on the core concept of language itself. For a study based on advertising, the linguistic elements about advertising specifically form a central conceptual foundation to base our study on.
• The language of advertising is full of adjectives and figures of speech which are extensively employed for the purpose of grabbing instant attention of the consumers.

• Women-oriented ads have their own unique vocabulary which is full of linguistic manipulations.

• There is a stereotypical perception about women in the field of advertising media.

• Tactfully, copywriters play with the language; as a result, they coin new vocabulary that leads to enhancing the lexical level of advertising campaigns.

This chapter presents a systematic account of the summary of the findings of this study. The summary has been further characterized by quantitative and qualitative results which have been explained in detail. A coherent account of the overall research conclusions has been given followed by future research directions and limitations of the study. In the end, the practical and theoretical relevance of the study has been presented.