



## Semantic Analysis of the Linguistic Features Used on Urdu Hoardings in Lahore



Nimra Rafiq \*

Namra Fazal †

Mohsin Tajammul ‡

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**Abstract:** *It is an established truth that advertising copywriters expertly manipulate language to suit their purpose of communicating advertising messages (Emodi, 2011). This research aims to explore to what extent advertisers manipulate language rather distinctively than the daily use of language. The current work presents a descriptive analysis of the linguistic features of Urdu ads at semantic level. The study uses qualitative approach where twenty Urdu hoardings were selected through purposive sampling technique from Gulberg and Hall Road, Lahore. The writer collected the data by looking at the meaning of advertisements printed on hoardings. In analyzing the data, the writer applied Leech's theory of semantics. The writer found the use of connotative words, adjectives, coined words, misspelled words, repetition, and the ambiguous statements in advertisements on hoardings. Every message has a very important role to play in building up the advertiser's message. So, on the basis of these findings it is stated that advertisers use persuasive language while violating the semantic laws which is distinctive from the language used in every day communication.*

**Key Words:** Semantic Analysis, Linguistic Features, Hoardings, Urdu

### Introduction

In recent years, advertising has evolved to be a common phenomenon for academic research and has attracted the attention of a number of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, literary criticism, and media studies (Adam, 2019). The function of advertising

language is convincing and shows how marketers and viewers interact with each other. Its primary aim is to catch the interest of customers and actively guide them towards the product or service on offer. Advertising can be depicted as the study of capturing the human

\*FAST, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

†FAST, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡FAST, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

keenness adequately long to bring in cash out of it. In this way, obviously notice plays had a vital influence in the corporate universe of today.

Eruchalu (2015) said that, it is worth noting that advertisement, like other specialties such as law, medicine, finance, politics, has its own preferred linguistic terms through which it hits its target market. For ads on hoardings, copywriters are conscious that their target is to convey message to thousands of passerby, travelers and daily commuters. Therefore, they craft quick, concise and intriguing posts that can be read at a glimpse.

The question, whether or not the advertising languages are appealing and convincing, has been the point of investigation for many researchers. Therefore, comprehensive research on linguistic features of Urdu used in advertisement helps to enhance both the comprehension and design of effective ads. Semantics is the study of a language structure of meaning (Emodi, 2011). In one view, the connection among language and the rest of the world (referential or denotative significance), between a word and the thought it represents, is significant. In another view, it incorporates the speaker's psychological state, communicated in a range of cordial, passionate (full of feeling or suggestive) hints. Semantic is one of the language factors propelling ads to the height desired. The way how words are used, and association of words makes the advertising language a special area of learning.

A nearby assessment of the different word controls and courses of action, word request, denotative and demonstrative implications of ad spaces, do in this review. The point is to sort

out how scholars construct information and proposition a more complete agreement and enthusiasm for the tone, importance and translation of the language utilized. In promotions, the utilization of phrasing requires excellent capability that certainly helps with tracking down the best blend of terms for a specific circumstance. Bogus lexical decisions either mark the purpose of correspondence wrong, or may freely or to some degree express the planned importance. The most basic correspondence perspective is accomplishing a phase of knowing the significance.

### Statement of the Problem

Readers or passersby often find fault and are shocked to some degree while looking at the unintended use of language in advertisement slogans, unusual use of sentences either primarily on lexical artifacts or in syntactic form. Here the issue under examination is that how certain advertisers use clichés, puns, ambiguous captions, jargons, interpretation and deviation from language norms deliberately for instance; Engro Foods Opler's Lassi (Desi Gulp Trendy Ghoont) and 7up (Food ka love with 7up).

### Objectives of the Study

- 1- To explore the in-depth study of advertising language from a linguistic point of view and explaining why publicists use distinctive language as compared to the everyday usage of language.
- 2- To semantically analyze the language used in Urdu hoardings in vicinity of Gulberg and Hall Road, Lahore.

## Research Question

- 1- Why advertisers use distinctive language as compared to the everyday usage of language?
- 2- What is the semantic analysis of language used in Urdu hoardings in the area of Gulberg and Hall Road, Lahore?

## Significance of the Study

It has claimed that because of the textual message and imagery, hoardings attract the public interest ([Pathak, 2018](#)). The main role of ads is to efficiently communicate the message about a product or service. The significance of the study is derived from the fact that the use of semantics and linguistic features of advertising are quite distinctive and unusual. So, in order to provide common people with a better understanding of how advertising language functions by examining these hoarding. One can say that common people are not aware from artistic views of language and their minds are manipulated by using that language. This study wants to educate the public.

## Delimitation of the Study

The research is delimited to the hoardings from two areas in Lahore because these two are the commercial areas. Twenty hoardings are observed and analyzed in this study.

## Literature Review

This study is about semantic analysis of linguistic features of Urdu hoardings used in Lahore. Content writers produce content while manipulating the words to convey the message to the daily commuters on the road effectively in a very short span of time.

Whatever may be the nature of the hoarding; the textual message is drafted very carefully and hence needs serious consideration. According to [Akinbode \(2012\)](#), one of the advertising tactics is not only packing maximum information into as few words as possible but also evoking the maximum possible response. The language used on hoardings is all about how to appeal the audience to attract them towards their products. Many ways to catch the attention of viewers, like using funny pictures, catchy lines and attractive colors.

## Hoardings

Hoardings are the big boards on a public place which is used to exhibit ads. A few sizes of hoardings normally are utilized for a wide range of promotions seething from new items delivery to political/government messages to the whole open and so on. Hoarding ads are designed to capture a person's attention and quite quickly make a lasting impression, leaving the viewer to wonder about the commercial after driving it by ([Anant, 2014](#)). They must be readable in a very short time because they are usually read at high speeds when being transferred.

## Semantic Analysis

Semantics is the branch of linguistics and logic that deals with the sense, word, phrase, or text. Semantics is to propose explicit meanings of terms and expressions to keep away from uncertainty that might lead readers to accept that a word has numerous implications. It lays out an association between a word and a sentence by its implications. [Bagha \(2011\)](#) said, semantics is the degree of linguistic study

where there is an interpretation of meaning. It is the theoretical stage of linguistic research, because as we can observe and record sounds but we cannot see or interpret meaning. The sense is very closely linked to the human capacity to think and understand logically. By applying theory of semantics by [Leech \(1981\)](#), this study offers semantic analysis which deals with the message intended or meant to express or signify. The term 'meaning' has a variety of meanings as indicated by semanticist, for example, [Leech \(1981\)](#) notes three significant points as mentioned below:

- 1- It means the intention of the speaker to express a certain interpretation which may or may not be apparent from the message itself.
- 2- Consequently, the viewer's perception can rely on the context.
- 3- In the way, it's something that's done rather than something that happens is static. It includes behavior (the speaker creates and impacts on the listener) and contact (the context agreed based on their shared language between the speaker and the listener).

Semantic analysis is to ensure that a program's statements are semantically accurate, that their interpretation is clear and compatible with how control structures and data types should be used.

### **Word choices in Hoardings**

Precision and viability in hoardings should be dependent on the wary utilization of words. Words are utilized to ship meaning unequivocally and dynamically to the watchers. It is fundamental here to see the language of hoardings as far as word meaning.

Generally, implications are of two sorts denotative and indicative importance. Denotative importance is the exacting or the word reference meaning while the evaluative, suggested, or passionate significance is demonstrative. The significations would be no different for individuals utilizing a similar word reference while for various societies or various individuals' words have various meanings. The definitions here are impacted by the sense wherein they are utilized, by the source related relationship with the beneficiary, and by a few different factors. The meaning of a word is consequently the reasonable exacting sense, while the undertone is the setting to which it is connected. Hoardings which use word with shifted expansions utilize direct significance. Regularly the terms imply strength, dependability, quality and other such characteristics ([Emodi, 2011](#)).

[Emodi \(2011\)](#) said, one can say that the language of hoardings is suggestive. Allow us to mirror the bournvita promotion and its restorative implications. It seeks after to pursue the watchers, which is probably going to see the rich and delectable substance of the drink.

Bournvita is the delightful and invigorating, which gives the ideal food drink. Hot or cold Bournvita can be intoxicated any time.

Notice the words, 'delightful' and 'invigorating'. The marketing specialist needs the watchers to remember that Bournvita is nutritious and can be taken whenever of the day no matter what the weather conditions being blistering or cold. It's in any event, for youngsters and older too, subsequently the greeting is great for the whole family. The

modifiers depict Bournvita as an all-out imperativeness refreshment containing every one of the fundamental dietary benefits: proteins, nutrients, minerals and carbs. The best part is that 'everyone can use it'. This example is clearly related to our study because advertisers does use connotation to attract the viewers.

### **Features of Advertising Language**

A linguistic feature is an extremely broad concept. However, feature has a plethora of meanings in linguistics. Language is part of the linguistic feature that has a suggestion to be explored because language interprets any implied meaning, not just the word, but any other meaning as well. The use of language is intended to convey a message which cannot be distinguished from the real context. Meaning is a bond of language elements especially words. Language is not the key resource for communicating with others nowadays, but it is becoming more useful because language is the valuable platform for a lot of people ([Mehwish, 2015](#)).

Advertisements aim to convince individuals to buy a product. Ads appeared in every position in this millennial era; people should know that ads have a powerful energy to convince customers. The use of sensational phrases to persuade readers or customers is comprehensible, since phrases of exaggeration are a good form of advertising. Like every other language for special purposes advertisement language has linguistic features and vocabulary ([Piskaryeva, 2014](#)).

The advertising message is a combination of astonishing and exciting visuals, audio and written text. In the past most of the ads on

hoardings limited to the text and a small number of images, at the present time the text is seen as less and the visual features are predominant. Though, a lot of attention is paid to the text that is there on the hoardings in a less amount therefore, advertisers make use of numerous linguistic features to draw attention and transfer a solid message to the target people.

Many studies have been conducted to define how language works in the advertising discourse, and what are the linguistic features used in the progress of time. There is, however, a point of view that advertising language is not a language for special reasons, but a form of advertising like a king of journalistic art. The one art is the use of Rhyme: Rhyme refers to sounds, not the written form of a word. It is commonly found in slogans and captions, like in this one: Sansui: —Bigger, Better, Flatter Park Avenue: —A quest for the best. These are short slogans for an effective impact on the audience. Use of the rhyming words in the advertisements on hoardings is helpful to catch the attention of the viewers ([Prasad, 2017](#)).

Another characteristic feature of advertising style is the so-called conflict of rules when the language of rules is repressed by the advertising language's stylistic criteria due to the unique challenges of communication ([Radikovna, 2019](#)). According to [Teodorescu \(2015\)](#) the use of positive words can be excessively seen in advertising texts. So the use of positive words in advertising language delivers the positive images and provides the target audience a positive attitude ([Teodorescu, 2015](#)).

[Teodorescu \(2015\)](#) observed the predominant use of the verb 'get' in place of

'buy', and a great use of modal verbs. The word 'buy' is often used in advertising language, as it involves the action of convincing the audience to pay some money for the product, usually these types of words don't attract the attention of the audience. Therefore, the verb 'buy' is mostly replaced by other verbs like 'get'. The advertising text doesn't tell the audience to buy the product, rather it declares that when you get the product you will obtain some discount, and you can adore or win some prizes of great value.

Leech is well-known for his four main functions of a productive advertisement that affects the use of language in order to attain the audience's attention these functions are: attention value, readability, memorability, and selling power. Basically, these four functions are the aims of the advertisers to catch the attention and provoke inquisitiveness of the audience, and linguistically this can be accomplished by violating the rules and principles of the structure of a language, and making use of different linguistic devices like wrong spelling, coinages, puns, rhymes, semantic deviations, etc. Once the receiver is attracted to the advertising message the purpose of the advertiser is accomplished. Hence, the language used in advertisements should be transparent, spontaneous and mostly vernacular, using simple vocabulary. The practice of using intimate language linked with private contexts in public or business communication was called by Leech "public colloquialism" (Leech, 1966, p.123).

## **Methodology**

The study has been conducted in Lahore; it is the provincial capital of Punjab, one of the

most populated provinces, sharing a boarder with India, via Jammu and Kashmir. It is also a very lively city having Asia's and Pakistan's largest trade markets. Lahore district is extremely multilingual and multicultural area that hosts a large number of communities, cultural, and linguistic groups. This is an inquisitive study using snapshots of the hoardings from the different parts of the city. The researcher used comprehensive approach to get the desired results as qualitative research approach was applied. It is due to the fact that it seems most satisfactory in achieving the general aims of linguistic features of advertising, which are mostly associated with modern linguistic studies and give a suitable line of inquiry to be pursued, because the other approach is narrow, and it is also a perfect way to explore the linguistic features of advertising.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretically, this work is based on the semantic theory of [Leech \(1966\)](#): meaning forms, in particular, associative meaning forms. It means that this research is making a contribution particularly in semantic in the field of linguistics. The researcher hopes that the outcome of this research will be to provide additional support in the semantic field that focuses on the advertising.

## **Sample**

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a nonrandom technique that does not require any underlying theoretical model where participants can be deliberately selected regardless of the sample size based on the willingness to provide the required information (Etikan, Musa &

Alkassim, 2016). A total of 20 photographs were gathered from the urban as well as sub-urban areas of the Lahore city. The sample was used to analyze the linguistic features of language on hoardings manipulated by the advertisers, and also to analyze why the advertisers use a text that ignores the language rules.

## Data Collection

The writer has twenty hoardings in Urdu language, some of these hoardings used Urdu as the main language and some used Urdu as the implied language. Writers used the data to execute the study. The unit of semantic analysis was limited to the linguistic features written on public spaces such as hoardings or billboards.

## Tools of data Collection

This study is conducted using qualitative research method where observation is used as data collection tool. The first step toward understanding any text in its context is to observe what the text actually says. It has been discovered what a text says (observation) before understanding what it means (interpretation).

## Reliability and Validity

According to Silverman (2008), the dependability and legitimacy of the subjective investigation relies more upon the consistency of the examination than on the sample size. There is generally an opportunity of inclination and blunder in any piece of the predetermined strategy. While completing a subjective examination, it is important that the assortment of information is totally ready to

lessen the gamble of mistakes and work on the quality. The key objective is therefore to define and justify the consumption trends used in ads whether they are socially respectable or not.

## Findings and Discussion

Findings indicate that both Urdu and English are the languages of communication in the public domain. Some hoardings used only Urdu text and some used Urdu and English both. The research is designed in such a way that the samples of advertisements collected are used to provide answer to the research question raised above.

Language of advertising inclines to have preference for small and irregular, but keen sentences. Such simple sentences certify that advertising messages are passed across at a glance. One of the features of human language is that it is based on some rules and principles. Every language has some set of rules, when the rules are violated ungrammatical sentences are produced. According to [Nnamdi-Eruchalu \(2015\)](#), advertising copywriters pay bigger attention to getting their audience's attention than to building grammatical sentences. To attain their aim of communicating messages, they intentionally violate the grammatical rules of the language of the advertisement.

## Examples

- 1- kashmir cooking oil *-healthy aur natural khana...bobot kboob!*
- 2- pespi-khana baney exciting
- 3- Lassi--*Desi Gulp Trendy Ghoont*
- 4- jaam-e-shirin--nai look khubian whi
- 5- coca cola --maza haar lamhy ka
- 6- Sting--*Energy Ka Jhatzzzka*
- 7- 7up--mana lo food ka love with 7up

- 8- master molty foam- asli foam
- 9- telenornaa daien naa baien seedha telenor  
4g par aaein
- 10- candi who khaas mithas jo kisi aur mein  
kahan (share your #khaasdost selfie)
- 11- tarang -chaye ka shi jod

These advertisements are wisely phrased to manipulate the minds of the target audience to believe that their products will make them happy so that they can use their goods and services again and again. In first example of cooking oil the text is worded in a way that grabs the attention of the audience, because everyone prefers to eat healthy food with natural ingredients. So if someone finds these qualities in cooking oil like Kashmir, it will be a good choice to buy it. This phrase is giving us a connotative meaning because it deals with the emotions of the people of society, so words and their meanings plays an important role in a text, the phrase “Lassi-*Desi Gulp Trendy Ghoont*” is conveying a clear meaning to the audience so that they can be emotionally attracted.

The advertisers usually use Roman alphabets to write Urdu, as these alphabets are simpler to use. The practice has impacted the writing skills. Many people especially old age who are native speakers of Urdu, they find it difficult to read such type of roman alphabets.

Advertisers have their own language on hoardings. This appears to have specific word choice and syntactic structures that allow the copywriters to catch the audience's attention in seconds. Therefore, language of ads should not be treated by language learners as a guide for correct and appropriate language use. This is marred by other peculiarities in the advertisement market. So it can be stated that

advertisers don't follow the rules and principles of a particular language as such, they just mix two or three languages to make their ads exciting and prominent to the audience.

In these examples above, advertisers use many positive statements to build beauty, splendor and strength in their ads such as ‘Khana baney exciting’ is a phrase which shows the combination of pepsi with food and without it the person will not enjoy his food. So pepsi is paired up with food. This is again giving the connotative meaning, as it conveyed the meaning based on the context of the word. In 2018, ([Yananingtyas 2018](#)) found that every advertisement consists of expressive words and unique sense, and most of the advertisements convey connotative meaning because it has been used by the advertisers to influence the readers.

Another example is ‘Desi gulp trendy ghoont’, as ‘lassi’ is a traditional drink of Punjab and it is considered as good for health specially in summer. This type of drink is mostly homemade but now is available in market. In this phrase ‘gulp’ and ‘ghoont’ are giving the same meaning, as gulp is an audible sound like ‘ghoont’ in Urdu language, here in this phrase there a figurative meaning like onomatopoeia, in which words are written in association with their sounds. So while reading this people can also imagine its sound.

Ad copywriters often inject vitality through the introduction of figurative words into their texts. Figurative words tend to embellish language by making it evocative and appealing. One of the above example there is a rhyming scheme ‘Naa daien naa baien seedha telenor 4G par aaein’, though the language is Urdu but written in roman alphabets.



In the above examples it is clear that only few advertisements on hoardings consist of only Urdu language, most of the ads are a mixture of Urdu and English language. As time and space are of great importance in billboard ads, it uses lots of short and jerky sentences, optimistic, comparative and superlative degrees, figurative expressions; modifiers, appeals and deviant structures to create elegance and efficacy around the goods or services advertised.

### **Conclusion**

This analytical, semantic analysis of Advertisement hoardings in Lahore conveys an influential message that the copywriters demonstrate exceptional skill, competence and excellence in drafting the commercial discourse. The message becomes important, because it can reach as many viewers and readers as possible. Messages written in English can be understood by educated persons, while messages using the Urdu language with English language expand their scope to the

full. The conversation some portion of the exploration gives an examination of the publicizing language and filled in as the reason for the examination parts. To have the option to decipher the mottos in such a manner, we needed to incorporate all parts of language from the semantic perspective. Promoters can be said to involve phonetic development as significant instruments to make a decent ad. Truth be told, semantic equivocalness and non-literal utilization of words were the two strategies that were generally utilized in a significant number of the advertisements models referenced. Such ideas permit the promoter to draw in the consideration of the client and to show his/her advantage in the item, which is the actual point of publicizing. We hope that this research will add to the existing awareness of the advertising language and provide new data, results and insights on this imaginative and extremely fascinating subject matter. We assume that it will be helpful to common people and all those who are interested in Urdu and its diversity.

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