

Examining the Discourse of Perfume Advertisements: An Analysis of the Verbal and the Visual

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Abstract

In the world that promotes consumerism, companies are in a competition to produce a variety of commodities and to convert people into consumers of their products whether they need them or not. The abundance of consumer products is promoted through advertisements. These advertisements persuade the common people to become consumers for which they use a variety of strategies, the most common being the use of problem-solution format in language and an effective use of the verbal and the non-verbal. This paper focuses on investigating the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of the text to examine how ideological constructs function in the discourse of advertising through the use of hegemony. A perfume advertisement has been selected for a detailed analysis of the verbal and the visual elements to illustrate how advertisers commonly attempt to transmit some underlying, yet unasserted, meanings to unsuspecting readers who may understand the intentions of the advertisers i.e. to promote consumption but may not understand that the aim is achieved by generally promoting cultural stereotypes which work towards the disadvantage of one social group vis-à-vis the other especially the one that the advertisement is addressed to. The tool for the analysis of the advertisement is Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) that uses the analysis of the verbal and the visual to reveal ideological underpinnings. CDA also has pedagogical implications for instance the language used for describing products, if analysed critically by language learners, helps them to unfold the hidden meanings as is illustrated through the analysis.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Advertising, Women Perfumes, Verbal, Visual

Introduction

The paper analyses the discourse of a woman's perfume advertisement critically. The perfume advertisement appeared in 'Stardust', an Indian film magazine in English. It is one of the most popular film magazines and targets people interested in the glamour world as it has write-ups on films and actors who flourish more in their careers if they look good. It is assumed by

the advertisers that glamour magazines generally carry advertisements of personality grooming and attract people who are generally interested in personal grooming making such magazines best advertising locations for products of hair care, skin care, beauty treatments, accessories, perfumes, deodorants, clothes, etc. Products like 'zeroone' would find place in magazines like Stardust, Lifestyle and Cosmopolitan rather than in a magazine

that has write-ups on politics, current affairs or sports. Additionally, the film world is regarded as a platform where it is normal to find intrigue, where it is normal to celebrate and accept seduction and deception and readers enjoy reading such write-ups. Therefore, advertisements such as Zeroone have better chances to reach the target consumers in magazines such as Stardust, which attracts a wide readership.

Advertising Discourse

Advertisements are short verbal texts that are generally accompanied with visuals and texts, which makes advertisements interesting for the readers who interact with them. In today's world where consumerism has become a norm, the study of advertising texts is particularly significant as people get to experience the interaction of advertising texts in their day to day life because of their ubiquitous nature. But the language of advertising is not taught overtly to learners at primary or secondary level and learner-attention is not brought to the language of advertising and the ideological meanings which emphasise how advertisements influence their buying habits and how to promote selling. They maintain the cultural and social status quo that may be discriminatory and hence problematic. It may be due to the reason that most exponents in the field analyse the language of advertising non-critically without going into the implicit meanings which are generally ideological.

Cook in his *The Discourse of Advertising* (1992; 2001) discusses how language of advertising, at different levels, contributes towards meaning. The study looks at the interaction between the verbal and the visual to create discourse which highlights how different elements of advertising texts, most of them non-linear, relate to each other. According to Cook (2001) the advertising discourse is a combination of

language and images. He observes, "...ads are multimodal, and can use pictures, music, and language, either singly or in combination, as the medium permits" (Cook, 2001, p. 219). The limitation of Cook's work is that it does not look at the language of advertisements in a critical sense or to bring to the fore ideological meanings which influence the readers in a particular way.

Goddard's work *The language of Advertisements: Written Texts* (1998) is more or less on the same lines as that of Cook and is not a critical analysis. It lays stress on the linguistic elements of the print advertisements for its meaning. On the other hand, a few scholars such as Norman Fairclough and Sara Mills have employed procedures in Critical Discourse Analysis to arrive at how advertising texts persuade the readers into buying things through an ideological work. Hirschberg(1996) also expresses that purchasing a certain product offers us the chance to create ourselves, our personality, and our relationships through consumption. The possibilities, thus offered are based on aspirations of most people, which the product advertisements exploit to their advantage. Advertisements are not to be considered as innocent texts that merely provide information about the product. They are tools in the hands of advertisers that promote consumption by evoking hegemonic response in people i.e. promoting consumption through people's consent. In fact, advertising has been often blamed for using subliminal messages to influence people to buy products and services that they do not need or want. Advertisements influence people's thought process to the extent of encouraging them to change their possessions too often or possessing different brands of the same product. This phenomenon gets much more visible on the dressing tables of women who invest in a variety of creams and moisturisers for day and night and for winters and summers; sunscreens of different

SPF measures; perfumes for work, and different occasions; lipsticks and nail paints, the list may be endless. Of these products, perfumes have attracted the imagination of both men and women. Perfumes or deodorants celebrate the artificial smell. The association with something that is olfactorily pleasant counteracts the bad smell of bodily odours (Freitas, 2008, p.143). Perfumes appeal to the olfactory sense and attract people to buy such products through use of advertisements. Primarily, the presence of good smell in products such as toothpastes, soaps and perfumes is to clean and remove the body odour but the advertising discourses suggest sex and seduction. For example, the advertisements of Axe deodorants for men show females swooning over the male who uses it. It shows that women forget everything else to be close to the male who wears it. Women in these adverts not only appear to engage in certain lustful acts with a complete stranger, but also approve of his invasive behaviour because of the deodorant used by him, thereby promulgating degrading image of women in society. It may be clearly observed in the clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9tWZB7OUSU//>. Hence, the advertising discourse present deodorants as products that remove the natural olfactory signs from the body while perfumes are presented as products that bestow it with new, 'ideal' olfactory appeal. This is more visible in advertisements of perfumes for women as perfumes are promoted as image enhancers for them. They promise a solution to the problem of bad body odour and also an assurance for better life in a society in which women are expected to be able to attract men. And the advertising discourse of perfumes, taking advantage of the social stereotypes, presents the product as the answer to this created need. The emphasis is on consumption of a certain brand if the need is to be met. Perfume advertisements generally suggest seduction and sex to promote their products in spite of the fact

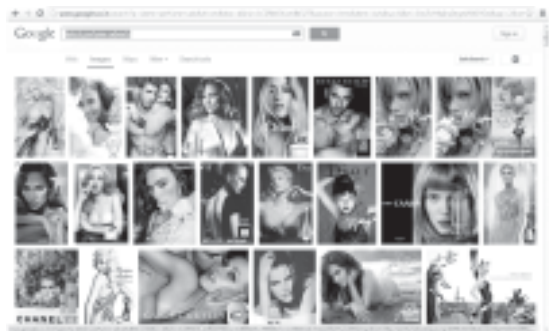
that a perfume in itself does not have the quality of driving men crazy. Irvine (1996) observes:

...there is no fragrance that drives men mad. It is fragrance advertising that has always kept women hoping. Sex, after all, sells scent. Come to think of it, sex sells everything from cars to ice cream to Folgers Instant. But fragrance has always flirted with sex a little more outrageously than almost any other product has, because perfume (unlike ice cream) is what women tend to put on before a date. (Irvine, 1996, p. 491)

Irvine's view gets reinforced with a search on Google for 'latest perfume adverts images'. Most advertising images on the Webpage (See Figure1) were suggestive of what Irvine states.

Figure 1

There has also been some research, which suggests that sex in the advertisements of



perfumes is out. Irvine (1996, p. 492) suggests that the 'liquid in the bottle, too, is losing carnal undertones. The trend is towards sparkling fruity scents, sheer girlish florals, and banal love like fragrances with the widespread appeal of a good air freshener.' However, she also believes that it is a passing phase and that sex will come back in the advertisements

as a major selling force. She states, 'Sex, however, isn't dead yet. Just a little tired, perhaps. After a short nap, the frankly seductive fragrance will no doubt soon be jumping and grinding its way into ad campaigns everywhere (1996, p. 493).' However, it is a subject of debate and it can be argued that sex never left the scene of advertisements. Even if her observation is accepted, more than a decade (1996) has passed since her paper 'Sprayed and Neutered' appeared. It may be granted that the nap is over and it has bounced back vigorously in the advertisements of women cosmetic products in general and in the perfume advertisements in particular. As may be seen in Figure 1, that images of international brands of perfumes such as 'Chanel', Gucci, 'Nina Ricci', 'Prada', 'Halle Barry', show a lot of female skin to suggest 'carnal undertones' in perfume advertisements. The expressions in the eyes of female models also flaunt sexual desire. In fact, 'Guilty Gucci' advertisements that show a couple entwined leaving nothing to imagination, establish the presence of sex in perfume advertisements. Cortese (2007) emphasizes how female nakedness or the image of the woman is exploited in perfume advertising. He believes that the image of a sensuous woman enticingly addressing the viewer continues to be employed in advertising, assuming the form of an 'agent provocateur' (an ideal image that arouses a feeling or reaction), performing the main function of eliciting the desired emotional response in the viewer. He observes that "image of the ideal beautiful woman may perhaps be captured with the concept of the provocateur (Cortese, 2007, p. 59)." Cook also points out that perfumes are "marketed and perceived as expressions of the self and of sexuality (2001, p.6)."

Critical Discourse Analysis: a review of the literature

A critical analysis of the advertising discourse is being used as an approach to analysis. It may be observed that the critical analysis of the advertisement helps to unpack the hidden agendas of the advertising discourse which are not visible at the surface level. It studies how the concepts of power and ideology are symbolically negotiated for the maintenance of the capitalist relations of production, exchange and consumption of goods as well as meaning. It also attempts to ascertain whether the advertising discourse participates in the activity of naturalizing the dominant 'ways of seeing' to protect the current socio-political ideologies of the capitalist market.

Fairclough (2003) explains that there is no single theory or method which is uniform and consistent throughout CDA. Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 6) observe that 'the whole theoretical framework of CDA seems eclectic and unsystematic.' The reason for this could be, as Titscher et. al. point out, the fact that the concern of CDA is social rather than purely linguistic. They observe that "CDA is concerned with social problems. It is not concerned with language or language per se, but with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures" (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, and Vetter, 2000, p. 146). What is, therefore, most striking about CDA is its concern with social life and the part that discourse plays in it. CDA views language as social practice and social life can be seen as networks of diverse social practices that always includes discourse.

Fairclough (2003, p. 231) argues that CDA developed as a response to the traditional divide between linguistics and areas of social science such as sociology. While linguistics was primarily concerned about

detailed analysis of texts and interactions or the interactional dimension of analysis, social science was concerned with the social practice and social change or the structural dimension. Fairclough (1995) points out that CDA includes a combination of the interactional and the structural analysis of social life. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” (Van Dijk, 1998, p.1). van Dijk (2001) also observes that CDA is concerned with social problems and may be considered to be a ‘discourse analysis with an attitude.’ He goes on to say that ‘CDA does not deny, but explicitly defines and defends its own socio-political position. That is CDA is biased – and is proud of it. (p. 96)’

CDA aims at recognizing social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships, through the use of texts (both written text and oral speech) that people come across in their everyday lives. It tries to expose the hidden ideological assumptions that texts hold for the purpose of resisting and overcoming the inherent power relationships. Rahimi and Sahragard observe that CDA is a method to examine “the power relations, ideological manipulations, and hegemony (2007, p.1).” According to Althusser, (1978), ideology and institutions such as family, church, school, mass media, and so on function through “interpellation”. The interpellated subjects imagine that their identities are internally self-generated while in reality it is imposed on them by the society, family, school, religion, and the mass media which Althusser includes among state ideological apparatuses. He attests that they worked less by power and politics and more by ideology. They inculcate in people specific ways of thinking

about and understanding their places within and in relationships to the societies of which they are a part (1978, pp.145-146).

Drawing upon Althusser, Fairclough asserts that CDA is a systematic investigation of covert relationships between discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes and aims at finding how such opaque relationships methodically ensure power and hegemony, while also drawing attention to disparity in power-relations, social discriminations, non-democratic practices, and other biases with a hope to urging people to adopt remedial actions. Fairclough (1992, p. 12) says:

Critical approaches differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but in showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief.

As such, critical discourse analysis is acknowledged as a social research method which emphasizes the systemic nature of social phenomena in order to reveal ideology at work, while also taking a position on its practical consequences. It therefore recommends itself as a methodology to explore and understand the discourse of advertising that urges people to consume and thereby construct subject positions for themselves. CDA tries to highlight ways in which the dominant forces in a society construct versions of reality that favour their interests. By unmasking such practices, CDA helps consumers discover the difference between the real world and the fake and how they are tricked into believing in the projected version of reality.

CDA of advertising discourse would therefore include the analysis of the verbal text following the eclectic model of Fairclough and also the visual text of the advertisement. Cook (2001, p. 3) corroborates that the visual and the verbal are essential and equally meaningful components of advertising discourse. Corresponding to Cook's observation, Freitas also states:

In fact, to privilege textual analysis over visual matter (or vice versa) would result in a severely unbalanced reading of the corpus, since the conveyance of meanings in print ads takes place by means of a process of convergence and reiteration of the same message via every channel available (Freitas, 2012, p. 96).

Such combination of channels, which is generally present in all communication and particularly in advertising, is multimodality. Talking about scent advertising and the multimodal discursive construction of masculinity, Godeo (2009, p. 14) points out, "...fragrances are advertised through a combination of short linguistic messages and visuals attempting to attract the attention of magazine readers, who are treated as potential purchasers." Jaworski and Coupland (1999, p. 7) observe:

When we think of discourse in the wider context of communication, we can extend its analysis to include non-linguistic semiotic systems (systems for signalling meaning), those of non-verbal and non-vocal communication which accompany or replace speech or writing...

It follows that advertisers use both the verbal and the visual texts in the advertising discourse to convey the desired meanings to manipulate the target group. They try to maintain the socio-cultural constructs of society that help them to present their products to people in a language

that makes all the disparities in society appear normal and natural. The analysis of the visual and the verbal texts also illustrates how ideology becomes one of the important aspects of CDA.

Ideological analysis of advertisements reveals that the advertiser's ideology appeals to the different ideological frames of the readers either by sustaining the relations of power or by seeking to transform them or through both. To achieve this purpose, advertisements alter the needs of the consumers by first making them feel inadequate about themselves. The advertisements make the consumers slightly dissatisfied with their current existence and their lifestyle. For example, in the Indian society fairness is considered as one of the yardsticks of beauty. Therefore desire to be fair is predominant in females. Taking advantage of this, the 'Fair and Lovely' advertisement shows dark and depressed getting transformed into confident, fair complexioned and beautiful after using the product. Such advertisements begin with a non-fair complexion female getting a raw deal because of her complexion. Such advertisements suggest that the product being offered will make their life better. These advertisements generally advocate fairness for attracting men thereby tilting the balance of power in favour of men. Berger (1999, p. 456) observes that publicity persuades us with promise "of such a transformation by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result enviable. Publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour." Hence advertising works step by step and these steps may be as under:

Advertisers construct a rich and appealing lifestyle in their ads '!They append a product to this lifestyle'!They sell the product as attachments to this lifestyle.

Hafel kitchens advertisements are excellent examples of how a rich life style is appended with the product. A very recent advertisement of 'rotimatic' is also an example of how advertisers first sell the attractive life style wherein a woman is shown making a painting and her husband handling the cooking of meals, laying the table with excellent crockery, cutlery and wine glasses and a bottle of wine. It is assumed that most women will be attracted by the scenario. After ensuring the attention of women the product 'rotimatic' is associated with it. //https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsfccHgWDb0//

The next step for the advertisers is to complement the advert with a unique selling proposition (USP) which promises to do something that other products cannot and it becomes difficult for consumers to resist such a tempting invitation. The USP of Colgate is "**No. 1 Brand Recommended by Dentists**". The presence of the word 'Dentists' in the USP accompanied by the visual of a dentist in a white coat provides a medical excellence to the product implying that the other products do not have such an advantage. Similarly, the USP of 'Fair and Lovely' i.e. '**power of beauty**'/'**maximum fairness**' helps females to achieve what they desire - a man, a job or friends.

Findings and discussion: Critical Discourse Analysis of the advertisement - Zeroone (Perfume for Women)

In the advertisement, the girl model appears to be an Indian therefore it may be said that the advertisement is addressing educated Indian women and men who would like to buy the perfume as a gift for women if they desire the projected scenario of an attractive woman waiting for them to execute her plot of pleasing them using the gifted perfume. If only the women audience are taken into

consideration, the advertisement appears to be addressed to both the wife and the other woman. The wife is advised to use the product to please her husband while the other woman is advised to use the product as a weapon to seduce the man she desires. It makes their interpretation multifaceted. It could be addressed to a girl going out on her first date; a wife wanting to feel secure that her husband is with her; or the other woman plotting seduction. Most young women would normally fall into one of these three categories and therefore develop a positive attitude towards the product. Since advertising discourse is that of persuasion through the use of various tools such as the verbal and the visual, this advertisement also constructs the persuasive discourse through the visuals, graphological features, and the verbal. As mentioned earlier about perfume adverts being more visual than verbal, the Zeroone advertisement follows the pattern and with a minimum use of the verbal, it is able to communicate its intended meanings to the target audience. It makes women perceive themselves to be in control of the situation through the use of the perfume but the reality of such portrayal can be gauged only on analysing the verbal and the visual of the advert critically. The analysis of the verbal and the visual clearly brings out the hidden agenda that works against the social status of women. It appears a case of sustaining the existing power relations between men and women.

Generally, in perfume advertisements, the analysis of the images used shows how women are deceived into thinking that being sexually desirable will have more power over men and that using a particular perfume will help them to become sexually desirable. Classen et al. (1994, p. 189) assert that perfume advertisements replicate the changes in the role and image of women in

Western societies. They observe that the changes concerned the designs and images explored in perfume advertising since the 1950s, when advertising messages drew on themes such as femininity and elegance while exhibiting glamorous images of social events, and propagating the ideas of those women who mainly wear a perfume was to please men (1994, pp. 189-190). Images of the 'sensuous' and of the 'natural' woman became common in the 1960s and 1970s (Myers, 1986, p. 75) and images of self-fulfilment through the use of a fragrance became a trend in the 1980s and 1990s (Classen et al., 1994, pp. 189-190). It may be argued that in the western world, the main objective in wearing a perfume is still more to please men rather than self-fulfilment. An advertisement of a women's perfume bracelet (Ultra Rare Gwen Stephani Perfumed Bracelet) in the UK edition of *Cosmopolitan* in November, 2007, (image available at <https://www.pinterest.com/vllanueva1/gwen-stefani-style/>) reveals the purpose behind the advert. This image cannot be called an image of self-fulfilment. The image of woman in advert is inter-textual. The semi clad woman doused with the perfume appears to be an avatar of a 'genie' out of a bottle ready to please as if saying 'your wish is my command'. The tag line '**I Want You All Over Me**' is deliberately ambiguous. On the surface, it may denote that the woman wants the perfume all over her but at the deeper level the purpose of using so much perfume cannot be ignored. It may again be not far-fetched to interpret that it is the man who gives the command 'I Want You All Over Me' or the woman invites the man to be 'all over' her.

The Advertisement : Zeroone Perfume

Figure 2



The Non-verbal

The advertisement, under reference (Figure 2) has been designed in such a way that the non-verbal occupies most of the space. Only two 'objects' can be seen in the advertisement: a woman and the product. The design of the advertisement reveals the designs of the advertisers. Since the advertisement is more visual than verbal, it becomes noteworthy that the promotion of an international product would generally be easier using more visual texts. It is quite apparent if Figure 1 is taken into consideration. Messaris (1997) observes that many fashion and cosmetics products, perfumes strive for global markets therefore pictures are likely to be part of the overall advertising strategy and this is commonly a feature of cross cultural and/or global advertising approaches that make them more suitable to cross borders (Messaris, 1997, p. 93). The visual in this advert reveals how the woman and the product are positioned vis-à-vis each other. The

visual makes it evident that the product is more important than the woman. It may be noted that the product is in the foreground while the woman is in the background. The product is fully visible and is foregrounded against the purple background while the woman is behind the purple strip and with some of her body parts seemingly hidden by the bottle of the product and the name of the brand. The product is in front of the purple strip with an agenda of foregrounding it to the fullest. Though the woman occupies more space on the page, it is the product that appears to be more important and has been accordingly foregrounded. No part of the product is hidden. The iconic image of the product occupies a significant place in the picture. The product, therefore, naturally becomes more significant than the woman in the advertisement.

Generally speaking, images of women in advertising are stereotypical in intent. They are presented, either to make their homes liveable for their men or to titillate / seduce them. This advert follows the second option that suggests that women need to do something special to please their men. The advertisement implies that women have to continuously think of and devise plots to keep their men happy and satisfied. Most female perfume advertisements suggest that using their product will help them to attract men and therefore encourage them to indulge in consumption of the product as an aid to carry out their plans (of enticing men), if they have any. This may also be seen as an answer to their need of enticing men.

The advertisement portrays a woman who has her hair open with an uncombed, wet, just out of her bath look. Perhaps, her next step should be to use 'zeroone' or she may have already used it. There is



something mysterious about her eye-expressions too. She is looking sideways (left) which explains that she perhaps has something to hide. Her lips that are only a little open give her a highly mysterious look. Her whole personality seems enigmatic. It is difficult to read what's going on in her mind. Along with mystery, there is also something dreamy about her look that is further explicated with minimal verbal text the advertisement has. On the left side of her head, we find a foregrounded word, 'plot'. This word is written in white against the black background. The positioning of the word 'plot' near her head implies that something is going on in her mind. Perhaps she is plotting something. A recent advertisement of Yardley of London perfume (Figure 3) featuring Katrina Kaif has similar visuals. Katrina Kaif displays similar body language and like the Zeroone model, she also looks mysterious with her sideways glance. As in the zeroone advert, the product occupies a significant space; Katrina also occupies one third of the page space but the product is positioned in a way that hides her to some extent and also makes a covert suggestion about the part where the product may be used. To complement this, the Yardley advert has a similar kind of sensuality and the



flaunting of female skin that once again suggests sexual implication on consumption of the product. The Dior advertisement (figure 4) is again very similar with minimal verbal text and emphasis on the visual communication.

The Zeroone advert has another important word i.e. 'weapon'. This word has been positioned near her shoulder. It may imply that she will need to use her hands, arms and shoulders in order to use her weapon. The visual import of the female model conforms to our conventional knowledge of who she is and what she should do and how she should look like. There seems to be a relationship between her and the 'absent man' for whom she is getting 'ready' making the absent man more important than the woman. The insignificant woman has bought/ will buy an important product to please an important person in her life who is not present in the advertisement. The importance of man in absentia and mitigation of the woman who is very much present in the advertisement can be clearly noticed. Hence, the most significant presence is that of the visible product – the perfume; then comes the absent man, and the woman who has to make all efforts finishes a poor third. She makes use of one (perfume) in her effort to get hold over the other (man).

An important visual in the advert (Figure 2) is her open hair. Hair is often seen to be linked with depicting the binary opposites of freedom and confinement (Also see Figure 3). In the advertisement, the open hair of the woman implies freedom - a sign of liberation. At the same time she also supports 'just out of the bath' wet hair look, which is considered a turn-on in the world of fashion and glamour. It may be said that wet and open hair may give an impression of women' emancipation and the liberty to do what she desires. However, it raises many a question such as the real meaning of the liberty that the modern woman presumably has i.e. 'What does she achieve with this liberty?' or

'What does she do with it?' The answer to these questions is quite simple though laced with patriarchal ideology. She has the freedom to choose her perfume; the freedom to plot or take initiative; the freedom to devise ways of pleasing/ seducing the man in her life. Such liberty may well be interpreted as reflection of women's preoccupation with thoughts of pleasing men and consequently as confinement of women in patriarchal stereotypes. Similarly, the use of purple colour against the black and white background is again symbolic and highly connotative. The purple colour gives undertones of sexual intimacy for which the woman seems to be plotting. This colour also stands for royalty and richness and has perhaps been used to give a false sense of empowerment that makes them think that they can take their own decisions - such as buying her perfume and choose her man, etc. This empowerment, as mentioned above, works towards the advantage of the dominant group. Such messages that advertisements communicate to people are ideological. In this advert, it may be observed that the advertising discourse (which is a part of mass media) interpellates (Althusser, 1978) women and works in particular ways to first prescribe and then enforce women into thinking about their identities in relation to men and that it encourages them to act accordingly i.e. their identities according to society is subordinate to men and therefore they need to please men by using the perfume. Women in this advertisement feel interpellated and feel internally compelled to imagine that the role determined by society for them is natural and they need to conform to the prescribed role. They consider it to be internally self-generated but in reality this kind of identity of women is imposed by society. Women feel compelled to please men as part of their conformity to their social roles for which they need to plan and buy a product that

helps them to execute their plan. It may be considered that the advertisement uses this strategy to ensure that 'Zeroone' is one of the perfumes on the dressing table of women among others. In fact, the advertisement does not leave women liberty to choose any other perfume but 'Zeroone' with its soft sell subtle techniques.

The Verbal

The advertisement under reference has very little verbal text. However, it has information regarding the range of products and the place of availability at the left bottom of the advertisement. Besides this information, it has just two words and the name of the product written just under the product (bottle) to describe the product lending it an air of mystery. These words are, 'plot', 'weapon' and 'zeroone'. There is no mention of the fragrance of the perfume in the advertisement. Classen et al (1994, p. 189) also observe that a close look at advertisements for perfumes reveals 'that there are few references to smell, which is, after all the sense directly affected by these products' (1994, p. 189) but the words 'sense (s)' and 'sensation (s)' are pretty common in perfume advertisements, observes Freitas (2012, p. 102). Nothing else is said about the product perhaps because in the advert the non-verbal takes precedence over the verbal. It throws up an image of a woman waiting for a man and planning to have some enjoyable time together with the man. The perfume as a 'weapon' can be used only in very predictable situations and it can help her in achieving her aim or in making her 'plot' successful i.e. to keep men happy or to seduce them. This reinforces the importance of the absent man and the insignificance of women with an implication that women should accept the stereotypical subjugated position as far as their relationship with men is concerned. Besides this, the language also suggests that the advert signals to hailed women that their 'plot' can now be supported by a 'weapon'

i.e. 'Zeroone'. The context of a plot to be executed and the weapon to be used as for its smooth execution gives it suggestive connotations. These suggestive connotations in the advert serve a hermeneutic function. The reader gets intrigued by the two foregrounded words in the advertisement and is tempted to puzzle out the significance of these two words in the advertisement that has no other language to support except the body language of the woman. The readers, if they are women, it is hoped that they might identify with the plot, the weapon as their own, and the utility of the product in executing their plot. As Feiereisen et al (2009) observe, "Increasingly, advertising practitioners are going to great lengths to design advertisements with female images that women consumers can easily identify with" (2009, p.814).

The advertisement also exploits the beauty myth that spells out the importance of beauty for all women. Advertisers, keeping in mind the 'male gaze' factor, ideologically construct the standards of beauty to which all women feel the need to conform. The implication is that women should strive to be beautiful not for themselves or to feel good but for their men and possessing a perfume would help them in their pursuit of beauty and attraction. It conforms to the traditional Indian concept of pursuit of beauty defined in Hindi as 'solahshringaar' as (sixteen ways to make women beautiful) and to Berger's (1999) observation that 'men act and women look'.

Hence, the advert under question seems very innocent but the words 'plot' and 'weapon' make it suggestive, connotative and laced with ideological underpinnings. Hegemony also appears to be at work here. The message that the reader gets from the image of the woman who is smiling in the advertisement is that she appears to be a willing cohort of the plot that the advertisers have made with her playing the

decoy using the perfume as her weapon. She seems to accept this situation and also the image of hers that gets portrayed through the advertisement and helps in naturalizing the inferior position that is traditionally ascribed to women vis-à-vis men. In spite of the fact that this advertisement is addressed to a modern woman (who may be the reader of the magazine), the advert is tailored to suit the conventional attitude of women that positions them naturally inferior to men.

Although the woman breaks one stereotype of shy and timid traditional women, she gets engaged into another that is of a modern woman, a temptress. Traditionally, in the Indian culture this image is not that of a woman who is respected but of a vamp, a seductress. However, the advertisement under question projects that women in the modern times need to change their thinking and should pride themselves in being plotters and seductresses and would be able to bring men to their feet in doing so. Women may also perceive it to be a very promising picture especially as they have been trampled in a patriarchal world for centuries. Perhaps this promise makes her consent to what is happening to her in the advertisement. Her smile in the advertisement also projects her eagerness to devise a plot and to look forward to all that is going to happen as a result of execution of her plot using her newly acquired weapon. She seems to have given consent with her mind and body to what might happen as implied by the positioning of the words 'plot' near her head and the 'weapon' close to her shoulder. She does not require to be coerced into accepting a subservient position.

It may be pointed out that the foregoing analysis and the inferences drawn may not be justified on the basis of looking at one advertisement only. However, the Ultra Rare Gwen Stephani Perfumed Bracelet,

Yardley of London (Figure 2), the Dior advertisements (Figure 4) discussed briefly and also the 'Google screen shot' (Figure 1) help to demonstrate that generally the trend in perfume advertisements is similar with more of visual supported by minimal verbal (text). The Yardley of London (Figure 2) advert has just two phrases- My Fragrance, My Yardley. The use of possessive pronoun 'My' seems to be significant as Katrina declares the perfume as hers with an implication that she uses the perfume to realize her objective, which is the same as that of any other woman using a product like this. Moreover, the use of 'my' also ascribes quality to the product since it is used by the top actress of Mumbai Film Industry.

Implications of Critical Discourse Analysis in English language teaching/ learning situation

The concern of CDA, that social practices are based on conceptions which work towards advantage of the powerful and the disadvantage of the weaker sections in society gets strengthened through this advertisement. Through the analysis, CDA aims at revealing social inequalities in society by studying language used by the dominant institutions which include society, politics, media, etc. appear to be right. A careful analysis of the language used by the members of these institutions exposes power relations that exist in society, the most apparent being power relations between men and women. Therefore, bringing critical awareness through CDA of adverts would generally be more applicable at higher or intermediate level English language courses.

To discuss the relevance of critical analysis of advertisements to teach English language at this level, it must be recognized that advertisements are authentic texts

which teachers can use in the classroom not only for illustration of persuasive use of language but for developing what is known as critical language awareness. As a part of methodology in a classroom, teachers can draw students' attention to linguistic elements which are ideologically significant. This kind of analysis sensitizes learners to the fact that language can be manipulated to conceal the real agenda implicit in a text and how language can be used as an instrument to maintain the status quo in society. Healy (2009) believes that EFL texts were biased against femininity in 1970s and 1980s when the world was a different place and that women had a subordinate position in society was an accepted fact. With more awareness about rights of women, the presentation of gender in ELT materials has become an important issue which also influences learners in a positive or a negative way. Therefore, learners must be given orientation in critical use of language so that they are not easily influenced and learn to look at things from a critical eye. They must learn how to read hidden meanings in texts like advertisements.

Exposure to the language in English media will not only help them to learn the usage but also to be able to recognize when language is laced with dominant ideology and when it is free. As they are exposed to numerous texts, verbal and non-verbal, in the classroom or home, their level of interaction with the textual content may vary from brief conversations with the texts to a total involvement as the learners make efforts to read through the lines to make sense of them. Therefore, language needs to be taught in conjunction with the social context and must be weaved into the teaching methodologies used in the classroom.

Conclusion

The analysis of the perfume advertisement suggests that advertisements emerge from social realities and reflect the ideology of the society in which they are created. Perfumes have always been used to appeal to the senses rather than the mind therefore carnal undertones cannot be ignored in the perfume advertisements. It may be observed that true to the context in which the advert appears, seduction is being celebrated in the advertisement. Sex and seduction emerge to be overwhelmingly present in the advertisement that appears to be innocent. As the advertisements are easily within the reach of common people, they can be clearly detrimental to the image and the position of women as they ratify the images that exist in the minds of people. Though postfeminists think and give women a stronger position today compared to women in the past, if the purpose of the plot is examined, it reveals no change in the position of women. In fact, the weapon may eventually work against them and may be used against them to reinforce the existing ideologies and social power relations. Their plot to charm with a weapon does not make her powerful in any sense of the word. Lazar (2007) believes, 'Such representations, however, far from supporting the feminist cause, are quite detrimental to it. Feminists' concern for women's empowerment is appropriated and re-contextualized by advertisers, evacuating it of its political content and instead infusing meanings quite antithetical to feminism (2007, p. 159).' To say that the analysis of the visual and the verbal in the advertisement of 'Zeroone' throws up an image of pseudo-empowered woman would not be off beam. The woman appears to be in control of things but the fact that she has to 'plot' an encounter and to use a 'weapon' to present herself as desirable reveals her weakness. She is presented as a predator on the prowl but in

reality, she is the prey. The verbal and the visual texts in the advertisement compel the reader to arrive at such inference. It is the ability to infer the implied meanings and relating the language to the social context in which it is born that needs to be imparted to language learners who should learn to look at text critically. CDA, therefore, is an appropriate tool to be used for analysis of advertising texts. It helps people to recognise that language is not an innocent medium of communication but a manipulative instrument used by the dominant class to maintain their dominance.

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