



***Ideology of Advertising Discourse in the Postmodern Era:
A Semiological Study of a Sample of Algerian Advertisements***

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyze the ideology and visual symbols used in Algerian television commercials, and the impact on the audience's perception as well as cultural and social awareness. The importance of this study arises from the need to understand how advertising discourse is used as a tool to shape social values and identities in a society characterized by local cultural diversity. This study answers basic questions about the role of advertising in promoting consumerism, Aesthetic standards, Traditional and modern gender roles, and the extent to which these factors influence Algerian identity. The study adopted a semiotic analysis method to explain the semantic and symbolic dimensions used in a sample of Algerian television advertisements. It focuses on cultural symbols and social norms in advertising discourse, and plays an important role in giving. This study contributes to the study of cultural semiotics by highlighting the influence of ideology in advertising discourse, and provides guidance aimed at guiding advertisers to promote positive cultural and social awareness in Algeria.

Restart This study aims to analyze the ideology and visual symbols used in Algerian television advertisements, and the impact on viewers' discretion as well as cultural and social awareness. The importance of this study lies in the need to understand public opinion and discourse.

Keywords: advertising ideology - postmodernity - cultural identity - advertising discourse - semiotics of advertising .

Introduction

Advertising discourse is one of the most important cultural tools of modern life-not because it gives promotion to products and services only, but also because of its very important role in fixing ideologies and cultural directions in societies. The investigation into advertising discourse shall reveal how symbols and concepts are used to communicate messages, both explicitly and implicitly, about the cultural, social, and ideological context of the society. This topic assumes special significance in the context of Algeria, where advertising has to confront cultural and social difficulties resulting from such rich cultural diversity, while at the same time it overstates one particular kind of consumerist lifestyle within a postmodern reality. Research on advertising discourse in Algeria is marked by a number of gaps in knowledge, relating above all to the ideological and semiotic aspects of this discourse. In fact, most studies conducted on advertising have looked at its economic dimensions with less attention paid to the symbolic or ideological functions it plays in the construction of public awareness and culture. The paper, therefore, tries to fill this gap by understanding how the discourse of advertising uses cultural signs and symbols in order to signal ideological messages that shape the values and social concepts perceived by the Algerian audience. Semiotic analysis of advertisements has become an important tool to describe how media messages shape the consciousness of the viewer in multicultural societies such as Algeria. This study provides an avenue toward understanding how ads reshape identity and cultural values, essential for proper insight and analysis by researchers and cultural policy makers. Critical awareness development in persons is also.

Study Objectives The study tries to:

1. reveal the ideologies that are embedded in the Algerian advertising discourse, and define the nature of the cultural and social messages transmitted in advertisements.
2. analyze the cultural symbols and signs used in the television advertisements, interpreting their meanings from the point of view of the Algerian culture.
3. understand the implications of the advertising discourse on the awareness and values of the viewer and what contribution this discourse makes to the formation of his cultural identity and his social orientations.

1- Introduction to Postmodernism

1.1. Definition: Postmodernism is an intellectual and cultural movement that rose in the mid-20th century as a response against modernism and its fruits. It is characterized by challenging traditional perceptions of knowledge, truth, and identity. In postmodern thinking, truths are put into question; truth is pluralistic and dynamic, not fixed or objective. It emphasizes diversity in human experiences and respect for individual.

1.2. The Impact of Postmodernism on Advertising Discourse

The influence of postmodernism was mainly into media and advertising discourses, in which the mode of message delivery has changed to depend more on symbols, suggestions, and interplaying visual styles than on straightforward messages. It is in such a postmodern period that advertising happens to manipulate the cultural symbols and reshape the idea in such a way that real and fantastic are mixed. The major characteristics of advertising discourse in this context include:

B.1 - Multiplicity of Meanings Advertising discourse uses multiple significations of images and symbols; each viewer understands those according to his or her own capabilities. In the postmodern era, advertisements will have the hallmark of this multi-valency of meaning-no longer a single, clear message but rather an invitation to many interpretations, therefore evoking different kinds of meaning

for the audience. This plurality targets offering the viewer a personal experience wherein they discover an interpretation that corresponds to their background, culture, and person's experiences. (Sadeq Ali 2018, p. 25.)

1.3. Importing the Plurality of Meanings in Advertising:

a. **More Audience:** Through the use of symbols and signs carrying multiple meanings, advertisements can be done toward different groups of audiences in which each group finds an interpretation close to their interest and culture. (Salim Maha 2015, p. 45).

b. **Personal Connection Creation:** The different meanings can be interpreted differently by each viewer; hence, it will help create a personal connection to drive the ad deeper in one's mind.

c. **Encouragement of Critical Thinking:** Multiplicity of meanings provokes the receiver to reflect and generate thoughts on the message given through the ad; this facilitates an interactive and memorable experience (Abdel Ghani Hassan, 2019, p. 88).

d. **To give advertisements their artistic dimension means** to release the meaning. The meaning is suggestive, symbolic, and can be polysemic; it can have multiple readings and therefore be more complicated but attractive. (Al-Shanati Mohamed, 2021, p. 56).

In other ads, there might be hints with which advertisement receivers would be familiar, referring to cultural or popular ones, yet allowing different interpretations. For example, an ad for a brand can be using scenes and symbols that represent nature and traditional elements, yet some can perceive these as a call to return to nature. Others can perceive it as strength and related to cultural dimensions. (Jaber Leila, 2017, p. 77).

It is the plurality of meanings in the discourse of advertising that makes it even more inclusive and appealing, creating greater interaction with the message, hence enhancing the effect of advertising, reaching a wide audience, and offering them a unique experience.

1.4. **Focus on individual identity** Advertisements, within the pretext of postmodernism, have a tendency to communicate messages of identity diversity; they utilize marketing strategies that are individualistic, that were personal to the viewer of the ads. In this way, advertising discourses within a postmodern setting have highly focused on personal identity-no longer channeled to promote products but actually to promote personal needs and to address individuals personally. This approach drives brands to offer the products and services that stand for what the individual identifies with, thereby strengthening the personal connection between the consumer and the brand (Aaker, 1997)..

1.5. Importance of Emphasizing Personal Identity in Advertising:

a. **Emotional Connection:** In focusing on personal identity, advertising is able to create a strong emotional bond with the viewer, who has the feeling that the brand offers him something that coincides with his identity and personality (Belk 1988).

b. **Brand Loyalty:** When a brand is thought to represent their values and interests, then this naturally makes the consumer more likely to be loyal to a particular brand by continuing to use it (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

c. **Self-Expression** - Personal identity-based advertisements give the viewer a way to express themselves through the products they consume. Some products are designed to be symbols. These products are employed to represent the individual's interest and lifestyle (McCracken, 1986)..

For example, advertisements for sporting products would use the principle of strength and excellence to attract those with high personal ambitions, whereas advertisements for youth clothing could relay messages concerning individualism and freedom as a way to appeal to a sector of the population that yearns to express their identity in a way that is both trendy and different from others, hence unique, as (Solomon 1983) observes.

Focusing on personal identity makes the discourse of advertising more influential in luring consumers, as persons can feel identified with the brand by representing part of their personality in it, strengthening emotional attachment and loyalty and allowing advertising to be used as a means for self-expression and individual identity.

1.6. Elaborated Cultural Symbols Used The usage of symbols and other forms of visual cueing in advertisement publicity is symbolic, complex, and even culturally engendered; therefore, much more powerful guides for the audience to certain cultural or ideological notions. Complex cultural symbols have emerged as the dominant feature of postmodern advertising discourse, in which advertisements are no longer based on direct images or clear messages but on deep cultural symbols with intertwined meanings across multi-dimensional planes and hence far more sophisticated and engaging for consumers. These symbols therefore attempt to converse with the viewer at a more subconscious level by making him contemplate what is beneath the message and connect it with the cultural and personal experience. (McCracken, 1986).

1.7.Importance of Complex Cultural Symbols in Advertising:

a.. **Clarification of Cultural Connection:** With the help of some cultural symbols, advertising can strengthen the connection of the consumer with the brand where the viewer feels the advertising message is in concert with their cultural values and reflects their identity. (Solomon, 1983).

b. **Providing Multiple Meaning Dimensions:** Cultural symbols give the advertisement several dimensions, having meanings which the consumer can interpret in light of his cultural and knowledge background. These dimensions make the ad more interesting and stimulate mental play with the viewer. (Mick & Buhl, 1992).

c. **Engagement with Social Values:** There is an engagement with, or even challenging of, prevailing social values through complex cultural symbols that advertisements use. These will emotionally engage the consumer with the message, therefore creating a special interaction with the brand. (McCracken, 1986).

An ad could also employ other traditional symbols, such as textiles or patterns endemic to that culture. For instance, regarding Algerian culture, an ad using traditional carpets or even local embroidery patterns could play on the viewer's attachment to cultural origins. In another culture, other symbols would ensure another cultural involvement and make that ad relevant for a specific audience, hence reinforcing cultural identity in its message.

The use of complex cultural symbols within advertising discourse also made it even more involved and multi-layered. It has indeed allowed consumers to connect the messages of the advertisement with their unique cultural and social experiences, strengthening emotional links and mental involvement in such an advertisement to make them impactful and memorable.

1.8. Manipulation of Time and Space

They often show impossible or unrealistic features of a certain aspect, creating a world that conflates times or juxtaposes cultures, hence making it even more innovative and appealing. One of the

innovative ways in postmodern advertising discourse is playing with time and space: the ad tries to create some fantastic world that conflates different times and places, adding to the message an artistic and symbolic level more complicated. This manipulation usually involves bringing the past or future into present settings or even bringing an assimilation of various cultures and geographical venues into one message as a means of driving home an appeal that would make an ad more interesting to consumers (Firat & Shultz, 1997).

1.9. The Importance of Time-Space Manipulation in Advertisement

a. **Stimulating Curiosity and Interest:** The manipulation of time and space arrests the attention of the viewer, who is thus led to reflect on the message and remembers it for a longer period. This technique thus provides the consumer with an appealing, out-of-the-ordinary viewing experience (Brown, 1993)..

b. **Creating continuity and belonging:** When elements of the past pop up in this contemporary setting, the viewer will find the ad as a reflection of the zeitgeist. In that respect, he is brought closer to the continuity of generations, and a sense of belonging to the brand will be reassured. (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

c. **Highlighting Cultural Diversity:** By juxtaposing the different places or cultures in a message, it can reflect cultural diversities or bridge the cultures through advertisement that lets the brand be inclusive and also belonging to globalization as claimed by (Featherstone 1991).

For example, an advertisement for a global brand might depict an ancient historic scene combined with modern products, such as using pyramids or traditional carpets in today's setting. This manipulation could enhance the relation between the viewer and history, giving a sense of modernity and making the advertising message more dynamic and current. Time and space manipulation do indeed enrich advertising discourse, allowing the viewer to participate in an interactive adventure that goes beyond the traditional bounds of time and place.

For this reason, this tool is highly attention-grabbing and deepens the effectiveness of the ad by making it possible for the consumer to symbolically pass through different historic and cultural dimensions, thus being more memorable and durable. It would be in order to say, within this perspective, that postmodernism has pushed the advertisement discourse towards symbolic diversity and complexity - not only a tool for promotion, but an aggressively influential cultural tool shaping the viewer's awareness and cultural identity.

2. Ideology in Advertisement Discourse

The role of ideology, consequently, is very significant in the sphere of advertising discourse, since adverts purposefully serve as one of the channels for communicating certain social and cultural values and standards, very often indirectly, which influence the consumers' awareness and orientations. Being a symbolic device, ideology helps the companies advocate certain values and standards promoting their commercial interests by placing encoded messages into advertisements carrying certain values, such as success, beauty, consumerism, or even social class affiliation (Goldman, 1992, p. 66)..

2.1. The role of ideology in advertising

a. **Reinforcing Social Values:** Ads are, in a way, reiterating social values and furthering ideas and standards representative of what is desirable or ideal-for example, the perception of beauty or success. This promotion enhances the social acceptability of the product through linking products to things that are socially perceived as good (Williamson 1978, p. 38).

b. **Consumerism Promotion:** Through playing on ideological values, advertisements convince consumers that happiness and fulfillment are linked to ownership of products. In this case, products are made to be solutions in which satisfaction and happiness will result to promote consumerism (Ewen, 1976, p. 123).

c. **Reshaping Identity:** The role of ideology in advertisements is that it reshapes both individual and collective identity, wherein there is an association of products with a particular group of people; as such, individuals define their identity based on what they consume. This thus leads to the attachment of consumers and brands to a certain social identity (Jhally, 1987, p. 83).

By doing so, brands can construct implicit messages by using images of successful and stylish individuals in certain products to indicate what is being sold, not for mere use, but as an identity of success or desirable social status for the consumer. Here, advertising can create a strong link between prevailing ideological values and the product by encouraging consumers to pursue these values through purchasing the product.

Ideology in advertising discourse is a powerful tool for the influencing of consumers by branding certain social values and standards with products. The influence strengthens brands' power to make an impact on consumption and cultural models in society, turning advertising into not only an instrument but also an active display in remodeling social consciousness and individual and collective identities.

2.2. Ideologies Reflected in Algerian Television Advertisement These ads on the Algerian television reflect certain ideologies that shape the social culture and influence customer behavior. Three major ideologies can be traced that these ads are propagating: consumerism ideology, beauty standards ideology and social roles ideology.

a. **Ideology of Consumerism** Most of the advertisements on television will stress the aspect of consumerism by relating personal happiness and satisfaction to ownership of modern or luxurious products. Products are marketed as a source of well-being and an aspect that will contribute to improving lifestyles, making people relate purchasing to happiness and self-fulfillment. This has been the approach where the feeling of personal satisfaction is related to consumption, making people spend more on products and services.

b. **Beauty Standards** The advertisements on Algerian television try to create some standards of beauty by offering the character with certain physical features and styles that are considered "ideal." Such ads reinforce perceptions of ideal beauty through specific cosmetic or fashion products, suggesting that achieving beauty is part of a happy and socially accepted life. This ideology supports the idea that beauty is the supreme value, at least if associated with social acceptance and appreciation, which indirectly pressures the individual into striving for such standards.

c. **SOCIAL ROLES** This is furthered by the use of television advertisements that reinforce such social roles through the portrayed roles of men and women in specific ways, representative of prevailing cultural norms: Women are often shown taking care of people or being beauty-oriented, while men are portrayed as strong, in control, and professionally accomplished. These advertisements reproduce and reinforce expected social roles that contribute to maintaining gender-based role divisions and redefining social values related to family and personal success.

The ideologies in the Algerian television advertisements become very important tools that reshape social values and influence the behaviors of people while their expectations from themselves and other individuals. Promoting consumerism, beauty standards, and traditional social roles, these commercials help build a consumer culture that directly and indirectly influences individuals' understanding of themselves and their social environment.

3. Symbols and Visual Signs in the Advertising Discourse of Algeria

3.1. Symbols and Signs Used Among the most decisive tools of television advertising that grab the attention of the viewers are visual symbols and signs. The use of these symbols is made in order to enforce advertising messages and transmit meanings that are related to cultural values and concepts. An emotional and cultural rapport between the ad and the consumer is evoked, which helps in the delivery of the indirect messages that ring with the viewer's social and cultural background.

3.2.. Traditional Cultural Symbols Most Algerian advertisements depend on traditional cultural symbols in order to help the viewer develop a sense of belonging to the Algerian identity. Examples of such symbols are traditional clothes, food items native to the culture, and folkloric music. In return, this gives it an aura of authenticity and helps in drumming on the importance of local values and customs. Through these symbols, the ad effectively managed to appeal to the viewer culturally by making him feel that what was being advertised was indeed in line with his culture and way of life.

3.3. National Colors Green, white, and red colors are widely used in advertisements as in the Algerian flag for effective national bonding. Colors signify national pride, which increases individuals' identification with society. It will, in turn attract consumers and make them feel that the product is part of their lives in Algeria. Eventually, they can relate to this product as a way of living in Algeria.

3.4. Social Symbols Most advertisements are representations of pictures of family or community in which people share a moment of pleasure or leisure. These ads serve as representations of the bonding of families and social relationships at the core of Algerian culture and act to reinforce the idea of how the product contributes to the improvement of the quality of life, reinforcing social relationships. Such symbols find resonance with the symbolic Algerian audience for whom family is at the core of daily life.

3.5. Religious Symbols Some Algerian ads use religious symbols, like scenes of prayer or of religious celebrations, cautiously to support spiritual values and respect religious traditions. This ad gives the impression that it is part of the viewer's religious life; thus, a positive reaction would come to the advertising message that respects religious identity within an Algerian society.

3.6. Symbols of Youth and Modernity The advertisements that would appeal to the tastes of the youth make use of a kind of symbolism reflective of the spirit of modernity, progress, technology, contemporary music, or the modern urban space. This is to mean that the product satisfies the aspirations of the youth and is addressed to the spirit of the age. It would serve as symbolic means to attract the quota of young people in the Algerian society who are in pursuit of products reflecting their aspirations and inclinations towards contemporariness.

In Algerian advertising discourse, symbols and visual signs are of paramount importance in building a close relation with the viewer for widening the scope of cultural and social identity and making the advertising messages more effective. Due to the use of symbolic expressions representing Algerian culture and tradition in advertisements, commercials manage to catch the attention of viewers effectively for an effective response towards the message; this helps result in effective achievement of brand objectives.

3.7. Symbols and Ideologies in Advertising Discourse and Its Influence on the Algerian Viewer The richness of symbols and ideologies in the Algerian TV ads is a tool in effectively reshaping the viewer's mind about their self-cultural and social values. Symbols and established ideologies will definitely assist in making the messages from advertisements reach the viewer's mind and heart to reinstate and make the reshaping of their concepts more effective in the realm of cultural and social identity.

3.8. Ways in Which Symbols and Ideologies Influence Algerian Viewers:

a. It helps in strengthening cultural identity and belonging. The use of traditional attire, national colors, and heritage music for advertising may help create a high level of belonging among viewers. The reinforcement of cultural identity through this practice makes the viewer believe that the product being advertised is not just a consumable commodity but part of their culture and their identity; hence, increasing attachment to the brand and the acceptance of the advertising message.

b. Shaping social concepts of family values Most of them contain images that are very family and socially bonded, which are fundamental values in the Algerian culture. These symbols help the viewers reinforce this notion, building their conviction that family and social relationships are two of life's cornerstones. Family imagery in advertising appeals to reviving these values, reminding the viewer of the importance of social bonds and integrating these values into the overall message of the product.

c. Shaping Beauty and Fashion Ideals Advertisements depicting beauty standards symbols transform the perception regarding what is acceptable or ideal. The images of ads represent beauties of the contemporary world and urge the viewer to follow such ideals and strive towards imitating them with the assistance of the products present in the ads. This influence thus creates an indirect social pressure that convinces people to follow new ideals of beauty.

d. Directing Consumer Behavior Towards Consumerism Advertisements use consumerist ideologies to convince viewers that personal satisfaction and happiness come with acquiring products. These messages enhance the feeling of a constant need for more consumption, setting up a consumerist behavior predisposed towards buying for fulfillment. The advertised goods become welcomed into one's life as a solution to achieve happiness and an ideal status.

e. Redefining Social Roles The guiding of viewers by symbols and ideologies, used in ads to point toward acceptance or even adoption of certain social roles, is a prominent feature. For instance, when females are portrayed playing family care roles or beauty-related and males in professional success or leadership-related roles, this framing reinforces stereotypes of such roles in society and influences viewers' perceptions about the expected social roles for each gender, which in turn makes for the division of roles based on societal culture.

The significations and ideologies within Algerian television advertising work as an effective tool in leading viewers toward specific social and cultural concepts. Reinforcing identity and belonging to shape social and aesthetic standards, it shapes the viewer's awareness and redefines his attitude toward social and cultural values. It makes advertising not just a promotional tool but also an instrument in reshaping cultural and social values in Algerian society.

4. Discussion of Results

The findings show that the symbols and ideologies used in the Algerian advertisements support theoretical frameworks in a number of key concepts in the study of media and culture, such as but not limited to ideology, semiology, and postmodernism. Relating the findings on the concept of ideology, it can be noticed that ads do not simply offer products but reiterate social values and standards, such as consumerism, beauty, and social roles.

This, therefore, underpins the theoretical fact that advertisement is not just a tool of commerce for a particular organization but also an important way of shaping values and reproducing the ideologies of a particular society. Semiologically, the findings have shown how adverts rely on symbols and signs to reinforce cultural identity in attracting the Algerian audience-a fact congruent with semiological theories that conceptualize symbols as carriers of deep meanings promoting sustainable interaction with the audience. The findings also confirm that the post-modern period, in fact, propagates the use

of complex signs and playing with time and space to get the attention of audiences, confirming that ads tend to use multidimensional approaches beyond the linear form and unobtrusively target awareness among consumers.

These findings bring forth some profound influence these ideologies and symbols have on the awareness and culture of the Algerian audiences. They further show that advertisements are an important contributor to the development of new perceptions about consumption, beauty, and cultural identity and therefore are crucial in shaping the viewer's understanding of self and community.

This could be the reinforcement of consumerism in advertisements, where they will make the audience believe that goods are a way to personal satisfaction. In this way, such ads reinforce a consumerist culture in society. Moreover, beauty standards within advertisements will affect the aspect of ideal beauty consideration by the audience in Algeria, hence creating pressure for social conformity toward such standards. Moreover, by depicting social roles of each gender, the advertisements reproduce gender role divisions, reinforce stereotypes, and affect human beings in what role is appropriate to be performed by each gender in society.

While comparing these findings to the related literature, there is a clear agreement with earlier studies concerning the position of advertising ideology within society. The literature available on this particular issue has shown how advertisements help develop consumerism and societal ideas, such as that by Wilson (1998) and Bordo (2003) on consumer culture.

These findings do confirm that Algeria's ads will help maintain consumer attitudes. Furthermore, these results corroborate those studies that identified how beauty standards in ads dictated the audience's perception of identity and beauty. For example, studies analyzing the effect of beauty standards on diverse societies such as Wolf (1991) and Kilbourne (1999) affirm this assertion. It therefore adds a local dimension that can provide new insight into how advertising is effective within an Algerian cultural setting—a unique environment that gives credence to theoretical frameworks related to cultural differences.

5. Conclusion

The study indeed proved that television advertisements in Algeria do carry ideologies and cultural signs which directly affect the consciousness of the viewer and perception about identity and social values. Among the key findings, one may trace the very purpose of advertisements: consumerist values, which use products as a means to gain happiness and personal satisfaction. It was also revealed that ads reinforce the canons of beauty and conservative social functions, thus building up some idea of cultural and social identity for a viewer.

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