

Symbolic Violence and Its Representation in Algerian Advertising Discourse: A Semiological Study

العنف الرمزي وتمثلاته في الخطاب الاشعاري الجزائري: دراسة سيميولوجية

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Received: 28/03/2026 published: 11/06/2026

تاريخ الاستلام: 2026/03/28 تاريخ النشر: 2026/06/11

Article abstract:

The study investigates symbolic violence in Algerian television advertising as a subtle form of domination operating through visual and linguistic signs rather than direct coercion. It examines how advertising discourse constructs social representations and normalized value systems that shape audience perception within the selected sample.

The study is grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence and draws on Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulation to explain how advertising produces socially constructed meanings that appear natural. Methodologically, it adopts a descriptive-analytical approach supported by semiological analysis, combining Roland Barthes' distinction between denotation and connotation with Roman Jakobson's functional model of language.

The analysis focuses on selected Algerian television advertisements and examines the interaction between visual and linguistic signs to identify mechanisms of meaning production and normalization. The findings show that advertising contributes to the reproduction of symbolic hierarchies through stereotypical and culturally coded representations operating mainly at the connotative level.

The study concludes that television advertising does not only promote products but also participates in shaping social perception through symbolic meanings embedded in discourse, highlighting the need for critical media awareness.

Key words : Advertising discourse; Symbolic violence; Television advertisin ; Social representations

ملخص المقال :

تبحث هذه الدراسة في ظاهرة العنف الرمزي في الإشهار التلفزيوني الجزائري بوصفه شكلا خفيا من الهيمنة يعمل عبر العلامات البصرية واللغوية، وتحذف إلى تحليل كيفية بناء الخطاب الاعلاني لتمثلات اجتماعية وأنظمة قيم مُطبَّعة تُشكِّل إدراك الجمهور ضمن العينة المختارة.

ترتكز الدراسة على نظرية العنف الرمزي عند بيير بورديو، وعلى مفهوم المحاكاة عند جان بودريار، وتبني منهجا وصفيا تحليليا مدعوما بالتحليل السيميولوجي، مع توظيف تمييز رولان بارت بين الدلالة المباشرة والإيحائية والنموذج الوظيفي للغة عند رومان ياكوبسون.

يركز التحليل على عينة من الإعلانات التلفزيونية الجزائرية لدراسة تفاعل العلامات البصرية واللغوية، وتحديد آليات إنتاج المعنى وتطبيعها. وتبين النتائج أن الإشهار يساهم في إعادة إنتاج هرميات رمزية عبر تمثلات نمطية مشفرة ثقافيا تعمل أساسا على المستوى الإيحائي.

وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الإشهار التلفزيوني لا يقتصر على الترويج للمنتجات، بل يشارك في تشكيل الإدراك الاجتماعي عبر معاني رمزية ضمن الخطاب الإشعاري، مما يستدعي تعزيز الوعي النقدي بالإعلام.

كلمات مفتاحية: الخطاب الاشعاري؛ العنف الرمزي؛ الاشهار التلفزيوني؛ التمثلات الاجتماعية.

Introduction

Violence has long been associated with direct physical aggression; however, contemporary social transformations have expanded the concept beyond its material dimension to include symbolic and discursive forms operating through language, representation, and communication. In this context, symbolic violence has emerged as one of the most influential forms of domination because it functions implicitly through meanings, images, values, and cultural norms that individuals gradually internalize as natural and legitimate aspects of social reality.

The influence of symbolic violence becomes more significant within modern media environments, where communication is no longer limited to the transmission of information but has become a central mechanism for constructing perceptions, shaping identities, and reproducing social values. Media discourse therefore plays an important role in organizing symbolic representations and directing public consciousness through persuasive communicative practices capable of influencing audiences without relying on explicit coercion. Among the various forms of media discourse, advertising occupies a particularly influential position because it combines visual, linguistic, and auditory signs within persuasive structures specifically designed to attract attention, influence interpretation, and guide consumer behavior.

Through this combination of image, language, sound, and symbolic representation, advertising discourse extends beyond its commercial function and becomes a cultural and ideological practice contributing to the production and normalization of social meanings. Television advertising, in particular, relies heavily on aesthetic appeal, emotional persuasion, and symbolic imagery in order to create attractive representations of lifestyles, identities, and social roles. As a result, advertising discourse often reproduces implicit meanings related to beauty standards, gender roles, body image, consumption patterns, and idealized lifestyles while presenting these representations as socially desirable and culturally acceptable.

The persuasive capacity of advertising discourse becomes more complex when symbolic meanings are embedded within entertaining and aesthetically attractive forms that conceal their ideological dimensions. In this regard, semiological analysis demonstrates that advertising discourse operates not only through explicit meanings but also through connotative and symbolic structures that carry implicit cultural and social messages. Visual images, gestures, colors, camera framing, slogans, and linguistic expressions therefore function together in constructing meanings that may contribute to the normalization of symbolic domination and stereotypical representation.

Within the Algerian media context, television advertising has become increasingly present in everyday life due to the expansion of private television channels and the growing dependence on persuasive visual communication. Algerian television advertisements frequently employ symbolic representations associated with femininity, masculinity, family relations, health, beauty, and social success in order to influence audience perception and consumer behavior. However, these representations may also reproduce symbolic hierarchies and implicit forms of exclusion by reinforcing specific social models and cultural expectations through repetitive media circulation.

The problem becomes more significant when symbolic violence is embedded within persuasive communicative forms that appear entertaining, harmless, or socially normalized. In such cases, advertising discourse contributes not only to the promotion of products and services but also to the reproduction of symbolic meanings and social representations capable of shaping collective perceptions and reinforcing dominant cultural values.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to analyze manifestations of symbolic violence within Algerian television advertising discourse through a semiological analytical perspective focusing on the interaction between visual and linguistic signs. The study aims to uncover the implicit meanings embedded within



advertising discourse and to examine how symbolic violence is reproduced through persuasive communicative structures and symbolic representation within the Algerian socio-cultural context.

1. The Methodological Framework

1.1 Research Problem

The transformation of violence in contemporary societies has extended the concept beyond direct physical aggression to include symbolic and discursive forms operating through communication, representation, and systems of meaning. Unlike physical violence, symbolic violence functions implicitly through cultural norms, linguistic practices, visual representations, and persuasive discourse that individuals often perceive as natural and socially legitimate. Consequently, this form of violence becomes more influential and difficult to detect because it shapes perceptions and social consciousness without relying on explicit coercion.

Within this context, media discourse has become one of the principal spaces through which symbolic meanings and social representations are produced and circulated. Media institutions no longer perform merely informative functions; rather, they actively participate in constructing social reality through persuasive communicative practices capable of influencing audience perception and behavioral orientations. Among the different forms of media discourse, advertising discourse occupies a particularly influential position because it combines linguistic, visual, and auditory signs within highly persuasive communicative structures designed to attract attention, create symbolic associations, and shape consumer attitudes.

The persuasive nature of advertising discourse becomes more complex when symbolic meanings are embedded within aesthetic and entertaining forms that conceal their ideological dimensions. Television advertising, in particular, relies on images, colors, gestures, camera framing, slogans, and emotional appeal in order to construct symbolic representations associated with beauty, body image, gender roles, lifestyle patterns, and social success. Through repetitive circulation, these representations may gradually become normalized social models that audiences unconsciously internalize and reproduce.

From a semiological perspective, advertising discourse does not operate solely at the level of explicit meaning but also at the level of implicit connotation. Visual and linguistic signs therefore function together in producing symbolic meanings that may reinforce stereotypical representations and symbolic hierarchies. The interaction between image and language allows advertising discourse to transmit ideological meanings indirectly through persuasive symbolic structures that appear natural and culturally acceptable.

In the Algerian context, television advertising has become increasingly influential due to the expansion of private television channels and the growing dependence on persuasive visual communication within everyday life. Algerian advertising discourse frequently reproduces representations related to femininity, masculinity, body image, health, beauty standards, and consumption practices through symbolic and aesthetic forms intended to influence audience perception. However, such representations may also conceal implicit forms of symbolic violence by reinforcing particular social models, cultural expectations, and normalized stereotypes.

The problem becomes more significant when symbolic violence is reproduced through persuasive communicative forms that appear harmless, entertaining, or socially desirable. In such cases, advertising discourse contributes not only to the promotion of products and services but also to the reproduction of symbolic meanings and social representations capable of shaping collective perceptions and reinforcing dominant cultural values.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to analyze how symbolic violence operates within Algerian television advertising discourse through the interaction between visual and linguistic signs and through the semiological structures embedded within advertising representations.

Based on these considerations, the central research question of the study is formulated as follows:

How do forms of symbolic violence manifest within Algerian television advertising discourse through its semiological and linguistic structures?

1.2 Sub-Research Questions

Within the framework of the present study, and in order to operationalize the central research problem related to symbolic violence in Algerian television advertising discourse, the following sub-research questions are formulated in a coherent analytical sequence that moves from meaning production to representation and finally to discursive mechanisms:

- How are meanings of symbolic violence constructed in Algerian television advertising discourse through the interaction of denotative and connotative levels of signification?
- What types of social and cultural representations are produced and reproduced in Algerian television advertising discourse, and how do these representations function as mechanisms of symbolic violence?
- How are linguistic functions mobilized in Algerian television advertising discourse to produce persuasive meanings and reinforce symbolic dominance?
- How does the interaction between iconic (visual) and linguistic signifiers contribute to the construction, legitimation, and reinforcement of symbolic violence in Algerian television advertising discourse?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the refined research questions and within a semiological analytical framework, this study aims to examine the mechanisms through which symbolic violence is constructed and reproduced in Algerian television advertising discourse. The objectives are organized in a logical analytical progression that moves from meaning production to representation and then to discursive and semiotic interaction, without altering the conceptual orientation of the study:

- To analyze how meanings of symbolic violence are constructed in Algerian television advertising discourse through the articulation of denotative and connotative levels of signification.
- To identify and interpret the social and cultural representations reproduced in Algerian television advertising discourse, and to examine how these representations function as mechanisms of symbolic violence.
- To examine the role of linguistic functions (particularly the conative, emotive, and poetic functions) in Algerian television advertising discourse in producing persuasive meanings and reinforcing symbolic domination.
 - To analyze the interaction between iconic (visual) and linguistic signifiers in Algerian television advertising discourse, and to assess how this interaction contributes to the construction, legitimation, and reinforcement of symbolic violence.
 - To explore the relationship between Algerian television advertising discourse and its socio-cultural context in terms of representation, selection, and framing, and to determine how advertising discourse contributes to the normalization of symbolic and cultural models.
 - To provide a systematic semiological reading of Algerian television advertising discourse that contributes to media and communication studies on symbolic violence, and to propose an analytical perspective for understanding the ideological dimensions of advertising discourse.

1.4 Research Methodology

Scientific research requires a methodological framework that is consistent with the nature of the research problem, its theoretical orientation, and its objectives, as it provides the procedural structure that guides the entire analytical process. Methodology, as defined by Maurice Angers, refers to a structured set of operations and procedures designed to achieve a specific research objective while ensuring coherence, validity, and scientific rigor throughout the research process (Angers, 1997. P58).

Given the focus of the study on Algerian television advertising discourse and the analysis of symbolic violence within it, the descriptive-analytical method is adopted as the most appropriate methodological approach. This choice is justified by the nature of advertising discourse as a pre-constructed socio-semiotic product that requires systematic observation, description, and interpretation rather than experimental manipulation or intervention.

The descriptive-analytical method, in this context, does not remain limited to the level of external description,



but extends to an interpretive dimension that enables the researcher to deconstruct advertising discourse by examining its linguistic, visual, and symbolic components. This includes identifying signifying structures, analyzing semantic and pragmatic relations, and uncovering both explicit (denotative) and implicit (connotative) meanings, particularly those related to symbolic violence.

In addition, this methodological approach allows for a systematic semiological reading of advertising discourse by linking textual and visual elements to broader socio-cultural structures. It enables the analysis of how advertising messages reflect, construct, and potentially reinforce social norms, cultural values, and symbolic hierarchies within the Algerian context.

To ensure analytical rigor, the study proceeds through a structured procedural process that includes systematic data collection, classification of advertising units (visual shots, linguistic expressions, and symbolic signs), and qualitative interpretive analysis based on semiological principles. This process allows for a deep exploration of the mechanisms through which symbolic violence is produced and reproduced within Algerian television advertising discourse.

1.5 Research Tool

To analyze Algerian television advertising discourse and uncover the mechanisms of symbolic violence embedded within it, semiological analysis is adopted as the primary research tool of the study. This choice is grounded in the nature of advertising discourse as a complex semiotic system composed of interrelated linguistic, visual, and auditory signs whose meanings are constructed through processes of signification and interpretation rather than directly expressed.

Semiological analysis, as developed within structural and post-structural approaches to sign systems, focuses on how meaning is generated through the interaction of signs and codes rather than through isolated descriptive elements. In this sense, it provides an appropriate analytical framework for examining advertising discourse as a structured ensemble of signifying practices that produce both explicit and implicit meanings (Oswald, 2012).

A central analytical distinction within this approach is that between denotative (literal) and connotative (ideological and cultural) levels of meaning. This distinction is particularly relevant to the study of symbolic violence, since such violence operates indirectly through suggestion, normalization, and the symbolic naturalization of social meanings. Accordingly, semiological analysis enables the identification of how advertising discourse constructs apparent meanings at the surface level while simultaneously producing deeper ideological significations at the connotative level.

Furthermore, the research tool allows for the systematic deconstruction of the relationship between iconic (visual) and linguistic signifiers within advertising messages. It makes it possible to examine how images, slogans, verbal expressions, colors, gestures, and compositional elements interact to produce integrated systems of meaning that may contribute to the reproduction of symbolic representations and social hierarchies. In operational terms, semiological analysis in the study proceeds through a structured analytical procedure that involves the segmentation of advertising discourse into meaningful units, including visual shots, slogans, symbolic scenes, and verbal expressions. These units are then analyzed through relations of similarity, opposition, contrast, and complementarity in order to interpret how symbolic violence is constructed and reproduced within Algerian television advertising discourse.

Accordingly, semiological analysis ensures coherence with the objectives and research questions of the study by providing a systematic interpretive framework that moves from sign description to meaning construction and finally to ideological interpretation. It is particularly suitable for the analysis of television advertising, where visual, linguistic, and auditory sign systems interact simultaneously to shape audience perception and symbolic meaning within audiovisual media environments.

1.6 The Semiological Approach

The semiological approach adopted in the study is grounded in the analysis of advertising discourse as a structured system of signs in which meaning is produced through the interaction of linguistic and visual elements rather than through isolated components. This approach allows for a critical examination of how advertising messages generate both explicit and implicit meanings that may contribute to the construction and



reproduction of symbolic violence.

Within this framework, language in advertising discourse is not treated as a neutral communicative medium, but rather as a persuasive and signifying mechanism operating through connotation, suggestion, and rhetorical effect. Accordingly, the semiological perspective enables the analysis of how meanings are organized at different levels of signification and how such meanings become socially and culturally encoded within advertising discourse. As argued by Laura R. Oswald, semiotics provides analytical tools for interpreting how verbal and visual signs operate together to produce culturally embedded meanings within marketing and media communication (Oswald, 2022, p. 6).

The study integrates the semiological perspective of Roland Barthes with the functional linguistic model proposed by Roman Jakobson in order to construct a coherent analytical framework. The semiological perspective enables the distinction between denotative and connotative levels of meaning and facilitates the interpretation of ideological and cultural significations embedded within visual and textual signs. Jakobson's functional model, meanwhile, supports the analysis of communicative functions within discourse, particularly the conative, emotive, and poetic functions that are highly operative in advertising communication. Recent studies in multimodal discourse analysis confirm that advertising meaning emerges through the interaction of linguistic and visual resources within socially coded communicative structures (Aiello & Parry, 2020, p. 18). The combination of these perspectives allows for a comprehensive semiological analysis that examines the interaction between image and language as co-constructive elements of meaning. It also enables the identification of the discursive mechanisms through which symbolic violence is produced, normalized, and reproduced within Algerian television advertising discourse.

1.7 The Sample

This study adopts a purposive sampling strategy in selecting the advertising material subjected to analysis. This choice is consistent with the qualitative and interpretive nature of the research, which does not aim at statistical generalization but rather seeks an in-depth understanding of Algerian television advertising discourse and the semiotic mechanisms through which symbolic violence is constructed and reproduced.

Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate for semiological and discourse-oriented studies, as it is based on the intentional selection of cases that are analytically meaningful and symbolically dense. In this sense, the selected sample is not treated as statistically representative, but as theoretically and analytically relevant. Such an approach allows for the detailed deconstruction of advertising signs and the interpretation of latent meanings embedded within visual and linguistic structures, as well as the examination of the cultural systems that frame advertising discourse.

In addition, this sampling strategy enables the researcher to deliberately select advertising cases that are directly relevant to the research problem, especially when dealing with complex phenomena such as symbolic violence. Since symbolic violence operates in implicit, normalized, and often invisible forms, it cannot be adequately captured through random sampling techniques that prioritize quantity over analytical depth. Instead, purposive selection ensures the focus on advertisements that are rich in symbolic, visual, and discursive mechanisms capable of revealing these hidden structures.

Based on these criteria, the "Lactofiber" television advertisement was selected as the corpus of analysis. This selection is justified by its high semiotic density and its strong reliance on body representation, aesthetic discourse, and health-related imagery in constructing its persuasive message. The advertisement also mobilizes recurring social and cultural representations, particularly those related to femininity, bodily norms, beauty standards, and the ideology of the "healthy body," which makes it a relevant case for examining processes of symbolic normalization and symbolic exclusion.

Moreover, the Lactofiber advertisement constitutes an appropriate analytical case because it reflects broader socio-cultural values and implicit hierarchies circulating within Algerian advertising discourse. Its visual and

linguistic composition provides a suitable empirical site for investigating how symbolic meanings are constructed and how they contribute to the reproduction of symbolic violence through normalized representations.

Accordingly, the selection of purposive sampling and the focus on the Lactofiber advertisement are not arbitrary choices, but rather methodologically grounded decisions aligned with the objectives of the study, aiming to enable a rigorous semiological analysis of the mechanisms through which symbolic violence operates within Algerian television advertising discourse.

1.8 Concepts of the Study

1.8.1 Definition of Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence refers to a subtle and indirect form of domination exercised through symbols, meanings, representations, and systems of communication rather than through direct physical coercion. It operates by imposing cultural norms and social classifications that become perceived as natural and legitimate by individuals themselves, thereby contributing to the reproduction of social hierarchies and relations of domination. According to Pierre Bourdieu, symbolic violence is “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167).

Within media contexts, symbolic violence may be reproduced through television discourse, visual representation, and advertising communication by shaping audience perceptions and normalizing particular values, identities, and behavioral models. In this sense, television does not merely function as a medium of entertainment or information, but also as a symbolic apparatus capable of influencing social consciousness and reinforcing dominant ideological structures through persuasive and normalized forms of representation.

1.8.2 Definition of Television Advertising Discourse

Television advertising discourse is a form of mediated communication characterized by the strategic integration of visual, auditory, and linguistic signs in order to construct persuasive messages directed at audiences. It is distinguished by its multimodal nature, combining image, sound, speech, and symbolic representation to influence consumer perception and shape behavioral responses.

In contemporary media studies, television advertising is understood not merely as the transmission of product information, but as a structured semiotic practice that produces meaning through the interaction of multiple sign systems within a culturally and ideologically coded environment. As noted in recent advertising and multimodal communication research, advertising discourse functions as a meaning-making system in which visual and verbal elements operate together to generate persuasive and culturally embedded interpretations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021, p. 45).

Accordingly, television advertising discourse can be defined as a multimodal communicative system that combines linguistic, visual, and auditory resources to construct persuasive representations of products, services, and lifestyles within broadcast media contexts.

1.8.3 Definition of Social Representations

Social representations can be defined as a form of socially elaborated and shared knowledge that helps individuals make sense of reality and communicate within their social environment. They are constructed through interaction, communication, and cultural exchange, and they shape how groups interpret objects, events, and social phenomena.

As stated by Serge Moscovici, social representations are “systems of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world, and to master it; and secondly, to enable communication to take place among members of a community” (Moscovici, 2001, p. 13).

2. Semiological Reading of the Selected Advertising Message: A Case Study of the Lactofiber Advertisement

2.1 Shot 1:



2.1.1 Denotative Reading

The advertising spot opens with a close-up shot of a woman inside a pharmacy, with the background composed of carefully arranged shelves of medication. This setting conveys a formal medical atmosphere, suggesting trust and scientific legitimacy. The woman appears modern, as reflected in her hairstyle, elegant clothing, and minimal jewelry (necklace and earrings), complemented by subtle, natural-looking makeup, which contributes to a balanced and authentic appearance.

From an aesthetic standpoint, the director employed calm and refined colors, closely aligned with the palette typically associated with medical environments (white, green, and light tones), reinforcing feelings of cleanliness and reassurance. Natural lighting from the window and door, combined with soft shadows, enhances the realism of the scene and strengthens the impression that it represents an ordinary, everyday moment.

Narratively, the woman is presented as a customer experiencing digestive discomfort, her facial expressions reflecting discomfort and unease, before being offered the “Lactofiber” medication by the pharmacist.

2.1.2 Connotative Reading

At the connotative level, the opening shot of the advertisement goes beyond the literal depiction of a woman inside a pharmacy to produce a structured network of implicit meanings. The central positioning of the female figure is not merely an aesthetic choice; it functions as a semiotic strategy through which the female body becomes a site for the inscription of social norms, consumer values, and cultural expectations. In this sense, the image participates in the reproduction of dominant representations within the collective imagination, in line with Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence and doxa (Bourdieu, 1991).

Within this visual configuration, the woman is constructed not only as a consumer but also as a symbolic mediator of meaning. Her representation marked by a modern hairstyle, refined clothing, and subtle makeup indexes a model of femininity associated with modernity and globalized aesthetic standards. These visual cues contribute to the naturalization of the association between “quality,” “credibility,” and externally oriented (implicitly Western-coded) consumption models, thereby illustrating how symbolic violence operates through

the unconscious internalization of values and preferences.

Although the scene appears simple and everyday-like, its semiotic structure reveals a system of meaning in which local products are implicitly devalued through representational contrast. This is particularly evident in the communicative framing of rejection expressed verbally through the phrase "Aya Khtini," which functions as a discursive marker of refusal that indirectly reinforces negative evaluation. In this way, the advertisement contributes to shaping consumer perception by associating acceptance with external models and rejection with local alternatives, thus participating in subtle processes of symbolic hierarchy formation.

From the perspective of Roland Barthes, the advertisement operates at the level of connotation by transforming visual and verbal signs into carriers of cultural myths. The female figure becomes a signifier of modernity, while the act of refusal acquires a broader ideological meaning that extends beyond the immediate narrative. Rather than merely representing a functional interaction in a pharmacy, the advertisement constructs a symbolic reality in which value judgments about products and lifestyles are naturalized through apparently ordinary scenes.

This connotative construction is reinforced through the communicative functions identified by Roman Jakobson. The conative function is reflected in the implicit orientation of the viewer toward preferred consumption choices; the emotive function appears through the expression of discomfort and rejection; the poetic function contributes to the aesthetic organization of the message; and the referential function maintains a realistic frame that enhances the credibility of the scene

Through this interaction of visual and linguistic elements, the advertisement does not merely reflect social reality but actively reconstructs it by producing normalized representations of desirability and legitimacy. In doing so, it reveals how symbolic violence is embedded within everyday advertising discourse through subtle processes of naturalization, aestheticization, and ideological framing.

2.2 Shot2:



2.2.1 Denotative Reading:

The shot depicts an elderly woman in a pharmacy, wearing a blue abaya and matching headscarf, along with black glasses and a gold bracelet on her wrist. Behind her, wooden drawers containing medications are visible, while several ceiling lamps provide artificial lighting. The woman displays sharp facial features and gestures with her hand in a manner that suggests warning or attentiveness, within a context that conveys credibility for both the pharmacy and the pharmaceutical product she presents.

2.2.2 Connotative Reading

At the connotative level, the analyzed shot constructs meaning through a structured configuration of visual signs that jointly produce an implicit representation of the elderly Algerian woman. The unit of analysis in this section is the visual shot, which is segmented into three analytical components: (1) character representation, (2) chromatic and spatial composition, and (3) gestural and facial semiotics.

Character representation

The selection of an elderly woman as the central figure functions as a primary signifier of authority and rigidity. Rather than being a neutral depiction, this choice establishes a socially coded identity that limits interpretive openness and directs the viewer toward pre-constructed meanings. In semiological terms, this contributes to the production of a stabilized social type rather than an individualized subject.

Chromatic and spatial composition

The dominance of blue tones operates as a visual sign associated with institutional control, emotional distance, and normative order. This chromatic choice reinforces a hierarchical reading of the scene, where authority is visually naturalized. The central positioning of the character further intensifies this effect by establishing visual dominance within the frame, which guides perceptual attention and strengthens interpretive hierarchy.

Gestural and facial semiotics

The hand gesture (directive/warning posture), combined with a fixed facial expression and dark glasses, functions as an integrated semiotic unit producing meanings of control, restriction, and emotional restraint. These visual elements operate not independently but as a coherent system of signs that directs interpretation toward authority-centered reading.

Within this structured configuration, symbolic violence operates through processes of naturalization and normalization of meaning, where the representation of the elderly woman is transformed into a socially recognizable but ideologically loaded figure. In this sense, symbolic violence is not explicit but embedded in the organization of visual signs that guide perception and limit interpretive plurality, consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic domination.

This interpretation aligns with contemporary multimodal discourse studies, which emphasize that meaning in visual communication is not simply "seen" but socially constructed through culturally coded semiotic resources that guide interpretation and constrain alternative readings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021, p. 61).

From a discursive perspective, this representation can be understood as a form of knowledge production about age and femininity within media discourse, where visibility is regulated and meaning is structured through power relations. The image therefore does not mirror reality but constructs a culturally coded version of it, aligning with Foucauldian notions of discourse as a mechanism of power/knowledge.

At the level of communicative structure, the advertisement operates within a strategic mode of persuasion rather than dialogical communication. Meaning is guided toward a predetermined interpretation, which corresponds to the distortion of communicative action discussed by Jürgen Habermas. In parallel, the image functions as a simulacral construction in which representation becomes detached from lived reality and reorganized according to commercial logic, consistent with Jean Baudrillard.

Finally, from a functional linguistic perspective, the communicative structure of the advertisement reflects Jakobson's model: the conative function directs viewer response, the emotive function shapes affective interpretation, and the poetic function organizes visual and linguistic form to enhance aesthetic persuasion while masking ideological content.

Overall, the shot constructs a stabilized symbolic representation of the elderly Algerian woman as a figure of control and rigidity. This representation contributes to the reproduction of symbolic hierarchies through subtle mechanisms of visual normalization, where meaning is produced not through explicit statements but through the structured interaction of visual signs within the advertising discourse.

3.2 Shot 3:



3.2.1 Denotative Reading

In this shot, the woman appears again inside the pharmacy, wearing different clothes from her previous appearance, standing opposite the pharmacist, who wears a white apron and a purple headscarf, holding a white plastic bag.

On the other side, the elderly woman is present, dressed in the same blue attire as in the previous scene, with her hand on her hip. The product Lactofiber is placed on the table, while natural lighting streams into the space from outside the pharmacy, creating a realistic illumination of the scene.

3.2.2 Connotative Reading

At the connotative level, this shot produces a layered system of meanings that extends beyond its immediate descriptive content, operating instead as a structured semiotic configuration in which social relations are symbolically organized. The unit of analysis is the interactional visual shot, in which meaning is constructed through the interplay of spatial positioning, chromatic coding, bodily representation, and linguistic-prosodic articulation. Within this configuration, the advertisement functions as a symbolic practice through which relations of domination are subtly constructed and naturalized, consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence.

The pharmacy setting is not constructed as a neutral medical space but as a socially charged arena where meaning is produced through interaction and positioning. The spatial arrangement of the two female figures establishes a structured asymmetry in which the elderly woman occupies a dominant interactional position, while the younger woman is positioned as receptive and responsive. This spatial organization contributes to the symbolic structuring of authority as socially recognized rather than explicitly imposed, thereby transforming interaction into a coded system of hierarchical meaning. Contemporary multimodal discourse studies similarly emphasize that spatial arrangement in visual communication functions as a meaning-making resource that structures social relations and guides interpretation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021, p. 176).

Color functions as a semiotic resource in constructing differentiated identities. The younger woman's light pink attire encodes meanings of softness, affectivity, and social receptivity, while the elderly woman's blue clothing operates as a sign of authority, stability, and institutionalized control. These chromatic choices are not decorative but meaning-generating devices that reinforce hierarchical distinction. In parallel, bodily posture further consolidates these meanings: the elderly woman's firm stance and hand-on-hip gesture function as signs of dominance, whereas the younger woman's reduced bodily assertiveness signals interpretive and behavioral submission. From a semiological perspective, these visual markers do not merely describe character traits but actively produce socially recognizable identities, transforming bodily representation into a site of symbolic classification and differentiation.



The verbal sequence "زيديني زوج... زوج... ضربة ضربة" operates as a dense linguistic signifier in which repetition, lexical choice, and prosody interact to produce meaning. Repetition functions as a marker of insistence and directive force, while the lexical term "ضربة" introduces a semantic field associated with impact and force, recontextualized within a medical frame to generate semantic tension. Prosodic modulation further organizes interactional hierarchy, where vocal intensity becomes a marker of authority and submission rather than mere communicative variation. Within this interactional structure, symbolic violence is enacted through the naturalization of asymmetrical roles rather than through explicit coercion, aligning with Bourdieu's understanding of domination as socially recognized and internally accepted classification systems.

From a discursive perspective, the advertisement does not merely represent interpersonal interaction but constructs a model of social behavior in which authority is embedded in everyday relations rather than institutional structures. The elderly figure functions as a socially circulating sign of regulation and control, while the younger figure becomes a sign of compliance and guided consumption. In this sense, the advertisement participates in the production of a normalized interpretive framework through which social roles are organized and legitimized.

At the level of media simulation, the scene does not mirror lived reality but reorganizes it into a hyper-mediated representational system in which authority is aestheticized and consumption is rationalized as a response to symbolic pressure, consistent with Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacral representation. This shift from representation to simulation reinforces the ideological efficiency of the advertising message by detaching meaning from empirical social reality and re-inscribing it within a constructed symbolic order.

From a functional linguistic perspective, the utterance reflects Jakobson's communicative model, where the conative function directs behavioral response, the emotive function encodes affective intensity, and the poetic function enhances rhythmic and aesthetic organization while simultaneously masking ideological operations. The referential function remains secondary, subordinated to persuasive and symbolic aims.

Overall, the shot constructs a stabilized system of meaning in which authority, gendered representation, and consumption are interwoven. Symbolic violence emerges not as explicit coercion but as a normalized interpretive framework through which social roles are organized, legitimized, and reproduced within Algerian television advertising discourse.

3. Results and Discussion

The semiological analysis of Algerian television advertising discourse indicates that symbolic violence is not an incidental feature but a structural component embedded within the organization of advertising meaning. It operates indirectly through the coordinated interaction of visual, linguistic, and auditory signs, including color schemes, bodily expression, spatial arrangement, vocal modulation, and verbal repetition. These semiotic resources function collectively to guide interpretation and normalize specific meanings, values, and behavioral orientations without explicit coercion, which corresponds to Pierre Bourdieu's conception of symbolic violence as a subtle and socially legitimized form of domination.

At the level of signification, symbolic violence is primarily activated through connotative processes rather than denotative content. The analysis shows that Algerian television advertisements frequently construct gendered representations in which young women are associated with aesthetic appeal, consumption practices, and models of modernity often aligned with globalized or implicitly Western-coded standards. Within this representational logic, femininity is reframed as a visual and consumable attribute rather than a socially complex identity. In contrast, elderly women are recurrently constructed through stereotypical codes emphasizing rigidity, authority, and emotional distance, producing stabilized cultural meanings that appear naturalized and self-evident.

The findings further demonstrate that symbolic violence in advertising discourse operates across multiple interconnected dimensions. At the psychological level, advertising strategically engages affective



states such as desire, anxiety, or discomfort to orient consumer behavior. At the social level, it reinforces hierarchical role distributions and normalized gender expectations. At the cultural level, it privileges dominant consumerist value systems while marginalizing local specificities and alternative representations. At the communicative level, the discourse shifts from rational and dialogical exchange toward strategic persuasion, in line with the critical perspective of Jürgen Habermas regarding distorted communication in media environments.

Moreover, the analysis reveals that female representations constitute a central site for the articulation of symbolic power relations. Women are frequently transformed into semiotic carriers of meaning rather than autonomous social subjects, as their bodies, gestures, and voices are mobilized to communicate ideological and commercial messages. Visual and linguistic strategies, including stereotypical framing, semantic implication, and affective modulation, contribute to reshaping perception and behavior in ways that naturalize hierarchical distinctions. From a Baudrillardian perspective, these representations can be understood as forms of simulated reality in which social meaning is detached from lived experience and reorganized within a system of signs governed by consumption logic, consistent with Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra.

Finally, the integration of linguistic and semiotic analysis, informed by Roman Jakobson's functional model of communication, shows that advertising discourse relies predominantly on conative, emotive, and poetic functions to influence audience interpretation. These functions contribute to shaping behavioral responses, intensifying affective engagement, and enhancing aesthetic appeal while simultaneously obscuring ideological operations embedded within the message structure.

Overall, the findings confirm that Algerian television advertising discourse extends beyond product promotion to perform a broader ideological and cultural function. It participates in the production and reproduction of symbolic hierarchies, particularly through gendered representations, and contributes to the shaping of social consciousness through normalized and aesthetically mediated forms of symbolic violence. These results underscore the importance of critically examining advertising practices and promoting more balanced representational frameworks within media discourse.

4. Conclusion

Television advertising in Algeria constitutes a central component of contemporary media communication, where visual, auditory, and linguistic elements are combined within structured persuasive formats designed to attract attention and influence audience interpretation. The semiological analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that advertising discourse does not transmit a single fixed meaning; rather, it produces layered and multi-level systems of signification in which explicit and implicit meanings coexist and interact.

The findings indicate that symbolic violence is structurally embedded within Algerian television advertising discourse. It operates in subtle and normalized forms through visual composition, linguistic choices, and aesthetic strategies that collectively contribute to the reproduction of stereotypical social representations. In particular, gendered representations—especially those related to women—are systematically constructed in ways that reduce social complexity and reinforce predefined cultural roles. Women are frequently represented either as aesthetic and consumer-oriented figures or as carriers of authority and disciplinary control, thereby limiting representational plurality and reinforcing symbolic hierarchies.

The analysis of the Lactofiber advertisement specifically shows how the elderly woman is constructed as an authoritative symbolic figure whose visual and verbal presence contributes to the normalization of hierarchical social meanings. These meanings are not explicitly imposed but are rather internalized through repeated exposure to culturally familiar visual codes, consistent with Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse as a mechanism of power that operates through normalization rather than direct coercion.

Furthermore, linguistic and auditory strategies such as repetition, tone variation, and embodied gestures contribute to transforming communicative interaction into a form of strategic persuasion. This process reflects asymmetries of symbolic power in which meaning is guided and structured in ways that influence



perception and behavior. From a semiotic perspective, female figures are transformed into signifying entities within a consumer-driven system of representation, functioning as simulacral constructions rather than reflections of social reality, consistent with Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra.

Overall, the study concludes that Algerian television advertising participates in the reproduction of symbolic violence through stereotypical representation, ideological framing, and the instrumentalization of social identities, particularly those of women. This highlights the need for more critically aware advertising practices that take into account the symbolic effects of visual and linguistic choices within media discourse

Recommendations

- Advertising agencies should systematically consider the symbolic implications of visual and linguistic elements to avoid reinforcing gendered or age-based stereotypes and forms of symbolic violence.

- Television advertising should reflect the social, cultural, and professional diversity of Algerian women beyond reductive aesthetic or disciplinary stereotypes, thereby supporting more balanced and inclusive representations.

- Regulatory and professional bodies should integrate ethical and cultural sensitivity criteria into advertising policies to ensure a balance between commercial objectives and respect for social values and diversity.

- A preventive analytical mechanism based on semiological principles should be adopted prior to broadcasting advertisements in order to detect implicit meanings and symbolic structures that may reproduce hidden forms of symbolic violence, particularly against vulnerable social groups.

5. Sources and references

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