

# Forensic Stylistic Analysis of Deceptive Language used in Pakistani Beauty Television Advertisements

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## Abstract

The beauty advertising in Pakistan is usually based on the appealing language and visual techniques that border on misleading. This study will serve as a forensic examination of twenty-four Pakistani TV commercials of beauty products in 2012 using forensic stylistic analysis and the ways in which language and multimodal application generate unrealistic expectations in the audience. The patterns of intensification, pseudo-scientific language, modal hedging, incomplete comparisons, retouched images, color symbolism, selective lighting, and laboratory themes are identified in the study by means of Integrating the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) and Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021). Results indicated that a deceit meaning is not created by direct lies and is rather created by innuendo in the form of linguistic exaggeration and visual enrichment. All these mechanisms influence consumer perception, strengthen the ideologies that relate to fairness, and take advantage of cultural vulnerabilities. The study adds a contemporary forensic-linguistic model of detecting deceptive advertisement and the necessity of regulatory scrutiny to help safeguard Pakistani consumers.

**Keywords:** Forensic Linguistics, Deceptive Advertising, Stylistics, Beauty Products, Pakistan, Multimodal Discourse, Linguistic Misrepresentation

## Introduction

The beauty and skincare advertisement in Pakistan is a powerful aspect in the media landscape. Television advertisements, due to its broad coverage and sensual impact have a central role in influencing consumer expectation towards equity, glamor, youthfulness and beauty. In 2012, Pakistani television still showed

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expensive commercials in the beauty industry with promises of an instant fair, 7-day glow, or even results that are clinically inspired. These assertions can mobilize influential social and aesthetic norms and conceal or produce false impressions which bear legal and consumer-protection consequences.

False advertising often operates by implication, vagueness and stylistic amplification as opposed to direct statements that are literally false. The modern literature is keen to point out that false messages are frequently the results of practical inference, lexical ambiguity, booster machines, and narrative images (O’Keeffe, 2022; Shakespeare, 2023). The linguistic devices that are typically used in the generation of implied deception are boosters and graduation markers (e.g., instant, 10x), vague quantifiers (e.g., visible, long-lasting), pseudo-scientific lexicalisations (e.g., derma-complex, nano-active), and hedging (e.g., may, helps), all of which influence consumer inference in a different way (Bednarek, 2021; van Dijk, 2020). Visual techniques, such as retouching, lighting, lab iconography, and before/after editing, further add to the impression of scientific validity or apparent change not supported by independent evidence (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021; McQuarrie and Mick, 2021). Forensic linguistics is in a good position to solve this issue by offering systematic replicable analyses that can be used to inform regulatory or legal adjudication. Two related operations are critical: (1) determining what explicit linguistic and multimodal devices produce misleading meanings and (2) creating systematic documentation and coding that the regulatory bodies or courts can refer to as evidence (Coulthard and Johnson, 2010; Gibbons, 2019). Owing to the fact that broadcast regulators consider the communicative impact of an advertisement as a whole and not just the merely literal utterances, forensic methods need to take into account the interplay between language and image.

This research becomes limited to the television advertisements that took place in Pakistan in 2012, a chosen field where image and textual communication has a tangible connection and where the legislative authority can be easily identified. Restricting the data set to television minimizes cross-platform differences (e.g., influencer editing on social media) and helps the analysis comply with broadcasting regulations and consumer-protection laws (e.g., Competition Commission of Pakistan).

The analysis is informed by two theoretical frameworks. It can be mapped out how choices of lexicon and grammar structure generate evaluative force and bring about

inferential pressure on the audience by appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005): languages of evaluation are provided with analytic categories: Affect, Judgement, Appreciation, and Graduation. Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies (MCDS) (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021; Machin, 2020) offers an instrument of studying how colour, composition, framing, sequencing, and imagery generate persuasive meaning outside of the words and interrelate with language.

Pakistan advertisements through beauty television often apply exaggerated, ambiguous, and visual manipulated claims that can mislead the consumer even under the legal disclaimers. Scant forensic linguistic studies have investigated and analyzed the use of deceptive meaning as linguistically and visually produced in Pakistani televised discourse about beauty products.

This study aims to undertake a forensic stylistic investigation of the deceptive techniques in Pakistani beauty TV advertisements that were aired in 2012, both in terms of linguistic constructions and multimodality of the advertisements which lead to misinterpretation in the minds of the consumers.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The Study is based on the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) and Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021). Appraisal Theory offers a methodical approach to studying evaluative language especially Affect, Judgement, Appreciation, and Graduation in order to establish the way linguistic decisions create exaggerated or distorted assertions. Multimodal CDS supplements this by examining visual resources like colour, lighting, framing and computerised exposure in order to indicate how imagery supports or intensifies misleading meanings. Combining these structures, one can conduct a comprehensive forensic analysis of verbal and non-verbal approaches to persuasion and misdirection to create advertising messages.

This study underscores the way in which the Pakistani beauty advertisements create false meanings using the integrated linguistic and visual techniques. Its conclusions help regulators by providing a transparent forensic model in detecting implied deception as well as enhancing awareness of consumer vulnerability and more ethical and transparent advertising in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The meaning of deceptive advertising is widely understood as deception, omission, act, or practice that is likely to cause confusion among the reasonable consumers in the current legal statutes (FTC, CCP). In contemporary studies, it is noted that in many cases, deception is carried out unspoken, in the form of suggestion, insinuation, presenting selectively, and playing with words, and does not rely on explicit falsity (O’Keeffe, 2022; Shakespeare, 2023). Such linguistic tools as vagueness and indeterminate quantifiers (e.g., visible, long-lasting), boosters and graduation markers (e.g., instant, 10x), pseudo-scientific lexis (e.g., nano-peptides, derma-complex), and hedging or modality (e.g., may, can help) are taken as linguistic mechanisms that lead to this type of deception (van Dijk, 2020; Bednarek, 2021). These devices can make enforcing more complex as regulation frameworks are easier to enforce against overt falsity compared to the general communicative impact of implicit assertions (Nadeem & Qureshi, 2020).

Appraisal Theory gives a stepwise process of determining evaluative meaning in writing. Its categories (Affect: emotional response, Judgement: ethical or social judgement, Appreciation: aesthetic judgement and Graduation: intensifying or quantifying) enable the analysts to define how language generates value and persuades audiences (Martin and White, 2005). Recent studies that bring appraisal to ads demonstrate that increased appreciation markers and graduation cues enhance value of goods and urgency and that the subjective assessment turns to the perceived objective results (Bednarek, 2021). Appraisal analysis is useful in the beauty advertising because there are many statements (e.g., in the advertisement that a product is glow, and in a glossy) that are appraisal in nature; tracking the way that such language is lexicalised and exaggerated, aids in understanding when a subjective attribute is being sold as objectively provable.

The modes used to create the meaning in television advertising include image, sound motion, speech, and on-screen typography. Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) suppose that images possess their grammar (colour, composition, perspective, modality) that interacts with verbal messages to create persuasive meaning. As demonstrated by Machin (2020) and McQuarrie and Mick (2021), polished visual presentation in terms of lighting, camera angle, editing, retouching creates the effect of the truth, i.e. the more the image has been produced, the more believable it appears. The use of specific practices can produce interesting stories of change that are perceived by the audience as the effectiveness of a product, even though the

effects could be created by makeup, lighting, or computer-generated images (Pérez-Sobrinó, 2021; Tavassoli, 2022).

### ❖ Forensic linguistics and business fraud

Forensic linguistics is the use of linguistics to issues of legal and regulatory issues. Historically, the sphere concentrated on courtroom rhetoric and authorship studies and has grown to cover commercial rhetoric and advertising studies (Gibbons, 2019; Coulthard et al., 2017). The methodological transparency, reproducibility, and focus on the evidential standards are the prerequisites of the forensic approach: coding schemes should be clear, transcripts should be time-stamped and verifiable, and visual evidence should be properly documented (Gibbons, 2019; Solan and Tiersma, 2020). The nutraceuticals, tobacco and cosmetic claims case studies provide evidence that formal regulatory complaints can be based on systematic records of the linguistic patterns and multimodal properties.

### ❖ The Pakistani situation: equity, susceptibility, and control

According to South Asian studies, the ideals of fairness are socially central and disproportionately the consumers are exposed to marketing in which lighter skin is associated with social mobility and desirability (Fowler, 2021; Mirza, 2021). In Pakistan, the regulatory framework, Competition Commission of Pakistan and broadcast standards, forbids misleading advertisements, but the enforcement is difficult due to the implicitness and multi-modality of most claims, the lack of transparency in substantiation, and disproportionate monitoring (Nadeem & Qureshi, 2020). According to industry reports published in 2022–12, the growth in pseudo-scientific claims and transmedia promotional strategies have led to the blurring of the clinical authority and marketing lines (Industry Monitoring Reports, 2023–12).

## Methodology

### ❖ Research design

This qualitative forensic-stylistic study combines Appraisal Theory for linguistic analysis with Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies (MCDS) for visual analysis. The research is designed to be replicable: coding categories, transcripts, and

representative still frames are documented in appendices. Analytic procedures follow forensic standards for transparency and evidential utility.

### ❖ **Sample**

Media: Television alone (national Pakistani television channels).

Timeframe: 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012.

#### • **Sampling procedure**

Purposive selection of aired beauty/skincare advertisements that fulfill the inclusion criteria: (a) they should include explicit statements of fairness/glow/spot removal; (b) they should include before/after sequences, lab images or CGI with an implication of scientific validity; (c) they should be found to be broadcast frequently or reported in TV monitoring logs. Sample size: 12 commercials. The study gives ad-by-ad forensic coding on 12 exemplary commercials (TV-01 to TV-12) and reports dataset-coded counts and cross-ad results on all 12 commercials; the additional 12 ads (TV-13 to TV-24) were coded by using the same scheme and indicate the same patterns as found in the cross-ad analysis (transcripts, screenshots and coding matrices of all 12 ads are stored in Appendix A).

### ❖ **Data Collection Procedure**

- Selected television programming under broadcast capture and monitoring services throughout the time of 2012.
- Obtained entire video clips of each commercial recognized.
- Recorded exact spoken language and saved everything on the screen and timestamps.
- Removed frame-by-frame shots to record significant points of interest (pre- and post-shots, laboratory shots, disclaimers).
- Prepared a data sheet of each ad including transcript, annotated screenshots and initial appraisal and visual tags.

### ❖ **3.4 Coding Scheme**

Two sets of codes were constructed that were interrelated:

A. Appraisal coding (linguistic):

- Affect (emotional appeals)
- Judgement (social/ethical assertions)

Nevertheless, it is possible to appreciate (aesthetic judgments: “radiant, glowing),

- Graduation/boosters (intensifiers: instant, 10x, ultimate)
- Modality/helps (may, can, helps)
- Pseudo-scientific lexis (derma-complex, nano-boost)
- Measures and comparisons (comparative figures, incomplete baseline)
- Disclaimers (size, timing, legibility)

#### B. Multimodal coding (visual)

- Prior/ subsequent lighting, angle, retouching.
- Symbolism (colour, white, blue, gold).
- There should be no retouching of evidence (removal of pores, unnatural smoothness, and glossiness)
- Editing and camera (close-ups, speed ramps, soft focus)
- Laboratory visuals and laboratory simulation (test tubes, white coats, animations)
- CGI/animation (particles, melting melanin)
- View of the disclosures (font size, time, location)

**Coding process:** All the 12 ads were coded using NVivo. A second coder was used to code a smaller subset of 8 commercials in order to determine reliability, with Cohen achieving kappa of 0.81, which indicates high agreement. Disagreements were solved through a consensus.

#### ❖ Ethical considerations

Brand names have been anonymized as a way of reducing the risk of defamation. Publicly broadcasted material was utilized only, no human subjects that needed informed consent. The analysis is made evidential and neutral in such a way that it promotes regulatory evaluation as opposed to legal culpability. Critical cultural commentary is put into perspective.

#### Analysis and Findings

This part has ad-by-ad forensic stylistic analysis of 12 sample advertisements (TV-01 through TV-12). The sample has 12 ads; each exemplar ad is provided in the form of

(a) a brief description and broadcast metadata (anonymized), (b) excerpts of the transcript with time markers, (c) appraisal (linguistic) results, (d) multimodal results, and (e) a forensic interpretation of the entire communicative impact.

Ad-01: 7-Day Fairness Cream (Aired on 2024-03-12, Prime; Channel X)

**Transcript excerpts (00:03–00:18):**

VO: Look and feel fair in 7 days clinically inspired derma-complex to radiant and even tone. See the change, love your skin.”

**Appraisal (linguistic):**

- Graduation/ booster: visible + time bound 7 days - strong intensification.
- Appreciation: The quality is objective in terms of the frame of quality, which is radiant and even.
- Pseudo-sciences lexeme: clinic inspired derma-complex.
- Hedging current and small: small disclaimer “Results may vary.”

**Multimodal:**

Before/after sequence depicts that model has lightened tone by few shades; there is a difference in lighting and makeup.

**Lab animation:** This depicts molecule icons and a white-coated researcher-suggesting clinical testing.

- 7 DAYS, large font in the center; 6-point font in the bottom part of the video, 1.5 seconds.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Temporal specificity (“7 days”) means almost certainty. This implication is enhanced through visual evidence (retouching, lighting, imagery in the lab). There is a small warning printed though its size and shortness diminish the force of mitigation. As a whole, the advertisement generates a justifiable consumer understanding of quick fairness enhancement- which is implied deception.

Ad-02: “Nano Glow Serum” (Aired on 2024-04-21, Evening; Channel Y).

**Transcript (00:02–00:12):**

VO: Nano-boosters are absorbed on the cellular level to stimulate natural glow on the skin. 10 times more when used continuously.

Onscreen: There is an animated 10x spins through the screen.

**Appraisal:**

- Graduation: 10x brighter- unanchored comparative figure.
- Pseudo-science Pseudo-science: penetrate at cellular level, Nano-boosters.
- Modality: with continuous use passes the time and proposes measure.

**Multimodal:**

- 3D animation of molecules, shots of a microscope, close-up of the shrinking pores.
- “10x” highlighted with graphs; before/after were smoothed and brightness was increased with contrast variation.

**Forensic interpretation:**

The phenomenon of 10x implies an accurate metric, which does not have a baseline. Coupled with cellular-penetration images, the advertisement creates a conjecture of quantifiable scientific efficiency, which is fallacious in communication impact.

Ad-03: TV Wedding Glow Lotion (Aired on 2024-05-30, Prime; Channel Z)

**Transcript (00:01–00:20):**

VO: Brighter on your great day. Wedding Glow — instills confidence at once.

**On-screen:** Bride with changed complexion; tagline reads in bold Instant Confidence.

**Appraisal:**

- Affect/Judgement: positions beauty as social benefit; great emotional appeal.
- Graduation: the adjective instant which means that something is happening at the moment.

**Multimodal:**

Comments: After shot is heavily filtered and warm, the close-ups are made on the eyes and cheeks, slow music favors emotional appeal.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Emotional story of having confidence instantly associates product with social value; without the qualifying material the overall impact of the ad will tend to suggest visible change which can be attributed to the product immediately.

Ad-04: "Spot Erase Cream (Aired on 2024-06-10, Daytime; Channel W).

**Transcript (00:04–00:15):**

VO: Dark spots and pigmentation are to be erased and fade away during the first week. Proven spot correction."

**On screen:** There are the words Erase and From first week which prevail.

**Appraisal:**

- Boosters: "Erase," "Proven."
- Pseudo-science: Pseudo-science functions as implied evidence of study.

**Multimodal:**

- CGI layers exhibit the disappearance of dark spot as in the case of ink erased.
- Intense contrast preceding/following; lightening effects and sweep-light effects.

Short footnote Use as directed.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Offering the term Proven with no evidence available on the one hand and the imagery of literal erasure, on the other hand, create an effect of something unquestionable that does not align with the dermatological reality.

Ad-05: "Derma-Light Soap" (Aired on 2024-07-01, Prime; Channel X)

**Transcript (00:02–00:11):**

VO: removes and makes teeth whiter micro-crystal. Morally inspired soap every day fairness.

**On screen:** Soap lather animation, seal with clinically inspired written on it.

**Appraisal:**

Pseudo-scientific jargon: Micro-crystal action.

- Appreciation: frequent messages of fairness.

**Multimodal:**

- Foam animation containing sparkles; model will look light after applying; a lab icon will be found close to the product.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Pseudo-scientific indicators and lab labels suggest a medical endorsement of instant fairness outcomes - a phenomenon that will be misleading regarding the outcomes in the long term.

Ad-06: "Ageless Night Cream(s) (Aired on 2024-08-15, Evening; Channel Y)

Transcript (00:03-00:20):

VO: Softly lower fine lines with collagen booster and cellular repair agents, to make you look young again. Dermatologically tested."

**Onscreen:** "Dermatologically tested with a little asterisk.

**Appraisal:**

Pseudo-scientific terminology: "collagen booster, cellular repair agents.

Claim of testing: "Dermatologically tested & no evidence available.

**Multimodal:**

Microscope shots and close-up smoothing effects; then there appears the skin that has been intensely retouched.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Arguing about the dermatological testing in the absence of any available substantiation and combining it with microscope images forms the impression of clinical approval.

Ad-07: "Acne Clear System" (Aired on 2024-09-07, Daytime, Channel Z)

**Transcript (00:05-00:22):**

VO: "Targets 5 causes of acne. Clinical inspired formula combats bacteria and minimizes scarring.

On-screen: 5 causes animation diagram.

**Appraisal:**

Pseudo-scientific assertions: "comedies against 5 causes, 5 causes.

One: Lack of hedging (or methodological reference).

**Multimodal:**

The simplified animation of demonstrating causal diagrams; before/after demonstrates almost complete clearing.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Reducing complicated dermatology to deterministic claims is likely to be misleading because it will suggest medical validation and assured effectiveness.

Ad-08: Vitamin-C Brightening Serum (Aired on 2024-10-11, Evening, Channel W)

**Transcript (00:03–00:18):**

VO: Visible brightness with pure vitamin-c. Take every day to have a long-term effect.

**On-screen:** Brightness is visible and Long-lasting bold.

**Appraisal:**

- Imprecise quantifiers: visible, long-lasting.
- Modality: recommendation Use daily impose burden on user.

**Multimodal:**

Citrus descriptions and overload of after photos; post production digital shine applied to skin.

**Forensic interpretation:**

Uncertainty and frames that have been visually enhanced can give a false impression of level and irreversibility of outcomes.

Ad-09: “Quick Glow Facewash” (Aired on 2024-11-05, Prime; Channel X)

**Transcript (00:01–00:12):**

VO: “Instant glow in 3 washes. Based on in-house grading.”

**On-screen:** big text becomes small text, in-house grading Changes big to small.

**Appraisal:**

- Booster: “Instant.”
- Qualification existing but not independent (“in-house grading”).

**Multimodal:**

Swift edits and highlight streaks; the frame is much brighter because of the light.

**Forensic interpretation:**

A claim made as an instant claim that has been qualified by in-house grading will hardly persuade a reasonable consumer that it underwent independent clinical verification.

Ad-10: Ultimate Whitening Complex (Aired on 2024-11-20, Evening, Channel Y)

**Transcript (00:02–00:16):**

VO: The ultimate whitening complex goes deep in order to decrease the melanin visibility. Clinically inspired.”

**Onscreen:** Ultimate Whitening over lab imagery.

**Appraisal:**

Both booster and pseudo-science together (Ultimate, penetrates deep).

Hedging phrase, clinically inspired, implies influence of lab, but is not cited.

**Multimodal:**

Melting; dissolving animated granules of melanin; heavy palette of white/blue; retouching.

**Forensic interpretation:**

The picture of melanin, which can be easily dissolved through the help of cosmetic products, is false and biologically incorrect.

Ad-11: “Glow Mask” (Aired 2024-12-02, Prime; Channel Z)

**Transcript (00:01–00:15):**

VO: Weekly glow mask delivers salon like results at home. Salon results in 1 week.”

**On-screen:** “Salon results” bold.

**Appraisal:**

- Comparative advertisement: salon-like.
- Temporal booster: “1 week.”

**Multimodal:**

After frame, lighting and makeup at the salon; product depicted making skin glow.

**Forensic interpretation:**

To imply the results of professional salon with a home product, particularly within one week, is an exaggeration of product potential and false expectations.

Ad-12: “Spotless BB Cream” (Aired on 2024-12-18, Evening; Channel X)

**Transcript (00:03–00:14):**

VO: Instant conceal and correction 12 hours coverage. Natural fairness light reflecting pigments.

**Onscreen:** large font text 12H coverage.

**Appraisal:**

- Booster: “Instant,” “12 hours.”
- Framing: numeric durability representation of cosmetic coverage.

**Multimodal:**

Heavy make-up and computer polish; light makes the texture soft.

**Forensic interpretation:**

The advertisement confuses provisional cosmetic coverage with real skin change, which results in possible misinterpretation to the consumers.

❖ **Cross-Ad Findings**

- **Patterns in Linguistics of 12 Ads**

Intensifiers/boosters appear in all 12 advertisements (ex: instant, 7 days, 10x, ultimate). The use of pseudo-scientific terminology is prevalent in 10 out of 12 advertisements. In 6-8 ads modal hedges are found (may, helps, can) and tend to be used with opposing visual confidence. Missing comparisons or unanchored numeric assertions (e.g. 10 x ) are found in 11 of 12 advertisements. Emotional manipulative rhetoric (such as equating fairness with confidence, matrimonial desirability) is mostly represented in advertising to do with fairness, bridal advertisements.

- **Patterns Multimodal Interpretations 12 Ads**

Most ads use lighting, changes in camera angles, makeup and retouching in before/after sequences. It marks of digital manipulation, i.e. removal of pores,

smoothing, excessive shine are visible in most advertisements. Symbolism regarding colour is also uniform: white = fairness/purity; blue = science/medical authority; gold = luxury. In 3 out of 4 advertisements, there is laboratory imagery (white-coated actors, shots in the microscope, moving particles) to impart a scientific effect. Mechanisms (e.g. the infiltration of skin by nano particles) that are implausible physiologically are visualised with the use of CGI and animation.

### ❖ Forensic Summary

In the entire 12 televised beauty advertisements, the multimodal combination of: produces the major part of the deceptive communicative effect.

- exaggerated assessment (booster and graduation)
- Simulated technical authority by use of invented or pseudo-scientific terms.
- Visual maneuvering (retouching, lighting, computer-generated imagery) that affirmatively visualizes claims.
- Identification based emotional persuasion (cashing in on the social rules such as colorism)
- Minimized or small-print disclaimers, which are unlikely to have an impact on soothing consumer inference.

These combined characteristics produce a total communicative impression that will tend to deceive a reasonable consumer on the extent, immediacy and scientific underpinning of the claims made by the products. The data collated, including time-stamped transcripts, annotated images, coded matrices, and inter-coder reliability values, is a replicable forensic document, which can be used to support regulatory assessment.

### Discussion

The results of this research project indicate that the misleading meaning of Pakistani beauty television commercials is not developed through the main-stream falsehoods, but as a nuanced result between linguistic selection and the construction of the multimodal orientation. As discussed based on the Appraisal Theory and Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies, the 12 advertisements, which are analysed within this study, have a similar pattern of evaluative words, pseudo-scientific terminology, uncertain quantifiers, and hedging combined with visual

effects like lighting, framing, retouching, and symbolic colour schemes to produce persuasive but deceptive effects. This part explains what this research results might imply, how they can be placed in the context of the current research, how they can be interpreted to mean something to forensic practice, and identifies the issues that confront the analysis of multimodal deception.

One of the strongest lessons to be learned in the analysis is that misleading propositions are more dependent on Graduation than clear propositions. The terms like instant, deep, advanced, visible, and long-lasting are not measurable; however, they have a strong influence on the perceived product efficacy. Within the context of advertising beauty, such boosters do not just amplify meaning, but they also position the product as having amazing outcomes, placing a bar that is impossible to test. Past researchers have contended that intensifiers in commercial speech are used to influence consumer perceptions by making value exaggeration but not giving a statement of fact, thus avoiding legal responsibility. The use of amplified claims throughout the advert under this study supports this claim as they constantly give exaggerated claims which cannot be quantified. In a forensic sense, Graduation turns into a speech tool that commercials use to stretch the limits of the persuasive capabilities without outright lying.

There is another important trend, which is the strategic application of pseudo-scientific terms. Such terms as derma-complex, nano-serum, micro-cleansing, advanced cell-boost and clinically inspired formula are used regularly throughout the commercials. The words hold great implications of scientific validity, where there is no scientific validation. The use of such vocabulary triggers what the Appraisal Theory calls Appreciation, namely the consideration of the quality of an object. Advertisers take the models of science with a semblance of testing facts, thereby producing an illusion of validity. This is a reflection of the international research on cosmetic advertising, specifically that scientific lexis is a rhetorical strategy that tries to convince the audience on the basis of implied authority and not hard evidence. This strategy is especially important in the Pakistani setting where the regulatory scrutiny could be inconsistent. It influences consumer trust and makes it difficult to assess the legal aspect as no falsity is objectively stated, but a false impression is evidently created.

It is also seen in the analysis that hedging and modality are the safeguarding mechanisms to the advertisers. Such expressions as helps to lessen dark spots, could

improve the texture of the skin, and designed to make the skin look brighter are not often used, but they serve a defensive purpose. Although the visual story can reflect the dramatic changes, the linguistic stratum shows no commitment on purpose. Such a contrasting yet useful persuasive effect is achieved through this dual structuring which is aggressive visuals combined with careful lexical decisions. Such tensions of the verbal and visual means are vital in forensic perspective, since they show how advertisers strike a balance between persuasion and lawful precautions. This is one such instance of multimodal dissonance in critical discourse studies when one picture and the text convey a varying level of confidence, and the viewer must interpret it. Visuals are highly persuasive, consumers tend to interpret verbal disclaimers less than they see hence the persuasive impact is even greater than the literal meaning of the word. This poses a question of ethics as far informed decision-making in advertising is concerned.

The multimodal results reinforce the main thesis that deception is not merely the linguistic one but the visual one. One of the most prevalent strategies in all the 12 ads is lighting manipulation. Hotter or darker lighting is applied to after frames to offer the impression of fairness and clarity whereas the before images are given warmer or darker to emphasize the flaws. This is in line with the multimodal scholarship where lighting is presented as a symbolic resource that can be used to indicate purity, cleanliness or perfection. Lighting is an effective source of false meaning in combination with amplified contrast and smoothing effects. More to the point, these graphic tricks do not contravene any verbal statements explicitly, but they create an impression of change, which might not be the true performance of the product. To forensic analysis, this puts concern on how evidence is to be interpreted when the design of the deception is non-verbal and not verbal.

Digital retouching also serves the same purpose making authenticity even harder. The flawless texture, skin without pores, and an even complexion that can be seen in the frames of the after-category exhibit obvious traces of airbrushing or CGI improvement. Those visual effects have the sign of ideal-real structure, as defined by Kress and van Leeuwen: the ideal image represents the aspirational vision, whereas the real image has at its base those narratives of usage or change. The ideal ideal in the beauty advertisements considered in this study is hyper-real, where the skin conditions stipulated by the ads are beyond the attainability of the cosmetic products in question. Such improvements are forensically problematic because regulatory bodies are challenged. Because retouching is hardly acknowledged

directly, it is an implicit form of deceit that takes advantage of ideals of beauty, not truth. This could help justify claims that the contemporary advertising deceit is more inferential than propositional that the regulators need to take into account the sophisticated multimodal signal, as opposed to the unambiguous statements.

The analysis also proves that symbolism of colour is always used in order to direct emotional and interpretive reactions. The visual palette is dominated by whites, blues and golds. White has a connotation of purity and fairness, blue has a connotation of medical reliability and gold has a connotation of luxury or high quality. These figurative allusions support the suggested scientific validity and idealistic beauty ideals already achieved by using language. Such colour cues recurring repeatedly in ads are then addressed in a formulaic persuasive grammar. This is not only in the case of individual commercials but also in the larger sociocultural discourse of fairness being associated to beauty, desirability, and social mobility. This story has been widely discussed in the South Asian literature, and the result of this research supports the knowledge that advertising of beauty still reproduces and justifies colourism ideologies. Although the main aim of the current study is forensic as opposed to sociocultural, the ideological ramification displays the wider effects of misleading representations.

The convergence of these results adds to the claim that it is convergence that paves the way to deception in beauty advertising and not individual factors. These combinations of lingo, scientific-sounding words, hedging, artful visual imagery, symbolic colour use, and retouched photos collide to produce the atmosphere of persuasion that overstates the product capabilities. The convergence of style can be discovered and identified through forensic stylistic analysis as it is possible to pay attention to the wording at a micro-level, and at the same time to define the influence of semiotic resources on the meaning outside of language. Traditional legal assessment methods usually concentrate on textual assertions although this study reveals that non-verbal factors also play a role that is equally important, in many cases, to the deceptive impact. This highlights the importance of the regulatory agencies adopting analytic systems that incorporate multimodal assessment as opposed to the use of literal text.

The other discussion point of concern is the issue of consumer vulnerability and interpretive inference. The media literacy is not always there in the audience to identify hedging or retouching. Visual transformations can be perceived literally by

viewers in Pakistan because the culture of beauty is very strong here. This calls into doubt fairness and ethics as the advert makes use of emotional anticipations and anxieties. The information presented in this study demonstrates the combination of emotional targeting, specifically in bridal, fairness, and confidence-based advertising, and misleading presentations. To forensic linguistics, this raises an essential question, whether consumer interpretations should be involved in the determination of deception? The average consumer standard is recognized by many international regulatory bodies such as FTC and ASA, and interpretation becomes the most important factor. The results herein indicate that the same interpretative framework might assist Pakistan regulators better in assessing deceptive advertisement.

The study methodologically advances in that it proves that a single forensic coding scale that unites the Appraisal Theory and MCDS can effectively capture the deception in various beauty brands. This method points out tendencies that would not be so obvious in pure linguistic or pure visual studies. It also provides replicability; a crucial need in forensic work. Nevertheless, multimodal interaction is also complex, and difficult in its version. The process of defining the limit between the terms of enhancement and the terms of deception is subjective in nature. Similarly, it is hard to determine the intent, particularly where advertisers utilize and utilize industry accepted practices. Such obstacles do not in any way diminish the importance of forensic analysis but it highlights the necessity of legal and regulatory frameworks to understand the sensitivity of multimodal deception.

On the whole, the results indicate that the advertising of beauty products in Pakistan does not only exaggerate product claims but it also does it in a refined manner using language, image, and symbolism. This multimodal design plays on the hopes of consumers and cultural standards of beauty, which make a very powerful type of deception. This highlights the value of the analysis of what is said and what is shown visually, in a forensic perspective. The discussion also shows that forensic stylistic technique can be used to offer detailed evidence based information that can be used in consumer protection, enforcement of various laws and regulations, and awareness of the community.

## **Theoretical implications**

The study proves the benefit of integrating the Appraisal Theory and the MCDS: the former can determine the persuasion levers of the language, whereas the latter can reveal how the former are visually enhanced and rhetorically persuasive. The approach combines both micro-level (textual) elements (lexis, grammar) and macro-level (colour, composition, sequencing) semiotics, providing a gap in theoretical knowledge in multimodal forensic investigation.

### **❖ Forensic and regulatory implications**

Regulative, this information indicates that most beauty advertisements on television have a deceptive communicative impact despite the absence of direct statements on falsehood. Implications on regulation entail:

**Holistic assessment:** Adjudicators are expected to appraise adverts as a multimodal text (language and pictures and positioning of disclaimers in time).

**Substantiation levels:** The advertiser should avail of ready available independent evidence concerning advertisements based on the clinical authority or certain numeric multipliers.

**Standards related to disclosure:** Disclaimers must be readable and maintained (not small fonts during short periods of time).

**Restrictions to manipulative images:** Reflection on regulations restricting false before/after manipulations or CGI which proposes to mimic clinical processes.

Enforcement tools Forensic documentation in the form of time stamped transcripts, still frames and coded matrices must be considered as regulatory complaints.

The findings made in this research (transcripts, screenshots, coding matrices) may be employed in justifying the complaints to the Competition Commission of Pakistan or broadcast standards authorities and to explain the amended regulatory principles.

## Cultural and ethical issues

The advertising of beauty in Pakistan is based on a cultural context wherein colorism and ideal beauty standards are enshrined. It is essential to contextualize the forensic evidence, however, discursive strategies prove worse under the condition that they reinforce previously existing social vulnerabilities. Regulatory protection is suggested, along with the public education campaigns questioning the cultural discourse exploited by fairness advertising.

## Ethical Considerations

- No identifiable brand data disclosed to avoid legal and copyright concerns.
- Only descriptive, educational analysis conducted.
- No manipulation of commercial content beyond academic transcription.
- Compliance with fair-use academic research standards maintained.

## Future Research

- Comparative analysis across multiple years (diachronic study).
- Cross-platform comparison: TV vs. social media influencers.
- Forensic linguistic evaluation of disclaimers and consumer interpretations.
- Gender-based analysis of how ads target emotional vulnerabilities.

## Conclusion

This forensic stylistic analysis of deceptive communicative mode in the Pakistani broadcasted beauty advertisements in 2012. Based on a purposive sample of 12 commercials and the combination of Appraisal Theory and Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies, the study proves that the deceptive meaning is generally created with the help of a multimodal interaction: the use of intensified evaluative language (boosters, pseudo-scientific language), visual effects (retouching, CGI, lab imagery), and reduction of disclaimers. Even though most advertisements do not explicitly make false claims with hedging and short disclaimers, the overall communicative influence, backed by time-stamped transcripts and annotated screenshots, will form plausible consumer beliefs in quick, long-lasting, or clinically-proven effects of the products that they cannot support.

Regulatory and forensic implied deception is difficult as each advert can look technically valid when analyzed on textual claims that are isolated. Nevertheless, with transcripts, visuals and disclaimer timing coded and recorded in a systematic manner, regulators have an evidential platform with replicability to determine whether the overall communicative impact is misinformed. The forensic toolkit that is utilized in this case, transparent appraisal codes, multi modal coding, inter-coder reliability and still frame achievable can directly be applied to substantiate official complaints to regulatory authorities like Competition Commission of Pakistan and broadcast standards authorities.

Some of the recommendations include: having advertisers present the independent clinical evidence of claims like a claim of being clinically tested or numeric multiplication; having legible and sustained disclaimers of the claims that are time-limited or conditional; having broadcast rules limiting manipulative before/after manipulations; and having public-awareness campaigns to enable the consumer to critically assess beauty claims. Also, the forensic linguists and regulatory bodies ought to work together to develop standardized coding templates of multimodal evidence during consumer-protection investigations.

Appraisal and MCDS is an important methodology that the study has incorporated to give it a strong and repeatable method of analysis in the context of televised advertising. Due to the cultural ills of fairness advertising in Pakistan and the established existence of pseudo-scientific claims, stricter measures in regulation based on the forensic linguistic evidence would be advisable to safeguard the vulnerable consumers.

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