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A Critical Discourse Analysis for Advertisements in Instagram: Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger and H&M

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ABSTRACT

Online Advertising has a significant influence in this modern century; because of this, famous companies effectively use online advertisements to introduce their products. Such as Calvin Klein, H&M, and Tommy Hilfiger are some famous brand companies that use advertisements on social media for their marketing strategies. Those companies have influential followers on Instagram, and they reach many people around the world. Thus, they use online media to sell their products and deliver their cultural values to reach the target audiences. Namely, famous brand companies want to be part of the social changes. Because of this, they use visual and verbal discursive strategies for their advertisements to influence and change socio-cultural values and stereotypes of people. In other words, advertisers use discursive language to persuade people to buy beliefs, values, and ideas besides commercial products. The visual and verbal language in online advertisements reveals the hidden meanings of stereotypes: body image, racism, and LGBT rights. Therefore, the qualitative analysis method uses to analyze the brands' advertisements. As a qualitative method, the writer applies the Critical Discourse Analysis to reveal the hidden meanings of Tommy Hilfiger, H&M, Calvin Klein's Instagram Advertisement Photos. The analysis and interpretation reveal that advertisers use different people to show that those companies think about everyone and want to reach everyone. The body type is not essential, and consumers can find different sizes of clothes. In addition, advertisers promote different body images to shape society's ideas to purchase their products and show like celebrities, who are confident, happy with their colour, body size, sexual orientation, and ethnic minorities. Even visual and verbal languages show that differences are beautiful and make you forget/remove your boundaries to be free.

Keywords: Advertisements, Instagram, Photos, Critical discourse analysis, Tommy Hilfiger, and H&M.

INTRODUCTION:

“Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.” (Berger, 2008); therefore, for social media and advertising, visual language has the same importance as verbal language. Even, sometimes visual language is more visible than words. Thus, online social media is powerful tool for people and branding companies to introduce their products and ideologies. Fashion advertising companies use online social media channels to “in-

form and/or influence one or more people” (Jeremy Bullmore, 2017) and spread its messages to the target audience, such as Instagram, Facebook, and others. Primarily due to the pandemic, social media has an essential place for people and commercial companies. Famous brands start to use social media to share their products with consumers. For example, “If you have strong visual content to spare for ads, then Instagram will be your better choice. T” (Chen, 2020). The source shows that for the visual content,

Instagram is the better choice for the marketing brands.

“Advertising is the most influential institution of socialization in modern society” (Jhally, 1990); because of this, Calvin Klein, H&M, and Tommy Hilfiger are some famous brand companies that use advertisements on social media for their marketing strategies. Those companies use online media to reach the target audiences to sell their products and deliver their cultural values.

In other words, as Hackley (2005) mentions in his book, “Advertising has been cited as a force for cultural change of many kinds. Changes in the portrayals of brand consumption in advertisements both reflect and legitimize changes in the social world beyond advertising” (Chris, 2005). Namely, famous brand companies want to be part of the new changes, and because of this, they use visual and verbal discursive strategies for their advertisements to influence and change socio-cultural values and stereotypes of people.

Literature review

“A stereotype is a schema or a set of beliefs about a certain group of people” (Helgeson, 2012). For instance, a stereotype covers gender, racism, LGBT people, and body image or beauty. Moreover, in this popular culture age, advertising uses social media to create or change the stereotype of people. Put it differently, “Social media is shaping our concept of beauty. We are, for better or worse, constantly consuming images posted online. As a consequence, social media and body image - the way we perceive our own physical appearance have become inextricably linked” (2019). Because of this, especially young generations imitate famous models to shape their bodies. Accordingly, this is one of the reasons that brand companies use celebrities or known people and social media to introduce their products and reach people. For example, as one of the studies found, “brief exposure to body-positive Instagram posts resulted in improved body image and mood in young women, compared to idealized and appearance-neutral posts” (2019). Additionally, another study from Florida House Experience shows that: “both women and men compare their bodies with those in the media” (2019). Especially the young generation tries to imitate models to be perfect like them. For example, according to the Pew Research Center “even as other platforms do not nearly match

the overall reach of YouTube or Facebook, there are certain sites or apps, most notably Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, that have an especially strong following among young adults. In fact, a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds say they use Instagram (71%) or Snapchat (65%), while roughly half say the same for TikTok” (Auxier and Anderson, 2021). In short, all those studies show that social media has an essential influence on people. They support the cultural values and stereotypes of people. Nevertheless, some academicians suggest that advertisements try to change peoples' cultural values and ideas about stereotypes. Advertisements “portray women in less stereotypical roles” (Karlsson, 2015). For example, most famous companies use plus-size women, pregnant women, elderly instead of ideal body women or young women. Of course, it is still the same as in the past they use ideal body women or a young one, but at the same time, it is possible to see diversities as well (Hosen *et al.*, 2020). Another example is related to racism. Nowadays, famous companies use both white and non-white models in their advertisements for their products to give the message that “race is no longer an issue” (Kahlor and Morris, 2014). Alternatively stated that as a result of the new advertising strategies, people do not only see white models. At the same time, they start to change their methods and cultural values to the new ones, which is we do not have any binary oppositions anymore about the colour of people. Moreover, most famous brand companies use different ethnic minorities in their advertisements, which is another way to reach more people. Such as “Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics identify most with ads that use Black actors, and Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites evaluate ads that use Black actors more positively than ads featuring White actors (Appiah, 2001b)” (Sierra *et al.*, 2010). It implies by using different ethnic minorities advertisers aim to reach more people. All the studies expose that online social media has a considerable influence on people's lives. So, marketing companies effectively use social media to sell and introduce their products to consumers. Instagram is extensive social network, which is using by marketing companies and consumers. Correspondingly, social networks use social values, and ideologies start to reshape people. For example, some Instagram advertisements start to prepare advertisements against the ideal body image, stereotypes such as ideal body image, racism, and LGBT rights. In this

technological century, advertisement is one of the powerful ways that reflect our ideologies, which is "a system of beliefs that determines how power relations are organised within a society" (Rayner *et al.*, 2004). Any other way, advertising is powerful because it deals with values, attitudes and ideas to shape culture and people. Advertisers use language to persuade people to buy beliefs, values, and ideas besides commercial products. Especially nowadays, online brand companies give massive importance to online advertisement. They use verbal and visual language to communicate with people. The visual and verbal language that appears on online advertisements reveals the hidden meanings of stereotypes: body image, racism, and LGBT rights. In short, because of online advertisement, famous fashion companies sell their ideologies and change the socio-cultural values of people. Therefore, in this analysis paper, the writer applies the Critical Discourse Analysis to reveal the hidden meanings of Tommy Hilfiger, H&M, Calvin Klein's Instagram Advertisement Photos.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are:

- 1) To apply the Fairclough, (1995) three-stage discourse analyses steps for analysing the verbal and visual language of advertisements.
- 2) To analyse the advertisements for identifying different types of discursive techniques used to change society's values and stereotypes.

Research Questions

This study examines/answers the following research questions:

- a) What are verbal and visual that the advertisements use to influence and change people ideas about stereotypes (body image, racism, and LGBT rights)?
- b) What are the hidden messages of the advertisements?

Theoretical Framework

According to Van Dijk (2015), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) "studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (p.466). CDA wants to "understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality" (Dijk, 2015). Discourse aims to control "the intentions, plans, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies-as well as their consequent actions-of

recipients" (Dijk, 2015). In short, according to Clark and Ivanic, (1997) CDA is related to identity, ideology, and gender as well. Nevertheless, CDA is "a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology" (Fairclough, 1995). Because of this, Fairclough established three-stage discourse analyses, which are description, interpretation, and explanation. The meanings of them are:

- 1) The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts).
- 2) The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/ designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects.
- 3) The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes" (Janks, 2015).

In general, CDA is related to identity, ideology, and society. It is possible to suggest that for the advertising analysis, CDA is the appropriate method to realize the hidden meanings of advertisement photos to relate them with people's current cultural and social values. Consequently, "Language is merely a manifestation of a discourse, which in turn is a form of knowledge about society and culture and also about social events" (Ilyas and Afzal, 2021) that the paper studies verbal and visual language to analyse Instagram advertisements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Qualitative analysis is used for this research. Three Online Instagram brand advertisements' photos are the secondary sources of this study. All the advertisements belong to famous fashion brand companies that use social media effectively. The randomly selected sample advertisements are:

- a) Tommy Hilfiger (2 photos)
- b) Calvin Kline (3 photos)
- c) H&M (2 photos)

Data Collection

For this study, data is collected from Instagram and download freely. The randomly selected sample is about famous brands of fashion companies. The photos are chosen according to the connection of the research questions, which are about stereotypes: ideal body image, racism, and LGBT rights.

Data Analysis

For the analysis, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework will be used, which are "(1) (description) text analysis; (2) (interpretation) processing analysis;

(3) (explanation) social analysis” (Fairclough, 1995). This approach “enables you to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxta positioning, their sequencing, their layout and so on” (Janks, 1997). In short, for verbal and visual analysis of the advertisements, CDA is the appropriate method to reveal the hidden meanings. Consequently, the following analysis part divides into three parts to apply the Fairclough three-dimensional framework. Three-dimensions of discourse appear under each picture. Then, the analysis part continues with the discussion part.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Analysis

For the article, the writer uses 3 Instagram advertisement brands (Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, and H&M) and seven photos from these famous brand advertisements; therefore, this part of the paper will analyse the advertisement photos by using Fairclough three-dimensional framework. The first two dimensions appear under each picture, and then for the last dimension, the hidden meanings of images will be revealed and discussed in the following part. All the photos took from social media, which is Instagram.



Fig 1: Calvin Klein.

The original text that is under the picture

Calvinklein “Just being Black, femme, plus-size is super important for me.” Raisa Flowers. The moment, 2010. Discover the moment and shop the campaign. Link in bio. #proudinmycalvins@raisaflores in the Modern Cotton plus Unlined Bralette (Karim *et al.*, 2020). Documented by @ryanmcginleystudios. Raisa

Interpretation or discourse practices:

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Kai Isaiah Jamal
Colour	Black, White, and Pink

is an artist and model from New York City. Ryan is a photographer from New York City.

Description or text analysis:

Pronouns: Me (personal); Vocabulary (wording): Being Black, femme, plus-size; Persuasive Language: Super important; Tense: Past Simple.

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Raisa Flowers
Colour	No colour – black and white
Pose and Gaze	Raisa Flowers is beautiful and glitzy, and she is looking to the consumers with assertive/confident eyes and posture.
Slogan	“Just being, Black, femme, plus-size is super important for me.”
Target audiences	Black and White, femme, plus-size



Fig 2: Calvin Klein.

The original text that is under the picture:

Kai Isaiah Jamal. The moment, 2020. “I’ll never forget it. I call it my transition 2.0. Being able to step back into femininity and celebrate that glory...where once those things would have been really triggering. I felt weightless and free.” Discover Moments of Pride. Shop the campaign. Link in bio. #proudinmycalvins @kai_isaiah_jamal documented by @campbelladdy. Kai is a poet and activist from London. Campbell is a director and photographer from London.

Description or text analysis:

Pronouns: I (personal); Vocabulary (wording): transition, femininity; Persuasive Language: glory, weightless, free; Tense: Future, Simple Present, Past Simple, and Perfect Continuous Condition.

Pose and Gaze	Kai Isaiah Jamal has a sexy posture on the pink bed. Also, Kai is glitzy and looking to the consumers with assertive/confident eyes and posture.
Slogan	"I'll never forget it. I call it my transition 2.0. Being able to step back into femininity and celebrate that glory...where once those things would have been really triggering. I felt weightless and free."
Target audiences	Trans, Black
Setting	Kia is wearing half short shirt that one can see Kai's half breasts. Kai has black pants and white socks. Near the pink bed, it has a silhouette of a flower.



Fig 3: Calvin Klein.

The original text that is under the picture

"I knew it wouldn't be easy because we have an interracial relationship. But I knew.. It's very important to have someone who sees you for who you are and vice versa. Someone to unite with and to be one front." @christian_yav, @rolfdekort by@jeanpaul-paula #PROUDINMYCALVINS.

Description or text analysis:

Pronouns: I, we, you (personal); Vocabulary (wording): interracial relationship; Persuasive Language: who sees you for who are, to be one front; Tense: Past Simple, Simple Present.

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Christian Yav and Rolf de Kort)
Colour	Black and White
Pose and Gaze	They are attractive and passionate. They are looking to the consumers with assertive/confident eyes and posture.
Slogan	"I knew it wouldn't be easy because we have an interracial relationship. But I knew...It's very important to have someone who sees you for who you are and vice versa. Someone to unite with and to be one front."
Target audiences	White, Black, and Gay
Setting	Black and white with blurred background



Fig 4: Tommy Hilfiger.

The original text that is under the picture

"By accepting our individualized experiences in this world, the fluidity of perspectives becomes.

The original text that is under the picture

"By accepting our individualized experiences in this world, the fluidity of perspectives becomes apparent. And remember, it is NEVER too late to become the person you have always imagined." @chellaman #TommyXIndya #TommyHilfiger

Description or text analysis

Pronouns: Our, you (personal); Vocabulary (wording): Individualized, perspectives; Persuasive Language: NEVER too late; Tense: Simple Present Tense.

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Chella Man
Colour	Black, Red, White, Silver, Gold, and Brown

Pose and Gaze	He is sitting at the red barber chair and looking at the customers. He has a meaningful and mysterious glance.
Slogan	"By accepting our individualized experiences in this world, the fluidity of perspectives becomes apparent. And remember, it is NEVER too late to become the person you have always imagined."
Target audiences	Trans, White, and Jewish-Asian
Setting	Barbershop



Fig 5: Tommy Hilfiger.

The original text that is under the picture

Style knows no boundaries - and neither should we. That's why we've teamed up with actor @Indya Moore to co-create a capsule of universal pieces designed without gender in mind. Excited? So are we! You can pre-order in the US today! Will be dropping in EU soon 😊 #TommyXIndya #Tommy Hilfiger

Description or text analysis

Pronouns: We (personal); Vocabulary (Wording): styles, teamed up, capsule, universal pieces, mind, excited; Persuasive Language: no boundaries, without gender; Tense: Simple Present

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Cory Walkers, Indya Moore, Pidgeon Pagonis, Gia Love, Chella Man
Colour	Black, Red, White, Green, Blue,
Pose and Gaze	Models sit down on the couch and the floor. Models are natural and looking to the consumers (they are looking up)
Slogan	"Style knows no boundaries – and neither should we. That's why we've teamed up with actor @IndyaMoore to co-create a capsule of universal pieces designed without gender in mind. Excited? So are we!"
Target audiences	All types of people
Setting	Room



Fig 6: H&M.

The original text that is under the picture

From the Stonewall riots to trans activists to #LGBTIQ+ allies around the world, here's to all those who never stop fighting for #Pride. Head to our stories to hear more. 🏳️‍🌈🏳️‍⚧️🏳️‍🚩🏳️‍🚩🏳️‍🚩 #HM #Beyond the rain bow

Description or text analysis

Pronouns: All those (indefinite); Vocabulary (wording): stonewall Trans pride; Persuasive Language: never stop fighting; Tense: Simple Present.

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Lethabo Matseke, Francesco Cicconetti, Joaquin Nondoni, Michaela Jae
Colour	Black and White
Pose and Gaze	They are looking to the consumers. Sitting, Standing
Slogan	"From the Stonewall riots to trans activists to #LGBTIQ+ allies around the world, here's to all those who never stop fighting for #Pride."

Target audiences	All types of people
Setting	Curtained place



Fig 7: H&M.

The original text that is under the picture:

Lidia & Maria hid their sexuality for decades. Now, they share their love with the world. 💕 Check out our 🏳️🌈🏳️🌈 highlight for more. #HM #Beyond the rain bow #Pride.

Description or text analysis

Pronouns: Our, Their (personal); Vocabulary (wording): sexuality decades, share their love; Persuasive Language: Our pride is eternal; Tense: Past Simple, Present Simple.

Interpretation or discourse practices

Strategies of the Advertisement	Linguistic Devices
Using Celebrity	Lidia & Maria
Colour	Black and White
Pose and Gaze	They are looking to the consumers. Sitting, Standing. They are hugging each other and holding their hands with big and happy smiles on their face
Slogan	“Lidia & Maria hid their sexuality for decades. Now, they share their love with the world. 💕 “Our pride is eternal”
Target audiences	World
Setting	Grey background

Explanation of the Photo Advertisements

According to Fairclough, the third part of the Explanation is associated to social analysis, which is socio-cultural ideologies and discourse. It means that all the images show that advertisements are not only trying to influence people to sell their products. Correspondingly, it shows that they try to reach everyone without any boundaries. Besides, brand companies try to destroy or change our boundaries about stereotypes, which are beauty, racism, and LGBT people. Simply put, the images connote that they want equal rights for everyone and a world without prejudices. In short, those advertisements give messages to challenge the current discourses by establishing different discourses in society. For example, against the stereotypes, as one of the current researches emphasised “Advertisers change the attitude and opinions of people and create an idealized image of beauty to influence the viewers and sell their producers. Ideology of a beautiful and attractive woman is shaped through the social practice” (Azam *et al.*, 2021).

However, they play with the beauty codes as well. They use plus-size, black, Trans, gay and lesbian, different ethnic minorities to reach them. Additionally, the slogans or the quotations signified that

they share their past, present, and future emotions, which is another way to influence people's cultural values about past difficulties, current situations, and future hopes (Akter *et al.*, 2020). Those emotional reflections are the beginning of new cultural values and discourse for the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

All the images show that advertisers use persuasive language to influence/change the ideas and beliefs of people. Still “advertisements create an idealized female image” (Azam *et al.*, 2021), but some famous brands use their advertisements to change the discourses. For example, all the Instagram images show that it is possible to look at the binary opposition and stereotypes differently. Unfortunately, still, we have ideal body image, stereotypes about ideal body image, racism, and LGBT people.

However, most companies and governments try to change the rules and ideas about stereotypes in general. Consequently, it is possible to suggest that those verbal and visual images of the advertisements as a mentor for people to change their ideas. With these advertisement photos, maybe famous brand companies cannot reach the oldest people, but they can certainly reach Youngers and adults, which is a hope

for equal rights for everyone. Consequently, those advertisements symbolise hope for the future without boundaries and stereotypes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

It is concluded that the selected advertisements use various linguistic and discursive techniques to attract and influence people. Their main aims are reach people, sell their product, and also create awareness about social and cultural issues. Advertisers use different people to represent that those brand companies think about everyone and want to reach everyone. The body type is not essential, and consumers can find different sizes of clothes. In addition, advertisers promote different body images to shape society's ideas to purchase their products and show like celebrities, who are confident, happy with their colour, body size, sexual orientation, and ethnic minorities. Even visual and verbal languages demonstrate that differences are beautiful and make you forget/remove your boundaries to be free.

I recommend that the future researcher compare the different countries advertisements to show the similarities and differences between stereotypes and gender differences.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

This study is my personal work, and so there is no conflict of interest to publish it.

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