

Critical Discourse Analysis of Linguistics and Visual Elements of GIV Soap Advertisements

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Abstract:

Advertising significantly influences consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior through the strategic use of linguistic and visual elements. Despite extensive research on advertising discourse, there remains a gap in understanding how language and imagery are specifically utilized in beauty and skincare product advertisements, particularly on social media. While existing studies have explored general advertising strategies, limited research has examined the interplay between linguistic choices, visual representation, and color psychology in shaping consumer responses within the Nigerian context. This study aims to fill this gap by critically analyzing the linguistic and visual elements in Giv Soap advertisements. The research examines the choice of words, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives, to determine their role in portraying product attributes, effectiveness, and the desired impact on users. It also identifies various phrase structures, such as noun phrases, verb phrases, and adjectival phrases, and their contribution to conveying persuasive messages. Additionally, the study explores the use of colors—blue, white, green, and pink—in these advertisements and their psychological effects on audiences. Findings reveal that Giv Soap advertisements strategically combine language and imagery to appeal to consumers, particularly women, by creating strong mental images and emotional connections with the product. The study highlights how these advertisements subtly influence consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. This research contributes to the broader discourse on advertising by providing insights into how linguistic and visual elements work together to construct persuasive messages. It offers valuable implications for advertisers, marketers, and linguists, particularly within the beauty industry.

Keywords: Advertisements, Critical Discourse, Linguistic Elements, Visual Representation, Giv Soap

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions. Through a strategic combination of linguistic and visual elements, advertisers construct narratives that appeal to consumer emotions, logic, and credibility. Language, as a central tool of persuasion, is carefully crafted to reinforce specific ideologies, desires, and social norms (Berger, 2014). Advertisements often depict a problem-solution relationship, where a problem concerning the consumer is presented, followed by a solution in the form of a product (Fairclough, 2003). This strategic use of language is designed to meet consumers' needs and desires, with the product positioned as the solution. Advertising language goes beyond mere text; it encompasses various semiotic elements such as visuals, colours, gestures, and layouts to convey meaning and messages effectively.

Language used in advertisements is a powerful tool that bridges the gap between advertisers and consumers. It is crafted to create a persuasive impact, often influencing consumer perceptions and behaviours. Beauty product advertisements, in particular, have been a subject of critical discourse analysis due to their role in reinforcing societal beauty standards. Many of these advertisements perpetuate the notion that fair skin is synonymous with beauty, success, and desirability. This constructed narrative influences consumer behavior, often pressuring individuals, particularly women, to conform to unrealistic beauty ideals (Brandt, 2021). The discourse within these advertisements not only promotes products but also reflects and shapes societal values regarding physical appearance, self-worth, and identity.

In the case of beauty products like Giv soap, advertisements tend to perpetuate societal ideals of beauty, such as fair skin, thereby encouraging consumers to buy products that promise to enhance their appearance. The language in these advertisements is not neutral; it is carefully constructed to shape consumer behaviour and, in some cases, reinforce social hierarchies and standards, particularly regarding skin colour.

Advertisements' visual and linguistic elements are often planned meticulously to attract and retain consumers' attention. As Gee (2011) highlights, language can persuade people, alter their ideologies, and influence their perspectives. Giv soap advertisements, for instance, exploit this power by targeting women, using language and imagery to promote societal standards of beauty. These advertisements reinforce the idea that light skin is desirable, contributing to a narrative shaping consumer behaviour, particularly among women.

In addition to persuasive language, advertisers also employ visuals, including models and colour schemes, to capture the audience's attention. According to Davis (2006), advertisements result from thoughtful planning, where different strategies attract specific groups. In Giv soap advertisements, female models are predominantly used to appeal to women, the primary target audience. These advertisements promote the product and reflect societal pressures that judge women based on their appearance rather than their abilities.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a powerful framework for examining how advertising language constructs meanings and influences consumer perceptions. Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of CDA is particularly relevant for analyzing advertisements, as it examines language at three levels:

1- Text analysis (description): This focuses on linguistic and semiotic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

2- Discourse practice (interpretation): This examines how advertisements are produced, distributed, and consumed.

3- Social practice (explanation): This contextualizes advertisements within broader sociocultural and ideological structures (Fairclough, 2013).

By applying Fairclough's model, researchers can uncover hidden power structures, ideological biases, and persuasive strategies embedded in advertisements. This approach has been widely used to analyze beauty product advertisements and their impact on consumer behavior (Sulistiyani et al., 2024; Iqbal et al., 2024).

Several studies have examined the linguistic and visual elements in beauty product advertisements. Laraib (2022) conducted a CDA study on beauty advertisements and found that advertisers use persuasive language and imagery to manipulate women's perceptions of beauty. The study highlighted how beauty product advertisements reinforce the desirability of "whiteness" as a beauty standard. Similarly, Falla (2020) analyzed TV advertisements for beauty products and found that advertisers strategically use persuasive language and cultural symbols to shape consumer ideologies.

Other studies have explored the role of figures of speech in advertisements. Aritonang (2012) analyzed Vogue magazine advertisements and found that hyperbole, metaphor, and personification were commonly used to create strong emotional appeals. Likewise, Robert (2013) examined advertising language in newspapers and magazines, highlighting the use of persuasive diction and graphological elements to attract consumers.

Visual elements, particularly the use of color psychology, have also been studied extensively in advertising discourse. Research suggests that specific colors evoke particular emotions and associations. For example, white is often linked to purity and elegance, blue to trust and calmness, green to freshness and nature, and pink to femininity and softness (Brandt, 2021). These colors are frequently used in beauty product advertisements to reinforce their intended message.

Additionally, studies on beauty standards in advertising have revealed that advertisements often perpetuate Eurocentric beauty ideals, positioning fair skin as superior. Oyedokun-Alli (2019) found that advertising language in Nigeria often reflects globalized beauty norms, leading to the marginalization of darker skin tones. This aligns with findings from studies on skin-whitening advertisements, which show that advertisers reinforce colorism by associating lighter skin with social mobility, confidence, and attractiveness (Gorgonio, 2021).

Despite the extensive research on beauty product advertising, there is a notable gap in studies that focus specifically on Giv Soap advertisements and how they utilize linguistic and visual elements to construct beauty ideals. Most previous studies have concentrated on international brands such as Lux, Fair & Lovely, and Nivea, while little attention has been given to Giv Soap and its role in reinforcing societal perceptions of beauty, particularly in the Nigerian context.

Moreover, while existing studies have analyzed the linguistic features of beauty product advertisements, fewer studies have explored the interplay between language, imagery, and color psychology in shaping consumer responses. This study seeks to fill that gap by applying CDA to examine how Giv Soap advertisements employ language, visual representation, and color schemes to influence consumer perceptions and reinforce beauty standards.

Another area that remains underexplored is the impact of social media advertising on consumer perceptions. Many beauty brands, including Giv, increasingly use digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to market their products. These platforms allow for highly visual and interactive advertising, often blending traditional marketing techniques with modern digital storytelling. Analyzing how Giv Soap advertisements function in these digital spaces will provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of beauty advertising.

Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze the linguistic and visual elements in Giv Soap advertisements to understand how they shape consumer perceptions, particularly among women. The following are the specific objectives:

1. To examine the linguistic choices used in Giv Soap advertisements, including the use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and phrase structures.
2. To explore the impact of visual elements in Giv Soap advertisements, particularly the use of color, models, and imagery, in attracting and influencing audiences.
3. To investigate how these advertisements, reinforce societal beauty standards, especially regarding the association of fair skin with attractiveness and desirability.

By exploring these questions, this study seeks to uncover how Giv soap advertisements perpetuate societal ideals of beauty and influence women's daily lives. Additionally, it investigates how language, colours, and visual representations shape the audience's perceptions and reinforce skin tone and beauty ideologies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to critically analyze the linguistic and visual elements used in Giv Soap Company's advertisements. The data were sourced from the company's official social media platforms, where contemporary advertisements are widely disseminated to target audiences. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four advertisements published between 2022 and the present. These advertisements were chosen based on their relevance to the study's objectives, particularly their use of language, imagery, and color schemes in shaping consumer perceptions. The primary data for analysis consisted of both the images and accompanying textual content within these advertisements.

The study adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its analytical approach. This framework consists of:

1. Text Analysis (Description): Examining linguistic features such as word choices (nouns, verbs, adjectives), phrase structures, and rhetorical strategies used in the advertisements.
2. Discourse Practice (Interpretation): Analyzing how the advertisements are produced, distributed, and consumed within social media contexts.
3. Social Practice (Explanation): Exploring the broader sociocultural implications of the advertisements, particularly their role in reinforcing beauty standards and consumer ideologies.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Linguistic Item and Writing Style of GiV Advertisement

This section presents the answer to the first research question on the choice of words or linguistic items and the writing style used in the GiV Advertisements. The first analysis of this advertisement involves the choice of words and linguistic items. Words, phrases, sentences, and

writing styles such as capitalisation, boldness, and italicisation are also used. The following subsection will detail the linguistic items and the writing style.

4.2. Words and Phrases of GiV Advertisement

The findings show that three classes of words were used in the GiV Soap advert: Noun, Verb, and Adjective. The noun is used to depict the name of the product. (Day, pearl, white, selection), The adjective is used to show the image of how the body of users will look (Beauty, perfect), and Verb is used to show how effective the product was and how the beauty will stay with the user. (Begins, stay). In addition, the phrases used are Noun Phrase (All day long, the perfect selection), Verb Phrases (Stay Pearly), Adjectival Phrase (Beauty begins), Prepositional Phrase (To start the week, with pearl white, if not give...).



The following are examples of words and phrases in GiV Company advertisements, as shown in the above figure.

- a. Noun
“Day”, “pearl”, “white”, “selection”
- b. Verb
“Begins”, “stay”
- c. Adjective
“Beauty”, “perfect”

Phrases

- a. Noun Phrase
“All day long”, “the perfect selection.”
- b. Verb Phrase
“Stay Pearly”
- c. Prepositional Phrase
“To start the week”, “with pearl white.”

Writing style

- a. Capitalization
“The perfect selection”, “if not Giv”
- b. Bold
“The perfect selection”, “If not Giv”, “Beauty begins”, “stay pearly.”
- c. Italicize
“Beauty begins”, “stay pearly.”

Adjectives are a necessary element in linguistics structure that helps in describing the name of the product. They are also used to encourage you to believe in the product or service advertised. Adjectives bring intensity to adverts, and the proper adjective can completely quickly look into a favourable situation (Hanan, 2018). For example, Google's recent Pixel phone campaign repeatedly uses the adjective 'new' to significant effect throughout the advert. Moreover, Donald (2017) said verbs are used in advert to force you to choose between love and hate.

Possibly, GiV company made use of the above (Linguistic Items) to make the advert a highly inflammable product that can be broken down even when you did not use it; they used adjectives to inculcate such in the minds of the customers. Adjectives and nouns somehow work together, so that is why they make the advertisement easier than we expect; if we say they did that, not because for the advert to be simple, they would have to use other word classes like prepositions, conjunctions, etc.

Moreover, the phrases and words perform the same functions because nouns can function as noun phrases, and adjectives can also function as adjectival phrases. But in the advert they perform different functions, just because they were used in different places and also create different effects in attracting customers. Noun phrases are here to show that if you select their product, you will never regret it. For example, "perfect selection": if you select GiV, you will have no more regrets or thoughts of looking for any other product. Prepositional Phrase is also used to trigger the interest in the minds of the audience to start using the product. "To start the week" means never wait until next week to start using GiV soap. The in-depth analysis of this advertisement can be done through multiple dimensions. The main caption of one of the advertisements signifies that glowing skin can be miraculous when achieved through this product, as the claim that "beauty begins" itself is very evoking and can attract the attention of women who want instant results from the product.

In addition the writing style used in the advert creates more effect in the mind of the customers of the product, in my opinion the boldness, capitalization, italics are to give more emphasis on a specific feature that can help them succeed in creating good style that can be attached to the product and also to tell the customers that there are very significant thing there, where the words are bold, capitalized or Italicized.

4.3. Visual Representation of GiV Advertisement

This section answers the second research question: How do the visual representations of these advertisements attract and influence women?



The woman in the advertisement seems to be smiling, confident and has a fair complexion. The overall colours schemes of the advertisements are blue, white, green and pink colour. Blue is

used mainly in the background, and some text is put up in the advertisement to show the other features of the visual design of the advert, as well as in putting essential things. White is used in the presentation of the text to give a mental image of what the result of the user's skin of the product will be. The use of pink in the advertisement gives a feminine appeal that eventually attracts women's attention. In addition, the model's However, some of the colours were used repeatedly, especially blue and white. Colour affects people's perception and thinking a lot in many aspects (Kristýna, 2015).

The most important part of the advert's visual items is the woman's photo. They put the image nakedly for the customers to see her skin colour resulting from the soap. That can also serve as an advertising tactic that directly tells the audience that no matter how ugly you are, your skin can change in a very few moments. They also think that if a woman is fair, she will be seen as lovely. Likewise, this can only be achieved by using this soap. Moreover, it can also be assumed that this is the beautiful feature preferred by most women using this kind of soap. According to Fairclough's Three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, there are three stages in discourse analysis, description, interpretation, and explanation (2015). These three dimensions perform different functions. Firstly, the description deals with the text analysis. This includes linguistic devices and features of the text. Linguistic devices serve a planned purpose, so they should be carefully analyzed. Interpretation involves the contextual analysis of the text.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into how linguistic and visual elements are employed in GiV Soap advertisements on social media. The analysis reveals that specific linguistic strategies—mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives, and various phrase types—are deliberately used to shape consumer perceptions.

- Nouns such as "Day," "pearl," "white," and "selection" emphasize exclusivity and desirable attributes of the soap, reinforcing its appeal.
- Adjectives like "beauty" and "perfect" serve to create an aspirational image, aligning the product with societal beauty standards.
- Verbs such as "begins" and "stay" highlight the soap's effectiveness and the lasting nature of its benefits, reinforcing the idea that beauty starts and continues with the use of GiV Soap.
- Phrase structures, including noun phrases ("all day long," "the perfect selection"), verb phrases ("stay pearly"), and prepositional phrases ("with pearl white"), enhance the persuasive impact by constructing a seamless narrative around the product.

The combination of linguistic devices serves not only to inform but also subtly manipulate the audience's perception, associating GiV Soap with continuous care, beauty, and personal satisfaction. In terms of visual representation, the advertisements reinforce their message through the strategic use of images and colors. The portrayal of glowing, fair-skinned models aligns with textual messages emphasizing beauty and purity. This reflects broader societal ideals, particularly those that associate fair skin with attractiveness and success. The study finds that color choices, such as white and pink, contribute to the psychological appeal of the product, associating it with purity, femininity, and elegance.

The findings of this study resonate strongly with the Nigerian beauty industry, where light skin is often idealized and associated with higher social status, attractiveness, and success. Skin-

whitening products and fairness-enhancing cosmetics dominate the market, reflecting a deep-seated preference for lighter skin tones among many Nigerian consumers. The GiV Soap advertisements capitalize on this preference by reinforcing whiteness as a beauty ideal, subtly pressuring consumers to view fair skin as more desirable. This aligns with Oyedokun-Alli (2019), who found that beauty product advertisements in Nigeria often mirror globalized beauty norms, leading to the marginalization of darker skin tones. Similarly, studies on skin-whitening advertisements have shown that advertisers reinforce colorism by associating lighter skin with confidence, social mobility, and attractiveness (Gorgonio, 2021). The findings also reveal how social media advertising is reshaping beauty discourse in Nigeria. Unlike traditional print and television ads, social media allows for direct engagement with consumers, creating a more immersive and interactive advertising experience. This aligns with contemporary research that highlights the role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions, particularly in beauty and personal care industries (Sulistiyani et al., 2024).

From a sociocultural perspective, these advertisements do more than just sell a product; they reproduce and normalize societal beauty standards, reinforcing gendered expectations of beauty. This supports Fairclough's (1989) theory that advertising language does not exist in isolation but is shaped by broader social and ideological structures.

The findings of this study can be effectively analyzed through Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which examines text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, the linguistic features of GiV Soap advertisements—including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and phrases—are deliberately chosen to emphasize beauty, purity, and transformation. The use of direct and persuasive language positions the soap as an essential product for achieving an idealized beauty standard. Additionally, visual elements, such as fair-skinned models and soft color tones, further reinforce the textual message, creating an image of beauty that aligns with societal expectations of fairness and attractiveness.

At the discourse practice level, the production and consumption of GiV Soap advertisements within Nigerian society reflect an ongoing beauty discourse, where whiteness is often privileged over darker skin tones. The digital nature of these advertisements, particularly on social media, allows for wider engagement, where consumers interact through likes, shares, and comments, thereby reinforcing beauty ideals through collective discourse. These advertisements operate as a self-reinforcing system, meaning that the more they are consumed, the more they shape consumer expectations, normalizing and perpetuating specific beauty standards.

At the social practice level, the broader cultural and ideological implications of GiV Soap advertisements reveal how advertising discourse influences societal attitudes toward beauty. These advertisements do more than promote a product—they perpetuate colorism, reinforcing Eurocentric beauty standards and subtly pressuring consumers to conform. This supports Fairclough's (2013) argument that advertisements are not neutral but are deeply embedded in social power structures, shaping ideologies and reinforcing hierarchies of beauty and desirability.

Through this theoretical lens, the study highlights how language and imagery in advertisements serve as tools of persuasion and social control, subtly shaping consumer identities and reinforcing dominant beauty ideologies. By embedding beauty norms within linguistic and visual cues, these advertisements contribute to a broader discourse that influences consumer behavior and societal perceptions of attractiveness.

Finally, the findings of the study align with previous research on beauty product advertising and the role of language in shaping consumer perceptions. For instance, Laraib (2022) found that beauty product advertisements reinforce the desirability of whiteness, influencing women's self-perception and reinforcing unrealistic beauty standards. This study confirms that GiV Soap advertisements employ similar strategies, particularly in their linguistic and visual representations of beauty. Falla (2020) highlighted how beauty product advertisements use persuasive language and imagery to create emotional connections with consumers. The GiV Soap advertisements analyzed in this study reflect this by positioning the soap as transformative, using phrases such as "beauty begins" and "stay pearly" to suggest continuous improvement and long-term benefits. Brandt (2021) examined color psychology in advertising and found that colors such as white, pink, and blue evoke purity, femininity, and trust. This study supports that GiV Soap advertisements strategically use these colors to reinforce their brand message. Oyedokun-Alli (2019) discussed the marginalization of darker skin tones in Nigerian advertising, a finding that resonates with this study, as GiV Soap advertisements primarily feature fair-skinned models, reinforcing the association between beauty and light skin.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examines the advertisements of GiV Soap Company on social media, revealing both linguistic and visual features used in promoting their products. The findings highlight using specific word classes, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Nouns (e.g., "Day," "pearl," "white," "selection") are used to denote the product's name, while adjectives (e.g., "beauty," "perfect") describe the desired appearance of the users. Verbs (e.g., "begins," "stay") convey the product's effectiveness and the lasting nature of its benefits. The analysis also identified various phrases, including noun phrases ("all day long," "the perfect selection"), verb phrases ("stay pearly"), adjectival phrases ("beauty begins"), and prepositional phrases ("to start the week," "with pearl white"). This study enhances the understanding of how language is employed in social media advertisements to influence consumers. It sheds light on the subtle effects and hidden meanings embedded within the adverts. The insights from this research are valuable for advertisers seeking to use language more effectively to persuade their audience, particularly in the digital advertising landscape. Additionally, the study contributes to the development of linguistic theories related to persuasion in advertising.

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