

Title:	A Critical Discourse Analysis of Facial Cream Advertisements
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Abstract

This paper aims at helping women customers resist discrimination by biased beauty product advertisements. By analyzing 20 pieces of English facial cream advertisements from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989), this paper discusses several characteristics of the beauty product commercials. The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough, which involves the examination of 1) the form of language, 2) the production and interpretation of the text, and 3) the influences of the text in the society. More specifically, this research study explores the linguistic constructions of the text advertisements, the discursive strategies employed by the beauty product companies to manipulate the customers, and the social issues embedded in the discourse.

The findings of this study show that the manufacturers use a lot of linguistic constructions such as direct address, questions and positive adjectives in their facial cream advertisements. By doing so, they produce a myth that having young skin is a symbol of ideal beauty of women. What's more, the advertisers use several types of discursive strategies (e.g. positive self-representation/ negative other-representation and scientific proof) to convince the customers to trust the advertised products. These types of strategies maintain power and stereotypes over the audience, by separating the audience into in-group and out-group. While the in-group members who has young skin are appreciated and accepted, members of the out-group who have signs of aging on their skins are constantly depreciated.

Reflection

As an English major who has been exploring the mysteries and magic laid in human languages, I am thrilled that I have gained a deeper understanding of how languages affect our mindsets through this capstone project. In the four-year journey of my undergraduate studies, I was taught to look beyond the language itself, for the implications and the ideology embedded in the literal meanings. This inspires me to become more aware of how people exert power and pressure through written language.

I am honored to be nominated for this Exemplary Capstone Project Award. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Prem Phyak, for giving me invaluable encouragement and guidance throughout the whole term whenever I felt frustrated. Without his support, this capstone project would not be possible.