CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A BANK ADVERTISEMENT: EDUCATION IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN BE ASKED FOR A CHILD!

BİR BANKA REKLAMININ ELEŞTİREL SÖYLEM ANALİZİ: EĞİTİM BİR ÇOCUK İÇİN İSTENEBİLECEK TEK ŞEYDİR!

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Abstract
In the contemporary world, it is very common to see advertisements in every single context. People can reach any information and advertisement through social media at any time and share their ideas easily. Similarly, attitudes to advertisements can be accepted as indicators of our personalities, social norms or ideologies. For this reason, it is essential to understand or investigate media discourse critically. Considering this aim, the present study analyzes a private bank advertisement in Turkish socio-cultural context by adopting a framework of Fairclough (1992) in critical discourse analysis. This framework consists of three aspects of discourse suggesting 1) description of textual analysis 2) interpretation and 3) explanation of social conditions which affect production and perception. The findings of the study reveals that this advertisement film has been produced for a social responsibility project that values the education of children living under disadvantageous conditions, more specifically girls who are forced to be married. Besides, it was clarified that critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be an appropriate method to utilize the effective language of advertisements which integrates cultural, social and ideological values of societies.

Key Words: Critical discourse analysis, children brides, education, advertisement.

Özet

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel söylem analizi, çocuk gelinler, eğitim, reklam.

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1. Introduction

Advertising has long been a subject of several studies in different disciplines such as mass communication, marketing, sociology, cultural anthropology, social psychology and semiotics with a history going back to 1950s and 1960s. Admittedly, it has some effective functions, which influence everyone (Gonzalez Ruiz, 2014). Davidson (1992) defines advertising as; a social language, a genre of spectator/reader experience, a technique of persuasion […] almost a world in its own right, with its own languages, customs and history, and one that sets the tone and pace for large parts of our lives. Advertising is a topic which both causes and reveals existing social divisions.

In addition, Williamson (1978) states that “ads are message systems designed to organize perceptions and create structures of meaning” (p.12). Briefly, advertisements can be considered as a powerful means of providing the desired impact on the audience.

It can be clearly grasped that advertisements, which are defined as “any paid form of non-personal communication through the mass media about the product” (Kotler, 2002, p. 578), have become an essential part of our everyday life. More than that, they have multifunctional purposes in our lives with all features which are specific to this genre. Besides, advertising is a way of encouraging or persuading people to buy a special product. Advertisements do not only serve this purpose, but they “also amuse, inform, misinform, worry, warn, … though it may be argued that these functions are all in the service of the main function” (Cook, 1992, p.5).

Goddard (1992) suggests that the discourse of advertising is a way through which people construct their ideas about the world. That is to say, words in advertisements do not exist in isolation, but occur in complex interaction with music, pictures and other text around them (Cook, 1992). Noticing the advertisement-related discourse, the intertextual elements are encountered in advertisements and mostly; the genres that people generally follow take place purposefully (Williams, 2003). This shows that advertisers are really aware of the characteristics of their audience. By paying attention to these characteristics, it is possible to know how they should design their messages both visually and linguistically (Turhan & Okan, 2017).

The focus of this study is a recent Turkish Bank advertisement drawing attention to a social responsibility project. Yapi Kredi Bank has recently received a great appreciation from the audience for the advertisement film released on the internet. The advertisement is addressing the" Science migration to Anatolia " project, which dedicately supports young girls’ education in this advertisement. Even though the audience initially watch a girl who is forced to marry without her consent, it is understood that the events that takes place afterward serves a different matter because the advertisement touches the point by doing a reverse corner. The audience feels sorry for the children, who have already been deprived of their right of education and condemned to a hard life, while the possibility that such stories may actually turn real somewhere makes us happy. With this understanding, this ad reveals that one of the most efficient media tools is TV advertisements because there is a television in almost every house of the world and the audiences are exposed to numerous advertisements. With the impressive combination of the sounds, images, simple conversations, messages and colors, advertisements definitely have strong functions reflected on the discursive language use. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze critically the advertisements to search for the message, to explore the hidden ideologies and even to reveal biases which are embedded in the context of them. Taking all these into account, the current study has the following research questions:

1) What are the linguistic features used in a private bank advertisement?
2) What are the discursive techniques employed in this advertisement to influence the audience?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been considered as being more important in these last few decades because of a series of changes that have encouraged its interest (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). Although discourse analysis is one of the main subjects of applied linguistics, other disciplines have contributed to the development of its theory and practice these years, such as psychology, sociology, etc (Davies & Elder, 2004, p. 133-134). When the definition of discourse is focused, it can be described by Gee (2005) as “the language (oral or written) in use with more socio-politically oriented meaning” (p.1). In other words, this discipline deals with how sentences are combined with each other to form texts – discourses – and describes the language in use – authentic written and spoken language in context – within them. Accordingly, it would not be wrong to suggest that discourse analysis involves both text and context. The language does not occur alone so that there is a mutual relationship between the text and the context, in which the text is used. Thus, as discourse analysis studies language, it is an important aspect to be considered (Cook, 1992).

Fairclough (1989) goes further and defines discourse as “just a particular form of social practice” that in its center power and ideology influence and interact with one another (p. 42). As a consequence, as Brown & Yule (1983, p. 27) claim “the discourse analyst has to take into account the context in which a piece of discourse appears” because the language has a significant role to manifest ideologies, power relations and social groupings. In order to investigate the use of power and ideology in discourse, critical discourse analysis (CDA) needs to be considered as a useful tool. Wodak (1999) support this notion as follows:

Critical Discourse Analysis centers on authentic everyday communication in institutional, media, political or other locations rather than on sample sentences or sample texts constructed in linguists” minds. [CDA] regards both written and spoken „discourse” as a form of social practice. It assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse, and, in turn, discourses influence social and political reality. In other words, discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it. (p. 8)

As Kress and Van (1990) argue, CDA sheds light on unequal power relations in public discourse by showing how public discourse often serves the interests of the powerful forces over those of the less privileged. Furthermore, Halliday (1994), who believes that language is a “social act”, is another supporter of the relationship between discourse and the society. Apparently, it can be grasped that vocabulary and grammar items are not selected randomly in a written or oral context but rather, they are all chosen and utilized on an ideological basis because language is the tool which conveys socially-negotiated issues to people in a certain society. In brief, this situation reminds the audience of the perception that discourse contains elements of meaning that are not explicitly expressed or communicated. In order to unravel those hidden messages and ideologies, CDA seems a reasonable way to analyze language in an attempt to identify for what purposes language is used in a certain way or tone (Wodak, 1996).
2.2. Advertising Discourse

Nowadays advertising is an important genre, it is everywhere and influences the culture since its discourse deals with objects and the way in which these ones are related to different aspects of our life (Jhally, 1990). Since the advertising is exploited in the current study, the term “media discourse” can be referred. It can be defined as the interactions that take place on a broadcast platform, either spoken or written, where the discourse is addressed to a non-present listener, viewer or reader (O'keeffe, 2001). This means that the addressees of such a discourse cannot share their answers on the matter instantly to the producers. In other words, media discourse is generated for the public and it does not resemble daily instantaneous turn-takings among people. Instead, it is a form of interaction which is open to everyone (O'keeffe, 2001). For some time, people can reach any information and advertisement through social media at any time and share their ideas easily. For this reason, it is essential to understand or investigate media discourse critically.

Advertising is a procedure within marketing that develops strategies in order to involve people with a particular product or service and satisfy consumers’ needs. From that perspective, advertising fulfills some functions to encourage and persuade people to buy a special product or get a service. However, advertising does not merely serve these purposes, they “also amuse, inform, misinform, worry, warn, … though it may be argued that these functions are all in the service of the main function” (Cook, 1992, p. 5). On the other hand, there are some non-profit advertisements to advocate a change in behavior rather than promoting any products. The non-profit ads are used in different campaigns and they show the effects of not adopting the advocated behavior. “Ads may not always be obliged to refer to a product, but they are still obliged to refer, however obliquely, to a change of behavior” (Cook, 1992, p. 224). When the current study is considered about a bank supporting the equal rights of education for girls, it becomes clear that the advertisement has been created for a specific purpose and a social responsibility project with related ideology inside.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

A qualitative design was utilized for this study to investigate how discourse in advertisements affect people’s construction of meanings. The methodology used to carry out this study is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) – derived from the Functional Systematic Linguistics– since it allows the analysis of texts and their social context (Titscher et al, 2000). Wodak (1996) puts forward that “discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory. The critical analysis implies a systematic methodology and a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations. Interpretations are always dynamic and open to new contexts and new information” (p. 17-20). With this belief in mind, Fairclough’s (1992) three-dimensional framework was used for the analysis of a Turkish bank advertisement with a social responsibility project as a content.

In this framework, there are dimensions which are all closely interrelated to each other. These dimensions are description of textual analysis, interpretation of production, and explanation of social conditions. In the first dimension, the textual level concerns the description of content and form, so it involves a linguistic and paralinguistic analysis (Titscher et al, 2000). Linguistic features include a systematic analysis of word choices, grammatical functions and text structure. This is the first step, in which text is the object. For Fairclough (1989), "description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of text” (p. 26). Secondly, Fairclough (1992) believes that what is described in the first dimension of CDA is
assigned certain meanings in the second dimension. That is to say, it is highly related to how an object is produced and perceived by the audience with the help of discursive elements in the first dimension. Moreover, Fairclough (1989) claims that "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as recourse in the process of interpretation" (p.26). Thus, discourse is not only regarded as text, but also a discursive practice in this stage, which means that attention should be attached to other factors such as speech act and intertextuality rather than merely analyzing linguistic details. Lastly, for the third dimension, Fairclough (1989) mentions that "explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects" (p. 26). In a broad sense, the analysis in explanatory part is with respect to the historical, social, and cultural contexts as a social-cultural practice. Also, Janks (1997, p. 26) argues that “the social practice deals with the socio-historical conditions that govern the productive and interpretative processes,” so the analysis needs to explain the relationship between the discursive and the social practice; namely, the Turkish culture, society, the role of education and perception of daughters in our advertisement.

3.2. Data Source

3.2.1. The Yapı Kredi Bank Advertisement

The advertisement selected for the study is available on Youtube and the relevant link is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FS2unbyzL8. The purpose of the advertisement can be said to put an emphasis on girls’ equal rights of education with a striking context. Another aim of the advertisement is to raise awareness about the need to educate the girls and to highlight the touching stories of children brides with the importance of science in Anatolia. Namely, this advertisement is a little spark that has been made to burn the science fire in Anatolia. As the producer of the advertisement, Yapı Kredi is the first private bank in Turkey established by Kazim Taskent in 1944 in order to ensure that individuals in Turkey have more favorable housing conditions.

Yapı Kredi Bank’s ad film ‘education for a child' became an agenda in social media as soon as it was released. The advertisement film explaining about a team, which comes home for a 12-year-old girl’s education, quickly reached thousands of viewers on the internet. By means of the striking message, Yapı Kredi has managed to appreciate the interest in the advertisement film broadcasted on the internet, which is the main focus of this study. The advertisement is addressing the ‘Science Migration Project to Anatolia’, which specifically supports the right of girls for education. Therefore, it emphasizes the point with an unexpected start. When you start watching this advertisement film, it may be possible for some audiences to feel the dilemma about father's words. However, as the advertisement progresses, the importance of education is underlined because the purpose is actually different. While the father is mentioning about his daughter's skills, it is thought that he is actually telling something to those who come to ask for his daughter. Albeit, the aim is to surprise the audience and reach the conclusion in a dramatic way. In brief, it can be suggested that the message is strongly transmitted through this cleverly edited advertisement film. More than that, Yapı Kredi gives a profound message that children need education, not marriage.
4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Dimension I: Description

As Fairclough (1992) stated, the description dimension includes the analysis of both linguistic units, semantics and visual components of a text from a multifunctional perspective. He also adds that linguistic analysis is concerned with "representations, categories of participant, constructions of participant identity or participant relations" (1995, p. 58). Hence, any sentence in a text is prone to analyze in terms of articulation these functions.

4.1.2 Textual Analysis

The advertisement starts directly with some words of the father saying ‘you ask for my daughter’, and it is assumed that the father is talking to the people who came to ask for his daughter for marriage. We think that we are watching a reflection of the painful picture of children brides in Turkey because the man mentions about how hardworking her daughter is.

So, you ask for my daughter. Well, I am not telling this just because she is my daughter, but... She cooks well, does laundry, works on the field, takes care of kids. She, actually, took care of all her siblings. What else could she have done when her mother passed away? She was the one, who kept this family together. Besides, she is talented. She knows how to sew, embroider. She can rip and stitch. But I didn't know she can build robots, I didn't know she was interested in science. Now, you ask for my daughter and say that she will be a scientist. Well, what can I say? May God bless you. And you, my dear daughter.

Overuse of pronoun ‘she’ indicates that the father tries to prove his daughter's ability in many fields. While talking about these skills, he refers to his daughter many times. Apart from that, the use of modal ‘can’ also deepens the emphasis on the girl's abilities with the purpose of adapting to life. The use of simple past tense is used to mention about the extra burden on the girl’s shoulder after the loss of her mother. It is clearly emphasized that the girl had no choice but to keep the house together and to take responsibility for life. The phrase ‘I didn’t know’ is used twice by the father to indicate his ignorance of his daughter’s abilities, interests and viewpoints, which can be accepted as a good example of self-criticism. However, this phrase represents the climax of the advertisement because, from that point, the flow of the advertisement film starts to turn into a positive attitude reflecting the real aim.

As the film progresses, we understand that the truth is not what we think it is. The father looks up at three young people sitting across him and says he knows a lot of things his daughter can do, but he doesn't know she can do robots. It is understood that the visitors at home want to raise his daughter as a scientist, not to make her a wife, but to give her the education she deserves.

'There is only one thing that you can want for a kid. And, that is for them to have equal opportunities in education. As Yapı Kredi volunteers, we work to turn the kids of these lands into the scientists of the future with 'Science Migration to Anatolia'. Because, if our main objective is to reach the level of contemporary civilization, there is no limit in service for us.'

This emotive language is voiced by the narrator of the advertisement introducing the ‘Science Migration Project to Anatolia’, which is the main theme. The purpose of the advertisement becomes clear with the sentences expressed in this section.
4.1.3 Use of visual and audial elements

Music and other visual elements also contain important messages in an advertising film. They have hidden contributions to the ads, which can be considered as semiotics. To begin with the music, slow music is played with piano in the background while the father speaks at the beginning of the advertisement, and the tone of the music is very compatible with the ambiance. When the advertisement film approaches the end and the actual purpose appears, there is a slight increase in the speed of the music, which reflects the positive mood. This is also true for the media, environment, colors, general atmosphere of the advertisement.

As can be seen in the above picture, negative emotion is reflected in the audience at first. Concerning the images, it can be suggested that the colors in this picture and the light of the environment are dark, which are parallel to the negative feeling given in the ad. The father and the girl have an expression as if they were doing something they didn't want to do. The image of helplessness reflected on the girl's face makes the audience share the same emotion.
However, as the advertisement progresses and the real purpose emerges, the colors and ambiance of the advertisement change. With another saying, brighter colors and environments are utilized to give more positive messages and the change in the mood of the advertisement. Moreover, the great smile on the girl's face has given her a significant way to achieve her dreams, and it shows that she will walk with sure steps on this way with her father's and this project’s support. It can also be understood from the use of logo of the bank, their motto and the logo of another supporter, which can be given together with the girl’s smiling face at the end of the advertisement.

4.2. Dimension II: Interpretation

Fairclough (1992) believes that what is described in the first dimension of CDA explains the purpose and manner of interpretation in the second section. In order to achieve this, in “Description” part above, the images, colors and the sound have such a specific function that they may represent an idea or give a certain message about advertising. To indicate shortly again, at first glance, it reminds viewers of the ceremony of asking for a girl in a deserted village of Anatolia, and a father praising the little girl sitting next to him. Even though the father thinks that he knows his daughter’s all good features, he does not realize her interest in science. At this point, it is understood that it is not a kind of gathering to ask for a girl from his father for marriage, but that the guests, who are present, have come to this house in order to provide a better education for her and to raise her as a scientist.

In the first place, the audience faces such a situation and the advertisement draws attention to the issue of child brides, which is one of the most important problems of Turkey. To clarify, while the father is talking about all the skills of her daughter at home, it is anticipated that he actually refers to her as an ideal bride's candidate. However, as the film goes on, it is grasped that the advertisement explains Yapı Kredi’s support for the project by emphasizing that education is the only thing to be asked for a child. This advertisement, directed by Tolga Karaçelik, was put on the agenda in social media as soon as it was broadcasted on the internet. The advertisement is praised for its support for education, as well as its clear stance on children brides, which is the bleeding wound of cultures. At this point, it can be stated that the producers of the film have turned the audience upside down and put on a more important and dramatic fashion for the message they want to convey.

To have a better interpretation of the advertisement, it is crucial to know that Critical Discourse Analysis plays an important role in explaining what the ad's message is and how it is presented to the audience. Regarding this, it is explicitly stated that the advertiser is YapıKredi Bank, which is the biggest private bank in Turkey, in cooperation with a non-governmental organization Young Guru Academy. The Bank's advertisement film encourages its employees to contribute to society by providing time and effort to different social responsibility projects. In addition, it aims to encourage children to love science rather than accept their evil fates in this advertisement.

4.3. Dimension III: Explanation

The third dimension of discourse could be described as ‘power behind discourse’ or as ‘social practices’ functioning behind the entire process and governing the power relations in discourse. Because of discourses’ influence on social practices, CDA theorists believe that a part of the critical analysis is a “concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use,” and that it should always be analyzed empirically within its social context (Jørgensen et al. 2002, p. 62). This situation requires the author to approach the issue from a wider perspective. With that
sense, it is vital to unravel the role of the discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world and unequal power relations (Jørgensen et al. 2002).

4.3.1. Child Brides

The characteristics describing the family in societies are determined by the socio-cultural values that a society possesses. Individuals assume social roles and responsibilities attributed to men and women according to these values of the society. When the current study is concerned in this respect, it can be clearly seen that the basis of the study includes the issues of the education for girls, the love of science and the child brides in Turkish culture.

Child brides are people whose childhood lives have been stolen from them. Considering the subject, it can be said that this happens due to many reasons. To name a few of them, the problem may stem from poverty, patriarchal mentality, multi-children family structure, lack of women's education, gender discrimination, domestic violence escape. Compared to urban areas, girls living in rural areas are much more likely to be exposed to such marriages because it might be a more burdensome issue to reach at the educational facilities because schools are inaccessible or expensive, or because their parents undervalue education. With very few alternatives, parents often see marriage as the best option for their daughters.

Social constructs underlay the patriarchal system, which creates another serious problem. According to the findings of Schroeder (2007), patriarchy restricts women to private space and excludes them from social life and public activities. In childhood, being raised as an adult and/or as a motherhood identity cause different problems that persist in their lives in terms of physiological and psychological aspects. Göksel (2018) claims in her study that girls face a serious discrimination that is determined and accepted by the cultural values and norms of the patriarchal family structure, which has been passed from past to present. Thus, they are restricted from participating in social life, benefiting from the right to education and starting their business life. What is more, early marriages continue to spread due to misinterpretation of stereotyped judgments, traditions and religious practices.

Low economic status is another reason leading to early marriage. Families in regions, where marriages are seen intensively at an early age, are mostly identified as having a low socio-economic status below the poverty line. Women and girls are most affected by this poverty and have the effects of this situation during their whole lifetime (Aydemir 2011). According to the results of a study conducted in 2011 in Diyarbakır/Bismil by Turkish Institution of Family Research, 71% of women got married under the age of 18 to reduce the financial burden of their poor families. This study shows that there is a correlation between the frequency of early marriages and the poverty of families. (Çakır, 2013).

Early marriages, especially the main problem of less developed countries, constitute an important problem in our developing country. Although it is not as striking as it is in less developed countries, it is seen as a serious problem that needs to be dealt with. For this reason, this advertisement handles this issue very effectively and underlines that the most important thing for girls is education.

4.3.2 Science Migration Project to Anatolia

Another aim of this advertisement is to introduce the ‘Science Migration Project to Anatolia’ to the people. Thanks to this advertising film, which was inspired by Aziz Sancar, who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry, it is aimed both to educate girls and to underline the importance of science. Based on the words of Prof. Aziz Sancar, “doing science is not a matter
of genetics or intelligence, but of tradition”, this social development project aims to help children embrace science and become self-confident individuals.

Within the scope of this project, it is aimed to extend science and technology to every corner of Turkey by increasing these children’s curiosity and self-efficacy in science. Young Guru Academy and Yapı Kredi volunteers also share their knowledge with children on concepts such as self-confidence, mental curiosity, clear mind and openness to development. The project started in October 2017 in Istanbul and Ankara and continues with provinces such as Gaziantep, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Kahramanmaraş and Erzurum. The project intends to reach five thousand children in 50 provinces within three years. Furthermore, science sessions with disadvantaged children are held every week in the ‘Science Migration Project to Anatolia’, and it is aimed that children will be a confident individual by conducting unique experiments.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to analyze an advertisement of a private bank in cooperation with a non-profit organization in order to highlight the importance of education for children. Fairclough’s 3-dimensional model was used to analyze the advertisement entitled ‘Education is the only thing that can be asked for a child!’’. As Gonzalez Ruiz (2014) suggests, advertisements are everywhere in our lives and have an impact on our perceptions. For this reason, it is essential to analyze them in a critical manner, more specifically the ones regarding education which can be accepted as the unique brick in shaping a country's future.

In the advertisement analyzed in the current study, the producer’s explicit aim is to reach the hearts of the audience by dramatically highlighting the children's needs for education. In accomplishing this goal, the issue of child brides, which is one of the serious problems of the Turkish culture, has been referred in the context. The audiences who follow the advertisement initially get sad for the girl's bad fate, but also become happy with the opportunity of education given her by the team visiting the house. At this point, the way that the advertiser explains the subject has turned the advertisement film into a more effective and surprising one.

Fairclough (1992) believes that there is a mutual relation between discourse and social structure and it can be argued that the discourse of the analyzed advertisement is closely bound to the social, historical and economic structures of Turkish culture. From that point of view, it can be suggested for sure that the advertisement film fulfills its purpose and succeeds in drawing attention with its approach and explicit ideology to the two important issues of Turkey: Child brides and their rights of education. Although there are preventive and protective legislations, deficits regarding this phenomenon have been remained unresolved. Moreover, the concept of “child bride” and “forced to get married at earlier ages” involve wide spectra including legal, sociological, psychological and cultural factors. Due to the severity and prevalence of this issue, further research needs to be conducted with the purpose of understanding the risk factors together with results of child brides in Turkey.

As an implication of this study, it can be suggested that such advertisements might be used as teacher training activities or teaching materials in the classrooms. Teachers have the chance to analyze the language in a specific context. They benefit from this kind of advertisements to introduce the relationship between the language, society, and culture to students so that students start to think more critically. Hence, they will be able to develop a positive attitude towards different cultures by discussing several viewpoints.
References


