

# Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Transforming Media Identity of Pakistani Women

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**Abstract-** The present study aims to explore the mediated identity of Pakistani women through multimodal discourse analysis. From the presentation of sociocultural activities to the construction of identities, Pakistani media underwent a significant change (Bhattacharya, 2014: 180). To carry out an investigation of how the identities are shaped through media and how the females are enticed to pursue the alternative roles is the key objective of the current study. 3 purposively collected Pakistani television advertisements, both old (1980-2000) and contemporary (2000-2017), which enact these multi-semiotic representations of women, are analysed and interpreted with regard to multimodal social semiotic approach devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). 20 female viewers were also interviewed to investigate the influence of advertisements on Pakistani female viewers to take alternative roles. Findings indicate a complete transformation of the mediated identity of Pakistani Women and the marvel of mediation leads to the transformation of stereotypical representation of Pakistani women into transformed identities influencing the females to acquire alternative successful roles.

**Key Words: Mediation; Identity, Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study was to analyze how in the advertisements, the identity of women has changed over the years; how was it constructed in the past and how is it projected today. The focus of this study is the manipulation of the mindset through advertisements the way semiotic choices work in shaping thoughts and philosophies.

In the contemporary times, media has gained the power to mould the social identities and bestow meaning to it (Hepp, 2013; Hepp and Hasebrink, 2014). It possesses so much power that the society adjusts according to it. When these natural ideologies are presented through advertisement on media, they become mediated (Asp 2011; Hjarvard, 2014). The visuals have a grammar of their own and need to be kept in mind when decoding texts such as advertisements (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

## Background

Advertisements have a lot to say about gender identity (Cortese, 2015). These project how men and women behave and what their roles are. Some scholars claim that women are represented as subjugated in the advertisements while men are shown as superiors (Harp and Tremayne, 2006; Ott and Mack, 2010) and some scholars claim that the representation of women is better than before (Madigan, 2015; Olah et al., 2014; Ulrich and Tissier-Desbordes, 2013).

However, some researchers assert that in Pakistan, portrayal of women resonates with the portrayal of women worldwide (Bhattacharya, 2014; Rameez-ul-Huda and Ali, 2015; UN, 2011; Isran and Isran, 2012; Ali and Gavino, 2008). Social progress and triumph of feminism around the world has not stopped Pakistani society to objectify women because of its society's strict moral codes and customs (Rameez-ul-Huda and Ali, 2015). Bhattacharya (2014) claims that Pakistan is like the rest of the societies of the world i.e., male obsessed. To women, it presents derogatory position.

## Language in Advertisements

Regarding the language used in the advertisements, it is said that to persuade the audience, rhetoric is used (Devi & Samanta, 2019). Since emotions have the power to alter judgment, the orator has to put in persuasive efforts to stimulate emotions. Rapp (2010) explains that there are three types of rhetoric

speeches: deliberative, forensic and epideictic. In deliberative, the presenter either warns or directly advises to follow a trend.

The harmful or advantageous nature of the trend is judged by the audience. In forensic, somebody is accused or defended. Whereas deliberative and forensic demand the audience has to choose between the two competing groups, the epideictic speech targets a person either blaming them or praising them. The reality, through advertisements, has become staged and a social construction. The day-to-day and bona fide experiences are being compared and determined against the cinematic counterpart. Therefore, a sociological inquiry is a must and such investigation must be taken seriously.

Chen and Chang (2019) assert that advertisements have a lot to say about gender identity in advertisements. These project how men and women behave and what their roles are for example women are portrayed as sexual objects or shown to be obsessed with toiletry. They show images of the exemplary masculinity and femininity. Chadwick (2017) divides the techniques used in advertising into seven basic categories: aspirational advertisements, socially responsible advertisements, celebrity endorsement, unique selling points, fear and advertisement composition and scientific evidence. These techniques are used cunningly to persuade the audience and are called as 'appeals': such as 'sex appeal,' masculine feminine appeal,' and 'social appeal'.

The curiosity of the audience is raised by 'sexual suggestiveness' resulting in strong interest in the advertisement. For example, the appeal to sex suggests that if one uses the advertised product, one will start looking like the model. On the other hand, the social appeal promises the achievement of recognition, acceptance, respect and status in the society. Dolan and Lynch (2017) declare that the vision shown on screen is a false vision and a method to obtain a social control. The aforementioned technique i.e., celebrity endorsement has become popular in advertising world over the years. Tellis (2004) looks deeply into this technique and categorizes three different kinds of endorser: the lay endorser, the expert endorser and the celebrity endorser. The lay endorser is the initially unknown model who becomes known after repeated use of the advert. The expert is the one who claims to have specialised knowledge of the product and can certify whether the product is of high quality or not. And lastly, the celebrity consumer is the one who is admired by the audience and is an inspiration that everybody wants to follow blindly. They help the consumer make the decision of buying a certain product.

In addition, the experts explicitly endorse the product meaning that they use explicit words such as 'I highly recommend this product.' Such statements might appear offensive to some consumers, therefore, a subtler approach is welcomed by the consumer. The celebrity endorser uses such implicit statements where s/he doesn't directly ask the audience to buy a product; rather s/he conveys that message indirectly.

Grow (2006) observed the ties of first decade of advertisements of Nike into well integrated body of signification. She noted that the advertisements scientifically formed the athletic experiences of women resulting in the evolution of the communities through the use of iconic and symbolic signs. Those advertisements fashioned the notion of women in community. The signification emerged from the daily lives of women hence giving the campaign influence and resonance. These Nike advertisement campaigns brought women together and tied as one (p. 3). In this way, advertising knits everyday experiences and spins them around into athletic experiences creating a whole new theatrical picture.

Referring to the advertisement industry as a "slavish follower of trends," Madigan (2015) argues that strangely the advertising industry shares a perturbed connection with change considering that the entire agenda of advertising is to change audience – their minds and behaviour. The advertisements made today remind us of 1960s advertisements in the sense that the woman feels proud in keeping the toilet clean and confining herself to four boundaries. However, Madigan claims that this industry has changed and will continue to do so. She gives a set of Ms: the mind, message and medium declaring that these will bring about the change in future.

Previously the advertisements only focused on the product benefit but later there was a boost in paying attention to the psychology of the consumer i.e., how to manipulate it. A relationship was deliberately formalised between the two disciplines i.e., psychology and advertising (p. 82). On the whole, it isn't just about the product i.e., what it does, but also how it makes you feel. It is also about the consumer insights. Such language is chosen on purpose which connects the product with its need e.g., asking to 'protect' and keep the children away from the 'risks.' Using children's health as the incentive, maternal guilt is targeted (p. 83). Citing Maslow's hierarchy of social need, Madigan says that the need to belong, to fit in and feel loved is the reason of success of social media and marketing. The value of dating websites is an example. Afterwards, the need to be respected and esteemed is the aim of advertising, tempting the consumers to buy a product just to feel good about them. 'Because you're worth it' the advertising slogan of L'Oréal is the right example. It seems that the fear of belittlement acts as a good motivator for the youth to buy a product alternatively the fear of death does not.

The base level of hierarchy i.e., survival, does not compel to change their behaviour as they are of the view of being invincible. By delving deep into the psychology of the audience, the advertising agency concluded that if the fear factor is very high and horrific, then the reaction by the audience would be to ignore it completely (p. 84). However, Ambekar (2009) also claims that fear factor technique implants inferiority complex in the audience, compelling the consumer to buy the product to become perfect and satisfied with their condition.

With respect to the changes brought about in advertising, Madigan states that how the stimulus works on the mind is imperative to find. Inducing any rational thought is the last thing that an advertisement needs. That is why the long advertisements of 1950s and 1960s are no more to be seen because the more they gave it a thought; the less likely it became to sell a product. Consequently, the power of visuals was devised resulting in bigger pictures and lesser words. Building on the idea that 'seeing is believing', social ideas are registered in the mind.

Advertising agencies are busy in putting effort in neuropsychology to observe the patterns in which advertisements affect the brain. Thus, Madigan mocks that the relationship between ethics and advertisements is worse than that of change and advertisements (p. 85) and it is the origin of society's ill (p. 88). Unethically the consumer's needs are exploited, distorting truth and airbrushing reality. And to cut through the clutter and to be more persuasive, the unique 'idea' became the master, hence not reflecting the true reflection of the society. Billions is spent on advertising to change the audience's behaviour – their minds, purchasing faculties and lifestyles.

For the same unethical reason, the pharmaceuticals join hands with the advertising agencies and pretend to improve the public health by selling health related products (Atherly & Rubin, 2009; Brennan et al., 2010; Fisher & Ronald, 2010).

Kress (1987) described advertising as the centre where all the processes of cultural reproduction take place (p. 131). Thereby meaning it is an institution which gives rise to ideologies pertaining to culture and society. More than the commodity, lifestyle is sold (Williamson, 1978).

Cultural ideologies undergo the process of 'naturalization' until they become a common sense (Fairclough, 1989, p. 91). Social groups fight for their respective ideologies, through the medium of language, until one of the ideology wins and dominates the other. And these ideologies must be questioned and exposed, says Fairclough. On that account, it is important to challenge the hegemony. Advertisements are formed in such a way wherein images and language are interrelated. This unique mixture is set in a way which appeals the senses and influences the mind.

### **Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

Multimodal discourse analysis spreads the study of language to the study that is combined with other branches of knowledge, for example, images, symbols, actions and gestures etc. The resources are also referred as semiotic resources (O'Halloran, 2011).

The modes are, in fact, the systems of meaning and representation. Newspaper, television, computer, events and books etc provide the medium through which the phenomena is materialised. Therefore, multimodal discourse analysis is the investigation of semiotic resources combined with other resources in a multimodal phenomenon.

### **Visual Social Semiotic Approach**

According to Bohlke (2008), the visual social semiotic approach offers analytical and descriptive resources for the interpretation of multimodal texts shedding light on the simultaneous construction of social relations and identities. Social semiotics is, basically, the explanation of semiotic resources, what can be done and said with images, and how those images and things can be interpreted (Jewitt, 2006).

Van Leeuwen (2005) and Burn and Parker (2003) is of the view that grammar is not just set of rules for a language; it is not just a code to utter accurate sentences rather it serves as a resource for meaning making. Halliday's (1994) systematic functional theory provides framework for multimodal social semiotic approach.

### **Visual Grammar**

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) are of the view that the images possess their own unique grammar and are the constructs of social cultures. Pictorial representations are not just the reproduced reality structures, rather they are entangled in the social interests wherein those images are created, disseminated and read. Images can communicate meaning and perform metafunctions with the same excellence as the language but in dissimilar and diverse ways (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 50). Therefore, the above mentioned metafunctions of language proposed by Halliday are transformed by Kress and Van Leeuwen in the following manner:

- Ideational metafunction of the language is conveyed through the **representational metafunction**. It refers to the nature of events, nature of circumstances in which the objects and participants are involved (Unsworth, 2007). It means that the visual images contain objects or

elements called 'participants.' These participants could be anything: people, places or various things represented by images.

There are two different types of participants: interactive and represented. The interactive participants are involved in the action or communication, the ones who read and write or listen and speak. On the other hand, the represented participants compose the subject-matter or the main content of the communication. These participants are the people, places or things (even abstract) and are represented in the images or the speech, about whom the images are produced (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

The structure of representation in images can be of two types i.e., narrative and conceptual:

**(a)** The most prominent feature of narrative is **vectors**. The actions and events are unfolded through vector study. The connection is built between the participants through vectors. In pictures, it is often shown by an oblique or strong line (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). It implies that human bodies can be a reflection of vectors.

The narrative (containing characters and plot) may include single participant with no Goal (**non-transactional**) or dual participants with a Goal (**transactional**). When the action is not aimed at anything nor has any Goal, then the process becomes **non-transactional**. Thus, this metafunction deals with the depiction of interaction amongst participants, places and things through images. This relation is realized either by the vector's movement (**Action Process**) or the vectors in direction of the eyes (**Reaction Process**). In **Action Processes**, the involved participants are named as **actors** and the receiver of the action is named as **goal**. And in the **Reaction Processes**, the involved participants are named as **reactors** and the receivers are named as **phenomenon**. The eyeline or the glance is the determinant of the vector (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). The conductor of the looking behaviour is the **reactor** while the **phenomenon** is the participant which is looked upon by the reactor.

Some other participants in the narrative representation are not the main participants, however, without their presence the processes may fall short of information for analysis. Therefore, the action is incomplete without **Circumstance**. There are three types of **Circumstance** (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006) i.e., **means, accompaniment and setting**. The object i.e., the part of the vector e.g., hands or fingers, with which the action is carried out is called the **circumstance of means**. The object whose vectorial association with the participant is absent i.e., it is not involved in the action but only accompanies the main participants is known as the **circumstance of accompaniment** (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 75). The involvement of foreground and the background with regard to lightness, darkness, saturation of colours, focus and detail is known as the **circumstance of setting**.

The transactions that have vectors and goals but do not have any actors are named as **Events** (Van Leeuwen, 2004). Brady (2015) devises the term **Filmic Event** to differentiate between the processes that involve only vectors and goals. The shot of the movement of the rippling water, where no participant is involved, is the well suited example of filmic event.

**(b)** In conceptual representation, the participants are represented in terms of their generalized or constant essence/trait, with regard to class or meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). The meanings are **classified** (type of), **analytical** i.e., 'part-whole,' structured or unstructured and **symbolic** i.e., attributive or suggestive.

- Interpersonal meaning is conveyed through **interactional metafunction**. The relation between the illustrated participant and the viewer serves as the interpersonal metafunction of the image (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). The relationship between the viewer and the viewed is built through visual resources. Meanings are made in three ways according to interactive metafunction: **contact, social distance, attitude, power, coding orientation and realism**.

**Contact** takes place when the participant is either gazing directly at the viewer (**demand**) or not looking directly (**offer**). **Demand** is made when the image is directly affecting the viewer. Gestures such as pouting, smiling or pointing with the finger at the viewer can be combined with the demand act (Brady, 2015). **Offer** acts are the reversed process wherein the role of the viewer is reduced creating a sense of detachment and becomes the subject of the participant's look, rather than the object of the look. The participants become the sample/example to be contemplated and observed by the viewer (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119).

**Social distance** is the gap between the represented participant and the viewer. It works the same way as the social relations that determine the space and distance between society members (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Between the participant and the viewer, the sense of intimacy or detachment is created through long and close shots (Brady, 2015) Extreme close shots present the participant as a lover or a

close friend while the impersonal and indifferent relation is created by long shots showing the participant as a stranger or a passerby.

**Attitude** is the one of the ways of interactive meaning making. They can be **objective** or **subjective attitudes**. The horizontal or vertical angle choices are involved in the **subjective attitude**. The attachment with the participant is presented through frontal angles while detachment is created through oblique angles. High angles depict the **empowerment** of the participant over the viewer and low angles depict the feebleness. However, eye level angles signify equality of both the participant and the viewer (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006).

**Realism** is said to be achieved through the colour choice, context, light and depth. Along with these factors is the factor of **coding**. Coding orientation classifies into abstract, schematic and naturalistic effects creating meaning.

- Textual meaning is conveyed through **compositional metafunction**. It covers the overall aspects of the layout for example the value of the information, whether it is portrayed at the **centre** or the **margins**, where is the **Given** information and where is the **New** information shown. The connectedness of the elements is expressed through **frames** and the **salience** is expressed through sharpness, size, location etc.

The usefulness of this framework has been acknowledged by many researchers for the investigation which involves both image and language (e.g., Almeida, 2006; Baldry, 2000; Heberle and Meurer, 2007; O'Halloran, 2004; Unsworth, 2007). This multimodal approach has also formed the basis to examine the gender issues fixed in media discourse (Heberle, 2005).

### **Representation of Women Worldwide as well as in Pakistan**

Formerly, it was believed by the researchers that the perspectives and voices of women were rarely portrayed or were absolutely absent from dominant media (Durham, 2007; LeBesco, 2006; Watkins and Emerson, 2000). However, if they were portrayed on television, the image was stereotyped (van Zoonen, 1994) and the average woman was shown as over emotional, passive and dependent on men.

Reality is distorted by the media when the women are underrepresented (Ott and Mack (2010). Harp and Tremayne (2006) state that women are shown to be best suited for private sphere; they belong to the domestic sphere, private relations, family, and responsibilities. Similarly, by classifying the features of men and women, asserted that they are treated differently. Previously, the men worked away from homes and women indoors; men were linked with cigars and women with cosmetics (Ulrich and Tissier-Desbordes, 2013) but these identities have evolved from one-dimensional to multidimensional approach.

Researchers now declare that the representation of women in media is definitely better than before (Madigan, 2015; Olah et al., 2014; Ulrich and Tissier-Desbordes, 2013). However, Dutt (2014) contradicts the view by stating that women are stereotypically depicted on-screen in spite of their remarkable and diligent stride in real life. The images, in particular the filmic images, manipulate our thoughts (Alcolea-Banegas, 2009), trimmed in a way that touches our imagination. Pakistani women are still being objectified because of its society's strict moral codes and customs (Rameez-ul-Huda and Ali, 2015).

Bhattacharya (2014) claims that Pakistan is like the rest of the societies of the world i.e., male obsessed. In general, the social status is the suffering of women in different ways. There is institutional and individual violence for all Pakistani practical women (UN, 2011). They cannot raise their voice against men (Isran and Isran, 2012) and are considered inferior. In the family, a daughter is viewed to have no role to play (Bhattacharya, 2014).

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is qualitative in nature. The advertisements are analysed using the visual social semiotic approach proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), as the multimodal discourse builds as well as mirrors the social realities. However, the model is adapted and moulded according to the need of the study.

This model is chosen because the audience reacts to the advertisement not only because of the language but also because of the integration of numerous meaning-making resources. Semi structured interviews of 20 female viewers, 10 working, 10 non-working, chosen through convenient sampling, were conducted in order to investigate the influence of advertisements on Pakistani female viewers to acquire alternative roles.

The sample is basically television commercials (TVC) that are aired on the TV and are seen widely all over Pakistan and not the ones from print or social media. The reason for choosing TVCs is that they are watched by a wide majority of people and hence possess the power to bring a change in the society (Flew, 2007; Alcolea-Banegas, 2009). After searching from various search engines, advertisements (1980-2017)

were accessed from the YouTube for analysis. 3 purposively collected advertisements are selected for analysis and interpretation from the past to the present in order to bring out the difference between the two time periods (1980-2000; 2000-2017). These advertisements (one from lawn dresses, one from kitchen appliances, and one from tea beverages) have been selected from the fields which are women related exclusively.

### III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the analysis of the research questions.

#### **RQ1: How mediated identity transformed the socially-constructed identity of women over the years?**

This question was addressed in the light of representational and interactional meta functions.

#### **Representational Visual Resources**

This section covers the visual resources of vectors, circumstances and symbolic processes used in advertisements to create meaning.

#### **Representational Metafunction Analysis**

The visuals (Figure1 and 2) are embodying conceptual representations because the participants seem to be there only for one reason: only to display their dresses ostentatiously to the viewer.



**Figure1**

**Figure2**

Gul Ahmad lawn ad (old---- 1986)

Conceptual: Symbolic: Attributive

They conceive a symbolic attribute because only one carrier is displayed. The garments that they are displaying appear to be symbolic attribute because they are exaggerated as compared to the carrier. The voiceover in the advertisement also says: Rangunmeiyehsajihui, dhanakkaaqsdikhae Gul Ahmad ki lawn (Decorated in colours, they reflect spring hues in Gul Ahmad garments). This affirms the fact that they are merely acting as trendsetters and endorsers of the garments (Adham, 2012), as women are the end users of the lawn dresses and their endorsement of a particular lawn dress makes it exclusively appealing to women among other lawn brands.

Chananie (2005) claims that advertising agency promotes the societal theory that females are inferior and one of the key determinants is her lack of voice and in this advertisement we observe that throughout the advertisement, the participants remain silent. This represents the real picture of male obsessed Pakistani society where females have passive presentation leading to low or no freedom of expression with their confinement preferably in the four walls of the house.

The very rebellious nature of women is to be seen in the recent advertisement of Gul Ahmed lawn. The participants take pride in saying 'no' to the societal critique. They refuse to being objectified, inspected and tamed, as voices in the background in the advertisement say: kitnikaalihal (how black complexioned she is). It may be interpreted that these voices are depicted as the voices of the society which dictate you and try to push you into inferiority complex.

The represented women simply refuse to become the perfect lady who everyone expects them to be: Kisi ki perfection ka bubble burst karna, mujhyachalagatahai (I like to burst others' bubble of perfection!) They reject the predetermined idea that woman value beauty above all things (Cortese, 2015). The three

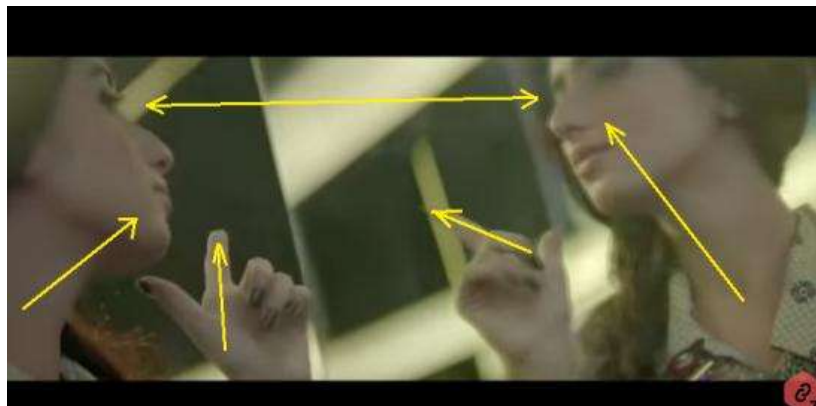
participants own up to their imperfections. Involved in a symbolic attributive process (Figure9), the participant accepts her 'chiryakaghosla' (bird's nest). Bird's nest refers here to her extremely curly hair as opposed to the straight hair which is considered attractive and a standard set by Pakistani society.



**Figure3: Gul Ahmad ad (recent---- 2017)**

**Conceptual: Symbolic: Attributive**

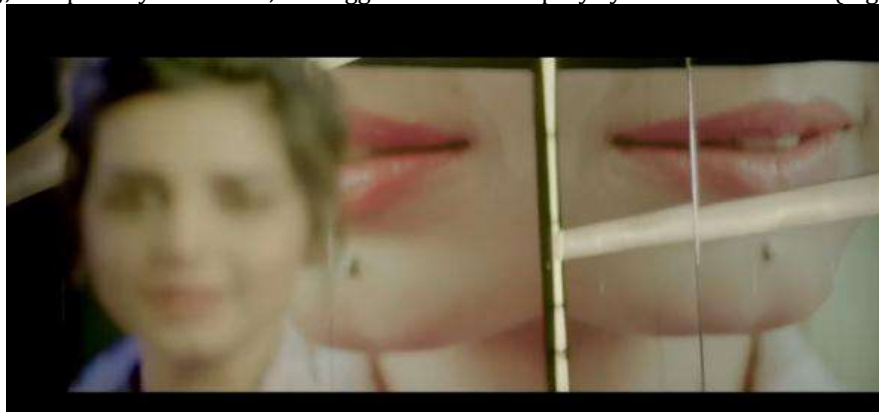
The carrier's face looks small as opposed to the huge foreground covered with her curly hair. The exaggerated area covered with curly hair exhibits symbolic attribute. Her face actually looks smaller as compared to her hair. Similarly, the next participant accepts her 'terhinaak' (crooked nose) just the way it is (Figure4).



**Figure 4: Gul Ahmad ad (recent--- 2017)**

**Narrative: Bidirectional transactional reaction**

The participant reacts to the objection hurled at her about her crooked nose. By means of index finger pointed upward and outward and chin also held up high, the vectors formed symbolize power and domination. The action is bidirectional as she gazes at her reflection. The effect of her negating the fixed rules seems to be doubled as she looks proudly at herself in the mirror. Likewise, the 'nazarkatikka' (evil-eye protector), accepted by its carrier, is exaggerated to exemplify symbolic attributive (Figure5).



**Figure 5: Gul Ahmad ad (recent---- 2017)**

**Conceptual: Symbolic: Attributive**

The carrier is on the left and blurred, bringing attention to the right sharp and clear visual.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the visual is covered with her chin which highlights the mole. It seems that the carrier is habitual of facing the critique on her relatively larger mole on her chin but she shuns all criticism by saying: Mujhyachalagtai (I like it!). This clearly shows an overall phase of transformation of the identity of women because in the past, any such mark on the face was taken very seriously by women often associated with worriedness but now, the modern women are more confident regardless of any such mole on their face, as they care for themselves only. Such bold presentation of Pakistani women encourages other underrepresented women to come up and lead the world which is very much evident now a days.

Similarly, a symbolic attributive process in Figure (6) illustrates that the carrier is posing for the camera to sponsor the object (the refrigerator) on her left. She includes her neighbour in this campaign: Abparosanmani k Dawlance he janaymausam Pakistani (Now the neighbour has agreed that only Dawlance is accustomed to Pakistani weather). The centre of attention here again is none other than the object and since the object is a household appliance, therefore it seems that no other person is more suitable to endorse than a woman.



**Figure 6: Dawlance ad (old---- 1986)**  
**Conceptual: Symbolic: Attributive**

In the other recent selected advertisement of the other household appliance, the same participant who is serving her family is seen to be working in an office, being the centre of attention (Figure 7 and 8). The circumstance of setting is different in both the visuals, one is indoors and the other is outdoors.



**Figure 7: Dawlance ad (recent---- 2014)**  
**Narrative: Bidirectional transactional action**

All the vectors are formed in the direction of the actor, therefore assuming responsibility and salience. The question may arise that the recent advertisement is also showing the stereotypical image of woman, but the answer lies in the difference exhibited in the next visual (Figure 8), where the same woman assumes power because five out of seven vectors are pointed towards her, while the rest of the two are taking notes. Such multimodal interpretation helps in decoding the integrative meaning (van Leeuwen, 2005) that the female participant is salient.





**Figure 8: Dawlance ad (recent---- 2014)**

**Narrative: Unidirectional transactional action**

The important thing to observe here is that there is already a red vector present on business growth chart which is moving in upward direction. This may seem to signify that the organization is thriving with the presence of a female leader rather than declining. Moreover, the voiceover affirms this leadership quality in women: Perfect dinner serve kerna, deewaronkoghar banana, reliable haitumharanaam (From serving a perfect dinner to turning a house into home, the world can rely upon you as you are named as reliable). Remarkably, the voiceover is of a male and it may seem to signify that the male members of the society are now acknowledging women empowerment and they perceive women as reliance personified.

The old advertisement of Supreme establishes a bidirectional transactional link between the son and his mother, where the son is the actor whose goal is his mother, whom he is trying to convince (Figure 9).



**Figure 9: Supreme ad (old----- 1989)**

**Narrative: Bidirectional-transactional action and reaction**

The eye line or the glance between the two is forming a vector. Along with that, the son is leaning forward: Maaaapaikbaar mil krtohdekhen (Mother, meet her at least once) and the arm movement of the mother is signaling rejection: Nahi, bas menekehhdiana (No, that is my final answer). This makes the mother the reactor and the process, a reactionary process where the mother is not inclined towards her son's proposal i.e., phenomenon. Here the stretched arms of both the son and the mother are acting as circumstance of means with which the action of appeal and reaction of rejection is being carried out.

From the conceptual perspective, the carrier is holding onto a cup, therefore the cup of tea, in the foreground becomes the symbolic attribute (Figure 10).



**Figure 10: Supreme ad (old---- 1989)  
Conceptual: Symbolic: Attributive**

Throughout the advertisement, she tightly keeps holding onto the cup of tea signifying her fixation for tea and hence the statement: Usaychayebananiaatihai? (Does she know how to make tea?) This propagates the idea that a mother-in-law is not concerned about the intelligence of her daughter-in-law rather about her tea making skills. This depicts the poor representation of women in the bygone times (D'Acci, 1994; Dow, 1990; Durham, 2007; LeBesco, 2006; Watkins and Emerson, 2000; van Zoonen, 1994; Harp and Tremayne, 2006; Ott and Mack, 2010; Dutt, 2014).

However, the mother-in-law in the recent advertisement of Supreme is different from the old ones. Forming a bidirectional link (Figure 11) through gaze and arms towards each other, the vectors connect the actor (mother-in-law) with its goal (daughter-in-law). What's to be noted here is that the mother-in-law, being the actor, serves tea to her daughter-in-law, which is contradictory to what we witnessed before.



**Figure 11: Supreme ad (recent---- 2016)**

**Narrative: Bidirectional transactional action**

A unidirectional transactional action is realized in Figure 12 where the mother-in-law is showing affection to her daughter-in-law. The circumstance of means i.e., the mother-in-law's bent back and arms towards her daughter-in-law are forming vectors. Notably, the daughter's mother is also gazing in her direction warmly, thus forming another eyeline unidirectional vector. It may be interpreted that the daughter-in-law is given salience because of having central position in the visual.

There seems to be a symmetry and an understanding found between the three of them. The slogan of: Zaiqaapnay pan ka (The taste of empathy). This empathetic taste may be translated as the new leaf, a new beginning for females where they are accepted by the society in which they are recognised and acknowledged as a person with feelings and emotions. This representation of women seems absolutely better than before (Madigan, 2015; Olah et al., 2014; Ulrich and Tissier-Desbordes, 2013).



**Figure 12: Supreme ad (recent---- 2016)**

**Narrative: Transactional action**

### Interactional Visual Resources

Interactional meaning is created with the use of camera shots: long, medium, close, high and low shots and these shots determine the social distance between either the represented participants or between the viewer and the viewed (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). The importance of analysing and interpreting the camera angle shots is that the visuals have a grammar of their own (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) and

therefore they add to the meaning of the text (Lim, 2004) and to ignore the shots is to ignore half of the meaning.

The represented participants in the old advertisement of Gul Ahmad are covered in long shots (Figure 13,14, and 15). Long shots are creating a far social distance between the viewer and the viewed.



**Figure 13: Gul Ahmad ad (old---- 1986)**

From vertical perspective, both high and low angles are used (Figure 14 and 15). In Figure 14, the participants are showing that their dresses are valuable and therefore, they have the supremacy over the viewer (use of low angle). In Figure 15, the viewers are pondering whether they want those dresses or not, due to the high angle shot.



**Figure 14**



**Figure 15**

The direct gaze of the participants in Figure 16 and 17 is suggesting demand creating a direct interactional relationship. They are exhibiting their dresses by directly gazing into the camera and enticing the attention (Bohlke, 2008) of the viewer. The point to be noted here is that no speech, personal experience or advice is shared verbally in this advertisement while the song that is playing in the background praises the dresses only that they are exhibiting.

The four participants in Gul Ahmad recent advertisement are mostly covered with extreme close shots and low angle from vertical perspective (Figure 18, 19, 20 and 21).



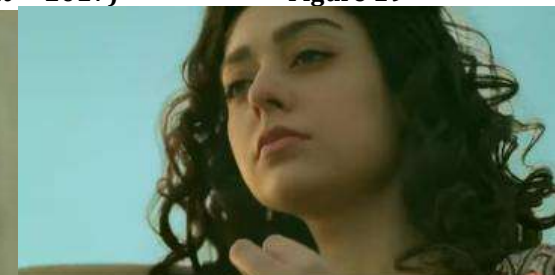
**Figure 18: Gul Ahmad ad (recent--- 2017)**



**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**



**Figure 21**

The use of low angles throughout the recent advertisement of Gul Ahmad indicates the domination of the women participants and extreme close shots imply intimacy between the viewer and the viewed. The viewer feels connected and relates on personal levels with the participants. Notably, all the participants have stern facial expression that they ought to be taken seriously and that they are not fooling around.

The direct gaze in Figure 18 and 20 suggests demanding behaviour. They are inviting the viewer's attention that they must not be taken lightly. The indirect gaze in Figure 19 and 21 suggests indirect interactional relationship between the audience and the participant. By indirect gaze, they have become an object for scrutiny and it has become the viewer's responsibility to ponder what is it that the participants are suggesting to change.

The represented participant in Figure 22 is captured by a close shot with participant gazing directly towards the viewer. The social distance formed is close personal.



**Figure 22: Dawlance ad (old----- 1986)**

The equal eye level or frontal pose is signifying the equality and involvement between the viewer and the viewed and the friendly facial expressions reinforce the social distance. Her expressions also signify that the viewed is a satisfied consumer. The direct gaze is to demand and attract viewer's attention.

Throughout the entire advertisement, two shots are used: close shots and medium-long shots. Medium-long shot (Figure 23), here, is suggesting impersonal business trying to convince (Chananie, 2005) the viewer to buy the product.



**Figure 18: Dawlance ad (old----- 1986)**

In the selected recent advertisement of Dawlance, low angles are captured wherever the represented participants are depicted as successful ( Figure 24, 25, 26 and 27) and the voiceover proudly says: Pakistan kohai TUM penaaz (Pakistan is proud of YOU!)



**Figure 24: Dawlance ad (recent----- 2014)**



**Figure 25**



**Figure 26**



**Figure 27**

The low angle shot gives dominance to the viewed over the viewer. The shot angles used in above portray that the women are strong-minded and successful and the viewer is feeble compared to them. Along with the verbal resources, the visual has its own unique grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) and gone are the days when mono-modal analysis (Lim, 2004) was enough and therefore, both verbal and visual interpretation is inescapable in this age (Van Leeuwen, 2004).

The participant in the old advertisement of Supreme is captured with close and medium-close shots establishing close and close-personal relationship with the audience.



**Figure 28: Supreme ad (old---- 1989)**

From vertical perspective, equal angle is used. This equal angle is bringing the two i.e., the viewer and the viewed closer, where the viewer can relate with the participant on personal grounds. Interestingly, the social distance between the participants in the advertisement is captured by high level (Figure 29).



**Figure 29: Supreme ad (old---- 1989)**

Notably, the son in Figure 29 is sitting on the knees while the female participant is on high level, looking down on the male participant. The son (Figure 29) is pleading with his mother while the mother is rejecting, having an upper hand. This seems to be propagating the stereotypical image (van Zoonen, 1994; Harp and Tremayne, 2006; Ott and Mack, 2010) of a hard hearted mother-in-law who is likely to throw away the choice of her son regarding the woman he chooses to marry. Her criteria for approving the girl is if she knows how to make tea: *Usaychayebananiaatihai?* (Does she know how to make tea?) It seems that she is not interested to know if the girl is good natured, successful or intelligent. It also speaks for the other side of the story, which is that the good woman is the one who is confined to the four boundaries and has no role to play (Bhattacharya, 2014) other than to take hold of the kitchen.

The recent advertisement of Supreme begins with a long shot (Figure 30) with the participant saying: *Sorry, ami, dair ho gayi* (Sorry, mother, for being late). It establishes the general impression (Wilson, 2013) that the daughter-in-law is up for some scolding from her mother-in-law. Her anxious facial expressions and raised shoulders and eyebrows imply that she is afraid that she might get into trouble (Figure 31).



**Figure 30: Supreme ad (recent ---- 2016)**



**Figure 31**

The middle part of the advertisement is captured by medium shots developing a personal social distance between the viewer and the viewed and equal angle shots from vertical perspective are used implying that the viewer can easily relate to the viewed i.e., the daughter-in-laws can easily relate their story with the viewed.

The advertisement closes with a low angle shot (Figure 32) from vertical perspective giving domination to the participants.



**Figure 32**

The strength of the three participants in the Figure 32 is revealed that even though they are in-laws, yet their bond is stronger than before. It is unlike that which is portrayed in the old advertisement of Supreme where the daughter-in-law is expected to be a perfect tea-maker. In this one, there is a role reversal and the mother-in-law is the one serving tea. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) state that the act of seeing has become identical to act of understanding as well as the act of adapting to its viewpoint immediately.

**RQ2: Do the advertisements influence Pakistani female viewers to acquire alternative roles?**

Interviews were conducted with female viewers: working and non-working. Data were collected, transcribed and then coded thematically for analysis. Gender identity is a socially accepted role that prescribes norms and expectations. The working female viewers generally noted that their values or ethics as individuals was something that they wished to carry into and hold in their leadership practice. Following is one of the responses from working females:

“I really appreciate the modern wave of alternative roles. I do think women lead differently to men ... I would find it much more difficult to separate the values that I have and the sort of person that I am from work needing to be done in a particular way”.

Undoubtedly, media, the true reflection of a society, has the power to bring social change by controlling the minds of the society. That’s why; media helps in shaping and controlling the attitude of the society which is revealed through the attitude of the masses. The young females try to imitate and identify with what they see on the media. Women play an important role in the uplift of any country and a developing country like Pakistan cannot prosper without the active participation of women in the corporate world. There was a time when the contribution of the women in the society was very limited; preferably in domestic chores.

However, 21<sup>st</sup> century women are achieving several mile stones and they are becoming source of inspiration for many. However, it cannot be confidently said that the image of women has been completely transformed because there are several instances to prove systematic discrimination among women. As revealed by one of the non-working female respondents:

“I really idealize the practically successfully woman----- it would have been my desire to take on these roles but on the same time, I am occupied with many other domestic liabilities”.

With the passage of time, the roles of women have been altered and now, the females have gone through transitional phase and they came out as more independent, strong, decisive, and confident. Media has created awakening in Pakistani women to know their potential.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The core objective of this study was to find out how the media, through the use of multimodality, has played its role in transforming the socially constructed identity of Pakistani women. The overall results conclude that the women in the past were stereotypically portrayed while the women of contemporary society are empowered i.e., media is bringing to the forefront strong and independent women. They were given the roles of mother, mother-in-law, house-wives, and at most, the roles of the endorser of a product. The roles exceeded not more than that whereas the interpretation of the recent advertisements yields dissimilar results. The socially-constructed identity of women in Pakistan has been transformed in diverse ways. The identities are empowered than before i.e., even if the advertisements show the women as wives in contemporary media, the same women are represented as respectable, more esteemed, their opinion are valued and they possess higher aims. Their wings have spread in various professions and hence their socially constructed identities have been transformed.

The previously socially constructed identities of women were limited to being a mother or a wife. The contemporary time brings into limelight the mediated identities of female working as superior doctors, talented engineers, imaginative artists, distinguished head chefs, victorious cricketers, resilient champions and prosperous businesswomen.

From verbal perspective, it is concluded that the olden advertisements were less vocal i.e., the women remained silent in most of the advertisements depicting inferiority. However, if they were made to speak, their whole purpose was only to endorse the product. From visual perspective, there is no innovation. From the perspective of interactional metafunction, the frequent use of equal to eye or frontal angles suggests that the social distance between the viewer is close-personal. This suggests that not only the viewed but also the viewers were the followers of the same cultural and societal theories. They could relate to the viewed on the same personal level. Those representations were a mirror of the past.

From the perspective of representational metafunction, there was less use of vectors and as vectors determine salience of the actor or the reactor, the visuals of the old advertisements had less to say about the female representative. Therefore, both the verbal and the visual resources in the old advertisements

fell short of expectation. The media contributed, therefore, only in the promotion of the stereotypical image of Pakistani women.

Since media mirrors the society, today's media is also a mirror of today's society of Pakistan. The women are striving and thriving in all fields. From verbal perspective, the women are more vocal. Through deliberate speech, the advertisements influence Pakistani female viewers to acquire alternative roles. Women share their personal life experiences, on media through advertisements, in order to set an example for the female audience. From visual perspective, different visual resources are used by the contemporary media, to convey the meaning of bringing a change not only in the world but also in themselves.

From interactional perspective, there is the correct use of camera shots, e.g., low angle shots when exhibiting the supremacy of the women. From representational perspective, there is apt use of vectors to put emphasis on the prominence of women. Through interpretation, not even a single advertisement of olden times is found where the women are using either verbal or visual semiotic resource to depict empowerment whereas, the recent media yielded various examples of women empowerment.

Media, and in this case advertising, represents women from within the society and through visual aid, persuasion, exemplifying and deliberate speech, moulds the societal dominant ideology. They represent those ideologies on media in such a way that they look more original and acceptable and the audience is bound to adapt to its viewpoints (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Therefore, the effect of media on social life and the identities of women cannot be underestimated. There are important changes clearly to be seen in the contemporary Pakistani advertisements through analysis and interpretation.

Present study has tried to show in chronological order, how language and visuals are socially moulded and how this mediated identity is playing a role in transforming the socially constructed identity of Pakistani women. The advertisements are used as a means of decoding the message for the viewer. The critical interpretation has provided with the results that women are no longer afraid, they know what their dreams are and how to acquire them. And they do not only have that knowledge, they also represent it on the media for the world to see. This aim of this study was to interpret the communicative artifacts and events by using semiotic resources and therefore, this study has contributed to the field of social semiotics. It is concluded through multimodal discourse analysis and interpretation that contemporary Pakistani women's identity has been transformed from the stereotypical representation of the past.

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