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Analysing Deictic Expressions in Urdu Advertising Slogans of Pakistani Brands



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Abstract

This study investigates the use of deictic expressions in Urdu advertising slogans of Pakistani brands. The study employs a descriptive qualitative research design and adopts Cruse's (2000) theory of deixis, which classifies deictic expressions into five categories: person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis. The data consist of twenty-four widely recognized advertising slogans collected from prominent Pakistani brands operating in the telecommunications, food and beverage, household, banking, and consumer goods sectors, including Ufone, Jazz, Pepsi, Surf Excel, Cadbury Dairy Milk, Telenor, HBL, Tapal Danedar, Dalda, Sprite, and Coca-Cola. The slogans were collected from television advertisements, official brand campaigns, and promotional materials. The collected data were identified, classified, and analyzed according to their deictic features. The findings revealed a total of twenty deictic expressions across the selected slogans. Person deixis was found to be the most dominant category, occurring 10 times (50%), followed by discourse deixis with 4 occurrences (20%), social deixis with 3 occurrences (15%), spatial deixis with 2 occurrences (10%), and temporal deixis with 1 occurrence (5%). The study concludes that person deixis serves as the primary pragmatic strategy in Urdu advertising slogans, enabling brands to strengthen consumer relationships and enhance message effectiveness. The findings contribute to the understanding of pragmatics in advertising discourse and provide valuable insights into how Pakistani brands utilize context-dependent language to create memorable and persuasive advertising messages.

Keywords: *Advertising slogans, deictic expressions, Pakistani ads*

Introduction

Language is an essential means of communication that allows people to express ideas, emotions, intentions, and experiences (Schwarz-Friesel, 2015). In communication, the interpretation of meaning is often influenced by the context in which language is used. Therefore, understanding language requires not only knowledge of linguistic forms but also an understanding of the contextual factors that shape meaning. This relationship between language and context is studied in pragmatics. Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning in relation to the context of utterance. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics examines the relationship between language and context that is necessary for understanding linguistic meaning. Similarly, Yule (1996) states that pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning and how listeners interpret intended messages in particular situations. One of the most important areas of pragmatics is deixis.

The term deixis originates from the Greek word meaning "to point" or "to indicate." Deixis refers to linguistic expressions whose meanings depend on contextual information such as the identity of the speaker, the listener, the place of communication, and the time of utterance. Words such as *I, you, here, there, now, and then* cannot be fully understood without reference to the context in which they are used. According to Cruse (2000), deixis can be classified into five categories: person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discourse deixis.

Deictic expressions are frequently used in various forms of communication, including conversations, political speeches, literary texts, social media discourse, and advertisements. In advertising, language serves not only as a medium of information but also as a persuasive tool designed to influence consumers and promote products or services. Advertising slogans, in particular, play an important role in attracting attention, creating brand identity, and establishing emotional connections with audiences (Skorupa, 2015). To achieve these objectives, advertisers often employ linguistic strategies that make their messages more memorable and relatable.

In Pakistan, advertising slogans have become an important component of popular culture (Rafique, 2025). Many slogans used by Pakistani brands are widely recognized and frequently quoted in everyday conversations. Examples include Ufone's "*Tum Hi Tou Ho*," Surf Excel's "*Daagh Tou Achay Hain*," Pepsi's "*Why Not Meri Jaan*," Cadbury Dairy Milk's "*Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye*," and HBL's "*Jahan Khwab Wahan HBL*." These slogans often contain context-dependent expressions that require pragmatic interpretation and may therefore be analyzed through the framework of deixis.

Several studies have investigated the use of deixis in advertising discourse (Maharani & Yatima, 2019), for example, examined deictic expressions in Indonesian advertisements and found that person deixis was the most dominant category. Their findings suggested that advertisers frequently use personal references to establish direct communication with consumers. However, despite the growing body of research on deixis in advertising, relatively little attention has been given to Urdu advertising slogans in Pakistan. Subsequently, this study aims to analyze the deictic expressions found in Urdu advertising slogans of Pakistani brands. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of deixis used in selected slogans, determine their frequency of occurrence, and examine their communicative functions within advertising discourse. By focusing on Pakistani advertising slogans, this study contributes to the understanding of pragmatics and advertising language in a local cultural context.

Research Objectives

The present study aims to investigate the use of deictic expressions in Urdu advertising slogans of Pakistani brands through Cruse's (2000) categories of deixis. Specifically, the study seeks the following objectives:

To identify the types as well as frequency of deictic expressions used in the selected Urdu advertising slogans of Pakistani brands

To analyze the communicative and persuasive functions of deictic expressions in Pakistani advertising discourse, which further contributes to audience engagement, emotional appeal, and brand-consumer relationships.

Review of the Literature

Deictic Expressions in Urdu Advertising Slogans

Deixis is an important concept in pragmatics concerned with linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on the context of utterance. Expressions such as this, that, here, there, now, then, we, and you are commonly identified as deictic because their meanings cannot be fully understood without considering the speaker, addressee, time, and place of communication. Levinson (1983) describes deixis as one of the most fundamental ways in which language connects linguistic forms with contextual

information. Similarly, Yule (1996) identifies person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis as major categories through which speakers establish relationships between language and context. The study of deixis has particular relevance to advertising because advertisements are designed to establish an immediate relationship between the advertiser, the consumer, and the advertised product. Advertising language frequently uses short, context-dependent expressions to make the message appear personal, immediate, and relevant to the audience. Deictic expressions can therefore function as persuasive linguistic devices rather than merely grammatical elements. Words equivalent to you, we, this, that, here, and now can position consumers within the advertising message and encourage them to perceive the product as directly connected to their own lives.

Deixis and Pragmatics

The theoretical study of deixis is closely associated with pragmatics. Levinson (1983) argues that deictic expressions are fundamentally dependent on the context in which they are used. Similarly, (Galita, 2011) emphasizes the relationship between deixis and contextual interpretation, particularly the role of the speech situation in determining the reference of deictic forms. Deictic expressions are consequently different from ordinary lexical items because their interpretation changes according to who is speaking, who is being addressed, and where and when the utterance occurs. In advertising discourse, this contextual dependence can be exploited strategically. An advertiser may use a personal pronoun such as **آپ** (you) to address consumers directly, while **آہ** (we) can construct a relationship between the advertiser and the audience. Spatial expressions such as **یہ** (this) and **وہ** (that) can direct attention toward a product, service, or idea, while temporal expressions such as **اب** (now) and **آج** (today) can create a sense of immediacy and urgency.

Deictic Expressions in Advertising Discourse

Advertising discourse differs from many other forms of communication because its primary purpose is persuasion. Advertisements attempt to attract attention, create positive associations, and motivate consumers to respond to a product or brand. As a result, advertisers frequently employ linguistic strategies that reduce the perceived distance between the consumer and the advertised product. Deictic expressions can contribute to this strategy by creating what may be described as contextual proximity. For example, the use of **یہ** (“this”) can make a product appear psychologically close to the consumer, while **اب** (“now”) can suggest that the advertised opportunity is immediate. Similarly, second-person forms such as **آپ** (“you”) can create the impression that the advertisement is speaking directly to an individual consumer rather than to an anonymous mass audience. Person deixis is particularly significant in advertising. The pronoun **آپ** can establish direct communication with consumers while maintaining the polite and socially appropriate register commonly associated with Urdu. In contrast, **آہ** can construct a collective identity, allowing an organization to present itself as sharing values or experiences with its customers. Such choices can contribute to interpersonal involvement and the construction of solidarity.

Urdu Advertising and Linguistic Persuasion

Urdu advertising provides an interesting context for studying deixis because advertising slogans in Urdu often combine brevity, cultural references, colloquial

expressions, and interpersonal language. Slogans are particularly suitable for pragmatic analysis because they compress a large amount of persuasive meaning into a small number of words. Urdu slogans may employ expressions such as *پا*, *ہی*, *مہ*, *آج*, *اب*, *یہاں*, *citamgarp tnereffid mrofrep nac snoisserpxe esehT .smrof detaler dna*, functions depending on their context. For instance, *پا* may construct an advertiser–consumer relationship, whereas *با* may encourage immediate action. The interpretation of *یہ* may depend on the product, accompanying visual image, or broader advertisement. Thus, analysis of Urdu advertising cannot be limited to the literal dictionary meanings of individual words; it must also consider the contextual and pragmatic functions of these expressions. The combination of verbal and visual communication is particularly important. In many advertisements, a slogan containing *یہ* *ہی* *مہ* *آج* *اب* *یہاں* *citamgarp tnereffid mrofrep nac snoisserpxe esehT .smrof detaler dna* ("siht") *یہ* *ہی* *مہ* *آج* *اب* *یہاں* ("ereh") intended referent. Consequently, deictic interpretation may depend not only on linguistic context but also on visual context. This makes advertising a useful domain for examining the interaction between language, context, and multimodal communication.

Previous Research and Research Gap

Previous linguistic research has established the importance of deixis in pragmatic analysis and has demonstrated that deictic expressions are central to the interpretation of context-dependent meaning. Research on advertising discourse has also examined the ways in which pronouns, imperatives, repetition, metaphor, and other linguistic features contribute to persuasion and audience engagement. However, comparatively less attention has been devoted to the systematic study of deictic expressions specifically in Urdu advertising slogans. Existing discussions of advertising language often concentrate on persuasive strategies, stylistic devices, code-switching, cultural representation, or lexical choices. Although these areas provide valuable insights, they do not fully explain how advertisers use contextual expressions to position the consumer in relation to the product and the advertiser. A focused study of deixis can therefore provide a different perspective on how Urdu advertising creates immediacy, interpersonal connection, spatial or temporal proximity, and social relationships. A further research gap concerns the classification of different types of deixis in Urdu advertising. Person deixis may be particularly prominent through forms such as *پا* and *مہ*, but spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis may also contribute to the persuasive force of slogans. A systematic classification of these forms could reveal which types of deixis are most frequently employed and what pragmatic functions they perform.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research is considered appropriate because the study focuses on identifying, classifying, and interpreting deictic expressions in advertising slogans. The descriptive approach allows the researcher to explain the occurrence and functions of deixis in the selected data.

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Data Source

The data of this study consist of Urdu advertising slogans collected from well-known Pakistani brands. The slogans were selected from various sectors, including telecommunications, food and beverages, household products, banking, and consumer goods. A total of twenty-four slogans were used as the data source for the study.

Examples of the selected slogans include:

Ufone: “Tum Hi Tou Ho”

Surf Excel: “Daagh Tou Achay Hain”

Pepsi: “Why Not Meri Jaan”

Cadbury Dairy Milk: “Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye”

HLB: “Jahan Khwab Wahan HBL”

Tapal Danedar: “Tum, Main Aur Aik Cup Chai”

Data Collection

The data were collected through documentation. The researcher identified popular Pakistani advertising slogans from television commercials, company websites, social media campaigns, and advertising archives. The selected slogans were then compiled into a data corpus for analysis.

The data collection process involved the following steps:

Identifying well-known Pakistani brands.

Collecting their advertising slogans and taglines.

Recording the slogans in written form.

Organizing the slogans according to their respective brands.

Preparing the data for analysis.

Applied Framework

The collected data were analyzed using Cruse’s (2000) theory of deixis. The analysis was conducted through the following procedures:

Reading and examining each advertising slogan carefully.

Identifying words and phrases that function as deictic expressions.

Classifying the identified expressions into five categories of deixis:

Person Deixis

Spatial Deixis

Temporal Deixis

Social Deixis

Discourse Deixis

Coding and tabulating the data according to the type of deixis.

Calculating the frequency of occurrence of each deictic category.

Interpreting the findings based on the theoretical framework of pragmatics and advertising discourse.

Drawing conclusions regarding the use and functions of deixis in Urdu advertising slogans.

Analytical Framework

This study employs Cruse’s (2000) classification of deixis as its analytical framework. The framework categorizes deictic expressions into person, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixis. These categories are used to identify and analyze the contextual meanings embedded in Pakistani advertising slogans. The analysis focuses on how

deictic expressions contribute to persuasive communication, audience engagement, and brand-consumer relationships within Pakistani advertising discourse.

Findings and Discussion

According to Cruse's (2000) five types of deixis, the most obvious deictic expressions in each slogan have been identified and assigned codes.

Table 1: Coding of Deictic Expressions in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

No.	Brand	Slogan	Deictic Expression	Type
1	Surf Excel	Daagh Tou Achay Hain	None Identified	-
2	Ufone	Tum Hi Tou Ho	Tum	Person Deixis
3	Pepsi	Why Not Meri Jaan	Meri	Person Deixis
4	Cadbury Dairy Milk	Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye	Kuch	Discourse Deixis
5	Telenor	Jo Har Pakistani Chahta Hai	Har Pakistani	Social Reference
6	Shan Foods	Add Taste to Life	None Identified	-
7	National Foods	Taste the Tradition	None Identified	-
8	Brite	Sab Right Kardeyga	Sab	Person/Generic Reference
9	Jazz	Dunya Ko Bataa Do	(Implied You)	Person Deixis
10	Coca-Cola	Zindagi Bhar Ka Sawaad	Zindagi Bhar	Temporal Deixis
11	Bonus Tri-Star	Safai Ka Seniorita	None Identified	-
12	Pepsi	Dunya Hai Dil Walon Ki	Dil Walon	Social Deixis
13	Peak Sooper Freans	Dil Dil Pakistan	Pakistan	Social/National Identity
14	Dalda	Jahan Mamta, Wahan Dalda	Jahan, Wahan	Spatial Deixis
15	Slice Mango	Dil Mange Aur	Aur	Discourse Deixis
16	Sprite	Kiya Aapne Sprite Piya?	Aapne	Person Deixis
17	Gourmet Cola	Zaiqa Har Dil Ka	Har Dil	Person/Collective Reference
18	Tulsi	Har Dil Ki Dharkan	Har Dil	Person/Collective Reference
19	HBL	Jahan Khwab Wahan HBL	Jahan, Wahan	Spatial Deixis
20	Wall's	Dil Ki Baat	Dil Ki	Person Reference

21	Mezan	Har Cheez Mezan Mein Achi Lagti Hai	Har Cheez	Discourse/General Reference
22	Habib Oil	Kyun Ke Yeh Dil Ka Mamla Hai	Yeh	Discourse Deixis
23	Mobilink Jazz	Apni Duniya, Apna Jazz	Apni, Apna	Person Deixis
24	Tapal Danedar	Tum, Main Aur Aik Cup Chai	Tum, Main	Person Deixis

Dominance of Person Deixis in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

Based on the analysis of the selected Pakistani advertising slogans, person deixis emerged as the most frequently occurring category. The findings revealed that advertisers commonly employed first-person and second-person references to establish a direct and personal relationship with consumers. Examples of person deixis can be observed in slogans such as “*Tum Hi Tou Ho*” (Ufone), “*Why Not Meri Jaan*” (Pepsi), “*Kiya Apne Sprite Piya?*” (Sprite), “*Apni Duniya, Apna Jazz*” (Mobilink Jazz), and “*Tum, Main Aur Aik Cup Chai*” (Tapal Danedar).

The use of words such as *tum* (you), *meri* (my), *aapne* (you), *apni* (your), *apna* (your), and *main* (I) demonstrates how advertisers directly address consumers and position them at the center of the advertising message. Unlike formal promotional statements that merely describe products, these slogans create an impression of interpersonal communication between the brand and the audience. For instance, the slogan “*Tum Hi Tou Ho*” by Ufone directly addresses the consumer through the second-person pronoun *tum*. The slogan implies that the customer is the most important element of the company's success and identity. Similarly, Tapal Danedar's slogan “*Tum, Main Aur Aik Cup Chai*” utilizes both first-person and second-person deixis to create a sense of intimacy and companionship. The slogan suggests a shared social experience between individuals, reinforcing the cultural significance of tea as a symbol of hospitality and togetherness in Pakistani society.

Likewise, Mobilink Jazz's slogan “*Apni Duniya, Apna Jazz*” employs possessive person deixis through the repeated use of *apni* and *apna*. This linguistic strategy encourages consumers to perceive the brand as a personal possession and an integral part of their everyday lives. Through such expressions, advertisers attempt to strengthen emotional attachment and brand loyalty among consumers. The dominance of person deixis in Pakistani advertising slogans can be explained by the persuasive nature of advertising discourse. Advertisers seek to engage consumers on a personal level, making them feel recognized, valued, and involved. By directly referring to the audience, brands reduce the perceived distance between themselves and consumers, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their messages.

Spatial Deixis in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

The analysis also identified instances of spatial deixis in slogans such as “*Jahan Mamta, Wahan Dalda*” and “*Jahan Khwab Wahan HBL*.” The words *jahan* (where) and *wahan* (there) function as locational markers that establish a relationship between a place and a particular product or service. In the slogan “*Jahan Mamta, Wahan Dalda*,” spatial deixis is used symbolically rather than physically. The expression suggests that wherever maternal love exists, Dalda is also present. Similarly, “*Jahan*

Khwab Wahan HBL” associates the bank with the aspirations and dreams of individuals. These slogans demonstrate how spatial deixis can be employed metaphorically to extend a brand's presence into important aspects of consumers' lives.

Temporal Deixis in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

Temporal deixis appeared less frequently in the collected data. One example is Coca-Cola's slogan “*Zindagi Bhar Ka Sawaad*”, where the phrase *zindagi bhar* (for a lifetime) indicates an extended period of time. This temporal reference emphasizes continuity, permanence, and long-lasting satisfaction associated with the product. The limited occurrence of temporal deixis suggests that Pakistani advertisers tend to prioritize personal engagement and emotional connection over time-related references. Nevertheless, when temporal deixis is used, it serves to strengthen perceptions of durability, consistency, and enduring quality.

Social Deixis in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

Several slogans reflected elements of social deixis by referring to social groups, collective identities, or cultural affiliations. Examples include “*Jo Har Pakistani Chahta Hai*,” “*Dunya Hai Dil Walon Ki*”, and “*Dil Dil Pakistan*”. These expressions do not address individual consumers directly; instead, they appeal to broader social identities and shared cultural values. The phrase *har Pakistani* (every Pakistani) evokes a sense of national belonging, while *dil walon* (warm-hearted people) highlights desirable social characteristics. Through these references, advertisers attempt to create solidarity with consumers by associating their products with collective social identities.

The use of social deixis is particularly significant in Pakistan, where advertisements frequently draw upon themes of patriotism, family values, hospitality, and community. Consequently, social deixis functions as a persuasive tool that reinforces cultural connections between brands and audiences.

Discourse Deixis in Pakistani Advertising Slogans

A small number of slogans contained discourse deictic expressions such as “*Yeh*” in “*Yeh Dil Ka Mamla Hai*” and “*Kuch*” in “*Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye*.” These expressions refer to concepts or situations that are understood from the surrounding discourse rather than explicitly stated. For instance, in the slogan “*Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye*,” the word *kuch* (something) leaves the object unspecified while implicitly referring to Cadbury products. Similarly, the word *yeh* (this) in “*Yeh Dil Ka Mamla Hai*” directs attention to a particular issue or concern that is contextually understood by consumers. Although discourse deixis was less common than person deixis, its use contributes to the persuasive and memorable nature of advertising slogans by encouraging consumers to infer meanings and complete the message themselves.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that person deixis is the most dominant category in Pakistani advertising slogans. This result is consistent with previous studies of advertising discourse, including Maharani and Yatima (2019), who found that person deixis was the most frequently occurring type in Indonesian advertisements. The prevalence of person deixis suggests that advertisers in different cultural contexts rely heavily on

direct audience engagement to increase the persuasive impact of their messages. The results also demonstrate that Pakistani advertising slogans are strongly influenced by cultural values, interpersonal relationships, and emotional appeal. Through the use of deictic expressions, advertisers establish connections between brands and consumers, making their messages more personal, relatable, and memorable. Therefore, deixis plays a significant role in shaping the communicative effectiveness of advertising discourse in Pakistan.

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