

National Identity Insinuations in the Advertising Discourse of Pakistani Clothing and Food Brands on Facebook

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Abstract

In the milieu of emerging branding process in Pakistan, the advertising discourse on online media platforms has become all the more popular owing to its interactive values and vibrant textual features. With the persistently increasing presence of brands on online advertising podiums, the notion of identity construction in advertising discourse has found new implications concentrating principally on the creation and negotiation of a certain desired image generated by the use of textual configurations by the brand. In this context the present research focuses on examining the linguistic and semiotic features used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising by various clothing and food brands to promote their national identity on their official Facebook pages. The data consists of the content available on the official Facebook advertisement pages of a total of six brands. The brands selected for the present study belong to two different domains i.e. clothing and food. The purpose of the research is to study the linguistic and semiotic features used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising of various brands to examine how they are used in the advertising discourse to construct national identity. The linguistic, semiotic and thematic aspects of the discourse used in these advertisements are analyzed and integrated into Fairclough's (1989) three dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to examine discourse and its meanings in social context. The findings indicate that the advertising text producers of all the selected brands aim at creating and representing a national identity for their brands in the advertising discourse of their respective brands.

Keywords: discourse of advertising; Facebook; brands; national identity; discourse analysis; textual elements; linguistic and semiotic devices

1. Introduction to the Background of the Research

With the rise of the branding trends in Pakistan, many different brands have risen to the status of esteem and gained fame across the world due to the use of online media platforms including websites and social networking sites to promote themselves. The advertising discourse on these online media platforms has become increasingly popular owing to its vibrant features and communicative potentials. With the increase in the use of online advertising platforms innovative linguistic schemes are being used to entice the audience and to generate a certain preferred identity of the brands. Language along with its linguistic and semiotic features is being used in the discourse of advertising on internet to attract the customers, and to endorse not only the products and services being advertised but also the underlying thought patterns that are not only the products of existing socio-cultural contexts but also creators of new social realities. In this milieu the current research examines the ways in which various clothing and food brands in Pakistan use discourse of advertising on internet to construct and promote a national identity of their respective brands. The current research studies the process of identity construction within the larger context of online advertisement networks and examines the linguistic and semiotic strategies used by different brands in Pakistani advertisements to create and represent national identities of their

brands. How different brands represent themselves on media through the use of language has significance not only for the producers and the buyers, but also for the sociolinguists who are interested in examining the role of discourse in the construction, negotiation and representation of identity.

1.1 Discourse of Advertising and the Significance of its Study

Advertising is a type of discourse that uses language to influence the viewers persuading them in buying the advertised products. Many linguists believe that advertising not only aims at promoting the brand, it also manages the image of the producer, and promotes an ideology or a notion (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Goddard, 1998). According to Goddard (1998) the advertising discourse needs to be studied as we not only come across a great number of advertising texts on a daily basis, but also encounter the perspectives of the producers of the texts. Cook (1994) also believes that advertising is a type of discourse, whose text can be explored in relation to its context. The advertising discourse is designed using these linguistic and semiotic features to influence the viewers in accepting the qualities being promoted in the advertisements, consequently urging the consumers to buy the advertised products (Verstergaard & Schroder, 1985). In addition to offering a promise of benefits expected from the consumption of the products being advertised, the advertisement texts present certain ideological viewpoints or conceptual standpoints that represent the producers' perspectives about the social realities around them.

As language is a dynamic and forceful tool in the creation and representation of identity in social spheres, it is similarly considered to be the most significant tool of identity construction in the world of advertising. Owing to the dynamic aspects of language used in the advertising discourse, there has been an increased interest in the study of textual constituents of advertisements in the past few years. Advertising discourse consists of linguistic and extra-linguistic components and has many sociological implications, thus presenting a challenging area of investigation to a linguist. Considering the key role of the contemporary online platforms for communication of identity, this research studies the relationship between language and identity in the advertising world on online communication platforms. The study focuses on studying how various clothing and food brands in Pakistan use linguistic and semiotic patterns with the aim of constructing and demonstrating their national identities. The present research studies the issues of identity construction and representation, with its focus on offering some significant insights into the linguistic and semiotic configurations used in the advertising texts in Pakistan to construct and represent the national identity of the brand.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Branding process in Pakistan is on the rise owing to the increase in the creation and marketing of new brands. In order to compete with other brands in the market, the producers of these brands are relying greatly on the linguistic aspects used in advertisements to attract customers. Advertising uses language, including both the linguistic and extra-linguistic features. As language has the power to construct social realities, advertising discourse also have a great tendency to create and reflect social realities. One of the most important of these social practices is the identity construction process, as advertisers through their advertisements, constantly engage themselves in the construction and negotiation of a desired identity for their brand. Advertisements are considered to be favorable for the construction of identity of brands, with their focus upon using persuasive and appealing discourses, generating diverse texts to create the desired image or

construct a certain identity of the product or the brand. The discourse of advertising being everywhere around us, needs to be studied from a sociolinguistic perspective to understand the use of language and its sociological implications in advertisements.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to study, by means of a discourse analysis, how different clothing and food brands represent the nationalistic aspects of their multi-faceted identity through discourse on their official Facebook pages. The study also aims to reveal the processes through which these national identities are constructed and represented through the use of linguistic and semiotic features used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising by various clothing and food brands on Facebook.

The present study has the following objective:

- To study the ways in which different clothing and food brands in Pakistan use both the linguistic and semiotic features of language in the discourse of advertising to construct and represent their national identity.

1.4 Research Question

The main research question of the present study is:

How is national identity constructed and represented through the use of linguistic and semiotic practices and strategies used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising by various clothing and food brands on Facebook?

1.5 Delimitations

This paper is based on a wider research carried out in a PhD thesis titled 'Identity Construction of Brands on Internet: An Analysis of Pakistani Discourse of Advertising'. The thesis focuses on examining various multi-faceted identities constructed and represented in the Pakistani discourse of advertising by various clothing, food and cosmetic brands on internet. The current paper however, focuses on the study of construction and representation of national identity by the selected clothing and food brands only.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discourse and Identity in the World of Advertising

Language is the most significant arrangement of signs and symbols for communicating and negotiating identities and is central to the negotiation and enactment of identity (De Fina, 2011). Mills (1997) believe that discourse and identity are strongly related with each other. Commenting on the relationship between discourse and identity Mills asserts, "Discourses structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity" (1997, p.15). Our language use consists of social identities and social associations. The language we use contains significant information about ourselves. According to Coulmas (2005) our discourse reveals a lot of information about us such as our age, cultural and social values, our gender, and also the desired identity or group with which we want to be identified. Similarly, discourse on internet such as on websites and social networking sites serves as the most effective tool for identity construction.

2.1.1 What is Discourse?

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000) includes the aspects of both the written and spoken medium of communication in defining the term discourse as, “Verbal expression in speech or writing” (p. 516). Jones, Chik, and Hafner (2015) however, view discourse as an extensive term which can be defined as:

‘Discourse’ is a term that is used in a variety of different fields and can mean a variety of different things. It can refer to the formal properties of semiotic artefacts that make them ‘hold together’ as certain types of ‘texts’, it can refer to the ways people use language and other semiotic systems to accomplish particular social actions, or it can refer to broader systems of knowledge which act to regulate what people can say, write or think. (pp. 3- 4)

Discourse is purposeful and is intended to be persuasive and influential (Potter & Wetherell, 2001). Therefore, discourse can be termed as the expression of a perspective. In other words discourse is a social process of constructing meaning (O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2002). The study of discourse as viewed by Wetherell, Taylor, and Yeats (2001) is the study of language in use. To them discourse is, “people communicating and using language to do things” (p. 3). Hence, the study of discourse is the study of meaning-making.

2.1.2 What is Identity?

Identity is a concept with many meanings and interpretations. It is considered to be the essential character of a person and is shaped as a result of the person’s involvements with his/her personal and social associations. Van Dijk (1998) believes that, “identity is both a personal and a social construct, that is, a mental representation” (p. 118). Djité (2006) defines identity as, “the everyday word for people’s sense of who they are” (p. 6). Altheide (2000) on the other hand defines identity as that part of the self “by which we are known to others” (p. 2). Similarly, Mohanty (2005) emphasizes the significance of the opinions of others in defining one’s identity. He defines identity as something which.

... relates to ideas about who and what we and others believe us to be. A cultural identity, therefore, involves a set of characteristics that define us as individuals, groups, societies and so forth. These characteristics can be almost anything, but it is evident that things such as gender, class, ethnic background, region and age are some of the most important sources of identity in any society. (2005, p. 81)

To put in simple words our identity is something that defines who we are and how we are perceived by ourselves and by others.

2. 2 Brand Identity

Creating a desired brand identity is perhaps the most effective advertising strategy used by the producers as it plays a very important role in endorsing the brand in the marketing circles and increasing the sales of its products. Brand identity expresses the brand’s distinctiveness which makes it recognizable and distinguishable for the consumers. To Aaker (1996) brand identity is a, unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These

associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members. (p.68)

Brand identity is deemed to be most valuable in making the brand successful in the market circles. Wheeler (2009) defines brand identity as something which is,... tangible and appeals to the senses. You can see it, touch it, hold it, hear it, watch it move. Brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible. Brand identity takes disparate elements and unifies them into whole systems. (p. 4)

Brand identity is the sum of attributes proclaimed by the producer, the means through which those attributes are carried out to the customers, and the consumers' experiences and opinions concerning the brand.

2. 3 Advertising Discourse and Identity Construction of Brands

As language is the most influential tool in the construction, negotiation, and representation of identities, advertising discourse, similarly is a powerful tool of constructing and characterizing identity in the advertising world. Cook (1992) considers advertising as a prominent discourse type. To him, "advertising is not a remote and specialized discourse, but a prominent discourse type in contemporary society" (p. 199). Advertisements are discourses planned to generate consumer impressions of the brand being advertised so that the consumers are persuaded to buy and consume the product (White, 2000).

The role of advertising discourse in the construction of identity cannot be denied (Widdowson, 2004). It is through the discourse of advertising that brands construct a suitable and desired identity for themselves. Musolff (2006) believes advertisements to be kinds of discourse which have a powerful role in constructing identities. Threadgold (1989) also asserts that texts cannot be separated from the social realities and practices in which they are created and consumed because they are by no means objective and detached. Advertising discourse has an influential power that affects the consumption patterns of the viewers. Advertisement texts consist of a variety of discourses including written and verbal, such as vocabulary items, and graphic and visual, such as gestures, expressions, colors, style etc. (Fairclough, 1989). Rubin (1995) also acknowledges the role of both the written and oral language in creating and representing different aspects of a brand's identity.

2. 4 Discourse Analysis and the Study of Identity Construction in Advertisement Texts

McCarthy (1991) defines discourse analysis as being "concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used" (p. 5). Discourse and identity are intertwined as it is through discourse that identity is constructed and represented by the people. He (2001) defines discourse analysis in relation to its role in studying identity construction. He asserts, Discourse analysis seeks to describe and explain linguistic phenomenon in terms of the affective, cognitive, situational, and cultural contexts of their use and to identify linguistic resources through which we (re)construct our life (our identity, role, activity, community, emotion, stance, knowledge, belief, ideology, and so forth). (p. 429)

Discourse analysis offers theoretical frameworks and approaches to study texts in order to examine identity construction practices in texts through the use of language. Paltridge (2006)

presents a text oriented stance and a socially oriented stance of discourse analysis and believes that the text oriented understanding of discourse analysis has its focus on linguistic constituents of the text, whereas, the socially oriented standpoint of discourse analysis focuses more on the function of the text in the socio- cultural contexts in which it takes place.

In the present research work discourse analysis is used as the theoretical background that can be applied to a text to study the meanings created in the Pakistani discourse of advertising. Chimombo and Roseberry (1998) are of the view that discourse analysis offers a deeper understanding of texts and elucidates how the texts become meaningful to their users. Since discourse analysis studies the effects of discourse on the construction of social identities and associations, the present study uses discourse analysis to study the effects of advertising discourse on the construction and representation of national identity orientations of brands.

3. Research Methodology

This section provides the research design, time frame for data collection and research methodology used in the present study.

3.1 Research Design

For this research data is collected from the content available on the official Facebook pages of the selected brands. A total of six brands belonging to two different domains, such as clothing and food are selected. An analysis of the advertising content on their Facebook pages is carried out to examine the linguistic, semiotic and thematic aspects of the discourse used in these advertisements in order to analyze the construction and representation of their national identities online. As the present work looks into phenomenon and processes, mainly a qualitative research paradigm is used which deals with the detailed analysis, interpretation and discussion of data to look into the processes of identity construction and representation of various brands in their advertisements.

3.2 Collection of Data

Data is collected from the official Facebook advertisement pages of various brands in Pakistan to look into the ways in which these brands use both linguistic and semiotic features in their advertising discourse, to construct and represent their respective national identities. Two different domains are selected for data collection on the basis of purposive sampling. The selected domains and the names of the selected three brands in each domain are as follows:

- Domain A: Clothing
Brand 1: J.
Brand 2: Nishat Linen
Brand 3: Khaadi

- Domain B: Food
Brand 1: National Foods Limited
Brand 2: Sufi Cooking Oil and Ghee
Brand 3: Qarshi Industries

3.3 Time Frame of Data Collection

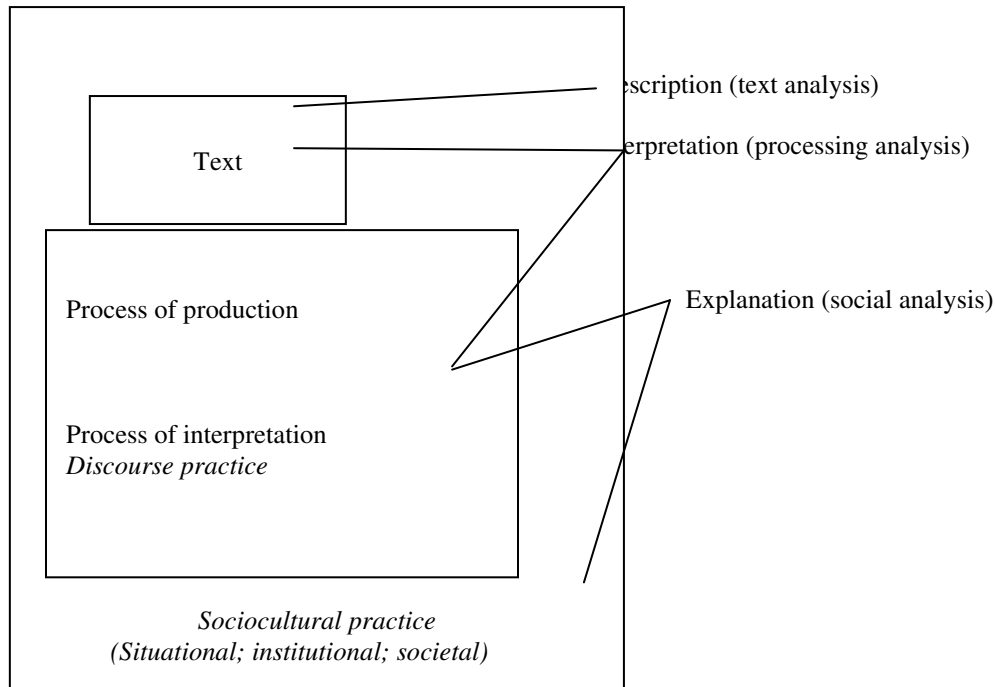
The data on the Facebook pages includes the linguistic and semiotic elements such as textual inscriptions, images etc. in the advertising discourse of these brands used in the posts and updates made on these Facebook pages over a period of 6 months (i.e. 1st July, 2014 – 31st December, 2014).

3.4 Research Framework for the Current Research

The notion of identity construction is interrelated with the concept of ideology, which according to Paltridge (2006) can be examined in a text by exploring the textual features of the text followed by the explanation and interpretation of the text with reference to its socio-cultural contexts implications. The current research includes a discourse analysis of the linguistic and semiotic features in the data to study the identity themes present in the discourse of advertisements that help in the identity construction process. The identity themes are analyzed examining the linguistic and the semiotic features present in the text in order to describe, analyze and explain the ways in which various brands in Pakistan use discourse in constructing and promoting the identity of their respective brands. Linguistic features in the data include the language used in the discourse of advertising such as the vocabulary items, arrangement of words, lexical/syntactic patterns, arrangement and scheme of lexical and textual patterns etc. Semiotic features in the data consist of the graphical features used in the discourse of advertising such as colors, images, size of the text and pictures, signs and symbols etc. Semiotic structures of the advertisement texts include anything related to the visual aspects of discourse as shared by the selected brands on their respective Facebook pages.

To analyze the discourse of advertising of the selected brands in order to study the processes and practices of identity construction, the analysis of textual features is incorporated into Fairclough's model for CDA (1989, 1995) which examines discourse and its meaning in social context. His framework provides three dimensions for analysis of these three dimensions of discourse, namely, textual (description), process (interpretation), and societal (explanation). These dimensions reveal how discourse, both in textual and in semiotic form, works to create meaning in social contexts. This approach enables the researcher to concentrate on the signifiers that form the text, the particular linguistic choices, their combinations and arrangements, their layout, themes etc.

The model in Figure 1 (adapted from Fairclough 1989, p.25; 1995, p. 98) shows the integration of textual features with sociocultural practice by means of the mediating dimension of discourse practice:



Dimensions of discourse

Dimensions of discourse analysis

Figure 3.1: CDA framework of Fairclough (adapted from 1989, p.25; 1995, p. 98)

The framework of textual analysis is applied to the data at three levels simultaneously to describe (first dimension of analysis) the verbal and visual text (first dimension of text), with its relation to the interpretation (second dimension of analysis) of the processes by means of which the text is produced and viewed (second dimension of text), to explain (third dimension of analysis) the social dimensions (third dimension of text) of the text.

3.5 System of Data Presentation

Due to an extensive amount of data collected over a period of six months, it was not possible to include all the data from the selected brands for analysis owing to the limited scope of a research paper. For this reason, in the sections 4.1 and 4.2, which deal with data analysis of Domain A and Domain B respectively, only representative data is included for analysis. Not only is the data too extensive to be analyzed completely, it is also impossible to include the entire data in appendix of this paper. Therefore, only representative data is presented in the analysis sections. As the focus of the research was to analyze national identity construction through the use of linguistic and semiotic devices by the brands, it was decided to look only into the national identity themes present in the data of each domain by including representative data to support the findings of analysis about the patterns of national identity construction.

4. Findings and analysis

The data is analyzed with reference to the nationalistic themes present in the advertising discourse of the selected brands. The qualitative findings focusing on the qualitative aspects of the analysis are presented as under.

4.1 Findings and Analysis of Domain A: Clothing Brands

The analysis in this section focuses on examining the linguistic and semiotic features used in the advertising texts of the discourse of advertising of clothing brands to study the national identity themes.

4.1.1 Brand 1: J.

The data collected from the Facebook page of J. shows that the brand constructs its national identity by featuring national memorandums, using certain color schemes, and by sharing various posts and photos about national events and national figures on Facebook. As the Pakistani flag consists of the colors green and white, changing the color schemes in the ads to green and remembering national heroes is a common practice in the world of Pakistani advertisements. The display picture of J. on Facebook changes to the colors green and white in order to show the brand's affiliations with Pakistan.



Figure 4.1: Display of J. on Facebook.

Figure 4.1 shows the display picture of J. on Facebook whose background is green in color whereas the inscriptions containing the brand logo 'J.', the name of the brand owner 'Junaid Jamshed' and the caption 'Soully East' are in white color. The use of the colors of the Pakistani flag in the brand's trademark logo demonstrates the national identity with which the brand wants to associate itself.

Consider another instance where the brand producers show their love for their homeland by celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day which is celebrated on 14th August every year with full zest and vigor. The media in Pakistan especially the social media becomes replete with national memorandums this time of the year. Similarly, J.'s official Facebook page shows various posts about the Independence Day.



Figure 4.2: Celebrate Independence Day with pride!

Figure 4.2 shows a green background with white colored inscriptions, corresponding to the color theme of the Pakistani flag. The text in the picture says, ‘Dil Dil Pakistan’, and ‘14th August 1947 – Forever’. ‘Dil dil Pakistan’ translated as ‘Pakistan ismy heart’ in English, is a famous national song of Pakistan known well to all the Pakistanis around the world for its honest manifestation of patriotism towards Pakistan. What is noteworthy here is that the song was originally sung by Junaid Jamshed, the owner of the brand J., in his youth when he was a prominent pop singer in Pakistan. Remembering the song on the independence day of Pakistan further lends a nationalistic facet to the brand’s identity. The text also contains the inscription ‘14th August 1947 – Forever’ which further endorses the love of the brand/ or its producers for their homeland. The date of 14th August 1947 is important for the Pakistanis as it marks the day when the Muslims of the Subcontinent got a separate homeland, Pakistan, for themselves to live their lives according to their own religion and desires. ‘14th August 1947 – Forever’ shows the hope and faith of the producers to see their country Pakistan safe and sound till eternity, thereby reinforcing the nationalistic overtones of the brand’s overall identity. The caption with the photo ‘Celebrate Independence Day with pride!’ demonstrates the brand’s pride in its country and exhibits the nationalistic aspects of its identity. The words ‘celebrate’ and ‘pride’ assert the unmatched pride of the brand (and/or its producers) in their country which urges them to rejoice on the Independence Day of Pakistan.

Not only are photos related to national celebrations of the independence day shared on Facebook, the designs and colors advertised are also associated to this special event.



Figure 4.3: Display of Brand.

Figure 4.3 has been taken from the Facebook page of the brand. The picture shows clothes in green color which are especially advertised with reference to the Independence Day celebrations. The green colored clothes designed for the customers are advertised in accordance with the celebration spirits of the brand. The caption on the photos reads '*IT'S TIME TO GO FOR GREEN*'. The colors used in the caption are green and white, which are the colors of the Pakistani flag. In Figure 4.3, a green background is used in the text box while the text is in white color. This use of green color is a way of celebrating the most important day in the history of Pakistan. The caption in the photo written in uppercase format is the selective voice used by the advertisers both to urge the audience to buy the green themed clothes and also to exhibit their national identity by advertising their designs compliance with the national day/event.

Defence day, celebrated on 6th September, is another important day in the history of Pakistan. It marks the victory of Pakistan in an Indian initiated war on Pakistan on 6th September, 1965. J.'s advertisement texts on Facebook on 6th September paid tribute to the men behind the glorious victory in the war. Figure 4.4 shows an image of a soldier standing on an elevated place under the shadow of Pakistani flag. A helicopter is seen flying in the sky while the soldier is vigilantly guarding his city fully armed with weapons.



Figure 4.4: Celebrating Defence Day

The text in the Figure 4.4 written in green color reads, '*A DAY TO REMEMBER THE BOLD & COURAGEOUS*' and '*CELEBRATING DEFENCE DAY 6TH SEPTEMBER*'. J. conforms to the nationalistic sides of its identity by paying tribute to the soldiers who valiantly fought in the Indo-Pak War of 1965. The brand dedicates its advertisements on this day to '*THE BRAVE & COURAGEOUS*' soldiers to remember them thereby exhibiting their nationalistic identity. The presence of the brand logo back grounded in the image shows that the brand cannot be dissociated with the celebration of the Defence Day. The brand logo's presence in the images shared in the respective advertisement discourses also act as reminders to the audience not to detach the brand from their remembrances of the national events.

Other national celebrations such as the Quaid-e- Azam day celebrated on 25th December, has also been celebrated by the brand. The day celebrates the birth anniversary of the great leader. On the respective day, images related to Quaid-e- Azam were shared by the brand's advertisement text producers on Facebook thus remembering the true spirits of the national event. Quaid-e- Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is the founder of Pakistan, who toiled day and night for the independence

of the Indian Muslims and eventually got succeeded on 14th August, 1947 when a separate homeland, Pakistan, was created.

Hence, it can be concluded from the data analysis that J. remembers the national events and national figures in its advertisement discourse on its Facebook page. The use of certain colors, pictures, and images related to the national celebrations in the advertising discourse enables the text producers to construct and represent the national identity of the brand.

4.1.2 Brand 2: NL

The data collected from the official Facebook page of NL shows that the national identity of NL is constructed and represented by sharing different status updates and photos about national events on Facebook. Pakistani media celebrates the Independence Day of Pakistan, celebrated on 14th August, with passion and enthusiasm. Similarly, there are certain references to the Independence Day celebrations of Pakistan in NL's discourse of advertising on social media. Figure (6) is a picture posted on the Facebook page of NL with reference to Pakistan's Independence Day.



Figure 4.5: Happy Independence Day from team NL.

Figure 4.5 shows a picture of some of the brand's team members gathered together to celebrate the independence day of Pakistan. The team members in the picture appear to be joyous and seem to be happily participating in the Independence Day celebrations. To send Independence Day greetings to the audience/readers from all the team members of NL, the caption accompanying the photo states, '*HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY...!!! From team NL..*'. The text reveals the brand's enthusiasm on the national event thus exhibiting the nationalistic facets of its identity. The team members are dressed up in green and white clothes to honor the Pakistani flag which is green and white in color. The use of the colors of the Pakistani flag in the brand's celebration campaigns shows the brand's associations with the country and also the nationalistic identity with which the brand wishes to associate itself, thus highlighting the nationalistic implications of the brand's identity.

Reference to another incident that has serious national concerns has also been made in the data of NL. To mark the day of 16th December, 2014 as a black and tragic day NL uses a blacked out image as its display picture on Facebook. The day is undoubtedly a black day for Pakistanis and also for the whole of humanity as more than one hundred and forty people including students were killed in a terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar, Pakistan. To mourn over the loss of the innocent souls NL blackens its display picture and expresses its grief.



Figure 4.6: **Display of Tragic Day**

Figure 4.6 is the image used by NL as its display picture on the tragic day. The black colored picture expresses NL's grief over the tragedy to the audience of its advertising discourse. As the black color used during the times of tragedies is considered to be the color of mourning in Pakistan, its use in the display picture of NL on Facebook highlights the mournful emotional condition prevalent in Pakistan at that time. This marks as a considerable way in highlighting the brand's nationalistic identity overtones in the discourse of its advertising.

NL presents winter season as a cultural fiesta enjoyed in Pakistan. Although Pakistan enjoys all the four seasons in a year but basically it is a warm country as the summer season is far longer than the winters. Hence, the winter season is often considered to be most enjoyable by the Pakistanis. NL welcomes the season and highlights the perks of the most cherished season in Pakistan. Consider Figure 4.7 to illustrate this point.



Figure 4.7: **Display of Nishat Brand**

Figure 4.7 is a picture shared on NL's Facebook profile on the arrival of winter season in Pakistan. The picture contains certain inscriptions and various images of female models posing to advertise the designs by NL. One of the captions written on the photo states, '*Nishat invites you to experience winter your way!*', Though the text claims to be inviting the audience to experience the winter season in the way they desire, other captions on the picture give the options to the audience for spending the season. The options include '*silken fabrics*', '*pashmina shawls*', '*crunchy chilghozas*', and '*warm mugs of chai*'. Not only does this picture welcome the season it also advertises about the products NL has to offer for the upcoming winter season. The very mention of the silken fabrics and pashmina shawls in relation to winter season establishes the relational values

in the text where the readers associate the silken fabrics and pashmina shawls with winters leading to their relating of winters with NL. The analysis of the socio-cultural dimensions of the text explains how the cultural identity is being created by the brand text producers in relating the culturally celebrated events with the brand. For instance, the other perks of the most loved season in Pakistan as offered by the brand's advertising text producers are '*crunchy chilghozas*' and '*warm mugs of chai*'. Chilghoza and chai are Urdu words that mean pine nuts and tea respectively in the English language. The Urdu equivalent of *pine nuts* i.e. '*chilghozas*' is used here in order to make it known to more people as the English counterpart is not so commonly used in Pakistan. Moreover to make the plural form of chilghoza, the plural form 's' from the English language has been added with the Urdu word thus making it a case of noun hybridization. Similarly, the Urdu counterpart of the word *tea* i.e. *chai* is used here. Though the word *tea* is a well-known and largely used word in Pakistan, it is not used here. The reason is to establish the relational values in the text that relate the audience with the text on a socio-cultural level as the word *chai* has certain ethnic and traditional connotations attached to it. It is a customary tradition in Pakistan to enjoy the cold wintry evenings inside the house, sitting in front of heaters and enjoying pine nuts and tea. When the urge to drink hot tea increases in the winter season, it becomes all the more a cherished and loved beverage in Pakistan. Hence, in referring to this tradition of eating pine nuts and drinking tea in winters, the advertising text here makes the readers/audience relate the beauty of winter season in Pakistan with the brand.

Hence, remembering national events and connecting with the audience on occasions having national concerns NL constructs and represents its national identity in the discourse of its advertising. The data analysis shows that NL has used certain words, images, colors and references that relate the brand to its country i.e. Pakistan, thus highlighting its national identity.

4.1.3 Brand 3: Khaadi

Just like J. and NL, Khaadi also exhibits its nationalistic identity in the data. The national identity of Khaadi is constructed through expressing its love for its motherland Pakistan. Numerous pictures are shared depicting the brand's association with its country. Figure (9) has been taken from the Facebook page of Khaadi.



Figure 4.8: Display of Khaadi Brand

Figure 4.8 shows an image of the Pakistani flag on which '*KHAADI LOVES PAKISTAN*' is written. What is more interesting here is that the picture is shared on no specific national event. This shows that the brand is keen in demonstrating its associations with Pakistan thus representing its nationalistic identity to both the national and international audience. The text producers aim to associate the brand with Pakistan in its advertising discourse. In a Facebook post they write, '*Just*

like truck art or the roadside dhaabe ki chai or even political turmoil, Khaadi too has become a quintessential symbol of Pakistan'. The phrases *truck art*, *dhaabe ki chai*, and *political turmoil*, all have specific connotations attached in the Pakistani socio-cultural context. *Truck art* is a popular form of ethnic art in Pakistan featuring floral patterns and poetic calligraphy to decorate a truck or a lorry. Truck art is an emblem of traditional cultural spirit of Pakistan. Similarly, the Urdu phrase *dhaabe ki chai* means 'tea from the roadside tea stalls' in English. In the Pakistani context this custom of enjoying the roadside tea is typical of the essential cultural tradition which is loved by the rich and poor alike. Likewise, the term *political turmoil* is representative of the political scenario in Pakistan which has always seen confusion and disorder. The statement presupposes that truck art, the roadside tea stalls and political turmoil are quintessential symbols of Pakistan; likewise relating the brand with these socio-cultural elements of Pakistan and calling the brand a similar ethnic symbol that has become a trademark of Pakistan.

Similarly, celebrating the Independence Day of Pakistan by sharing content representing the brand's affection and esteem for its motherland is another important way of constructing the brand's nationalistic identity. Pakistan's Independence Day is celebrated on 14th August every year with great enthusiasm. All the media channels in Pakistan including the social media focus greatly on sharing national memorandums and messages having significance in this context to celebrate the independence day of their country. In the same way, Khaadi's Facebook page shows various advertising updates related to the Independence Day. The brand text producers share numerous pictures and updates on Facebook regarding the Independence Day celebrations. Figure 4.9 is shared on Facebook to mark the brand's love for Pakistan.



Figure 4.9: Display of Khaadi Brand on Facebook.

Figure 4.9 shows the inscription 'Khaadi LOVES', and an image of a crescent and star that are the trademark symbols of the Pakistani flag thus signifying that Khaadi loves Pakistan. The background of the picture is green whereas the inscriptions are in white color which is significant as both these colors are the colors of the Pakistani flag. The phrase 'Khaadi LOVES' and the symbols of the crescent and the star have been foregrounded in the picture and are topicalized. The use of this technique of topicalization lends agency to the text and hence, gives the power position to the brand. Similarly the assertive tone, the expressive values in the phrase and the font size of the text also give a position of power to the brand. The caption at the bottom right corner of the picture, 'Happy Independence Day! 14 August 2014' shows that the brand wishes its audience/customers an independence day greetings, thus representing its patriotic character.

The advertising text producers repeatedly assert the love of the brand for its country by writing 'Khaadi Loves PAKISTAN!' as a caption with various pictures shared on Facebook. This statement

establishes the relational values in the text by showing how the writers assert their love for their motherland by directly showing their ideological agreements and choosing to influence the readers in this way.

Hence, by celebrating the national events and involving the audience in the advertising discourse related to these events, Khaadi constructs its nationalistic identity and presents it to its audience/readers on the internet.

4.2 Findings and Analysis of Domain B: Food Brands

The analysis in this section focuses on studying the linguistic and semiotic elements used in the advertising texts of the discourse of advertising of food brands that are significant in constructing and representing national identity of the brands.

4.2.1 Brand 1: National Foods Limited (NFL)

As the name of the brand refers to its national associations, National Foods Limited (NFL) strongly adheres to its idea of constructing an individual identity for itself in the discourse of its advertising that is based on the national insinuations. The individual national identity is constructed by the references made to the cultural events, connotations attached to those events, and by using words, pictures, foods etc. that have cultural connotations attached in the Pakistani context. The data shows that NFL focuses mostly on representing its national and cultural identity insinuations. One reason of promoting the brand's products in the backdrop of Pakistani culture could be that generally good food in Pakistan is associated with the Pakistani culture and also because traditional Pakistani food is famous worldwide due to its flavor and taste. Most Pakistanis usually relish the distinctive spicy food of Pakistan typically associated with their culture and traditions, despite having their occasional likings for the international food. NFL being the food brand associates itself with the Pakistani culture as an effective marketing strategy. Consider figure 4.10 in this regard.



Figure 4.10: Display of National Foods Limited.

Figure 4.10 shows an inscription in a foregrounded position which states, 'The Complete Pakistani Food Experience'. The presence of the brand logo just above the inscription shows how the brand's advertising text producers relate the brand with the archetypal Pakistani food. The text here acts as a selective voice that asserts the relation between the brand and the Pakistani food experience. Relating the Pakistani food experience with the Mughals by using the Mughal art in the picture, NFL associates itself with the quintessential Pakistani food inspired from the Mughal

culinary. Another image that shows the famous Badshahi Mosque in Lahore further highlights the brand's national and cultural associations. See figure 4.11 in this regard.



Figure 4.11: Display of Badshahi Mosque by National Foods Limited.

Figure 4.11 shows an image of the Badshahi Mosque situated in Lahore which is one of the historical cities of Pakistan. Though the image doesn't contain any text in relation to the picture of Badshahi Mosque, a certain relationship between the brand and this historical place of Pakistan is however assumed by the reader. Since the mosque was constructed by the Mughal Emperor Aurungzeb in late seventeenth century, this picture of the mosque endorses the brand's notion of its relationship with the traditional and historic culture of the region.

The advertising texts in NFL's data are largely reflective of the Pakistani culture relating the food by NFL to specific cultural occasions and events. An informative account in the form of the segment '*National Culture Kahani*' as part of the brand's advertising campaign on its Facebook page narrates the cultural food fact specifically related to the food traditions in the rural Punjab. See figure 4.12 in this regard.



Figure 4.12: Display of Punjabi Food by National Food Limited

Figure 4.12 shows an image of the traditional food of the Punjab province i.e. *sarson ka saag* and *makai ki roti* translated as '*mustard leaves cooked in spices*' and '*corn bread*' in English. This food is essentially associated with the quintessential spirit of Punjab when it comes to customary food culture in the province. The inscription on the picture states, '*Sarson ka Saag is the staple food of the rural people of Punjab. The saag topped with rich homemade butter fits the lifestyle of the village people who laboriously work in the fertile lands of the province*'. The text not only

states the food fact about the rural Punjab, it also gives an insight into the life of a villager in the province. The text captures the spirit of the Punjabi culture which is used by the brand to highlight its association with the Pakistani culture in general and with the cultural food of Pakistan in particular. NFL has been very keen in constructing and representing its cultural identity in its advertising discourse. According to Fairclough (1989) the social dimensions in a text are explained by relating the text to its socio-cultural contexts. Hence, to study the cultural identity of NFL a special focus on the explanation of the socio-cultural contexts of the text production is required. This explanation further elucidates the processes and practices of identity construction by the brand. The fact that NFL mostly uses cultural themes in its advertising discourse establishes the ways in which it wants to be perceived by the readers/audience i.e. in relation to and also as being symbolic of the Pakistani traditional culture.

A lot of code mixing has been used in the advertising discourse of NFL where words from the Urdu and Punjabi language are mixed in English syntactic structures. This mixing of Urdu and Punjabi words is significant as it serves the brand's purpose of relating itself with the Pakistani culture. Since vocabulary words from these native languages have special cultural connotations attached to them the mixing proves worthwhile in creating the cultural identity of the brand. Since English is commonly used in the advertising domain of Pakistani media, the main code used in NFL's advertising discourse is English. However, to represent the cultural identity of the brand, the advertising discourse of NFL contains numerous instances of code-mixing and code switching. Consider an instance of code mixing used to capture the spirit of a sweet dish called '*Gajjar ka Halwa*', which apparently will lose its connotation if replaced with the English equivalent i.e. *carrot pudding*. Consider figure 4.13 in this regard.



Figure 4.13: Display of Sweet Dish by National Food Limited

Figure 4.13 shows an image of a sweet dish with an inscription, '*Serve Gajjar ka Halwa with vanilla ice-cream!*'. *Gajjar ka Halwa* is an Urdu noun phrase which means *carrot pudding* in English. It is a famous sweet dish of Pakistan that is recognized by the Pakistanis more by its name than by anything else and is cooked and eaten in all parts of the country especially in the winter season. Since readers can associate more with the noun phrase *Gajjar ka Halwa* than with the noun phrase *carrot pudding*, the producers have used the Urdu counterpart in an otherwise English syntactic structure. This instance of code mixing where Urdu has been mixed in English sentence serves the purpose of capturing the true spirit of the word so that people associate the

brand with the taste of Pakistan i.e. the taste and flavor created in the Pakistani cuisine that is loved by the Pakistanis all over the world.

Hence, the description, interpretation and explanation of the textual content in the advertising discourse of NFL with relation to its socio-cultural contexts shows that the brand's advertising text producers greatly rely on promoting the brand's values as deeply entrenched in the Pakistani culture and values. This focus on the national and cultural adherence in the advertising discourse establishes the brand's national identity that focuses mainly on its associations with the Pakistani culture and traditions.

4.2.2 Brand 2: SUFI

The national identity of the brand is constructed and represented by sharing content about national events and national figures on Facebook. Consider for example Figure 4.14 which was shared on the brand's Facebook page to celebrate the birth date of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the Pakistani nation who struggled hard for the independence of the Muslims of the Subcontinent from the British rule and for the creation of a separate homeland called Pakistan for the Muslims in the early half of the twentieth century.

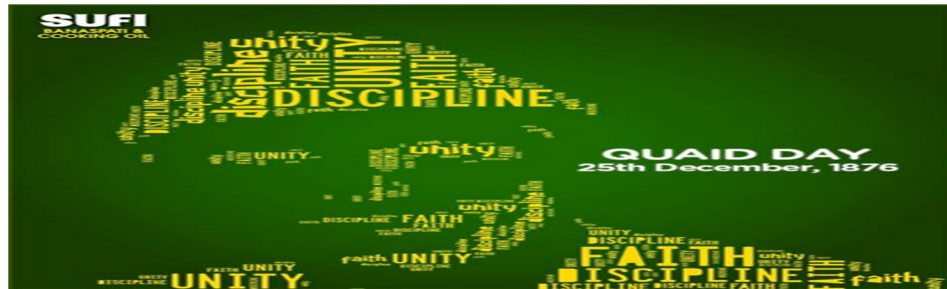


Figure 4.14: Display of Quaid's Birthday by SUFI

The picture shown in the figure 4.14 is shared on 25th December to mark the birthday celebrations of Quaid-e-Azam. The image in the picture shows a silhouette of the portrait of Quaid-e-Azam. The outline of the portrait is made by the repetitive use of Quaid's well known motto, i.e. *unity*, *faith*, and *discipline*. Further inscription on the picture says, '*QUAID DAY- 25th December, 1876*', along with the brand logo both written in the white color. The background of the picture is green in color. The use of these two colors is significant as the colors in the Pakistani flag are green and white, thus denoting the national associations of the brand. The presence of the brand logo on the upper left hand corner of the picture shows that this image is specifically created by the brand's text producers for the specific purpose of showing the brand's love and association with its country. As Quaid-e-Azam is considered to be the father of the Pakistani nation, events related to his birth, life, and death are equally reminisced in the advertising discourse of Sufi to honor his efforts for acquiring a separate homeland, Pakistan, for the Muslims of the Subcontinent.

References to other national figures and events are also found in the data by Sufi. One such reference includes the celebration of Iqbal day, celebrated on the 9th of November every year in Pakistan to mark the birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal, the national poet of Pakistan.

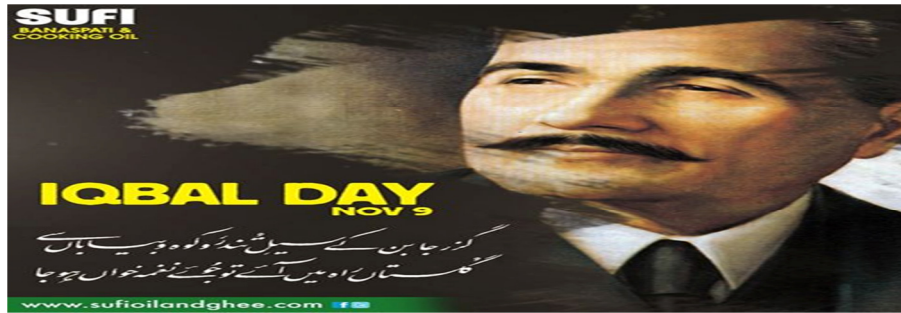


Figure 4.15: Display of Iqbal's Birthday by SUFI

Figure 4.15 shows an image of a portrait of Allama Iqbal with 'IQBAL DAY NOV, 9' inscribed on it. A stanza from his Urdu poetry has also been inscribed which gives a message of adaptability and subsistence to his nation. Allama Iqbal was the great thinker and philosopher who dreamed about having a separate homeland for the Muslims of Subcontinent. Every year Pakistanis celebrate his birthday by arranging ceremonies to honor him. Similarly, Sufi celebrates Iqbal Day to show its national associations thus constructing its national identity. Another national event celebrated by the brand is Independence Day of Pakistan which is celebrated by sharing related content on the Facebook page. Figure 4.16 is a picture shared on Facebook to share the day's celebrations with the readers/audience.



Figure 4.16: Display of Independence Day by SUFI

Figure 4.16 shows images of various national figures that actively took part in the freedom movement for Pakistan including Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Iqbal, Madam Fatima Jinnah (sister of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah) etc. The text inscribed on the picture says, '14th AUGUST HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY'. Independence Day of Pakistan is celebrated on 14th of August every year by the Pakistanis around the world. Similarly, wishing the readers with an Independence Day message exhibits the brand's association with its country.

Another instance of highlighting the national identity implications of the brand is its technique to share content related to the legacy of the country in such a way that the brand seems a part of the national heritage. Figure 4.17 as shared on the Facebook is an illustration.



Figure 4.17: **Display of City Lahore by SUFI**

Figure 4.17 shows an image of the *Badshahi Mosque* in the historical city of Pakistan called Lahore. The picture contains the images of a few Sufi oil products that have been edited on to the picture of the historical place and placed in an upfront position in the picture. The text written as a caption for the picture on Facebook says, '*Lahore is all about tasty food and rich heritage. Is that the reason why it is called the 'heart of Pakistan'?*'. The text here asserts the splendor of the rich culture of the historical city of Lahore which is famous for its Mughal heritage and for its rich tradition of tasty food. The second sentence though asks a question from the readers prompting them to contemplate for a moment for the answer; it nevertheless presupposes that Lahore is called the '*heart of Pakistan*' most probably due to its rich traditions of food and heritage. Placing the Sufi products in the picture is a strategy to relate the brand with the legacy of tasty food and rich heritage of Pakistan as mentioned in the caption. This is an effective strategy of the text producers to establish the relational values in the text where while mentioning about the cultural heritage of Pakistan the brand text producers enable the readers to relate the brand with the rich heritage of Pakistan. Using references to national monuments in the advertising discourse the brand's text producers reflect their national interests and highlight the nationalistic aspects of their identity.

Many other references of national significance have also been made in the discourse of Sufi's advertising. These references include messages of unity, optimism and harmony for the Pakistani nation. Though Sufi is a food brand whose main focus is on constructing its identity as a healthy brand, it nevertheless constructs and represents its national identity. The national identity is constructed by making textual references to national memorandums and events in its advertising discourse, thereby relating itself to the quintessential Pakistani spirit and traditions. As good food holds a strong position in the milieu of Pakistani heritage, it is but an effective marketing strategy to construct its national identity in its advertising discourse.

4.2.3 Brand 3- Qarshi

The linguistic and semiotic elements in the advertising discourse of Qarshi give a glimpse into the Pakistani culture and society, thus marking its national identity. The concept of family, social relations, cultural values and ethos all find a way in the advertisements designed by Qarshi's advertising text producers. These social relations depicted in the advertising content represent the socio-cultural identity overtones in the advertising discourse of the brand. The data gives a glance into an average Pakistani way of life which includes a glance into the family life setup, societal relationships, religious bearings etc. All these cultural and social aspects present in the advertising discourse of Qarshi highlight the socio-cultural identity of the brand. Consider figure (19) for

example, which has been taken from the Facebook page of Qarshi that advertises about a sweetened drink.



Figure 4.18: Display of family enjoying "Jam-e-Shirin" by Qarshi

Figure 4.18 shows an image of a family which includes a husband and a wife with their two children. The family is enjoying the product and is shown with happy faces smiling towards the camera. The foregrounded inscription which is in the topic position on the picture states, 'Warmth of being with loved ones is natural...', while the text in the continuation of this is placed at the bottom of the picture which states, '... just like enjoying Jam-e-Shirin with milk in winter is natural'. The endorsement of the product is done through the incorporation of the claimed goodness of the product by the text producers with the beauty of the family setup in Pakistani society. The text associates the naturalness of the warmth experienced in a family among loved ones with the naturalness of having *Jam-e-Shirin* (the sweet drink) in winter. In the Pakistan society family life and social relations are given utmost importance. Most families live together in joint family system where large families live together. In the current advertisement a strong image of a happy family is used to attach emotional value with the brand. By this practice of using an image having socio-cultural implications for Pakistanis, the brand producers construct and represent the national identity of the brand. Consider another image that has been shared on the Facebook page of the brand to promote the same product i.e. *Jam-e-Shirin*.



Figure 4.19: Display of "Jam-e-Shirin" by Qarshi

The image in figure 4.19 shows a man and a woman having a glass of the drink being advertised. The image of the product has been shown in a foregrounded position in the picture whereas the inscription in the top position on the picture reads, 'Serve your loved ones with a natural drink when they come home'. By urging the desired audience to serve their loved ones with a natural drink the text here presupposes that Jam-e-Shirin is a natural drink. In this image the family structure of a typical Pakistani household has been used to promote the product. The image of a married couple has been used in the advertisement to promote the brand by attaching emotional value to it. Here again the brand text producers relate the goodness of the drink with the bliss of conjugal life. Another insight into the Pakistani society can also be discerned in this picture which highlights the dominant patriarchal structure existing in Pakistani society where mostly the husband goes out to work and earn for his family while the wife stays at home and manages the household chores. Deeper readings into the secondary discourse of Qarshi's advertising reveals the deep rooted socio-cultural configurations in the Pakistani society that find a way in the advertising discourse of the brand thereby reflecting its socio-cultural identity.

Other socio-cultural events used as backdrops to various advertisements include the occasion of *Eid* which is a religious festival, among other festivals. Pakistan being a Muslim state officially celebrates Eid along with other events having religious significance for the Muslims of Pakistan who are in vast majority in Pakistan. Though not strictly a socio-cultural event, Eid in Pakistan is nevertheless celebrated as if part of a socio-cultural setup. Product endorsement on such events of religious significance is a common practice in the advertising world of Pakistani brands. Similarly, Qarshi also uses these events as milieus to promote its products. Figure 4.20 shows product advertisement on the occasion of Eid.



Figure 4.20: Display of "Jam-e-Shirin" by Qarshi on Eid

Figure 4.20 shows an image of a man and woman smiling towards the camera. Both are wearing national dress of Pakistan called Shalwar qameez. The text written in Urdu in the topic position in the picture states, '*Eid ki khushiyoun mein Jam-e-Shirin ka saath natural hai*' which can be translated as '*In the happiness of Eid the company of Jam-e-Shirin is natural*' in English. Here the text relates the brand or more specifically the product being advertised with the religious event of Eid thereby attaching the emotional value to the brand. An instance of code mixing is also observed in the above statement where the word '*natural*' from the English language has been mixed in an otherwise Urdu syntactic structure. Pakistan being a multilingual country allows the speakers to use a mixture of languages in their everyday lives. The mainstream media however uses either Urdu or English, or even a mixture of both these languages as it reaches to a wide audience across Pakistan and even abroad. The use of such linguistic practices of code mixing and code switching in the discourse of Qarshi's advertisements is also reflective of its national identity.

5. Conclusion

This section presents the conclusion of the analysis and research by providing a summary of the national identity construction practices and patterns of both the clothing and food brands, followed by a concluding remark.

5.1 Summarizing the Identity Construction Practices and Patterns of Clothing Brands

A common identity constructed by the three brands in the domain of clothing is national and patriotic identity. All the three brands in the domain of clothing have followed a similar pattern of identity construction by sharing content on their respective Facebook pages related to national events and national figures in honor of occasions having national significance. All the brands have very enthusiastically shared pictures, greetings, national memorandums etc. in honor of the Independence Day of Pakistan, celebrated on the 14th of August. The green color (color of the Pakistani flag) has been observed to be a recurrent color theme in the pictures shared on such events by all the selected clothing brands. Not only are national days celebrated with fervor and zeal, cultural festivals in Pakistan are also celebrated with great enthusiasm by these clothing brands thus representing their national identity.

5.2 Summarizing the Identity Construction Practices and Patterns of Food Brands

The findings indicate that all the three brands in the domain of food construct their national identity. The brands have shared content on their Facebook pages related to national events and national figures in honor of occasions having national significance. The findings indicate the advertising text producers of NFL construct its professional identity by focusing on Pakistani culture orientations. Relating the brand with the Pakistani culture is an effective advertising strategy on the part of the text producers as it helps in attaching an emotional value with the brand. Pakistanis being food lovers get attracted to the products promoted in the backdrop of Pakistani culture. This also enables the brand to represent its national and cultural identity overtones to the audience. Moreover, the advertisements of food set in the milieu of Pakistani culture grab the attention of the viewers more than anything else. Sufi Cooking Oil and Ghee similarly, constructs its national identity by representing its associations with its country by sharing posts related to national figures, national celebrations and by portraying its associations with the historical places of Pakistan. The third food brand i.e. Qarshi Food and Beverages constructs its national identity by representing its associations with the Pakistani culture. The focus of the brand remained on

depicting the socio-cultural themes, thus presenting the nationalistic overtones in its overall identity.

5.3 Concluding Remark: Addressing Nationalism

The national identity as constructed by the brands demonstrates the importance of nationalism for the people in Pakistan. Due to the long history of colonialism, the people of this region value independence which is apparent from the textual content updates in the advertising discourse of these brands in times of national concerns. For instance, the data shows that the brands have updated their advertisement content in connection to Independence Day celebrations to show their love for their homeland. What is noteworthy here is that almost all the brands remembered to celebrate this day with audience by creating texts depicting their national associations. Moreover, references to other issues of national concern in the advertising discourse of the brands such as the days celebrated in memory of birth and/or death anniversaries of national figures etc. also reflect nationalistic insinuations of the brands, thereby reflecting the value of nationalism in the country.

Thus, the findings of the analysis reveal that the advertising discourse of all the selected brands make use of images, vocabulary items, lexical and syntactical arrangements, themes, and other linguistic and semiotic elements of language that relate the brand to the socio-cultural contexts in which the texts are produced with the aim of creating a national identity for the brand that makes the brand more distinguishable and relatable to the audience.

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