

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review will examine general discourse, media discourse theory, and theories of discourse on advertisements in the first part and previous studies conducted in relation to product advertisements in the second.

1. Theoretical framework

1.1 Discourse Theory

Discourse can be divided into two aspects: interactional and transactional. Interactional is the discourse used to express social relations and personal attitudes. People in their daily course of life use interpersonal language, verbal and non-verbal, to communicate with each other. It is the conventional languages that open talk-exchanges as well as close the conversation. Transactional discourse is referred to when the speaker or writer aims to transfer factual information. Also, it is important that the receiver understands the information correctly (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf 3). For example, a beauty advisor explains to her customer how to apply a night crème, a policeman gives direction to a tourist, a doctor tells a nurse how to take medicine to a patient or a teacher explains how a certain math problem can be solved to his students. It is important that the speaker or writer make clear what he or she says or writes. The message receiver also needs to get the correct information or else the user may complain that the expensive



night crème she bought did not really work as expected, the tourist may never get to see the ancient ruins he wants to see, the patient's condition can get worse and the students may fail a test.

According to Fairclough, discourse is used in various disciplines namely language, political and socio-cultural studies. It is predominant in language studies. This refers to discourse as social action and interaction between people in the real social situation. The other is predominant in post-structuralist social theory. In this case discourse is considered to be a social construction of reality and a form of knowledge (Fairclough 18).

A different approach to discourse is presented by Guy Cook as “a text and context together, interacting in a way which is perceived as meaningful and unified by the participants” (1992: 2). A study of discourse is a study of syntax, semantics, context and forms, meanings and functions. It may be composed of one or more grammatically correct sentences, but sometimes it doesn't have to be. Discourse can follow the rules of grammar as a resource but sometimes it may deviate from the grammar structures. Discourse can be anything, but what is important is that it communicates and is recognized by the receiver as coherent. A sentence below taken from Wongbiasaj and Freeouf (2000: 1) is an example. “Our company, City Silk, is pleased to announce that we have produced a new type of silk. This silk has been developed by using a different weaving style. Such a style of weaving gives the fabric a heavier weight and uniqueness.”



A receiver of the message understands clearly that City Silk is introducing a silk of unique weaving style and fine quality. This is because the entire message is coherent. The nouns and pronouns used have clear references and the lexical items can link all the points well.

Cook's theory (Cook: 1989: 14) further states that there are two ways of approaching a language. The first is contextual that refers to the facts outside language. These are the situation and the people involved; what they are doing and what they know. These facts construct stretches of language that have a meaning and a unity. The other is a formal approach which refers to facts inside the language; the way people recognize differences between correct and incorrect sentences. These two approaches are totally different but can be studied through formal features, such as something people hear or read and contextual features, something in people's mind. There are also formal links in discourse. Formal links between sentences and between clauses are known as cohesive device. It can be divided into the followings.

1. Verb form is the form of verb in the sentence. Verbs are various in forms, for example, the verb "to go" can be expressed as to go, go, went, gone or going, depending on the tenses.

2. Parallelism is similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases or clause for example "*Live in your world, Play in ours*"

3. Referring expressions is the word that refers to the other word or element of the sentences such as third person pronouns (*she, her, hers, herself; it, its, itself*), adverbs of

place and time and (*this, that, here and there.*) Sometimes the meaning of a referring expression is not in sentence or clause itself. For example, if a student submits a paper to her teacher and the teacher says, “Leave *it* on my table.”, the student can assume that *it* means her paper.

5. Repetition and lexical chains

Repetition is simply a repetition of a word within a sentence or a poetical line and lexical chain is a sequence of related word in writing. Sentences using repetition can be short or long. The following example of repetitive form is cited from Cook (19).

The pineapple... the pineapple... the pineapple... the pineapple

This can be rewritten as by avoiding the repetition of the word pineapple.

The pineapple...the luscious fruit...our meal... the tropical luxury

6. Substitution is the replacement of one word or more by others.

Once in London, Margaret paid a visit to the Eyes of London. She never forgot the experience.

In the example illustrated above, the word *experience* substitutes for *a visit to the Eyes of London*.

7. Ellipsis is the omission of words and clauses when a substitution is not needed and the receiver can understand the whole sentence. In the example below “*Are you*” is omitted.

Rested from your vacation? Exhausted from the travel?

8. Conjunction is the connection between one sentence or clause and another.

Conjunction can take several forms and functions, for example.

- Addition e.g. *and, furthermore, moreover*
- Elaboration or exemplification e.g. *for instance, on the other hand*
- Relation to information already said e.g. *so, consequently, because, for this*

reason

- Time e.g. *formerly, then, next, last*
- Summary e.g. *to sum up, in sum, in conclusion, in summary*

1.2 Media Discourse

The study of advertisements involves media discourse. The reason that we have to study media or communication is because television, newspapers, texting and other available communication channels play an important role in mediating society to itself. Media discourse analysis helps people understand the hidden meaning. It analyzes any kinds of interactions which media texts set up between people and society. And it also analyzes how meaning is made different in different media texts and different ways of seeing and thinking (Matheson 1).

According to Fairclough (1995) discourse is used by both social theorists and analysts and linguists. Many linguists use discourse to refer to spoken or written language, such as visual images (photography, film, video, and diagram) and non-verbal communication (gesture, facial expression). Fairclough stated that communicative events consisted of text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. Texts may be written or oral, and oral texts may be spoken or spoken and visual. Discourse practice involves

various aspects of the procedures of text production and consumption. As cited from Fairclough (57), sociocultural practice is observed at different levels of abstraction from a particular event. It may involve immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices that event is embedded within or the wider frame of the society and the culture.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between three dimensions of an event, in which discourse practice is in the middle between text and social and cultural practice. The link between sociocultural and textual is made by way of discourse practice. This is because properties of sociocultural practice shape text through the shaping of the discourse practice (59-60). In summary, the text and culture are mediated by discourse practice, the cognitive processes through which the text is produced and consumed by society.

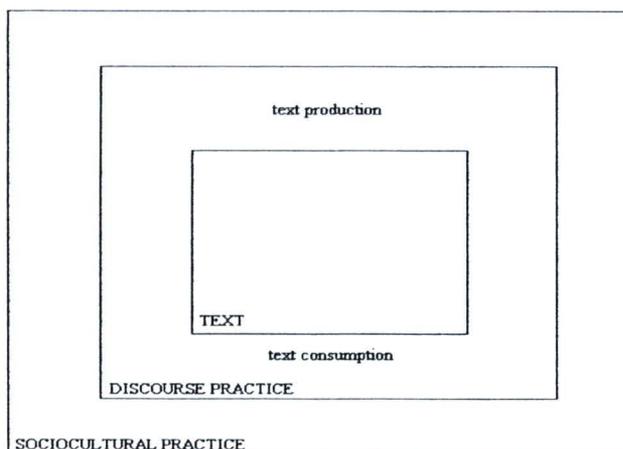


Figure 1: A framework for critical discourse analysis of a communicative e



1.3 Discourse of Advertisements

Advertisement has several functions: to inform, to advice, and to warn, but the main purpose is to persuade. The discourse of advertisement involves an analysis of the elements presented to the receiver, ways the advertising agency uses in the ad, the reasons the ad is presented in that way, the interpretation of the reader and the power hidden in the ad (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf 58). They further stated that the study of printed advertisements can be analyzed at 2 levels, visual and verbal. The other concept purposed by Kongpeth and Smith is in *The Language of Printed Advertisement*. However, they focused their analysis only on visual elements. For Kongpeth and Smith in *The Language of Printed Advertisement*, they proposed that language for advertisements comprises several features. The details of both principles will be illustrated in Chapter 3, Research methodology

2. Previous Studies

There are many relevant works about discourse analysis on beauty. The first is by Aunjai Jeamburanakul in “Beauty” Discourse, Identity, and Culture of Consumption: A Case Study of Women’s Students in Chiang Mai University (อุนใจ เจียมบุรณะกุล วากรรม “ความสวย” อัตลักษณ์วัฒนธรรมการบริโภค: กรณีศึกษานักศึกษาหญิงมหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่) (2004) which aimed to understand “beauty” as social construction for young girls. The study is both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative method emphasizes discourse analysis in the beauty section in women magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *LIPS* and *Elle*. This method

uses discourse theory by Michel Foucault, while the quantitative approach makes use of interviews of key informants, and students from different faculties of Chiang Mai University. The study shows that under the process of consumerism, women use their knowledge about values surrounding beauty to choose a personally most appropriate way of creating beauty as part of their own identity.

Another interesting study is by Jantima Patamathamakul (จันทิมา ปัทมธรรมกุล) (2007), a qualitative research aiming to analyze the advertisements in women magazines through the concept of beauty using Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough's theory, as well as semiology. The study analyzes how women magazines construct the concept of beauty framed by society and shows that the media is the important variable for the construction of the culture of beauty culture for women. The results demonstrate that cosmetic advertisement reproduces a discourse of beauty that is not different from social expectancy. Those advertisements use many techniques to construct a standard of women's physical beauty through the use of its products. The researcher concludes that media has great influence on consumers by using beauty to gain trust. She also suggests that discourse of beauty from other beauty advertisements such as diet products, supplement products, beauty clinics, as well as hidden advertisements should be extensively studied because advertising discourse has great impact on women's perception and life.

Esthetic Discourse Analysis on Advertising of Women Magazines by Noppamas Ruengpanichpiban (การวิเคราะห์วาทกรรมความงามในหน้าโฆษณาของนิตยสารสตรี โดย นพมาศ เรืองพานิช)

ภินาถ) (2007) studied the components of discourse, creation of esthetic meaning and reflection on gender on advertising of six women magazines. Advertising articles, fifty pieces altogether, were collected and analyzed. It is qualitative research analyzing the contents and conducting in-depth interviews on 3 groups of women; scholar on woman studies, advertising producers and psychologists in terms of attitudes towards the esthetic discourse on advertising of women magazines. The research reported the following findings. First, the components of esthetic discourse are comprised of pictures and paralanguage. Outstanding characteristics, famous presenters and western women are used as representatives to identify the knowledge frame of society. The advertisement presents pictures of people more than the product pictures because celebrities are considered more attractive to viewers. Second, the creation of aesthetics is achieved using market strategies such as using one full page rather than two separate pages. Femininity is presented and connected between relationships and consumption signals. Implicated meaning of products was transferred. The brandings focus on symbols of famous products along with pictures of western women to represent western aesthetics. All interviewees believed that advertisements affect the thinking process of women by repeating representation of beauty, especially that women should be beautiful. Finally, it is found that women's status is determined by societies based on bodies and gender inequality forcing women to pay a great attention to their appearances to attract men. Women then try hard to be more beautiful to increase social values. Women would feel devalued if they do not have aesthetics specified in the media.

The research by Firth, Shaw and Cheng (2005) compared the construction of beauty in women magazines from the US, Singapore and Taiwan to determine whether culture or ethnicity plays a role in how beauty is constructed in advertising. Nine different magazines were used for data collection. 80% or more of their readers were primarily local women between the ages of 20 and 35. The content on each magazine focused mainly on fashion and beauty in which the study found some similarities and differences. Asian ads contained a large proportion of cosmetics and facial beauty products, while the U.S. ads were dominated by clothing. The findings suggested that the U.S. ads paid more attention to body, while Asian ads focused on face. As far as culture dimension is concerned, advertisements pictured women as sex object. In comparing ads from Singapore, Taiwan and the U.S., the study found that Caucasian women were depicted most often in sexual portrayals across cultures. On the other hand, Asian women were hardly projected sexually. This may be a reflection of conservative Confucian cultural values in Singapore and Taiwan where women are expected to be proper and rather kept inside the household.

“Words that Matter: Lexical Choice and Gender Ideologies in Women’s Magazines” by del-Tesco-Craviotto (2005) is a lexical study of four US women magazines (*Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, Working Woman and Ms.*) using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The researcher explored the connections between vocabulary and the dominant gender ideology by collecting the most frequent and relevant vocabulary in each magazine. This study examined the use of certain lexical items in the specific contexts where they appear. The results showed the

distribution and frequency of beauty related vocabulary of each magazine, functioning as an ideological resource for the description and evaluation of people and situations. The study also showed that certain words such as “woman”, “man” or “work” were used frequently in all four magazines to reveal the magazine’s position towards women and femininity, especially emphasizing on gender as individual or social issue.

The study by Ketkarn Tiammuang (เก็จกาญจน์ เทียมเมือง) (2002) focused on an analysis of the techniques and language used in diet product advertisement and services in women magazines. There were 3 target groups of women magazines: well-educated working class, middle class and low class. The data were 1329 diet product advertisements focusing on both verbal and non-verbal techniques. The results showed advertisements relied on identification, specific headlines, slogans and company’s motto as specific marketing techniques. Different captions were used in advertisements showing pictures of before and after use and the process description. For non-verbal language, many techniques were such as color pictures, standard letters with full page giving significance to logos and brand names.

“The role of social comparison in the effect of magazine advertisements on women’s mood and body dissatisfaction” by Tiggemann and McGill (2004) involved the magazine advertisements. It aimed to study social comparison processes in women’s responses to images of thin-idealized female beauty from advertisements. The samples were 126 women who viewed magazine advertisements. The study employed a between-subjects 3x3 factorial design, investigating 4 aspects. First, the effect of image type (body



part, full body, and product). Second, the instructional set (control, appearance focus, social comparison). Next, the mood and body dissatisfaction was measured instantly before and after viewing. Lastly, weight anxiety and the amount of appearance compassion were measured only after viewing. It was found that exposure to either body part or full body images led to increased negative mood and body dissatisfaction, while the amount of comparison processing was affected by both image type and instructional set. Importantly, analyses showed that the effects of image type on mood and body dissatisfaction were mediated by the amount of social comparison reported. It was concluded that the processing in which women engage in responding to media images is an important contributor to negative effects.

The study by Brian Moeran (2010) explored how international magazines such as *Elle*, *Vogue*, and *Marie Claire* portray feminine beauty in textual and advertisement matter and how the readers react to such portrayals. The study collected more than 700 issues of these magazines published in France, Hong Kong, Japan, UK and USA and over fifteen-year period. The analysis focused on the different kinds of “face” that the magazines invited their women readers to put on. The magazine contents confirmed the validity of previous feminist critiques; the article argues that magazine editors adopt a technology of enchantment as a means of exercising control over the readers. The magazine and its advertising language were full of magical power that persuades readers to believe.

To sum up, various studies have been conducted on beauty from advertisements in women's magazines. These studies have been generally either lexical in nature, or focused on women's cognitive perceptions of the advertisement. However, no study has been found to focus on the construction of beauty in the beauty products in *Marie Claire*. Therefore, it will be worthwhile to conduct an in-depth study on this particular matter using discourse analysis. This study will analyze the mechanism of verbal and visual discourse used in beauty product advertisements to find out how the concept of beauty is constructed throughout the magazine advertisements.