

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

NGUYEN THI PHUONG

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF SOME NIVEA ADVERTISEMENTS**

(Phân tích diễn ngôn phê phán một số quảng cáo của NIVEA)

M.A THESIS

Field: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

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Supervisor 1: Prof. Dr. Hoang Van Van

Supervisor 2: Dr. Nguyen Trong Du

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the study entitled “A critical discourse analysis of some NIVEA advertisements” represents my own research result as the fulfillment for the Master Degree of Arts at School of Foreign Languages – Thai Nguyen University. It has not been submitted to any other universities or institutions.

SUPERVISORS’ SIGNATURE

STUDENT’S SIGNATURE

Supervisor 1

Prof. Dr. Hoang Van Van

Nguyen Thi Phuong

Supervisor 2

Dr. Nguyen Trong Du

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, my sincere thanks would like to be sent to my supervisors: Prof. Dr. Hoang Van Van – Vietnam National University, Hanoi and Dr. Nguyen Trong Du – Thai Nguyen University. This work would not have been completed without their valuable advice and guidance.

I am also grateful to my colleagues and friends for their assistance when I was doing my research.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all lecturers at the Department of Post-graduate Studies, School of Foreign Languages, Thai Nguyen University, whose support and considerations have enabled me to pursue the course.

I finally wish to give my deep thanks to all members of my family for their love, care, and in-time encouragement to inspire me finish my thesis.

ABSTRACT

The study on advertising has been increasingly important. There have been many critical discourse analyses of advertisements in the world, but little research has been found in Vietnam. In addition, no study on NIVEA advertisements has been conducted although NIVEA is one of the most global famous cosmetics brands. This study was conducted to achieve three objectives: (1) to analyze the linguistic features of NIVEA advertisements which are designed to attract customers; (2) to discover the discourse strategies used in NIVEA advertisements to construct the concept of ideal beauty; and (3) to investigate the social implications of NIVEA beauty product advertisements. Fairclough's three-dimension model was applied on the data sample of 18 NIVEA advertisements downloaded from the website <https://www.nivea.co.uk>. The research results showed that in terms of lexical devices, NIVEA advertisers used both positive and negative vocabulary, scientific terms, foreign or exotic words, second personal and possessive pronouns. Headlines were typically written in short simple sentences and phrases while body copies tended to be longer and more complex with the use of comparison, imperative sentences, active and passive voice, present and future tense. Other linguistic features including the use of such rhetorical devices as repetition and simile contributed to create impression and attraction on viewers. The discourse strategies including negative and positive self-representation, providing scientific proof, puffery, adding appeal to healthy beauty and setting close relationship with customers were applied to build the producers' beauty concepts, deliver it to customers and persuade them to use the products. The ideology hidden behind the discourse of NIVEA advertisements was the producer's universal beauty standard of natural, youthful, energetic, healthy and smooth complexion.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the reasons for choosing the topic, the purpose of the study, the main research questions, the scope and significance of the research.

1.1. Rationale for the study

Advertising has been a topic for many studies and advertisement analysis has been increasingly important. An advertisement is seen as a message to promote or sell a product. Consumers can gather information about products or services through advertisements, based on which they can decide which product is good or bad for them (Rosul, 2011). Advertising is not only to promote branded products, but also to deliver the idea of texts which are intended to create the image of an individual, group or organization (Goddard, 2002). Hence, advertising is not a remote and specialized discourse, but a prominent discourse type in contemporary society (Cook, 2001). From a discursive point of view, advertisements in both written and spoken forms have the potential to employ social dominance, power abuse or inequality and they can change social practices. While doing so, the persuasive language used in advertisements can sometimes mislead viewers either consciously or unconsciously (Tahmasbi & Kalkhajeh, 2013; Turhan & Okan, 2017). Advertisements are complex and interdisciplinary although they are very short. Thus, for ordinary people, especially learners of English, it is very difficult to understand the meaning hidden under advertisers' language. Therefore, the study of advertisements is becoming increasingly important. To find out the message, which is generally hidden, critical discourse analysis could be an effective method because critical discourse analysis has an interest in concepts like communications patterns in public institutions, media discourse such as reporting, advertisements, and television broadcasting (Baykal, 2016). Critical discourse analysis always concerns about social issues embedded in society and tries to analyze hidden power in it. These advertisements have linguistic power through gender and social hegemony and ideologies (Islam, 2016).

Recently, there have been many studies on advertisements from the critical discourse analysis perspective in the world. For example, Tahmasbi & Kalkhajeh (2013) researched on banks advertisements in Iran. Rosul (2011) carried out a critical discourse analysis research of Fairness-Product Advertisements for Women and Men in Bangladesh. Kaur et al (2013) conducted a critical discourse analysis research in Malaysia to analyze the influence of beauty product advertisements' linguistic features and discourse strategies in constructing the standard of ideal beauty among Malaysian women. Nugrawidhanti (2016) conducted a similar study in Indonesian context with the focus on Oriflame beauty product advertisements. However, almost no critical discourse analysis studies on NIVEA have been found in the world while NIVEA is one of the oldest beauty brands with a history of over 100 years and has been one of the top skin care products for both men and women all over the world. It has been ranked high by many trustworthy websites; for example: No.5 in Top 10 beauty brands in 2012 (<https://www.forbes.com>); No.5 in Global top 50 brands in 2015 (<https://www.cosmeticsbusiness.com>); No.2 in Top 10 popular skin care brands in 2016 (<https://www.beautycrew.com.au>). Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a study with an interest in how NIVEA advertisements work to promote beauty products in order to attract customers to buy and use them. The researcher also enjoyed the contribution of these advertisements to constructing the standard of ideal beauty and convincing customers to believe it.

Moreover, to my best knowledge, in Vietnam there have hardly had any research on analyzing advertisement discourses, so learners of English may encounter difficulties in reading advertisements (i.e those for NIVEA products which are familiar with Vietnamese users). Therefore, this research entitled "A critical discourse analysis of NIVEA advertisements" was also expected to be beneficial for learners of English in expanding knowledge about language use in particular context, especially linguistic features and discourse strategies of advertisements.