Exploring Discursive Features and Techniques of Manipulating Consumers in Persian Printed Advertisements

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Abstract

Manipulation is an illegitimate mind control that can be performed via the triangular model of social, cognitive, and discursive strategies which leads to social inequality. This study aimed to investigate the discursive strategies employed in Persian printed advertisements to manipulate audiences based on triangular model of van Dijk (2006). Since manipulation is a crucial notion of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the researchers had to utilize CDA principles of Fairclough (2013) as well. To do this, an analysis was performed on the corpus of 160 Persian printed advertisements collected during one year, from 2016 to 2017. Half of the data were collected from real context of use in three different cities of Iran (Kermanshah, Ahwaz, and Mashhad), and another half were downloaded from different websites. Then, the corpus of data was analyzed employing triangular model of manipulation and CDA in order to determine the strategies used in those advertisements to manipulate audiences. The results revealed that the advertising discourse in Iran is completely manipulative which uses discursive, cognitive and social strategies to manipulate consumers. Furthermore, the results added more strategies such as *(a) religious messages, (b) challenging hints, (c) Giving discount or rewards, and (d) Deadline,* to the findings of previous studies.

1. Introduction

According to van Dijk (2006) manipulation is a sort of controlling minds and actions through an illegal use of language by speakers or writers to create a new ideology and thinking for audiences in order to convince them to act in the best interest of speakers or writers. Van Dijk (2006) argues that this special use of language is governed by social, cognitive and discursive features to have manipulative effects on audiences; moreover, he emphasizes that audiences as the manipulated groups must not be aware of being manipulated by speakers or writers as manipulator groups. He further mentioned that in manipulation studies, power relations between social groups in a specific context are of utmost importance. In this regard, Maillat and Oswald (2011) suggest that in discourse analysis of manipulation, two aspects must be carefully evaluated; first, the social relationship of manipulators and manipulated groups, their particular roles, and their position in that context must be clarified. In fact, CDA as a rhetorical investigation of discursive features is used to critically analyze the spoken as well as written texts in order to determine how speakers and writers establish manipulative context or hierarchical power relations through using spoken and written language to impose their intended meaning and hidden ideology on audiences and consequently manipulate their audiences' minds and actions (Fairclough, 2013; Weiss & Wodak, 2007). Hence, in manipulation studies, macro analysis of CDA will determine whether the manipulative act is performed through top-down approach which is imposed from superior groups on inferior groups in a specific context, or through bottom-up approach in which the inferior groups will manipulate the minds and actions of superior groups. The results of the CDA of political issues (Bhatia, 2006; Dunmire, 2009; Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2006), mass media (Cukier, Ngwenyama, Bauer & Middleton, 2009), political newspaper (Teo, 2000), and political advertisements (Ademilkun & Taiwo, 2013) revealed that manipulation in most of the political contexts was performed in the top-down approach in which the powerful groups or political leaders- to fulfil their political goals- will control the discourse to manipulate others. Whereas CDA in other contexts such as educational context (Hasrati & Mohammadzadeh, 2012) and in some drug companies (Billig & Marinho, 2014) employed the bottom-up approach of manipulation in which the inferior groups (here students and companies) through using manipulation strategies aimed to manipulate the superior groups to achieve their goals. Second, Maillat and Oswald (2011) suggest that the tools through which the manipulation will be realized must be identified. Therefore, the linguistic features utilized by manipulators as the manipulative tools to gain the unaware approval of the manipulated groups must be analyzed. Hence, the micro analysis of CDA is used to investigate different strategies or linguistic features employed in specific discourse as manipulative tools (Chapman, 2011; Gee, 2011).

Most of the previous manipulation studies have been stated so far, were performed in political or educational contexts in which predetermined unequal and hierarchical power relations existed amongst different social groups; however, this study through analyzing advertising discourse put efforts to demonstrate that manipulative act can be done without relying on clear power relationships between manipulator and manipulated groups. Advertisements in Iranian context like any other societies are used as a medium of interaction between producers and consumers which provide a gateway for producers to manipulate consumers to do things in favor of producers' intentions (buying their products). The advertising discourse is a social phenomenon which is both "socially shaped and socially shaping" (Chiluwa, 2008, p. 374). Based on this dialectical social phenomenon, it is assumed that the style of language used in the corpus of advertisements in the present study are socially shaped by producers based on the Iranian context and are considered as social tools to interact with community of consumers in that context. Simultaneously, the messages in advertisements have the potential to shape the specific social relationship between producers and consumers in such a way that it might lead to empowering producers to control others' minds and actions. Hence, producers as manipulators resort to the needs and demands of the consumers to manipulate them through manipulated advertisements. The present study aims to investigate the way companies manipulate consumers through different discursive features used in Persian printed advertisements in the advertising context of Iran.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Manipulation

Van Dijk (2006) maintains that using language in interactional contexts including groups with asymmetric power relations cannot simply be regarded as a way of exchanging or persuading but there are some implicit or manipulative intentions in such interactions. He introduces manipulation as a deliberate and covert attempt by speakers to influence or elicit the interested response from audiences, whereas this response will be more than verbal communication and leads audiences to perform an action in the best interest of the speakers. He mentions that manipulative acts could be performed discursively, socially and cognitively by means of deceiving audiences' cognitions or minds, deceptive social practices and misleading information provided via specific discourse. Therefore, manipulation can be based on deceiving audiences' awareness (Chomsky, 2012; de Saussure & Schulz, 2005), providing relevant information for addressees (de Saussure, 2011), reducing audiences' critical thinking (Chomsky, 2012), or concealing the negative information under the positive appearances (Rigotti, 2005) to

convince the audiences to act in the interest of speakers without being aware of manipulative effects or intentions of speakers.

As it was mentioned before, besides top-down or bottom-up approach, manipulation can also be performed without existing predetermined and clear hierarchical power relations amongst different social groups in a specific context. This sort of manipulation is imposed by one group through their access to social recourses (such as knowledge, information, media or textbook) or social practices which can lead to hierarchical construction of social fields, institutions, and organization and consequently may lead to social changes through using specific genres or styles and making meaning which is in the interest of that groups (Fairclough, 2012; van Dijk, 2015). van Dijk (2015) argues that ordinary people are the passive group who have no access to or control over information and knowledge in newspapers, textbooks, and other mass media and consequently are passive acceptants of the provided information. Utilizing CDA to analyze the media and advertising discourse, some studies demonstrated that these social resources use people's lack of knowledge and information to manipulate them via providing beliefs, opinions and knowledge for them (Baidya, 2016) or providing biases or discriminatory judgments, decisions and actions for audiences (Hart, 2012).

2.1.1 Manipulation through Advertising Discourse

Advertisements are ubiquitous means of interaction between producers and consumers which are scattered all over the society and people encounter them intentionally or unintentionally. Advertisements like the sellers' talk seek to create needs and desire to people, remind them what they need, create belief and ideology and also evoke the desire to try new things. In addition, advertisements as commercial conversational tools have their own specific visual or verbal style with some underlying intentions to have some effects on audiences' minds and actions (Baig, 2013; Hashim, 2010). In a nutshell, advertisements are used to turn audiences into consumers.

Based on the study by Tahmasbi and Kalkhajeh (2013), the two main types of advertisements are "printed advertisements" and "TV advertisements". As it is clear by these terms, the TV advertisements utilize short movies or special kinds of moving pictures, sounds and music which are broadcasted by TV to advertise some brands or products: whereas, in printed advertisements the advertisers use textual and intertextual features, images, and colors to inculcate particular ideology into customers' minds. Although both types of advertisements use type of language suitable for specific sociocultural context to induce persuasive or manipulative elements to serve the interest of advertisers, the effects of TV advertisements due to using memorable strategies (i.e. movies and music) are more powerful and

stronger. Nowadays, due to the increasing usage of internet and mobile, manipulation through advertisements goes beyond TV and printed advertisements to have direct interaction with people via different websites. In fact, producers through online advertising aim to make advertisements more obtrusive and to increase people's purchases (Boyland & Whalen, 2015; Goldfarb & Tucker, 2010; Rideout, Foeher & Robert, 2010). Analyzing messages utilized in advertisements, Danciu (2014) maintains that advertisements are not neutral and producers through using deceptive facts, fallacious arguments, emotive persuasion and exaggeration about the quality of advertised products aim to manipulate people's shopping. Manipulation through advertisements was also performed by tapping into people's needs and using emotional expressions or emotional games (Danciu, 2014); by using people's personality factors such as *dominance, aggressiveness, openness, emotional lability,* and the like (Salceanu, 2014); by emphasizing gender preferences to attract men's or women's attentions (Velasco-Sacristán & Fuertes-Olivera, 2006); and by controlling people's emotional behavior or preferences to enhance impulsive purchases (van Tuinen, 2011). Hence, advertising discourse is in the interest of producers through imposing unintentional needs in consumers' minds towards the advertised products and subsequently create a demanding urge in consumers to buy those products (Capon & Hulbert, 2001).

Jalilifar (2010) argues that since the target of advertisements are different people, the success and failures of advertisements are highly depending on their attention to cultural values of specific societies. Therefore, advertising discourse is based on sociocultural context in which it is used and it will utilize the linguistic elements, images, and ideology which are related to the consumers' culture (Sells & Gonzalez, 2002). Thus, the manipulation in advertising discourse will be based on consumers' sociocultural, sociopolitical and sociohistorical contexts to reduce their critical thinking and resistance to the messages in advertisements.

According to Shooshtari and Allahbaksh (2013), printed advertisements in Iranian context are of two kinds: "bilingual printed advertisements and monolingual printed advertisements". They declare that bilingual printed advertisements utilize English language along with Persian language to increase its positive effects on audiences, modernity, creativity, internationalization, and to add prestige to the products to manipulate audiences. Whereas, in monolingual printed advertisements the host of language is Persian while other languages such as English are rarely used to cite the email address or introduce foreign brand name. In fact, the monolingual Persian printed advertisements in the context of Iran uses the lexical and structural knowledge, rhetorical features, and cultural conventions which are appropriate and comprehensible for the community of Iranian

consumers to manipulate them through shared knowledge and comprehensible interaction. As previously mentioned, this study tries to scrutinize the discursive strategies used in monolingual Persian printed advertisements to manipulate consumers. More specifically, current investigation is going to address the following research questions:

1. What discursive features are used in Persian printed advertisements to manipulate audiences?
2. What strategies and techniques might have been used in Persian printed advertisements to cognitively manipulate consumers' minds?
3. What types of social practices, as explained by van Dijk (2006), are utilized in Persian printed advertisements to control consumers' actions?

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study can be placed more in the qualitative research design as it leads to classification of data into theme-based categories or thematic coding which are arranged in specific categories based on their verbal/written elements (see, for example, Paltridge, 2012, chapter 10; Doing Discourse Analysis). The qualitative analysis for this research project was based on CDA and manipulation studies to analyze the Persian printed messages in advertising context of Iran.

3.2. Corpus of the Study

The materials for this study are consisted of a corpus of 160 Persian printed commercial advertisements. 80 were collected in the real context of use in three cities of Iran: Kermanshah, Ahwaz, and Mashhad, through taking photos of commercial advertisements- such as posters, banners, flyers, products' containers, leaflets and so on- distributed in public places, and 80 online advertisements downloaded from the internet through surfing different websites of factories which are producing the famous products mentioned below or most public websites which advertise most products of the mentioned products below. This corpus of data was collected during one year to avoid the time affecting variables; hence, the advertisements that promoted different goods, services, or products from 2016 to 2017 were collected for the current investigation. The main criterion for selecting advertisements was the use of Persian messages, especially Persian messages which were beyond two words and which were in the form of Persian phrases or sentences.

3.3. Instruments

In order to collect data, a digital camera was used for taking photos of Persian advertisements' banners or billboards distributed across the three target cities. A corpus of printed advertisements or flyers were used too. Moreover, in the case of searching for online advertisements laptop and computer were also utilized. Since this research was conducted to investigate and classify the rhetorical features and manipulation strategies used by advertisements, the researchers have adopted van Dijk's (2006) framework for manipulation analysis of Persian messages, and Furlough's (2013) framework of CDA for critical analysis of Persian printed advertising discourse in the context of Iran. Van Dijk's model proposed three parts to analyze the text, namely cognitive, discursive, and social facets/ dimensions, and CDA is based on two steps for rhetorical investigation of advertising messages, namely; macro-level and micro-level analysis. Based on Fairclough (2013) three-dimensional framework to study discourse, the objective is to map these three separate forms of analysis onto one another. That is; the analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as examples of socio-cultural practice are mapped onto one another. Fairclough (2001) combines the three levels of micro, meso and macro-level interpretation. At the first level, micro-level, the discourse analyst is concerned with the aspects of textual/linguistic analysis, for instance syntactic analysis, or utilizing metaphor and rhetorical devices. At the meso-level or "level of discursive practice" the discourse analyst studies the issues of production and consumption, for example, who produced a text, who is the audience, etc. Finally, at the macro-level, the discourse analyst is concerned with intertextual and inter-discursive elements and attempts to consider the broad, societal currents which affect the text under study.

3.4. Procedure

The collected data were manually scanned to select only 160 advertisements (80 from real context of use and 80 online advertisements) which had the rich Persian text format (i.e. phrases, chunks, or sentences). Then, the researchers scrutinized the collected advertisements via laptop software for deleting some noises such as phone numbers, English or other languages messages and addresses to have an expurgated version of the advertisements. Afterward, based on CDA and manipulation frameworks mentioned above, the researchers classified the written messages into different categories and themes, based on their elements such as their structures, meaning and their manipulative effects on audiences. In the first step of this analysis, the collected data were scrutinized based on macro-level analysis of CDA and van Dijk (2006) to provide information which reveal

that the advertising discourse of Iran is manipulative context through using irrelevant information and intentionally highlighting or hiding some specific information, and also to provide information about the way one group through access to advertisements as social recourse are able to control others' minds and actions. Then, the collected data were analyzed using micro-level of CDA and manipulation studies to find the rhetorical strategies used by Persian printed advertisements to discursively, cognitively, and socially manipulate audiences' minds and actions.

Hence, to answer the first research question, the discursive strategies which are mainly related to specific lexical and structural features used in advertising discourse and the effect of those advertisements on the formation of social relation (here manipulative relation) were analyzed and classified into eight them-based strategies under the heading of *Discursive manipulative strategies*. Moreover, to answer the second research question, the strategies used by producers or companies to provide specific understanding for the consumers, which enable producers to cognitively manipulate their minds, were analyzed and classified into six strategies as *cognitive manipulative* strategies. Finally, in order to find answer to the third question, the advertisements as a medium of interaction between companies and consumers and subsequently as a medium through which companies might manipulate the consumers, were scrutinized based on their roles as social tools distributed in social contexts. In this regard, some features or information that indicated the companies' awareness of people's mental model, their emotion, what people need or what they suffer from, were analyzed by the three researchers based on the above-mentioned frameworks and the researchers' own interpretations and specified into four strategies as *social manipulative strategies*. Finally, their frequency and percentage were calculated. The researchers compared and contrasted each other's data. In the case of any discrepancies among the analysis the remove the unwanted and unrelated data till they came to unanimous agreement. The inter-coder reliability was obtained around 69%.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis of 160 Persian printed advertisements which are theme-based categorizations of data based on manipulation analysis, macro-level and micro-level analysis of CDA are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Manipulation Strategies Obtained from Analyzing 160 Persian Printed Advertisements

Manipulation strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Discursive manipulative strategies		
Differentiation/ Neologisms	29	18.13
Overall interaction strategies	55	34.38
Rhetorical figures	44	27.5
Local meanings	17	10.63
Question-like/ Unfinished statements	5	3.13
Testimonial information	20	12.5
Parallel structure	16	10
Command	12	7.5
Cognitive manipulative strategies		
Consumer complimenting	10	6.25
Challenging hints	12	7.5
Religious messages	10	6.25
Snob appeal	7	4.38
Dead line	8	5
Brand names	37	23.13
Social manipulative strategies		
Authoritative fallacy	17	10.63
Patriotism	20	12.5
Giving discount or rewards	22	13.75
Geographical and cultural messages	29	18.25

4.1. Manipulation and micro-level of CDA

Then, building upon Furlough's (2013) micro-analysis of CDA and van Dijk's (2013, 2006) triangular model of manipulation, and confirming the results of studies by Chilton (2005), the researchers have provided answers to the research questions about different strategies used in manipulative context of Persian printed advertisements. The results of analysis of 160 Persian printed advertisements reveal that the manipulative acts performed through discursive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies and each strategy divided into different subcategories; moreover, there are advertisements among 160 collected data which had all strategies and their subcategories; however, there also exist some advertisements that only had one or two strategies or subcategories. According to Table 1, the discursive manipulative strategies consist of 29 differentiations/ neologisms, 55 overall interaction strategies, 44 rhetorical figures,17 local meanings, 5 question-like/ unfinished statements, 20 testimonial information, 16 parallel structure, and 12 commands out of 160 Persian printed advertisements. The subcategories of cognitive manipulative strategies are as follows: 10 consumer complements, 12 challenging hints, 10 religious messages, 7 snob

appeals, 8 dead line, and 37 brand names. Furthermore, the collected Persian printed advertisements had the social manipulative strategies such as 17 authoritative fallacies, 20 cases, 22 giving discount or rewards, and 29 geographical and cultural messages. The researchers of this study have also found some manipulation strategies which are not mentioned in previous studies. The discovered strategies are classified into '*religious messages, challenging hints, and dead line' as cognitive strategies, and 'giving discount or rewards' as a social strategy* which are utilized in Persian printed advertisements to manipulate consumers. These strategies along with the related subcategories are clarified as follows.

4.2. Discursive Features to Manipulate Audiences

The results revealed that Persian printed advertisements discursively manipulate consumers through utilizing specific linguistic structures and word play in advertisements' messages to make pleasant and attractive messages and to decrease their rational and critical thinking towards these messages. These discursive strategies or features are employed to manipulate audiences and make them permanent consumers are as follows:

Differentiation/neologisms. Using this strategy, Persian printed advertisements try to manipulate consumers via stating that their products are different from that of others or representing their products in a way that those are the first or the revolutionary and the newest one amongst others. For example, the messages such as "برای اولین بار در ایران"= *for the first time in Iran" and "*طعمی خوشمزه و متفاوت*"= a delicious and different taste"* are regarded as differentiation/neologism strategy to discursively manipulate consumers. This strategy will confirm the findings of the studies done by Jalilifar (2010) and Chomsky (2012) who believe that media and advertisements use the same strategies to persuade people to be flexible and use new changes.

Overall interaction strategies. Based on van Dijk (2006) and Wodak (2007), the overall interaction strategy (positive self-representation/ negative-other representation) can be used in spoken or written texts to depict a group as the best or better group or depict the competitor group as a negative group with negative or good-for-nothing activities. In fact, this strategy in Persian printed advertisements has been used more than other strategies in advertising context of Iran to create a biased opinion toward the products in favor of specific producer or brand name. This strategy tends to promote an intended product as the best among other products through using positive self-representation, but they very rarely use negative other representation. The positive self-representation in collected Persian printed advertisements are in two ways: first, the advertisements use some linguistic strategies such as comparative or superlative structure to argue that 'they are the best', for

instance "بهترین برزنت، طول عمر بیشتر = *the best oilcloth, more durable*"; second by using some positive statements about their own products without any comparison among different products such as ' سبک، سالم، خوش طعم= *light, healthy, tasty'* to manipulate consumers to buy the intended products.

   Rhetorical figures. Rhetorical strategies are specific stylistic features of written or spoken language which are used to manipulate audiences or to produce an impressive effect on them (Jalilifar, 2010). The rhetorical strategies discovered through analyzing the data of this study are consisted of 'rhyme', 'alliteration', and 'hyperbole' to attract audiences' attention.

   a) Rhyme is a rhetorical strategy used to make a pleasant and memorable effect through employing words with the same final accent such as 'still-hill' (Shams, 2005 & (Jalilifar, 2010). The Persian message such as (سن ایچ باتو ودیگر هیچ) in Iranian advertisements used rhyme in the final accent of سن ایچ and هیچ) San Ich and Hich: San Ich-a Turkish word meaning drink it-and nothing anymore) to make it more memorable and to build a poetry slogan with San Ich (the brand name) so as to convince the audiences that there is no need to have other products.

   b) Alliteration in Persian printed advertisements are in the form of repetition of consonant cluster (Jalilifar, 2010) such as i.e. چین / chin in this Persian phrase: "چین چینو تو بچین= *chin chino to bechin"* (chin *chin-a brand name meaning pick up- you pick up).* This strategy manipulates consumers through providing a pleasant and desired understanding for consumers to encourage them to choose this specific brand.

   c) Hyperbole in Persian advertisements is promoting products with exaggeration about their quality (Danciu, 2014 and Jalilifar, 2010). For instance, a Persian printed advertisement which advertised a specific brand of rice uses personification (Lakeoff & Johnson, 1980) via depicting a grain of rice in a man shape while uttering this Persian message ' ببخشید! جا نبود دراز کشیدم/ *excuse me! There was no place so I lay down',* this utterance is a hyperbole which introduced the grain of rice as a very long grain that cannot stand in limited space of billboard to show that this brand of rice uses the long grain rice which has the popularity in the Iranian context.

   Local meanings of our/their or positive/negative action. This discursive strategy is used to provide many or few details, general or specific and explicit or implicit information to manipulate audiences (van Dijk, 2006). The results of current analysis of Persian printed advertisements revealed that local meaning strategies were used to provide many/few positive details about the products such as information about their facilities, the ingredients which seem to be useful and pleasant for consumers. For instance, this

information represented on the container of washing powder: ' اولین پودر ایرانی /being the first Iranian washing powder having 3 enzymes' and introducing those three enzymes at the lower parts in a way that this powder has the power to cleanly wash all kinds of dirty clothes, is a good exmple of local meanings to show the positive features of this product.

Question-like/ unfinished statements. Another discursive strategy to manipulate consumers refers to using the unfinished structure (Chapman, 2011; Danciu, 2014) and the question like statements (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013 ; Jalilifar, 2010) in advertisements. In fact, unfinished structures using open ended statements about the product let audiences guess the missing parts or interpret the meaning, and questions like statements are used to attract attention or challenge the audiences' minds. The Persian printed advertisements which *uses questions like;* '؟!؟ الو پنجره را می شناسید؟!؟ *Do you know Alo window?!?!?'* or وندیک چیست؟ */what is* vanadik?" are trying to struggle audience's mind to find the answer by searching about those products and unintentionally being eager to use them as well.

Testimonial information. This strategy refers to using some scientific proof or factual information to verify the products' quality. The sort of testimonial information in this study is related to using some standard logo or being endorsed by some worldwide reputed laboratories. The Persian message in this advertisement 'i.e. هاکوپیان سربلند درکسب نشان شوالیه مدیریت رویا/ *Hacoupian-a brand name- is on the top by receiving the award of Knight Management of dream',* used the endorsement of a well-known standard logo as a testimonial information to manipulate consumers' mind and their shopping.

Parallel structure. This discursive strategy of manipulation is a kind of word play in which some statements in advertisements are created of two parts or two phrases which have the parallel linguistic structure to create a kind of rhythm in their intonation. Advertisements with parallel structure such as بردن صندلیمو بردن راحتیمو" / *Took my chair Took my comfort",* try to manipulate consumers through using humorous and memorable expressions**.**

Command. In general texts, command will be used as a demanding structure to demand and reach some goods and services (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) but using the command in advertising contexts is for giving goods and services and also for persuading consumers to purchase the products. Persian printed advertisements used the command structure- which most of the time- give the order to do or try something; moreover, doing or trying what advertisements ordered are totally in the interest of producers since these orders and command structures are efforts to manipulate audiences to buy their products. The command structure of Persian message " فکرنکن! پودرتو عوض کن! *Do not think, Change your detergent powder"* is

used to convince consumers to purchase the intended brand first through creating a problem about the other detergent powders, then through giving solution (Chomsky, 2012) which is in the form of command structure meaning do not waste the time to think more, so change the previous powder by replacing with a new one (i.e. their product).

4.3. Cognitive Strategies to Manipulate Consumers

In order to answer the second research question, the corpus of data was studied to detect their effects on audiences' mind through creating value and the hidden desire for them. Using advertisements, producers seek to manipulate audiences cognitively through creating goal-oriented messages which are able to create specific understanding and mental model for them and consequently change their behavior (Vahid & Esmaeili, 2012). Furthermore, using van Dijk's (2006) model, the findings of current research revealed that the verbal language used in all 160 Persian printed advertisements tried to cognitively manipulate consumers via Persian messages with *'less complex syntax' and 'basic lexical items'* in order to provide comprehensive messages for people at all levels and reduce their critical thinking. Thus, advertisers seek to provide understandable information for audiences to remove their critical perspective toward advertisements and to consider them as some neutral tools to provide real and unbiased information (Tanka,1999) and to have cognitive, persuasive and manipulative effects on them (Chebat, Chebat, Hombourger & Woodside, 2003).

Consumer complimenting. Advertisements with the '*consumer complimenting strategy'* use some flattering words to praise consumers and shows that producers pay more attention to consumers and work for them rather than acting in the interest of themselves (Shams, 2005). The message such as "چون مهم هستید: *because you are important*" in Persian printed advertisements use consumer complimenting strategy to manipulate consumers through depicting the importance of consumers and the efforts of producers to provide the best because they pay attention to their consumers, at the same time implicitly transfer this message that their product is the most suitable one for consumers.

Challenging hints. Based on the findings of this study some Persian messages in Iranian advertisements were classified under the category of "challenging hint" since they provide no explicit information or visual images but use some hints to challenge the audiences' mind and make them curious about the intended product. These kinds of advertisements encourage audiences to pursue the following advertisements to find the intended product and unconsciously being manipulated to try and use that product. This advertisement *"i.e. میلاد...؟ به زودی Millad...? very soon"* as an example of

"challenging hints" uses just the name of specific brand without providing any images or information about the product. The punctuation marks 'ellipsis(…)' and question mark (?) along with written word 'به زودی: *very soon*' are used to struggle audiences' mind to ask themselves 'what product will be offered by this brand very soon?', so they might follow other advertisements of this brand to find their answers and then make a purchase to try that product.

Religious messages. As it is mentioned by Hasrati, Street and Habibi (2016), "religion is deeply rooted in the Iranian culture" (p.6) and around 98% of the population of Iran are Muslims; therefore, there is no surprise that advertisements utilize the religious matter to manipulate audiences. Manipulation through religious messages can be considered as an emotional game which has the emotional effect on consumers (Danciu, 2014). The advertisements with religious messages provide consumers with specific understanding and ideology that the producers are bilievers and have the religious identity, at the same time it can manipulate consumers in a way that through using this product, the holiness of religious message might be transmitted to them. Some of the religious messages in advertisements are related to those advertisements collected from Mashhad which is a religious city in Iran because Imam Reza Shrine is located there. These advertisements use the name of Imam Reza or use some specific words related to religious matters as brand names such as 'تبرک: *consecration or blessed*'. Some others such as the name of this brand of tea which has been taken from religious issue 'چای هیآت: the tea with a brand name related to the sacred ritual for Imam Hossein and the written message at the lower left corner ' متبرک به روضه حضرت سیدالشهدا: *Blessed with the sacred ritual of Imam Hossein*' resort to the religious issues to manipulate Iranian consumers.

Snob appeal. This strategy manipulates consumers through providing thinking and ideology for them via suggesting that the use of the intended product will make customers the members of an elite group with a luxurious and glamorous life style (Shams, 2005, p.192). Using a message like ' انتخاب زیبا پسندان/ *The choice o f the aesthetician*' (drawn a line under the word 'aesthetician' to make an emphasis on this word) in persian printed advertisement is an example of snob appeal strategy to maniplate consumer by uttering that if you want to be a member of aesthetician group, you should purchase that product.

Deadline. During analyzing Persian printed advertisements, researchers of this study came across some advertisements using discount messages or specific extra services in a restricted period of time. This time zone or deadline is a good way to cognitively manipulate consumers' minds and actions through creating an intentional understanding in consumers' short term memory and affecting their preferences to have impulsive purchases

(van Tuinen, 2011). For instance, in an advertisement a seasonal discount is available about 30 days as it is written ‘از ۶ آذر الی ۶ دی: *From Azar 6-name of an Iranian month approximatley equal to November27- to Day 6 (name of an Iranian Month approximatly equal to December 27’;* therefore, it might lead consumers to think that it is better to buy that product without hesitation since that product might be useful later and now they can buy it with lower costs or extra services but after this deadline they will pay more money to buy the same product.

      Brand names. The brand name can provide an iconic or indexical relationship to have some effects on consumers' thought through concealing the exact information about the product or providing myth and some pleasant association about the product. Product's brand can be the name of the specific person or the owner of a company, geographical places or some cultural issues (Manning, 2010). The results of present study revealed that producers mostly used the geographical, sociocultural, religious, and some positive associative words. The brand name such as ‘ سن ایچ */San Ich'* which is a Turkish word meaning*: Drink'* is a famous brand name for juice, which is related to both geographical place and sociocultural context in Iran.

4.4. Social Manipulation

      To answer research question three, the researchers employed van Dijk's (2006) model. van Dijk (2006) argues that social manipulation can be imposed when speakers are aware of mental model of audiences and have powerful position among them, then the speakers can use audiences' lack of relevant knowledge and their emotional state to create undeniable values or ideologies for them. The results of analysing the Persian printed advertisements demonstrated that producers as a powerful social group-through their access to advertising discourse, having complete information about the sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural context in which they advertise products, and having more information about intended products- are able to manipulate other social group or consumers via manipulating advertising context through utilizing social issues.

      Authoritative fallacy. authoritative fallacy refers to creating specific attitude or ideology for audiences through information which is not the exact characteristic of the produc (van Dijk, 2006). t. In fact, the advertisements use some credible and authoritative resources to endorse their products as reliable and valid products. The authoritative fallacy in advertising some electronic devices has been written as follow: گلدیران ضمانت خرید شماست: *GoldIran is your purchase warranty'.* The producers of this brand as a social group are aware of economic situation of consumers, so try to use some strategies and words to make them sure about what they are to purchase. Electronic devices and cell phones are the most expensive products among

others; therefore, consumers who have little information about different brands and their reliability and validity worry about spending their money. In this case, the producers use some extra services or guaranty to represent themselves as responsible factors for their product and their assurance of their product's quality so as to manipulate consumers .

Patriotism. The second social strategy based on the current investigation is 'patriotism'. Sometimes, advertisements produce some emotional state for consumers about their country to make a special ideology for them and manipulate them to purchase home-made products (Shams, 2005). Through some sociopolitical and socioeconomic situation in Iran, there is a trend to encourage the consumers to use their country-made products. This advertisement explicitly declared the patriotic phrase 'i.e. از ایرانی برای ایران: *Made in Iran for Iranian consumers'*, then argues that this Iranian made product equates global products through writing this message'هنر ایرانی فناوری جهانی: *Iranian art is universal technology.*

Giving discount or rewards. This strategy is based on producers' socioeconomic awareness of the specific context, providing desirable messages for that context to manipulate consumers to buy their products. The social strategy of 'giving discount' often has been used for highly expensive products; hence, through this message consumers will find the opportunity to buy that product at a lower cost. Furthermore, giving rewards has the same effect on consumers in a way that they can buy one thing but receive more than one thing or extra goods and services *(ex.* هدیه 10% +25%تخفیف */ 25% discount+ 10% gift).*

Geographical and cultural messages. The advertisements are created culturally and might be different from one culture to another, although they can be understandable crossculturally (El-daly, 2012; Jalilifar, 2010; Sells & Gonzalez, 2002). The same result was obtained in the analysis of 160 Persian printed advertisements of this study, which revealed that advertisements used some 'geographcal places' in Iran to arouse a sense of patriotism or feeling of belonging and used 'cultural messages' to show their deference to consumers' cultural conventions. The geographical messages in most of the Persian printed advertisements are used as brand name such as 'اروم آدا: *Orum Ada'* which is a blending word composed of ' اروم+آدا: Urumieh (a city in Iran)+ Ada (a Turkish word meaning 'present or offer'). The message like' از شب یلدا لذت ببرید: *Enjoy the Yalda night'* is a cultural message refering to cultural and traditional custom (i.e. Yalda) in which the people of Iran celebrate the first night of winter and use the winter fruits.

The current results revealed that there is considerable overlap between the three manipulation strategies and their subcategories. For instance, religious messages and patriotism strategies can have both cognitive

and social manipulative power, or differentiation/neologisms and overal interaction strategies might manipulate consumers discursively and cognitively. As mentioned before, strategies such as *"challenging hints, religious messages, giving discountor rewards, and dead line"* are new finding of this investigation. These strategies do not use the deceptive or false information (Danciu, 2014) to manipulate consumers, but they function as distraction strategies (Chomsky,2012) to deviate consumers' attention from serious information such as product's quality to the less important one such as price, time limitation, and religious issues. These findings confirm the results of studies by Chomsky (2012) and Danciu (2014), who declared that the cognitive and social manipulative effects of these strategies are based on emotional expressions through using emotional games on consumers.

Moreover, the results of micro-level analysis of 160 Persian printed advertisements confirmed the Baig's (2013) study. Baig (2013) declared that producers- through providing comprehensible messages in advertisements- have irrefutable effects on consumers' short-term memory, then through entrenchment as introduced by Fauconnie and Turner (2002), this specific understanding in short-term-memory of consumers will be transferred into their long-term memory. The entrenchment is the act of socially shaping the provided concept or understanding via distributing advertisements across the social context (Fauconnie & Turner, 2002). Similarly, Tahmasbi and Kalkhajeh (2013) argue that advertisers as social groups are aware that which kinds of advertisements, in which seasons of the year must be placed in which places in public context to have more effects on audiences. This entrenchment will be a way to turn impulsive buyers into permanent users of promoted products.

Furthermore, the current findings determined that the messages in 160 Persian printed advertisements have used the 'overall interaction strategies' as introduced by van Dijk (2006) but the majority have used only the 'positive self-presentation'. In fact, in Persian printed advertisements used for advertising products, unlike political advertisements or advertisements for election campaign, there is no obvious 'negative other-presentation' and they just used the differentiation and unfinished statements to have some hidden negative other-presentation.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The overall aim of this research project was to determine the way the messages in Persian printed advertisements- through written texts and strategies- have affected consumers' minds and actions and consequently have manipulated them discursively, cognitively, and socially. The manipulation strategies used in Persian printed advertisements serve the Iranian producers to reach their goals and increase sales (Cohen, Mashruwala

& Zach, 2007) and also to create a desired identity for consumers (Pomering, Johnson & Noble, 2013). The results of this research project can be implied theoretically in educational context in general and in DA and CDA in particular to teach the discursive and pragmatics aspects of language in a real context of use such as illocutionary and perlocutionary effects of advertising discourse on consumers. The main limitation of this research is to ignore the semiotic features existed in printed advertisements. As the semiotic features have mutual effects on written messages, the researchers suggest performing multimodal investigation of Persian printed advertisements to have complete analysis. Since the analysis of advertisements in this study is limited to Persian printed advertisements, further studies are needed to make comparisons between Persian printed advertisements and English or other languages printed advertisements, in order to determine how differences in linguistic and cultural contexts lead to different strategies used to manipulate audiences.

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