ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PERSUASIVE MARKETING: CONSTRUCTIONS OF TOURIST IDENTITY AND CULTURAL OTHERNESS[i,ii]

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Abstract:

This article tackles the way orientalist doctrines are projected onto promotional discourse. In this article, we will use the case study of recreational activities taking place in Marrakech in order to demonstrate the ideological perspectives of Western advertisers. The goal of this research is to reveal the way Western advertising entities exert power over the Western tourist and the Moroccan community.

Keywords: language, advertising, marketing, cultural representation, orientalism

ملخص:

يتناول هذا المقال الطريقة التي تُسقَط بها العقائد الاستشراقية على الخطاب الترويجي. وسنستخدم في هذا المقال دراسة حالة للأنشطة التي تُقام في مراكش من أجل توضيح المنظورات الأيديولوجية للمعلنين الغربيين. يركز هدف هذا البحث. على كشف الطريقة التي تمارس بها الجهات الإعلانية الغربية السلطة على السائح الغربي والمجتمع المغربي

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة، الإعلان، التسويق، التمثيل الثقافي، الاستشراق

Résumé :

Cet article traite de la manière dont les doctrines orientalistes sont projetées sur le discours promotionnel. Dans cet article, nous utiliserons l'étude de cas des activités récréatives se déroulant à Marrakech afin de démontrer les perspectives idéologiques des publicitaires occidentaux. L'objectif de cette recherche est de révéler comment les entités publicitaires occidentales exercent un pouvoir à la fois sur le touriste occidental et sur la communauté marocaine.

Mots-clés : langue, publicité, marketing, représentation culturelle, orientalisme

1. Introduction

The focus of this article is based on an understanding of representational theory in the context of tourism advertising. This study tackles the structures of orientalism as an ideology to account for the role of advertising entities in the promotion of non-Western destinations. We also show the marketing strategies which foreign advertising entities use to influence their target audiences' response in their favor by introducing a focus on the role of power relations in advertising tourism destinations. The significance of this study lies in answering our understanding of power relations in discourse and their projection onto the promotion of Marrakech as a non-Western destination. Marrakech is a city located in Morocco. It was founded in 1070 by the Almoravid dynasty and has since played a pivotal role in the history and economy of Morocco. Furthermore, Marrakech is renowned for the Medina, the city's original district. In the heart of the Medina lies Jamaa el Fna square, a vast space which showcases Morocco's tangible and intangible heritage. The social power which this article tackles is based on the textual discourse produced by Western advertisers in the promotion of Marrakech. Moreover, we are interested in revealing the type of power which advertisers exert on Western tourists and its effects on Moroccans.

This article will demonstrate how Western advertisers build rapport with Western tourists in order to establish mutual grounds of trust and familiarity.

2. Methodology

In this article, we constituted a model of analysis inspired by van Dijk's way of practicing critical discourse analysis (CDA). We understand that critical discourse analysis, or CDA is a perspective which focuses on the nature of authority in discourse through the production and reproduction of power. According to van Dijk (2001), CDA is not a simple approach used to tackle inequality or hierarchy. Instead, it can be considered as a cross-discipline incorporating several sub-disciplines, each composed of several relevant theories, tools and instruments of inquiry. Therefore, CDA does not present a referential example to approach and analyze social phenomena, but instead focuses on incorporating a conceptual analysis of any given social problem in order to be eligible to choose the tools or structures to either keep or discard.

Van Dijk's (2000), (2001) multidisciplinary framework is composed of the following structures: discourse, cognition, and society. The discourse dimension includes language (written or spoken), and the second structure, cognition, is perceived as an ideological perspective which includes ideologies, shared beliefs, and mental representations. The third and last component of the framework, society, serves as an interpersonal and interactional medium which binds groups and societal structures together. Furthermore, this interpersonal link is rooted in the dynamics of power relations, which often lead to social disparities and cultural discrimination.

In order to link the discourse and society dimensions of the triangle and reach the successful aims of CDA, one must account for the "*mental models*" which constitute the contextual meeting point or the medium between discourse and society (van Dijk, 2001, pp. 112-113). The combined structures of cognition and society are considered to be the main elements responsible for defining context in discourse. From a practical standpoint, the link between the dimensions of discourse and society is achieved by defining what van Dijk (2021) refers to as the "*mental mediation*" (pp. 96-97-98). This concept means that the advertisers' discourse is adapted to, but not directly linked with, their factual situations such as age, race, gender, etc. The participants' discourse is influenced by the "*subjective interpretations*" they have about what they are talking about and to whom it is addressed. This is called the "*context models*" (p. 96). In order to clarify things even further, we may firstly say that participants represent events (based on personal experiences) in a "*subjective mental model*" stored in the episodic memory and organized through the following categories: time, place, participants, identities, roles, goals, and interpersonal relations. This is what is referred to as the "*event model*" (p. 97). Secondly, the narration of these personal experiences (which are reproduced through discourse) is altered depending on whom the discourse is addressed to. This means that the contents of discourse vary and depend on the models of the addresser and addressee of the communicative event.

Our model incorporates two main segments: the situational review and the linguistic features. The first segment revolves around situating the overall context of analysis, which includes an elaborate evaluation of the setting of our data. This segment is labelled the "Ideological Model". This examination consists of van Dijk's (2000) context properties:

- **The setting:** this feature is responsible for defining the overall situational domain of our data. By defining the setting, we provide a contextual layout for interpretations of social situations. Furthermore, this feature allows us to shape the event or social context of our data by providing an overall situational analysis.
- **The participants:** the definition of this category provides an additional layer of information to our analysis. Notably, through the communicative role of the participants, their national and social identity, as well as their relations with other participants.
- **The overall action:** in the contextual analysis, it is paramount to address the performative aspects of participants. To elaborate, language users are enticed to determine what kind of action the participants engage in within the situational domain of the data.
- **The shared social knowledge**: this category is responsible for identifying the shared beliefs, ideologies, and values of the participants involved in our data. Social groups, or even small community members, tend to share similar moral compasses, which include ethics, morals, attitudes, etc. The analysis of these components provides additional context to the situational analysis.

In order to establish an elaborate contextual analysis, our ideological model also consists of a theoretical background built on a number of marketing tools which advertisers rely on to make their advertisements more appealing to their target audiences. In promotional discourse, advertising entities promote Marrakech using several marketing tools or advertising strategies to make their advertisements more appealing to their target audiences. This marketing strategy may be perceived as a power move which makes advertisements more appealing. The power move we are referring to is tied to authoritarian dynamics which the advertising entity holds over the tourist. Advertisers exert power on the reader/tourist through a type of persuasion which centers on the theory of affect-based advertising strategies. This theory is designed to impact the tourists' feelings instead of using aggressive persuasion techniques such as strong arguments to impact the readers' thought processes (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010). Following on this theory, Cohen and Avieli (2004) found that tourists seek some kind of intangible shelter which inspires familiarity, but at the same time look for peculiar and strange phenomena in their travel. In this case, advertisers seek to captivate their target audiences by building a familiar, almost parental rapport with them in order to grab their attention and thus make their promotional discourse more compelling. In this situation, the power dynamics are based on a patronizing relationship between the addresser (the advertising entity) and the addressee (the tourist). The rapport built between the advertiser and the tourist builds a foundation of familiarity. Consequently, we may also find that this discourse exoticizes the host community of the advertised tourism destination.

The second component, labelled "Linguistic Model", includes van Dijk's (2001) discourse properties, which include several tools meant to uncover power dynamics in promotional discourse.

- **Meaning:** the meaning category represents the ideological perspectives of language users in discourse. Given the fact that the concept of meaning is complex in its nature, we will elaborate on it through the following sub-categories:
  - **Actor description:** In discourse, we may find that language users present sets of characters, or actors, in a descriptive manner. These descriptions may vary in accordance with group ethnicity, social status and functions, cultural norms, and practices, etc. For instance, advertisers may describe European actors in a respectful and dignified manner, and Moroccans in a degrading way.
  - **Categorization:** In discourse, language users tend to classify people who do not belong to their social/ethnic background through different terminologies. This distinction is meant to positively welcome in-groups and alienate out-groups.
  - **Generalization:** This tool is mostly found in a discourse where general claims and assertions are prevalent. For instance, advertising entities may produce a discourse where they draw conclusions based on limited evidence. Their claims lack nuance and are overly generalized across contexts.

- o **Implication:** Implication is used in discourse to communicate inferred information about out-group actors. Accordingly, implication may also extend to keep information implicit in order to hide any biased or racist observations.
- o **Presupposition:** This tool is used to uncover any controversial or debatable convictions. To elaborate, advertising entities may produce a discourse which advances claims without any factual truth factors. Consequently, writers may produce a discourse which lacks credibility and advances vague and debatable claims.

- **Style:** The style category highlights the way meaning is expressed through the use of lexical concepts or expressions in discourse. Extensively, advertising entities may opt to use certain words to portray out-groups in a negative manner.
  - o **Lexicalization:** This tool is meant to uncover the lexical items used by language users, or in this case, advertisers, in discourse. Often, advertisers will refer to out-groups using representative words to highlight the negative aspects of locals.

- **Argumentation:** In discourse, we may find that language users produce a discourse which reinforces certain ideological belief systems through the following approaches. The goal of this particular discourse is based on adding both legitimacy and credibility to certain claims.
  - o **Example:** In order to make discourse more relatable and legitimate, advertising entities may use concrete examples to validate and strengthen their arguments. Moreover, this type of argumentative strategy is meant to communicate underlying beliefs or statements to an audience.
  - o **Explanation:** In discourse, language users tend to interpret the behaviors of disadvantaged groups in ways that underscore negative characteristics attributed to out-groups.

2.1 Data Collection

Our data is composed of four paragraphs taken from the following travel guide, Footprint Morocco. This travel guide uses a discourse which aims to warn tourists against numerous activities which take place in Marrakech. This research follows a qualitative approach based on a critical discourse analysis procedure meant to criticize as well as reveal ideological power abuse in discourse emanating from orientalist dogmas. Naturally, this approach is meant to locate the way advertising entities use discourse to not only persuade tourists (in-groups), but also implement and reinforce orientalist dogmas on the local community (out-groups). In this case, advertising entities exert power through discourse to affect two actors: the Western tourist and Marrakech's local community. The power-oriented discourse aimed at tourists is based on the advertising strategy of familiarity. This method aims to build a parental-like connection with the tourist by establishing rapport. Additionally, this marketing strategy evokes a sense of

comfort and tranquillity, helping the tourist feel secure and well looked after. Simultaneously, this discourse diminishes the Moroccan community by conveying orientalist ideologies through its promotional content.

Our data sourcing consists of primary sources taken from two editions of the same travel guide, with the first edition predating the second. This approach has been chosen to examine whether and how the promotional discourse has evolved over time. The data selected for our study is central to addressing our research focus, which explores how advertisers assert influence over tourists and consequently impact the Moroccan local community's cultural and social dynamics. The selected travel guides, all authored by foreign writers, were chosen to reflect how Western perspectives on the Orient are projected through promotional discourse. This selection provides insight into how these guides construct and reinforce particular narratives about local culture while also shaping the perceptions and decision-making processes of prospective tourists.

2.2 Analysis

We will start our analysis by establishing the situational review of our data. This segment, also labelled the ideological model, incorporates the global context of the paragraphs taken from the selected travel guides[iv]. The contextual properties will help situate the overall setting in which the paragraphs take place in accordance with the domain of tourism advertising.

As mentioned in the methodology section, advertisers tend to produce a promotional discourse which affects the target audience's emotive appeal. Adequately, the cognitive and linguistic review of our analysis will reveal the underlying power dynamics at play in advertising. This section targets the strategic marketing functions and the ideological constructions of promotional discourse, particularly through the perspective of Orientalism.

2.3 The Situational Review

The situational review of our analysis tackles, on a first level, the setting in which the promotional discourse of our data takes place. The discourse is set in Marrakech, including Jamaa el Fna. The participants include the writer/author, the addresser (the advertiser), and the reader/addressee (the foreign tourist). The communicative role of the addresser holds the national identity of a Western advertiser whose social identity is visible as an advertising entity. Similarly, the communicative role of the addressee holds the same national identity as the addresser, which is of Western origin. The social identity of the addressee is based on the reception of the promotional discourse. The relations between the participants (the addresser and the addressee) are based on a relationship where the former aims to establish rapport with the addressee. The dynamics of this relationship are based on embodying a parental figure which patronizes the tourist while undermining Moroccan actors. From a marketing perspective, this rapport-driven

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iv We will refer to the travel guides of our data by their titles and not by their authors' names.

connection can be associated with the advertising strategy of familiarity, where the advertising entity presents itself as a relatable figure to the tourist based on their shared Western identity.

2.4 The Cognitive and Linguistic Review

This section aims to determine the kind of promotional discourse which advertisers present to their audience. Indeed, advertisers produce a discourse which patronizes the tourist in a way which encourages the tourists to vindicate for themselves when necessary. Given that both the addresser and the addressee share the same national identity, the results of such promotional discourse end up affecting the Western tourist's gaze on non-Western communities. Consequently, this perspective allows advertisers to reinforce their ideological constructions through promotional discourse. Furthermore, these ideational frameworks are rooted in Orientalist doctrines, which shape how tourists perceive and engage with Moroccans.

The representational doctrines which the West assigns to the Orient are apparent in the following excerpt: "*Migrants are attracted by the city's reputation as 'city of the poor', where even the least qualified can find work of some kind. For many rural people, the urban struggle is hard, and as the Tachelhit pun puts it, Marrakech is ma-ra-kish, 'the place where they'll eat you if they can'*". (Footprint Morocco, 2012, p. 48). In this passage, the advertising entity provides a detailed depiction of various actors. Specifically, migrants, who are directly mentioned, and the Amazighs (Historically rooted community in Morocco), who are indirectly represented through their native language.

We may also notice that the advertising entity categorizes the actors mentioned in this passage into several disparaging groups. Namely, migrants and Amazighs. On one hand, migrants are implicitly portrayed as inept individuals or, more specifically, job seekers with insufficient credentials. On the other hand, the Amazigh community is degraded through implicit meanings of savagery linked to the meaning associated with the city's name. It is important to note that this lexical association is given by the advertising entity, and that the terminology "*ma-ra-kish*" does not correlate with the translation given to it in this passage. In fact, this terminology does not represent any meanings in Tamazight (Amazigh language), or in any language for that matter.

The negative-them representation is implemented in the advertising entity's explanation of the socio-economic interactions of the city. By explaining why Marrakech is recognized as the "*city of the poor*", the advertiser reinforces their ideological beliefs through degrading interpretations of economic class-related dynamics. Additionally, this orientalism driven viewpoint also appears in the inaccurate translation of Marrakech.

In another passage, the advertiser warns the tourist against taxi drivers in Marrakech, "*Short taxi journeys in Marrakech should not be more than 10 or 15dh - try to have change and insist on using the meter even though you may be told that it is broken.*" (Footprint Morocco, 2012, p. 46). In this paragraph, the advertiser is communicating to the reader that Marrakech's local taxi drivers are dishonest individuals who may take advantage of tourists if they are not vigilant. Evidently, this discourse portrays these taxi drivers

negatively through implications of fraudulent and unprincipled behavior. The advertiser's representation of taxi drivers in Marrakech is relevant to Said's (1979) viewpoint of orientalism, in which the West views Arabs as group members who lack any values and instead act on their biological needs, which rest on survival.

The promotional discourse which depicts taxi drivers in Marrakech as dishonest individuals is again repeated in a recent version of the same travel guide. "Short taxi rides in Marrakech should not cost more than 10 or 15dh, longer journeys, 20dh. Unfortunately, Marrakech taxi drivers are renowned for overcharging and for not using their meters; try to have change and insist on using the meter." (Footprint Morocco, 2016, p. 38). This excerpt invokes the negative portrayal of Arabs as untrustworthy individuals who are only concerned with satisfying their biological needs. This depiction recalls the viewpoint of Orientalism through which the West depicts Arabs as untrustworthy individuals. Aside from this observation, the advertiser appears as a concerned parental figure whose job is to warn the clueless tourist, who is known to be a target for fraud and deception. Moreover, this role creates an unseen bond or rapport between the advertiser and the reader, making the latter susceptible to invoke feelings of ease towards the advertiser as they appear as a reliable, responsible and trustworthy figure.

The repetition of this discourse confirms the fact that the advertiser is adamant to portray taxi drivers as fraudulent individuals, a viewpoint that diminishes among Moroccans through an implicit communication of their lack of empathy.

The West's orientalism-driven viewpoint is again apparent in the following excerpt: "*Do watch out for the henna-ladies on the square, who have a habit of making a sales pitch by grabbing your hand. And don't pay attention to young men in the souks who hang about on street corners shouting out that you're going the wrong way or that the sight you're heading towards is closed*." (Footprint Morocco, 2016, p. 38). In this passage, the advertiser presents two sets of actors: henna tattoo ladies and young men, who are represented as impostors and fraudsters. This observation is tied to the advertiser's discourse, which implies that the mentioned actors use devious tactics to attract the tourists' attention. These actions are explicitly mentioned as techniques which entice tourists to spend their hard-earned money. Moreover, these strategies may be considered as duping tactics based on deception and falsehood. We may perceive then that the advertiser is implying that these actors make their living based on tricking and misleading the Western tourist, believing that they are gullible individuals. This examination confirms Said's (1979) perspectives on the West's ideological beliefs concerning non-Western communities. From a promotional viewpoint, the reader or the tourist may be encouraged to take the advertiser's side since the latter appears as a genuine and friendly figure who provides the reader with insightful advice. Likewise, this may lead the tourist to experience feelings of ease translated through the exertion of familiar feelings towards the addressee.

The advertising entities promote Moroccans as hostile actors who negatively impact the foreign tourist, notably through duping tactics, including representations of deceitful dishonesty. Furthermore, the contextualization of this analysis in the field of tourism advertising is explained through the advertising strategy of ease. To elaborate,

we find that our analysis shows that the advertising entities strive to establish a parental connection with the tourists in order to create rapport and build a trusting relationship, which exhibits feelings of trust and reliance within the tourists. Our analysis thus reveals two things. The first observation is based on the advertiser's representation of Marrakech's locals as simple beings who utilize duping methods in order to assuage basic survival instincts. The second observation indicates the initiation of the advertising strategy of familiarity established by the advertiser in order to establish rapport with the Western tourists as a way to render the promotional discourse more appealing. Our analysis of the linguistic properties reveals that the advertising entities of the selected travel guides use a promotional discourse which undermines Moroccans, and more specifically, Marrakech's locals, by portraying them as untrustworthy groups who strive to dupe tourists in order to gratify their own personal needs.

3. Conclusion

The current research aimed to identify the ideological structures of Orientalism as a system of Western representation in the promotion of the city of Marrakech. By analyzing the Western representation of occidental advertising entities in Marrakech, we were able to determine the structures of orientalist dogmas on Moroccan culture. The effectiveness of the applied methodology has led us to uncover the pinnacles of orientalist convictions and perceptions. Moreover, we have uncovered the subliminal meanings within the promotional discourse of our data and brought to the surface identifiable results which show a promotional discourse which reveals an orientalized perspective on Moroccan civilisation. The results of our analysis also revealed the way Western advertising entities use promotional discourse to establish a relationship with their audiences.

This study reveals the prevalence of a discourse fashioned to manipulate the potential tourist in favor of the advertiser. Thereupon, this manipulation proved to be based on a power dynamic between the advertiser and the potential tourist, and again between the advertiser and the Moroccan society. This power-oriented interpersonal relationship revealed that the advertisers' discourse has an effect on potential tourists as well as Moroccans. This relationship is founded on building a connection between the advertiser and the prospective tourist. Furthermore, the study emphasized the use of a marketing approach aimed at familiarizing the advertiser with the tourist to foster trust.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article.

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