

## **Advertising Linguistics: A Morpho-Syntactic Exploration of Pakistani Billboards**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v2i2.516>

### **Abstract**

This study aims to present the morpho-syntactic analysis of advertisements to show case the display of language in a non-native country. Advertising actually helps in shaping the cultures, trends, societies and economies in a significant way. The wide range of implications of advertisements is the key intrigue for the commencement of the study. However, the objective of the research is to identify the factors that contribute to the occurrence of morphosyntactic errors on billboards, such as language proficiency, copywriting practices, and cultural influences. For the execution of the investigation process, the ads are taken from internet with the help of convenient sampling technique and the linguistic fragments are evaluated morphologically and syntactically. It is very true that any advertisement is the mixture of many elements including the images, symbols, color schemes and language. Every element plays its role in conveying the message properly for which it is necessary for every element to reflect its true essence. For the convenience of the research only linguistic fragments are taken under investigation. The research methodology is qualitative and the research design is chosen to be exploratory in nature. The theoretical framework is contrastive analysis hypothesis presented by Lado (1957). The findings of the study go in line with Lado's (1957) point of view that differences in languages are because there are differences in their structures.

**Keywords:** Morpho-syntax, linguistic analysis, advertisements, morpho-syntactic analysis

### **Introduction**

Advertisements reflect cultural identity and communication patterns, acting as a linguistic mirror of society. In the bustling streets of Pakistan, billboards serve as vibrant and attention-grabbing displays that capture the essence of advertising and public messaging. Urdu, being the national language of Pakistan, plays a central role in the creation and design of billboards across the country. Exploring the morphological complexity of billboards unveils a fascinating intersection between language, design, and communication, providing insights into the intricacies of visual expression and linguistic creativity. Being a multilingual society, the advertisers always take consideration of the use of prestigious language to get the attention of the public. In consequences of which the parade of language use becomes radiant. The selection of a diverse and vibrant color palette further contributes to the complexity of billboards. Carefully chosen colors, along with contrasting combinations, create visual contrast, depth, and intrigue. The interplay of colors adds another layer of complexity, eliciting emotional responses and enhancing the overall visual impact. Visual composition and layout are essential in shaping the morphological complexity of Urdu billboards. The arrangement of elements, layering techniques, use of perspective, and incorporation of three-dimensional effects create visually dynamic compositions that engage viewers and convey messages effectively.

By delving into the morphological complexity of Urdu billboards in Pakistan, we gain a deeper appreciation for the intricate relationship between language and design. The fusion of the linguistic richness of Urdu with visual expression on billboards highlights the creative potential of language in the realm of advertising and public messaging. In many advertisements it is observed that the makers make use of both languages side by side to target all kind of public. Understanding the intricacies of morphological complexity in Urdu billboards allows us to decipher the visual language and cultural nuances that shape the advertising landscape in Pakistan. English holds the status of being an official language in Pakistan, along with that it is taken as prestigious and influential language which is widely used in almost all sectors of the country. The advertising agencies also utilize the language for attraction. Limited exposure to the use of English ultimately results in the lower command on the language use which also grabs the attention of the observers. This research is one of the perspectives on the display of language on the public forum which is used by the users of a particular society. The focus is definitely put on the reflection of the linguistic units in the advertisements which are considered as the most important tool in giving exact message about the product. The track of the research is decided to evaluate the errors happens on part of the language used in the specific advertisements published in Pakistan.

### **Research Objectives**

- to identify and categorize the most common morphosyntactic errors found on Pakistani billboards
- to identify the factors that contribute to the occurrence of morphosyntactic errors on billboards, such as language proficiency, copywriting practices, and cultural influences

### **Research questions**

- What are the Common Morphosyntactic Errors Found in Pakistani billboards?
- How do errors affect the overall message?
- What are the factors that contribute to the occurrence of morphosyntactic errors on billboards?

### **Literature Review**

Morphology is considered to be a very productive branch in the field of linguistics because it includes discussions regarding the structure, formation and classification of words. These concerns are very important to notice in the approximation to know how language works. It is also true that morphology is the fundamental unit of linguistics because it not only focuses on how children language but also draws our attention towards natural language processing (NLP). Bauer (2003) asserts that there is a deeply ingrained and established awareness in the field of language morphology that words are built in a variety of ways. The term "morphology" was coined in the nineteenth century to characterize the study of change in the constructs and constructions of words such as Read – reader, reading; Hate – hated, hating; Love – loved, lover, loving; and other similar structures and constructions. Morphology has traditionally been defined as the study of the internal structures of words; the components that frame words (known as Morphemes); and the procedures by which morphemes are linked together. Morphemes are various types of word parts, such as prefixes, stems, infixes, and suffixes. Thus, a single Urdu word, e.g., خوبصورت (beautiful) has two morphemes خوب and صورت; „beautiful“ can be broken into two morphemes (beauti-ful). For example, the Urdu word اچھی صورت (good looking) is a compound word and both the constituents اچھی and صورت are two independently occurring words. Good looking has three morphemes (good-look-ing). The syntax is the branch of linguistics that studies the structure and formation of sentences. It demonstrates how correct sentences are generated by carefully arranging words and phrases. If the words are in their proper locations and agree with one another, a phrase can have no sense yet still being correct in syntax. The governance of syntax allows combinations of words. Noam Chomsky (1965) provided a classic example of a situation in which a statement is valid but does not make sense: "Colorless green ideas sleep fiercely." To develop grammatically correct and

acceptable English sentences, we must adhere to English syntax norms. The goal of syntax is to investigate sentence structure and formation. It entails establishing standards for constructing meaningful and grammatically acceptable sentences by focusing on word order, phrases, clauses, and their links. Our effective spoken and written communication both rely on following syntax norms more loosely, allowing us to convey our message. The examples in the table below will demonstrate how grammatically organized sentences make sense and non-grammatical sentences do not. The study of grammar can be separated into two categories: morphology and syntax. The study of words and the laws that govern their development is known as morphology. Syntax, on the other hand, is the study of sentences and the rules that govern their creation. In essence, morphology and syntax are both studies of the same thing - the rules that govern the formation of a language – but at different "levels." Advertising billboards are large-scale, visually appealing, and established for the benefit of road users. They are typically placed in crowded areas where many people pass by. Due to the era's rapid advancement, billboards may now be put in almost any place (Fomukong, 2016). Using Urdu on billboards is anticipated to pique people's attention and encourage them. An understanding of linguistics is essential to understanding the use of Urdu on billboards (Iswati, 2020). The translation of one language into another involves linguistics in a significant way. The information must be translated in more ways than simply altering every word from one language to another. The original language's features and functionalities must also be translated into the new language through decoding and deciphering (Rezaini, 2020). Three previous studies became references in this study. The first research was conducted by Fomukong (2016) about Stylistics Analysis in Advertising Discourse: A Case of the Dangote Cement Advertisement in Bamenda- Cameroon. This research investigated advertisement discourse and whether the meaning can be conveyed to the readers. The second research was conducted by Poejilestari (2020) with the theme an Analysis of Morphological and Syntactical Errors in Recount Text. This study reported that students experienced writing obstacles caused by interlingual factors, intralingual factors, and excessive generalization. The third research was conducted by Afdaliah (2022). This study was titled an Analysis of Phonological, Morphological, and Syntactical Errors on Teachers' Talk in EFL Classroom. While the first study elaborated an advertising discourse analysis in the billboard, it focused on stylistic analysis to check the comprehensibility of readers to catch the intended message. In this regard, the present study is distinguished in two areas: analysis focus and the setting where the billboard is displayed. Even though the second study is quite similar to the present study in which morphology and syntax become the tools in analyzing the phenomena, the research objects to be analyzed are somewhat different in that the recount text and teacher's talk are at the center of the investigation. Researchers conceive that this research is salient to add the void in the practical gap for hotel advertising billboards in the spectrum of linguistics analysis. Therefore, to fill this void, this research examines the morphological and syntactical analysis of advertising billboards used in Pakistan. The word "Billboard" derives its meaning etymologically from the Greek words "Reclomos," which means "repeat," and "clomos," which means "call" or "shout." Therefore, billboards are repeated calls. Meanwhile, billboards are typically referred to as propaganda media used for advertising and introducing goods and services to the public. One way to successfully and affordably advertise products and brand names is through billboards (Javed & Nizamani, 2011). In terms of morphology, it investigates how variations in word form impact word meaning and word class (Hamawand, 2011; Poejilestari, 2020). Yule (2010) stated that morphology is the study of basic forms in a language. The study of word formation from smaller meaningful units is known as morphology. The study of word production falls under the umbrella of morphology. It covers the process by which new words are added to the languages. According to Aronoff & Fudeman (2011), morphology is the area of linguistics that studies words, their internal structure, and how they are generated. It can also refer to the cognitive mechanism involved in word development. This is also

supported by Lieber (2009), who defines morphology as the study of word formation, including how new words are coined in the language and vary depending on how they are used in sentences. For morphology, Urdu is quite like other Indo-European languages, e.g. having a concatenative inflective morphological system. However, some differences can be found in the case of causative verbs that also exhibit stem-internal changes in some cases. In this section we discuss Urdu morphology and then present our solution that explains them in FM. In morphology, we do not deal with the words that would require determining across multi-token units (some loan derivational affixes), hence leaving them to be dealt at the syntax level.

### **Research methodology**

The Qualitative research method is used to analyze data. The data is collected from internet and some pictures are taken from Pakistani street advertisements. The Morphosyntactic model is used to analyze data. The design for the research is exploratory which intends to explore the broad research problem. The aim of the research is to explore the morphosyntactic patterns shape advertising in Pakistan that means to explore the focus on the understanding that how syntax and morphology interact in advertisements. Convenient sampling techniques are adopted to gather the data. The reason to adopt this technique is to utilize ease of access and availability. Furthermore, because the objective of the research is to only highlight and bring forth the exhibition of language on perspectives of morphology and syntax that is why this sample technique is well suited. The research is delimited to the linguistic fragments of the advertisements because most of the time the advertisers prefer to use English to target vast majority of people. Otherwise the advertisements also include number of other elements such as images, pictures, alignments, symbols and color combination which play very significant role in order to convey message in every possible way. As far as the visuals are important, the linguistic fragments also get the equal importance. Within a multilingual society, the amalgam of different languages presents a valuable attraction.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The basic concern of the research is to highlight the morpho-syntactic errors present within the advertisements, that is why the language is evaluated according to the theoretical framework contrastive analysis hypothesis presented by Lado (1957). The main features of the framework are based on the point of view that Errors can occur because of the differences between the basic parameters of the language structures. On the go, the same path is adopted to investigate the research problem. The fact of the matter is that Urdu and English belong to different language families and represent different sentence as well as word formation structures.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

Different images are collected from different sources and morphological and syntactical errors are found from these billboards. There are two types of billboards that are mostly used in Pakistan. The 1st one is in Urdu. As Urdu is our native language, most people read it easily. 2nd is English, as English is our official language.

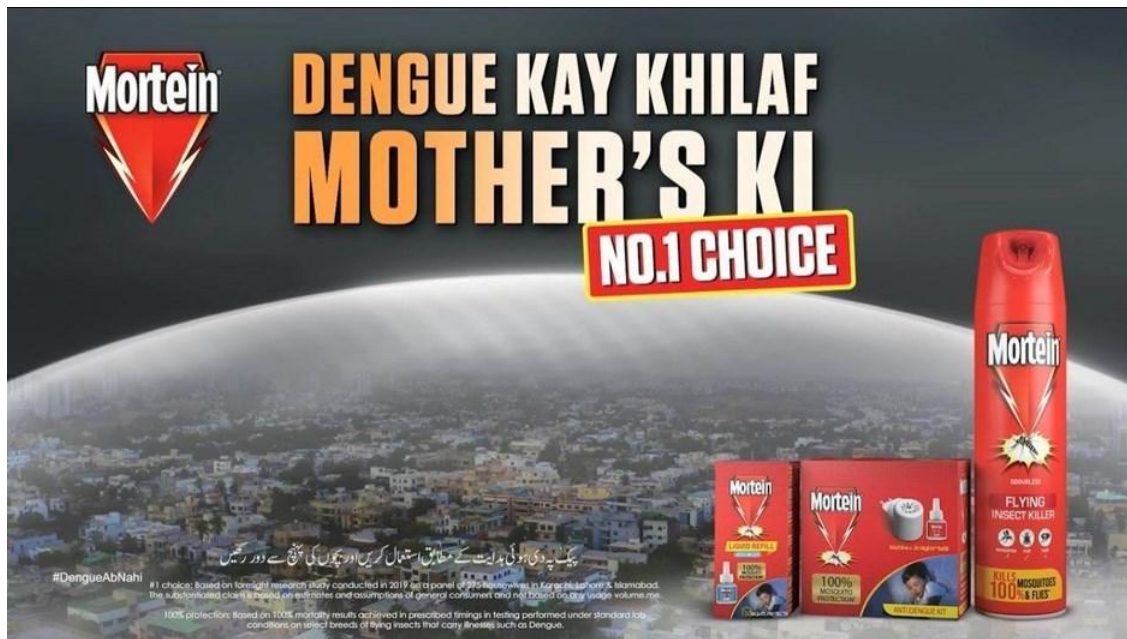


fig.....01

"Mortein" is the company Reckitt Benckiser, which produces a range of household insecticides, including mosquito repellents and mosquito-killing sprays. Mortein is a well-known brand that offers various products designed to combat mosquitoes and other flying insects. The Mortein products in eliminating mosquitoes, which are notorious for spreading diseases such as dengue, malaria, Zika virus, and others. The Mortein range includes mosquito coils, mosquito mats, and aerosol sprays, all designed to help protect individuals and households from mosquito bites and potential health risks. Slogan "Dengue kay Khilaf Mother's ki N0.1 Choice". the code switching in Urdu with English language. The structure is of Urdu language and as in Pakistan code mixing is very natural in Billboards. So, this billboard shows a code-mixing Urdu and English language. Dengue is the English as well as urdu word and it is the noun, Kay Khilaf is from pure urdu kay show possession and khilaf is also a noun. "Mother's": This is a possessive form indicating possession. It shows that something belongs to or is associated with "Mother." The morpheme "-s" is used to mark the possessive case. "ki": The word "ki" also shows possession in Urdu. "Number": This is a noun, representing a numerical value.

"01": This is a numeral, specifically the number "1" in a two-digit format. "choice": This is a noun,



referring to an act of choosing or deciding. Mother's Ki the two possessions are used that are semantically wrong.

Fig 02

The phrase "Admission open" is an example of a common error involving the missing plural "s." It is often seen in school and college advertisements or banners where the intended meaning is that admissions are currently open for enrollment, but the plural form of "admissions" is not used. The correct form should be "Admissions open" with the plural "s" added to the noun "admissions." This makes it clear that multiple admissions are open for prospective students to apply or enroll.

Here's the correct version:

"Admissions open"

Using the plural form "Admissions" and avoids the common error of missing the plural "s" when referring to multiple admissions.





# HASHIR

## SCHOOLING SYSTEM

Nursery to Class 8<sup>th</sup>  
English Medium

# Admissions Open

**WHY HSS?**

- You must have heard about English Medium School. Do you know what real English Medium is? Come forward to experience.
- A complete Islamic Environment for Students.
- Schooling with Hifz-e-Quran – A bridge.
- Overall personality grooming.
- Kindergarten enriched with toys and Educational Tools.
- Play Area for Kids
- Education with Modern Techniques.
- Flash card Activities.
- Monthly medical checkup for students to facilitate healthy environment in society.

● Children are like Wet Cement, whatever falls on them, makes an impression.  
● Education is not only the learning of Facts, but the training of the mind to think, create and innovate.



## مدرسہ دین حسین

ناظرہ و حفظ قرآن

Nazra and Hifz section managed by  
Certified Qari & Ulama-e-Karam

For Boys & Girls

Address: CC-7, Block D Extension, Alfalah Housing Society, Malir Halt, Karachi  
Cell # 0330-8197080, 0321-2601756, E-mail: hashirschoolingsystem@yahoo.com

fig... 03

School billboards that contain numerous grammar mistakes raise concerns about the quality of education being offered by the institution. The presence of grammar errors on school billboards can send a contradictory message to parents and the community, as it reflects poorly on the school's attention to detail and overall commitment to proper language usage. This raises the question of how effectively the school can teach correct grammar to children if they themselves are displaying errors in their public communication.

Here are some potential implications of schools having billboards with grammar mistakes:

**Perception of Quality:** Parents and community members may question the quality of education provided by the school if they observe grammar mistakes on official communication. It might lead them to doubt the school's ability to effectively teach important language skills to students.

**Educational Standards:** Errors in grammar on school billboards may raise concerns about the school's adherence to educational standards and guidelines. It might suggest that the school does not prioritize language proficiency and proper communication.

**Role Model for Students:** Schools are expected to be role models for students in all aspects, including language usage. Having billboards with grammar mistakes can set a poor example for students and undermine the importance of correct grammar.

Attention to Detail: Attention to detail is essential in education, and grammar mistakes on billboards might imply that the school lacks attention to detail in other areas of their operations as



fig... 04

morphosyntactic analysis of the phrase "Nestle Nido Milk 'Make them strong on the inside'," we will break down the components of the phrase and examine their grammatical and syntactic properties.

Nestle Nido Milk: This is a noun phrase and serves as the subject of the sentence. It refers to a specific brand of milk called "Nestle Nido Milk."

'Make them strong on the inside': This is a verb phrase and functions as the predicate of the sentence. It includes the imperative verb "make," followed by the object pronoun "them," and the prepositional phrase "on the inside."

Make: This is the main verb of the verb phrase and functions as an imperative, giving a command or instruction.

them: This is a pronoun and serves as the object of the verb "make." It refers to one or more unspecified individuals who are being instructed to become strong on the inside.

strong: This is an adjective that describes the state or quality of being strong. In this sentence, it modifies the pronoun "them" and specifies the desired condition they are being told to achieve. on the inside: This is a prepositional phrase that provides additional information about the type of strength being referred to. "On the inside" implies internal or emotional strength rather than physical strength.

In summary, the phrase "Nestle Nido Milk 'Make them strong on the inside'" is an advertisement or slogan that promotes the brand "Nestle Nido Milk." The phrase encourages consumers to use milk to help individuals become strong internally or emotionally, as indicated by the phrase "Make them strong on the inside." The imperative verb "make" is directed towards an unspecified group of individuals represented by the pronoun "them," and the prepositional phrase "on the inside" specifies the type of strength being emphasized.





To perform a morphosyntactic analysis of the phrase "Kabibist restaurant," we will break down the components of the phrase and examine their grammatical and syntactic properties.

Kabab is an Urdu word. kebab, also spelled kebob or kabob, dish of Middle Eastern or Central Asian origin that typically combines small pieces of meat such as lamb or beef with vegetables on a skewer and is then grilled.

1. Kababist: This is an adjective that describes the type or quality of the restaurant.

However, it seems like there might be a typographical error in the word. It is likely intended to be "Kebabist" (or "Kabab" + "-ist"), which refers to a restaurant specializing in kebabs.

2. Restaurant: This is a noun that functions as the head of the noun phrase. It represents the focus of the phrase, which is the establishment type.

morphosyntactic analysis of the phrase "Kabibist restaurant" is as follows:

Adjective: Kababist. the suffix 'ist' add in the urdu word kabab (noun) to make it adjective. a English Pattern used in urdu to make Adjective.

Noun: Restaurant

This analysis shows that "Kabibist restaurant" (possibly intended to be "Kebabist restaurant") is a noun phrase consisting of an adjective (describing the type of restaurant) and a noun (representing the establishment type).



Nestle nido Company slogan "Toddler 1-3 years". According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Trusted Source, kids between the ages of 1 and 3 are considered toddlers. The term "toddler" already encompasses the age range of 1 to 3 years, so there seems to be repetition when including the specific age range.

The use of both "toddler" and "1-3 years" in the same phrase can be seen as repetitive since "toddler" inherently refers to the age range of around 1 to 3 years. Therefore, including the specific age range may not add much new information.

### **Findings:**

Billboards are a ubiquitous feature of urban landscapes, conveying information, messages, and advertisements to the public. Analyzing the morphosyntactic aspects of Pakistani billboards can provide insights into the language choices, cultural influences, and persuasive techniques employed in these visual displays.

### **Morphological Analysis:**

Billboards often display concise and impactful language due to limited space.

They utilize a mix of English, Urdu, and sometimes other regional languages.

Morphemes such as prefixes, suffixes, and inflections may be employed to convey specific meanings within the space constraints.

Nouns, adjectives, verbs, and occasionally adverbs are common word classes used on billboards, reflecting the need to provide essential information efficiently.

### **Syntactic Analysis:**

Billboards often prioritize brevity and immediacy, leading to simple and direct sentence structures. Word order may be altered for emphasis or to fit the available space, possibly leading to variations from standard sentence structures.

Ellipsis and omission of certain words are common strategies to convey a message while keeping the text concise.

Code-Switching and Language Choice:

Pakistani billboards frequently exhibit code-switching, where multiple languages are used within the same text. This reflects the linguistic diversity of the country and caters to a broader audience. English, as a global language, is often used for brand names, slogans, and to convey a modern or aspirational image. Urdu is commonly employed to establish a local and relatable connection with the audience.

### **Cultural Influences:**

Morphosyntactic choices on billboards reflect cultural values, norms, and aspirations. Politeness levels, honorifics, and culturally significant phrases may be employed.

Certain linguistic constructs may evoke emotions or trigger cultural associations that resonate with the audience. According to Yastanti et al. (2021), a suffix is a letter group added to the end of the base word. It frequently signifies the part of speech and sometimes adds meaning. Words with the suffix *-ly* are often found in English, for example, beautifully, perfectly, and quickly. Words ending in *-ly* are usually adjectives and nouns. Suffix *-ly* is a suffix that forms an adverb of an adjective. The words given *-ly* are turned into adverbs that modify other words in the sentence. Many adverbs end in *-ly* because it is an easy way to turn an adjective into an adverb. The *-ly* suffix is also the best way to describe how, or how often, something is done. Examples of adverbs ending in *-ly* are: angrily, happily, hardly, smartly, slowly, smoothly, calmly, carefully, clearly, easily, gently, and rudely.

The first problem starts with the billboard. In that sentence, there is one word that needs to be added suffix *-ly* to get the exact meaning. The addition of the suffix *-ly* is placed at the end of the word International. The changing of the word international to internationally is a change from the form of an adjective to an adverb. b. Problem in Suffix *-s/es* to Verb

Verbs added with *-s* or *-es* follow a singular third-party subject, such as he, she, and it. Furthermore, the verb gets the addition of *-s* or *es* only in present-tense sentences. Verbs ending in *-s* and *-es* are used in present tense sentences that use a singular third-party subject (she, he, it, or the name of a person/thing). Verbs ending in *es* are verbs that end in the letters o, s, x, z, ch, and sh.

The second problem that often occurs is the lack of adding suffix-s/es to the verbs of simple present tense sentences. The tense is used to describe an event or something that happened all the time or repeatedly.

In linguistics, syntax refers to the rules that govern how words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is included in a field of study that focuses on how phrases and sentences are formed from certain words to create a good structure for meaning (Agler, 2013; Bahtiar et al., 2021). The syntax section can be elaborated as follows:

#### a. The Structure Problem

Syntax is a study of principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in a particular language (Burton & Roberts, 2016). In linguistics, the study of the rules that govern how words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is one of the significant components of grammar, the arrangement of words in a sentence. Some errors affect texts larger than the word, namely phrases, clauses, and sentences.

### **Conclusion**

Analyzing the morphosyntactic aspects of Pakistani billboards reveals a complex interplay of language choices, grammatical structures, and cultural influences. These billboards serve as a linguistic and cultural canvas, employing a mix of languages, morphemes, and syntactic strategies to effectively convey messages within the constraints of space and capture the attention of a diverse audience. This study is conducted to explore the use of linguistic fragments within the advertisements for the purposes of conveying messages about the products. Therefore, the language used in the advertisements is enough to reflect the intellectual state of their people. The use of English is obviously for prestige as well as for global appeal in consequence of which there happens to observe the cultural blend in non-native communities. The representation of the language plays a vital role along with understanding these elements enhances our appreciation of the linguistic dynamics embedded in visual communication and advertisement in Pakistan. This research highlights the use of language in the advertisements for the purpose of conveying messages to the target audience. In consequence which there happen to be certain visuals in which there are errors with the use of language. For an instance, mother's choice is written instead of mothers' choice in the advertisement. Moreover, there is a case of lexical missing such as Kababiest in which the Urdu word kabab get the suffix from English. These kinds of expressions get the attention of the viewer which can be understood by the people belonged to the same community but it becomes hard for the outsiders. The study concludes by stating number of morpho-syntactic errors available within the advertisements in the analysis section which clearly reflect the intellectual state of the advertisers. There should be some measures taken by the publishing agencies to get the texts proofread by the specific authorities. This step will not only improve the quality of the advertisements but also convey the messages properly. Second concern is to see how the message is affected with the presence of morpho-syntactic errors. Obviously if there are errors within some document the reader or the audience will not only be stuck with the actual meaning but it will definitely damage the intellectual reasoning by the end. Ultimately, advertisements can be used to spread proper use of language as well. The last concern of the research is to highlight the factors involved in the use to errors in the advertisement in Pakistan. essentially, the basic factor is taken out from the point of view of Lado's (1957) theoretical framework about contrastive analysis which focuses on the fundamental differences among and between languages. Moreover, in Pakistan English is spoken as a second language and the limited exposure to the real time communication brings the non-standard blend in the expression.

### **Implications of the Research:**

This research can be used in the fields of language teaching, learning and policy making. With the help of the issues discussed in this study are really helpful to marginalize the issues faced by non-native speakers of the language. This research is equally helpful for the language related and media related individuals so far because advertisements are considered to be the face of any product in the market. Most of the time public gets to know about any product by the advertisement so that the appropriateness matters.

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