

Semiotics of Deception: A Linguistic Analysis of Packaging Industry in Pakistan

Faizullah 1 Dr. Aftab Akram 2 Muhammad Farukh Arslan 3

1. M.Phil. Linguistics Scholar, English Graduate Studies, National University of Modern Languages faizp057@gmail.com
2. Lecturer, English Graduate Studies, National University of Modern Languages (Faisalabad Campus) aakram@numl.edu.pk
3. Lecturer, English Graduate Studies, National University of Modern Languages (Faisalabad Campus) farukh.arslan@numl.edu.pk

Abstract

Packaging speaks louder than words, and this study brings to light how the semiotics behind Pakistani biscuit packaging manipulates consumer perceptions. The research aimed to explore the interaction of linguistic and visual messages in packaging, focusing on how they convey cultural meanings and influence consumer behavior. Employing Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory (1964) as the conceptual framework, the research employed a qualitative semiotic analysis method to analyze one hundred biscuit packaging samples from ten prominent Pakistani brands. Data was collected through open-ended questionnaires from 200 mass communication students at Government College University, Faisalabad. The major findings revealed that the interplay of linguistic elements—such as brand names, slogans, and descriptions—with visual features like colors, symbols, and images, constructs a powerful narrative that not only shapes brand identity but also deceives consumer perception by masking the true nature of the product. The study broadened Barthes' framework by proposing the inclusion of new semiotic dimensions, such as digital and ethical messages, to better interpret modern packaging strategies. This research contributes significantly to the fields of linguistics, marketing, and design, highlighting that the semiotic analysis of packaging is crucial for understanding consumer engagement and brand success in the Pakistani market. It also provides insights for future studies on how packaging can be used ethically to communicate product authenticity and cultural relevance.

Keywords: Semiotics, Packaging, Linguistic messages, coded, non-coded iconic messages

1. INTRODUCTION

In a world where every aspect of packaging conveys meaning, the link between semiotics and consumer behavior becomes a key factor in shaping perceptions and influencing buying decisions. Semiotics studies how individuals interpret the meanings of signs and symbols, exploring the ways visual communication are expressed through metaphor, analogy, allegory, metonymy, and symbolism (Contributor, 2017). This field has gained recognition in various academic disciplines for its ability to decode communication strategies. In Pakistan's packaging industry, semiotics serves as a valuable tool for understanding how packaging conveys messages to consumers. Packaging, as a representation of a brand's identity, relies heavily on both linguistic and visual semiotic elements to engage its audience. These elements are critical because packaging significantly influences consumer choices. By analyzing the semiotic and linguistic features in packaging, this study not only contributes to linguistic discussions but also offers practical insights for marketers. It seeks to investigate how cultural, linguistic, and semiotic factors combine to shape consumer preferences in Pakistan's packaging industry.

Language is an effective communicative tool, able to convey not only actual information but also deeper cultural values and social messages. This rule extends beyond interpersonal communication, playing a significant role with purchasers' actions and brand identification in the bazaar. Mainly in the world of snack foods, biscuit packaging, depending heavily on visual and linguistic messages to attract attention, touch brands of values, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions. Packaging is one of the fields in visual communication design that has many special demands because its function is directly dealing with consumers, including technical, creative, communicative and marketing demands that must be manifested into visual language (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Language on packaging used to convince and collaborate with consumers on a deeper stage through cultural values and social messages. Furthermore, humor, wordplay, proverbs, slogan, and even color might be employed to create a sense of connection and familiarity with the consumer. The relationship between

semiotics and packaging is closely intertwined through the use of visual language, which includes elements such as colors, images, text, brand symbols, slogans, and captions. As the saying goes, A picture is worth a thousand words (Bernard, 1921), highlighting the power of visual elements in communication. Semiotics examines how these signs, symbols, and images are employed to convey meaning, exploring the ways in which language, visuals, and metaphors work together to shape consumer perceptions. Moreover, prominent linguist, structuralist, and semiotician have their own notion as far as semiotics is concerned. For Ferdinand de Saussure, semiology is a ground of knowledge where all signs work as a constituent of social life (Saussure, 1959). According to Barthes, the main theorist of the present study, semiology is an organization of signs which comprises symbols, images, signs, non-verbal expression (Barthes, 1967). Likewise, a sign communicates a message or an idea to a person (Peirce, 1902).

While the visual factors of packaging surely affect consumer belief, the language picks employed at the packaging play an essential function in shaping symbol identification and customer interaction. The packaging, particularly biscuit packaging works as a vital communicative tool, including linguistic and semiotic factor to bring messages to customers. Conversely, there exists a gap in our understanding of how these linguistic and semiotic capabilities are semiotically constructed and interpreted in the context of Pakistani biscuit packaging. Therefore, this research explored the semiotic and linguistic aspects of Pakistani local biscuit packaging. The purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative analysis of biscuit packaging from ten prominent biscuit companies in Pakistan, by applying Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory (1964) as the guiding framework. The study focused on the linguistic and semiotic aspects used by local brands of Pakistani biscuit in their packaging.

1.1. Background of the Study

The packaging industry in Pakistan plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, where the semiotic and linguistic elements embedded within packaging designs serve as powerful tools for communication. Packaging is not just a means of protecting the product; it also acts as a silent salesperson, influencing consumer decisions and brand recognition (Taimela, 2024). In the context of Pakistan, being a diverse and culturally rich country, the use of symbols, colors, and language on packaging is particularly significant. These features are often strategically employed to convey specific messages, create brand identities, and evoke emotional responses from consumers (Ali & Iqbal, 2022). However, this semiotic richness also opens the door to deceptive practices, where packaging may mislead consumers regarding the quality, origin, or ingredients of a product, raising ethical concerns within the industry (Khan, 2021).

The study of semiotics, as introduced by Barthes (1964), offers a framework to decode the layers of meaning conveyed through packaging. By analyzing the signs and symbols used in packaging, the studies can explore the underlying messages that may not be immediately apparent to the consumer but are intended to influence their purchasing behavior. In Pakistan's packaging industry, where competition is aggressive, and consumers are highly brand-conscious, the manipulation of semiotic and linguistic elements create false impressions or exaggerated claims is a prevalent issue (Shah & Ahmed, 2020). This study aims to explore, how these practices manifest in the Pakistani context by examining the ways in which packaging can both inform and deceive, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on consumer protection and ethical marketing practices.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The main concern of this study is to identify the linguistic difficulties faced by consumers in interpreting Pakistani local biscuit packaging. Packaging is an important communication tool, using both linguistic and visual aspects to engage consumers. However, there is a gap in understanding how these aspects are constructed and interpreted in this particular context. No prior studies have analyzed linguistic and semiotic exploration of Pakistani biscuit packaging. Existing research focused on packaging design in visual communication and ignores linguistic and semiotic analysis. Moreover, there is a communication gap between producers and consumers. While people consume various brands of

biscuits, most are unaware of the company's history, the origins of brand names, their literal and implied meanings, and especially of the deep symbolic value of logos, colors, images, verbal messages, awareness of utterances and nonverbal expressions. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by using Roland Barthes semiotic theory (1964) as a framework for analyzing linguistic and semiotic aspects within Pakistani local biscuit packaging.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study is guided by specific research objectives. These objectives aim to explore how these elements shape consumer perceptions and behaviors.

- a. To investigate the linguistic features present in Pakistani biscuits packaging, including brand names, slogans, and textual messages
- b. To conduct a semiotic analysis of the visual elements in biscuits packaging, focusing on culturally significant symbols, images, and colors
- c. To examine the dynamic relationship between linguistic and visual elements on biscuits packaging

1.4. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1.4.1. Primary Research Question

- a. How do linguistic and visual features interact in Pakistani biscuits packaging to convey cultural meanings and influence consumer perceptions?

1.4.2. Secondary Research Questions

- b. What linguistic strategies are employed in Pakistani biscuits packaging, including the use of brand names, slogans, and textual messages?
- c. How do visual elements, such as culturally resonant symbols, images, and colors, contribute to the semiotic landscape of biscuits packaging in the Pakistani context?
- d. In what ways does the interaction between linguistic and visual elements shape the overall communicative strategy of biscuits packaging?

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The present research is grounded on Barthes Semiotic Theory (1964) to explore text, slogan, brand name, picture, logo and design etc. Essentially semiotics assumes meanings of signs inside packaging. There are three kinds of messages:

- i. **Linguistic Message:** This message contains the text like slogan, product name or any statement.
- ii. **Non-coded Iconic Message:** It is the natural message, which explore the denotative analysis of what Barthes called "first degree of intelligibility".
- iii. **Coded Iconic or Symbolic Message:** It carries connotative and symbolic analysis of what Barthes called "rule-governed transposition" which means the packaging may have different meanings according to viewers' cultural background.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview of the Literature Review

The literature review for the present study, titled "Semiotics of Deception: A Linguistic Analysis of the Packaging Industry in Pakistan," is structured into three distinct sections. The first section explored the historical development of semiotics, tracing its evolution from the era of Plato to contemporary times. The second section examined the existing studies on packaging, emphasizing its functions, strategies, and the role of deceptive practices, with a focus on the Pakistani context. The third section focused on the integration of semiotics into packaging, providing an overview of text semiotics, and the role of various visual elements such as images, icons, logos, monograms, paintings, photographs, and symbols that were integral to packaging.

2.1.1. Defining Semiotics: Key Concepts and Principles

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation in society, significantly contributing to social psychology and linguistics. According to Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) one of the prominent figures in the study of linguistics, semiotics examines the nature of signs and the rules that govern them.

In addition, Signs are embedded in everyday life or in society, such as road traffic lights using red, yellow, and green colors—green for drive, yellow for caution, and red for stop. Other examples include gender symbols indicating restrooms, and washrooms, or the indicators on an automated teller machine (ATM) for money withdrawal and service payments. Financial institutions in Pakistan like Habib Bank Limited (HBL) use signs to navigate banking services. Additionally, signs encompass application icons like those for Google Chrome, Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and tools like the painter's color bucket. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter use recognizable symbols, like f, and X for that reason. Moreover, a single signifier can represent multiple meanings; for instance, a rose can convey different messages based on its color. Each color of rose embodies distinct cultural concepts: a red rose symbolizes love and passion, a white rose represents purity, clarity, and innocence (often used in traditional weddings), an orange rose denotes pride, enthusiasm, and fascination, and a lavender rose signifies love at first sight (Rose Color Meanings - Fifty flowers, 2021).

2.1.2. The Concept of Semiosis

Semiosis represents a triadic relationship encompassing the sign, the object, and the interpretant. Defined as "a sign-process, that is, a process in which something functions as a sign for some organism" (Morris, 1946, p. 253), semiosis strengthens the way signs are interpreted and understood.

2.1.3. Distinction between Semiosis and Semiotics

The term *semiosis*, introduced by Peirce, describes any process involving the interaction of signs and the creation of meaning. Semiosis is inherently triadic, involving cognitive, affective, and biological dimensions, and exhibits a cyclic nature that reflects the recurring stages of societal evolution. It provides insights into past and future phenomena across an extensive temporal span, including up to three billion years. Conversely, semiotics concerns the process of meaning-making through the study of signs. It consists of three key components: semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. Semiotics also emphasizes cognitive strategies and the analysis of routine human activities (Sebeok, 1991).

2.2. Key Theorists of the Twentieth Century

2.2.1. Charles Sanders Peirce: Pragmatic Semiotics and Symbols

Saussure examined signs from a psychological perspective, where the signifier and signified were shaped by mental processes. A sign communicates something or an idea to an individual (Peirce, 1902), potentially leaving an indelible mark or even a stronger impression on the viewer's mental slate. Four key aspects—Representament, Interpretant, Object, and Ground (Peirce, 1902)—contribute to the makeup of a sign.

Firstly, "representament" refers to any type of sign. Secondly, the "interpretant" represents the mental response elicited by the sign in the mind of the reader, interpreter, or viewer. This study examined participants' emotional reactions to specific biscuit packaging, revealing that these responses varied based on individual knowledge, culture, and understanding. Thirdly, the "object" is the specific entity the sign refers to, with logos and monograms serving as clear examples of signs commonly found on packaging. Lastly, the "ground" refers to the context or setting in which the sign appears; in this research, both the background and foreground were analyzed for their impact on the conveyed message.

2.2.2 Ferdinand de Saussure: Language, Sign, and Meaning

Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) is undoubtedly a leader in modern linguistics. His significant contributions include the development of semiology and the sign model (Lyons, 1968). Prior to Saussure, language was primarily seen as a tool for communication, but Saussure elevated its importance by framing it as a "nomenclature" — a systematic way of forming terms within a specific field (Thaibault, Paul J., 1997).

Saussure's dyadic model of signs comprises two components: the signifier (the form of the sign) and the signified (the concept it represents). A visual depiction like a picture of a tree, rose, or icon serves as a signifier, while the

romantic feelings associated with a rose represent the signified. The relationship between the signifier and signified is termed signification.

A sign results from the fusion of the signifier and signified which have a deep-seated connection and mutually evoke each other (Saussure, 1959). A single signifier can evoke multiple signifieds. For example, the signifier "rose" can signify various concepts. Different colors of roses carry distinct cultural meanings: red symbolizes love and romance, yellow signifies platonic love, joy, and appreciation, pink denotes gratitude, sympathy, and elegance, white represents purity, innocence, and traditional weddings, orange conveys pride, passion, and enthusiasm, while lavender expresses love at first sight (Singh, 2023).

Saussure argued that the signifier and signified were psychologically constructed. For him, a linguistic sign was not merely a reference to an object or its name but rather an association between a sound pattern (phonic pattern) and a mental concept. The phonic pattern, rather than being a mere sound, is the sensory impact of sound perceived and named as an "acoustic image" (Saussure, 1959). Thus, the phonic pattern and its associated concept together form a linguistic sign.

2.2.3 Roland Barthes: Mythologies, Deception, and Consumerism

Barthes exemplifies the transition from structuralism to textual semiotics in his influential work. He emerged as a leading figure in the 1960s, advocating Saussure's semiotics and applying it extensively to visual communication including images, architecture, packaging, painting, advertising, and film, earning international recognition. This study similarly focuses on semiotic analysis of packaging industry in Pakistan, acknowledging Barthes as a pivotal theorist in this field. Barthes developed a sign system emphasizing the socio-cultural context's influence on the relationship between signifier and signified. He proposed that anything could function as a sign, asserting, like Saussure, an arbitrary link between signifier and signified. This viewpoint expanded linguistic signs into photographic images, coded iconic themes, and monograms, all of which are explored in the current research on packaging industry in Pakistan.

Barthes articulated a comprehensive view of semiotics, asserting that "everything falls within the realm of semiotics" (Eco, 1976, p.7), encompassing communication, media studies, packaging, advertising, dance, music, and film, thereby extending semiotics' reach to encompass all aspects of life. He introduced the semiotics of Myth, describing it as extending beyond oral discourse to include photography, films, news reporting, shows, and publicity. Myth, according to Barthes, consists of pre-fabricated speech patterns and operates through "second-order signification," where it disguises its true intentions by draining a linguistic sign (composed of a signifier and a signified) of its original meaning, filling it instead with mythic concepts. For instance, Barthes analyzed the cover of Paris-Match featuring a black French soldier seemingly saluting the tricolor. While on the surface, it signifies military service and respect, second-order signification transforms it into a symbol of submissive acceptance of French imperialism (Barthes, 1972, pp.110-114).

"Myth is 'A complex system of images and beliefs which a society constructs in order to sustain and authenticate its sense of its own being i.e. the very fabric of its system of meaning'" (Hawkes, 2003, p.107). Myth detaches signifiers from their historical meanings and attaches new signifieds and identities over time. This evolution is evident in product branding, where names like "Pampers," "Always," "Bonanza," "Surf," "Ariel," and "Marie biscuit" become associated solely with their current meanings. Through myth, society imbues signs with social values, employing them in packaging and cultural activities alike.

2.2.4 Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965)

Louis Hjelmslev was a prominent figure in the development of glossematics (1943), a theory that integrates both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of language (Fischer, 1965, as cited in Noth, 1995). His approach, known as the Copenhagen School of Linguistics, has become a cornerstone in the field of semiotics (Krampen et al., 1981).

2.2.5 Roman Jakobson (1896-1982)

Roman Jakobson was a prominent twentieth-century linguist and a key figure in semiotics (Krampen et al., 1981). His career is marked by four distinct periods, each contributing significantly to the field:

Firstly, during the Formalist Period (1914-1920), Jakobson co-founded the Moscow Linguistic Circle and participated in the Opoyaz poetics circle. Secondly, in the Structuralist Period (1920-1939), he became a leading figure in the Prague School of Linguistics and Aesthetics. Thirdly, in the Semiotic Period (1939-1949), he collaborated with Hjelmslev's Copenhagen Linguistic Circle and established the Linguistic Circle of New York. Lastly, in the Interdisciplinary Period (1949-1982), Jakobson taught at Harvard and expanded his research into fields like physics, mathematics, neurolinguistics, information theory, and biology (Koch, 1981, as cited in Noth, 1995).

Jakobson made substantial contributions to various areas of linguistics, including dialectology, phonology, aphasiology, and morphology. His interests later broadened to aesthetics and culture. In the realm of semiotics and applied semiotics, he explored the concepts of sign, system, communication, code, function, structure, and their applications in film, painting, folklore, and theater.

2.2.6 Karl Bühler (1879-1963)

Karl Bühler, a German psychologist and linguist, pioneered the integration of psychology into the study of language. He is renowned for his contributions to the understanding of nonverbal expressions. One of his significant contributions was his theory of metaphors and sematology (Cobley, 2001). Bühler deliberately used the term "sematology" to differentiate his work from Saussure's "semiology." Sematology, as defined by Bühler, is the science of verbal signs within the processes of thinking and reasoning. His theory of language also encompasses elements of language and their organization, including aspects such as syllabification, word definitions, metaphors, and anaphora.

2.2.7. Charles William Morris (1901-1979)

Charles William Morris was a seminal figure in the field of semiotics during the 1930s and 1940s, recognized as a "classic of semiotics." He developed a theory of signs that contributed to the broader framework of "Unified Science" (Morris, 1938). His work had a significant impact on the development of the theory of Iconicity and semiotic aesthetics. Morris delineated three key components in the process of semiosis:

- a) Vehicle: This is the entity that functions as a sign.
- b) Designatum: This is what the sign indicates or points to.
- c) Interpretant: This is the overall effect the sign has on the interpreter (Morris, 1938, p. 3)

Morris's theory provided a comprehensive understanding of how signs operate and influence interpretation.

2.3 PACKAGING

Packaging serves as a crucial medium for product communication and consumer interaction. It encompasses various semiotic elements that can influence consumer perceptions and behavior. This section examines existing studies on packaging, emphasizing its functions, strategies, and the role of deceptive practices, with a focus on the Pakistani context.

2.3.1 Definition, Purpose, and Significance of Packaging

Packaging refers to the materials and containers used to protect, contain, and present a product from the point of production through distribution to the end user. It encompasses both the physical containment of products and the communicative elements that convey essential information and branding. Packaging typically includes structural components like boxes, bottles, and wraps, as well as graphic elements such as labels, colors, and typography (Soroka, 2002).

The primary purposes of packaging are to protect products during transport and storage, ensure product integrity and safety, and facilitate ease of use. Beyond these functional aspects, packaging serves a critical role in marketing by attracting consumer attention, differentiating products, and conveying brand identity (Underwood, 2003). In the context of consumer behavior, packaging significantly impacts purchasing decisions through its visual appeal and informational content,

which can enhance perceived value and trust (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). Additionally, in an increasingly competitive market, effective packaging acts as a silent salesman, providing a critical touchpoint between the product and the consumer that influences brand recognition and loyalty (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008).

2.3.2 The Functions of Packaging

Packaging functions as a "silent salesman," crucially involved in conveying product information, brand identity, and marketing messages. By integrating visual and textual elements, packaging captures consumer attention and communicates essential product details, thereby influencing purchasing decisions (Underwood, 2003). Elements such as colors, images, and fonts are strategically chosen to create a visual appeal that not only differentiates the product from competitors but also aligns with the brand's identity and values (Nancarrow et al., 1998). Effective packaging thus serves to attract and persuade consumers by fostering an emotional connection and facilitating immediate product recognition.

Beyond its communicative role, packaging provides vital protective functions, ensuring that products remain safe, intact, and uncontaminated throughout the supply chain. It is designed to shield contents from environmental factors such as moisture, light, and physical damage, thereby extending shelf life and preserving quality (Lockhart & Paine, 1996). Additionally, packaging enhances functionality by offering ease of transport, storage, and usage. Features like resealable closures, ergonomic shapes, and tamper-evident seals contribute to consumer convenience and safety, further adding to the overall utility and effectiveness of the packaging (Sonneveld et al., 2005).

2.3.3 PACKAGING STRATEGIES

2.3.3.1 Visual and Textual Elements

Effective packaging strategies rely on the integration of visual and textual elements to communicate a cohesive and persuasive message. Visual semiotics—comprising color schemes, shapes, and imagery—play a crucial role in eliciting emotional responses and conveying brand values (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Colors can signify freshness, health, or luxury, influencing consumer perceptions and decisions even before reading any text (Kauppinen-Räsänen & Luomala, 2010). Similarly, imagery on packaging can evoke specific associations or desires, making the product more appealing. Textual elements such as brand names, slogans, and product descriptions provide essential information, reinforcing the visual message and building trust (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). Together, these elements create a powerful narrative that guides consumer behavior and establishes a clear brand identity. For that purpose, Roland Barthes semiotic theory (1964) has been used to analyze all linguistic, coded, and non-coded messages in packaging.

2.3.3.2 Branding and Identity

Packaging is instrumental in creating and reinforcing brand identity, which is critical in differentiating products in a competitive market. Consistent use of visual and verbal cues on packaging helps in establishing brand recognition and fostering consumer loyalty (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). Effective branding on packaging creates an emotional connection with consumers by reflecting the brand's personality and values. For instance, premium brands often use minimalist designs with high-quality materials to convey exclusivity, while eco-friendly brands might use earthy colors and recyclable materials to emphasize sustainability (Keller, 2009). By creating a distinct identity, packaging not only enhances visibility on the shelf but also contributes to long-term brand equity.

2.3.3.3 Functionality and Usability

Beyond aesthetics, the functionality and usability of packaging are crucial elements of an effective strategy. Consumers increasingly value packaging that offers convenience, such as easy opening, reseal ability, and portability (Rundh, 2009). Packaging that improves user experience by being intuitive and practical can significantly enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, features such as clear labeling and ergonomic design contribute to ease of use and safety, addressing consumer needs for both functionality and information (Hawkes, 2010). Innovative packaging solutions that combine aesthetic appeal with practical

usability can thus provide a competitive advantage. Moreover, one of the studies analyzed the flags of 30 countries through the lens of semiotic theory, specifically employing Berger and Luckman's (1966) model. This model highlighted three perspectives of meaning: precise meaning, designed meaning, and intended meaning, all within the framework of social constructionism. It extended the concept of precise meaning, which elicited specific responses from recipients. These meanings contributed to the ideology underlying the visual elements of the sign, signifier, and signified, as proposed by Saussure (1916). The study adopted a descriptive qualitative design to examine the flags of 30 countries, analyzing the signs (visuals) in terms of precise meaning, context or designed meaning (related to physical appearance), and intended meaning (as intended to be perceived). Furthermore, each country's dominance was intricately linked to its image and perspective, reflecting the significance they place on their flags, rooted in their background, history, and culture.

While semiotics in packaging can effectively communicate positive brand attributes, it can also be used deceptively to mislead consumers. Deceptive practices might include using exaggerated imagery, ambiguous icons, or misleading textual claims that distort the product's actual attributes or benefits (Ford et al., 1991). For instance, a package might display lush, fresh produce imagery for a processed product, suggesting a level of freshness or naturalness that the product does not possess. In the Pakistani packaging industry, where regulatory oversight can be lax, and such deceptive practices can be prevalent, eroding consumer trust and distorting market fairness. Understanding the semiotics of deception is crucial for developing strategies to enhance transparency and consumer protection, ensuring that packaging accurately represents the product and maintains ethical standards (Raza et al., 2022).

Arslan et al. (2023) conducted a semiotic analysis to examine the various layers of meaning on the cover pages of Pakistani dramas. By analyzing six drama covers in terms of visual elements such as size, color, attire, and facial expressions, the study identified how these elements communicate religious, social, and cultural messages. The findings suggest that these visual cues on cover pages convey hidden meanings, helping the audience infer story themes and character traits. This analysis underscores the role of semiotic elements in media, revealing how cover visuals offer audiences deeper insights into the dramas' underlying messages and societal reflections.

Drawing from Arslan et al.'s work, this study applies semiotic analysis to Pakistani biscuit packaging, focusing on how colors, symbols, and language contribute to brand identity and influence consumer behavior. Just as Arslan et al. highlighted semiotic cues in drama covers, this research investigates how packaging elements craft narratives that resonate culturally with consumers, revealing the broader socio-cultural impact of product design.

Furthermore, (Yana Erlyana, 2019) the study examines packaging design in visual communication. Focusing on the specific requirements of this segment, Erlyana highlights those technical, creative, communication, and marketing aspects that packaging must include as it connects consumers directly plant. Focusing specifically on the Promina Puffs weaning formula, Erlyana uses stuffing systems techniques and signal analysis methods to explore how visual aspects of the design function as communication tools.

Recent semiotic research emphasizes the power of visual and linguistic elements in conveying cultural and ideological messages. Shakeel et al. (2023) analyzed the flags of 30 countries using Berger and Luckman's (1966) social constructionist model, which categorizes meaning into three types: precise, designed, and intended. This model underscores how visual symbols like flags can communicate complex socio-cultural identities and ideologies by layering meanings related to historical pride, national identity, and cultural heritage. This study builds on such insights by examining how semiotic elements in Pakistani biscuit packaging—such as color, imagery, and text—work to shape consumer perceptions.

In line with Barthes' (1964) semiotic theory, which explores how everyday objects convey both denotative (literal) and connotative (cultural) meanings, this

research analyzes how Pakistani packaging design not only projects brand identity but also embeds cultural messages. This framework enables an exploration of how brands leverage semiotic cues to construct consumer loyalty and brand narratives, similar to how national flags serve as symbols of collective identity. Furthermore, the study extends Barthes' theory by introducing digital and ethical dimensions to the analysis, reflecting contemporary marketing trends and the evolving role of packaging as a cultural artifact.

Likewise, the research by Ariel Chen and Goran Eriksson (2019) examines the marketing strategies used to promote the use of protein foods as a healthy eating option, focusing on the role of packaging things eat in a discourse or myth about the perceived benefits of consuming more protein goes on. Despite limited evidence supporting the purported positive effects on physical function and body composition, studies show a significant growth of the protein food segment and the addition of protein to foods previously classified as unhealthy. By using critical discourse analysis (CDA), the authors studied food packaging materials, revealing a trend Protein amount of emphasis supplied. The study reveals how these packaging materials present themselves as results of science and modern technology in playful and comfortable ways, in keeping with neoliberal ideals of well-being and active lifestyles.

Carla Pereira (2021) examined how packaging design fulfills consumers' nutritional, psychological, and cultural needs, particularly within the Brazilian context. This study highlights the role of standardized packaging and a diverse product range in enhancing the importance of visual communication in the food industry. Using a qualitative approach and tools such as label analysis, the study assessed the color of 612 food packages. It identified three primary signaling roles of colors in packaging: conveying food color (branding function), indicating target product characteristics (informative activity), and symbolizing ideological and cultural traits (symbolic exercise). The findings reveal that the Brazilian food packaging color scheme is structured around color attributes, reflecting diverse user group identities. For instance, white is associated with "healthy" individuals, black with "sophistication," pink with women, and green with "ecological" identities. The study concludes that colors function as symbols of identity, mirroring the differences and contradictions among consumer groups.

Furthermore, the study by Faiz, et al. (2023) examined a semiotic analysis of zeera biscuit advertisements to uncover the sign system and meanings within these visual communications. Using Roland Barthes' (1964) semiotic theory, the analysis examines both verbal and nonverbal elements, such as words, images, and color, to understand their symbolic structure and implications. The study reveals complex connections between consumers, producers, and the broader sociocultural context of cumin biscuits. Importantly, while verbal information is found to be slightly more significant than nonverbal cues, the difference is minimal. This research enhances our comprehension of visual communication, Zeera Plus design, and consumer culture, offering valuable insights for marketers, designers, and researchers.

The literature review provided a comprehensive overview essential for framing the current study. It began with a chronological progression of semiotics, tracing its evolution and theoretical foundations. Subsequently, the review explored existing research on packaging, focusing on its functional aspects, strategic approaches, and the pervasive issue of deceptive practices within the Pakistani context. This exploration underscored packaging's multifaceted role in facilitating product communication, marketing, and protection, while also highlighting the detrimental effects of deceptive practices on consumer trust and market integrity. Furthermore, the review explored the integration of semiotics into packaging, emphasizing the significance of textual semiotics and various visual elements such as images, icons, logos, monograms, paintings, photographs, and symbols. Finally, the review also assessed existing research on packaging design within the context of visual communication.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research is grounded in a qualitative design, as it primarily engages with non-numerical, descriptive data. The study employs both exploratory and interpretive approaches to investigate how participants understand and respond to biscuit packaging elements. The exploratory approach is suited for research that seeks to generate insights into concepts and theories, particularly where data is in the form of words rather than numbers (Babbie, 1992). Barthes' Semiotic Theory served as the framework for analyzing how packaging communicates meaning through linguistic and visual signs. The interpretive approach was employed to understand participants' meaning-making processes, enabling a deeper analysis of how they perceive the packaging. Through this approach, gaps in Barthes' theory were identified, contributing to the formulation of new theoretical insights.

3.2 Research Method

This study employs semiotic analysis to interpret and decode the meanings embedded in the packaging of biscuits by analyzing both linguistic and visual elements. This method is grounded in Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory (1964), which focuses on how signs function in society to communicate messages and shape consumer perceptions. As Chandler (2007) points out, "semiotic analysis provides tools for uncovering the hidden meanings, making it a powerful method for understanding the communicative power of visual and textual signs" (p. 13). Grounded in Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory (1964), the study uses a qualitative semiotic analysis to investigate ten biscuit packaging samples from a selection of one hundred across ten leading Pakistani brands. Qualitative data was collected from 200 participants using open-ended questionnaires, filled by M.Com students from GC University Faisalabad. The participants' semiotic interpretations of the packaging were analyzed through Barthes' framework, identifying the meanings conveyed by brand names, colors, and symbols. Additionally, the analysis addressed semiotic gaps within the data, supplementing these findings with insights from relevant academic literature to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the packaging's impact on consumer perceptions.

3.3 Research Participants and Sampling

This study involved 200 Mass Communication students from Government College University Faisalabad, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling method was chosen to focus on participants with specific characteristics relevant to the research questions, ensuring the collection of meaningful insights (Rai & Thapa, 2015). The sample consisted of 200 students, each responding to two open-ended questionnaires about one biscuit packaging. Packaging samples from a selection of one hundred across ten leading Pakistani brands were selected for the present study. The open-ended questionnaire served as the primary research tool, allowing participants to share their interpretations of linguistic and visual elements in the packaging. Given the exploratory nature of the study, a smaller, focused group of participants was sufficient for the qualitative analysis.

3.4 Pilot Study of Questionnaire

A pilot study of the covering letter and questionnaire was conducted with Mass Communication students from Government College University Faisalabad. Based on their feedback, the content and format of the questionnaire and covering letter were refined to be more effective for the target population. The pilot study helped eliminate ambiguities and ensured the validity of the questionnaire and covering letter.

3.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to enhance the understanding of linguistic and semiotic features in Pakistani local biscuit packaging. Using semiotic analysis to analyze both linguistic and visual elements, the present study seeks to reveal the complex ways in which language is used in biscuit packaging and in relation to visual elements communicate to create meaning brand names, slogans, textual messages and cultural signs. This insight into linguistic components provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between language and visual content is not that such an understanding not only enhances the study of language but also provides a deeper understanding of cultural symbols in communication. This study reveals research participants' symbolic interpretations of text, brand names, images, and color symbols. In the present study, Barthes' theory is applied

to one hundred biscuit packaging. Furthermore, the study contributes to a broader discourse on linguistic semiotics, highlighting the role of language in shaping consumer perceptions within the unique cultural framework of Pakistan.

3.6 Rationale of Study

The rationale for this study lies in the importance of the complex transition between linguistic and visual elements in Pakistani biscuit packaging. Although semiotic analysis was used in a variety of consumer contexts, there are notable gap in understanding how linguistic and semiotic interact in the specific cultural and linguistic context of Pakistan. This further contribution of research seeks to bridge this gap by examining the unique linguistic strategies, visually embedded cultural symbols, graphic designs, colors, and textual elements of biscuit packaging in Pakistan. Understanding these interactions is important not only for the theoretical understanding of linguistic signs but holds practical implications for businesses aiming to develop culturally relevant and effective packaging strategies in a market characterized by linguistic diversity and cultural richness.

3.7 Delimitations

This study is delimited by focusing on Pakistani local biscuits packaging, excluding analysis of imported biscuits packaging. Moreover, as far data collection one hundred local biscuit packaging's images were collected from the official websites of the selected companies through Google search engine on the basis of high market sharing.

Two hundred Mass Communication students from Government College University Faisalabad were selected to fill two hundred open ended questionnaires.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, a qualitative analysis was conducted focusing exclusively on the packaging of Cookania biscuits, examining 10 packaging designs from this single brand. Although 100 biscuit packages across 10 brands were originally considered for the research, the present study solely analyzes Cookania packaging, while the remaining nine brands have not been included. The analysis applies Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory (1964), which provides a framework for interpreting the linguistic message, coded iconic message (connotative meaning), and non-coded iconic message (literal, denotative meaning). This study explores how the text, brand names, images, colors, and design elements used in Cookania packaging interact to convey specific cultural meanings and influence consumer perceptions. Additionally, Barthes' theory helps systematically explore semiotic deception in the Pakistani packaging industry. The exact responses of participants, collected via an open-ended questionnaire, are quoted in inverted commas, with further analysis reflecting the researcher's discussion and interpretation.

4.1. COOKANIA

Cookania biscuit packaging is a product of Volka Food International (Pvt.) Ltd., one of Pakistan's leading manufacturers in the bakery and confectionery industry. Established with a commitment to high-quality production, the company has grown to become a major player in Pakistan's food sector. Cookania, like other Volka Food products, reflects the company's dedication to excellence, upholding principles of quality, integrity, and transparency (Volka Food, 2022). The packaging is designed to convey the brand's commitment to premium quality while appealing to local tastes and consumer expectations, positioning Cookania as a trusted name in the biscuit market.

1. TEA TIME



The *linguistic* elements of the cookania biscuit packaging include various textual components that contribute to the overall communication strategies. The brand name “cookania” which is also the logo of this packaging is displayed in bold, capitalized in white color set against a red heart-shaped background.

According to Roland Barthes, the linguistic message is indeed present in every image: as logo, title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon (Barthes, 1977). One participant pointed out that: “The choice of bold font and capital letters catch my eyes to buy this teatime biscuit”. Moreover, the product name “Tea Time” is equally significant, and it also written in bold white font with a yellow background at the center, which is repeated on both sides of the packaging, too. Furthermore, the product description i.e. “lemon & vanilla” is positioned on the left side corner in bold brown font on a yellow background, clearly indicating the flavor variety. And whereas the slogan “flavoured cookies” in white font further highlights the product’s appeal by emphasizing the taste experience.

To the *denotative* analysis of what Barthes called “first degree of intelligibility”; images are explained as they are seen without codes, (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). The non-coded iconic message of the packaging focuses on the literal and denotative aspects. The denotative meaning of “Cookania” is to produce deliciously wholesome biscuits and cookies with exclusive tantalizing tastes (Cookania – Volka Food, n.d.). The imagery includes a hand dipping a biscuit into a white cup filled with tea, alongside three biscuits have placed on a plate. This straightforward depiction visually communicates the intended use of the biscuits, which is to enjoy them with tea, reinforcing the product name “Tea Time.” The half-yellow and half-red background design provides a clear and vibrant visual separation, making the text and images stand out. “The use of realistic and simple visuals ensures that the consumer immediately understands what the product is and how it is meant to be consumed, without needing any interpretative skills”.

The *coded iconic message* involves the connotative meanings embedded in the visual and textual elements of the packaging. The meaning of the image, here, does not rely on the creator’s meaning; the image may have different meanings according to the receivers (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). One participant pointed out that “The red heart-shaped background behind the brand name “Cookania” connotes warmth, love, and passion, suggesting that the biscuits are made with care and are meant to be enjoyed in moments of comfort and affection”. The use of yellow in the “Tea Time” background and in other parts of the packaging connotes happiness, positivity, and energy, aligning the product with cheerful and relaxing tea times (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). “The flavors “lemon & vanilla” written in brown font connote naturalness and a hint of luxury, appealing to consumers who appreciate classic and refined tastes”.

The relationship between linguistic and visual elements on biscuit packaging, as seen in the "Cookania" example, showcases how textual components such as bold fonts, capital letters, and descriptive slogans enhance product appeal. Visual elements, such as the hand dipping a biscuit into tea, align with the linguistic message, offering a clear, relatable depiction of the product's intended use. This blend of text and imagery creates a cohesive communication strategy that appeals to both taste and emotion.

2. TIKIT



The *linguistic* message referring to the text which may be analyzed denotatively and connotatively, (Barthes, 1977). The linguistic message on the Tikit biscuit packaging is clear and strategically positioned. The brand name "Tikit" is prominently displayed in a bold, black tan color. “The font style and color choice give the impression that the name is derived from the word *ticket*”. Whereas the slogan "Royal Tea Cookies" is written in black and placed at the center of the packaging. “The use of the word "Royal" suggests a high-quality, luxurious product, aiming to elevate the perceived status of the cookies”.

The *non-coded* iconic message involves the straightforward, denotative elements of the packaging. The meaning of “royal” is owned or occupied (Oxford

English Dictionary, n.d.). The central image includes a white cup filled with tea, and above it, a biscuit appears. This literal depiction clearly communicates the intended use of the product: biscuits meant to be enjoyed with tea. The overall packaging color is reddish-purple, with the bottom part designed in brown. The reddish-purple color gives the packaging a rich, sophisticated look, while the brown design at the bottom adds a classic, vintage touch.

“The use of "Royal" in the slogan connotes a sense of luxury, individuality, and high quality, suggesting that the biscuits are fit for royalty and special occasions”. The burgundy color of the packaging connotes sophistication, richness, and elegance, enhancing the product’s appeal to consumers looking for a premium tea-time treat (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010).

The linguistic and visual elements on the Tikit biscuit packaging works together to create a cohesive and appealing message. The bold, coffee-colored brand name "Tikit" is reminiscent of a ticket, suggesting an invitation to a special experience, while the slogan "Royal Tea Cookies" enhances the sense of luxury and quality associated with the product. Visually, the depiction of a biscuit above a cup of tea reinforces the intended use, offering a clear, relatable image of tea-time enjoyment. The reddish-purple and brown color scheme adds sophistication and elegance, aligning with the product's premium positioning and luxurious connotations.

3. MAGIC



The brand name "Magic" is prominently exhibited at the center in a bold, white font. This placement and styling make the brand name stand out, suggesting that these biscuits offer a magical and delightful experience. The slogan "Egg & Milk Cookies" delivers essential details about the product’s key components.

There are two biscuits have been showed highly on the packaging, which gives a clear indication of the product. Additionally, there is an image of a white glass filled with milk, with a biscuit partially dipped in it. Beside the glass there are two eggs, one of which is broken, revealing its contents. These images directly relate to the product description of "Egg & Milk Cookies," providing a visual confirmation of the ingredients. The non-coded iconic message of “magic” is, the art of producing illusions as entertainment by the use of deceptive devices (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).

As far one participant: “The word magic shows power”. In addition, the name "Magic" suggests an enchanting and exceptional quality about the biscuits, implying that they offer a special or superior taste experience. “The depiction of eggs and milk alongside the biscuits reinforces the idea of high-quality, nutritious ingredients, which appeal to health-conscious consumers”. The blue color used in the above packaging symbolizes trust, reliability, and calmness, and creating a sense of assurance about the product’s quality. The red color symbolizes energy, excitement, and warmth (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010).

The relationship between the linguistic and visual elements on the "Magic" biscuit packaging is complementary and reinforces the product's identity. The linguistic message, with the brand name "Magic" and the slogan "Egg & Milk Cookies," conveys the product's uniqueness and key ingredients. The visual elements, including the depiction of a glass of milk, partially dipped biscuit, and eggs, directly support and illustrate these linguistic cues. This integration ensures that both the textual and visual components work together to communicate the product's core features—its magical, high-quality, and nutritious ingredients—clearly and effectively.

4. OKAY



The *linguistic* message on the "okay" biscuit packaging is clear and direct. The brand name "okay" is prominently displayed in bold white letters with a blue shadow, making it stand out against the background. The slogan, "Tea Biscuits with Sesame Seeds," is also in white with a blue shadow, providing specific details about the product. This slogan informs consumers about the type of biscuits and highlights the inclusion of sesame seeds, which is an appealing feature for those who enjoy this ingredient. The simplicity and clarity of the text ensure that the product information is easily understood at a glance.

The non-coded iconic message of the word: "okay" is being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition, (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). "There is a clear image of a round biscuit with an empty center, depicting the actual product". Beside the biscuit, there is a white cup filled with tea and placed on a white plate, reinforcing the product's use as a tea-time snack.

"The brand name "okay" suggests reliability and satisfaction, derived from the common expression "ok," which connotes that the product meets acceptable standards and provides a satisfactory experience". The heart shape used in the design symbolizes love and affection, suggesting that these biscuits are made with care and are a treat that bring joy to tea time. The navy color evokes feelings of trust and reliability, while the cornflower color adds a softer, welcoming touch (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). The image of the tea cup and plate with the biscuit emphasizes the product's association with relaxation and enjoyment during tea time.

The relationship between the linguistic and visual elements on the "okay" biscuit packaging is cohesive and complementary. The linguistic message, with the brand name "okay" and the slogan "Tea Biscuits with Sesame Seeds," provides clarity about the product's identity and ingredients. The visual elements, such as the image of a round biscuit alongside a cup of tea, visually reinforce the idea of these biscuits being an ideal tea-time snack. Together, the text and images create a unified message, emphasizing reliability, enjoyment, and satisfaction during tea time, enhanced by the comforting visuals and simple, direct wording.

5. PEANUT PLUS



The *linguistic* message on the "Peanut Plus" biscuit packaging is clear and straightforward. The product name, "Peanut Plus," is prominently presented in bold white letters at the center, making it immediately visible to consumers. The slogan, "Made with Real Peanuts," is written in a smaller yellow font, emphasizing the use of real peanuts. "The straightforward language and emphasis on real ingredients aim to attract consumers seeking authentic and natural products".

The literal meaning of peanut is: a nut that grows underground in a thin shell (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). The green background serves as a plain but effective backdrop, making the white and yellow text stand out. Additionally, the left side of the packaging shows more than ten peanuts, further reinforcing the presence of peanuts in the product. "These straightforward visual indications help consumers quickly identify the product and understand its primary ingredient".

The *coded iconic* message explores the connotative meanings behind the packaging elements. The use of green and white in the design suggests associations with natural and healthy products, aligning with the slogan's emphasis on real peanuts (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). One participant remarked that "the design represents the flag of Pakistan suggests a deeper cultural

connection, potentially appealing to Pakistani consumers by evoking national pride”. The imagery of the peanuts and the use of the color green also connote freshness and natural goodness, appealing to consumers seeking wholesome snack options (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). The term "Plus" in the product name suggests an added value and an enhanced version of a standard peanut biscuit.

The linguistic and visual elements on the "Peanut Plus" biscuit packaging work together to reinforce the product's core identity. The linguistic message, with the bold "Peanut Plus" and the slogan "Made with Real Peanuts," emphasizes authenticity and the presence of natural ingredients. This aligns with the visual elements, such as the clear depiction of peanuts on the packaging. The green background not only highlights the product's natural appeal but also complements the text, creating a unified design that communicates the product's focus on health and freshness. Together, these elements strengthen the product's connection to natural goodness and authenticity

6. PIK A NUT



The *linguistic* message on the "Pik a Nut" biscuit packaging is concise and direct. The product name, "Pik a Nut," is in apricot color at the center of the packaging. "This playful and catchy name aims to attract attention and emphasize the key ingredient, nuts". The slogan, "peanut biscuits," is written in white color, clearly communicating the product type. The repetition of the product name and slogan on both sides of the packaging ensures that the message is visible from multiple angles, reinforcing brand recognition and product identity.

As far Merriam Webster dictionary is concerned nutpick is a small sharp-pointed implement for extracting the kernels from nuts ("Nutpick," n.d.) Moreover, the color scheme incorporates three shades: brown, golden syrup, and a little chocolate color. These earthy tones create a warm and inviting look, suggesting the natural and wholesome quality of the biscuits. "The visual representation of the biscuits filled with nuts helps consumers easily identify the product and its main ingredient".

"The apricot color used for the product name "Pik a Nut" conveys a sense of freshness and uniqueness, making the product stands out on the shelf". The earthy tones of cinnamon, syrup, and russet suggest naturalness, warmth, and comfort, appealing to consumers looking for wholesome and nutritious snacks (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). "The visible nuts in the biscuits symbolize health and richness, suggesting that the product is delicious". The playful name "Pik a Nut" adds a fun and engaging element, potentially appealing to a younger audience.

The linguistic and visual elements on the "Pik a Nut" biscuit packaging are tightly interwoven to create a cohesive message. The linguistic message, with the playful and catchy product name "Pik a Nut" in apricot color, draws attention while emphasizing the presence of nuts as the key ingredient. This is complemented by the visual elements, such as the warm earthy tones of brown, golden syrup, and chocolate, which visually suggest naturalness and comfort. The imagery of nuts in the biscuits reinforces the message of wholesomeness, while the packaging design appeals to health-conscious consumers and enhances product recognition. Together, they create an inviting and nutritious product appeal.

7. SEASONS



The *linguistic* message on the "seasons" biscuit packaging highly features the product name "seasons" in bold, capital letters with the letter "S" being even more stressed than the others. This stylistic choice emphasizes the brand name, making it stand out and easy to remember. "The slogan "the original" positioned above the brand name in smaller white font highlights the product's authenticity and long-standing quality". Below the brand name, the product description "egg & milk cookies" clearly informs consumers about the key ingredients, making it easy for them to understand what they are purchasing. The consistent use of white font against a maroon background ensures readability and visual impact.

The *denotative* meaning of "Seasons" is any of the four main periods of the year: spring, summer, autumn and winter (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Semiotics can be considered a tool for evaluating something in order to derive multiple meanings that are covered in any discourse. Language can be analyzed from connotative and denotative perspectives. By denotation, we mean the objective and literal meaning of language, while connotation refers to the contextual and cultural meanings of language (Farukh, et. al, 2023). The design features two biscuits, two eggs, and a shade of milk, directly illustrating the product and its primary constituents. The dark red background provides a striking contrast to the white text and images, making the visual elements pop. The presence of eggs and milk imagery reinforces the product description and suggests freshness and quality. These literal images help consumers quickly identify the product and its main components.

The *coded iconic* message delves into the connotative meanings embedded in the packaging design. The dark red background conveys a sense of richness, warmth, and perhaps indulgence (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). "The bold and capitalized "S" in "seasons" symbolizes the brand's strength, reliability, and prominence in the market". The slogan "the original" suggests heritage, tradition, and authenticity, appealing to consumers who value classic and time-tested products. The imagery of eggs and milk further connotes wholesomeness, nutrition, and natural ingredients, enhancing the product's appeal to health-conscious consumers.

The linguistic and visual elements of the "seasons" biscuit packaging work cohesively to convey a strong message of authenticity and quality. The bold and capitalized product name "seasons," with an emphasized "S," grabs attention, while the slogan "the original" highlights the brand's tradition and reliability. The product description "egg & milk cookies" provides clarity on its main ingredients. Visually, the dark red background enhances the white text's readability and evokes a sense of richness and warmth. The imagery of biscuits, eggs, and milk reinforces the idea of freshness and natural ingredients, aligning with the brand's appeal to consumers seeking wholesome and time-tested products.

8. CLASSIC



The word "zeera" is demonstrated at the top in bold red font, indicating the flavor variety. Directly beneath it, the name "Classic" is written in bold maroon color, emphasizing the traditional and timeless nature of the product. Below "Classic," the word "Biscuits" is also in maroon, clearly stating the product type. This hierarchical arrangement of text ensures that consumers immediately recognize the flavor, the brand, and the product category. The consistent use of bold fonts makes the text stand out and be easily readable.

The *non-coded iconic* message consists of the literal images on the packaging. The denotative meaning of “zeera” is cumin seeds. In addition, the design features a white cup filled with tea and three zeera biscuits placed beside it, clearly depicting the product and its intended use. Additionally, there is a generous sprinkling of zeera (cumin seeds) on the left side of the packaging, reinforcing the flavor profile. The background is split into two colors: half white on the right side and peach on the left side. “These straightforward visual elements help consumers quickly identify the product and its key ingredients, as well as its serving suggestion”.

The *coded iconic* message interprets the connotative meanings embedded in the packaging. The maroon and red colors used for the text convey richness, warmth, and perhaps a sense of tradition and quality (*Color Theory for Designers, Part 1: The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010*). The placement of “zeera” at the top suggests that the flavor is a primary selling point, appealing to consumers who enjoy this specific spice. “The combination of a white cup of tea and biscuits connotes a relaxing, comforting snack time, often associated with hospitality and a break from routine”. The split background colors of white and peach symbolize purity and subtlety (*The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010*) respectively, suggesting a balance between simple, pure ingredients and a delicate, flavorful experience.

The linguistic and visual elements of the “ZEERA Classic” biscuit packaging are designed to create a harmonious message about flavor and tradition. The bold red “ZEERA” at the top highlights the cumin flavor, while the maroon “Classic” and “Biscuits” emphasize the product’s timeless and traditional appeal. The imagery of a white cup of tea and three cumin biscuits provides a clear visual representation of the product, with cumin seeds sprinkled on the packaging reinforcing the flavor. The split background of white and peach enhances the idea of purity and subtlety, while the color choices evoke richness, warmth, and comfort, aligning with the appeal of a traditional tea-time snack.

9. DEWBERRY



The *linguistic* message on the “Dewberry” biscuit packaging prominently features the brand name “Dewberry” written in white color with an underline, centered on the packaging. The slogan “Sandwich Cookies with Cream and Strawberry Flavoured Jam” is also in white, but smaller, providing a clear description of the product. At the right end of the packaging, the word “Vanilla” is included in white as a product description, indicating an additional flavor component. “The use of white text against a dark red background ensures high readability and emphasizes the key selling points of the product”.

The *non-coded iconic* message consists of the literal visual elements on the packaging. This includes the image of two biscuits filled with strawberry-flavored jam and a layer of white cream in between. Moreover, *relay* which is less frequent with fixed meanings; here, the text is only a snatch of dialogue completing its intended meaning by images that are either cartoons or comic strips (Barthes, 1977 & Hugh, 2009). Additionally, “there are three funny strawberry emojis in red color, depicted laughing and playing in the white cream”. The overall packaging color is a mix of dark red and red, creating a striking visual appeal.

The *coded iconic* message interprets the connotative meanings surrounded in the packaging. The dark red and red mix background connotes richness, indulgence (*The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010*) and as well “the fruity nature of the strawberry jam”. The brand name “Dewberry” with an underline emphasizes quality and distinction. The playful strawberry emojis add a sense of fun and enjoyment, targeting a younger audience or those looking for a cheerful and delightful snack. The imagery of the biscuits with visible jam and cream highlights the product’s texture and flavor, suggesting a satisfying and

indulgent treat.” The word "Vanilla" adds an element of classic flavor, appealing to traditional tastes”.

The linguistic and visual elements of the "Dewberry" biscuit packaging work together to convey a message of quality and indulgence. The brand name "Dewberry" is prominently displayed in white with an underline, set against a dark red background for high readability. The slogan and product description provide detailed information about the biscuit's contents, including the strawberry-flavored jam and vanilla component. “Visually, the packaging features images of the biscuits filled with jam and cream, complemented by playful strawberry emojis, which add a fun and appealing touch”. The rich red background and the detailed imagery suggest a luxurious, flavorful treat while targeting a cheerful and youthful audience.

10.HAPPY FACE



The product name "Happy Face" is prominently displayed in a bold font, with "Happy" in a purple color and "Face" in green, creating a cheerful and vibrant visual appeal. The slogan "Chocolate Flavored Cream Biscuit" is in white text against a black background shaped like an emoji, further emphasizing the playful nature of the product. Interjections such as "wow," "lol," and "hahaha" are also included in white text, each with different colored backgrounds (green for "hahaha," pink for "lol," and maya for "wow"), adding to the fun and lively feel of the packaging.

The *non-coded iconic* message features straightforward visual elements. There are two biscuits shaped like emojis, clearly illustrating the product's unique and playful design. The packaging utilizes two main colors: pineapple and chocolate, which serve to highlight the product and make it visually appealing. The interjections ("wow," "lol," and "hahaha") and the emoji-shaped biscuits provide a literal representation of the product's fun and lighthearted nature, making it easily recognizable and appealing to consumers.

The *coded iconic* message conveys deeper connotative meanings through the packaging design. The use of the colors purple for "Happy" and green for "Face" signifies joy and freshness (The Meaning of Color — Smashing Magazine, 2010). The emoji shapes and onomatopoeic interjections like "wow," "lol," and "hahaha" suggest a sense of fun, laughter, and enjoyment, appealing particularly to a younger audience or those looking for a playful snack. “The black background for the slogan adds a touch of sophistication and contrasts well with the colorful elements, enhancing the overall visual appeal”.

The linguistic and visual elements of the "Happy Face" biscuit packaging work together to create a vibrant, playful impression. The product name "Happy Face" uses contrasting colors—purple and green—to evoke a cheerful and lively mood. The slogan "Chocolate Flavored Cream Biscuit" is presented in white text on a black, emoji-shaped background, enhancing the playful theme. Visual elements include emoji-shaped biscuits and colorful interjections like "wow," "lol," and "hahaha," which reinforce the fun and lighthearted nature of the product. The use of purple and green suggests joy and freshness, while the black background for the slogan adds a sophisticated contrast, appealing to a younger audience seeking a delightful and enjoyable snack experience.

5. DISCUSSION

This study successfully met its research objectives by exploring the linguistic features present in Pakistani biscuit packaging, conducting a semiotic analysis of the visual elements, and examining the interaction between linguistic and visual elements. The findings provided insights into how these features influence consumer perceptions and cultural meanings, fulfilling the study's aim of understanding semiotic deception in the packaging industry.

The first objective of this study was "to investigate the linguistic features present in Pakistani biscuits packaging, including brand names, slogans, and textual messages." This research analyzed the denotative and connotative meanings of linguistic elements found on one hundred packaging designs. The linguistic components such as the brand names "Chai Wala Biskut" and "Nankhatai" in Roman Urdu not only conveyed product identity but also evoked cultural associations with tradition, nostalgia, and everyday life, as interpreted through participants' responses.

The second objective was "to conduct a semiotic analysis of the visual elements in biscuits packaging, focusing on culturally significant symbols, images, and colors." This research explored two hundred interpretations from participants regarding the imagery, symbols, and color choices on the packaging. For example, the Nankhatai packaging displayed an illustration of a palace with traditional shops, horses, and people, evoking the cultural heritage of Lahore—a city renowned for its history and traditional sweets. The use of golden font in Roman Urdu further highlighted the product's link to traditional values, positioning it as an item that carries cultural pride and nostalgia. Consumers recognized this as a celebration of local heritage, and it resonated with their perception of the product as a traditional, high-quality offering.

Colors also played a significant role in conveying cultural meanings. The Gluco biscuit packaging, for instance, featured warm, earthy tones of yellow and red, which symbolized energy and vitality. These colors were chosen deliberately to align with cultural perceptions of strength and family well-being, with the imagery of a mother and her son reinforcing themes of care and nourishment. This combination of colors and imagery not only caught consumers' eyes but also emotionally engaged them, making them associate the product with positive familial values.

The use of symbols and imagery such as thrones and royal attire in Prince biscuits created an impression of nobility, quality, and indulgence. The throne and royal iconography suggested that the product was of a higher standard, while the playful inclusion of a Spiderman character appealed to children. This combination of traditional symbols of royalty with modern pop culture icons made the packaging visually dynamic, targeting multiple demographics at once. Therefore, the culturally resonant symbols, images, and colors contributed significantly to the semiotic landscape, making the packaging not only attractive but also meaningful to Pakistani consumers. The visual elements reinforced cultural values, traditions, and emotions, creating a deeper connection between the product and the consumer.

The third objective was "to examine the dynamic relationship between linguistic and visual elements on biscuits packaging." The interaction of words and images was explored through participants' perceptions of how brand names like "Tooo Gud" combined with playful visuals created a cohesive message. The fusion of language and imagery was shown to enhance the overall appeal of the packaging, with participants noting how the integration of both elements contributed to the product's cultural narrative and consumer attraction.

5.1. Limitations of the present study

The present study, while offering valuable insights into the semiotics of Pakistani biscuit packaging, is not without its limitations. One major limitation is that semiotic interpretations of packaging designs are often influenced by the researcher's subjectivity, as the analysis of cultural and symbolic meanings can be shaped by personal perceptions. Although Barthes' Semiotic Theory provided a structured framework, the inherent challenge of subjective interpretation remains. To mitigate this, the research incorporated responses from two qualitative questionnaires for each of the one hundred packaging designs, which allowed for a more impartial analysis by considering participants' diverse viewpoints. Furthermore, the websites of each brand were consulted to gather additional information about the product's profile, history, and intended marketing messages, which helped to cross-check the semiotic interpretations made during the analysis.

Another limitation of the study was its exclusive focus on biscuit packaging, which may not fully represent the broader packaging industry in Pakistan. While the findings offer a deep understanding of semiotic practices in one specific

product category, they may not be generalizable to other sectors such as beverages, snacks, or cosmetics. The sample size was also restricted to a finite number of local brands, which could limit the broader applicability of the conclusions drawn. To address this limitation, future research could expand the scope to include other product categories and international brands, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of semiotic strategies across the packaging industry. Additionally, incorporating a larger and more diverse sample of participants from different socio-economic backgrounds would further enhance the robustness of the findings by capturing a wider range of consumer interpretations.

5.2. Semiotic research situation in Pakistan and suggestions

The field of semiotic research in Pakistan remains underdeveloped, with limited institutional infrastructure dedicated to advancing this area of study. Currently, one of the few established organizations, Semiotics Consultants (Pvt) Ltd., has made notable contributions to various socio-economic sectors since its inception in 1988. However, the overall research landscape for semiotics is sparse, with minimal attention given to its application in areas such as marketing, branding, and consumer behavior. The limited development of this field presents both challenges and opportunities for growth, especially in a market like Pakistan, where cultural and linguistic nuances play a significant role in consumer perception and behavior.

To address the existing gaps, a revitalization of semiotic research in Pakistan is essential. Existing organizations, including Semiotics Consultants, should expand their scope to explore the semiotic implications in marketing, product design, and advertising, helping to refine strategies for consumer engagement. A concerted effort to integrate semiotics into corporate practices, particularly in multinational companies, could offer fresh insights into consumer behavior and drive more effective marketing campaigns.

Furthermore, the media has a crucial role to play in promoting awareness about the importance of semiotics. By featuring discussions on how semiotics impacts branding and consumer communication, media platforms can encourage greater engagement with the field. Alongside media involvement, the integration of semiotic theory into educational curricula—particularly in disciplines such as journalism, media studies, and law—would foster interdisciplinary approaches and enhance students' understanding of symbolic communication.

To further develop the growth of semiotics, universities and academic institutions should host seminars, workshops, and short courses that emphasize the relevance of semiotic analysis in different professional and academic fields. These platforms would not only promote the exchange of ideas but also provide opportunities for students and professionals to develop skills in semiotic analysis. By expanding the use of semiotics into forensic applications, such as in the analysis of legal texts and language patterns would also offer practical benefits in areas like justice and law enforcement.

Although Semiotics Consultants has contributed significantly to the socio-economic sector by completing over 250 assignments, it is clear that the potential for semiotic research in Pakistan remains largely unexploited. Future efforts should focus on building institutional capacity, encouraging academic and corporate collaboration, and integrating semiotic research into diverse sectors to ensure its continued development. By fostering a deeper understanding of semiotics, Pakistan can better harness its cultural richness in areas like advertising, media, and branding, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced and effective communication landscape.

5.3. Recommendations for future research

Future research in the field of semiotics, particularly related to packaging, should aim to broaden the scope and investigate deeper into the different elements that contribute to the semiotic landscape. While this study has focused on visual and linguistic messages, semiotics encompasses a wide range of symbolic modes, including sound, imagery, and cultural context. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of semiotic communication, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Word-level semiotics

Expanding semiotic research to explore the subtleties of language and textual elements in various contexts can provide deeper insights. Future research could consider:

- a) Brand Naming and Lexical Choices: The names of products and brands themselves carry strong semiotic messages. Future studies can analyze how these names interact with cultural norms and expectations could provide insight into how language shapes consumer behavior.
- b) Taglines and Slogans: Further research can explore the semiotic implications of product taglines and how they convey underlying cultural meanings.
- c) Political Speeches: The upcoming researchers can observe the semiotics of speeches by influential figures such as Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr, Maya Angelou, Donald Trump, and Imran Khan to understand how rhetoric shapes public perception and political narratives.
- d) Literary Titles: Prospective analysis may investigate how book titles and their accompanying visuals contribute to the semiotic meaning of literary works and influence reader expectations.
- e) Advertising Language: Future inquiries can study the semiotic impact of brand names, slogans, and taglines across different product categories, including food, fashion, and technology.
- f) Packaging Texts: Further research should conduct the semiotic role of textual elements in packaging, such as ingredient lists, health claims, and promotional messages, to understand their influence on consumer choices.
- g) Folk and Popular Music: Subsequent investigations may explore the semiotics of lyrics and their cultural significance in folk songs, pop music, and traditional marriage songs, especially within specific cultural contexts like Pakistan.

2. **Picture-level semiotics**

Visual elements and their semiotic implications can be explored through the following recommendations:

- a) National Symbols: Further studies can conduct semiotic analyses of flags and national symbols to understand their cultural and political meanings.
- b) Non-Verbal Communication: Next studies can discover the semiotics of facial expressions, body language, and physical gestures to explore how these elements convey meaning across different cultures.
- c) Palmistry: Future inquiries may analyze the semiotics of palmistry and its cultural significance, including how hand lines and shapes are interpreted in various societies.
- d) Forensic Linguistics: The new research also explore this new domain of linguistics to combine semiotics with forensic linguistics in order to study how fingerprint patterns and other forensic markers can reveal personal or cultural information.
- e) Sign Language: Future examinations also investigate the semiotic differences in sign languages used in different countries, such as American Sign Language and British Sign Language.
- f) Postal Stamps: Prospective analysis can conduct semiotic analyses of postage stamps, especially those issued for special occasions, to understand their symbolic and historical significance.

3. **Visual and multisensory semiotics**

Future studies can research how various sensory modalities interact can enhance our understanding of semiotic processes:

- a) Multisensory Branding: Forthcoming research efforts may examine how visual, auditory, and tactile elements work together in branding to create a cohesive consumer experience.
- b) Sensory Packaging Design: New studies can investigate how different sensory features in packaging (e.g., texture, color, scent) contribute to brand perception and consumer engagement.
- c) Visual Metaphors and Symbolism: Further examinations should explore how visual metaphors and symbolic imagery (e.g., fruits representing freshness, animals denoting purity) impact consumer understanding and expectation of a product.

- d) Use of Color and Typography: Future research may investigate how specific color schemes, font choices, and design patterns align with cultural expectations and influence consumer purchasing decisions.
- e) Cultural Visual Metaphors: Prospective analyses can search how visual metaphors in different cultures affect the interpretation of products and advertisements.

4. Cross-cultural and comparative studies

New studies can broaden the scope of semiotic research to include diverse cultural contexts and comparisons:

- a) Cross-Cultural Packaging Analysis: The studies may compare semiotic elements in packaging across different countries to understand cultural variations in consumer interpretation.
- b) Global Branding Strategies: New researches would to study how international brands adapt their semiotic strategies for different markets and the effectiveness of these adaptations.

5. Technological and digital semiotics

Exploring the impact of digital technologies on semiotic practices:

- a) Digital Media Analysis: further examination may investigate how semiotic principles apply to digital advertisements, social media content, and online branding.
- b) Interactive Media: Subsequent studies can observe the semiotic implications of interactive elements in digital media, such as gamification and user-generated content.

These recommendations aim to expand the field of semiotics by addressing various modalities and contexts, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted across different mediums and cultures.

5.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

5.4.1. A NEW SEMIOTIC THEORY

In exploratory research, the primary goal is not to test a hypothesis but to develop new theoretical insights based on collected data (Babbie, 1989). Following this convention, this study humbly proposes a new semiotic theory, one that builds upon Roland Barthes' work but extends it to address areas that were previously unexamined in his theory. Specifically, Barthes' theory revolves around three main types of messages: linguistic, non-coded iconic and coded iconic. While these are foundational for understanding the semiotics of packaging, this research has identified key elements missing in Barthes' framework. From the analysis of 100 biscuit packages, new semiotic dimensions have emerged that provide a more comprehensive lens for analyzing packaging.

1. Linguistic Message

The linguistic message refers to the textual elements on a package—brand names, product descriptions, slogans, and promotional text. This is one of the core elements in Barthes' theory, but modern packages often use language not only to inform but also to persuade and emotionally engage the consumer. For example, on a biscuit package, the slogan "Made with love" suggests that the product is crafted with care, evoking a sense of warmth and authenticity. Similarly, phrases like "100% natural ingredients" strengthen the perception of health and quality, directly influencing consumer trust and preferences.

2. Non-Coded Iconic Message

The non-coded iconic message is made up of visual signs that are not tied to cultural or linguistic codes, such as color schemes, logos, and the overall aesthetic of the package. These elements work on a more intuitive level, where meanings are derived from general perception rather than specific cultural or linguistic interpretations. Such as, the use of red and yellow on a biscuit package can create a sense of urgency and hunger, as these colors are commonly associated with food and desire (Hzdg, n.d.). Additionally, logos like the famous Inovative's blue shield, while not dependent on language, create an instant connection to brand recognition and quality.

3. Coded Iconic Message

The coded iconic message combines both linguistic and visual elements, where the meaning arises from the relationship between text and image. This

harmony creates layered meanings that go beyond what either the text or image could convey individually. For instance, zeera plus biscuit package featured a picture of a biscuit alongside the words "tasty salty." The image of the biscuit reinforces the linguistic promise of taste and texture, creating a holistic message that appeals to both visual and verbal processing by the consumer.

4. Temporal Message

Barthes did not address the temporal aspects of packaging, yet they are crucial in influencing consumer decisions. Time-related elements, such as expiration dates, limited-time offers, or seasonal packaging, create a sense of immediacy and urgency. Such as, a biscuit package featuring the phrase "Limited Edition – Only Available This Summer" encourages consumers to act quickly, while an expiration date reassures them of the product's freshness. These temporal markers trigger urgency and careful consideration of product longevity, affecting purchasing behavior.

5. Digital Message

In today's digital age, packaging often includes digital elements such as QR codes, augmented reality (AR) features, and social media icons. These elements encourage interaction and create a bridge between the physical product and its digital presence, extending the brand's reach. For instance, a click biscuit package with a QR code leading to an interactive game or recipe section provides an engaging experience beyond the purchase. Similarly, social media icons invite consumers to become part of an online community, where they can share their product experiences and contribute to brand awareness.

6. Ethical and Environmental Message

Modern consumers are increasingly conscious of the environmental and ethical implications of their purchases. Ethical and environmental messages on packaging include certifications, labels, and design features that highlight sustainability or ethical practices. Like a Tuc biscuit package that displays certifications like "Fair Trade" or "100% Natural ingredients" appeals to consumers' environmental and ethical values. This messaging not only informs but also supports the product with a broader socio-cultural movement towards sustainability, potentially attracting eco-conscious buyers.

7. Heritage and Nostalgic Message

Barthes' theory did not account for the emotional pull of brand heritage and nostalgic elements on packaging. Many brands leverage their long-standing history or retro designs to create an emotional bond with consumers, tapping into feelings of trust, reliability, and familiarity. For example, a Sooper biscuit package featuring the phrase "Since 50 years" or using a vintage design can evoke nostalgia, especially for older consumers who may have childhood memories associated with the brand. This emotional connection often translates to loyalty, as the consumer feels a deeper connection to the brand's legacy.

This research expands Roland Barthes' semiotic framework by introducing six additional dimensions that reflect the modern complexities of packaging design. While Barthes' focus on linguistic, coded iconic, and non-coded iconic messages remains foundational, contemporary packaging also communicates through temporal, digital, ethical, and nostalgic dimensions.

The analysis of 100 biscuit packages demonstrates how these elements combine to create rich, multi-layered meanings that go far beyond visual and textual representation. This new semiotic theory offers a more comprehensive examination for analyzing packaging, particularly in today's world where consumer expectations and experiences are shaped by a combination of physical, emotional, and digital interactions. This framework provides future researchers with a robust set of categories to examine how packaging functions not just as a container, but as a dynamic communication tool.

5.4.1.1. FAIZULLAH'S PACKAGING SEMIOTIC THEORY

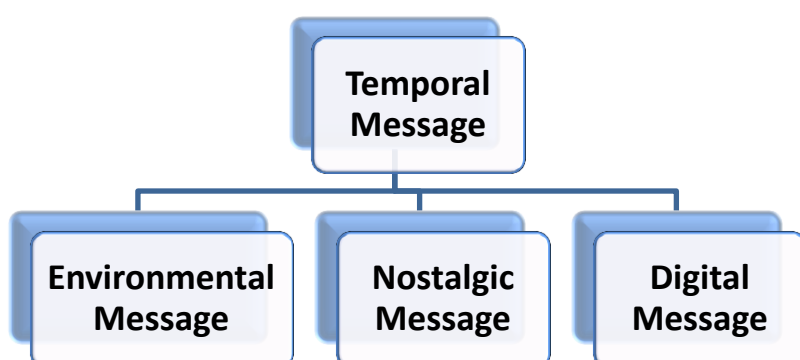


Figure 1

5.4.2. Global contributions of this research

This research on the Semiotics of Deception: A Linguistic Analysis of the Packaging Industry in Pakistan makes significant contributions to global semiotic studies by introducing a comprehensive framework for analyzing packaging. By expanding Roland Barthes’ traditional semiotic theory to include temporal, digital, ethical, and nostalgic dimensions and this research addresses the evolving nature of consumer culture in a globalized world. The addition of these dimensions, such as ethical and environmental messages, reflects the growing global emphasis on sustainability and corporate responsibility. This broader framework allows researchers worldwide to better understand how packaging not only communicates product information but also manipulates consumer perceptions through multisensory and emotional engagement.

Furthermore, the research highlights the deceptive strategies often used in the packaging industry, which can be universally applied to examine consumer manipulation in various cultural and economic contexts. By offering insights into how linguistic and visual elements work together to create misleading impressions, this study equips global scholars and industry professionals with a more nuanced approach to decoding packaging. This research not only advances semiotic theory but also provides practical tools for critiquing and improving ethical standards in global packaging practices, contributing to more transparent and consumer-friendly markets worldwide.

5.4.3. Contribution for Pakistani society

In the context of Pakistani society, this research on the Semiotics of Deception: A Linguistic Analysis of the Packaging Industry in Pakistan offers valuable insights into the ways local brands use packaging to influence consumer behavior. By uncovering the deceptive strategies employed through linguistic and visual elements, the study raises awareness among Pakistani consumers about the subtle manipulations they encounter in everyday products. Moreover, the introduction of ethical and environmental dimensions into packaging analysis promotes a conversation around corporate responsibility in Pakistan, encouraging local industries to adopt more transparent, sustainable, and socially conscious practices. This research also provides a framework for policymakers and consumer rights organizations to establish stricter regulations on packaging to protect consumers from misleading marketing tactics, ultimately fostering a more informed and empowered society.

5.4.4. Contribution in the Pakistani academic context

In the Pakistani academic context, this research on the Semiotics of Deception: A Linguistic Analysis of the Packaging Industry in Pakistan marks a significant contribution to the fields of semiotics, linguistics, and marketing studies. It introduces an interdisciplinary approach that blends linguistic analysis with visual semiotics, offering a fresh perspective on how local brands communicate with consumers through packaging. This study enriches the academic discourse on semiotic theory by expanding Roland Barthes’ framework to include

new dimensions such as ethical, environmental, temporal, and digital messages, tailored to the complexities of modern packaging in Pakistan. Additionally, it provides Pakistani scholars with a comprehensive tool for analyzing the intersection of language, culture, and marketing, encouraging further research in areas like consumer psychology, media studies, and ethical marketing. This contribution not only advances semiotic research but also enhances the understanding of how cultural and societal values are encoded and conveyed in Pakistani marketing practices.

6. CONCLUSION

This research concluded the study by summarizing the research findings; discussed how the research objectives were met, identified the study's limitations, and presented recommendations for future research. Through the analysis of packaging in Pakistan, the study revealed how linguistic, non-coded iconic and coded iconic messages shaped consumer behavior and embedded cultural values within packaging designs. The newly developed Faizullah's Packaging Semiotic Theory expanded upon Roland Barthes' original framework by introducing temporal, digital, ethical, and nostalgic messages, providing a more comprehensive approach to semiotic analysis. This research contributed not only to academic discourse on semiotics but also offered practical insights for the packaging industry in Pakistan.

The study also acknowledged its limitations, such as focusing mainly on the ten biscuit packaging of cookania brand and excluded the rest of nine brands. Future research could widen the scope to other industries and include comparative cross-cultural studies. Recommendations for advancing semiotic research in Pakistan included incorporating interdisciplinary approaches and utilizing advanced digital tools for analyzing contemporary packaging strategies. Ultimately, this study laid the groundwork for further research in packaging semiotics while making substantial theoretical contributions to the global understanding of the field.

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