

## Representation of Disabled People in Advertisements in Turkey

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to discover how disabled people are represented in advertisements in Turkey. Ten purposefully chosen TV channels (ATV, FOX, TV8, SHOW TV, KANAL D, STAR TV, TRT 1, KANAL 7, TRT HABER, TRT ÇOCUK) were used in a pilot study to identify ads featuring people with disabilities. Because the results of the pilot study showed no such advertisements, data for the current study were collected from internet. Three types of advertisements featuring people with disabilities emerged: public service announcements, consumption-centered ads, and supportive ads. Critical discourse analysis was applied to the data derived from the latter two types. Results indicate that the media, which play an important role not only in reflecting public attitudes and values regarding disability but also in shaping them, may assist in reducing stigma and misinformation and in increasing social acceptance and inclusion only if the portrayals are positive and comprehensive. Any positive change in attitude along with better programs and laws can accelerate the integration of people with disabilities into society.*

**KEYWORDS:** Advertisement, Disabled, Disability, Television, The Internet.

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### Representation of Disabled People in Advertisements in Turkey

According to data from the World Health Organization, over one billion of the world's eight billion people live with a physical, emotional, or intellectual deficiency. Data from a 2002 study done at the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK; 2004) indicated that 8.5 million disabled people live in Turkey, representing 12.29% of the total population. Another TÜİK (2011) study reported that 58.6% of disabled men and 41.4% of disabled women were registered in the National Disabled Database. Of these, 29.2% had mental impairments; 8.8%, orthopedic; 8.4%, visual; 5.9%, hearing; 3.9%, emotional; and 0.2%, speech; furthermore, 25.6% had a chronic illness, and 18% had more than one deficiency. In view of the sheer number of people in Turkey with disabilities, whether these people are sufficiently represented in the social environment remains a question to be answered.

How disabled people are represented in advertisements in Turkey was examined in the current study. The media, which play an important role not only in reflecting public attitudes and values regarding disability but also in shaping them (Auslander & Gold, 1999), may assist in reducing stigma and misinformation and in increasing social acceptance and inclusion only if the portrayals are positive and comprehensive (Samsel & Perepa, 2013; Sanchez, 2015; Ziegler, 2001). Any positive change in attitude along with better programs and laws can accelerate the integration of people with disabilities into society (Thompson, 2018).

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## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Background on Media Depiction of People with Disabilities**

Along with parents and schools, contemporary media have played a role in educating new generations. Among media tools, television is the most common and accessible. Television comes into one's life early, eliminating any "before exposure" condition. Later, television plays a role in producing other effects and new inclinations (Gerbner, 2000; Kuyucu, 2019). If what appears on the screen directs who one is and how the individual views real life by shaping the person's attitude toward life, television is no longer only a tool: It becomes a leading factor in shaping society (Gerbner, 2000).

Social learning is another basic yet powerful way to theorize how media images, such as advertising, influence how people behave—and what they think is right or wrong. According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, "models are an important source for learning new behaviors and for achieving behavioral change in institutionalized settings" (Sims & Manz, 1982, p. 65). In other words, people can learn from observing others, so they can learn from observing advertisements featuring disabled people. After observing others' behaviors, people may imitate that behavior. According to Bandura, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities, especially if the observed experiences are positive. After watching advertisements with disabled people, viewers might imitate the behaviors of individuals interacting positively with them.

Every culture has its own identity and values, circulated throughout the society by media through representations; however, these representations are neither objective nor neutral. Built with an ideological approach and playing an important role in shaping intellectual practices, representations are tools to solidify specific ideas and values, which gain strength when they are accepted and internalized by individuals. Representations underlie the way people understand and see others, objects, practices, and institutions in their lives (Gerbner, 2000).

Representations not only show the realities of contemporary life, but attitudes and behaviors, gender roles, customs, and stereotypes are also learned this way according to social learning theory (Zengin, 2014). Substantial research has shown that the representation of gender in the media can affect people's attitudes and behaviors. For example, the world of work has been depicted in the media as a man's world, still the case in the real world (DeFleur, 1964). Another example comes from a study on gender differences and the joint effects of media and peers on young people's attitudes toward cosmetic surgery, which showed that the attitudes of college students appeared to be affected by two social agents: media and friends (Wen et al., 2017). Media have long been considered influential in young people's attitudes toward cosmetic surgery (Markey & Markey, 2009). Other research has shown that media have shaped attitudes, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices directed toward disabled people ("Toplum engelliliği nasıl anılıyor araştırması," 2002). Representations in the media are important because people typically mix real life and virtual life.

According to Gerbner's (2000) cultivation theory, television not only reflects reality, but it also provides an alternative reality on the screen, introducing stereotypes in the presentation of characters (Erdoğan & Alemdar, 2010; Güngör, 2013; Yaylagül, 2012). According to Gerbner more men than women appear on TV, and elders and children are represented infrequently if at all. A centralized storytelling system, TV creates messages and images with its programs, cultivating and structuring a common source for society's daily culture. In a world of media tools, unrepresented people cannot be understood, resulting in a major problem with disabled people's expression of themselves.

## Disability and Disabled People in the Media

The most common definition of disability involves existence outside the bounds of what is regarded as standard. When viewed from a social perspective, disability is a social situation, not a medical issue; in other words, disability gains meaning in the social environment in which the individual lives rather than being determined by the individual's biological nature (Yavalar, 2020). An analysis of stigma by Goffman (1963/1990) has proven useful in exploring the power relations embedded in cultural constructions of "normal," which he argued is a prized cultural status ascribed to those "who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue" (p. 15). Contemporary scholars have continued to draw on Goffman to understand the management of social discomfort experienced by disabled people in their careers (Anderson, 2009; de Klerk & Ampousah, 2003). Acton and Hird (2004) drew explicitly from Goffman to explore the difficulties faced by those who stutter in social interactions, arguing that drawing a symbolic interactionist approach into a sociological analysis of stuttering yields "examples of the micro-processes through which individuals create and maintain the differentiation between 'normal' and 'stigmatized'" (p. 509). Disabled people often face obstacles in participating in various forms of social life. The media play an important role here. If people see the world as the media portray it, then they will perceive disabled people as TV portrays them (Yavalar, 2020); furthermore, the way people with disabilities are perceived in society and the way they perceive themselves are influenced by media representations through the power of discourse (Zhang & Haller, 2013).

The image of disabled people in the media has been a topic of interest since the 1960s (Barnes, 1992). Research has shown that two types of representations appear in the depictions of disabled people in the mass media, including newspapers, cinema, and television; but they have resulted in primarily negative stereotypes (e.g., Barnes, 1991; Pirls & Popovska, 2013; Saltes, 2010). One type of representation involves mercy and pity, the result of depicting disabled people in terms of addiction, illness, powerlessness, dependence, and poverty (Yavalar, 2020). They can appear pitiful, Satanic, violent, abrasive, sexually deviant, and burdensome (Barnes, 1992; Zengin, 2014). By contrast, some representations of disabled people occasionally cast them in the role of superhero. Most of the individuals impacted by media programming are affected: When they see a disabled person approach in real life, they associate them with the negative stereotypes they have seen on television (Akdağ, 2005).

"Instead of dividing the representation of disability into a positive and negative binary opposition, we must see people with disability along the full spectrum of human experience and popular culture characterization" (Ellis, 2015, p. 9). Messages about disabled people deal primarily with the obstacles they face, not their strong and successful sides, producing a negative effect on emerging attitudes toward disabled people ("Toplum engelliliği nasıl anlıyor araştırması," 2002). The most powerful and widely used tools available to reverse this situation, media could accomplish the following: (a) create awareness, (b) facilitate understanding and empathy toward disabled people, (c) overcome potential miscommunication between disabled and nondisabled people, (d) improve the lives of disabled people by providing them with the information needed to solve potential problems, and (e) encourage positive attitudes and behaviors of nondisabled people toward disabled people so that the latter can express themselves openly and socialize freely (Serttaş & Eral, 2017). Thus, the media should represent disabled people positively and commensurately so that they can enjoy the same rights as others and take their places in society, where their presence can be neither ignored nor falsified.

## Problem Statement

Children and adults live in a social, shared environment in the media content; and representations of themselves in programs are vital for audiences to understand the world around them. The consequences of the lack of representation of oneself in media content or the misrepresentation or absence of those who are unseen and unheard in society deserve attention, especially children who are abused, people with disabilities, those living in poverty, and the children of single parents (Çoban Keneş, 2015; Zengin, 2014).

The term “symbolic demolition” was coined by Gerbner in 1972 to denote the lack of representation of individuals or groups without majority status in gender, ethnicity, or social class (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 182). According to Gerbner’s (2000) cultivation theory reality is reproduced in the media and creates alternative assumptions for members of the television viewing audience, who are subjected to ideas and attitudes toward women, men, children, roles, values, and beliefs without the benefit of experiencing and analyzing them. Thus, new attitudes, far removed from the realities of life, can emerge. Results of a study of disabled people and symbolic demolition showed that children in the television audience gained almost no information about disabled people, causing a representation problem for disabled children and deficient attitude development for nondisabled children (Serttaş & Eral, 2017).

According to the sustainability framework, disability is a construct in which disabled people are grouped yet separated from their nondisabled counterparts in mainstream culture (Barnes & Mercer, 2011). This situation holds in media representation. At one point in the last decade disabled people constituted only 8 of 796 regular characters in television programming, or only 1% of all on the best-known TV channels in the US (Alper, 2014). Discussing how disabled people are represented in the media is, therefore, important, and dealing with this subject is essential if discrimination against disabled people is to be overcome. Several previous studies of the potential using media images to change attitudes toward disabled people have confirmed this possibility (Farnall, 1996; Farnall & Smith, 1999; Panol & McBride, 1999).

The media occupy a significant place in contemporary life, playing an important role not only in the business world but also in the dissemination of knowledge to the masses, including knowledge of those who are different. Lack of real-world communication between disabled and nondisabled people makes the media a most important vehicle in determining the way the latter understands the former. In this study, the representation of disabled people in the media, especially in television advertisements was the primary focus. Because television advertisements are supposed to portray everyday life, viewers should not see only nondisabled people in them: Disabled people deserve a place in the media as well.

One British marketing official explained that good disability images and well-done advertisements have been designed to promote brand loyalty and make a product more popular (VisABLE Campaign, 2000). Historically, most images of disability in advertising in Britain have been produced by charitable organizations as has been the case from the days of Victorian philanthropists (Owen, 1965) to the late 1980s, when disabled people finally made a few appearances in commercial advertisements.

*People with disabilities should not be viewed as charity cases or regulatory burdens, but rather as profitable marketing targets. Now, mainstream companies, from financial services to cell phone makers, are going beyond what is mandated by law and rapidly tailoring products to attract them. (Prager, 1999, p. B1, 2)*

Since the 1990s many advertisements in Britain featuring disabled people have been accepted and considered nonstigmatizing (Haller & Ralph, 2001).

Corporate America and Britain have created positive, sensitive, and accurate images in advertising that represent disability merely as another slice of life. Leaders of companies in the US and the UK have understood the benefits of diverse images in advertising: Including disabled people in their advertising translates into profits. But what is the situation in Turkey? A study of Turkish films, for example, showed that people with disabilities live in their own worlds, far removed from social life with nondisabled people and unable to join daily life with them (Paftalı, 2013). Turkish filmmakers have depicted people with disabilities as poor and needy, as street vendors, sometimes as wealthy and cruel. In *Serseri*, a film broadcast on a national Turkish television channel, a blind woman is exposed to danger, causing the audience to feel pity (Ergüden, 2008). In *Üç Arkadaş* [*Three Fellows*], blind Gül survives by panhandling. In *En Büyük Şaban* [*Şaban Is the Best*] a blind girl sells flowers, and in *Diyet* [*Blood Money*] disabled people work at a factory (Ulu, 2013). Researchers examining disabled people and their rights on 48 national TV channels in Turkey showed that the time spent, the number of depictions, and the content involving disabled people are all inadequate (Sönmez et al., 2013). “To better understand why many disabled people, feel like they are invisible, undesirable, and attached to a stigma, one needs to examine the various ways advertising and mainstream media represent and treat disabilities” (Timke, 2019). Thus, the researcher aimed to discover whether and how disabled people are represented in Turkish commercials.

## **Methodology**

This section opens with a summary of the method and findings derived from the pilot study, which informed and shaped the current study. It is followed by a section of the current research, its design and site as well as the selection of the sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques and processes.

## **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted before the current study to determine whether or not disabled people are represented in commercials shown on Turkish TV channels. To locate television commercials that included disabled people during prime-time viewing, the researcher watched TV commercials randomly. Because the random search yielded no commercials including disabled people, the researcher turned to purposeful sampling to broaden the search to commercials previously shown on TV. The sampling frame was defined as all channels broadcasting prime-time programming on a private cable system (TURKSAT) and on the internet. The system offered 86 channels to subscribers receiving “expanded” basic service, the most popular choice according to the communication office of that cable system. A review of the list of channels led to the removal of the foreign language channels from the pool because problems would likely have resulted from translation issues. Because watching 86 channels would have been redundant, the researcher decreased the number of channels to 10, the ones with the highest ratings in 2020 (See Table 1). For the pilot study, the researcher viewed 50 hours of programming on 10 channels over 25 days in 2020, watching two hours each day during prime time (from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.), but the results showed that no advertisements included people with disabilities at all.

**Table 1**  
*2020 Ratings of TV Channels*

Channel	Total Day %	Prime Time %
ATV	1.99	4.40
FOX	1.71	4.13
TV8	1.54	5.51
SHOW TV	1.28	3.56
KANAL D	1.19	3.09
STAR TV	0.94	2.47
TRT 1	0.76	2.46
KANAL 7	0.72	1.53
TRT HABER	0.53	0.81
TRT ÇOCUK	0.53	0.61

Source: <http://tiak.com.tr/tablolari> (TV Audience Research Company, TİAK)

## **Current Study**

Experience gained in the pilot study directed and shaped the current study, which did not duplicate the pilot but was instead informed by its methodology and findings. In the current study, the researcher was once again interested in discovering how disabled people are represented in advertisements in Turkey. To gain a deep understanding of the representation of disabled people in advertisements, the researcher searched the internet for advertisements that included disabled people, viewed them, and applied critical discourse analysis to the data.

## **Research Design**

*Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become the general label for a special approach to the study of text and talk, emerging from critical linguistics, semiotics and in general from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse, and communication. (van Dijk, 1995, p. 17)*

Because this study was focused on discrimination against disabled people in the media, CDA was the appropriate method. “Critical discourse analysis is problem-oriented rather than paradigm oriented. Any theoretical or methodological approach is appropriate as long as it can effectively study relevant social problems, such as sexism, racism, colonialism, and other forms of social inequality” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 17). CDA researchers have not only focused on purely verbal approaches but also paid attention to other semiotic dimensions (e.g., pictures, film, sound, music, gestures) of communicative effects.

## **Sampling Procedure**

Because of the lack of results in the pilot study noted above, the researcher conducted purposeful sampling to locate commercials previously shown on TV by searching the internet. In critical discourse analysis, every piece of recorded communication turned into written text (news message, statement, or declaration of any institution, such as company, political party, organization; academic papers; any kind of document respected as social interaction, for example, chats, focus group discussions, interviews, or media, television programs, advertisements, journals, novels) can be a research subject (Elliott, 1996). Thus, the sample in the current study comprised advertisements that included disabled people. The success of discourse analysis is not related to sample size; in fact, it is focused on specific research questions, not sample size (Sözen, 1999).

## Data Source

This section includes a description of the data source: advertisements that included disabled people. The researcher searched the internet to locate any commercials related to disabled people. Results revealed no commercials involving the daily lives of disabled people appearing on the internet, but three other types of commercials on the internet featured disabled people: (a) public service announcements (PSAs), (b) consumption-centered advertisements and (c) supportive advertisements.

First, numerous PSAs appeared in preparation for International Day of Persons with Disabilities, celebrated on December 3. Individuals, charities, government agencies, the Turkish National Police, universities, and other groups broadcast ads about it.

Second, as shown in Table 2, four advertisements were consumption-centered and designed to present new technology, applications, or practices for disabled people. Three of the four commercials were produced by Turkcell (a phone company) and one by Kuveyttürk (a bank). Two of these advertisements were for deaf people, and two were for blind people.

**Table 2**  
*Consumption-Centered Advertisements*

Company	Year	Duration (seconds)	Aim	Content
Turkcell	2013	0.59	Presentation of practice	Workers learning sign language
Turkcell	2015	1.08	Presentation of new technology	Audio description application
Turkcell	2017	1.56	Barrier-free education program	A blind girl paints her mother's portrait for her birthday.
Kuveyttürk	2019	0.55	Presentation of technology	Barrier-free banking

**Table 3**  
*Supportive Advertisements*

Company	Year	Duration (seconds)	Name of the ad	Content
Samsung	2015	2.31	A Surprise for Muharrem	To raise awareness of people who are deaf, the company surprises Muharrem, a person with deafness.
Samsung	2017	2.09	Deaf Children	Even though they have a disability, children with deafness can successfully use their instincts.

Third, supportive advertisements broadcast by companies contained material sympathetic to people with disabilities by portraying their strengths and instincts. As shown in Table 3, Samsung, a phone company, broadcast two advertisements to support disabled people and raise awareness. Both feature people with deafness, one including children. Samsung's first advertisement is called "A Surprise for Muharrem," a child with deafness. Throughout the ad featuring Muharrem and his sister on a shopping trip, everyone uses sign language. At the end of the ad, a woman appears on a billboard, signing to Muharrem, "These [products] are for you." Samsung's other ad features deaf children, who cannot hear music but can feel it.

For the analysis below, only the consumption-centered and supportive advertisements were chosen because the PSAs were too numerous for critical discourse analysis.

## Data Analysis

In the current study, Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework was used to analyze Turkish advertisements that included disabled people. This framework includes three interrelated dimensions—(a) text, (b) interaction, and (c) context—as shown in Figure 1.

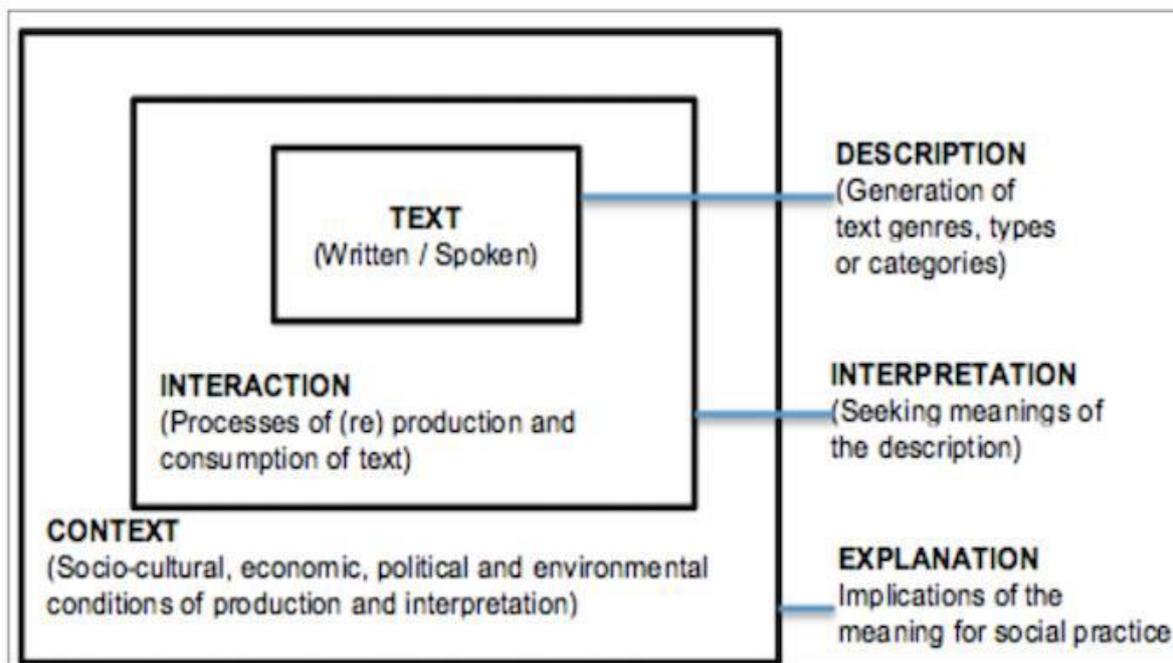
**Text.** Analysis of text involves linguistic analysis in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, and cohesion–organization above the sentence level (Fairclough, 1995). It is concerned with both their meaning and their form.

**Interaction.** The second layer—interaction—mediates between the production and the reception of the text (Fairclough, 1995).

**Context.** Analysis of the sociocultural practice of a communicative event comprises three parts: (a) social, (b) historical and (c) economic aspects (Fairclough, 1995).

### Figure 1

*Fairclough's Three Dimensions of Discourse Analysis*



Source: Fairclough, 1992, p. 25.

## Results of Critical Discourse of Analysis

### Consumption-Centered Advertisements

#### *Text (Description)*

The four consumption-centered advertisements under consideration in this section were designed to present new technology, applications, or practices for disabled people. For convenience they have been labelled Turkcell2013, Turkcell2015, Turkcell2017, and Kuveyttürk below.

The textual dimension of the CDA entails both linguistic units and visual components (Fairclough 1992). The events in all the advertisements were expressed in a narrative style from the perspective of a third party at various points. All three Turkcell advertisements involved enactments of disabled people's real lives, in which the advertiser conveyed feelings and ideas so as to create the illusion that the content represented a true story. In two of the advertisements,

both sign language and spoken language were used. In a substantive portion of Kuveyttürk's advertisement, only sign language was used, perhaps to create the impression of the desperation of people when they cannot understand what others are talking about. All advertisements included vocal tracks as well. Dubbing in all the Turkcell advertisements was done by a man; in the Kuveyttürk advertisement it was done by a woman.

In addition to linguistic units, images, colors, and sounds were analyzed. Concerning images, all the Turkcell advertisements had real-life settings. The Kuveyttürk advertisement used a brief enactment. To convey the essence of real life, the Turkcell advertisements used enactments effectively, appealing to audience emotions.

Each ad ended with an appearance of the company logo. Turkcell2015 and Turkcell2017 used the slogan of the company, and the Kuveyttürk ad and Turkcell2013 conveyed a social message about disability. Turkcell2015's message was "Life is good when we all use the same language" and Kuveyttürk's message was "We understand each other better now."

### ***Interaction (Interpretation)***

What is described in the first dimension of CDA is assigned meaning in the second dimension (Fairclough, 1992). To do so, in the first dimension, the scenes and the sounds used in the advertisement have been referenced. The narrative style of language use, the people attempting to help disabled people, and the enactments resembles the realities of Turkish life. A point that can be inferred from the advertisements is the need of disabled people to lead normal lives. In Turkcell2013 a blind boy cannot watch films without the help of Turkcell's application, and in Kuveyttürk's advertisement a deaf person cannot complete banking transactions without the bank's application. In Turkcell2017 a blind girl paints her mother's portrait with the help of Turkcell's barrier-free education program. In Turkcell2015 a deaf person cannot express himself until Burcu, a worker who uses sign language, helps him. Disabled people shown in all the advertisements clearly have needs that the companies can fulfill, including additional treatments or applications, without which they are vulnerable and unable to lead normal lives. Thus, the advertisements reflect the lives of disabled people in Turkey: They need the help of others, and companies have seized upon this notion.

Another concern of CDA is the purpose of the companies in producing these advertisements: to increase the exposure of the companies and to provide information about the benefits they offer people with disabilities. New technology applications for disabled people are shown in the advertisements to convey the success of the company in real life.

With the help of companies' new applications, disabled people are ultimately portrayed as happy; furthermore, the audience is affected by the emotional scenes.

### ***Context (Explanation)***

The context (explanation) dimension comprises the social, historical, and economic aspects that require the researcher to look at the discourse from a broader viewpoint (Fairclough, 1992). For example, a noteworthy cultural detail appears in Turkcell2015: Burcu brings stuffed grape leaves to the workers at Turkcell to thank them for their willingness to learn some sign language, reflecting the reciprocity style common in Turkish as well as Mediterranean culture. The primary cultural consideration, however, is the relationships of disabled people with others as well as representations and stereotypes associated with them. The social status and representation of disabled people have always been issues in Turkish society. To exemplify, accessibility to social life for disabled people in Turkey has typically been perceived as limited because they require the help of others; however, in advertisements, disabled people were shown as able to achieve goals with the help of the applications produced by companies. In all four advertisements under consideration in this section, companies stated

that they offer help for these people. The perception of disabled people as capable of achieving little seems to have changed somewhat as individuals have become more humanistic and open to differences while recognizing the importance of making their lives easier than in the past. Unfortunately, these companies have not mentioned the cost or availability of the new technologies for disabled people. Can every disabled people reach out to acquire these technologies? In Turkey how many barriers still exist to banking applications for deaf people or employees at a company learning sign language?

Few people in Turkey have actually shown willingness to help disabled people. In fact, in a recent news item a disabled person fell from his wheelchair in front of others, but onlookers failed to help him (“Beşiktaş'ta 'insanlık ölmüş' dedirten görüntü”, 2021). Thus, the willingness of people in the advertisements to help disabled people was not typically reflective of reality; clearly, real life and advertisements differ. Even so, the advertiser may have intentionally preferred to show the opposite of reality to demolish the prejudices or stereotypes associated with disabled people in Turkish society. The various perspectives conveyed in the advertisements of new technologies may be compatible with what people will experience in real life once those prejudices and stereotypes have been shattered.

## **Supportive Advertisements**

### ***Text (Description)***

Following an in-depth search, the researcher located only two advertisements supportive of people with disabilities, showing their strengths and instincts. Again, the linguistic units and visual components of a text were analyzed (Fairclough, 1992). Advertisements have been referred to as Samsung2015 and Samsung 2017 below.

The events in both advertisements were expressed in a narrative style from the perspective of a third party. In Samsung2015 only subtitles were used. In Samsung2017 an audio track was used with subtitles, and dubbing was done by a man.

In Samsung2015, the longest ad in this study, Samsung prepares a surprise for Muharrem, a deaf person. On a shopping trip everyone he and his sister encounter use sign language, surprising Muharrem. As the ad draws to a close, a Samsung staff member signs directly to Muharrem from a billboard: “We support all deaf people.” Making the point even stronger, only sign language and subtitles appear throughout the ad.

In Samsung2017, several deaf children appear. Despite any deficiencies, they have instincts that they can use to achieve goal. For example, the voiceover says, “A deaf child may not hear the voice of musical instruments but can feel the music,” and “A deaf child might not protect herself or himself from danger but can feel who is in danger.” At the end of the advertisement, a deaf child’s performance in a piano recital is witnessed by a proud mother. The advertisement ends with the following: “Come together at sesgetirenler.com.”

Beyond the linguistic units, images used in the advertisements were also analyzed. Both advertisements involved enactments, but they did not depict the realities of life. For example, the surprise prepared for Muharrem is that all people use sign language; but such a situation is far from real life. In Samsung2017 deaf children are successful in various aspects of life not reflective of reality. The advertisers tried to create lifelike scenes, but they are aspirational, not realistic.

The endings of the advertisements differed. In Samsung2015 the company used its logo; in Samsung2017 only the company logo appeared.

### ***Interaction (Interpretation)***

In the interpretive dimension of CDA, scenes and linguistic units were analyzed in the first dimension to determine (a) whether or not the advertisements used language or showed disabled people's strengths and weaknesses and (b) how disabled people were presented. From a cultural perspective, the advertisements included no elements of Turkish culture, in which little support has typically been extended to disabled people as opposed to what appears in Samsung2015. In Turkish culture, disabled people have been isolated, and others have not tried to understand them or see their strengths. In fact, the proportion of people who stated that they did not want disabled people as neighbors reached almost 70% ("Engelli komşu istenmiyor", 2012). In addition, most people in Turkey have avoided people who are developmentally disabled as friends, and the proportion of people objecting to work in the same workplace with disabled people has remained high (Çaha, 2016). In Samsung2017, however, each person Muharrem meets uses sign language to make his life easier, hardly a situation deaf people have encountered. In Turkish society, few people have learned sign language; furthermore, the notion that deaf people can achieve anything with their instinct has not been borne out in Turkish society.

The aim of the advertiser seemed to have been to show support of disabled people in Turkish society. At the end of Samsung2017, only the company's logo was shown without effort to market itself.

Because the advertisements deviated from the real-life experiences of disabled people, the members of the audience may have felt no effect at all, especially if they have never encountered a deaf musician, uncommon in Turkish culture.

### ***Context (Explanation)***

The context dimension requires the researcher to look at the discourse from a broader perspective (Fairclough, 1992). As noted above, disabled people, their lifestyle, the barriers they encounter, and their relationships with society have remained matters of importance. Disabled people have been apart from society because of their deficiencies, but in supportive advertisements, companies have optimistically shown that disabled people can achieve many goals with their insights. Real life is far more complicated for disabled people than indicated in the ads. Historically, the deficiencies of disabled people have been regarded as such insurmountable barriers that they could achieve little. In the 21st century this belief has changed somewhat but not sufficiently. Many people in Turkish society, including the parents of disabled children believe that they cannot lead normal lives. Related to economic issues, obtaining equipment for disabled people, especially deaf people, is expensive. Even if parents and disabled people believed they can achieve, accessing equipment developed for them would be very costly. The question that should be raised here is that whether or not parents can provide for all the needs of a disabled child. The level of depression in the parents of disabled children's parents has been shown to be high partly because of the economic burden placed upon them as they try to provide for their disabled children (Işıksan, 2005).

In summary, the representation of any aspect of the context (social, historical, and economic) of these advertisements is incongruent with real life in Turkey. The ads and real life stand far apart from each other.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

Analyzing advertisements critically, especially the ones including members of social minorities, is important because advertisements are ubiquitous and influence everyone (González Ruiz, 2014). Minorities have always been ignored, dividing society. In Turkey disabled people are members of a minority, the inclusion of which is a concern, but advertisements can help achieve it through aspirational content because such ads may have some power to change social practices (Tasmasbi & Kalkhajeh, 2013) and perceptions (Vahid & Esmâ'e'li, 2012).

A common stereotype of disabled people is that they are trapped at home and can achieve little. In response, the advertisers who produced the ads in this study may have aspired to change that perception at some point in the future and to improve the lives of disabled people. Although well-intentioned, the expectation is ambitious but detached from reality.

In terms of the explicit aim of the ads, the advertisers have introduced the companies and their benefits to disabled people, but the ads are less than persuasive: Despite a desire to persuade viewers to agree that disabled people could do anything if they gain enough support, they do not represent the real-life experiences of disabled people when the discursive patterns, including the language, images, and sounds, are examined. In Turkish society disabled people encounter numerous obstacles, which the advertisers essentially ignore.

A bilateral relationship exists between discourse and social structure, and one can argue that the discourse of the analyzed advertisements is not bound to the social, historical, and economic structures of Turkish culture (Fairclough, 1992). Furthermore, the advertisers do not know the values and understandings of their audience. They use common ideologies and the power of language to attempt to change the thoughts, perceptions, or behaviors of people; but few advertisements would have the capacity to change the understanding and values of a society, especially when such ads appear only every two years, hardly sufficient to change anyone's opinions.

## **Recommendations**

The results of this and previous studies have shown that disabled people rarely appear in the media, and even when they are, they have been shown in a negative light. If the number of positive advertisements could be increased, generalized, and broadcast, disabled people might be at least encouraged to achieve all the goals they can. Turkish society would also be affected by the ads because people would see this kind of scene more often, and their values and opinions of disabled people might change. Importantly, such an approach would benefit not only disabled people but also society in general.

The appearance of disabled people should be increased, especially in visual media; and the quality of their appearances should be improved. In addition, the quality of programs related to disabled people should also be improved; news related to disabled people should be broadcast throughout the year (not only on International Day of Persons with Disabilities), and programs that will help integrate disabled people into the mainstream should be promoted.

Because socialization begins in childhood and attitudes are shaped during that time, disabled people should appear in more children's programs. To create awareness especially of disability, media programming should lead to a conscious understanding of disabled people by nondisabled children. To succeed in this endeavor, producers of media, especially visual media on TV, must work intently to include all citizens living in a society without discrimination. Disabled or nondisabled, young or old, woman or man, poor or rich—every person has a right to integration into society.

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