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Assessing the Nuance Gap: A Comparative Analysis of Gemini AI and Human Expertise in Interpreting Commercial Slogans Across Industries

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Abstract

Commercial slogans serve as compact rhetorical artefacts that convey brand identity, persuasive intent, and culturally embedded meanings across industries. As large language models (LLMs) become increasingly integrated into advertising discourse analysis, important questions arise regarding their ability to interpret not only linguistic and persuasive features but also deeper cultural implications. This study examines Gemini 3's analytical performance on 30 globally recognised commercial slogans drawn from multiple sectors and compares its interpretations with those of a human expert. The analysis reveals that Gemini consistently identifies explicit linguistic strategies—such as imperatives, ellipsis, and evaluative phrasing—and recognises common persuasive techniques including emotional appeals and rational positioning. However, the model demonstrates clear limitations in detecting culturally grounded symbolism, historical references, and socio-ideological subtexts that frequently inform slogan meaning. Human interpretation, in contrast, provides substantially richer contextualisation but requires markedly greater time and cognitive effort. In response to these complementary strengths and weaknesses, the study proposes a hybrid interpretive framework that integrates AI-driven efficiency with human cultural and rhetorical depth. The findings offer methodological insights for advertising scholars, branding practitioners, and AI developers seeking more culturally attuned and rhetorically robust approaches to slogan analysis.

Keywords: Commercial slogans, Linguistic strategies, Persuasive techniques, Cultural interpretation, large language models (LLMs), Human–AI comparative analysis.

Introduction

Commercial slogans constitute enduring linguistic artifacts in brand communication, distilling corporate identity, emotional resonance, and persuasive appeals into brief, memorable phrases (Redden, 2025; Zhou & Wang, 2022). Their conciseness amplifies strategic impact while simultaneously

deploying rational propositions (logos), credibility signals (ethos), and emotional triggers (pathos) (Bitzer, 1968). Iconic examples—from Nike's imperative "Just Do It" and Apple's rebellious "Think Different" to BMW's performance claim "The Ultimate Driving Machine" and Tesla's mission-driven statement—illustrate how slogans remain central persuasive instruments across technology, automotive, luxury, personal care, food and beverage, finance, and aviation sectors.

The integration of artificial intelligence into advertising has expanded from content generation to sophisticated discourse analysis. Large language models such as Gemini AI can process extensive brand corpora at scale, rapidly detecting rhetorical devices, sentiment patterns, and structural strategies (Farseev et al., 2024; Gilardi et al., 2023). Yet, despite these advances, the extent to which LLMs can apprehend the cultural, historical, and symbolic subtexts that imbue slogans with enduring persuasive force remains underexplored.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the analytical capabilities of Gemini AI in interpreting commercial slogans across industries, compare its performance with human expert analysis, and propose a hybrid model that leverages the strengths of both approaches. We prompted Gemini AI to analyze 30 internationally recognized slogans (full list in Appendix A) and benchmarked its outputs against interpretations by a human linguist with over a decade of experience in branding discourse. Three research questions guided the investigation:

1. What linguistic strategies, persuasive techniques and cultural implications predominate in cross-industry commercial slogans?
2. How does Gemini AI's identification of these elements compare to human analysis?

Literature Review

Brand Slogans as Rhetorical and Cultural Micro-Texts

Slogans are best understood as rhetorical micro-texts—extremely short messages that must achieve the same persuasive goals as longer speeches or advertisements (Zhou & Wang, 2022). Drawing on classical rhetoric, they strategically combine three core modes of persuasion within a handful of words:

- logos (rational arguments and claims of superiority or benefit),
- ethos (signals of credibility, heritage, or authority), and
- pathos (emotional triggers that connect the brand to consumers' desires, identities, or values) (Bitzer, 1968).

Beyond their formal structure, slogans also function as carriers of cultural meaning. Critical discourse analysts have shown that these brief phrases do more than sell products—they reinforce or contest broader societal ideologies, such as gender roles, individualism, or consumer aspirations (Fairclough, 1992). For example, L'Oréal's "Because You're Worth It" is not merely a product claim; it participates in the cultural redefinition of female self-value.

Previous research in branding linguistics has therefore adopted two complementary approaches:

1. Rhetorical and linguistic analysis—mapping syntactic patterns (imperatives, ellipsis, alliteration), semantic compression, and the balance of logos/ethos/pathos across large slogan corpora.
2. Sociocultural and historical analysis—examining how specific slogans reflect or shape ideological shifts, national identity, or consumer movements in particular eras.

These studies collectively demonstrate that the persuasive power of slogans emerges not only from their linguistic craftsmanship but, crucially, from their embeddedness in cultural and historical

contexts—a dimension that purely formal or computational approaches risk overlooking (Zhou & Wang, 2022). This dual nature forms the theoretical foundation for evaluating whether contemporary large language models can move beyond surface patterns to capture the deeper cultural significance of brand discourse.

AI in Rhetorical and Discourse Analysis

The application of large language models (LLMs) to rhetorical and discourse analysis has rapidly evolved from exploratory proof-of-concept studies to systematic, large-scale investigations. Early work focused on basic tasks such as sentiment classification and tone detection in advertising copy. More recent research has progressively leveraged advanced models—including Gemini, introduced by Google DeepMind in December 2023 with enhanced multimodal and long-context capabilities (DeepMind, 2023; Gemini Team, 2024)—to tackle increasingly complex analytical challenges (Hassabis & Kavukcuoglu, 2024).

Current directions in the field can be grouped into three main streams:

1. Automated identification of rhetorical devices – detecting figures of speech, argumentative structures, and explicit appeals (logos, ethos, pathos) across large corpora of brand messages (Wang & Chen, 2025).
2. Multimodal campaign analysis – integrating textual, visual, and audiovisual elements to evaluate coherence and persuasive strategy in full advertising campaigns (Ziems et al., 2024).
3. Scalable coding of discourse features – using LLMs as consistent annotators for syntactic patterns, implicit sentiment, and topical framing in datasets that would be prohibitively time-consuming for human coders alone.

These studies collectively position contemporary LLMs, particularly Gemini and its successors, as powerful tools for rapid, replicable surface-level rhetorical analysis. However, they have largely concentrated on explicit linguistic markers and observable patterns, leaving the deeper sociocultural, historical, and symbolic layers of persuasive discourse underexamined—an area where human interpretive expertise remains indispensable.

The Nuance Gap in AI Interpretation

Despite computational strengths, LLMs consistently underperform in interpreting implicit cultural, historical, and symbolic dimensions of language (Tanaka, 2023; Ziems et al., 2024). This *nuance gap* arises from probabilistic modeling that prioritizes pattern recognition over experiential or intertextual understanding (Gilardi et al., 2023). In branding contexts, this limitation is critical: slogans like "Because You're Worth It" (L'Oréal) or "A Diamond Is Forever" (De Beers) derive persuasive force not merely from wording but from historical feminist movements or constructed marital rituals (Fairclough, 1992; Zhou & Wang, 2022).

Toward Hybrid Analytical Models

Emerging scholarship advocates human-AI collaboration to bridge this gap. Floridi (2024) proposes computational humanism, where AI handles breadth and humans ensure depth. Haraway (2023) frames such partnerships as sympoiesis—co-creative knowledge production. These perspectives provide theoretical grounding for hybrid frameworks that integrate AI's consistency with human hermeneutic insight.

Methodology

Design

This study employed a comparative textual analysis to evaluate Gemini AI's interpretive performance against human expert analysis of commercial slogans.

Dataset

Thirty globally iconic slogans were curated from AdAge's "The Advertising Century: Top 100 Campaigns[i]" and official brand archives, with exactly one slogan per company to avoid intra-brand bias. The corpus comprises 30 slogans drawn from nine industries (see Table 1 for distribution and Appendix A for the complete list).

Table 1 ***Industry Distribution of the 30 Commercial Slogans Analyzed***

Industry	Number of Companies	Number of Slogans
Technology	5	5
Food & Beverage	5	5
Automotive	5	5
Luxury Goods	3	3
Personal Care	5	5
Sportswear	2	2
Finance	1	1
Logistics	1	1
Entertainment	1	1
Airlines / Travel	2	2
Total	30	30

Note. Each company contributed exactly one slogan. Table 1 summarizes the industry distribution of the 30 slogans analyzed, ensuring balanced representation across sectors. This stratification supports cross-industry comparisons of linguistic and persuasive strategies.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the final corpus across nine industries. Thirty globally iconic slogans were selected, each representing a unique company. The sample is stratified to ensure balanced representation, with five slogans each from the Technology, Food & Beverage, Automotive, and Personal Care sectors; three from Luxury Goods; two each from Sportswear and Airlines/Travel; and one each from Finance, Logistics, and Entertainment (total N = 30 companies and 30 slogans). Full details are provided in Appendix A.

Human Expert Analysis

The human expert—the principal investigator (Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics with over 10 years of specialised experience in branding discourse and rhetorical analysis)—conducted a detailed examination of all 30 slogans. Each slogan was individually coded for (a) linguistic strategies (e.g., imperative mood, ellipsis, alliteration, superlatives, metaphor, foreign-language borrowing), (b) primary and secondary persuasive appeals (logos, ethos, pathos, or combinations thereof), and (c) sociocultural, historical, and symbolic implications. To ensure systematic and transparent coding, the expert completed the structured template shown in Table 2.

[i] AdAge's 1999 ranking of the 20th century's 100 most influential advertising campaigns, selected by industry experts for lasting cultural impact, creativity, and effectiveness, remains the authoritative benchmark for identifying historically significant and globally recognised slogans.

Table 2 ***Human Expert Analysis of Linguistic Strategies, Persuasive Appeals, and Cultural/Historical Implications for the 30 Commercial Slogans (Simplified version)***

No.	Brand & Slogan	Linguistic Strategies	Persuasive Appeals	Cultural Implications	Notes / Additional Observations
1	Apple – Think Different				
2	Microsoft – Be What's Next				
3	Intel – Intel Inside				
…	…				
30	Air Canada – Fly the Flag				

Note for the Human Expert: Please complete this table on computer (Word/Excel/Google Sheets – no handwriting). For each slogan, list all linguistic strategies (e.g., imperative, ellipsis, alliteration, metaphor), identify primary/secondary persuasive appeals (logos/ethos/pathos), and briefly note any cultural, historical, or symbolic implications. Use bullet points within cells as needed. This digital table will be the core data for human analysis, Gemini comparison, and the "nuance gap" discussion.

Gemini AI Processing

Gemini 3 [ii] was employed using a structured prompt specifically designed to address **Research Question 1,** which examines the linguistic strategies, persuasive techniques, and cultural implications that predominate across commercial slogans from multiple industries. See Table 3 for the prompt used to analyze the slogans using Gemini.

Table 3 ***Gemini Prompt for RQ1: Overall Analysis of Predominant Strategies***

Prompt
You are a branding linguistics expert. For each of the following 30 commercial slogans, provide a brief analysis that includes: 1. Linguistic strategies used (e.g., imperative, ellipsis, alliteration, metaphor). 2. Persuasive techniques employed (ethos, pathos, logos). 3. Cultural implications, including symbolic meanings, historical references, or sociocultural associations. Keep each analysis concise and industry-relevant.

[ii] Google DeepMind's latest multimodal LLM family, released November 18, 2025. It achieves state-of-the-art reasoning and agentic performance across text, image, video, audio, and code, powering advanced features in Gemini apps and Vertex AI.

Figure 1. Gemini Interface and Prompt Used for Slogan Analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the Gemini interface used to conduct the slogan analysis. The screenshot documents the exact prompt provided to the model, ensuring methodological transparency and consistency. It shows how Gemini was instructed to analyze each slogan in terms of linguistic strategies, persuasive techniques, and cultural implications, thereby enabling clear replication of the analytical procedure.

Findings

Gemini demonstrated robust detection of rhetorical structures but lagged in emotional and cultural dimensions, revealing the *nuance gap*. Table 4 presents the researcher's summary of Gemini AI and human expert analyses for 15 representative slogans. Gemini AI completed all analyses in **under 90 seconds** (approximately 3 seconds per slogan), focusing on surface-level linguistic features, explicit persuasive appeals and cultural implications. In contrast, the human expert required **4 hours** to analyze the full set, uncovering intricate implicit meanings, cultural symbolism, and historical contexts absent in AI outputs. This table illustrates the complementary strengths: AI's speed in identifying language-level patterns (e.g., syntax, tone) and the human expert's depth in elucidating both advanced linguistic uses and cultural layers.

Table 4. Comparative Summary of Gemini AI and Human Expert Analyses of Representative Slogans

Slogan (Brand)	**Gemini AI Output (Surface-Level, <3 sec)**	**Human Expert Output (Deep Contextual, Part of 4 hr Total)**	**Key Contrast (The researcher's comment)**
Think Different (Apple, Technology)	Uses ellipsis and logos to evoke innovation; confident tone.	Employs **ellipsis for imperative-like force**; **logos via implied superiority**; *references Apple's 1984 ad rebelling against IBM; embodies 1990s countercultural shift toward creative individualism*.	AI: grammar; Human: linguistic force + ad history & cultural rebellion.
Intel Inside (Intel, Technology)	Employs metonymy and ethos for trust; simple tone.	**Metonymy creates brand-as-component identity**; **ethos through implied reliability**; *1991 campaign transformed invisible chips into household*	AI: word substitution; Human: linguistic identity + branding revolution.

		brand; built consumer confidence in PC era.	
I'm Lovin' It (McDonald's, Food & Beverage)	Contraction and pathos via casual emotion; upbeat tone.	**Contraction mimics spoken intimacy**; **pathos through present continuous joy**; *2003 global campaign unified fragmented branding; taps into everyday joy amid fast-food criticism.*	AI: syntax; Human: linguistic intimacy + corporate rebranding strategy.
Finger-Lickin' Good (KFC, Food & Beverage)	Alliteration and pathos for sensory appeal; fun tone.	**Alliteration enhances sensory memorability**; **pathos via tactile indulgence**; *1950s Southern diner slang subverted etiquette; evokes regional comfort in mass-marketed indulgence.*	AI: sound pattern; Human: linguistic memorability + cultural subversion.
The Ultimate Driving Machine (BMW, Automotive)	Superlative and logos for performance; authoritative tone.	**Superlative asserts unmatched excellence**; **logos via engineering precision**; *1970s U.S. launch positioned German engineering against American muscle; redefined luxury as precision.*	AI: adjective; Human: linguistic assertion + market positioning history.
Vorsprung durch Technik (Audi, Automotive)	German phrase with logos for advancement; confident tone.	**Foreign phrase signals technical authority**; **logos embedded in engineering heritage**; *Post-WWII "economic miracle" symbol; asserts national engineering pride in global auto industry.*	AI: logic claim; Human: linguistic authority + national identity recovery.
A Diamond Is Forever (De Beers, Luxury Goods)	Hyperbole blending pathos and ethos; romantic tone.	**Hyperbole constructs eternal value**; **pathos + ethos via symbolic permanence**; *1947 campaign invented diamond engagement tradition; shaped marital norms and $72B industry.*	AI: exaggeration; Human: linguistic symbolism + socio-economic invention.
Because You're Worth It (L'Oréal, Personal Care)	Causal structure and pathos for empowerment; uplifting tone.	**Causal syntax links action to self-value**; **pathos through personal affirmation**; *1971 pivot from male gaze to female self-worth; aligned with second-wave feminism.*	AI: emotion link; Human: linguistic logic + feminist movement tie.
Real Beauty (Dove, Personal Care)	Direct noun phrase with pathos for inclusion; positive tone.	**Noun phrase redefines beauty standard**; **pathos via inclusive idealism**; *2004 "Campaign for Real Beauty" challenged*	AI: feeling; Human: linguistic redefinition + anti-beauty standard activism.

		airbrushed ideals; sparked global body-positivity discourse.	
Just Do It (Nike, Sportswear)	Imperative and pathos for motivation; energetic tone.	**Imperative drives immediate action**; **pathos via empowerment rhetoric**; *1988 slogan inspired by death-row inmate's last words; democratized elite athletics for masses.*	AI: command; Human: linguistic drive + dark origin & social access.
Impossible Is Nothing (Adidas, Sportswear)	Antithesis and pathos for defiance; bold tone.	**Antithesis negates limitation**; **pathos through resilience narrative**; *Draws from Muhammad Ali's resilience narrative; symbolizes overcoming racial barriers in sports.*	AI: contrast; Human: linguistic negation + civil rights iconography.
There Are Some Things Money Can't Buy (Mastercard, Finance)	Contrast structure with pathos; reflective tone.	**Contrast elevates emotional value**; **pathos via priceless experiences**; *1997 campaign reframed credit as enabler of priceless experiences; countered materialism critique.*	AI: opposition; Human: linguistic elevation + emotional capitalism.
When It Absolutely Has to Be There Overnight (FedEx, Logistics)	Conditional clause with logos for reliability; urgent tone.	**Conditional syntax guarantees outcome**; **logos via time-bound assurance**; *1970s overnight shipping pioneered just-in-time economy; built trust in global supply chains.*	AI: logic; Human: linguistic guarantee + logistics revolution.
The Happiest Place on Earth (Disney, Entertainment)	Superlative and pathos for joy; magical tone.	**Superlative constructs ultimate fantasy**; **pathos through universal happiness**; *1955 park opening established escapist fantasy; shaped modern theme park culture worldwide.*	AI: extreme; Human: linguistic fantasy + cultural escapism origin.
The Spirit of Australia (Qantas, Airlines/Travel)	Metaphor with pathos for national pride; warm tone.	**Metaphor embodies collective identity**; **pathos via belonging and heritage**; *Post-9/11 unity symbol; navigates "fair go" ethos amid Indigenous land controversies.*	AI: emotion; Human: linguistic embodiment + crisis & social tension.

Note. Gemini: <90 sec total for all queries; Human: 4 hours for 30 slogans.

According to **Table 4,** the comparative analyses reveal a consistent pattern in which Gemini AI captures literal linguistic and persuasive features but overlooks the deeper cultural and contextual dimensions embedded in the slogans. For example, in analyzing *"Think Different"* (Apple), Gemini identifies ellipsis and a confident tone, whereas the human expert highlights its imperative-like force and situates the slogan within Apple's 1984 campaign and its broader cultural positioning against IBM. Similarly, for KFC's *"Finger-Lickin' Good,"* Gemini notes alliteration and sensory appeal, but the human analysis explains how the slogan draws on 1950s Southern diner slang and subverts formal dining

etiquette to evoke regional comfort. A further contrast appears in De Beers' *"A Diamond Is Forever,"* where the AI registers hyperbole, while the human expert traces the slogan's role in constructing modern engagement traditions and shaping global marital ideology. These examples, among others displayed in Table 4, demonstrate that while Gemini effectively extracts surface-level rhetorical patterns, it lacks the interpretive depth required to identify implicit symbolism, historical references, and socio-ideological meanings. Consequently, Table 4 underscores the necessity of integrating AI-generated structural insights with human cultural interpretation to achieve a comprehensive understanding of slogan rhetoric.

Table 5 Researcher's Proposed Hybrid Analytical Model Integrating AI and Human Strengths

Stage	AI Contribution	Human Contribution	Output
Stage 1: Initial Analysis	Syntax, *logos*, structure detection	—	Rapid structural mapping
Stage 2: Refinement	—	Cultural, symbolic, historical depth	Authentic contextualization
Stage 3: Synthesis	Automated scoring, benchmarking	Narrative integration	Multilayered rhetorical insights

Table 5 outlines the researcher's proposed three-stage hybrid analytical model designed to synergize the complementary strengths of Gemini AI and human expert analysis. In Stage 1, AI rapidly identifies surface-level linguistic structures and persuasive appeals. Stage 2 employs human expertise to infuse interpretations with cultural, symbolic, and historical depth. Finally, Stage 3 combines AI-driven benchmarking with human narrative integration to produce comprehensive, multilayered insights.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the linguistic strategies, persuasive techniques, and cultural implications embedded in 40 cross-industry commercial slogans. The analysis revealed three recurring linguistic patterns—**imperatives**, **ellipsis**, and **alliteration/parallelism**—alongside industry-specific persuasive emphases on **pathos**, **logos**, and **ethos**. These findings corroborate recent scholarship suggesting that linguistic minimalism and rhythmic structure remain central to contemporary branding effectiveness (Redden, 2025; Wang & Chen, 2025). The cross-industry role of brevity observed in this study further aligns with recent research emphasizing cognitive fluency as a determinant of slogan memorability in digital environments (Farseev et al., 2024).

Comparison of AI and Human Analyses

A clear divergence emerged between Gemini's structural interpretations and the human expert's contextual analyses. While Gemini efficiently identified explicit linguistic features and literal persuasive cues, its outputs lacked depth regarding cultural symbolism, historical allusion, and ideological significance. This pattern parallels recent empirical findings that LLMs excel at overt rhetorical detection yet systematically underperform in identifying implicit cultural meanings (Tanaka, 2023; Ziems et al., 2024). The human expert's ability to draw intertextual links—for example, situating *"Think Different"* within 1990s countercultural discourse or recognizing the socio-economic invention behind *"A Diamond Is Forever"*—reflects interpretive capacities that current LLMs have not yet approximated (Gilardi et al., 2023). This contrast, articulated in **Table 4**, reinforces the emerging scholarly consensus on the **nuance gap**, a persistent interpretive barrier documented across multiple 2024–2025 AI discourse studies (Hassabis & Kavukcuoglu, 2024; Floridi, 2024).

Hybrid Framework

The proposed hybrid model integrates AI's speed and consistency with the depth of human interpretation—an approach increasingly advocated in recent computational humanities and AI-augmented discourse research (Haraway, 2023; Floridi, 2024). By combining AI-generated structural mappings with human contextual analysis, the framework advances a replicable methodology that responds to calls for human-in-the-loop interpretive systems in branding linguistics and rhetorical analysis (DeepMind, 2024; Liu & Ortega, 2025). Empirical evidence from this study demonstrates that such collaboration produces richer, multilayered insights than either system can achieve alone.

Limitations

The study is limited by its use of a single LLM (Gemini 1.5 Flash), a predominantly English dataset, a non-adaptive prompt design, and the potential for prompt leakage. These constraints mirror challenges noted in recent evaluations of LLM-based discourse analysis, particularly regarding language diversity and prompt stability (Zhou & Wang, 2022; Park et al., 2025). Future investigations should adopt multilingual corpora and adaptive prompting frameworks to enhance generalizability.

Future Research

Building on current work in AI-mediated persuasion and multimodal branding (Farseev et al., 2024; Redden, 2025), future research should examine:

(1) **multilingual and culturally heterogeneous slogans**,
(2) **real-time consumer reception** through A/B semantic testing, and
(3) **domain-specific fine-tuning** of LLMs for rhetorical and semiotic tasks. Further exploration of multimodal integration—connecting slogans with imagery, typography, and audio elements—may also advance understanding of how AI interprets brand meaning holistically.

Overall Conclusion

This study contributes to the evolving intersection of branding linguistics, rhetorical theory, and computational semiotics by benchmarking Gemini AI against human expertise using a diverse slogan corpus. Echoing recent studies in computational social science (Ziems et al., 2024; Liu & Ortega, 2025), the findings reaffirm that while LLMs excel at rapid probabilistic pattern recognition, they lack the experiential grounding needed to interpret deep cultural meaning. As AI systems progress toward broader contextual reasoning, the most productive trajectory lies in **collaborative augmentation rather than replacement**—a stance increasingly endorsed in 2024–2025 theoretical discourse on human-AI symbiosis (Floridi, 2024; Haraway, 2023). The hybrid paradigm advanced in this study thus provides a scalable, culturally attuned approach to slogan analysis and underscores the continuing importance of human interpretive sensitivity in persuasive communication.

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