



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 4. Issue.1., 2017 (Jan-Mar.)



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

THE PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENTS

ADIL KHAN<sup>1</sup>, ANAM SHAMS<sup>2</sup>, WAJIHA FATIMA<sup>3</sup>, ASFIA KHANAM<sup>4</sup>

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

<sup>1</sup>sarimkhn@gmail.com; <sup>2</sup>anamshams12@gmail.com; <sup>3</sup>wajihafatima@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup>asfia1991@yahoo.com



ADIL KHAN

ABSTRACT

Although advertisements are ephemeral in that each one is short-lived, their effects are longstanding and cumulative: they leave traces of themselves behind, which combine to form a body of messages about the culture that produced them. These messages can then function both to reflect and to construct cultural values: they can reflect the values of the powerful groups in society who produced the texts. Almost all the ads use taglines to attract the customers. Everything matters in an advertisement. The kind of color, background, people who are appearing, the words used by the people are all matters in advertisements. Above all, the culture depicted in advertisements plays a crucial role in promoting the particular product of a company. It needs a lot of imagination and creativity. Those who work hard and smart can excel in this field. This paper critically analyses the language used in advertisements with reference to the products they shown in mass media, in papers, and in journals.

**Keywords:** Media, Advertisement, Persuasive language, Rhetorical devices

©KY PUBLICATIONS

Introduction

The aim of the paper is to propose a simple approach to monitoring the language of the advertisement use it. The work provides the analysis of the language of advertising from a language point of view and specifies linguistic means used in advertising texts. The work brings knowledge about the use of linguistic devices in the advertisement. In this paper, the researchers' are concerned with the language of advertisement. The main reason to choose this topic was the interesting use of language in media culture, how the English language gets molded by the advertisers, to grab the attention of the audience towards their product. Language plays a great role in persuading and making others listen and pay attention. The language of advertisement is therefore used, to persuade the audience. English language and its use in different contexts is interesting to note and is been studied for ages. The language of advertisement is yet another interesting creation and use of the English language. Researchers of this paper worked on, to discover its anatomy of creative writing and grammatical structures. The objective of the work is to provide the analysis of the language of advertising from a linguistic point of view and specify linguistic means used in advertising texts.

The concrete statements and data can provide information for those, who write advertising texts in English. The diploma thesis is addressed to the students of English language for Specific Purposes, teachers of English language for Specific Purposes, people working in advertising sphere, copywriters and all people interested in the language of advertising. In order to develop a clear conceptual framework for the study, the researcher reviewed a large number of books and articles on advertising, advertising management, brand management, consumer behavior, marketing research, books and articles on literature and other related studies in the field.

### **Overview**

Advertising is an inevitable part of our modern capitalist consumer society whose outstanding feature is its competitive fight. "...advertising is not some external curiosity which we examine, from which we are separate and superior, but something of which we are a part, and which is part of us..." (Cook, 1996). It is everywhere around us: in newspapers, in magazines, on billboards along the streets, on television, in radio, in means of public transport and any place the sponsor pays to distribute their message. The effects of the advertising influence us whether we like it or not. Advertising traces its history back to ancient times. Wikipedia says that the first forms of advertising messages were transferred by word of mouth, however, in the ruins of Pompeii commercial messages and election campaign displays have been found. Egyptians used Papyrus to create sales messages and wall posters, while in Greece and Rome lost-and-found advertising on papyrus was common. Wall or rock painting for commercial advertising is another manifestation of an ancient media advertising form, which is present to this day in many parts of Asia, Africa, and South America. With the form of advertising, we could meet in the marketplaces, where the sellers used to shout and extol their products. In the course of time, people more and more tried to differentiate their products and began to find out new ways of presenting. They started to accentuate the visual aspect of the advertisement. With the expansion of color printing and colorful posters, the streets began to revel in colors. These posters were ancestors to our modern billboards. As the economy and the trade were expanding during the 19th century, the need for advertising grew. Gradually, advertising transformed into a modern, more scientific and sophisticated conception. New visual techniques have been launched. Not only the content of the message is important, but also the form. The creativity of copywriters, who are finding new ways, leads to the richness of various forms of advertising.

According to Geoffrey Leech (1972), most frequent and important type of the advertising is "commercial consumer advertising": advertising directed towards a mass audience with the aim of promoting sales of a commercial product or service. It is the kind which uses the most money, professional skill, and advertising space in this country." ('this country', here: Great Britain). Example: "Plump it up. New volume boosts liquid lip color. Paints lips with a high shine lacquer finish. Feel the tingling sensation as formula begins to work." We can classify the types of advertising also according to the type of medium: TV, radio, brochures, leaflets, magazines, newspapers and other printed material advertising, the Internet and Direct Mail advertising, outdoor advertising, etc. According to Widdowson, human language "serves as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community." (Widdowson 2000: 3). Angela Goddard emphasizes the idea of narrator and narratee. She says that the writer is the person who constructs the text in reality (in advertising texts, the real writers are the copywriters and artists who work in an advertising agency's creative department), while the narrator is the storyteller within the text. Copywriters can construct all sorts of different narrators to convey to us the message, for example, a female writer can construct a male narrator, or an adult writer can construct a child narrator: "She's got more than me, mom."

### **Media and language Alteration**

The issue of language on TV advertisement and its effects has been a matter of concern and debate for around years all over the world and for about 27 years in an advertisement, they are using such sort of language which evokes the emotions of the consumers. Sometimes the emotions turn into happiness or we can say positive response for e.g. Positive emotions: the image of people enjoying themselves while drinking Pepsi and other than they also show the negative emotions like: person having back pain after buying the

wrong mattress. It can also include emotions such as worry and shame: the image of striving child persuade you to send money.

An appeal to logic or reason: The advertisement using logos will give you the whole image of the product.

The daily "logos" of an advertisement will straight fact about the product: one glass of real juice contains 75% of your vitamin C.

An appeal to credibility or character: An advertisement using credibility will try to convince you that the company is more reliable, honest and credible; therefore, you should buy their products.

It includes statistics from reliable aspects for e.g., 'Such as nine out of ten dentists agree that Colgate is better than any other brand in India'.

Often, a celebrity endorses a product to lend it more credibility: Shahrukh Khan makes us want to know switch to 'Jio 4g digital life'.

Persuasion is the act of causing people to do or believe something: the act or activity of persuading people. The idea that is believed to be true, or valid without positive knowledge. It also changes the attitude and influencing a target market to action.

The persuasive text is something in which it is able to cause people to do or believe something able to persuade people. In the writing, author expresses the facts or opinions to try to convince the reader.

The persuasive language is used in the advertisement as it is an act of attracting public attention to a product or business as by paid announcement in print, broadcast or electronic media.

#### **The idea behind advertising a product**

The advertisement is done simply to attract the consumer so that they will buy more and more products.

Advertising is the best way to communicate to the customers. It is for everybody including kids, young and old. The language used in media advertisement is of creativity.

The English language is known for its vocabulary and creativity of words. Wherein, the other languages have only one or two words which carry a particular meaning, English may have five or six for a particular word.

Moreover, the meanings of these five or six words may differ very slightly and in a very subtle way. It is important to understand the connotation of a word. It is the feeling or ideas that are suggested by a word, rather than the actual meaning of the word. Armchair, for example, suggests comfort, whereas chair arouses no particular feelings. This shows that the different words of English are used to show creativity in advertising a product.

The advertisers adapt language to their own use and take compound words and use them as adjectives. The compound word later widely used in normal situations. For top- quality, economy-size, chocolate, feather-light and longer-lasting.

The language of advertising is, of course, normally very positive and emphasizes why one product stands out in comparison with another. Advertising language may not always be "correct" language in the normal sense. For example, comparatives are often used when no real comparison is made. An advertisement for a detergent may say "It gets clothes whiter", but whiter than what?

#### **The language of advertisement from a linguistic point of view:**

##### **Rhetorical Devices used in Advertisements**

Rhetorical devices, which are artful deviations that put a twist on the familiar, are frequently found in advertisements and the purpose of advertisements is not only to inform but also to persuade (Tom and Eves, 1999).

McQuarrie and Mick (1996) also reiterate this point that advertisements using rhetorical devices get more preference and better indelibility.

McGuire (2000) states that in a 45 consumerist age, persuasion should be a central topic of study in consumer research and that the art of persuasive communication of using figurative language is ignored in our age.

**Hyperbole:** exaggeration, frequent use of adjectives and adverbs

Words like new, clean, white, real, fresh, right, natural, big, great, slim, soft, wholesome...

**Novelty impact:** e.g. Beanz Meanz, Heinz, Cookability, Schoweppervescence, Tangoed...

**Short sentences for impact on the reader-** The sentence used to capture the attention of the reader for example "Headline" or "slogan".

**Avoidance of negatives** – advertising normally emphasizes the positive side of a product.

**Familiar language-** the language used to show friendly attitude.

Certain techniques which are used by the advertisers for persuading are as follows:

The use of repetition of rhyming to create a lasting effect on memory- For e.g. we all have come across advertisement repeating the word or smart rhymes e.g. Advertisements for luggage "travel light, travel right".

Some used the contrast to bring out desirable characteristics of their product e.g small car great adventure. Advertiser often that appeals to our emotions for e.g. "diamonds are forever". It represents diamond as an eternal love.

The other advertisement which is ambitious in nature e.g. "the winner's choice".

The advertisement also bold words or phrase example **NEW, EXTRA** or **INTRODUCING**. They also use font size and styles. Example underlining and italics for words.

There are certain simple words which are also used in media and advertisements. "Cognitive message strategy" is also used to benefit their products. Example: a food product advertisement saying "their product is tasteful and low calories".

Some advertisement uses statics example a mouth wash advertisement claiming it to be recommended by 3 out of 4 dentists.

Advertiser uses certain words of product to create an attraction in the mind of the consumer. Example Trix cereal and rice crispers.

The use of catchphrases, slogans, and slang that appeal to a target audience example Nike's slogan 'just do it' or Adidas 'impossible is nothing'.

Sometime figurative language is used to appeal to the consumer through or imagination. For example, double mint advertisement "gum adds to your fun".

In our daily life, we encounter with the advertisement which consists of persuasive language. These are memorable due to their persuasive language. Persuasive language is used to attract a group of buyer or so that they are easily convinced to buy a certain product. In other words, this language is used to create a lasting impact on memory.

#### **Giving the sound effect**

The starting point for thinking about further types of written texts is the use of aspects of speech to give them more communicative force. It is difficult for us to answer the question 'What is a real speech like?' for a number of reasons. One is its transient nature: up to now, it has not been an easy task for us to preserve it for study. Computer corpuses can provide us with accurate recordings and transcriptions of millions of spoken words, collected from many different types of interaction. It is only by finding repeated patterns that we can really say how spoken language 'works'. Speech has a lot of catching up to do. For several centuries, all our archives that tell us about language have been based on writing and recorded in writing. Writing has such high status that we tend to think all its representations are accurate, even when writing has the cheek to impersonate speech, that follows to sort out how real speech differs from the way it often appears in constructed texts, such as literary fiction; at the same time, it will be important to notice which features literary writers choose to represent, as well as to ignore. Writers need to give us a sense that their characters

could exist, so in choosing aspects of speech to represent, they must choose some aspects that we recognize intuitively.

**Deictics** : Also because of its context dependency, real speech often makes use of what are termed deictics – reference terms such as ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘those’, ‘it’, ‘here’ and ‘there’, which indicate items in the immediate context. The literary version also uses deictics, but it has to make sure that the reader already has a clear picture of what is being referred to. For example, the underlined deictics in the following section all refer back to the description of the attack on the hair in the first sentence: She stabbed at the hair, sawing and hacking away almost at random. ‘There you are. Give that lot a bit trim and you’ll be all right.’ Elaine’s voice shook with laughter. ‘No, hold on, there’s a bit here.

**Prosodic features:** Both the texts represent prosodic features – aspects of spoken language such as intonation and stress, which are part of the overall ‘melody’ of a language. The difference is that in the real dialogue, these aspects were part of the general communicative force of the original interaction. In writing up the transcript, the transcriber has made some attempt to represent these features by specific markings. The conversation in the literary text, of course, never took place, but it is in the interest of the writer to make the reader bring it to life as if it did. To this end, the literary writer uses typographical presentation, such as different typefaces and features of punctuation – here, the use of italics to signal stress, and question and exclamation marks to suggest the respective intonation patterns.

These features present the spoken voice in a very impressionistic way: in other words, the literary writer uses a small range of written conventions, knowing that readers will read the clues and work to ‘create’ features of spoken dialogue inside their heads as they read. Lexis The lexis (vocabulary) of the two texts demonstrates some interesting differences and similarities. Both the real dialogue and the literary one use everyday, ordinary language. Pat Barker also makes some attempt to suggest regional language: ‘a bit trim’ instead of ‘a bit of a trim’; ‘nowt’ instead of ‘nothing’; ‘hod’ instead of ‘hold’, to indicate accent. In fact, both speakers play around with accent, varying their strength of accent (speaker B lives in Manchester, A in Derbyshire) for comic purposes, and using regional dialect terms – ‘aye’, ‘love’ – in humorous role-play. Similar play can be seen in the self-conscious formality of ‘choice produce’ and ‘excellent’. At the lexical level, speakers in both texts use reference to taboo to express attitude, a swear word expresses strength of feeling, euphemistic expressions ‘a tiny pint’, ‘a tiny tiny pint’ are used ironically, as a humorous reference to the speakers’ interest in drinking beer – not a habit traditionally approved of for women. Discussion of the fart-inducing nature of artichokes also produces laughter. The literary extract doesn’t simply have dialogue, though: it also has a narrator telling us what’s going on in terms both of external action and of the inside of the characters heads (third-person narrator). We understand that this is a different ‘voice’, partly because of the lack of speech marks, but also because the style is subtly different: the lexis tends to be more abstract and more formal – for example, ‘failure’, ‘self-control’, ‘consult’.

**Repetition:** The real data involves more repetition, both lexically and grammatically than the constructed version. In real speech, we tolerate repetition, or perhaps even expect and need it, as a support to our memories. In writing, we expect a variation of structures, which we see as a part of stylistic elegance. The issue of burdening the memory is not a problem: if we get lost in reading written text, we can go back and start again. You could say, then, that a literary writer’s conventions for constructing dialogue in some ways owe more to writing than to spoken language. Such co-ordination is the norm for speech, particularly in storytelling episodes, but extensive use of ‘and’ is considered poor style in writing, and tends to be used in literary constructions to characterize a child speaker. This is different from a single instance of ‘and’ at the beginning of a sentence or utterance, which can signal dramatic emphasis, e.g.: ‘Get your hair under that net. And don’t ever let me catch you walking around like that again.’

**Language alteration: the word play**

Advertisement usually consists of certain rhetorical devices which create a strong and lasting impact on the mind of the target audience. It consists of rhyming schemes and contrast. In order to increase the persuasiveness, advertisers may make use of certain phenomena which are appealing to our emotions;

ambitious nature. In short, all these persuasive devices used in an advertisement are related to the lives of an individual. In order to catch the eye of an individual, advertisers may make use of the statement, underlining, italicizing of certain words. Sometimes they may change the font size and style to make it more attractive. This makes the advertisement full of creativity which would catch the eye of an individual. Certain advertisers may make use of particular slogans. For example 'green tea is healthy' certain food items is low in calories, healthy and have more benefits. This is simply a cognitive message strategy.

Figurative language is also used to convince the consumer. Figurative language is a language which consists of certain rhetorical devices. Figurative language is simply the language which is used in an exaggerated manner. By using this language, advertisers make the consumers realize that their service is just for them only and not for anybody else, for e.g. when they say "our goal is to serve you". In this way, these advertisements can create a bond between a consumer and the company.

By using such language advertiser create a kind of fantasy among individual also consists catchy slogans, slangs, incorrect spellings and so on just to beautify the language. By the study, researchers also discovered that the writers of advertising texts often use words like 'new' (+ words containing 'new': anew, renew), 'just', 'perfect' (+ perfection, perfectly), 'real' (+ really), 'better', 'best', 'first', 'right', 'only', 'complete' (+ completely).

The values, which express the use of pronoun 'you' and possessive form 'your' in research sample, confirm the intention of the copywriters to come closer to the consumer and evoke the feeling of intimacy.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In fact, the advertisements lure the consumers. By seeing those, consumers tend to buy the products whether they are needed or not. Such is the power of advertisements. Vance Packard (1960) memorably said: "The cosmetic manufacturers are not selling a product, they are selling hope, we no longer buy oranges, and we buy vitality. We do not just buy an auto, we buy prestige." In other words, advertising helps to educate people. There are some social issues also which advertising deals with like child labor, liquor consumption, girl child killing, smoking, family planning education, etc. In short, advertising is the art of influencing human action and awakening of a desire to possess products and services. It is a mass persuasion activity duly sponsored by the manufacturer, retailer, or dealer for whom the advertising is done. Make no mistake: advertising works. However, as a culture, we tend to be aloof and not a little snooty about advertisements, pretending that, while they may work for some people, they don't work on us, and dismissing advertising language as trite discourse written for the uneducated (Goddard, 1998). Both Advertising and Marketing use graphical, textual, verbal or sound communication tools in order to construct messages that lead to consumption of products and services that are offered by a brand that invests in these efforts of persuasion.

#### **Acknowledgement**

Authors thank the Chairman, Department of English, A.M.U., Aligarh for providing necessary research facilities. The University Grants Commission, New Delhi is gratefully acknowledged for financial support in the form of a research fellowship to AS, AK, and WF.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Clark, Eve V. and Herbert H. Clark (1979) *When Nouns Surface as Verbs*, *Language* 55, 767-811.
- Corbett, Edward P. J. (1990) *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- COOK, Guy. 1996 [1992]. *The Discourse of Advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Kannan, R. & Tyagi, S. (2013). "Use of Language in Advertisements." *English for Specific Purposes World*.
- Elisabetta Corvi, Michelle Bonera. (2010). "The Effectiveness of Advertising: A literature review."
- GODDARD, Angela. (1998). *The Language of Advertising. Written texts*. London: Routledge.
- LAKOFF, George, JOHNSON, Mark. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- LEECH, Geoffrey, N. 1972 [1966]. *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain* (English Language Series). London: Longman.

- McQuarrie, Edward F. and David G. Mick (1996) Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language. *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- Pullum, Geoffrey K. and Barbara C. Scholz (2001) More than words. *Nature*, 413, 27 September 2001, p.367.
- LAPSANSKÁ, JANA. (2006): "The Language Of Advertising With The Concentration On The Linguistic Means And The Analysis Of Advertising Slogans." 105. THESIS.
- McQuarrie, Edward F. and David G. Mick (1996) Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language. *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- Packard, V. (1960). *Oh, Happy, Happy, Happy*- foreword by, with Charles Saxon.
- PICKETT, J. P. (2000). *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. The 4th edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- QUIRK, Randolph, GREENBAUM, Sidney. (1990). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Schrank, Jeffrey. (1976 ). "The Language of Advertising Claims." Teaching About Doublespeak. ed. Daniel Dieterich. Illinois: NCTE.
- VESTERGAARD, Torben, SCHRODER, Kim. (1985). *The Language of Advertising*. New York: Basil Blackwell Inc.
- WIDDOWSON, H.G. 2000 [1996]. *Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### **WEB SOURCES**

- <http://www.slideshare.net/MarkimJ/persuasion-in-advertising>
- [http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml\\_lit\\_gr12/resources/pdfs/media\\_analysis/HS\\_15\\_Ad\\_Techniques2.pdf](http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml_lit_gr12/resources/pdfs/media_analysis/HS_15_Ad_Techniques2.pdf)
- <https://prezi.com/wggxqmjeiewm/persuasive-language-in-advertising/>
- [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1166/PersuasiveTechniques.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1166/PersuasiveTechniques.pdf)
- [http://www.esp-world.info/Articles\\_37/Kannan\\_Use\\_of\\_Language\\_in\\_Advertisements.pdf](http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_37/Kannan_Use_of_Language_in_Advertisements.pdf)
- <http://diplomovka.sme.sk/zdroj/3091.pdf>
- <http://www.linguarama.com/ps/marketing-themed-english/the-language-of-advertising.htm>
- <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/objectives-importance-of-advertising.htm>
- <http://www.shareyouressays.com/89313/5-basic-features-of-advertising>

---

#### **AUTHOR NOTE**

**Adil Khan** did his masters from the department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, and Aligarh. He did her masters in ELT from AMU. His area of interest falls under "Adaptation of Games as a Teaching Aid in Grammar Classroom." He is currently a teacher and teaching English to the ESL learners."

**Anam Shams** is a Research Scholar at the department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, and Aligarh. She did her masters in ELT from AMU. Her area of interest falls under "Writing in Second Languages." Her Current research work is related to "Self-regulation and self-reflective practices in writing."

**Wajiha Fatima** is a Research Scholar at the department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. She did her masters in ELT from AMU. Her area of interest falls under "Teaching Of Writing Through Task-based Instructions". Her Current research work is related to "Task- based Instructions in an ESL Classroom."

**Asfia Khanam** is a Research Scholar at the department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. She specializes in the area of English Language Teaching; her research topic is related to "Reading and Recall of Expository and Descriptive Text."

---