



Language Of Advertising A Study Of Language Content In The Advertisements Of Fast Moving Consumer Goods

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Abstract: Print advertising encompasses printed advertisements in newspapers, magazines, brochures, and on other printed surfaces, such as posters and outdoor boards. Flexibility in terms of rereading, reading out of order or moving through a publication at one's own pace is ensured in the print media unlike in the others. Since the printed message is less fleeting than broadcast and more concrete, people assimilate more with print. Print advertisements are richer in terms of details of the product/service, have an extravagant imagery and a longer message life. According to Kaptan and Acharya (2000), English newspapers attract forty eight percent of total advertising, earning rupees one thousand and fifty only from advertising alone in 1990 (ORG review, 1991). Operations research review reported that one third of all advertising in the English newspaper segment is for branded consumer goods. News dailies account for eighty seven percent of all advertising as against nearly thirteen percent by Hindi dailies. This in a way proves that news papers carry more prominence as an advertising medium. In this study have three objectives these are to find out the characteristics of the discourse of advertising, To identify key aspects that a consumer is drawn to by an advertisement and To understand if the discourse of advertising prompts the desire to buy. in this attempt have been analyze how language play vital role on advertisements and print media.

Keywords: Language, Advertisement, Fast Moving Consumer Goods

Introduction

Contemporary society does not deny any space for advertising. It is impossible to walk down the street without encountering an advertisement in one or the other form. Advertising is a constant companion to everyone - whether one is alone or with friends or family or found in a crowd. Despite this frequent occurrence, it is observed that not many pay attention to such advertisements, which is always an ornamental inclusion. In spite of the care and skill that go into the creation of such advertisements, they are flicked past, put in the bin, zipped (fast-forwarded on video) or zapped (avoided by remote-control channel switching) or skipped. Although budget allocation for entertainment and recreation includes reading books, putting up paintings in galleries and sculptures in museums, advertisements are often regarded as a peripheral creation except by those directly involved in it. An absolute stranger to a society would probably be struck by the prominence and quantity of advertising and may reasonably be more attentive to them than to the text of literature, law and journalism which are otherwise valued higher. Advertising is ubiquitous and unavoidable. How can advertising be defined? What can be included as an advertising campaign? Most lexical connotations focus primarily on the crucial function of advertising as propaganda. It is evident that

the art of advertising clearly extends beyond this central task. We encounter advertisements as press promotions, television commercials or billboard posters, advertorials, product placements, event sponsorships, junk mails or carefully staged large-scale public relations exercises which incidentally require more time and effort and of course language. The language of advertising is mostly direct and employs hard-sell techniques, while others send out messages which are more indirect, subtle or even subliminal. The present scenario in the advertising realm is in harmony with Leacock's (1924) famous definition of advertising which states that advertising is the science of arresting human intelligence long enough to trigger spending of money.

Aims

To study the print advertisements of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods producing companies in India on the premise that language and culture is a social construct.

Objectives

To find out the characteristics of the discourse of advertising

To identify key aspects that a consumer is drawn to by an advertisement

To understand if the discourse of advertising prompts the desire to buy

Procedure of data collection

The leading FMCG producing companies for the financial year (2018-2019) were selected based on the revenue generated individually. The top ten firms were selected, out of which two products were chosen based on consumer demand. The print advertisements of these products were obtained from numerous sources available on the internet. For the analysis of sample advertisements, linguistic devices of Discourse Analysis were examined for occurrence in the text of the copy of the advertisement. The linguistic devices employed for analysis were

- Weasel Words
- Dixie
- Reference involved,
- Context,
- Elements of Communication and
- Macro – Speech Functions.

For the analysis of the discourse of the sample advertisements, data was gathered using the tool of a structured questionnaire. The queries in the questionnaire revolved around the maxim that culture and language are constructs that ensue as a result of regular, constant and consistent encounters of speakers of language who are consumers in reality and of the various media and innumerable endeavors of persuading these customers to buy‘.

Language, Culture and Society

Language has multifarious purposes – to talk, to listen, to read and to write. Language is the tool in the process of learning. In a professional environment, language has multiple uses which include management, teaching, healing, defense or bargain. Occasionally, it fulfills the role of convincing, conversing, reassuring, dissuading, breaking bad news or justifying actions. Among humans, language serves to explain, narrate, consult, make plans or complain of inadequacies. With friends, language is used for activities of pleasure, entertainment and amusement. Exerting authority and negotiating positions need language. We see that language plays a critical role in multiple ways in a social system. This function of language is circumscribed by linguistic communication. Since language is a social practice, it exerts a powerful influence in shaping thought processes and behavioral patterns which add to the construction‘of the world.

Sounds, words and grammar constitute language. Language does not exist in isolation; words do not contain meaning in isolation. The meaning of a word is a construct. As participants, we construct meanings depending on social and linguistic relationships we share with the rest of the world. Since meanings are a construct, the relationship between forms and functions of language is flexible. The word, phrase or sentence does not entail one particular function or meaning. The system of an interaction warrants utterances to convey meanings as intended by the speaker to people without considering their syntactic form or lexical definitions. Depending on the context, the meanings of words, phrases and sentences take different forms. It is palpable that meaning is dynamic and shifts with reference to particular contexts. The comprehension of these constructs tends to consciously influence communication. Thus, language is a powerful tool to negotiate through a complex network of conventions, assumptions and expectations. The consumerist culture that has helped Western economies grow and thrive over the past few decades has regarded advertising as its driving force. It is apparent that the function of advertising is to promote and to draw attention and also to consider the availability and desirability of a product, service or brand. This is achieved by first reaching the target audience, and then capturing that audience with a message that is attractive and memorable. The advertising medium is a stunningly powerful means of communication which in every way is equivalent to two popular genres - movies or music. The fuel to this driving force is language. Apart from poetry, no other field has so much creative energy involved. Slogans, catchphrases, jingles and puns are crafted with such skill that while deconstructing a piece of advertising copy, it can sometimes be embarrassing as it is hard to overstate the forethought that had gone into constructing the copy in the first place. Copywriters brandish language as their most powerful tool. A special category of language that combines words cleverly and methodically for one special purpose, that is to separate people from their money, is, the language of advertising. The language of advertising incorporates proven devices and techniques through which words are charged with the power to influence consumers/viewers. Advertising language is fascinating but partially distorts reality, with the usage of deliberately inflated language that is premeditated to charm, seduce and convince. Critics often consider the language of advertising as a distortion of reality.

Advertising in India

The Indian advertising industry can be traced back to the Indus valley civilization. Relics unearthed from the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro have names engraved on exquisite earthen stone and metal works which can be compared to the present-day Trade mark system. The paintings and writings on the walls of these ancient cities have shown evidence of slogans and stone engraving which were a form of advertising. Advertising, in its juvenile stage was the form of a propaganda used for religious purposes. Emperor Ashoka of Kalinga set up rock and pillar edicts all over India between 560- 232 BC to spread the teachings of Buddha. These structures are the forerunners of poster advertising of today. Thus, it was outdoor advertising that first emerged. The cave temples of Ajanta, Sanchi and Amaravati had wall paintings which served as indoor visual communications. Centuries later, a systematic advertising domain was established by the street hawkers selling their wares right from the beginning of the dawn of cities and marketplaces.

Advertising had not taken a specific purpose of business until the British's rule of India. India with its unique culture of indigenous production of various goods prevented widespread advertising. The advent of the British heralded advertising as the initiation to promote products and goods. Until then, India was predominantly a rural economy where the producers and consumers interacted directly. Products and goods manufactured were sold in local markets on a weekly basis. Samples of the produce were given for free to serve as an advertising vehicle. The producers marketed their wares by shouting out the features of their products. Since Indian artisans worked primarily in the areas of textiles, silk, cotton and metal works, these were conveniently accepted and no special efforts towards advertising were required. However, the advent of the British from the 1600's onwards brought obvious changes in the country. The luxury goods that the British brought with them needed advertising. This was made possible through the print medium. In 1556, the Portuguese brought the first printing press which was initially used for printing Christian literature exclusively. The Bengal Gazette that was started in 1780 was the first Indian newspaper printed. There were four weekly newspapers and a few were monthly and were republished from Calcutta. By 1786 the Bengal Journal carried all the government advertisements in print. The Courier, published from Bombay in 1790 also contained advertisements in various Indian languages including Marathi, Gujarati, Konkani and Kannada. The Government Gazette was started in 1791 and it carried all the government advertisements in

different provincial languages. Although in 1833 the first Indian newspaper was started, it took a long time for advertisement in Indian languages to be printed. Though there were no official advertising agencies, newspapers had provided the services of space selling.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Indian advertising agencies took a backseat due to increased competition mostly from their counterparts in England and America. The agencies themselves had a tough time coping with this downfall but learnt the importance of agency business which served as a rich source of employment and earnings since most of the newspapers were under the control of the ruling forces.

'Tata publicity' was the first professionally managed modern advertising agency which was started in the year 1918 by Lastromach, a British army officer in Bombay. This was followed by D Jekey Mores operation in 1929 and in the 1930's 'Thompson Advertising Agency' was set-up. 1930 can be considered as a period of consolidation in the history of Indian advertising. The Swadeshi Movement made a turning point in the advertising industry as this movement led to an increase in the appearance of advertisements with the purpose of popularizing Indian goods against their imported counterparts. The Indian advertising agencies have undergone many changes in the pre- independence era. So, advertisements related to ladies, goods, gents, clothes, traveling, restaurants, hotels and entertainment for the outsiders living in the country, motorcars, electricity and lifts in houses were considered to be a luxury back then. The early advertisements were also about hotels, four-wheelers, gramophones, cotton goods, tailoring shops, and it was obvious that the target audiences of these advertisements were Indians. This target audience also included the native princely families and people from the upper strata of the society. The abolition of the princely order after Independence saw a new class emerging called the middle class and this section of society received the attention of the advertisers.

Roles and Functions of Advertising

In general, the following are the seven basic functions of an advertising campaign accomplishes.

- i. Builds awareness of products and brands.
- ii. Creates a brand image.
- iii. Provides product and brand information.
- iv. Persuades people.
- v. Provides incentives to take action.
- vi. Provides brand reminders.
- vii. Reinforces past purchases and brand experiences.(Wellset.al.,2008)

Advertising has evolved to don varied hues and shades since its original objective of recognizing the makers of goods. It has continued to carry forward that role even to this day. The advent of the printing press and improved technology made it possible for advertisers and advertisements to reach a wider audience. Identifying the maker and providing commercial information became the function of advertisements. Rapid industrialization and mass manufacturing of goods made it possible for manufacturers to produce more than what was required for the local markets. Advertising took up the role of creating a demand for such goods by adopting two techniques – hard-sell approaches that build reasons to persuade consumers and soft – sell approaches that build an image for a brand and touch consumers' emotions. An advertisement announcing a discounted price on a tire is an example of a hard – sell approach whereas the advertisement for a luxury bus of KSRTC is a soft – sell approach. The approaches represent the art and science of advertising. The explosion of media made it hard-hitting for a singular message to grab people's attention, and so a need for impact based creative techniques arose. As a consequence, creativity became a key factor that determined the impact of an advertising idea and its success. The early 2000's saw an economic slowdown; marketers became more concerned with account ability and there turns they would get on the investments made on a campaign. As an outcome, advertising professionals had to demonstrate that their grind is operative – that it brings the desired results. This powerful prominence on accountability stresses on the theme of effectiveness.

Given the primary manner in which advertising works, the following four roles for advertising in business and in society can be identified.

The Marketing role: The process a business uses to satisfy consumer needs and wants by providing goods and services is called marketing. The marketing department or the manager is responsible for selling a product which can be goods (computers, refrigerators, soft drinks), a service (restaurant, insurance, real estate) or an idea (support an organization, believe in a candidate).

The Communication role: Advertising as a means of mass communication communicates different types of information connecting the buyer with the seller. It both enlightens and alters the product by crafting an image that goes beyond facts.

The Economic role: In an economic setup of supply exceeding the demand, advertising excels in its role. Under such circumstances, advertising proceeds to create demand for a particular brand/product and not just passing on information. In creating the desired economic impact, advertisements are vehicles for helping consumers assess value, through price, quality, location and reputation.

The Societal role: Latest and improved versions of old products help the consumer in comparison and making better choices. This function is taken up by advertisements. It also informs and supplements one's aesthetic sense. As an informative tool an advertisement teaches the consumers about new products or the method to use it. Since it is directly linked to consumer behavior, it influences an individual physiologically and psychologically which in turn affects personalities, concept of self, attitudes, beliefs and opinions along with lifestyle as well as sense of style. (Chunawalla, 2008)

The functions of advertising

The core occupation of advertising is to persuade. Its secondary purpose is to provide information. Different advertisers use diverse techniques to influence or inform. Some make use of the copy to provide information like the size, the brand name, the price and the address and telephone number of the store or company, relying on the product to speak for itself. Other advertisers emphasize on the background so that the image of the product is its Unique Selling Proposition (USP). Few others will rely upon the associations of the product and its relevance to a context. Advertisers appeal to our desire to be a more successful man or woman', a wonderful lover or a part of a happy family'. They exploit our wish to be beautiful', powerful responsible and knowledgeable. To be able to convince the consumer to buy a car, an advertiser will have to convince them that they will be fashionable, have a better status in society and their lives will be exhilarating by buying the particular model. Advertisers can even market a particular brand of baby food to be purer and more natural than its rivals and to elevate the buyer to becoming a 'better parent'; that by wearing certain clothes the viewer becomes looked-for or authoritative; that by eating certain variety of ice-cream the consumer will become noticeable or more alluring. The ultimate function of all advertisements is to make the consumer buy' the product or service. Though not apparent, the sole purpose of the campaign is to affect rather than apprise.

Types of Advertisements

Advertising is a complex genre since several categories of organisations try to reach different advertisers. Large users of advertising are the manufacturing industry, trading and service firms, non-profit organizations and the government agencies. Considering all these different advertising situations, Chunawalla (2008) has classified advertisements on the basis of

- a. Geographical spread as national, regional and local.
- b. Target group such as consumer advertising, industrial advertising or trade advertising.
- c. Type of impact as primary demand or selective demand advertising, direct or indirect action advertising and institutional advertising.

- a. Based on geographical spread
 - i. National advertising is from a manufacturing unit that targets the entire country via a media that reaches the masses.
 - ii. Local advertising is from small firms that restrict their business to the state or regional level since they first establish themselves in the local market before exploring wider possibilities.
 - iii. Global advertising is for multinational firms which assume the entire globe to be their target space.
- b. Based on the target groups that the advertisements are aimed at, advertising can be classified as follows.

i. Consumer advertising is for those people who buy consumables either for their own use or for the household. Since the market base for such items is generally very large and the area is wide spread, the importance of advertising as a marketing tool is enhanced. The dominance of such advertising is seen in any general print media like newspapers and magazines. The promotion and sale of such products occurs through direct appeal to the customers/consumers.

ii. Industrial advertising is a type of advertising that is adopted by manufacturers/distributors to appeal to the buyers of industrial products. Machinery and equipment, industrial intermediates, parts and components are included in this category. Since the consumer base for such products is limited and unique, industrial advertising occurs at a relatively lower scale than consumer advertising.

iii. Trade advertising targets wholesalers and retailers who act as distribution channels for the manufacturers. The stocking of products and opening up of new retail outlets by channel members is encouraged by motivating them with constant incentives.

iv. Professional advertising is for certain products that are not bought by choice but due to circumstances. A classic example for this is the medicine prescribed by a doctor for a specific illness. The patient is the consumer here. Architects, civil engineers and contractors fall under this category of professionals. The target for such advertising will be the stakeholders themselves i.e., the decision makers.

c. Based on the type of impact, primary advertising is for generic products like tea, coffee and paints, which are unbranded. These are later branded and promoted. This is called selective advertising. In direct action advertising, an immediate response from the consumer solicits orders through mail or some other carrier. Inclining the consumers towards these products which can be purchased in the future is indirect action advertising. Institutional advertising is used to project a positive corporate image for a firm.

Print Advertisements

History clearly illustrates that media is a force to reckon with when it comes to passage of information. Information about current affairs, future trends and shapes of public opinions emanates through the various media. Since the editorial content is specific in its purpose, an enormous number of followers are attracted to both the visual and print media. This is a sacred sign since large numbers of people are influenced. For information to be conveyed, the channel adopted becomes crucial. Such channels include newspapers, magazines, radio or television. The advertising space and time is sold by the media to the readers/viewers and also to the advertisers. By improving the marketing concepts or content presented, circulation/viewing of the particular medium is enriched. Revenue is generated by trading space and time through subscriptions and advertising, though revenue from advertisements outrun revenue from subscriptions. Indirectly, advertising revenue subsidizes the media for the common man which makes it relatively economical.

The primary strategy of deciding on a target audience is highly beneficial for print advertising. For example, an advertiser targeting college-going youth will have to advertise in a popular youth magazine or other popular college magazines and newspapers. This narrows down the focus on to print media alone since it utilizes a very structured information processing style unlike the other media. Since the basic assumption is that college youth are constantly absorbing and reading information intensely print media has a more serious impact than other forms. An active participant in the reading process tends to absorb more information, of course selectively, than an active viewer of television advertisements. A television viewer can absorb information more passively. Despite this, print advertising lacks universal appeal and therefore is restricted in its reach. Advertiser's world over and specifically in India has left no stone unturned to gain mass appeal for their products and services. In metropolitan areas, the most effective advertising media are television, video, and the print media, especially news papers and magazines. In smaller towns, radio and the cinemas are quite popular. Majority of advertisers have preferred the 'multi – media' approach to 'single – media' approach as these warrant greater spread and higher prospects to realize. Since the cost of all this is growing by the day, the selection of the advertising media has to be more precise and less extravagant. Extensive research in this regard has supported top advertisers to exploit fewer media and determine their target audiences.

Demographic standards show that newspaper reaches sixty eight percent of adult population and is a solid mass - market medium. Nearly half of adults receive home delivery of news papers and frequent readers of daily news papers invariably turn out to be regular readers. Delivery levels are the highest in medium – size cities and lowest in rural areas and larger metropolis. Older people tend to be avid readers of newspapers as compared to those in their late teens and early twenties. Educational qualification is another factor that dictates readership. Like most recipients of information, newspaper readership is also selective

i.e., a greater percentage reads only specific sections rather than the whole paper.

Elements of Print Advertisements

Sale brochures, coupons, flyers, business cards, billboards and advertisements in magazines and newspapers comprise print advertising. By defining the advertising goal, identifying the target audience and by focusing on the message to be conveyed, the medium of print advertising successfully completes the required task. Since expenditure on the production of a printed advertisement far exceeds the revenue it may generate, it becomes inevitable that the process of printing itself has to become economical. Text, visual or a different proportion of either of these two elements combine to give rise to the main elements of any print advertisement. The following are the elements of print advertising that are incorporated into the layout of an advertisement in order to enhance its effect.

Artwork: Key visual elements of many types of advertisements include photographs, drawings and other graphic embellishments. A single visual may be incorporated in some advertisements while others might have several pictures. Exceptions like text only advertisements might also have some graphics in the form of decorative bullets or borders. A caption when combined with visuals is one of the first things that most readers notice after viewing the visual. This additional aspect will give the advertiser another chance to grab the reader's attention.

Title: The strongest element of an advertisement is its headline and occasionally the headlines carry secondary importance due to a strong visual. The title element may be included in some advertisements. A well-written headline must be composed in order to get the reader's attention. By merely making the headline larger than the visual in size or by placing it in a prominent position in the layout of an advertisement, the reader's attention may not be gathered.

Copy: The main text of the advertisement is called the copy. A minimalist approach is adopted by some advertisers which will be limited to a line or two or maybe a single paragraph. On the other hand, several advertisements may be quite text-heavy with paragraphs of information arranged in columns like in a newspaper. Visual elements such as indentation, full quotes, bullet lists and creative learning and tracking organize and emphasize the message of the body of the advertisement. However, the text is largely considered as the most important part of the copy.

Contact: The contact details with regard to the specific company or manufacturer or firm that is extending the service or marketing a product may appear anywhere in the advertisement although in most cases it is at the bottom of the layout. Contact information consists of the following details:

- a. logo
- b. advertiser name
- c. address
- d. phone number
- e. map or driving directions
- f. website addresses

Extras: Along with the already mentioned components, some print advertisements may have a few additional special details included such as an attached business reply envelope, a tear-out portion with a coupon, a tip sheet or occasionally a product sample.

Layout of a Print Advertisement

Readers instinctively read from left to right direction like most popular global languages like English, Spanish and French. Our eyes will scan over a page, containing both text and image, in a similar fashion giving rise to a z-shaped pattern, unless a design element or inclusion draws attention to a different element. Marketing firms put this theory into practice and place advertisement elements in such a way that it will catch the attention of the reader. Naturally, that element will kindle an interest and will be placed right at the beginning of the advertisement. In the middle portion of the advertisement, something catchy will be included and the logo or the message will most certainly occur in the lower middle area, to the right of the advertisement.

Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) as a Category

Advertisers from the early 20th century had realized that the key consumer markets had reached saturation despite advertisers developing strategies and persuasive messages to increase sales. Various psychological theories were referred to in an attempt to unlock the consumer's mind. Numerous theories of human behavior and motivation which could be unlocked by persuasive treatments were used by agencies. Based on this, two new approaches to persuade consumers were identified in 1920 and they were "Reason why" and "atmosphere" advertising techniques.

- **House hold care(31%):** Fabric wash, Household cleaners
- **Personal care (50%):** Oral care, hair care, skincare, cosmetics, hygiene & paper products
- **Food and beverages (19%):** Health beverages, staples/cereals, snacks, chocolates, ice-cream, tea/coffee/soft drinks, processes fruits & vegetables, dairy products & branded flour. (Research report: Indian FMCG Industry, 2013).

Indian Fast Moving Consumers Goods Industry Analysis

The rural segment is a large contributor to the overall revenue generated by the FMCG sector in India. It accounts for a share of around 45%, as the demand for quality goods and services has been going up in rural areas of India. Improvement in the distribution channels of manufacturing and the number of FMCG companies have also increased. The urban segment accounts for a share of 55% in the overall revenue generated by the FMCG sector in India. A growing awareness, easier access and changing lifestyles are key to the growth that drives this consumer market. Numerous initiatives are expected to increase the disposable income in the hands of a common man especially in the rural area which will benefit this sector. Thus, it becomes an inevitable demand to be fuelled by advertising. Advertising plays a major role in altering the buying behavior of consumers in the FMCG sector. Annually, the advertising revenue, irrespective of the media adopted, is found to have upward mobility. Products belonging to the specific segment of personal care hold special importance as these products are mainly used for hygiene and aspirational purposes. Convincing the consumers to buy these kinds of products from a particular company, therefore, becomes an important task.

List of Major FMCGs in India

India is a hub for FMCG companies for the last few decades. Over hundred crore people of India depend on FMCG companies for their day to day requirements. The Indian FMCG industry is the fourth largest in the world and has access to an improved status with increasing investment. Most of these companies sell products that are bought off-the-shelf and over-the-counter and are economically priced. FMCG include non-durables like soft drinks, over the counter drugs, toiletries, processed foods and numerous additional consumables. The vast population of India depends on top FMCG firms to satisfy their everyday requirements. These companies operate in all parts of the country through their wide distribution network. Below are the most popular FMCG companies in India in 2019.

1. Hindustan Unilever.
2. ITC limited.
3. Nestle India Limited.
4. Dabur India Limited.
5. Marico Limited.
6. Britannia Industries Limited.
7. Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited.
8. Godrej group.
9. Procter and Gamble and
10. Amul

The ranking of these companies is on the basis of the revenues they generate and popularity in the increasing order. From the above list, the following advertisements were selected for analysis. The products were selected from the entire range of products produced by the leading FMCG companies in India for the first half of 2019. Two products from each brand were selected based on the revenue they generated in that period of assessment. The print advertisements of these products were obtained from multiple online

resources including the brand webpage.

Conclusion

The current chapter orients the researcher towards the pre-requisites of sample selection and data collection methods to be adopted for the present study. Although Discourse Analysis is an extensively dealt topic in Linguistics, the niche of the present research lies in the samples chosen and the respondents selected. By limiting the linguistic devices selected for examination to Weasel Words, Deixis, Reference involved, Context, Elements of Communication and Macro – Speech Functions, the study becomes relevant to English studies and hence will contribute further to the field of Discourse Analysis.

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