

## ADVERTISING DISCOURSE - LURES THE HEARTS AND ALLURES THE MINDS

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### Abstract

*This paper “Advertising Discourse – Lures the Hearts and Allures the Minds” discusses the role of language in persuading people to buy the marketed product. Advertisements deal with the people – with the way they live, the things they do, with social and cultural ideologies that the members of a particular social group or groups share with one another, with the things they buy and the services they seek and with the people who make the goods and render the services. Thus the goal of the advertiser is to persuade people through different linguistic and non-linguistic devices and by conforming to or enhancing their ideological, social and cultural status. The power of language in luring the peoples minds and alluring their hearts is discussed with special reference to a few advertisements.*

**Keywords:** *Advertisements, social, cultural ideologies, persuade, social and cultural status, power of language.*

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**T**he form of marketing communication is advertisement. It is used to promote or sell a business product or service. Advertisements are viewed through various media such as newspaper, magazines, television, radio, mail, Internet etc. The motto of advertisement is to generate increased consumption of the business products or services through “branding” which associates a product name or image with certain qualities in the minds of consumers. Advertisements can be commercial or non-commercial. Non-commercial advertisers can be political parties, interest groups, religious organizations and governmental agencies. Be it a commercial or non-commercial advertisement, the purpose of it is to persuade the consumers or the target group. The majority of the ads are minimalistic. They are not overly busy or distracting. Most of the ads include one witty and smart tag-line. The ads are well thought out and use one clever image or photo-manipulation that will draw the attention of the consumers. Leacock(1924) defines advertising as ‘the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it’(quoted in Woods 2006:1).

In today’s fast moving scenario of cut-throat competition every one of us wish to have the best of every thing, especially the products that we use and it is through advertisements that we get information about such products, services and ideas. Advertisements deal with the people - with the way they live, the things they do, with social and cultural ideologies that the members of a particular social group or groups share with one another, with the things they buy and the services they seek and with the people who make the goods and render the services.

Guy Cook, one of the renowned discourse analysts, points out that an advertisement is an interplay of text, context and discourse and we cannot understand anyone aspect without taking into account the other. Cook (2001) states that

Thus if we analyze a piece of advertisement we have to take into account not only the written text i.e., the linguistic aspect but also its context, participants, paralanguage and function of text in particular society or culture. Describing the complexities of defining an advertisement, Cook points out, that difficulties in giving an exact definition to an advertisement arise out of interference and merging of various genres into each other. The verbal and non-verbal forms of communication, for instance, merge into each other in advertisements. Not only this, if we consider the advertisements from the view point of its function, the task becomes more complicated as genres have certain social functions 'but equally societies may be categorized in terms of the genres they use.'

Defining an advertisement Angela Goddard (1998), a well – known linguist and discourse analyst, relates advertisement as a form of discourse to the identity of an individual. She holds the view that ...Advertisements are forms of discourse which make powerful contribution to how we construct our identities. At the same time, for adverts to work, they must use our community shared resources of language in ways that affect us and mean something to us (Goddard 1998: 3-4).

Thus interestingly, an advertisement may contribute to the construction of our identity at social and cultural levels. Advertisements, thus, reflect our social and cultural stands, and ideology. In order to persuade people, advertisements should thus be able to reinforce the socio-cultural stand of the members of a particular society. And there is a powerful connection between society, culture, ideology and the language of advertisement which include both verbal and non-verbal aspects.

As the present paper deals with an analysis of discourse of advertisements, let us look at discourse and its relation with text, context and how these are related and structured in advertisements. But before discussing these relations, it would be in place to discuss what we mean by the term 'discourse'. Discourse has often been defined as serious writing or talk, rational and orderly in organization. Basically, discourse is language use understood as the verbal record of an event and includes participants who speak, write and therefore it also connotes that there are implied listeners and readers. Thus, discourse could be a poem, an essay, a speech or a dialogue. It is the use of language above and beyond the sentence level and the study of discourse is the study of text and contexts focusing on the actual spoken sentences. The

discourse analyst investigates the spoken or written form and also the structural and functional aspects. The subject matter of analysis could be either literary or non literary. If it is literary, the study is termed as stylistics. Many analysts also go for narrative and non-narrative discourse of genres. Whatever the approach, one common point in all the approaches is, that discourse involves communication of the message above and beyond the level of a sentence and involves language put to use in live contexts.

Let us look at the following advertisement for analysis:



(<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=car+ads&biw=1093&bih=542&tbm=isch&imgil=vV2HKUTj0xWsgM%253A%253BJYCfFqU29wbppM%253Bhttps%25253A>)

The caption of this ad is “Carrying what you need and what you can even imagine”

The above advertisement of the truck talks about the length, the space and the weight that it can carry on it. It also shows clearly that the truck maintains equi-balance in spite of the mounting of the objects to great heights. The designer of the ‘ad’ wishes to convey the toughness of the body, its length and above all its maintenance of balance without any support. This ad tries to tempt or persuade the buyer to opt for it as it can balance heavy weights without any difficulty. Looking from the cultural aspect, the Elephant standing on top of the bike is symbolic of strength. Elephant is considered holy and is associated with divinely aspects of life. More over a trained elephant in circus can do several feats. Such a huge animal towering on top

of bike gives the impression that the truck can balance unimaginable things and can even maintain great balance in its capacity though; the huge animal does some feats on the bike at great height. As Cook rightly pointed out... change in any one element usually entails a change in the whole. An ad is not a tangible or stable entity; it is the dynamic synthesis of many components, and comes into being through them. (Cook 2001:6)



(<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=car+ads&biw=1093&bih=542&tbm=isch&imgil=vV2HKUTj0xWsgM%253A%253BJYCfFqU29wbppM%253Bhttps%25253A>)

The caption of this ad is “The Quiet Diesel”.

In this ad inspite of the approach of the car, we see the undisturbed wild boar. It subtly states that it has a diesel engine which makes the car run smoothly and does not produce cacophony. You can aim at an animal, point blank without being noticed by the movement of the car. Opting for a petrol car is a temptation to many a people as it is a symbol of status, smooth run and less noise. The expression “Quiet Diesel” really lures the hearts of the people as it exaggeratedly portrays a man trying to hunt a wild boar from his car by stopping it quietly behind it. The use of the word “Quiet” does it refer to the “diesel” or to the “engine”? Here the ad maker stresses on the smooth and quiet operation of the car.



([www.google.co.in/search?q=samsung+refrigerator+advertisement&newwindow](http://www.google.co.in/search?q=samsung+refrigerator+advertisement&newwindow))

The above advertisement of the fridge talks about the design of the refrigerator that occupies no extra space other than its usual dimensions. But the inner design of it gives more room to accommodate several items. To stress on the fact that the fridge is normal in dimensions, the ad-maker uses the term “sleek”. This feature of the refrigerator is mentioned in a compact paragraph. The attractive colours inside the refrigerator captivate the minds of the people and make them look at the picture and compel them to read the advertisement.



(<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=lipstick+ads&espv=2&biw=1093&bih=507&tbm=isch&imgil=ZJ16XyYeZ5teRM%253A%253BjZreYy6DmvXmjM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.celebrityendorsementads.com%25252Fcelebrity-endorsements%25252Fcelebrities%25252Fkate-winslet%25252F&sou>)

The ad stresses that the use of the lipstick highlights the curvaceous, sensual feature of the lips and the expression ‘exceptionally replenished’ refers to the enhancement of beauty even

when the person is tired and worn out. The beauty of the person remains intact even after long hours of work. The untarnished and splendid colour adds vigour and energy to the façade of a person. Nicola Woods, a famous linguist, points out how advertisers seek ‘a single essence’ in order to ensure ‘consumer motivation’ universally (Woods 2006: 12). Advertisements aim at a particular audience (members of a particular society) by sharing the common outlook with them and persuading them to buy the products. This aspect is reinforced in Woods (2006) in the following way:

Advertisements are highly dependent on context and inextricably linked to societal values and cultural conditions. While frequently seeking a single ‘essence’ that universally drives consumer motivation to buy a product, advertisers also tailor and target their messages to particular audiences.(Brierley 2002, cited in Woods 2006:12). Here this ad is targeted to reach the consumers who utilize lipstick as part of beautification.

### **Conclusion**

After the analysis of the advertisements, we understand that the sentences are short, simple and ungrammatical. Most of the titles of the advertisements are without verbs. They are verbless sentences. They are noun phrases. Thus the English used for advertisements is totally different from the ordinary day to day life. The stylistics analysis of an ad is different from our regular use of language. The vocabulary and the language used in advertisements is ornate. The purpose of advertisements is to captivate the emotions of the people to promote business products and improve sales. Thus the language employed in advertisements lures the people’s hearts and allures their minds.

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(<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=car+ads&biw=1093&bih=542&tbm=isch&imgil=vV2HKUTj0xWsgM%253A%253BJYCfFqU29wbppM%253Bhttps%25253A>)

