

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL ADVERTISING SLOGANS

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The main purpose is that this paper focuses on the language of slogans, particularly the language of advertising slogans. It highlights the striking features of advertising language observed in media commercials. The paper also analyses the linguistic strategies and features of many advertisements dealing with the pedagogical implications of the advertising language in the context of linguistics, pragmatics, and communicative approach. As all advertising messages, slogans are designed to attract attention of the target population, like marketing to create desire and drive to action. In this paperwork, the descriptive method has been applied to define and elaborate the meaning and purpose of the slogans.

Key words: advertising slogan, commercial advertising, social advertising, analysis, nonnative language, complexity, comprehension.

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Advertising slogans are significant elements in brand building. While slogans form an important part of a company's marketing strategy and branding process, it is important to cover some basics of what slogans are or to find out some facts about slogans, their difference with other marketing tools, their types and final steps toward the treasure of a catchy, creative and commendable slogan.

Slogans are memorable, short series of words for potential customers aimed at summarizing any product's appeal. Slogans can make or break the brand image because it is the first and foremost arrow thrown at the customer along with the company logo. Even before experience with any product or service, a slogan strikes the consumer. A memorable slogan helps in recall and identification of the brand. And every good company strives for brand recall.

A slogan is a brief and indelible phrase that encompasses an offering's appeal. Slogans are always defined as "short and brief". There exists a psychological rationale for this – it is believed that it takes almost 7 seconds to form a first impression. Therefore, slogans ought to be "short and brief". The next part of the definition terms slogans as an "indelible phrase". This is because slogans are meant to be memorable and catchy. The indelible element may be through the way of a rhyming scheme or humor or pop-culture references.

It has been suggested that foreign languages in advertising are primarily used for their symbolic significance (the stereotypes they evoke), and that, therefore, consumers' comprehension of the foreign language used is of secondary importance. Experimental research into the effect of the difficulty of foreign languages in advertising slogans has focused on the influence of difficulty on appreciation of the slogan itself. The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of difficult versus easy English slogans in product advertisements on evaluations extending beyond text evaluation. In a within-subjects experimental design, 128 Dutch participants evaluated six Dutch advertisements with difficult and easy English slogans. The dependent variables included evaluation of the slogan, attitudes toward the ad and product, and purchase intention. Findings showed that the easy English slogans were evaluated better than the difficult English slogans and generally resulted in a better attitude toward the ad and toward the product and in a higher purchase intention.

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Thus, difficult-to-understand foreign-language slogans were found to have negative effects on ad effectiveness, which extended beyond text evaluation.

In advertising in countries where English is not the native language, advertisers regularly use English [1, 195-215]. As Piller [4, 9-10] observes, "English is the most frequently used language in advertising messages in non-English-speaking countries (besides the local language, of course)." The Netherlands is one example of a country where English is frequently used in advertising. Of the 325 advertisements in the Dutch edition of *Elle* published in 2004, for instance, 64 percent contained one or more English words [3, 17-31]. Since English is a nonnative language for consumers in countries such as the Netherlands, English in advertising may not always be comprehended. In fact, Gerritsen found that 39 percent of English phrases in print medium ads were not described correctly by participants from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. The question, therefore, is to what extent comprehension of English in advertisements is important in persuading consumers.

In the Netherlands, consumers may be expected to be relatively highly familiar with English. In education, pupils are taught English from primary school onward and English is compulsory at all levels of secondary schools. Many institutions of higher education offer English-taught bachelors and master's programs. In a recent survey, 90 percent of Dutch respondents indicated that they spoke English well enough to take part in a conversation, versus a European average of 38 percent. The Netherlands ranks second among 70 countries worldwide in the English Proficiency Index [2, 3-4], based on English proficiency tests. In addition, English is omnipresent in the media. The majority of films and TV series are broadcast in their original English-language version with subtitles. In advertising, English words and phrases are commonly used both in print media and in commercials on radio and television, while all-English advertisements are also used but less frequently.

In the literature of foreign languages in advertising, it is often observed that comprehension of foreign-language utterances is of minor importance, because the point of using foreign languages is not to convey the content of the message but the symbolic significance of the foreign language. Ingrid Piller [4, 15-16], for instance, remarks that "even if the audience does not understand the denotational message of the English [...] they will recognize that the message is in English, and they will activate their stereotypes about English." In this view, a consumer who does not know the meaning of an English word or phrase in an ad will at least recognize that it is English. This recognition is thought to evoke stereotypes about English, which are subsequently transferred to the product advertised. Stereotypical associations evoked by English include notions such as modernity, prestige, international orientation, and sophistication, Kuppens [5, 19-20] observes that advertisements sometimes contain "meaningless words or sentences that only sound English," illustrating that what matters is not the meaning of the foreign language used in the ad, but the image conjured up by the foreign language.

The literature on the role of comprehension in the persuasion process argues that less understanding leads to less persuasion because a message that is less well understood is appreciated less. The findings of a small number of empirical studies on the effect of comprehension of a foreign language in advertisements seem to support this view. One study showed that the attitude of Dutch viewers toward spoken English phrases in television commercials was predicted by the degree of accuracy of their transcriptions of these phrases (an indirect measure of comprehension) [2, 34-36]. Two other studies with Dutch participants revealed that easy French and English slogans were appreciated more than difficult slogans in these languages. These two studies also showed that when the French and English slogans were easy, the participants preferred the ads with French and English slogans to ads with Dutch translations of these slogans. For the difficult French slogans, participants had a preference for ads with the Dutch translations of these slogans. For the difficult English

slogans, there were no differences in preference. The studies by Hornikx and Starren, van Meurs, and de Boer used the complexity of slogans (difficult–easy) as a measure of comprehension. In both studies, the relationship between complexity and comprehension was tested in a pretest, which showed that difficult slogans were more frequently mistranslated and were rated as more difficult than the easy slogans. In addition, Hornikx, van Meurs, and de Boer showed that the slogans that were more often translated incorrectly and were rated as more difficult were appreciated less. Thus, these two studies indicate a clear link between predetermined complexity and actual and perceived comprehension.

By personal explanation, it can be defined that Slogans are not merely a group of catchy words; they are a strategic attempt at creating a persuasive image in the minds of the consumers. The basic purpose of a slogan is to sell a product/service. Purpose of a slogan is to act as a shadow identity of a brand and promote a specific product/service.

A genuinely successful slogan will act not only as a benefit to the brand, but it is also a long-term commitment. It is like the DNA of your brand. It imbibes the ideals of the related product/service and portrays the same to customers as well as employees. It aims to increase sales of the product. Slogans aim to reach out to customers on an emotional level. They relate to day-to-day situations for the target audience.

Brand slogans promote a product/service as well as a campaign for a range of products and services. Slogans aim to reveal more about the company, especially through more information about a pricing strategy, services or what customers may look forward to. In other cases, the slogan may reveal even more, for instance – a technology company slogan would emphasize its differences or a shoe company may encourage consumers to reach for their goals. The purpose of these slogans is to build a brand identity that sets the company apart, inviting consumers willing to experience the benefits of that brand. Another important function of a slogan is to position the brand in the minds of customers most desirably and advantageously. Why is this positioning important? Positioning sets apart a brand from others. In today's times, it is not only the brands that possess the power to change the market, but it's also the consumers.

Along with other advertising elements (text, specification, image, logo, video, music, jingle...), an advertising slogan assists to prosper a recognizable image for the manufactured product, provided service or because it is representing. For instance, the following slogan “Any washing machines live longer with Calgon” suggests that Calgon dishwasher tablets are smart and technology-friendly products. This inevitably heightens their competitiveness among the products featuring similar quality and price. Combined with a catchy jingle, the slogan may remain in consumer's memory forever. Nike's simple logo and equally simple slogan Just do it – a piece of advice saying “do not stall, do not procrastinate” – encouraged thousands of people across the world to get off the couch and “do it”, i.e. go outdoors, start exercising and start buying Nike products. That is how it sticks at consumers' mind and attract them to get it. Others see brand activism as a way to target a coveted young audience who is far more progressive and political than their parents. To reach millennial, brands must tap into the political energy that generation created and show young people that they can take a stand.

To summarize final analysis, the language of slogans is closely related to linguistic techniques and figures of speech which have been analyzed at various levels. Figurative language is also necessary in advertisements as it is the language, on the whole, favored by rhetoricians, poets, fiction writers, lovers. Investigating the research in an adversarial way, it is to inform that figurative language is the language that avoids speaking directly or plainly about the subject under examination relying on linguistic approach.

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