**Advertisement Genre**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Advertising is so familiar to modern readers that it may seem odd to ask what an advertisement is. Although advertising is all around us, we do not often pause to think about its nature as a form of discourse, as a system of language use whereby, on a daily basis, huge numbers of readers fleeting conversations’ with the writers of countless texts (Goddard, 1998: 5). The term 'advertising' comes down to us from the medieval Latin verb ‘advertere’ to direct one's attention to. It is any type or form of public announcement intended to direct people's attention to the availability, qualities, and/or cost of specific commodities or services. Advertising can be seen to fall three main categories: (1) **consumer advertising**, which is directed towards the promotion of some product or service to the general public; (2) **trade advertising**, which is directed to dealers and professionals through appropriate trade publications and media, and (3) **public relations advertising**, which is directed towards society by citizens or community groups, or by politicians, in order to promote some issue of social concern or political agenda. The focus of this paper is on the first category; namely, consumer advertising.

**ADVERTISING: A SOCIAL DISCOURSE WITH RHETORICAL FORCE**

Advertising is referred to as a form of discourse in the sense that it has influenced not only the structure of language and the modality of lifestyle, but also the content of routine daily acts of communicative exchanges. The messages of advertising have permeated the entire cultural landscape. Printed advertisements fill the pages of newspapers and magazines. Commercials interrupt TV and radio programs constantly. As Beasley and Danesi (2002: 1) pointed out, "brand names, logos. trademarks, jingles, and slogans have become part and parcel of the 'mental encyclopedia' of virtually everyone who lives in a modern- day society” (See Wodak, 2006a, 2006b; Wadak, 2007).

Advertising has progressed beyond the use of simple techniques for announcing the availability of products or services. It has ventured into the domain of persuasion, and its rhetorical categories have become omnipresent in contemporary social discourse. Because of the growing effectiveness of its persuasion techniques, advertising has become entrenched into social discourse by virtue of its wide spread diffusion throughout society. Everywhere one turns, one is bound to find some ad message designed to persuade people to buy a product. All this leads to the inescapable conclusion that advertising has developed, since the first decades of the 20th century, into a privileged form of social discourse that has unparalleled rhetorical force. With the advent of industrialization in the 19th century, style of presentation became increasingly important in raising the persuasive efficacy of the ad text. Accordingly, advertising started to change the structure and use of language and verbal communication. Everything from clothes to beverages was being promoted through ingenious new techniques. As the 19th century came to a close American advertisers in particular were, as Dyer (1982: 32) points out, using more colloquial, personal and informal language to address the customer and also exploiting certain effective rhetorical devices to attract attention to a product. So persuasive had this new form of advertising become that, by the early decades of the 20th century, it started becoming a component of social discourse, starting to change some of the basic ways in which people communicated with each other and in which they perceived commodities and services. From the 1920s onwards, advertising agencies sprang up all over, broadening the attempts of their predecessors to build a rhetorical bridge between the product and the consumer's consciousness (See Sayer, 2006; Saussure & Schulz, 2005; Segalowitz, 2011; Tyler, 2011).

The language of advertising has become the language of all, even of those who are critical of it. As Twitchell (2000: 1) puts it "language about products and services has pretty much replaced language about all other subjects”. It is no exaggeration to claim that today most of our information, intellectual stimulation, and lifestyle models come from, or are related to, advertising images. Since the 1920s, positioning and image – creation have become the primary techniques of what has come to be known as the era of persuasion in advertising. This is an era in which advertising messages have moved away from describing the product in itself to focusing on the consumer of the product, creating product imagery with which the consumer can easily identify (Woodward and Denton, 1988: 192). Ads and commercials now offer the same kinds of promise and hope to which religions and social philosophies once held exclusive rights: security against the hazards of old age, better positions in life, popularity and personal prestige, social advancement, better health, and happiness. To put it simply, the modern advertiser stresses not the product, but the benefits that may be expected to ensue from its purchase. In this regard, Beasley and Danesi (2002: 15) points out that the advertiser is becoming more and more adopt at setting foot into the same subconscious regions of psychic experience that were once explored only by philosophers, artists, and religious thinkers. However, not all advertisements make perfect sense. Not all of them promote or imply acceptance of social values that everyone would agree are what we should hope for, in an enlightened and civilized society. Some advertisements appear to degrade our images of ourselves, our language, and appear to move the emphasis of interaction in our society to even more consumerism. In this regard, Sells and Gonzalez (2002: 166) points out that there is no doubt that advertising promotes a consumer culture, and helps create and perpetuate the ideology that creates the apparent need for the products it markets (Iten, 2005; Jazczolt, 2005; Ang et al., 2007).

**LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS AND ANALYSES OF ADVERTISEMENTS**

An extremely useful and relevant survey of concepts from linguistics that can be used in the analysis of advertising can be found in Vestergaard and Schroeder (1985). Among the most important concepts are (1) cohesion and coherence in text; (2) given and new information; (3) presupposition; (4) the sign: a signifier and a signifie, and ( 5) icon vs. index vs. symbol. Cohesion is a term from the work on textual structure by Halliday and Hasan (1976), given to the logical linkage between textual units, as indicated by overt formal markers of the relations between texts. Each piece of text must be cohesive with the adjacent ones for a successful communication. However, readers are very creative interpreters, and formal properties of cohesion are typically not marked overtly. Vestergaard and Schroeder (1985) introduce the notion of coherence as a way of talking about the relations between texts, which may or may not be indicated by formal markers of cohesion. Advertising language tends not to use clear markers of cohesion, but is interpreted as being coherent. As with all the other linguistic concepts surveyed here, the notion of coherence extends to the relation between text and image. It is commonplace in the analysis of the meaning contribution of a linguistic unit such as a sentence to split the information into Given information and New information. It is possible for a sentence to be all - New, but all - Given sentences are (by definition) uninformative, and therefore have only specialized or restricted usages. Each sentence has an opportunity to present new information, or at least highlighted information. A common strategy in advertising language is to use very short potential utterances as sentences, to maximize the amount of highlighted information that is being presented. In addition to these linguistic concepts, there are two key concepts that can be used in the analysis of advertisements from modern - day linguistic theory, namely 'presupposition' and ‘relevance’.

These two concepts are important because they allow us to see the primary means by which advertisements can communicate much more information than what is explicitly presented in them (See Walker, 2011; Sebba et al., 2011).

The pragmatic interest in the implicit meaning dimensions of language use has been extended to include meanings which are logically entailed on the language use by the user of a particular structure. Presuppositions are implicit meanings which are subsumed by a particular wording in the sense that its interpretation is conditional upon the tacit acceptance of the implicit meaning (pre-supposition = 'an assumption that comes before'). For example, a sentence such as "The cold war has ended" presupposes that the existence of the entities it refers to, in this case the 'cold war'. Therefore the study of presuppositions often concentrates on meaning dimensions which are 'taken for granted' in an utterance or a text and hence this area of pragmatic research offers an instrument which is wellsuited for examining the links between language and ideology (Elison et al., 2009; Belinda, 2010; Francis, 2008; Buccarelli, 2010; Kimmel, 2010; Fetzer, 2008). Presupposition is a kind of pragmatic inference “based more closely on the actual linguistic structure of sentences" (Levinson 1989: 167). It is classified as a type of pragmatic inference by Strawson (1952). It must be emphasized, here, that the notion of presupposition required in discourse analysis is pragmatic presupposition that is, defined in terms of assumptions the speaker makes about what the hearer is likely to accept without challenge (Givon, 1979: 50). The notion of assumed 'common ground’ is also involved in such a characterization of presupposition and can be found in this definition by Stalnaker (1978: 321). Presuppositions may be even more critical in television advertising (Geis 1982) than in print advertising. However, even in print advertising, presuppositions are an important component of the overall message. As the name implies, a presupposition is a necessary precondition for the processing of any communication. Presuppositions typically involve the existence of some object or idea (See LoCastro, 2011; O’Keeffe & Clancy, 2011).

To summarize, presuppositions are a crucial part of advertising as they can cause the reader to consider the existence of objects, propositions, and culturally defined behavioral properties: for example, "Have you had your daily vitamins?" presupposes that you take or need "daily vitamins", thereby creating and perpetuating the idea that the behavior of taking vitamins daily is part of our culture. Similarly, "What's great about Chuck Wagon dog food ?” (Geis 1982, 45) presupposes that there is something great about the dog food though exactly what is left open.

**THE SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO ADVERTISING**

Humans produce their own signs such as words gestures or symbols. These signs are called "conventional signs". Like natural signs, conventional signs consist of two dimensions: (1) a physical dimension such as the sounds or letters that make up a word; and (2) the object that the physical part has been created to stand for whether it be real or imagined. The physical dimension is called the signifier in Saussurean semiotics and representation in Peircean semiotics. The conceptual dimension (2 above) is called signified and "object” in the two methods respectively. The particular kinds of meanings that the association of a signifier with a signified (or set of signifieds) generates in social situation is called "signification". Conventional signs are classified as verbal and nonverbal. Examples of verbal signs are words and other linguistic structures, whereas drawings, gestures, etc. are examples of non verbal signs (See Cobley, 2011; Leeu-wen, 2011).

It is obvious that the use of signs to create messages and meanings entails an interpretation of what they mean. The problem is that the rang of interpretations always varies from individual to individual. There is no one meaning that can be extracted from a human-made text. In addition, the sign's primary meaning is called its denotation. This is the meaning or referential connection established between signifier and signified. But this meaning can be extended freely to other domains of reference. This extensive process is known as connotation. The French semiotician Ronald Barthes inspired the first true semiotic works analyzing the implicit messages of advertising. The semiotic investigation of advertising and marketing has become widespread. And, some interesting studies have been produced such as Harris (1995); Goldman and Papson (1996); Berger (2000), and Danesi and Perron (2000). The major theme that stands out from this line of inquiry is that many brand names, logos, ads and commercials are interpretable at two levels; a surface level, and an underlying one. The surface level involves the use of specific types of signs in a highly creative manner to create a personality for the product (images, words, colors, etc.). These are 'reflexes' of, and 'traces' to, the underlying level. Relatedly, the goal of semiotics in the study of advertising is to unmask the arrays of hidden meanings in the underlying level, which form what can be called "signification system". As Bell (1990: 1) has observed, the semiotic notions used in the study of advertising are powerful because they allow us to bring to the surface the hidden meanings of advertising texts. The word "text", as it is used in semiotic theory, means something very specific. It literally designates a putting together signifiers to produce a message, consciously or unconsciously. The text can be either verbal or nonverbal, or both. In the modern theory of texts, the underlying, connotative meaning on which a text is anchored is commonly referred to as its subtext. The incorporation of other textualities present in the culture, through direct citation or indirect allusion, is called intertextuality (See Chandler, 2011).

meaning in an ad text is commonly referred to as decoding. It encapsulates what is involved; namely, the identification of the code or codes utilized to generate a signification system in the ad. The use of several codes to create the subtext can be called intercodality (Beasley and Danesi, 2002: 71). Product textuality is one of the persuasion techniques used by advertisers to promote product and service recognizability. It works on two levels; a surface and an underlying one.