

A Discourse Analysis of the Advertisements of Fmcg: A Case Study of Ten Print Advertisements

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ABSTRACT: The post industrialization world witnessed the emergence of the advertising machinery to promote and propagate ideas, thoughts and most importantly products which were produced in large numbers to satisfy the luxuries of the upper classes but to give an illusion of satisfaction to the labour class. The following study is an analysis of this machinery of advertising. A survey of the sample advertisements confirm that the language of advertisements is persuasive in nature with the usage of definite linguistic categories.

KEYWORDS: FMCG, India, print advertisements, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics. Linguistic devices.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Language is used for numerous purposes, of which communication is of primary importance. Language also serves as a tool for learning, within the process of learning. It plays a critical role in negotiating and fulfilling different functions. Within a social system, language shapes thought processes and behavioural practices. Since language does not exist in isolation, it neither carries meaning in that context. The meaning of a word is construct of culture and society. These meanings take different forms. These meanings are dynamic and shifting with reference to particular contexts. The comprehension of these constructs tends to consciously influence communication.

Thus, language is a powerful tool used to negotiate through a complex network of conventions, assumptions and expectations. The failure to correctly interpret the intended meaning of language, an effective strategy must be adopted and language is that alternative strategy.

Accordingly, the language of advertisements is a strategy that served to promote and propagate. Since its primary function is to draw attention. This is achieved by first reaching the target audience with a message that is attractive and memorable. The medium of advertising is the powerful means of communication which in every way is equivalent to the popular genres of movies and music. The fuel to drive this vehicle is language. Advertising language is a special category of language that combines cleverly and methodically crafted words to separate people from their money. The language of advertisements incorporates proven devices and techniques through which words are charged with the power to influence consumers. Advertising language fascinatingly distorts reality, by using inflated language. The present study is to list the categories of Discourse Analysis in the sample advertisements.

II. METHODOLOGY

A sample of ten advertisements belonging to the genre of print advertising were chosen. This selection was on the basis of the revenue that the advertisers/ Fast Moving Consumer Goods company generated for the financial year 2019-2020 (till date). Popular but economically priced products were selected from the leading five companies and their print advertisements was selected from digital resources. For each of the company selected, two advertisements were chosen. Each advertisement was then subjected to analysis and the categories of Deixis, Reference and Context were examined for occurrence.

III. DISCUSSION

Language as a construct of culture has a powerful influence on the buying power of people. The code used to convey the message is of vital importance. Both the visual content and design of the advertisement layout has an impact on the consumer. But it is language that binds all these factors together. Although the English language is multi-faceted in meaning, the responses to these variations in meaning while using language is sensed immediately. The connotative meaning of a particular word or set of words and phrases is the response of the receiver of the message rather than its literal meaning. The clarity in thought while sending out a message is the initial step towards successful or effective communication. Compound words take up the role of adjectives which eventually are accepted as part of a register. The language of advertising is positive and emphasizes on the Unique Selling Proposition of the product as against its rivals. Advertising language may not always adhere

to conventions but is modified to meet the requirements of the situation it is used in and adopts numerous strategies to convince the customer.

Using a specific code, extensive verbs and adjectives, short imperatives, ambiguities, weasel words, euphemisms, simple and colloquial language, familiar language, simple vocabulary, repetitions, rhyme and rhythm, syntactic parallelism, association, humour and glamorization are few of the strategies that the language of advertising adopts to convince people. Most intended meanings are derived by the consumers, mostly as a result of these language devices.

It is clear by now that the purpose of advertising is to sell – sell ideas, services, goods, products and even people. Persuasion is the key element in the language of advertising. It is through persuasion that stimulation occurs and behaviour is affected. There are innumerable ways to persuade but the written word is the least affective. The written word is the tangible range of thoughts, beliefs and ideas. Writing is a more prudent but deliberate version of communication. Traditional persuasive writing is old-fashioned but well-constructed, at the levels of sentences and paragraphs. Persuasion works simultaneously with coherence. Discourse of advertising is persuasive in nature. Advertisements are instruments of communication and have the intended effect of persuading the audience.

Both the text and image of the copy of the advertisement carry equal importance in this endeavour of persuasion. All the constituent elements of an advertisement are associated, interrelate and they influence each other positively. However, since the text is considered to be one of the important components of an advertising copy, it describes as a linguistic sign some state, actions or feelings eventually affecting the addressee such that there is a response. It can be noted that the text is not crucial or central to the advertisement but transfers more information about the product being advertised. Language is still crucial in assessing the responses and the stimulation that the text carries with it. This reiterates that language is persuasive and positively influences in the best conceivable manner.

IV. FINDINGS

The sample of advertisements have been chosen from various sources on the internet based on the fact that the products belong to the category of leading FMCG producers currently. The companies, in the decreasing order are

1. Hindustan Unilever.
2. ITC limited.
3. Nestle India Limited.
4. Dabur India Limited.
5. Marico Limited.

Two popular brands were chosen from each company and the sample size thus adds up to ten.

1:FMCG: Dove Shampoo. (House: Hindustan Unilever).



Analysis Of Advertisement Number 1.

This advertisement is of the product Dove Shampoo from the house of Hindustan Unilever. The advertisement is for their new variant in shampoos called 'Dove Environmental Defence'. The advertisement follows the popular layout of Z-profile by placing minimal details on the lefts side of the copy and most details

on the right side. The advertisement contains a representative of the female gender with lengthy luscious hair whose image is placed on the left side of the copy. She is projecting a radiant smile which is indicative of her satisfaction after using the product. Despite the long length of her hair, maintenance does not appear to be cumbersome for her and hence the calm and peace is evident. She is seen fondling her hair in the still image which further points to the fact that she is extremely joyful with the effects of the product usage. The product on the right side is surrounded by the splash of water having shades of colour green indicating freshness. The accompanying green leaf contributes further to the idea of freshness. In the background a traffic jam, quite customary in urban areas is visible. The cars that have lined up in the background are a part of the tough and non-passable traffic which is usual in metropolitans.

The woman in the copy seems to be a working professional. This is apparent because she will encounter huge traffic jams and therefore damage to her hair due to exposure to pollutants which are a result of heavy vehicular traffic in metropolitans.

The sole defence of hair in times of extensive damage caused by pollutants is dove environmental shampoo because of its associated freshness and natural ingredients.

The text/words of the image contain the following literary devices.

1. **Deixis:** Person Deixis – Your.
2. **Reference:** a. Pronoun – Your
- b. Noun Phrase – Environmental Defence.
3. **Context:** Text – hair

Co-text: a. worries,
b. pollution,
c. damage,
d. environment and
e. defence.

2:FMCG: Fair & Lovely cream. (House: Hindustan Unilever).



Analysis Of Advertisement Number 2.

The advertisement in 2 is of Fair & Lovely fairness cream from Hindustan Unilever. The advertisement is for the fairness cream of Fair & Lovely which is pitted against international creams. The advertisement follows the Z-profile with maximum details placed on the right half of the copy. As with most FMCG advertisements the image highlighted is of a well-groomed woman with a diminished complexion. Her fairness would improve with the usage of this particular brand of fairness cream as against the usage of some international creams. Her face is partially lightened to project a dimmer complexion while using the international cream and an improvement in fairness with the usage of Fair & Lovely. The product on the other hand is placed on the right side of the copy, against the background of a globe. This indicates the uniqueness of the product in the global market. On close observation of the globe we notice the map of the continent of Africa upon which the product is placed which hints to the fact that even the darkest of complexions from the Dark Continent can be improved with this product.

The text of the advertisement consists of the comparison of the product with international creams which is placed below the name of the brand but in a different font and texture so as to draw the attention of the reader/consumer to the comparison. The innovation is highlighted so as to segregate it from the rest and in turn emphasise. This inclusion also has a special note that further adds to the effect of using the cream. By placing the text in the centre of the copy, the copy writer conveys to the reader/consumer that the latest innovation is the core and focus of this advertisement copy.

The following literary devices were identified.

1. Deixis: Spatial Deixis – a. International.

b. Some.

2. Reference: a. Noun Phrase – i. Environmental Defence.

ii. Some International Cream.

3. Context: Text – Cream.

Co- text: a. Unbeatable fairness.

b. International.

c. International fairness.

3:FMCG: Aashirvaad Atta (House: ITC Limited).



Analysis Of Advertisement Number 3.

The advertisement for analysis in number 3 is of Aashirvaad Atta from the house of ITC. The advertisement is for their latest product called Aashirvaad Atta which has an added feature of sugar release control. The Atta has low Glycaemic index as compared to other regular brands or products of atta. The target readers/consumers of the advertiser are people who are struggling with unhealthy sugar levels due to erratic maintenance and lifestyle habits. As a product that was released just before New Year's Eve, it played upon the fact that many of us resolve to maintain better health in the upcoming year. Therefore, to meet this habit ITC suggests that we make a healthy resolution – that which supports healthy living. The low GI value in the diet of Diabetics will help maintain sugar levels consistently. Also, the slow release of sugar into the bloodstream prevents glycaemic shock which is a peril diabetic constantly encounter.

The copy follows the Z-format by placing minimal details on the left half of the copy and major details on the right half. The product name is not emphasised upon but stays in a prominent position at the centre of the copy. However, the novelty of the advertisement is brought out on a red horizontal badge with white coloured capitalised font so as to grab immediate attention. The colour red is associated with danger and immediate response. Therefore, the take –home message is immediately noticed. The fine print below this highlighted message is again in red so as to continue the caution to the readers/consumers.

The product is placed on the right half of the copy and is incompletely tied with a ribbon as though to indicate that this product is a present for people suffering with high levels of sugar. The confetti around the product also adds to the representation that the product is a reason to celebrate for patients with diabetes. Accordingly, the following literary devices were identified.

1. Deixis: Person Deixis – a. Your.

Spatial Deixis – New Year.

2.Reference: a. Pronoun: Your

- a. Noun Phrase – i. Sugar release control.
ii. Natural grain.

3. Context: Text – Diet.

- Co- text: a. Sugar release control.
b. New Year resolution.
c. Healthy Habit.

4: FMCG: B Natural juice (House: ITC Limited).



Analysis Of Advertisement Number 4.

The advertisement is of the B Natural fruit juice from the house of ITC. Unlike other competitors, B Natural is made from fruits itself that are naturally occurring and not from the pulp or concentrate produced from the fruit. For the health-conscious urban woman, natural products are the go-to option in times of degrading environmental milieu. This is represented by a popular Bollywood Actress, Shilpa Shetty who has long been associated with health and fitness. As usual the layout of the advertisement is in the Z-shape. Important details related to the product are placed on the upper half of the copy and the product is placed in the lower half of the layout. The representative of the target reader/consumer who in this case happens to be a celebrity is placed at the centre of the copy as though it were the focal point of the advertiser. The USP (Unique Selling Proposition) of the product is that it is made from fruit, hence it has been highlighted using the colour red. The comparison is in green colour indicating the fact that it is not of much importance. By mentioning the USP right on top of the copy, the advertiser adds to the understanding that the product stands unique in comparison to other similar products. The base and the background of the copy consist of greenery which is an indication of the freshness of the product. The colour green is associated with genesis, productivity, abundance and of course freshness. Through this addition, the advertiser is perhaps trying to indicate that B Natural juice is one of the freshest in the market. Celebrity endorsement adds value to the product making the testimony widely acceptable both to the celebrity fan base of the actress herself and the general public at large. The green icon on the left bottom corner of the copy confirms that the product is 100% vegetarian.

1. Deixis: Person Deixis – a. Your.

Spatial Deixis – New Year.

2. Reference: a. Pronoun: Your

- a. Noun Phrase – i. Sugar release control.
ii. Natural grain.

3. Context: Text – Diet.

- Co- text: a. Sugar release control.
b. New Year resolution.
c. Healthy Habit.

5: FMCG: Maggi Tomato Ketchup (House: Nestle).



Analysis Of Advertisement Number 5.

Maggi tomato ketchup is a product from the house of Nestle. As already illustrated, we observe that the packet of noodles supplements the 1kilogram bottle of ketchup. Right on top of the copy the latest offer/discount and the marketing strategy of a combined product is highlighted so as to draw instant attention of the reader. Since the tomato ketchup always accompanies noodles and also manufactured by the same FMCG company as a new marketing gimmick the 1kg bottle of ketchup is combined with a smaller pack of instant noodles from the same company. The change in price of the product is also mentioned so that the viewer knows that it has been reduced.

The background of the advertisement copy is blurred but with whatever visible elements available we notice that the set-up is urban in nature. Instant noodles were a big hit and still is as its preparation is not time consuming. It takes just about two minutes to prepare the dish and is the go-to option for people with paucity of time and need to be gratified instantly. These aspects are mentioned on the packaging cover of the packet of noodles. However, the ketchup serves as an accompaniment to the noodles and is used less frequently when compared to noodles. Therefore, a good bargain would be to buy the ketchup in larger quantity when it is economically feasible. The richness of the tomato is expressed through the images of bright red tomatoes on the cover of the bottle. As though to reinforce this aspect 'Rich Tomato ketchup' is also mentioned. The font used while mentioning 'rich tomato ketchup' is not formal. This gives an instant connection to the consumer that the aid product is not restricted to certain classes or communities in society but is accessible to everyone.

As though to depict that the bottle of ketchup and the packet of noodles are a perfect couple, in the Indian context both are placed against each other in an inclined manner. Patriarchal notions are also subtly hinted that when the noodles are consumed it has to be supplemented with the ketchup to enhance the taste as though a woman is complete only with the presence of a towering supportive well-placed male.

The copy follows the z-shape format by placing minor details on the upper half of the layout and the important major details in the lower half of the layout.

To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined.

1. Deixis: Temporal Deixis – a. two – minute.

2. Reference: a. Noun Phrase – i. Rich tomato
ii. Two-minute noodles.
iii. Tomato ketchup.

3. Context: Text – Ketchup.

Co- text: a. Rich.

b. Saucy.

6: FMCG: Munch crunch o' nuts (House: Nestle).



The latest product from the Nestle is from the category of chocolates. The new Munch is a limited series in the production line. The addition of cocoa balls, peanut crème, double Choco layer adds to its crunchiness. These inclusions are brought in so that the sales of the chocolate improve and revenue is generated.

In order to grab the attention of the consumer the advertisement copy is designed in the format of a children's comic strip. We can say that the target customer for this latest chocolate is children or young adults who occasionally indulge in chocolates. The copy makes use of bright attractive colours to emphasise on the different aspects within the copy.

The copy of the advertisement follows that z-format. The major details are on the upper half of the copy and the company's name and logo are in the lower half. The placement of the product is at the centre of the copy and is in an inclined manner as though it depicts the landing of the product just like an airplane.

The language on the copy is colloquial in nature. This indicates that the product is not associated with luxury but is an economically priced one. The stress on 'limited series' is an indication of its restricted availability thus forcing consumers to buy it as early as possible as delays may create non-availability. The copy ends with a page turning symbolism. This clearly shows that the product is being advertised in the print media. To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined.

1. Deixis: Spatial Deixis - double
Temporal Deixis – a. now
b. limited

2. Reference: a. Noun Phrase – i. Explosive cocoa balls.
ii. Crunch o' nuts.
iii. Surprising peanut creme.

3.Context: Text – Chocolate.
Co- text: a. Cocoa balls.
b. Crème.
c. Choco layer.

7: FMCG: Dabur Honey (House: Dabur).



The advertisement in 7 is of Dabur honey from the house of Dabur. The advertisement begins by displaying a weighing scale which indicates the weight of a physically fit person to be 50. The fitness of an individual is indicated by maintaining this ideal weight and the consumption of Dabur Honey supports this. The

recommendation that honey must be consumed with warm water every morning is indicated as a special note. The fine print adds to this idea of health and fitness.

Celebrity endorsement is an added factor to improve sales. Jacqueline Fernandes is a Bollywood celebrity and a former beauty queen. Health and fitness are naturally attribute to celebrities since they are in the showbusiness. Dabur has been an old player in the field of FMCG. Therefore, its superiority is emphasised up on by naming it as No.1 in the market.

As though to parody urban lifestyle and the various habits that urbanites are invariably expected to indulge in the text 'START Drinking' is placed prominently in the copy. Except for the name of the brand most other colours used in the copy exude warmth and femininity to soothe the eyes and appeal to target consumers especially women. The notion that slimness and beauty is measure of the level of fitness is indirectly projected through the celebrity who also extends a similar impression.

To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined

1. Deixis: Person Deixis – Every

You.

2. Reference: a. Pronoun – you.

b. Noun Phrase – warm water.

3. Context: Text – Health.

Co- text: a. Fit.

b. Young.

8: FMCG: Dabur Lal Tail (House: Dabur).



The advertisement for Dabur Lal tail which is a massage oil for new born and infants is from the house of Dabur. The target of the advertiser is a mother of a child who has to undergo a rigorous regime of an oil massage and then bathing. Dabur Lal tail would be a natural choice as it is made from natural ingredients which is prominently mentioned under the product name itself. On the cover of the bottle a healthy child is standing upright with the support of a happy parent after the usage of this product. A regular massage of the baby using this product guarantees healthy bone development and early walking. As though to indicate that young children need extensive but careful administration of propriety medicine, the baby is supported from the anterior side by the arrow of approval within which is the clinically tested evidence.

Set against the background of the colour of the brand itself, the product is placed with the carton it comes in. Also, the availability of the product on e-platforms is indicated by the inclusion of the web address of Amazon.

Below this is the price of the product for a quantity of 500 ml which is indicative of its inexpensive nature.

To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined

1. Deixis: Person Deixis – medicine.

2. Reference: a. Noun Phrase – i. Ayurvedic medicine.

3. Context: Text – Baby oil.

Co- text: a. Ayurvedic medicine.

9: FMCG: Saffola Masala Oats(House: Marico)



The house of Marico advertises its brand of Saffola Masala Oats. Its target is the health-conscious urban population who have to overcome constraints of time and unhealthy eating habits by using Saffola masala oats. Saffola was initially associated with healthy cooking oil. With passage of time, the brand has ventured into other avenues related to the health sector.

The copy of the advertisement is bright orange, perhaps an allusion the morning sun which shines brightly in the sky. The advertiser says that by purchasing this product, life moves onto brighter shores of health and fitness despite severe shortage of time and recreation. The background seems to be the table of an urban kitchen. Fresh vegetable like carrots, green peas and cilantro add to the health considerations. The final product after cooking is plated or rather placed in a heart-shaped bowl to carry forward the theme of healthy heart and in turn fitness which was the initial forte of Saffola.

Since the cooking time is mentioned to be under three minutes, urban users will invariably purchase the product as it less time consuming and convenient. Healthy eating habits is linked to eating small portions of bland food but the masala factor in oats renders the product interesting and tastier along with ensuring health.

Variants available are also displayed to show that multiple options are available and the consumption need not be monotonous and boring. The tag line 'The Smarter Way to stay fit' shows that Saffola oats is 'the' only option available to consumers. The price of the product is also mentioned to indicate to prospective consumers that it is economically less expensive and hence an easier option to maintain health.

To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined.

- 1. Deixis:** Person Deixis – a. it.
b. you.

Temporal Deixis – 3 minutes.

- 3. Reference:** a. Noun Phrase – i. Masala Oats.
b. Pronouns - i. You.
ii. It.

- 4. Context:** Text – Health.

- Co- text: a. Hot.
b. Spicy.
c. Delicious.
d. Fit.
e. Smarter way.

10: FMCG: SET WET GEL (House: Marico)



The second product from the house of Marico is Set Wet gel. The product targets the urban youth especially the college-going students who are extensive users of this styling gel. The advertisement is promoting the use of digital transaction which has become the norm now. By crediting free talk time to the wallet of a digital payment platform, the advertiser is endorsing digitalisation. On the other hand, since digital payments are used even while grocery stores the cashback offer will tempt the youngsters to use this mode of payment.

The advertisement follows the usual format of a print advertisement i.e., the z-format, where minor details are on the right half of the copy along with the product. The product is placed against the background of chic wallpaper which gives the advertisement a youthful appeal. Sober colours are incorporated into the copy so that the product is highlighted. The celebrity endorsement by a Bollywood actor adds to the effect of the advertisement. Aditya Roy Kapur is presently associated with movies that are relevant to the current generation of urban youth. Hence his endorsement may have improved sales.

The offer presented with the product uses the uppercase letters of the English alphabet and is white in colour to draw instant attention of the viewer.

To substantiate that advertisements are a discourse and the language used is persuasive in nature the following literary devices were examined.

1. Deixis: Person Deixis – Every.

2. Reference: a. Noun Phrase – i. Set, wet gel.
ii. Free talk time.

Pronoun: Your.

3. Context: Text – Hair.

Co-text: a. Set.
b. Wet.
c. Worth.
d. Free.

V. CONCLUSION

Language is a construct of the society that masses inhabit and these masses actively participate in the construction of a mass culture. This culture calls for distortion of reality and other imperfections. The occurrence of the said language devices reiterates the fact that irrespective of the area, genre or code adopted, advertisements follow and adhere to linguistic conventions which are not evident. That persuasion is an argument that impacts perceptions, attitudes towards people, ideas or the world in general. Persuasive strategies include warrants – one that is adopted to consume, convince, manipulate and coerce.

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