

COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES OF PERSUASION IN ADVERTISING ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

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This article explores the role of persuasive strategies in advertising within the context of advertising ecological discourse. Advertising has been a powerful tool in shaping consumer behaviors and attitudes towards ecological products and sustainable practices. This article delves into the linguistic techniques and pragmatic strategies employed by advertisers to persuade consumers to embrace eco-friendly products and practices. By analyzing ecological advertisements through the lens of linguistics and semio-pragmatics, we aim to uncover the linguistic mechanisms that drive persuasive messages in the context of environmental consciousness. A detailed description of this type of discourse is provided based on specific criteria, along with the results of an analysis of how speech impact is realized advertising slogans.

Key-words : *advertising, ecological, discourse, persuasion, implicature.*

Persuasion as a concept has been studied and discussed by scholars across various disciplines, including linguistics, semiotics, and pragmatics. Persuasion is the impact on the consciousness of an individual by appealing to their own critical judgment, selecting, logically ordering facts and conclusions according to a unified functional goal of the statement, as well as logical proof, sometimes alongside the emotional influence. When considering persuasion, there are two parties involved, with one intentionally influencing the other. The aim is to guarantee that the recipient consciously embraces the system of assessments and opinions aligned with another perspective. Persuasion involves intention, action, and sometimes the impact of altering an audience's thinking, making it a speech act that goes beyond describing cognition to actively changing it. The exploration of persuasion within these frameworks sheds light on how language, signs, and pragmatic strategies are employed to influence and appeal to the audience.

The growing importance of ecological discourse in recent years reflects the escalating environmental concerns and the imperative to address ecological issues. Within this field, advertising assumes a pivotal role, wielding influence over consumer choices and behaviors, steering them towards environmentally friendly products and practices. Persuasion, in the context of environmental advertising, manifests as the audience's deep confidence in the truth of the presented concepts, ideas, and the urgency of taking environmentally friendly actions. The attitudes formed through persuasive environmental messages can influence individuals' behaviors in various situations, demonstrating the effectiveness of the communicative act, which aligns with the goals of the discourse.

Ecological advertisements serve as a form of discourse by interpreting and evaluating environmental phenomena, aiming to influence public perception, behaviors, and attitudes towards ecological issues and contributing to the formation of a specific ideological background. In this sense, the discourse assumes an influencing function, an informational function, and a partially constructive function of social actions, aligning with the strategies of discourse. The advertisements appeal to the critical judgment of individuals by presenting logical orders

of facts and conclusions about environmental challenges, often accompanied by emotional appeals. The conscious acceptance by the audience of the message and its alignment with an environmentally conscious point of view is a desired outcome.

This intersection of advertising and persuasion becomes a focal point for linguistic analysis, unveiling various strategies employed in ecological advertising for both logical and emotional impact. As Ch. Larson states “persuasion uses either logical or emotional means or a combination of both of them instead of force to accomplish desired ends.” (2010 : 2)

Logical impact refers to the use of reasoned and rational arguments to convey information and persuade the audience. It involves presenting facts, evidence, and logical reasoning to support the eco-friendly product or behavior promoted in the advertisement. The goal is to engage the audience’s intellect and convince them of the environmental benefits or positive aspects associated with the promoted product or action. Positioned within the logical direction of rhetoric, where speech is considered an art influencing behavior, feelings, intentions, and views, persuasion in advertising serves as a communicative task, regulating the organization of sign units, their interaction, and the content of their propositions.

The effectiveness of persuasion can be significantly influenced by appealing to the emotions of the audience. On the emotional front, advertisers deploy emotive language to elicit responses. Words like *green*, *clean*, *pure*, and *natural* with positive connotations establish an emotional connection with eco-friendly products. Metaphors and analogies serve as powerful linguistic tools, drawing parallels between eco-friendly products and desirable qualities, invoking visual imagery and emotional responses.

However, persuasion impacts both the rational aspect and also the emotions of individuals, and only under these conditions does it prove to be effective. It is important to note that when influencing the rational, one can evoke the emotional, as these two aspects are interconnected. This mutual influence is also evident in the reverse impact of already formed convictions on the emotional activities of the psyche.

Arguments containing such appeals create a favorable atmosphere for persuasion, reducing potential resistance from the psyche arising from various reasons. Irony and sarcasm, appeals to feelings of pity and compassion, modesty, and the individual’s desire to align with the majority can all serve the same purpose in persuasion.

A particular case involves persuasive communication with arguments appealing to the emotion of fear. It has been observed that this has a less productive impact because the conclusion that alleviates the aroused fear simultaneously demonstrates the groundlessness of the experienced fear. The use of strong stimuli that induce fear, not mitigated by conclusions, further diminishes the overall effectiveness of communication. Such appeals either leave the created mental tension, which contributes little to the audience’s agreement with the communicator, or prompt the audience to ignore or exaggerate the described danger.

Following Larson’s statement that “communication tactics flow from communication strategies, which in turn flow from overall communication goals”, (*Ibidem* : 28) we will state the goals for the advertising ecological discourse being: *research-oriented* (current social issues and problems related to ecology and environmental pollution), *informative*, (influencing public opinion by disseminating information in defense of nature as the natural habitat), *regulating* (reminding the norms of interaction with the environment (laws, regulations, etc.)), *encouraging* or *call for action* (persuading recipients of the need to change their behavior and increase their environmental awareness with the aim of mobilizing them to protect the environment).

It is well-known that the choice of discourse strategy depends on the intentions of the addressee. By analyzing various types of advertising environmental discourse texts on local websites, we have come to the conclusion that two general communicative strategies can be attributed to the advertising environmental discourse: *the strategy of discrediting actions* harmful to nature and the environment and the *strategy of popularizing actions* aimed at environmentally friendly practices. Communicative strategies, in their turn, consist of communicative tactics.

The *strategy of discrediting actions*' tactics are : critical assessment of the current state of the environment today; confirming specific facts or identifying specific culprits of environmental pollution; appeal to the opinion of scientists or scientific facts; criticizing the irresponsible attitude towards the nature; contrast or comparison; forecasting potential risks or danger to human life.

The *strategy of popularizing actions*' tactics are : rational argumentation in favor of environmental protection; appeal to values (clean air as a necessary foundation for human life); proof by contradiction (measures to maintain clean air have a positive impact on the climate and people's health). Also, positive framing is a prevalent technique, portraying eco-friendly choices as positive and empowering. Phrases like "be part of the solution, not the problem" and "choose a better future" exemplify this approach. Social proof, rooted in the psychological principle that people tend to follow others' actions, finds expression in linguistic elements such as testimonials, endorsements, and statistics, showcasing the widespread adoption of eco-friendly products or behaviors.

Therefore, pragmatic strategies in persuasion involve manipulating language to achieve specific effects on the audience. The senders often convey meaning indirectly through implicature, where the audience is expected to infer certain information that is not explicitly stated, through presupposition, assuming the truth of certain background information, through metaphors to create vivid images that appeal to emotions and values, through various rhetorical devices (such as repetition, parallelism, and alliteration) to enhance the persuasive impact of messages.

Grice's concept of implicature (1975), as a technical term in the pragmatics subfield of linguistics, aligns well with the advertising discourse, referring to what is suggested in an utterance, even though neither expressed nor strictly implied by the utterance. In ecological advertising, the use of certain symbols, images, or language may suggest a commitment to environmental sustainability without explicitly stating it. For instance, an image of a clean, untouched natural environment may imply a product's eco-friendly nature, contributing to the overall implicature. Analyzing these implicatures provides insights into the implicit meanings behind statements, sentences, or utterances in the context of ecological advertising.

Implicatures are integral to the nuanced and persuasive communication in advertising ecological discourse. The examination of discursive implicatures unveils two prominent categories: *conventional* and *unconventional*, contributing significantly to the persuasive nature of advertising discourse and influencing how audiences perceive and interpret the communicated messages.

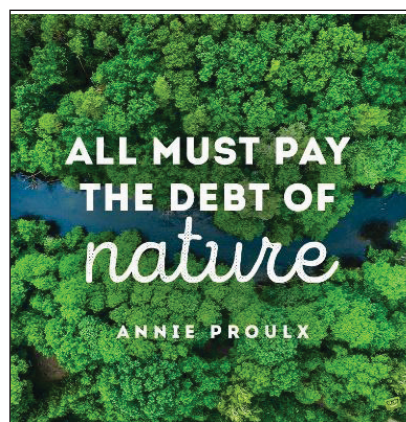
The *conventional implicatures* in ecological advertising emerge logically from the ordinary meaning or logical structure of sentences. These are often indicated by certain conventional meanings of words within the text. For instance, in an advertisement promoting an eco-friendly product, the use of terms like *sustainable*, *organic*, or *green* may carry conventional implicatures, suggesting positive attributes associated with environmental consciousness. The ordinary meanings of these words contribute to the overall persuasive impact.

On the other hand, *unconventional implicatures* in ecological advertising draw meanings based on the beliefs, knowledge, and situational context of the audience. For example, an advertisement featuring a family happily using an eco-friendly product may imply unconventional meanings related to a wholesome and responsible lifestyle. The audience's background knowledge and beliefs about family values contribute to the unconventional implicature, enhancing the persuasive appeal.

By dissecting linguistic features in advertising text, we aim to showcase how persuasive techniques are employed to promote eco-conscious choices and products. The context of ecological discourse is instrumental in shaping linguistic strategies for persuasion. Environmental consciousness and awareness are key drivers of linguistic choices, as advertisers align their messages with eco-friendly values and global environmental concerns.

Language in environmental advertisements serves as a powerful tool to manipulate perceptions and persuade audiences by highlighting the importance of nature. For example:

a. "All must pay the debt of nature" - "debt of nature" - the phrase employs a metaphor, that symbolizes the consequences of environmental negligence, creating a visual image of a debt owed to nature. This construction uses semiotic elements to convey a deeper meaning beyond the literal interpretation. The use of the phrase "pay the debt" employs a financial metaphor, framing environmental responsibility as an obligation by positioning nature as a creditor, creating a sense of moral responsibility and emphasizing the consequences of neglecting environmental stewardship, as an appeal to responsibility. The colors and visual elements enhance the semiotic impact.



The images of nature reinforce the connection between the message and the natural world. The phrase implies a sense of obligation and inevitability. The use of "must" suggests a moral or societal duty, invoking a pragmatic implicature that compliance with this duty is non-negotiable. The utterance can be seen as a directive speech act, urging individuals to acknowledge and fulfill their perceived responsibility toward nature. It serves as a call to action, aligning with the pragmatic function of influencing behavior. The choice of words like "debt" carries emotional weight, appealing to individuals on a personal and moral level. The persuasive function lies in framing the relationship between humans and nature as a financial transaction, creating a moral obligation to repay this "debt." At the same time, the pragmatic strategy involves triggering emotional responses to foster a connection between the audience and the message. This approach aims to evoke a sense of responsibility and guilt, influencing individuals to adopt environmentally conscious behaviors. The quote combines semiotic elements such as metaphorical language and, potentially, visual cues with pragmatic strategies like implicature and emotional appeal. The overall goal is to persuade individuals to recognize their responsibility toward nature and take concrete actions to address environmental concerns.



In conclusion, the phrase "All must pay the debt of nature" employs a combination of semiotic and pragmatic dimensions to convey a persuasive message aiming to influence individuals to embrace a sense of duty and act in harmony with nature.

b. “Only humans produce the waste that nature cannot digest” – The slogan relies on a clear binary opposition between humans and nature, framing humans as the exclusive source of waste that nature struggles to manage. The visual representation of a polluted environment, including garbage and distressed animals, reinforces this symbolic contrast. The exclusive use of “humans” emphasizes anthropocentrism, highlighting human responsibility for waste. “Produce the waste” symbolizes human responsibility for environmental degradation, creating a visual image of waste generation, implying a sense of guilt and accountability, urging individuals to recognize their role in environmental degradation and issues.

The visual representation of a polluted environment with a dog sitting on the garbage and birds flying over creates a powerful image that reinforces the message. The dog’s gaze toward the viewer may serve to establish a connection and elicit an emotional response. The statement implies a negative consequence of human waste production, suggesting that nature is unable to cope with the waste generated by humans. This implicature invokes a sense of responsibility and urgency.

The utterance functions as both an assertive and directive speech act. It asserts a specific claim about the exclusive responsibility of humans for waste that nature cannot digest and directs the audience’s attention to the environmental issue at hand. The persuasive function lies in highlighting human responsibility for environmental degradation. By emphasizing the unique and problematic nature of human-produced waste, the message aims to prompt a change in behavior and attitudes towards waste management. The visual elements, including the distressed animals and the polluted environment, contribute to the emotional appeal. The use of a dog, a common companion animal, may evoke empathy and concern, enhancing the emotional impact of the message. The quote and visual representation employ a combination of semiotic elements such as binary opposition and visual cues with pragmatic strategies like implicature and emotional appeal. The overall goal is to persuade individuals to recognize the environmental consequences of human waste production and to motivate them to take action in waste reduction and proper disposal.

Therefore, “Only humans produce the waste that nature cannot digest” uses a persuasive blend of semiotic and pragmatic dimensions to convey a message about human responsibility for environmental degradation. The accompanying visual representation enhances the persuasive impact by creating a poignant and emotionally charged depiction of the environmental consequences of human actions.

The above examples employ linguistic techniques, semiotic symbols, and pragmatic strategies to persuade and convey messages related to environmental responsibility. These dimensions work together to influence perceptions and encourage specific actions for environmental conservation. The environmental advertising phrases employ linguistic techniques such as metaphor, inclusive language, contrast, and imperative statements to manipulate perceptions and persuade audiences to recognize the importance of nature in their actions and choices. The language used aims to evoke emotional responses, foster a sense of shared responsibility, and drive immediate, tangible actions for environmental conservation.

This scientific linguistic analysis sheds light on the persuasive techniques used in advertising ecological discourse. By examining the linguistic tools employed by advertisers, we can better understand how language shapes consumer choices and behaviors towards environmentally friendly products and practices. As ecological concerns continue to grow, linguistic research in this field becomes increasingly relevant, highlighting the crucial role

of advertising in promoting ecological consciousness. This research encourages further exploration into the ethics and efficacy of persuasive strategies in ecological advertising.

Certain factors unrelated directly to the content or manner of presentation of the message significantly influence the results of persuasion. This includes, above all, the primacy effect of communicative influence. If the recipient receives some important message, there is a readiness in their consciousness to perceive subsequent, more detailed information confirming the initial impression. If later on, there are facts that contradict their initial impression, they are reluctant to abandon what they have already believed until these facts become overwhelming both in quantity and credibility.

The power of ecological advertising discourse lies in providing recipients with knowledge that makes individuals care about its content, thus potentially shaping the principles that determine their verbal and actual behavior.

In the context of ecological advertising discourse, persuasion becomes a central element in motivating individuals to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. Scholars in linguistics, semiotics, and pragmatics continue to explore the evolving nature of persuasion in the digital age, considering the impact of online communication and visual elements in ecological advertising. They analyze how language and signs are strategically employed to evoke emotions, establish connections, and promote a sense of responsibility toward the environment. Semiotic elements such as symbols, colors, and visual metaphors are utilized to convey messages about nature, sustainability, and the consequences of environmental neglect. These symbols serve as persuasive tools that go beyond the linguistic realm, tapping into shared cultural meanings.

This research contributes to the understanding of persuasion in advertising ecological discourse by examining the pragmatic aspects through semiotic and cognitive-discourse lenses. By delving into the distinctive features of advertising and the nuances of discursive implicatures, the study sheds light on the intricate dynamics that shape persuasive communication in the realm of environmental advertising. Environmental advertising discourse aligns with the characteristics and strategies of popular science discourse outlined in the article. It serves as an institutional type of discourse aimed at presenting scientific knowledge about environmental issues to a broad audience, utilizing linguistic means for effective communication and persuasion to promote eco-friendly behaviors.

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