

UNLEASHING CREATIVITY IN LINGUISTIC DISCOURSES THROUGH ADVERTISING SKILLS

By

Y. SUNEETHA

Professor & Head of the Department, JNTU, Rajeev Gandhi Memorial College Engineering and Technology, Nandyal, India.

ABSTRACT

Creative fluency is positively correlated with the quantity and quality of talk as well. The fluency gives an indication of the learner's ability to cope with real-time communication. This paper makes a correlative study on nurturing narrative tasks through advertising skills. English advertising exploits from the high adaptability of the English language. English enables the creators of advertisements to use word puns, figurative language, and to mix individual styles and types of texts. The aim of this paper is to explore what is linguistically creative in everyday interactions by analyzing advertising language. The present study has been done by comparing 100 advertising slogans of Indian Brands and International Brands to analyze language of advertising from linguistic aspects. Further, it provides examples to describe the most commonly used linguistic devices and figures of speech in advertising as a base for creative discourses.

Keywords: Creativity, Advertising Language and Discourse Techniques.

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades English Language Teaching has become more and more characterized by the communicative approach. The main objective of ELT is to develop the learner's ability to take part in spontaneous and meaningful communication in different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes. In fact, human language "serves as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community." (Widdowson 2000, p. 3).

The purpose of creative language in everyday speech includes - new way of expression, humorous remarks, expressing a particular attitude, variety of language forms to entertain. Creativity almost always depends on intensions and interpretations of the producers. As Sacks(1984, p. 413-29) argues, ordinary talk has to be achieved and it is a huan, social, and creative accomplishment which is far from being 'ordinary'. Lakoff and Turner (1989), Turner 1991, Sweetser (1990), and Gibbs (1994, 1999) argue that familiar speech such as metaphor, irony, and hyperbole are natural components of language, and that the human mind should thus be seen as essentially non-literal in its figurations in its world.

English advertising exploits from the high adaptability of the English language. English enables the creators of advertisements to use word puns, figurative language, and to mix individual styles and types of texts. Advertising unifies language, pictures, music; it contains information, invokes emotions and imaginations, it can capture all five senses and, besides it, it has social and practical aim. As a genre, it seems to be much diversified. It is compact, terse, and delivers powerful message and thereby influencing millions of people. It is interesting to analyze advertising as text and powerful message and relate linguistic techniques which make advertising an effective genre.

This paper makes a correlative study on nurturing narrative tasks creatively through advertising skills by analyzing various figures of speech, stylistics and other techniques of language usage.

1. The Purpose – Unleashing Creativity in Language through Advertising

Advertising is a prevalent phenomenon nowadays that has gained the attention and interest of a large number of individuals in different societies around the globe. People are exposed to the advertising process wherever they are. Advertising is not only an 'ideal tool' for reaching people economically, but it is a device of attaining and

maintaining contact with persons socially, culturally, politically and even psychologically. "...advertising is not some external curiosity which we examine, from which we are separate and superior, but something of which we are part, and which is part of us..." (Cook 1996, p. 182).

Advertising can be identified as a type of discourse, because "it can tell us a good deal about our own society and our own psychology (...) Discourse is text and context together." The whole discourse of advertising could be analyzed, it means "the interaction of all elements that participate in advertising discourse: participants, function, substance, pictures, music, a society, paralanguage, language, a situation, other advertising and other discourse." (Cook 1996, p. 2-5).

Text is a structured unit consisting of smaller units. It is "a stretch of language which makes coherent sense in the context of its units. It may be spoken or written; it may be as long as a book or as short as a cry for help." (Quirk et al. 1990, p.434). Advertising, if it is meant the verbal one, is a type of text. In printed advertising, the text may serve only for catching the reader's attention, provide information about the product or serve as an anchorage (the link between the image and its context; some guidance to the reader) for the image. Widdowson defines cohesion as "the ties that connect up units of language to form text. (...) The repeated pattern provides a kind of texture to the text, sets up a kind of connection or cohesion across the sentences." (Widdowson 2000, p. 38, 125). The following discussion focuses linguistic techniques that will unleash creativity in narrative discourses.

2. Advertising Language: Few Techniques

2.1 Informational Structure within the Text – Theme and Rheme

The RHEME (also called new, focal element; comment) is the informationally most prominent element of a tone group containing the new information, while the THEME (also called given, non-focal element; topic) is the least prominent element containing given information. In following example, (and in most cases), the THEME is the subject of the sentence, while the rest of the sentence is RHEME.

I love you Rasna

Boost is the secret of our energy.

The characteristic accent (intonational nucleus) is put on the last stressed syllable of the tone group. In this case, the subject 'I' is the theme; the rheme is the rest of the sentence increasing the communicative dynamism towards the last word 'Rasna'. Through ads, the intonational nucleus can be quickly adopted and learned.

2.2 Hyperbole

A hyperbole is "the deliberate use of overstatement or exaggeration to achieve emphasis. Businessmen and manufacturers use the figure of speech to advertise their goods in as attractive a way as possible."

"No other pain-relieving gel works like DeepRelief."
 "No one can eat just one" – Lays
 "Nobody delivers Kerala better – Malayala Manorama

(http://www.languageinindia.com/march2005/advertising_englishhongkong1.html)

This can be applicable in day to day discourses for effectiveness. Consider the following examples. No one can climb Everest but Alishanothing is as useful as this app and so on.

2.3 Metonymy

A Metonymy is "the use of a single characteristic to identify a more complex entity. (...) It is extremely common for people to take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something and use that aspect to stand either for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it." Examples of Metonymy: 'The press' for the news media, 'Wall Street' for the American Financial Industry, 'The Crown' for the British monarchy. Among other examples belong following sentences: 'He reads Shakespeare.' (= his books), 'I drink Champagne' (= a drink), etc. In advertisements, an associated word often expresses the whole group: 'I like Volvo' (= Volvo cars), 'woman is an uncharted territory' (= all the women), 'a fragrance of Sabatiny' (= perfumes made by Sabatiny).

Volkswagen means "people's car" in German. Its current International Slogan is "Das Auto" ("The Car"). Metonymy is an effective Narrative Technique that makes discourse highly creative.

2.4 Antithesis

An Antithesis "is a figure of speech, which uses the same or similar structure to express two opposite ideas so as to achieve the effects of emphasizing the meaning and the contrast. The figure has the characteristics of harmonious combination of sound and rhyme, balanced syllables, sharp rhythm and compendiousness. The combination of pleasant senses of vision and hearing often stimulates the good feelings of readers and arouses consumers' buying desire."

*Talks inside. Shouts outside. New 2006 Fiesta.
No confusion, great combination*

(<http://www.languageinindia.com/march2005/advertising/englishhongkong1.html>)

This can be used to describe a unique situation or device. For example, Imagine a mini phone with maximum style and design.

2.5 Presupposition

In advertising language, presupposition is very frequent way of expressing the content. Advertisers rather use presupposition than assertion because it is much easier to deny an assertion than a presupposition: An example of presupposition is following:

"Just the touch of the button gives you voice control of your music, climate control and your Bluetooth hands-free phone." It presupposes that the car will certainly have got a button, radio player, air-condition and hands-free set and that everything will be able to be controlled by voice. Angela Goddard writes that presupposition is "all about reading between lines; since this is, as it suggests, a hidden process, it is very interesting to advertisers, as we can be taking in all sorts of assumptions without consciously paying attention to them." (Goddard 1998, p.125)

In advertisements, there are often cases where the question is stated as kind of a 'problem' and then the text offers an answer – 'a solution' for the problem: "Got wedding on the brain? Time to visit our new website."

2.6 Parallelism

The formal schemes can be represented in various ways. Parallelism is one of the forms of schematic patterning. It can

be defined as "repetition of formal patterns" (Leech 1972, p.186). Parallelism means the parallel presentation of two or more than two similar or relevant ideas in similar structural forms. It is a rhetorical device heightening the emotional tone of the message and its importance. Parallelism is often accompanied by Anaphora – "the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of several consecutive sentences or verses to emphasize an image or a concept." "Explore the hills. Explore the rivers. Explore the mountains. Explore the sea." And Epiphora - "the repetition of the same word or words at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences." (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>) "See new. Hear new. Feel new." "Worth doing Worth Dulux."

2.7 Incomplete Sentences

In advertising text, one can read whole advertisement without coming across a main verb. There is a widely spread tendency to punctuate phrases. One reason is, that the reader of the advertisement turns to the visual layout, which provides him many clues to correct interpretation, so the explicit structure of the sentence is not so important. L'OREAL advertisement text says - Because you're worth it! And it is one of the most recognizable, yet most compelling catch phrases in history. The slogan sent a powerful message promoting female self-esteem to women everywhere. As Pascal Beucler, a French brand specialist puts it, "It is neither to please others nor to fit into the mold that I choose the best product for my hair... It's to please me, to make me feel good."

(<http://bellabox.sg/magazine/the-story-behind-the-slogan-because-youre-worth-it/#sthash.LMXPoVJ6.dpuf>)

2.8 Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson in their book (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) define Metaphor as "statements and/or pictures which cause a receiver to experience one thing in terms of another.", for example: "Clearly, Mother Nature is a Romantic."

A single Metaphor may be worth of a hundred words of advertising text. It has an interesting value and stimulates the curiosity of the reader about the product. "One touch. One light, effortless touch and she realized freedom was something you feel." This advertisement is for Revlon face

powder. The sentence indicates that the freedom is actually the powder, because when you put the powder on your face, you will feel free. Kerala Tourism caption says – God's Own Country. In advertising, a Metaphor usually creates a comparison between the product or service and some other quality the advertiser wishes to be associated with the product or service advertised.

3. Research Implications

By the research it is identified that the writers of advertising texts often use words like 'new' (+ words containing 'new': anew, renew) 'just', 'perfect' (+ perfection, perfectly), 'real' (+ really), 'better', 'best', 'first', 'right', 'only', 'complete' (+ completely). The values, which express the use of pronoun 'you' and possessive form 'your' in research sample, confirm the intention of the copywriters to come closer to the consumer and evoke the feeling of intimacy.

L O'real : Becauseyou're worth it!
 Britania : Eat healthy,think better
 Complian A Completelannedfood
 Nike : Just do it

It is also observed that the informal style of advertising language predominates over the formal style. It is found the formal style of writing only in scientific and business types of Magazines. David Ogilvy (Ogilvy 1985: 7) in his book says: "I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative'. I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product."

By the above discussion, it can be inferred that advertising language is highly emphatic and it unveils the essence of message in a compact manner. This style can be adopted to narrate important and high priority situations like Interviews, Meetings and other professional deliberations. Language learning through advertising skills can be an enjoyable and innovative experience. There is connectivity and also there wouldn't be any Monotony.

4. Applications and Conclusions

Discussions of creativity in advertising in relation to language teaching and learning have tended to focus on issues of language usage. For example, research by Tarone and Broner (2001) underlines the relationship

between language play and problem solving capacities of learners on and off the task. The research presented in this paper points parallel directions of language techniques and argues greater focus on creativity in language discourses by following the examples of advertising slogans.

The challenges of conversations embedded in contexts and cultures are similar to that of any literary task. Kramsch (1993) constantly reminds us that the learner is someone struggling not just with lexico- grammar and pronunciation, but moving from with one cultural context to another.

The present research has been carried out in the area of multifaceted linguistic aspects of Advertising language. Further research can include pedagogical applications of the techniques discussed and also more work has to be done in the spheres of social and psychological impacts of Advertising Language. Classroom activities could be undertaken by exploring advertising slogans to raise learners' consciousness and assess learners awareness of creativity in usage.

It is clearly seen that advertisement makers exert great effort in the use of language, which becomes more and more delicate, attractive, and offers much for thought. The study and analysis of advertising language, as well, becomes a new item for language learners. Advertising language introduces new facts, findings and observations which are creative and extremely interesting. It will be useful and contributing for all who are interested in English language and its multiplicity. Language has different shades and styles of expression. By the above examples, it can be ascertained that language discourses will have deep and lingering impacts when they are expressed in a creative style. These techniques can be used as an influential component to make the conversations in a more creative manner.

References

- [1]. Cook, Guy. 1996 (1992). *The Discourse of Advertising*. London: Routledge
- [2]. Goddard.A. (1998). *The language of Advertising. Written Texts*. London. Routledge.
- [3]. Gibbs, R.W. (1994). *The Poetics of Mind : Figurative*

Thought, Language and Understanding. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

[4]. Gibbs, R.W. (1999). *Researching metaphor in L. Cameron and G. Low (eds): Researching and Applying Metaphor*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 29-47.

[5]. Kramsch.C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

[6]. Lak off, G. and M. Turner. (1989). *More than cool Reason: A field Guide to poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: Chicago University press.

[7]. Lak off, G. Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by Chicago*. The University of Chicago.

[8]. Leech, Geoffrey, N.1972 (1966). *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain (English Language Series)*. London: Longman.

[9]. Ogilvy, David. (1985). *Ogilvy on Advertising*. Vancouver: Vintage

[10]. Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, Sidney et al. (1990). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

[11]. Sacks,H. (1984). "On Doing "being ordinary", in J.M.

Atkinson and J.Heritage (eds): *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversational Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, pp.413-29.

[12]. Sweetser, E. (1990). *From Etymology to pragmatics: the mind- Body metaphor in Semantic Structure and Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

[13]. Tarone, E. and M.Broner. (2001). "Is it fun? Language play in a fifth grade Spanish immersion classroom", *Modern Language Journal*, Vol.85(3), pp.363-79.

[14]. Turner, M. (1991). *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the age of cognitive science*. Princeton: University Press.

[15]. Widdowson, H.G. (2000). "On the Limitations of Linguistics Applied", *Applied Linguistics*, Vol.21(1), pp. 3-25.

[16]. [http://www. language in india.com/march2005/advertisingenglishhongkong1 .html](http://www.languageinindia.com/march2005/advertisingenglishhongkong1.html)

[17]. <http://www.motto.com/glossary.html>

[18]. [http://www.sil.org/ linguistics/ Glossary Of linguistic Terms/Index.htm](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/Index.htm)

[19]. <http://www.wikipedia.org>

[20]. <http://bellabox.sg/magazine/the-story-behind-the-slogan-because-youre-worth-it/#sthash.LMXPoVJ6.dpuf>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Y. Suneetha is currently acting as Professor and Head of the Department at University of JNTU, RGM College of Engineering and Technology, Nandyal, India. She has taught courses on Communication Skills and Soft Skills with more than 18 years of scholastic experience in teaching at Engineering College level. With clear bent for research, she has presented more than ten papers at various National and International Conferences and in reputed Journals. By organizing several Workshops and Training Programs for the Faculty and the students, she has proved her leadership traits. Further, she has acted as a Resource Person for Seminars organized by other colleges. To her credit, she has attended an International Symposium and published the Paper in the rd Conference Journal at 3 CELC Symposium organized by National University of Singapore in May 2010. She has also been appointed as Chairman, Board of Studies in the Department of English since 2010 and designed the syllabi for Graduate and Post Graduate Courses for the consecutive academic years.

