

บทความวิชาการ

## ภาษาโฆษณาทางสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์

### The Language of the Printed Advertisement

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#### Abstract

Advertisers are convinced that advertising “works”; as a result, they increase their marketing budgets to compete for space and time for advertisement in a variety of media, especially on television, in magazines, and on billboards (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf, 2000). Advertisements may be constructed to have several functions, e.g. to inform, to advise, to subvert, or to warn. Many advertisers seek to maximize sales of products or services by using every communication process to create need which has not yet existed (Toolan, 1988; Myers, 1994; Woods, 2006). The more customers are exposed to the

advertisements, the more their perceptions, ways of thinking, values and behaviors are affected, conditioned, influenced or even manipulated by them (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf, 2000).

This paper explores the linguistic features of the printed advertisement to raise the readers' awareness of the advertisers' techniques and, importantly, the persuasive power of advertising. The paper begins with the description of the advertisement's structure, followed by the discussion of language features typical of the printed advertisement, and the significance of the language of printed advertising for effective communication.

In brief, this paper introduces the readers to the linguistic features of printed advertisements. It is expected that their awareness of these characteristics will help them to understand the persuasive power of advertisements and to communicate with the native English speakers effectively.

**Keywords :** printed advertisement, headline, body copy, signature, figure of speech, neologism

### บทคัดย่อ

นักโฆษณาเชื่อว่าการโฆษณานั้น “มีประสิทธิผล” ดังนั้นจึงเพิ่มงบประมาณทางการตลาดเพื่อซื้อพื้นที่และเวลาในการโฆษณาในสื่อต่าง ๆ เช่น โทรทัศน์ นิตยสาร และป้ายโฆษณา (วงษ์เบ็ญสัจจ์ และ ฟรีอุฟ, 2000) โฆษณาตอบสนองวัตถุประสงค์ต่าง ๆ เช่น เพื่อให้ข้อมูล ให้คำแนะนำ ทำให้เสียความรู้สึก และให้คำเตือน แต่นักโฆษณาส่วนใหญ่พยายามใช้ระบบการสื่อสารทุกอย่างเพื่อกระตุ้นให้มนุษย์เกิดความต้องการขึ้นทั้ง ๆ ที่ไม่เคยมีความต้องการนั้นมาก่อนเพื่อที่จะเพิ่มยอดขายของสินค้าและการให้บริการต่าง ๆ (ตุลาน 1988; ไมเออร์ส 1994; วูดส์, 2006) การที่ผู้บริโภคได้มีโอกาสสัมผัสกับโฆษณามากขึ้นเท่าไรพวกเขาก็มีแนวโน้มที่จะได้รับอิทธิพลจากโฆษณาทางด้านมุมมอง แนวความคิด ค่านิยม และพฤติกรรม มากขึ้นเท่านั้น (วงษ์เบ็ญสัจจ์ และ ฟรีอุฟ, 2000) บทความนี้ศึกษาลักษณะภาษาที่ใช้ในโฆษณาโดยเน้นโฆษณาซึ่งเป็นสิ่งพิมพ์เพื่อให้ผู้อ่านตระหนักถึงเทคนิคของนักโฆษณาและที่สำคัญคือพลังในการจูงใจของโฆษณา บทความนี้เริ่มต้นด้วยการอธิบายโครงสร้างของ

*โฆษณาโดยทั่วไปและลักษณะภาษาโฆษณาที่สำคัญ นอกจากนี้ยังกล่าวถึงความสำคัญของภาษาโฆษณาที่มีต่อประสิทธิภาพในการสื่อสาร*

**คำสำคัญ :** โฆษณาทางสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์ พาดหัวโฆษณา ข้อความโฆษณา ข้อความห้อยท้าย การใช้อุปมาอุปมัย คำศัพท์ใหม่

## Introduction

While there are a number of different types of advertisement, this paper focuses specifically on the printed advertisement, as found in newspapers and magazines (Punyaratabhandhu, 2005). According to Leech (1966), the most pervasive media for printed advertisements are the popular and niche magazines. The largely wealthy and middle-class readers are self-selecting in the sense that they make a deliberate choice to buy popular magazines and the smaller circulation, highly specialized, magazines on subjects that interest them. These are precisely the people advertisers strive to influence. Accordingly, the glossy magazines can afford to buy the highest levels of printed advertising skills that the advertising industry's research shows to have the greatest effect on buying habits. Wongbiasaj and Freeouf (2000: 74) add that "the printed advertisement has traditionally influenced almost every other type of advertisements. So understanding the printed advertisements may help us understand other types of advertisements as well". Perhaps simply because, historically, newspaper printed advertising preceded all other media it has had significant effect on the evolution of printed advertisement design in newer media. We will therefore spend a little space discussing the underlying features as a basis for the later analysis and discussion. The printed advertisement is the result of "an integrated attempt in which technology, science, art, graphic design, photography, illustration, printing, language and communication comes together as one" (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf

(2000: 74). Focusing exclusively on the linguistic features used in the printed advertisement does not deny the role of its other elements, but recognizes the power of the text in this application of one-way persuasive communication (Leech, 1966 and Woods, 2006). Drawing on the early work of Toolan (1988), Myers (1994), Locke (1996), and most recent of Woods (2006), this paper reviews some of the most typical linguistic features of the printed advertisement and provides examples of these from various magazines and newspapers such as *Glamour*, *Kinnaree*, *Marie Claire*, *The Singapore Women's Weekly*, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *The Nation* and *The Bangkok Post*.

## Advertisement Structure

According to Locke (1996), the printed advertisement consists of three major parts: Headline, Body Copy and Signature.

### 1. Headline

Borrowed from newspapers, the headline is the most easily read at the greatest distance or casual glance to attract the reader's attention and stimulate the desire to find out more, especially if it is expressed as some kind of advantage or promise to the reader (Locke, 1996; Boaze, n.d.).

Headlines can be classified into the following five basic types:

- News Headline;
- Advice and Promise Headline;
- Selective Headline;
- Curiosity Headline; and
- Command or Demand Headline.

**News Headline** informs the readers something he or she did not know before. This type of headline usually uses declarative sentence.

- ❖ Nicorette have created a new way to help bring down your smoking habit. (Nicorette, The Australian Woman's Weekly, 2007: 133)
- ❖ 1 in 7 people in the UK can't stomach milk (Lacto Free, Glamour, 2007: 295).

However, Locke (1996) warned that a headline is not considered a news headline only when it contains the word "news" or its synonyms.

**Advice and Promise Headline** aims to convince the readers that if they follow the advice in the advertisement, they will achieve a desirable goal.

- ❖ 7 days, Tender & Finer Skin Like Baby's (Bio-Essence (Radiant Youth Essence) The Singapore Women's Weekly, 2006: 67)
- ❖ 28 Days The only Number You Need to Remember for Crystal Clear Skin (SK-II (Facial Treatment Essence), The Singapore Women's Weekly, 2006: 59)

Both of these example headlines promise a way to fey the outcomes of the inevitable aging process if the advertised products are used for the recommended period.

**Selective Headline** targets a specific audience group.

- ❖ Can aroma science enhance the bust? Discover new Aromatic Bust Firming Complex (Shiseido, The Singapore

Women's Weekly, 2007: 15)

- ❖ Don't let cystitis make you sit things out again  
(URICLEANSE, The Australian Woman's Day, 2006: 90)

Obviously, the product in the first headline is being marketed to women who want to have a firmer and bigger bust but through the unusual means of aromatherapy. The questions format carefully avoids any legal complications about evidence of effectiveness. On the other hand, the product in the second headline is being especially advertised to those who are frustrated by not being able to participate in normal activities because of incontinence.

**Curiosity Headline** intends to arouse the readers' interest to make them read the advertisement.

- ❖ Don't miss The Point (The Bangkok Post, 2006: B12)

In the above headline, it is unclear to the readers what "The Point" really is. So, they have to read further to find out that "The Point" is not the issue or matter being talked about. Rather, it refers to the luxurious two-tower freehold condominium at Wong - Amat Beach, Pattaya.

- ❖ Even geishas would approve! (The Singapore Women's Weekly, 2006: 53)

Similarly, it is unclear to the readers what geishas approve and the answers may be varied e.g. clothes, make up, food or dancing style. So, they have to read on to find out that geishas approve the high quality of KOSE' Mousse Cleansing Oil to clean off stubborn makeup effectively.

**Command or Demand Headline** is usually expressed through the imperative clause.

- ❖ Protect yourself from bites and scratches at working time (Profender, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 84)
- ❖ Open the door to a fresher lifestyle (VITASOY, Superfood Ideas, 2001: 19)

Unlike other kinds of text, the command (or imperative) is often used in the advertisement to create a personal effect (i.e. a sense of one person talking to another) rather than to tell the readers to do something (Myers, 1994). This will be discussed further in the Body Copy section below.

In Locke's (1996) view, the effective headline is normally the result of the mix of two or more kinds of headlines rather than one (Locke, 1996).

- ❖ We all speak one language. Fly Emirates to five continents where **football** is **spoken**. Keep discovering. (Emirates, Time, 2006: 9)

In the above headline, the advertiser cleverly uses the declarative "*We all speak one language*" which readers instantly recognize as false and so read on, to find the news expressed as an imperative "*Fly Emirates to five continents where football is spoken. Keep discovering*". This quirky use of the meaning of the "*language*" makes the reader smile with this discovery, in turn leading to the little pat on the back for being clever "*Keep discovering*". Giving the word "*football*" the meaning and status of an international language capitalizes on the game's own highly successful advertising claim that it is a world

game, which Emirates would also, dearly, like to be. Considering how many continents there are is a side issue further challenging the reader to discover.

## 2. Body Copy

The body copy is the written section of the advertisement which describes the product's advantages. The body copy is written to sustain interest and to generate an appeal in the target audience.

## 3. Signature

The signature is the concluding part of the advertisement where the advertiser 'signs off'. It is usually located in the bottom-right-hand corner of the page in languages written left to right and top to bottom. This part of the advertisement has twofold purpose: to prompt action and to leave a final, lasting impression.

**Action** is often prompted by the use of imperatives.

**A lasting impression** - Common ways of leaving a lasting impression include the use of a brand logo (a trademark or symbol that reinforces the product name) coupled with a slogan - a short, catchy, verbal formula designed to stay in the consumer's head. Slogans often make use of puns, alliteration, rhythm and rhyme.



For example, the advertisement structure of Blue Diamond nuts (Superfood Ideas, 2001: 83) is as follows.

The headline uses a declarative sentence  
*"You never know what nuts are going to*

*show up at your place these days*”, a curiosity headline, in this case highlighting an ambiguous meaning. The background of the picture shows a group of people at an outdoor party, standing around the food table. The man in the center is acting in a crazy way, having spoons vertically sticking to his face. The word “nuts” arouses the readers’ curiosity to find out whether it literally refers to different kinds of nuts or goes beyond its literal meanings to the figurative sense of “crazy” men.

The foreground pictures of bags of different types of nuts and the information in the body copy makes the readers realize that the “nuts” in the advertisement is the literal meaning. The body copy is also accompanied by a statement encouraging the consumers to buy more nuts because the more nuts (both vegetables and human varieties) they have around, the better their party is going to be.

The signature of the advertisement features a brand logo “Blue Diamond” and a slogan “***There’s no nut that’s nuttier***”, making use of both alliteration (i.e. the “*th*” and “*n*” consonants) and assonance (i.e. the vowel “*u*” as in “*nut*” and “*nuttier*”), thereby reinforcing the body copy’s connection between the literal and figurative meanings of “nut”. Again the ambiguity is significant, referring to both the human and vegetable nuts.

### Advertisement Language Features

The language of persuasion has to be compressed to fit the available space including white space (the designer wants the text to stand out by not being too cluttered), to be eye-catching (words have shapes) and to be memorable (think of catch-phrases originally found in advertisements now used commonly because their meaning catches the reader’s imagination), and to complement the pictorial elements. No matter

where the designer places the pieces of text, these objectives will be sought.

### 1. Sentence Types

Like most texts, a variety of sentences (i.e. Declarative, Imperative, Interrogative and Exclamations) are used in the printed advertisement. Each type serves different purposes.

As already mentioned in 1, *Declarative* is used to give information and *Imperative* is used to urge the readers to some action. Although the central message of the advertisement is “buy this product”, the advertisers tend to avoid giving commands to the readers directly and rarely use the verb ‘buy’ in the advertisement (except when s/he wants to contrast ‘buy’ with other process words e.g. ‘rent’ and ‘lay-by’). Rather, they tend to urge the readers to do other actions such as ‘try’, ‘choose’, ‘discover’ or ‘use’ the products or services being advertised. Further, the polite word “please” is usually left out from the imperatives. In Western culture, this is acceptable if the speaker is asking someone to do something that is beneficial to the hearer, not the speaker himself (Myers, 1994). Some advertisers choose to use the imperative to catch the eye of people looking for a sense of direction, especially in the world of fashion. This value depends on the perceived authority of the person it is attributed to, or the reputation of the magazine.

Some examples of the imperatives are:

- ❖ **Discover** the Sensation of a Cream-To-Powder Transformation (Double Perfection Crème Poudre by CHANE L, Vogue, May 2005: 210)

- ❖ **Put** the discomfort of irritation behind you (RECTOGESIS Cleansing Wipes, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 140).
- ❖ **Bolster** your body's own natural defenses this winter with Blackmores Immunodefence (Blackmores, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 191).

*Interrogative* is extensively used, particularly in the headline although it is mainly rhetorical. It aims to prompt the readers' interest and expects a single answer.

- ❖ Can your hair care range tell the difference? (Dove Advanced Color Care, WHO, 2006: 6)
- ❖ Is your anti-ageing regime only doing half the job? (Nature's Own Age Renewal, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 99)

In the first case the readers must continue on to find the assertion that it is **only** Dove's new Advanced Color Care that can tell the difference between lightened and darkened hair, giving it the unique care it needs. In the first of these examples the question 'presupposes' the answer 'no', for example, "no, I don't think my current hair care products are working" (even if the reader is unsure what hair conditions the products are supposed to be able to differentiate between). In the second, the expected Answer is 'yes', a clever construction securing the readers' agreement. See presuppositions treated more fully below in 8.

*Exclamations*, as an emphatic form of the imperative but not a common feature in the written text, are deliberately used in the printed advertisement to encourage the readers to read the information emphatically and to be impressed by the strength of its conviction.

- ❖ Fall in love with your skin again with our best anti-ageing formula ever! (Loreal Revitalift, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 5)
- ❖ When hair color nourishes, cherry reds are simply irresistible! (Nutrisse Nourishing Permanent Hair color, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 37-8)

Both *Interrogative and Exclamations* engage the readers, creating personal, face to face contact (Myers, 1994; Woods, 2006).

## 2. Catchy sounds

Catchy sounds are commonly exploited in the advertisement to make it interesting and memorable. Some of the common techniques include: *alliteration, assonance and rhyme*.

**2.1 Alliteration** occurs when a consonant is used repeatedly, normally in certain prominent positions (Myers, 1994).

- ❖ **Healthy** dad ... **happy** family  
**We'll** care for **his** **health**  
**While** **he** enjoys **his** family (Samitivej Hospital, The Bangkok Post, 2006:1)

**2.2 Assonance** is the repetition of vowel sounds and its effect is usually more subtle than the alliteration (Myers, 1994).

- ❖ **Volumise** **Moisturise** **Mesmerise** (REVLON, The Singapore Women's Weekly, May 2007, p. 33)

**2.3 Rhyme** is the use of words that end with the same

sound as each other, resulting in pleasant sounds to the ear (Chuandao, 2005). For example, a slogan of one of the electrical appliances is:

❖ Spend a **dime**, save your **time** (Chuandao, 2005:4)

The advertisers cleverly use both alliteration (“*spend*” and “*save*”) and rhyme (“*dime*” and “*time*”) to attract the readers’ attention. The readers are to be convinced that if they buy the advertised product, it will not only help them save time, but also money.

❖ A breath of fresh **air** in skin **care** (Timotei, cited in Myers, 1994: 35)

In the above example, the advertisers use alliteration (“*skin*” and “*care*”) and assonance (“*breath*” and “*fresh*”) as well as rhyme (“*air*” and “*care*”) to make the slogan of the Timotei shampoo catchy and memorable. The example also illustrates that good copy writers tend to add impact by multiplying the number of devices.

**3. Colloquial diction** includes contractions, maintaining a tone of familiarity (Locke, 1996). The headlines of the ads for the New Heaven Dairy Desserts by Nestlé and the Baby Center Australia illustrate this:

❖ **Can’t** wait for some nice spooning? (The Australian Woman’s Weekly, 2006: 69)

❖ Everything you’re expecting and more (The Australian Woman’s Weekly, 2006: 27).

**4. Clichés**, because they are already familiar, provide a rich source for wordplay in advertising. For example, the advertising agency for

DTAC tries to persuade the customers to use DTAC by saying ***“When in Thailand, do as the Thais do ... select DTAC”*** (Sawasdee, 2005: 7). This borrows and adapts the famous saying ***“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”***.

Similarly, the slogan of the strawberry jam ad by Merrychef Foods ***“The Fruit. The Whole Fruit, And Nothing But The Fruit”*** is adapted from the famous law court oath ***“The Truth. The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth”*** (The Malaysian Women’s Weekly, 2005: 225). This gives the readers’ the impression not only that the jam is of high quality, containing 100% fruit and lack unhealthy ingredients such as sugar, preservatives and artificial color, but that it has legal approval.

Another example of cliché used in the advertisement is ***“Never Put All Your Eggs in One Basket”***, a headline of the Aberdeen Investment Company (The Nation, 2007: 5B). If the readers read the rest of the ad’s body copy, they will understand that the advertising agency wants to persuade them not to invest all of their money in only one kind of fund. Rather, the agency wants them to diversify their investment risks to different kinds of Aberdeen Investment Company’s funds, including Aberdeen Asia Pacific Equity Fund, Aberdeen World Opportunities Fund, and Aberdeen European Growth Fund (The Nation, 2007: 5B). Possibly, readers will miss the irony that each of these funds is in the single basket of the Aberdeen company.

**5. Approbatory diction** attempts to convince customers how excellent the product is. Businessmen and manufacturers are not satisfied that their products are being advertised as simply “good”. Rather, they need to drive their product’s qualities to be thought of as superior to any competing products (Chuandao, 2005).

- ❖ If it’s not **top** shelf, it doesn’t make it onto our shelves  
(Woolworths Select products, The Australian Woman’s Day,

2007: 57).

- ❖ Conceivably the **Most** Advanced Minute Repeater in the World (Citizen watch, Kinnaree, 2007: 57)
- ❖ The **One**, in millions. The **rarest, most** exceptional blend of our whiskies ever (Johnnie Walker Blue Label, Fortune, 2007: 81).
- ❖ Black Canyon Coffee. A drink from **Paradise** ... available on Earth. (Black Canyon, Thairath, 2007: 28).

**6. Jargon**, both in abbreviated forms and in full, is often used to impress the reader with scientific or pseudo-scientific technical terms giving authority to the product being marketed. Despite not being aware of the meaning of the term, the readers are persuaded of the product's quality because it sounds well researched and technically advanced (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985, cited in Woods, 2006). For example, the facial beauty products may claim to include ingredients such as *salicylic acid*, *Retin-Ox+*, *algae polyuronides* and *collagen*. Further, nutritional health supplement advertisements may include words such as *evening primrose oil*, *antioxidant*, and *vitamins A, C and E*. The following ad of Avance EPA2000, a health supplement, illustrates this.

Avance **EPA2000** is a premium health supplement rich in **Omega 3 fatty acids**, which are vital for maintaining a healthy heart and overall circulation. Loaded with the highest concentration (81%) of **Eicosapentaenoic (EPA)** and **Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA)**, these perfect pairs work together to promote good mental and visual health and protect your body against infections. Further enhanced with **Vitamin E**, a powerful **antioxidant**, each soft gel of Avance **EPA2000** gives you the equivalent of a 100g of cooked salmon. Now that's a great catch! (The Singapore Woman's Weekly, 2006: 135)

**7. Neologisms** are invented words or formulations used to make the advertisement more interesting and memorable. For example, the word “**accelebrate**” which appears as the headline in the MINI car ad (Image, 2004: 29) is a result of the combination of the words “accelerate” and “**celebrate**”. To make sense of such a novelty word, the readers have to read the ad’s body copy:

5. 4. 3. 2. 1. Vroom! Vroom! Incorporated with innovation technology and design, the MINI delivers sensational go-kart feeling with superb quality and handling. The only way to celebrate the holiday season this New Year is by pedal to the metal (Image, 2004: 29).

The information in the advertisement’s body copy asks the readers to believe that the innovative technology and design of the MINI car allows the driver to *accelerate* the car as fast as a go-kart and hence, in the imaginations of ‘boy racers’ of any age, it is the only way to *celebrate* the New Year.

Another example of neologism is the word “**edutainment**” as in the following headline:

❖ Explore the New World of **Edutainment** @ “Uniquely Singapore” with Nation Group and Christopher Wright (The Nation, 2007: 5A)

The invented word, which is a result of the combination of the words “education” and “entertainment” is intended to convince the readers that the “Uniquely Singapore” trip will not only provide them with important information for their further studies, but also interesting tour

programs such as city sightseeing and shopping. Further, the symbol @ is used in place of the word “at” to make the ad seem ‘with it’ and hence, more interesting and memorable to technologically ‘savvy’ people.

Another purpose of the invented word is to reinforce a sense that the product itself is a great innovation (Woods, 2006). For example, “**herbaceutical**” is derived from the words “herbal” and “pharmaceutical”.

- ❖ Avon pioneers a **Herbaceutical** breakthrough. New, East meets West to fight all the visible signs of aging skin (Avon Anew Alternative Intensive Age Treatment, WHO, 2006: 5)

The word makes sense to the readers when they read through the body copy of the advertisement which explains that “For the first time, Eastern plant therapies are united with today’s most advanced cosmetic technologies. A powerful fusion formulated to complement skin’s natural restorative processes...” (WHO, 2006: 6).

**8. Presupposition** refers to the question structured to make a particular point or employed for specific effect rather than to receive an answer. For example, the advertisers do not genuinely expect the readers to answer the following question.

- ❖ Haven’t we seen enough of ordinary? (FIAT, Marie Claire 2007: 59)

Rather, they aim to encourage the readers to believe that Bravo, a new model of a U.K. made FIAT, is definitely not an ordinary car. As the readers read through the advertisement, they will find out that it is so because “it (the new Bravo) is beautiful and spacious, with the option of a turbocharged T-Jet or Multi Jet engine, the New Bravo is so far away

from ordinary it's unreal.”

In the following advertisements, questions are used to convince the readers to believe that their problems can be solved or at least alleviated through the patterns of purchase and consumption of the products advertised.

- ❖ Why pick up the groceries when you can pick up the Aussie Roast? (Red Rooster, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 185)
- ❖ Not getting all that you want because of taxes? Invest in the Aberdeen LTF/RMR and reduce your taxable income by up to 600,000 baht (Aberdeen Investment, The Nation 2007: 3B).

As the above examples illustrate, the grocery shopping and financial investment are constructed as problems to which the purchase of Red Rooster and the investment with Aberdeen are the “perfect” answers. Woods (2006) points out that it is in the best interests of advertisers that potential consumers be convinced that they have a great many problems which can be solved, or at least alleviated, by buying the products and services of their clients. Accordingly, advertising copy writers play on all fears such as *Are you too fat?*, *Does your hair too oily?* and *Do your computer cause you headaches?* With this constant barrage of doubts raised by clever advertisers it is little wonder that many people develop neuroses founded in discontent with their lot.

## 9. Figures of Speech

Exactly the same language resources that are available to poets and playwrights are also available to advertising copywriters. In the compressed expression limited by the extreme cost of advertising space

the figures of speech must work hard to catch the buyers' attention and stimulate their thoughts and instincts to motivate making an actual purchase (Chuandao, 2005). In our analysis it is not simply to observe that copywriters use the common literary techniques of metaphor, simile, antithesis, parallelism, hyponym and personification, but how they use them.

**9.1 Metaphor** is a direct comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects. Generally, a metaphor describes a first subject as *being or equal to* a second subject in some way (Myers, 1994).

For example, the Ella Ella Baché eye cream is described as **a feast**, indicating that it is rich in ingredients and is generous with the quantity.

- ❖ A **feast** for your eyes from Ella Baché at David Jones (The Australian Woman's Day, 2006: 17)

Further, the process of removing makeup by FANCL Mild Cleansing Oil-Cover is described as a **breeze**, suggesting that it can be done quickly and conveniently, with the softest touch.

- ❖ Removing makeup is a **breeze** with Mild Cleansing Oil-Cover (FANCL, The Singapore Women's Weekly, 2007: 30)

**9.2 A simile**, like a metaphor, compares two things, except that it uses the *like*, *as* and *as if* to assert the similarity (Myers, 1994).

- ❖ At Huawei we ignite innovative ideas and turn them into spectacular results for our customers, just **like** a single match can spark off an outstanding firework (Huawei, Fortune, 2007: 82)

- ❖ Radiant **as** a dazzling star, it's eternal. It's celestial. Just **like** your love (Celestial Diamond, The Singapore Women's Weekly, 2007: 242).
- ❖ Play on world-class golf courses **as if** they were your own. Enjoy complimentary rounds and access to many world-class golf courses courtesy of visa Platinum (Visa, Kinnaree, 2007: 12)

Myers (1994) noted that similes may not be found in the advertisement as often as the metaphor because they present ready-made comparisons while the metaphor asks the reader to contribute to his/her own imaginative connections resonant with their experience of life or projections about possibilities.

**9.3 Antithesis** refers to the juxtaposition of contrasting words or ideas (often, although not always, in parallel structure) so as to achieve the effects of emphasizing the meaning and the contrast (Chuandao, 2005).

- ❖ Warehouse Clearance. Their Loss, Your Gain. (Chuandao, 2005: 4).
- ❖ One man's disaster is another man's delight. The sale is now on (Chuandao, 2005: 4-5).

Putting the two opposite ideas next to each other, the advertisers successfully catch the readers' attention and arouse their curiosity.

**9.4 Parallelism** refers to similarities of words or phrases in terms of graphology, phonology, grammar, and semantic terms. The following examples illustrate these.

- ❖ **Incredible Innovation Inside Inverter** (Daikin Inverter, The Nation, 2007: 3A)
- ❖ **Love your hair. Dove your hair** (The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007:16)
- ❖ The Residence. The Lifestyle. The Address. The River. Bangkok's finest waterfront residence (The Bangkok Post, 2007: Classified 23)
- ❖ The **goodness** of soy with a **great** milky taste (The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 138)

The first two headlines feature both graphological and phonological parallelisms. In the first headline, the prefix "*in*" is used repetitively. In the second headline, the sound /*ove*/ as in **Love** and **Dove** and the words "*your hair*" happen in the same sequence. In contrast, the third headline is considered a grammatical parallelism as all phrases have the same grammatical pattern that is the article "the" is immediately followed by a 'noun' so that the usually unaccented "the" becomes the strongly accented "THE", meaning "the best". In the final headline, semantic parallelism is applied because the words "*goodness*" and "*great*" are parallel.

**9.5 Homonyms (or Puns)** are the use of words with different meanings that are either pronounced the same (*homophones*) or spelled the same (*homographs*). The following headlines are examples of homophones which the words "2" and "Buy" are pronounced the same as "to" and "bye" respectively.

- ❖ Pack **2** Fly (Thai Air Asia, The Bangkok Post, 2006, Section 1: 5)

- ❖ Good **Buy** 2006 (Thai Air Asia, The Bangkok Post, 2006, Section 1: 5)

Unlike the above examples, the headlines below are examples of homographs as the words “hot” and “cutting-edge” have two different meanings.

- ❖ **Hot** Summer **Hot** Deals ... with the Bangkok Airways (The Bangkok Post, 2007: 1)
- ❖ Introducing A New Clinical Eye Lift **Cutting-edge** technology without the **cutting edge** (Avon, Australian Woman’s Day, 2007: 9)

On the one hand, the word “hot” means *very high in temperature*. On the other hand, it means *especially good in some way*. The readers are to be convinced that the Bangkok Airways will provide them with very good deals so that they can avoid the heat of summer by getting the best deals on flights to cooler destinations.

In the “Eye Lift” example, “cutting-edge” has one of its meanings as *modern or advanced* while a second is *the reduction of ingredients* and a third is the literal *sharp knife’s*. The readers are assured that the quality of the product will not be diminished due to the advanced technology used in production. Further, the excellent “eye-lifting” results could be achieved without either the use of surgical treatment (no sharp scalpels), or the resulting disfiguring scars.

In some advertisements, homograph involves the use of the same word referring both to the name of the product, and to a word with its own everyday meaning (Myers, 1994).

- ❖ Now, caring for sensitive skin is **simple** (Simple Skincare, The

Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 122).

- ❖ Time for a **swift** exit (Suzuki Swift, Glamour, 2007: 324).

Although this technique is perceived by some scholars as “unchallenging” (Myers, 1994), it is still evident in advertisements because it helps the advertisers convey their intended meanings precisely. Also, the repetition of the same word makes the advertising words easy to read and remember (Chuandao, 2005).

Wongbiasaj and Freeouf (2000) noted that homonyms are frequently used in the advertisement for psychological reasons. The advertiser can present the information ambiguously or implicitly. The readers are invited to make their own conclusions, deductions, inferences or interpretations. The more the readers are personally and actively involved in the interpretations of the meanings, the more attention they pay to the advertisement and hence, the longer they will remember it.

**9.6 Personification** refers to the process of identifying inanimate objects or an abstract entity as having human or animate characteristics such as sensations, emotions, desires and expressions (Woods, 2006).

For example, the new Lexus model IS250 is personified as an “intelligent” car, being able to respond to every need of its master.

- ❖ It senses your presence. It's ready when you touch. It feels your finger pulsing. It knows you're exhilarated. It makes you feel the power. It's your IS250. The intelligent Sports Sedan (Dichan, 2007: 243)

Another example is the Herbal Essence Color advertisement in which the words “roar” and “purr” are used to personify the product. In

effect, the readers are asked to be convinced that if they use Herbal Essence Color, the color of their hair will be so attractive that, like lions, it “roars”. Due to the excellent quality of the product, their hair will stay in so good condition that, like cats, it “purrs”.

- ❖ Color that **roars**. Condition that **purrs** (Herbal Essence Color, Glamour, 2007: 202)

A further example is the advertisement for Coles supermarket in which its system is personified as “farmer to you”, signifying that because the produce on the supermarket’s shelves has been personally delivered by the producer it has just been picked.

- ❖ Introducing Coles ‘**farmer to you**’ system (The Australian Woman’s Day, 2006: 41)

Woods (2006) emphasizes that the process of personification offers advertisers further opportunities to embellish the properties of the products they are marketing.

**10. Cohesive Devices** are extensively used in the printed advertisements to create unity or coherence. The most common of which are *references and repetitions*, and *ellipsis and substitution*.

### **10.1 References and Repetitions**

As the advertisement aims to persuade, it tends to approach the readers on a friend-to-friend basis, using the language features which create a sense of companionship and intimacy. One of these is pronoun references, particularly the first and second person pronouns (e.g. *I, you* and *we*).

- ❖ When **you're** stressed out over an urgent delivery the last thing **you** want to speak to is a machine. So at DHL **we've** gone all the way to rip **ours** out. Now a friendly customer service officer will attend to **you** personally within three rings every time. **Our** staff are also backed by the latest technology so **you** get real answers from real people in real time. Be it on-the-spot booking or tracking a package, call **us** today and give it a try. (DHL, Fortune, 2007: 23)
- ❖ **Your** dreams **our** Vision With the right partnerships **you** can achieve anything (Standard Chartered, Time 2006: 54).

However, the advertisers tend to use a repetition of the product name more often than the third person pronoun references (e.g. *it* or *they*) because it gives the product name a focus, reinforcing the readers' memory (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf, 2000).

- ❖ Enjoy the warming taste of **NEW COUNTRY CUP** Pasta soup. Taste the country with new 98% fat free **COUNTRY CUP** Pasta soup (Country Cup, The Australian Women's Weekly, 2007: 75).
- ❖ Why is **NESTLE ACTIV** Light Yogurt so good for active people? **NESTLE ACTIV Light Yogurt** is packed with essential nutrients to help you power through the day ... (Nestlé, Superfood Ideas, 2001: 13).

In the first example, the word "COUNTRY CUP" is used repetitively to give the product's name a focus. In the second example, the NESTLE ACTIV Light Yogurt at the beginning of the second sentence is used in place of the third person pronoun "it".

## 10.2 Ellipsis and Substitution

Ellipsis is the omission or deletion of words and clauses, which can be recovered from the preceding sentence or from context. Ellipsis is common in advertising discourse because the text needs to be short or quick to save space where words cost money. For certain words, the advertiser needs to isolate them and assign a focus, highlight stress, a prosodic purpose (Wongbiasaj and Freeouf, 2000).

For example, the phrase “*Do you have ...*” is ellided from the first line and “*Have you...*”, and “*Are you ...*” from the second.

- ❖ Sensitive, dry or cracked skin? (SBS1 Natural Skin Care, The Australian Women’s Weekly, 2007: 150)
- ❖ Rested from your vacation? Exhausted from the travel? (Marquis Jet, Condé Nast Traveler, 2004: 126)

Psychologically, an ellipsis enables the advertiser to create “ambiguity”, a major element in advertising. Ambiguity means unclear, incomplete and unclosed. When viewers are exposed to an ambiguous advertisement, they are subconsciously invited to participate in the process of forming a closure. Wongbiasaj and Freeouf (2000) stress that “the more viewers are actively involved in forming the closure, the more vivid the advertisement becomes in their mind and the more likely they become persuaded”.

- ❖ So secluded, yet so close to everything. (Hotel Bel-Air, Los Angeles, Condé Nast Traveler, 2004: 46)

In the example above, the readers are invited to complete the sentence by themselves. They have to read through the rest of the advertisement to realize that the phrase “Hotel Bel-Air is ...” is ellided from the sentence.

**11. Snappy syntax**, like ellipsis and substitution, is usually used to avoid wordiness. It may be a result of leaving something out (particularly a verb) or from punctuating with full stops what would otherwise be punctuated with commas (Myers, 1994). For example, in the following headline, the verb ‘has’ and the phrase ‘which are’ are left out.

- ❖ River City. Everything you love about Thailand. All in one place. (Bangkok River City Hotel, Sawasdee, 2004: 38)

In fact, the above headline should be read as “*River City has everything you love about Thailand which is all in one place*”. By leaving the verb “has” and the phrase “which is” out, the readers are asked to contribute by filling in the missing words to make sense of the advertisements. As mentioned above, advertisers often apply the incomplete or unclosed tasks in their advertisements to get the readers involved with them. Wongbiasaj and Freeouf (2007:89) stress that this not only gives the readers long-term memory, but also brings them satisfaction because forming closure means reducing tension and bringing back the balanced state of mind.

On the other hand, the following headline is intentionally punctuated with a full stop to emphasize the second part of the information.

- ❖ A commitment to slimming is in fact a commitment to effectiveness. With evidence to prove it. (Lipo. Metric (Vichy), The Singapore Women’s Weekly, 2007: 67)

Grammatically, it is unnecessary to punctuate sentence with a full stop and the sentence should have been read as “*A commitment to slimming is in fact a commitment to effectiveness with evidence to prove*”

*it*". Yet, the use of the full stop enables the advertiser to emphasize the second part of the information, making it more authoritative and punchy. On the other hand, these two parts have no real meaning, "in fact" is highly disputable. In the first, it is quite ambiguous whether the fat person or the product owner has the commitment. "Effectiveness" (in slimming) does not come from commitment, but from the reduction in calorie intake coupled with improving metabolic rate of burning calories already in the body as well as newly eaten ones. Or "effectiveness" may mean that the slimming person is effective at his job, his/her relationships and his/his leisure activities. So, the first part might read: When you commit to attempting to lose weight, it is a first step towards achieving that outcome. The second part has meaning, but the doubt is what value is the evidence? So there are several layers of meaning implied, asking the reader to contribute their own paranoia to fill in the gaps, whether the result of ellipsis or several other devices in the writing. To that extent the advertisement can be said to be successful.

## Conclusion

The language features of the printed advertisement have developed into a genre distinct from the conventional norms of the other genres of written language. Yet, the advertisement is still readable, coherent and cohesive and can still be comprehended. Myers (1994: 2) notes that it is beneficial for us to understand the language of advertisement because "it makes us aware of language they way poetry does". It is readily apparent that, like poetry, the language of advertising has its own ways of using literary devices to achieve multilayered meanings. As we become more aware of how talented copy writers manipulate the language of advertising to achieve sales, we will be able to inform our purchasing decision consciously. Importantly, we will be able to apply our knowledge of the language of advertising to communicate with native English speakers more effectively.

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