

أفعال الكلام المستخدمة في الإعلانات العربية المخادعة

Speech Acts Used in Arabic Deceptive Advertisements

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الملخص

يتناول البحث الحالي اللغة العربية المخادعة التي يستخدمها المعلنون ضمن إطار تداولي. ويعالج المشكلة المتعلقة بالحيل التي يستخدمها المعلنون في عرض إعلاناتهم في محاولة للتأثير على تصورات المستهلكين. وبالتالي، فهو يهدف إلى الكشف عن الأنواع المختلفة من أفعال الكلام التي يستخدمها المعلنون في عرض إعلاناتهم والطرق التي يمكن من خلالها أن تكون أفعال الكلام المقدمة هذه مخادعة بشكل فعال. ويفترض البحث أن أنواعاً مختلفة من أفعال الكلام تستخدم من قبل المعلنين في تقديم إعلاناتهم الخادعة، وأن فعل الكلام التأكيدي هو أكثر أنواع أفعال الكلام التي يستخدمها المعلنون لتحقيق هدفهم الخادع. تم اعتماد نموذجين مستقلين لتحليل البيانات. الأول هو نموذج "الخداع ضمناً" من قبل هاستاك ومازيس (٢٠١١)؛ فهي تهتم بتحديد الادعاءات الخادعة. تم تطبيق هذا النموذج على ٤٠٠ اعلان متعلق بأنواع مختلفة من المنتجات تم جمعها من خلال طريقة المراقبة من مصادر مختلفة. النموذج الثاني يتمثل في نظرية فعل الكلام لسيرل ١٩٧٩؛ ويهتم بالتعرف على الأنواع المختلفة لأفعال الكلام المستخدمة في الإعلانات المخادعة. وقد

تم تصميم منهجية الدراسة باتباع المنهج الاستكشافي المختلط الذي تم من خلاله تطبيق كل من التحليل النوعي والتحليل الكمي على البيانات المجمعة. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى نتيجتين: أولاً، أن جميع أنواع الأفعال الكلامية يستخدمها المعلنون في عرض إعلاناتهم المخادعة. يكشف الاستنتاج الثاني أن فعل الكلام التأكيدي هو النوع الأكثر شيوعاً من أفعال الكلام التي يستخدمها المعلنون في عرض ادعاءاتهم.

### Abstract

The present research deals with the Arabic deceptive language used by advertisers within a pragmatic framework. It tackles the problem related to the tricks used by advertisers in presenting their advertisements in an attempt to affect their consumers' perceptions. Thus, it aims to reveal the different types of speech acts used by advertisers in presenting their advertisements and the ways through which these presented speech acts can be effectively deceptive. It hypothesizes that different types of speech acts are used by advertisers in presenting their deceptive advertisements and the assertive speech act is the most frequent type of speech acts used by advertisers to fulfill their deceptive aim. To achieve the aim of the study and to test its hypotheses, two independent models have been adopted for data analysis. The first one is the "deception by implication" model by Hastak and Mazis (2011); it is concerned with identifying deceptive claims. This model has been applied to 400 advertisement claims related to different types of products collected through an observation method from different sources. The second model is represented by Searle's speech act theory (1979) ; it is concerned with identifying the different types of speech acts used in deceptive advertisements. The methodology of the study has been designed by following the exploratory mixed approach through which both qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis have been applied to the collected data. The study has arrived at two conclusions: first, it concludes that all types of speech acts are used by advertisers in presenting their deceptive ads. The second conclusion reveals that assertive speech act is the most frequent type of speech acts used by advertisers in presenting their claims.

## 1. Introduction

Communication around the world can be achieved by following various techniques, forms, means, and possibilities. An advertisement (henceforth ad) is an act of communication, more precisely it can be considered as one-way mediated communication (Fairclough, 2003: 77) which is “directed to a non-answer hearer or reader” ( Al-Hindawi and Al-Temimi ,2012: 3). The main aim for advertisers is to promote their products , ideas, and services in a way that convinces and attracts a large number of targeted consumers and they compete with each other in presenting as an attractive ad as possible . Recently, with the era of modernity, a lot of means of communication are spread widely around the world, especially with the emergence of the internet which is of great help for advertisers to do their job easier than before. Advertisers nowadays can use websites and exploit the different applications of social media like Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, etc., in promoting their claims and exposing their products. It can be said that such means of communication have the advantage of simplifying the promotional act for advertisers , and through which ads can be overflowed to anyone in every single place (Fialova,2017:9). However, several techniques can be used by advertisers with the purpose of getting the targeted consumers to either reinforce or change their attitude or behavior towards some products and brands . In this respect, advertisers can manipulate , control, convince, persuade , influence , inform and even seduce and deceive ; thus there is a variety in the level of what advertisers do (Miyazaki,2020). In particular , the deceptive language that is used in advertising communication is the concern of the current study.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem:

In marketing context, particularly in the process of promotion, advertisers tend to manipulate the persuasive strategy and misrepresent certain ad claims. Consequently, this misrepresentation can affect consumers' perception, processing, and comprehending of an ad. As a result, such ad claims may be problematic; ordinary consumers may face problems in figuring out the appropriate interpretation of a given

ad claim and this is what advertisers aim to achieve when presenting their ad claims.

### **1.3 Aim of the Study:**

The study aims to reveal the different types of speech acts used by advertisers in presenting their ads, and to investigate the capability of the presented speech acts in making the advertisement as deceptive as possible .

### **1.4 Hypotheses:**

1. Different types of speech acts are used by advertisers in presenting their deceptive ads.
2. Assertive speech act is the most convinced type of speech acts used for the purpose of deception, accordingly, it is the most frequent one presented in advertisements.

## **2. Deceptive Advertising**

In modern life, a variety of ads has been widely spread. Individuals are exposed daily to various types of ads intentionally and unintentionally. Ads in the modern era occupy a large space in each community. That's why ads have become an important tool and means of communication that is indispensable in transmitting the information from advertisers to the target party. For advertisers, marketers, and sellers, the main goal is to win consumers' satisfaction and capture their attention by using special kinds of tactics, tools, and techniques through which they can convince and persuade them to buy the product. In this regard, advertisers often put great effort to make an ad as effective as possible.

People usually are influenced by ads that are highly designed and well presented. They can be convinced easily by certain information, claims, or ideas whenever they are presented in a highly stylistic way, especially if they serve their needs and interests. However, in certain cases, in an attempt to raise their sales profits, advertisers present certain claims with an intention to deceive the targeted consumers (Danciu,2014:23). By doing so, they give rise to a specific type of ads to exist which are "deceptive ads".

## 2.1 Definitions of deceptive advertisements:

It is a concern for many scholars to define deceptive ads. Some scholars adopt the behavioral definition of deceptive ads which is based on consumer's perception, while others tackle the phenomenon of deception by focusing on the act of deceiving made by advertisers (Xie and Boush, 2011, p. 294). In this regard Gardner, (1975, p. 42) states "If an ad leaves the consumer with an impression (s) and/or belief (s) different from what would normally be expected if the consumer had reasonable knowledge, and that impression (s) and/or belief (s) is factually untrue or potentially misleading, then deception is said to exist". Olson and Dover (1978, p. 30) suggest "deception occurs when consumers acquire demonstrably false beliefs as a function of exposure to an ad". Armstrong, Gary, and Russ ( as cited in Gardner and Nath, 1986, p. 8) posit that deception occurs when the false claims are believed by consumers and consequently affect their attitudes and behavior. According to Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary (1996), to deceive is "to mislead by a false appearance or statement". Moreover, "in 1914, the Federal Trade Commission was given the authority under Section 5 (a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act to prevent unfair methods of competition in commerce" (Cohen, 1974, p. 8). Deceptive marketing according to FTC is defined as "a representation or practice that would likely mislead a consumer acting reasonably under the circumstances in a material way" (Campbell, 2010, p. 2). Based on FTC cases and court interpretations, an ad can be considered false, misleading, or deceptive under the following criteria (Cohen, 1974, p. 9) :

- 1.The claim is false: When facts are misrepresented, ads claim is false.
- 2.The claim contains insufficient information: Failure to provide insufficient information and limitations on the effectiveness of the product with some beneficial use is cited to be a misleading ad.
- 3.The claim may be true but the proof is false: When ads claim facts and features difficult to prove and demonstrate by advertisers in an attempt to persuade consumers through their promotional act.

4. The claim may be literally true but creates a false implication: When certain ad claims can convey more than one interpretation that is to be miscomprehended by consumers.

Moreover, deception is defined as an act that deceives the intended recipient. This is referred to as commission deceit. Deception can also arise as a result of a lack to act, as when a promoter or manufacturer fails to disclose a product's unfavorable aspect. Deception by omission occurs in such instances ( Aditya, 2001, p. 738).

More than one definition for deceptive advertising has been proposed by many scholars due to the fact that the word "deceptive" is broad in its meaning ; it may convey several meanings and aspects. Therefore, there is no agreed and totally satisfying definition to depend on in determining whether an ad is deceptive or not and this gives rise to the concept of deceptive being controversial. Some scholars claim that the phenomenon of "deceptive ads" should be tackled and defined from consumers' perspectives. That is to say, whenever consumers hold false beliefs by being exposed to certain ad claims, and whenever this ad has the capacity to affect their purchase decision, this ad can be deceptive. In other words, no deception takes place unless consumers are harmed by the perceived literal message that they are exposed to. Consumer's miscomprehension of the ads' claims is related to either consumer's inattention to the message of an ad or to the lack of the essential knowledge to interpret the ads' claims. It can be said that “consumers are not always highly interested and able to reduce deceiving claims, if they are unfocused at the moment of the ad conduct, they will be more vulnerable” (Khan, Saeed, Feroz, Liaqaut, Khan, and Jabeen, 2015, p. 92). Others argue that what constitutes deceptive ads is the deliberate misrepresentation of ads claims by advertisers in a way that confuses consumers particularly those illiterate ones who lack the critical thinking that enables them to weigh their choices through their buying behavior in contrast to those educated ones.

### 1.1 The Typology of “Deception by Implication”

Hastak and Mazis's typology of deception (2011) suggest a typology namely, "deception by implication". This typology is based on the integration between psychological theories and the legal framework to categorize different types of deceptive claims. The authors claim that consumers can be deceived by presenting truthful but misleading claims. Accordingly, five types of misleading claims are proposed to be included within "deception by implication" typology:

**1. Omission of facts:** This type of deception is concerned with presenting incomplete information or claims throughout the advertiser's promotion activity. Sometimes, marketers fail to disclose their claims that are related to the exposed products. Omission of facts is classified as :

a.Pure omission: When all the essential information related to the product being advertised is omitted by the advertiser.

b.Half omission: When advertisers tend to select certain facts to be stated, the facts that they want to expose, more precisely they highlight the most positive and effective attributes related to the products.

**2.Misleadingness due to Semantic confusion:**This type of misleadingness is represented by the use of certain expressions by which consumers can be confused. The semantically confused expressions in Arabic ads are represented by emotional expressions. Such expressions may stimulate and affect consumers' decision – making ( Achar, So, Agrawal, and Duhachek, 2016, p. 3; Danciu, 2014, p. 24). Yet, it is to be noticed that confusion can be also achieved at the level of pragmatics, that's why this point has been modified by the researcher to be "Misleadingness due to semantic and pragmatic confusion". Pragmatic confusion misleadingness is concerned with providing consumers with ambiguous claims. Consumers cannot infer exactly what is beneath the surface of the linguistic message. In this case, “the ad can be understood into more than one interpretations. People can catch what the ad shows differently from what the advertisers mean”(Cahyani and Islam, 2017,p. 50). Accordingly, they can be deceived and confused.



**3.Intra-attribute misleadingness:** It refers to the phenomenon of holding false beliefs and inferences by consumers about the same attribute or features of certain products or brands. It is subdivided into:

a. Attribute uniqueness claims: When advertisers associate their brands or products to a particular attribute as if this attribute is unique to this product.

b. Attribute performance claims: When advertisers present certain claims about the performance of certain attributes to the extent that consumers may believe that this can be considered as a source of that attribute.

**4.Inter-attribute misleadingness:** It refers to situations where consumers misperceive certain attributes and correlate them with other attributes. Accordingly, consumers may draw erroneous inferences and result in misleadingness.

**5.Source-based misleadingness:** To enhance the effectiveness of their ads or claims, advertisers usually tend to provide and support their claims with some endorsements that are taken from different sources, particularly those endorsements that are taken from typical consumers or certain experts. By doing so, most advertisers expose just the positive endorsements that praise their products for promotional purposes and mislead consumers.

### **3.Pragmatics of Advertisements:**

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that contributes to studying language systematically and scientifically. It is associated with studying language use in context (Birner, 2013, p. 2) and concentrates on those aspects of meaning that cannot be predicted by linguistic knowledge alone but taking into account interlocutors' knowledge of the physical and social world (Levinson, 1983, p. 21). It involves studying the implied meaning, the intended meaning of the speaker (Arif, 2016, p. 30), because what is literary said may imply more than one meaning, so pragmatic knowledge helps to understand how what is said is different from what is implied, and how a single utterance can be interpreted differently in different situations (Chapman, 2011, p. 69). However, the main core of the present study is concerned with

deceptive ads. It deals with the deceptive concept from a pragmatic point of view, particularly with the linguistic input that is asserted by many adverts to fulfill their intention to deceive consumers and concerned with the constituents of the deceptive advertising discourse that is designed in a highly stylistic way to be effective. The pragmatic approach is concerned with those elements which depend on extra-linguistic contextual information and the hearer's inference abilities. That's why "ads are rarely identified in isolation but rather identified in a context" (Tanaka, 1994, p. 7). Understanding the linguistic representation of a specific advertised message is not merely a matter of decoding, thus a good interpretation of ads can be best approached from pragmatic perspectives.

### 3.1 Speech Act

People usually perform different types of acts in their daily life , either physical or mental acts like walking, playing , writing, thinking, imagining ,etc. In addition, another type of act can be performed by the use of language which is called a speech act (Dawson and Phelan, 2016: 488) which can be considered as a basic unit of linguistic interaction (Griffiths, 2006:148) .

Speech act theory is one of the theories included within the framework of pragmatics since it requires an intention on the part of the speaker and inference on the part of the hearer respected to contextual factors ; thus , it is inherently a pragmatic theory( Birner, 2013:170).

#### 3.1.1 Searle's Taxonomy of Speech Acts

Searle (1979) presents a special taxonomy of illocutionary acts which consists of five basic categories or types of illocutionary acts one can perform. The following are the categories of speech acts as suggested by Searle (1979:12-20):

##### 1.Assertives:

The aim of assertive speech acts is to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. Speech acts that have the sense of assertion include : complaining , boasting, concluding , deducing, explaining , describing, claiming ,etc.( For further examples to the uses of assertive speech acts see Dhannon and Hussein, 2022)

## **2.Directives:**

Directive speech acts are performed when the speaker attempts to get the addressee to do a specific action ,as in requesting , asking, ordering, praying , commanding , permitting, questioning, challenging, begging, advising, etc.

## **3.Commisives:**

Commissive speech acts commit the speaker to do a specific action in the future, as with promising ,offering, threatening, etc.

## **4.Expressives:**

Through expressive speech acts , people can express their feelings , as thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating , deploring , etc.

## **5.Declarations:**

Performing declarative speech acts result in an immediate change in the status of the addressee. To successfully perform a specific declarative act, the speaker must have the authority and power to do so , as in declaring war, marrying, christening, and nominating.

To perform a specific speech act successfully , speakers should fulfill certain conditions suggested by Searle (1969) . Searle (1969:63) suggests a classification of four kinds of conditions:

**1.The propositional content condition:** The content of the utterance should count as a given speech act.

**2.The preparatory condition:** It requires that the speaker should have beliefs in doing certain acts as well as to have the power and authority over the hearer.

**3.Sincerity condition:** It is concerned with the intention of the speaker or his psychological state.

**4.Essential condition:** It is what makes the hearer perform the act which is motivated by the speaker's intention.

## **3.2 Speech Acts and Advertising:**

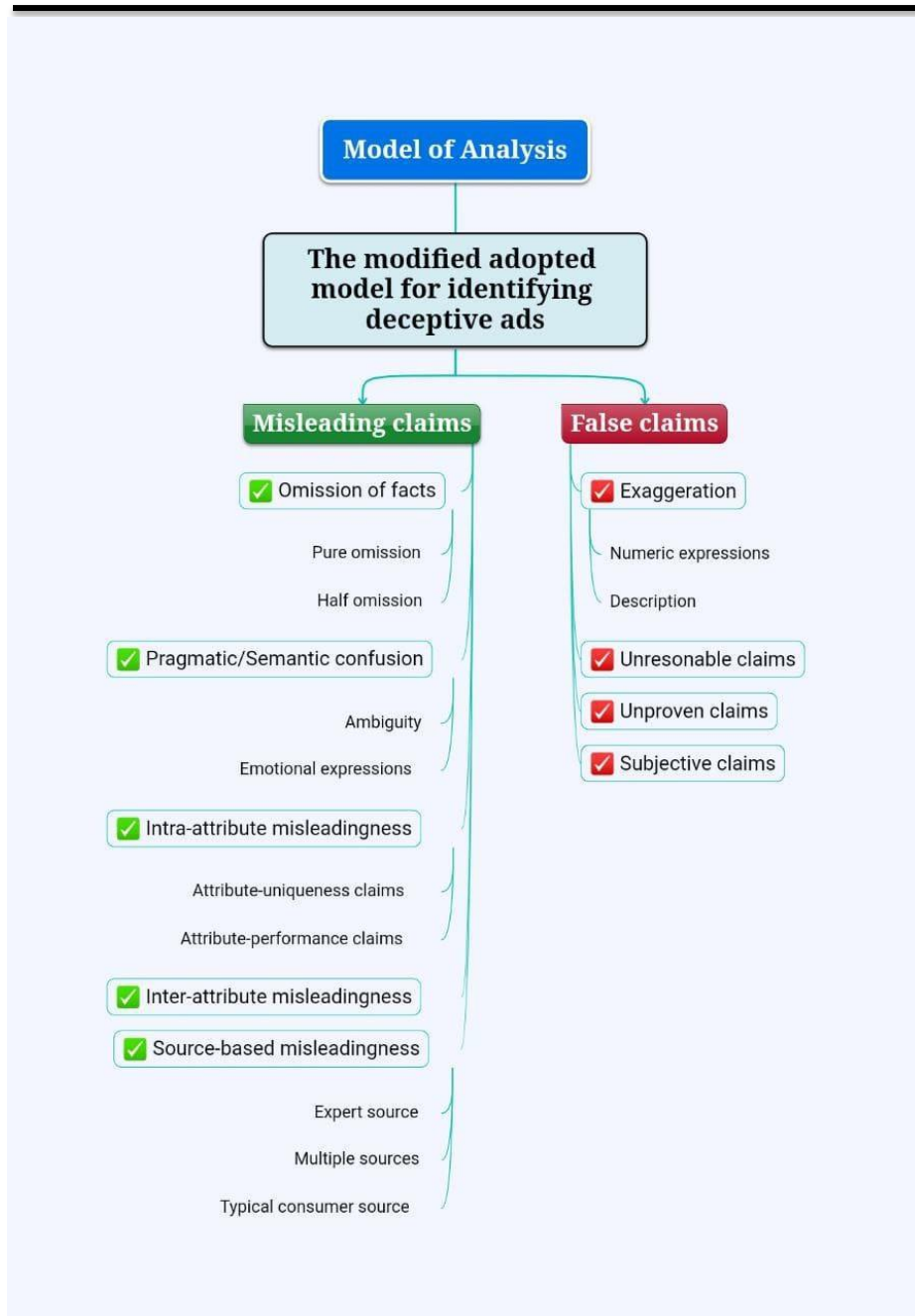
Speech act theory can be considered a reasonable aspect to study the language of ads. Advertisers often perform direct and indirect speech acts to persuade the target consumers in terms of promotion. In an advertising context, advertisers can perform different types of speech acts when presenting their ad claims. For example, assertive acts can be performed by advertisers when they tend to explain, describe or inform

their consumers about things related to the exposed products. Directive acts can be performed when advertisers invite consumers to buy the product. Commissives also can be performed through which consumers can make promises or present certain offers to their consumers. Some ads may have the sense of expressiveness in that advertisers tend to express their feelings towards their consumers by the use of certain expressions. Declarative speech acts can be also accomplished by advertisers in their promotional activity in one way or another (cf. Simon and Dejca, 2015; Novianti and Maliyani, 2018).

It can be said that speech act theory takes its role to investigate the different types of speech acts that are performed and exploited by advertisers particularly when they present their deceptive claims.

#### **4. Model of Analysis**

To fulfill the desired aim of the present study, two independent models have been adopted for the purpose of data analysis. The first model is called "deception by implication" by Hastak and Mazis (2011); it is concerned with identifying misleading claims. This model consists of five categories, namely: the omission of facts, misleadingness due to semantic confusion; this category has been modified by the researchers by adding another category which is concerned with pragmatic confusion so as to be misleadingness due to pragmatic and semantic confusion, intra-attribute misleadingness, Inter-attribute misleadingness, source-based misleadingness. For further identifying deceptive claims, this model has been modified by adding another model to be concerned with identifying another type of deceptive claims which is false claims. Since there are no objective criteria in identifying false ads, four components are determined by the researchers as the cases that are deemed to be issues of false claims, namely: exaggeration, unreasonable claims, unproven claims, and subjective claims.( See Diagram 1).



**Diagram (1)**

### **The Modified Adopted Model of Identifying Deceptive Claims**

The second model is represented by Searl's speech acts taxonomy which is concerned with identifying the different types of speech acts found in Arabic deceptive ads.

## 5. Data Collection

The data corpus of the present study consists of 400 ad claims that have been collected randomly from two main different sources namely social media and outdoor media. Few of these ads are claims written on certain products. The collected data are related to different types of products like cosmetics, fashion, food, and diet products, but with a primary focus on cosmetic products. Two means are adopted for collecting this amount of data. The researchers' phone camera is applied to gather collect data from outdoor media. In addition, screenshots are made to collect different types of data posted on social media.

## 6. Procedure of Analysis

Two different approaches are used for data analysis; qualitative and quantitative approaches. Based on the adopted model of identifying deceptive claims, the deceptive ads will be identified and classified into different types. Then, according to Searle's speech act theory, all the potential types of speech acts will be identified in each type of these deceptive claims. By doing so, qualitative analysis will be achieved. To support such analysis, a quantitative analysis will be also applied to the collected data to reveal the frequency of each type of speech acts.

## 7. Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis of the present research involves two identification processes, the first one is concerned with identifying the deceptive ads under the application of the "deception by implication" model, and the second one is concerned with identifying the different types of speech acts which are represented in these deceptive claims under the framework of Searle's speech act theory.

### 7.1 Qualitative Analysis

The present section deals with analyzing the collected data qualitatively, starting with misleading claims with identifying the different types of speech acts they have, and the same applies to false claims.

### 7.1.1 Misleading Advertisements

The present section deals with presenting and analyzing all categories of misleading respectively as follows:

#### 7.1.1.1 Omission of Material Facts

This type of deception is concerned with presenting incomplete information or claims throughout the advertiser's promotion activity, as it is seen in the following claim:

(1) **يحتوي على تركيبة قوية من المواد**

**ingredients)**

The above-mentioned claim has been written in one of the promotional posts on Facebook that are associated with cosmetic ads through which the advertiser tries to inform consumers about the ingredients of a specific skincare product. The advertised product looks like a scrub by which human skin can be bleached and cleaned. This claim is categorized as being misleading due to the incomplete information that has been presented. The advertiser's claim is just that this product consists of a powerful combination of ingredients without even mentioning what these ingredients are. By doing so, the pure omission of facts has been committed by the advertiser. Accordingly, consumers will lack the adequate understanding that has an apparent role in evaluating the ad claim appropriately.

According to speech act theory, the ad claim mentioned above performs an assertive speech act through which the advertiser performs an informing action. However, regarding the felicity conditions, the mentioned claim has been identified as insincere assertive speech act due to the deceptive intention that is held by the advertiser through his attempt to present a misleading claim which has been embodied in providing consumers deliberately with incomplete facts. Therefore, the pragmatic trap that is included in the above-mentioned claim is represented by the fact that the sincerity condition has not been met.

#### 7.1.1.2 Misleadingness due to pragmatic and semantic confusion:

Misleadingness due to Pragmatic confusion can be represented by claims containing certain ambiguous expressions that have more than one interpretation (Islam and Cahyani, 2017: 50). In Arabic written ads, those ambiguous claims are widely adopted by the advertisers,

particularly when they tend to make a specific offer to their consumers. let us consider the following example:

**(2). عرض لفترة محدودة (Limited time offer).**

Throughout gathering the data of the present study, it has been observed that this claim has been widely adopted and used by advertisers when they want to make a special offer about their products. Moreover, it has been noticed also that such a claim has been written more than one time in one single ad, especially in social media ads. However, this claim is identified as a misleading claim due to its ambiguity, by saying that this offer is valid for just a limited period of time without determining the exact time for this offer, the ad will have more than one potential inference. By doing so, advertisers tend to make consumers believe that this offer will end at any time; thus consumers may buy the product because they are afraid that this offer may be ended soon due to the unspecified period of time that hasn't been determined at the beginning and the end of their offering.

Through presenting such a claim the advertiser performs a declarative speech act which holds an informative illocutionary force by which the advertiser tends to inform his targeted consumers that this offer is valid for a limited period of time. Yet, the informative force of this declarative speech act has been identified as insincere; the sincerity condition which is concerned with the intention of the speaker has not been fulfilled. The advertiser hasn't been sincere in performing such an ad claim because the starting and finishing period of time of the offer have not been mentioned by the advertiser. By claiming that this offer is valid just for a limited period of time, the advertiser ignores mentioning certain facts about this offer; thus, erroneous inferences can be generated from this non-informative ad claim, that's to say, the intention behind presenting such a mysterious claim is to deceive the consumer. Being insincere through performing such a speech act result in a pragmatic trap through which consumers can be misled.

Semantically confused claims are represented by the use of emotional expressions. Those expressions can be considered as effective tools in shaping consumers' choices and influencing their



purchasing behavior (Achar, So, Agrawal, and Duhachek,2016:3; Danciu,2014:24). For example:

(3)لأنك جميلة، لوريال تريد لك الافضل

**(Because you are beautiful, L'Oreal wants the best for you)**

This claim has been observed in social media ads by which the advertiser wants to promote a shampoo product that has a certain role in reducing hair problems that consumers usually suffer from. The advertiser here chooses to promote the advertised product by starting the claim with an expressed positive statement that involves praising the ad receivers to make them have the impression that they should buy the advertised product because it is the best choice for preserving their beauty and having a healthy hair as long as possible. As observed, this claim is oriented directly to women, they are the targeted ones that the advertiser wants to present such a claim to. Advertisers tend to use such emotional expressions because the women's psychological state, in general, might be affected easily through being exposed to such a kind of compliments and emotional expressions, particularly if the advertised product is close to their needs in a sense that everything associated with this product is taken seriously.

In terms of speech act theory, the presented claim can be considered as an assertive speech act through which the advertiser asserts to his targeted consumer that she is beautiful. The compliment that has been asserted through this act has a significant effect in increasing consumers' happiness and raising their self-confidence. Whatever the sense consumers can get by being exposed to such an emotional expression, their behavior can be influenced positively towards the advertised product. Behind the compliment that is presented in this claim, the advertiser implicitly performs a directive act in that he indirectly asks consumers to buy the product. However, whatever force the ad claim may have, it does not fulfill the sincerity condition; thus, it is characterized as deceptive. The deceptive intention is clear as the advertiser makes a specific reference by using the personal pronoun twice. The advertiser begins his claim by stating the inseparable personal pronoun "ك" in "لأنك", because you are" and the second

personal pronoun at the end of the claim which is represented by "ك" in the word "لك, for you". By using these personal pronouns, the advertiser addresses his claim to just one specific consumer while this claim is written and shared on Facebook account in that hundreds of consumers can perceive it. Therefore, this assertive speech act has not been performed sincerely, so it can be misleading.

#### 7.1.1.3 Intra-attribute Misleadingness

It is another parameter through which misleading ads can be identified. It entails certain cases when consumers misperceive specific attributes which result in misleading inferences about the same attribute. For example:

(4) كل ما هو حصري وغريب تجدونه لدينا فقط .

#### (You can find everything exclusive and strange only with us)

This ad claim has been observed written at the beginning of every promotional post on Facebook and Instagram accounts that are related to a specific mall concerned with selling things related to different types of products. When he tries to expose his products, the owner of this mall starts his promotion with this statement in order to maintain the attention of his targeted consumers whether on Facebook or Instagram since both these accounts are considered as effective tools through which advertisers can show their products to hundreds of people and they represent the best choice for the majority of advertisers to exercise their promotional activity. However, this statement is identified as a misleading claim because the advertiser gives his products such a unique description by informing his consumers that they can find everything strange and exclusive only with what he sells in a sense that he associates those attributes only to his products. By giving his products such a uniqueness, consumers may be misled by assuming that no other malls have such attributes; this assumption has been generated by the deliberate use of the word "فقط, only" by the advertiser. The sense of uniqueness that is revealed from this claim is

given by the use of "فقط, only" to imply that everything strange and exclusive is uniquely related to the products being offered in this mall.

According to speech act theory, this claim can be considered as an assertive speech act. By performing an assertive act, the advertiser asserts to his consumers that they will find every new, different, unique, and strange thing with products that he presents in his mall. Despite the sense of assertion that this claim has, it is still hard for consumers to check its truth value, that's why the advertiser exploits this difficulty and presents such a misleading claim. Accordingly, the assertive act has been performed insincerely by the advertiser due to his deceptive intention.

#### **7.1.1.4 Inter attribute Misleadingness**

This strategy indicates cases through which consumers make a correlation between two different attributes when drawing their inferences, as it is seen in the following example:

##### **(5). قليل الدسم (Low fat)**

The previous labeling claim has been observed written on one of the specific cheese products to make them more appealing to consumers who are concerned with losing weight or having health problems. As a result of being exposed to such claims and based on the logical consistency inference, consumers may have the belief that since this product is "low in fat" so it is "low in calories" while the two attributes differ from each other. By holding such false beliefs by consumers, invalid inferences can be generated so as such true claims can be ruled as misleading.

It is worth mentioning that such a false belief is commonly held by those illiterate consumers who are not concerned with any other provided information that is labeled on the product. That's why, even with making a successful disclosure to correct such a false belief, it is non-effective for acquiring the correct belief because consumers tend to combine new information with previous assumptions that they hold. However, the claim has been identified as misleading but not at the level of speech act theory in that it represents a sincere assertive speech act.

#### 7.1.1.5 Source-based misleadingness

Source-based misleadingness is the strategy by which advertisers choose to provide consumers with specific endorsements and testimonials concerning the displayed products. For example:

(6) موصى به من قبل اطباء الجلدية

#### (It has been recommended by dermatologists)

It has been observed that this claim has been frequently used by promoters in an attempt to enhance the value of the product being offered and to encourage product purchasing. It is widely stated through the promotional posts that are concerned with promoting cosmetic products on both Facebook and Instagram accounts. Perceiving such a claim may result in an assumption that the displayed products are checked and inspected by those experts who have permission to recommend such products. Consequently, consumers can be misled; their perception may be influenced by being exposed to such endorsements and they may assume that this product is safe to use without resulting in any problems. Accordingly, their purchase behavior can be affected and the act of buying the displayed product may be motivated.

In terms of Searle's speech act theory, the above-mentioned claim expresses an assertive act in a sense that the advertiser asserts to their consumers that this product has such recommendation in order to affect their ad processing. However, when advertisers perform such assertive speech acts, they don't fulfill the sincerity condition due to their deceptive intention behind providing consumers with such recommendations. That is to say, they tend to support their ad content by such recommendations and to mislead consumers as well.

#### 7.1.2 False Claims

Throughout this section, the criteria that have been selected for identifying false claims are presented with their examples that can be analyzed for further identification of insincere speech acts.

**7.1.2.1 Exaggeration:** One of the strategies that are adopted by most advertisers through their promotional activity is to exaggerate their claims. Advertisers deliberately attempt to give a highly exaggerated

description to the quality or attributes of their products to the extent that it would not be matching the performance of the product itself. In addition, they sometimes join their claims with exaggerated numeric expressions as well. The following is an example of an ad including an exaggerated numeric expression:

**(7) يقضي على التقصف 100% It eliminates hair breakage 100%)**

This claim has been presented by the advertiser in an attempt to promote a specific brand of shampoo products on his Facebook account. The presented claim involves that the advertised product can treat hair breakage one hundred percent. Giving such an exaggerated percentage beside the presented information that is related to the advertised product is widely adopted by the advertisers. However, the problem of hair breakage that many women suffer from cannot disappear totally and never can be perfectly treated. That's why this claim can be identified as a non –factual claim. To defend himself from being accused of presenting nonfactual claims, the advertiser can present his claim without giving such a guarantee on the performance of the advertised product. In contrast, the presented ad claim lacks credibility due to the exaggerated numeric expression that has been presented deliberately by the advertiser to deceive the consumers.

An example related to the exaggeration in description can be presented as follows:

**(8) مرطب الشفاه الافضل على الاطلاق وبدون منازع مرة وحدة و ميحتاج تستخدميه بعد**

**(The best lip balm ever, without a competition, one time is enough to use it once and for all).**

The above-mentioned description has been given to a specific lip balm brand by the advertiser through his promotional activity on his Instagram account. Two exaggerated claims are included within this ad. The first exaggerated claim is represented by giving this brand the superiority over other products to imply that this brand is the best product one can ever use. However, all beauty products that are related to the area of cosmetics have endless brands updated or manufactured by many producers who are interested in preparing such beauty products and competing among themselves to present as a satisfactory

brand as possible. In this respect, it is potential to have other products or brands that may have the same performance as the product being advertised, or even better than it. Accordingly, it can be said that the advertiser's preference for the product as "the best without any doubt" is fake and has a sense of falsity. The advertiser seems to be subjective in his evaluation and this subjectivity is apparently represented by the exaggerated sense that the presented claim has. Another exaggerated claim that can be identified is represented by the clause that is stated at the end of this ad. In this claim, the advertiser tends to inform his targeted consumer that to get the effect that she wants, she can use this product only one time and it needn't be used anymore. However, the impact that the advertised brand has on its users cannot be effective and stated forever, that's why it definitely need to be used more than one time by consumers in order to keep its impact. In other words, this claim is highly exaggerated by the advertiser to deceive consumers and to imply how such a brand is highly effective from the very beginning of its consumption.

As a speech act, the above-mentioned claims are considered as insincere assertive speech acts because of the advertisers' intention not to fulfill the sincerity condition due to the nonfactual claims that have been presented by the advertisers deliberately to deceive consumers.

#### 7.1.2.2 Unreasonable claims

In Arabic written deceptive ads, unreasonable claims have been presented by many advertisers in promoting specific products, offers, or services, etc. As can be seen in the following ad claim:

(9)أرقى زيت ممكن تستخدميه يعني ماكو بعد ولا شعراية تتساقط

**The best oil you can ever use, no single hair would fall out afterwards.**

This unreasonable claim is related to a specific hair loss treatment oil that has been promoted on an Instagram account. The advertiser starts his claims by a praising statement; he states that this is the best product one can ever use for treating hair loss problems. This claim may imply that one can get rid of this problem forever, but this is something unreasonable, that's to say, it cannot be achieved regardless

the product being used because all humans particularly women differ in the level of their suffering from hair loss problem in their life. Consequently, no one can completely get rid of such a problem. Due to the difficulty in achieving such a result, this claim can be a false claim. Under the framework of speech act theory, the presented claim is identified as an assertive speech act, but the sincerity condition has not been fulfilled by the advertiser because of presenting a nonfactual claim in an attempt to deceive consumers.

#### 7.1.2.3 Unproven Claims

These are claims that are presented without any existing evidence that may prove them. Unproven claims can be further explained when advertisers give the advertised product a certain classification as if it is built on a certain study that is not be provided by the advertisers through their promotional activity as in the following examples:

(10) الغسول رقم واحد عالميا (The lotion number one).

The ad claim has been presented by the advertiser on his Instagram account to promote a specific brand of lotions that are used by women for keeping their skin pure and fresh. What qualifies such a claim as being false is the absence of the evidence that proves this claim. That's to say, no previous statistical studies have been presented by the advertiser as evidence to support and prove that this advertised lotion is universally number one. By doing so, the advertiser intends to raise the value and the quality of the advertised product as well as to deceive his consumers.

As a speech act, this claim is considered as an assertive speech act by which the advertiser tends to make his words fit the world. Due to the deceptive intention behind presenting such an unproven claim, the advertiser misfires the sincerity condition that's why it will be an insincere assertive speech act.

#### 7.1.2.4 Subjective claims

Subjective claims are claims that have a high level of subjectivity to the extent that they cannot be verified by consumers so that the advertisers exploit this point in presenting nonfactual claims. For example:

(11) لسنا الوحيدين ولكننا الافضل ( **We are not only alone, but we are the best**)

By this claim, the advertiser tends to promote the service that is presented in a specific restaurant in Mosul. First, the advertiser defends himself by starting his claim with the statement of "لسنا الوحيدين", we are not only alone ", then he ends his claim with a praising statement which is represented by "لكننا الافضل", but we are the best". This judgment that has been made by the advertiser himself can be problematic due to the high level of subjectivity that it has. This claim can be qualified as a false claim because such a comparison cannot be proved by the advertiser so as it cannot be judged as objectively true. Accordingly, it is hard for consumers to verify the validity of such a subjective claim unless one has a prior experience of all restaurants exist in Mosul, in this case, she/he can distinguish whether the restaurant being promoted deserves to be the best or not, but practically this is hard to be achieved by certain consumers. The advertiser realizes that consumers cannot verify the subjective claims easily; he deliberately chooses to promote his service in this way to deceive consumers.

Regarding speech act theory, the problematic statement "لكننا الافضل but we are the best " has one illocutionary force namely the assertive force. But due to the sense of falsity that this claim has, this assertive act has been performed insincerely because the advertiser intends to deceive his consumers; his sincerity condition has not been fulfilled by performing such deceptive acts.

## 7.2 Quantitative Analysis

Statistical analysis has been conducted to reveal the frequency of each type of speech acts used in Arabic deceptive ads.

### 7.2.1 Frequency of speech acts used in Arabic Deceptive Ads:

The identified deceptive ads represent different types of speech acts. In the current research, an assertive speech act is the most frequent type of speech acts that has been adopted by advertisers in presenting their claims; 85. 7% of speech acts in deceptive ads have been identified as assertive speech acts. Such a high percentage may indicate that



advertisers almost tend to give their claims this sense of assertion in order to be as factual as possible so as to become more persuasive than other claims. Also, it can be said that due to the different illocutionary forces that assertive speech acts have, they have been widely used by advertisers whereby advertisers can assert, inform, suggest, explain and describe certain things in their ad claims.

Declarative speech acts occupy 12.6% of speech acts used in deceptive ads. For advertisers, declarative claims are of a little efficiency to achieve deception in their promotion. Moreover, they represent specific type of ads particularly those of discounts ads; thus, not all ads can have the sense of declaration, that's why declarative claims are less frequent than assertives.

Six ad claims have been identified as directive speech acts through which advertisers ask and advise their consumers implicitly or explicitly to buy the product. The imperative mood of these directive acts may not be too much acceptable by certain consumers, as a result, advertisers avoid designing directive claims in their ads. In Arabic marketing context, directive acts make up only 1.8 % of speech acts used in deceptive ads.

As far as commissives speech acts are concerned, one single ad has been identified as a commissive act by which the advertiser makes a promise to their consumers. It can be said that promises are rarely performed sincerely by advertisers in that those promises are not too much trusted by consumers so it can be less deceptive; advertisers rarely commit promises in their ads.

Expressive speech acts have not been used by advertisers when presenting their ad claims because the marketing context is not the context where one can express his feelings; they have no significant role in achieving deception in advertising.

However, the difference in the types of speech acts used in deceptive ads can be explained in the following Figure:

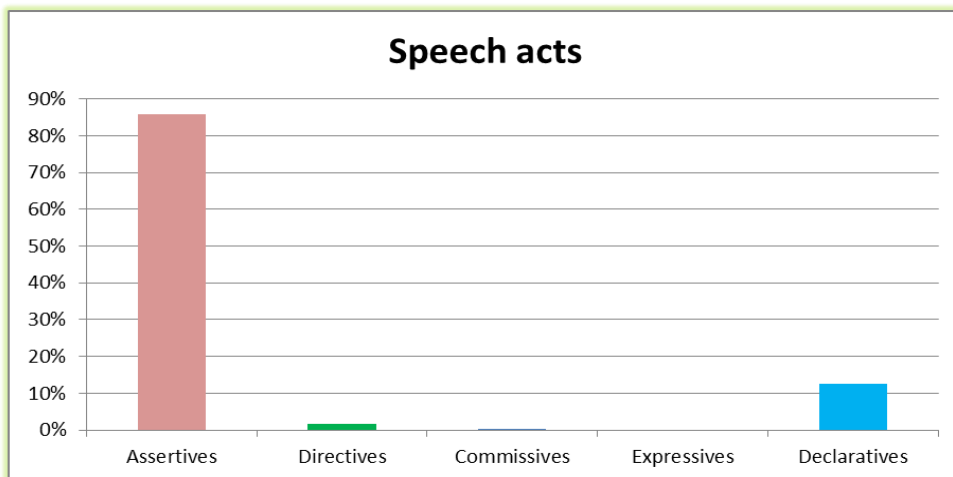
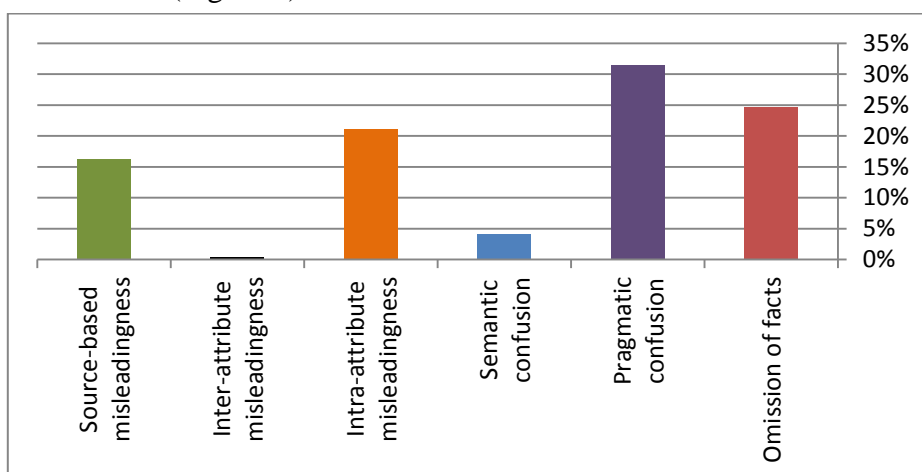


Figure ( 2)

### Rates of Speech Acts Used in Arabic ads

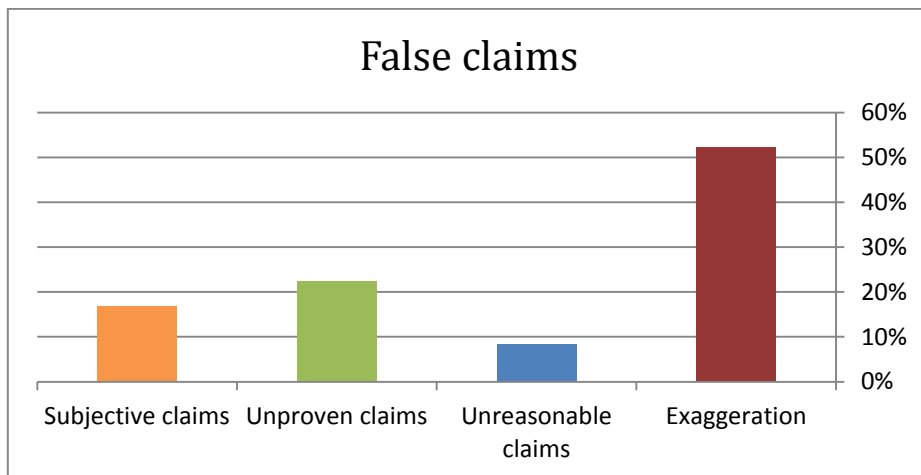
In accordance with the data that have been analyzed, it has been found that when advertisers tend to deceive consumers by performing a specific type of speech act, their sincerity condition is not considered; this condition almost has not been fulfilled by advertisers in the deceptive context. Accordingly, this may result in many insincere speech acts; the insincerity in performing a specific speech act helps advertisers to achieve their deceptive intention as it has been noticed throughout the qualitative data analysis. The rates of speech acts mentioned in the diagram above support the two suggested hypotheses of the current research paper, in that, assertive speech act holds the sense of convincement more than other speech acts, that's why it is the most adopted one. Concerning the deceptive strategy, it has been found that advertisers tend to present either misleading claims or false claims. In both types of deceptive claims, advertisers follow certain strategies in designing their claims. For example, misleading claims have specific strategies that are different from strategies used to present false claims. Moreover, these strategies differ in their significance in presenting deceptive claims. It has been found that advertisers usually prefer to use a specific strategy rather than another. For instance, in misleading claims, advertisers often follow the strategy of presenting ambiguous claims in order to confuse and deceive their consumers. What supports such a finding is the high proportion of ambiguity among the collected

data .The second high proportion of these strategies is related to the omission of facts in that advertisers usually tend to omit certain facts related to the products being offered in an attempt to motivate them to discover the hidden facts ; thus they may decide on purchasing the products. It has been noticed also that advertisers try to confuse their consumers' perception by the use of certain comparative adjectives in either describing the attributes of their products or in praising themselves. It has been found that such a strategy is similar in its efficiency in deceiving consumers to the omission of facts strategy due to the close frequency of claims that have been designed by following these two strategies. This may refer to the advertisers' preference to follow such strategies, but at all, they are less significant than presenting ambiguous claims. Appealing to consumers' emotions is also not too much considered by advertisers ; the strategy of presenting emotional expressions in ads claims is less powerful than other strategies, as it has been observed that only 8 claims are presented with emotional expressions. It has also been found that advertisers are not too much concerned with presenting certain recommendations or testimonials from experts or other consumers ; such recommendations may not achieve the deception that advertisers aim to. For further clarification (Figure 3)



**Figure(3)**  
**Rates of misleading categories**

Concerning false claims, it has been observed that advertisers also differ in the strategies they use in presenting false claims in their ads. It has been found that they are more interested in exaggerating their claims by over-describing features and characteristics related to a specific product for the sake of raising its value. In contrast, advertisers are less interested in providing consumers with unreasonable claims due to the less effect it has on consumers purchasing behavior. As for unproven claims, advertisers usually tend to deceive consumers by claims that lack evidence by which they can support their claims. But it has been found that advertisers' interest in presenting unproven claims is the same as presenting subjective claims. For advertisers, the importance of these two types of false claims is similar to each other as it has been revealed that they both are of close frequency within false claims (See figure 4).



**Figure (4)**  
**Rates of false claims**

## 8.Conclusions

According to the data being analyzed, it can be concluded that :

1. All types of speech acts are used by advertisers in presenting their deceptive ads which are assertives, declaratives, commissives, directives and expressives.

2.Assertive speech act is the most frequent type of speech acts employed in advertisements contexts, because through which advertisers can perform different illocutionary forces to make the presented ad as persuasively deceptive as possible.

Based on such conclusions, the hypotheses posed in this research paper are verified.

3.Due to the different speech acts strategies used by advertisers , their advertisements will be problematic , in that , it is hard for ordinary consumers to do successful coding to each claim presented in marketing context.

4.Using different types of speech acts in presenting various advertisements refers to advertisers' ability of using these speech acts as effective tools to promote different types of products.

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