

الإقناع والصلّة في الاعلانات التجارية في المجلات الامريكية

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Persuasion and Relevance in the Commercial Advertisements in American Magazines

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الخلاصة:

من مجالات مختلفة، مثل الفلسفة والبلاغة وعلم النفس. إلا أن هذا البحث يُعرّف الإقناع من منظور تداولي لأن لغة الاعلانات تُستخدم بطريقة فنية لإنجاز غرضها (اي الإقناع). يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة الإقناع تداوليا في ستة اعلانات تجارية في مجلتي امريكيتين، هما "لايف" و " بيبل". تتم دراسة الإقناع بواسطة الاعتماد على نظرية الصلّة (1987) لسيبرير وولسون. يجب ان يتعرف المستهلكون على رسالة الاعلانات بصورة واضحة بواسطة تزويدهم بالمثير الإظهارى الذي يوصل الرسالة باقصى درجة من الملاءمة. المنهجية المتبعة في هذا البحث هي منهجية نوعية وصفية. يكشف التحليل لستة اعلانات تجارية بأنه لا يتم استخدام اي اعلان بدون التواصل غير اللفظي. توصل هذا البحث الى استنتاج مفاده أنّ نوع التواصل المستخدم في

الاعلانات التجارية هو التواصل الإظهارى - الاستدلالي. يُنجز الإقناع إذا أدرك المستهلكون نية المُعلن بنجاح. يقسم هذا البحث على ثمانية مباحث. يُعرف المبحث الاول مفهوم الإقناع في سياق الاعلانات التجارية. ويقدم المبحث الثاني شرحاً نظرياً لنظرية الصلة. ويعرض المبحث الثالث عدداً من التعريفات للاعلانات التجارية. ومن خلال المبحث الرابع تتم دراسة العلاقة بين الإقناع و الصلة في سياق الاعلانات التجارية. ويحدد المبحث الخامس الاطار العام للمنهجية المعتمدة في هذا البحث. ويقدم المبحث السادس تحليل البيانات. ويتناول المبحث السابع مناقشة النتائج و الاستنتاجات. ويعرض المبحث الاخير الخاتمة متبوعة بقائمة المراجع.

Abstract

‘Persuasion’ is a multidisciplinary concept, that is, it can be defined, based on a context, from different fields, such as philosophy, rhetoric, and psychology. In this research, however, persuasion is defined from a pragmatic perspective since the language of advertisements is used in an artistic manner to achieve its purpose (i.e., persuasion). This research aims to investigate how persuasion is achieved pragmatically in six commercial advertisements in two American magazines, namely, *Life* and *People* magazines. Persuasion can be investigated by depending on Sperber and Wilson’s (1987) communicative principle. Consumers should clearly recognize the message of the advertisement by providing them with ostensive-stimulus which communicates its optimal relevance. The method followed in this research is a qualitative descriptive one. The analysis of six commercial advertisements reveals that no advertisement is used without non-verbal communication. This research reaches the conclusion that the mode of communication used in the commercial advertisement is ostensive-inferential communication. If consumers successfully recognize the advertiser’s informative intention, then persuasion is achieved. This research is divided into eight sections. The first section defines the concept of ‘persuasion’ in the context of the commercial advertisements. The second section provides a theoretical explanation of the relevance theory. The third section presents a number of definitions of the commercial advertisements. Through section four, the relation between persuasion and relevance in the context of the commercial advertisements is examined. The fifth section outlines the methodology. The sixth section presents the data analysis. The seventh section addresses the discussion of the results and findings. The final section presents the conclusion followed by a list of references.



Introduction

Commercial advertisements occupy Americans' lives. They appear in every aspect of their life, such as magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, and billboards. The United States has more than twice as many advertisements as the United Kingdom, making it the country with the most advertisements (Baravalle & Lee, 2019, p. 9). The purpose of these commercial advertisements is to persuade consumers to take an action, that is, to purchase.

Within the context of the commercial advertisements, persuasion is an art rather than a science (Bernbach, 1987, as cited in Sims & Quatro, 2005, p. 103). That is, the language of advertisements is used in an artistic manner. Hence, 'persuasion' is a pragmatic concept rather than a logical one. In other words, the advertiser should use language in a context to change consumers' beliefs and behaviors in order to achieve persuasion. Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle is used in this research as a model to investigate how persuasion is achieved. According to this principle, the mode of communication is ostensive-inferential communication. The speaker, in this mode of communication, should ostensibly point to his/her intention and the hearer should infer the speaker's intention on the basis of the background knowledge and the provided evidence. When the hearer recognizes the speaker's informative intention, communication is accomplished successfully. Therefore, persuasion is achieved.

To attract consumers' attention and accomplish communication between the advertiser and consumers, the researchers propose that verbal and nonverbal communication should be combined. In this research, persuasion is examined in terms of consumers' recognition rather than the practical consequences of their recognition. In other words, consumers' acceptance or rejection of the message of the advertisement (i.e., their doing of the act of purchasing) is beyond the scope of the research.

This research aims to answer the following two questions:

- (1) How is 'persuasion' as a pragmatic concept achieved in the commercial advertisements in American magazines?
- (2) How is Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle employed to achieve persuasion in the commercial advertisements in American magazines?

1-Persuasion

Bettinghaus and Cody (1987, as cited in Perloff, 2017, p. 22) describe persuasion as a conscious attempt by a person to alter the attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs of another person or group of persons through delivering some messages. Persuasion, in this definition, has been

described as a conscious attempt, that is, a persuader intends to persuade the other party.

According to Lakhani (2005), persuasion is “about creating an environment that lets two or more people find common ground and belief” (p. 15). Along similar lines, Larson (2010, p. 22) states that persuasion is a process of co-creating a state of identification by persuaders and receivers through the transition of verbal and/or visual symbols. Persuasion necessitates the intellectual and emotional engagement of both the communicator and the other party, resulting in a shared meaning and a co-created identity. Lakhani (2005) and Larson (2010) do not explicitly state that persuasion is a conscious attempt as Bettinghaus and Cody (1987) do.

In fact, any process that produces a new belief or modifies your degree of commitment to an already held belief, is considered persuasion. Then, persuasion is not only changing your attitude or belief, but also reinforcing or strengthening your existing belief (Pullman, 2013, p. xx). This is too general view since there are other processes that produce a new belief but they are not considered persuasive, such as coercion. According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), *coercion* is described as the use of explicit or implicit threats of violence, or revenge, or other terrifying behavior that situates an individual in a fear of the outcomes in order to force that individual to behave against his/her own will. The use of “explicit threats” in this definition indicates a direct threat, whereas “implicit threat” indicates an implied threat. Coercion also produces a new belief but under violence. Therefore, the tools used for producing a change in coercion are different from those used in persuasion.

In more specific way, O’keefe (2016, p. 25) describes persuasion as a successful conscious effort to influence a person’s mental state through communication in a situation in which the persuadee has the freedom to choose. He emphasizes certain parameters in this definition. First, the notion of ‘success’ is rooted in the concept of ‘persuasion’. For example:

(1) “I persuaded him but failed.”

(2) “I tried to persuade him but failed.”

Example (1) is nonsensical because there is contradiction, i.e., one cannot persuade someone and fail. In contrast, using the verb ‘try’ in example (2) implies that a person is either succeeded or failed to persuade the other party.

Second, similar to Bettinghaus and Cody (1987), O’keefe explicitly (2016, p. 25) indicates that persuasion should be intentional. For example:

(3) “I accidentally persuaded Mary to vote for Brown.”



In this example, the use of the adverb “accidentally” indicates that the S does not intend to persuade Mary. However, without using “accidentally” in (3), the S deliberately intends to persuade Mary.

Third, persuasion requires changing the persuadee’s mental state. Persuasion may involve, in some instances, only a change in mental state (i.e., just a change in thought). However, even in cases where there is a behavioral change (i.e., a change in action), it is typically assumed that there was an underlying mental state change preceded the behavioral change. For example, if you persuade a person to take golf lessons, you change his/her mental state first, that is, he/she starts to believe that his/her golf skills were not that good, that he/she could improve them by taking golf lessons (O’keefe, 2016, p. 26).

Fourth, persuasion is achieved through communication. Throwing a person, for example, physically off the roof of a building is something completely different from talking to him/her to throw him/herself off the roof of the same building. The latter is an instance of persuasion, while the former is an instance of coercion (O’keefe, 2016, p. 26).

Finally, persuasion occurs in situations where the persuadee has a free will to accept or refuse. For instance, when a robber knocks someone and takes the victim’s money, one cannot say that robber persuades the victim. Therefore, this is not an instance of persuasion but of coercion (O’keefe, 2016, p. 25).

Perloff (2017, p. 46) describes persuasion as a symbolic process in which communicators attempt to convince other parties to alter their own behavior or attitude about a particular issue by delivering a message in the context of free choice. This definition views persuasion as a “symbolic process.” Similarly, Sigler (2017, p. 7) describes persuasion as a “symbolic” but not as a “process.” He describes it as “communication,” which occurs between two or more individuals with the intention to change, shape, or reinforce the beliefs, attitudes, and/or behaviors of the addressee.

In essence, scholars use different words and conditions to define the concept of ‘persuasion’. For example, they use words like “effort”, “attempt”, “process”, and “communication” to define persuasion. However, in the context of the commercial advertisements, persuasion is described as “communication”, because the researchers want to analyze an advertisement, which is the result of the process of advertising (Fletcher, 2010, p. 1) to investigate how persuasion is achieved through communication between the advertiser and consumers. Furthermore, all scholars mention that persuasion are accomplished through communication, although some of them do not mention it explicitly (e.g.,

Lakhani, 2005; Larson, 2010; Pullman, 2013). In this research, persuasion can be defined as a symbolic intentional communication, which attempts to change American consumers' belief and/or behavior in a context of free choice.

2-Relevance

Relevance theory has been developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986, 1987, 1995, and 2004. It has been considered a development and a reaction against classical Gricean pragmatic theory (Huang, 2007, p. 181).

Relevance theory builds on Grice's claim that intention expression and recognition are essential components of the majority of human communication, both verbal and non-verbal. In advancing this claim, Grice paves the way for an inferential model of communication, a replacement to the classical code model. In line with the coding model, the S encodes his/her intended message as a signal, which the H decodes using an identical copy of the code. In line with the inferential model, the S presents evidence of his/her intention to convey a specific meaning, which the H infers based on the evidence presented. An utterance is "a linguistically coded piece of evidence". Therefore, verbal understanding includes an aspect of decoding (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 607).

The central claim of the relevance theory is that human attention and thought automatically orient toward information that appears relevant. That is, to communicate is to imply that what has been communicated is relevant (Sperber & Wilson, 1987, p. 697).

Sperber and Wilson (1995, pp. 260-261) set two principles of relevance, namely, cognitive principle and communicative principle. The cognitive principle states that "human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance." That is, relevance is considered "a property of input to cognitive processes."

In addition, Sperber and Wilson (1995, pp. 121, 132) define relevance as a function of "effect" and "effort". An assumption is relevant in a context if it has some cognitive effect in that specific context.

There are three types of cognitive effects: contextual implication, strengthening an existing assumption, and contradicting or abandoning an existing assumption. Contextual implication is considered to be the most important type of cognitive effect. It is a conclusion that can be deduced from both the input and the context, but not from either alone. For example, when someone sees his/her train arrives, he/she may check his/her watch, consult his/her knowledge of the train schedule, and then conclude that his/her train is late (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 608).



Sometimes, cognitive effect involves strengthening a given information by providing stronger evidence to support it. For example, when a person suspects it is raining and looks out the window and notices that:

(4) "It is raining."

This new information supports and strengthens the person's existing assumption. In other cases, however, new information leads to a contradiction. Consider the same person with the same assumption, looks out the window, and notices:

(5) "It's not raining but there are branches from a tree making a noise like rain on the roof."

This new information contradicts and eliminates the person's existing assumption, making it relevant (Clark, 2013, p. 102).

The cognitive effect of an input is not the only factor that makes it stands out among other stimuli. Different situations can affect the salience of a stimulus. Intuitively, more effort required for perception, memory, and inference leads to less appealing of the input and thus less deserving of the audience's attention. According to relevance theory, the more effort required to process a thing, the less relevant it is. Hence, relevance can be assessed based on cognitive effect and processing effort (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 609).

For example, Mary does not like most meats, and specifically chicken, because she is allergic. She calls her dinner party host to figure out what is on the menu. Her party may give her one of the following three answers:

(6) "We are serving meat."

(7) "We are serving chicken."

(8) "Either we are serving chicken or not."

All three answers are relevant to Mary, but (7) is more relevant than (6) and (8). It is more relevant than (6) because of cognitive effect, that is, (7) entails (6), and hence derived all and more conclusions of (6). It is more relevant than (8) because of processing effort; that is, although both of them are logically the same and then they have the same cognitive effects, these effects can be deducted more easily from (7) than from (8), which involves extra effort of parsing and inference. More broadly, the effect factor is decisive when similar amounts of effort are needed, whereas the effort factor is decisive when similar amounts of effect are fulfilled (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, pp. 609-610).

Relevance theory has been criticized because it does not explain how to measure cognitive effects and processing effort and how to bring them into balance with each other objectively (Huang, 2007, p. 184).

The second principle of relevance states that “every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 260). In this research, persuasion is achieved through successful communication. That is, the focus is not on measuring the cognitive effects and the processing effort, but rather on communicating the message of the advertisements successfully to achieve persuasion.

According to the relevance theory, inferential communication is called ostensive-inferential communication. There are two layers of intention within this model: informative intention and communicative intention. The former is the intention that is used “to inform an audience of something”, whereas the latter is the intention that is used “to inform the audience of one’s informative intention.” Hence, “understanding” is accomplished when the communicative intention is achieved, i.e., when the audience realizes the informative intention (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 611).

Ostensive-inferential communication involves using an ostensive stimulus that is aimed at attracting an audience’s attention and directing it towards the communicator’s meaning. Based on the relevance theory, using an ostensive stimulus may generate specific and predictable expectations of relevance that are not brought up by other inputs (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 611). Sperber and Wilson (1987, p. 700) argue that inferential communication and ostension are the same process, but seen from two separate perspectives, that is, the communicator’s ostension and the audience’s inference.

As a result, using an ostensive stimulus produces a presumption of optimal relevance. The concept of ‘optimal relevance’ refers to what the audience of an ostensive communication can expect on the basis of effort and effect. There are two presumptions of optimal relevance: (a) The ostensive stimulus is sufficiently relevant “to be worth the audience’s processing effort”, and (b) it is the most relevant and in line with the communicator’s abilities and preferences (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 612).

According to optimal relevance, it is claimed that the communicator has an interpretation in mind that justifies the processing effort required in reaching it. This indicates that the addressee is trying to find an interpretation that meets this condition and that he/she does not accept one that has no sufficient effects to support this condition. For example, (9) “I’m a human being.”

The H cannot assume that the S informs him/her about which biological species he/she belongs to because this is something the H already knows,



and then not justifying the effort processing. Therefore, the H goes further and considers other possibilities. It would be intended to remind the H that the S has human qualities and that it would not be appropriate to expect him/her to act in ways that go beyond human capability. This would be appropriate, for instance, in the context by which the H asks the S if he/she feels sorry on hurting someone else's feelings (Clark, 2013, p. 35).

3-Advertisements

The origin of the word 'advertisement' is the Latin verb 'advertere' which means "to turn towards". So, one can say that an advertisement is something designed to get one's attention. But, is everything getting one's attention considered an advertisement? The answer is no, since there are a lot of things designed to grab attention (e.g., a university prospectus, a film trailer, traffic signs, a shop name, etc.), but they are not advertisements (Goddard, 1998, pp. 5-7).

According to the American Marketing Association, an advertisement can be defined as "any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor." The "paid form", in this definition, means that companies should pay money for publishing advertisements. The "nonpersonal aspect of communication" indicates one way communication from the advertiser to consumers, that is, there is no immediate feedback. The channels for delivering an advertisement are the mass media, such as magazines, newspapers, radios, and TVs (as cited in Belch & Belch, 2003, p. 16).

An advertisement has been defined by different scholars over time. Kennedy (1905, as cited in Cruikshank & Schultz, 2010, p. 56), for example, defines it in three words as "salesmanship in print." That is, advertising is what salesmen do in face-to-face communication in order to persuade consumers to buy.

However, Reeves (1960) states that Kennedy's (1905) definition is not precise enough to define an advertisement today because there are a lot of advertisers who do not sell anything. They have their own definition of "salesmanship". Reeves provides a new definition of an advertisement as "the art of getting a unique selling proposition into the heads of the most people at the lowest possible cost" (p. 121). In using "unique selling proposition", Reeves means that advertisers write a "right message" that distinguishes them from their competitors. This message has been projected to the maximum number of people and at the minimum cost.

Later on, Williams (1980, p. 189) states that an advertisement has the capability to "associate consumption with human desires to which it has no real reference." This means that if the consumption of some products

cannot satisfy a human's desire, then advertisements make some sort of magic to create a false association between the product being advertised and the human's desire. That is, the advertiser does not buy the product only, but also beauty, health, success, and social respect.

Dyer (1982, p. 2) states that an advertisement fundamentally means "drawing attention to something, or notifying or informing somebody of something." Goddard's (1998) view is similar to this view since both of them emphasize the fact that advertisements in their nature are designed to draw one's attention. In using the words "notifying" and "informing", Dyer restricts the function of advertisements within the scope of informing only.

Conversely, Bernbach (1987, as cited in Sims & Quatro, 2005, p. 103) states that "advertising is fundamentally persuasion and persuasion happens to be not a science, but an art." Although he describes the process of advertising as persuasive, the advertisement is the result of advertising. Therefore, the advertisement in its nature is persuasive. Also, persuasion used in advertisements is an art rather than a science.

Furthermore, Janoschka (2004, pp. 15-16) defines an advertisement as "a company's external communication." He considers advertising a certain sort of communication. In order to make this sort of communication achieved successfully, he states that an advertisement should be more than informative. It should also be persuasive.

In fact, Berger (2015, p. 6) describes an advertisement as something that attempts to draw attention to, generate a desire for, and provoke action that leads to buy the products and services that are advertised. This can be achieved when people read ads in printed media, listen to radio, or watch and listen to commercials on television. He focuses on the function of advertisements which is mainly for persuading consumers to buy the products.

According to O'Guinn et al. (2019, p. 8), an advertisement is "a paid, mass-mediated attempt to persuade." This definition states certain points. First, it asserts that advertising is a paid communication. Companies or organizations that pay for advertising are called sponsors or clients in the language of advertisement. A communication cannot be advertised if it is not paid for. For example, Will Smith's, an American actor, promotion of his film on a talk show is not an advertisement because he does not receive money from the film producer. Second, "mass-mediated" means that an advertisement is delivered through magazines, newspapers, radios and TVs to a large number of audiences. The message of the advertisement is not delivered in the environment of face-to-face communication. Third, "an attempt to persuade" means that all sorts of



advertisements, even if they are purely informative, have persuasion in their core.

To conclude, the majority of previous definitions emphasize the persuasive nature of advertisements, either explicitly or implicitly. The researchers' operational definition of an advertisement is a paid non-personal communication that attempts to persuade audiences to make a purchase decision.

4-Persuasion and Relevance

Within the context of the commercial advertisements, there are two participants. One of them has an active role in the process of communication, that is, the advertiser. Another one has a passive role in the process of communication in the sense that there is no immediate feedback for the advertiser's message, that is, consumers. When communication between the advertiser and consumers is achieved successfully, persuasion is achieved.

Advertisements attempt to get the consumers' attention. Berger (2011, p. 1) considers attracting attention the first rule of advertising. Consumers cannot be persuaded if they do not pay attention to an advertisement. To this end, relevance theory offers a theoretical framework to analyze how the ostensive-stimulus is designed to attract consumers' attention and direct them to the advertiser's message.

To achieve persuasion, on a pragmatic level, successfully, consumers should recognize the advertiser's informative message. As a result, Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle of relevance is used to investigate how the ostensive-stimulus (e.g., an utterance or a picture) can be employed in the commercial advertisements to attract consumers' attention. According to the ostensive-inferential mode of communication, the advertiser has an intention to persuade their consumers to buy. He/she needs to communicate his/her intention to them. Once his/her attention is recognized by consumers, understanding is achieved. To make his/her intention recognized, the advertiser needs to use an ostensive-stimulus that creates optimal relevance.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1995, p. 60), "non-verbal communication tends to be relatively weak" because it is opened to several interpretations. In contrast, verbal communication allows the H to narrow down the S's intentions on the explicit content of his/her utterance to a single obvious interpretation without processing effort to consider other interpretations. Sperber and Wilson (2004, p. 614) state that non-verbal communication can be used as ostensive-stimuli to only add an additional layer of intention recognition to a fundamental layer of

information that the H may have already recognized. For example, one may point to an empty glass on the table and say:

(10) "My glass is empty."

In this case, pointing to an empty glass strengthens the H's recognition despite the fact that the S's informative intention is communicated clearly through his/her utterance. That is, meanings that might be communicated nonverbally is only limited to those that the communicator can evoke in his/her audiences by drawing their attention to "observable features of the environment." Hence, the researchers propose that by combining verbal and non-verbal communication, the H's comprehension and understanding are enhanced and the effect of the message of advertisements is going to be stronger since advertisements contain both types of communication.

Johannessen et al. (2010, p. 9) describe an advertisement as "a mixture of regular language and paralinguage." Paralinguage refers to non-verbal communication that complements and emphasizes regular language, including facial expressions, gestures, voice quality, and letter sizes. Moreover, they state that the interaction between text and picture is what draws consumers' attention to an advertisement. Since printed advertisements are the focus of this research, non-verbal communication includes things related to printed words that appear in advertisements only (i.e., letter sizes, italics, fonts, and word colors) and pictures used to strengthen the effect of printed words. Therefore, facial expressions, gestures, and voice quality are beyond the scope of this research.

The ostensive-stimuli may fail to communicate the message of ads if ambiguity is raised or if one ostensive-stimulus contradicts another one in the same message. In other words, if the message communicated by verbal communication, for example, contradicts what has been communicated by non-verbal communication, persuasion is not achieved. For the purpose of analysis, Sperber and Wilson's (1987) version rather than other versions (Sperber & Wilson, 1995, 2004) of relevance theory is adopted since it offers a comprehensive understanding on the communicative principle, which is the focal component for the analysis of persuasion in the commercial ads. Although Sperber and Wilson's (1986) *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* is the first version, which introduces relevance theory, the 1987 version is used because of access restrictions of the former.

5-Methodology

The method of this research is a qualitative descriptive one. Instead of using statistics, this study uses words to frame its findings. In this method, open-ended questions are used rather than closed-ended ones



(Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Qualitative research is a method for learning about social reality. Such a method can be used to study a variety of subjects in different fields. In the behavioral and social sciences, it is frequently employed to investigate, describe, or explain social phenomena (Leavy, 2014, p. 2).

Inductive reasoning is used within the qualitative method. A qualitative researcher allows the data “speak” to him/her and tries to avoid approaching a study with a preconceived idea of what he/she is going to find. When theory, hypothesis, and interpretation are preceded by observation, this is known as an *inductive approach*. (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, p. 168). The data have been collected from two general interest American magazines, namely, *Life* and *People* magazines. They are collected from the Google Archive by using the Ostrich VPN program since the archive is inaccessible to Iraqis. These magazines have been selected because they are general interest magazines, in which they include various aspects of ads. Six commercial advertisements have been selected from different periods of time to investigate how persuasion is achieved over time. The data were purposefully selected from 1937- 2021 to examine how the use of language has been changed over time.

Sperber and Wilson’s (1987) communicative principle has been adopted to analyze the collected data. This model has been chosen because it provides a framework to analyze how the speaker expresses his/her intention and how the hearer recognizes the speaker’s intention on the basis of the provided evidence and H’s background knowledge. Furthermore, through combining the verbal and non-verbal communication, the effect is going to be stronger because non-verbal communication strengthens the effect of verbal communication and accomplishes understanding. Hence, persuasion is achieved.

6-Data Analysis

An advertisement is presented first as an image and then the written language used in ads is transcribed below each one. The data are arranged chronologically, starting from *Life* magazine and then moving to *People* magazine. In the analysis, the terms ‘S’ and ‘H’ are replaced by ‘advertiser’ and ‘consumers’ respectively, in line with the context of the commercial advertisements.

a-Life Magazine

Advertisement (1)



THINK! OVER 80 YEARS' EXPERIENCE BACK OF SEAGRAM'S. THAT FINER "CROWN" TASTE RESULTS FROM MASTER BLENDING. Ever since Seagram's was founded in 1857, the lessons learned by practical experience have been handed down from generation to generation... secrets of distilling and blending known to no other distiller. As a result, Seagram's 5 and 7 Crown Blended Whiskies are so smooth in flavor, so utterly distinctive in taste and bouquet that over 100,000,000 bottles have been sold in three years. Think before you drink -and try Seagram's Crowns-finest of the finer blends. THINK DRINK say Seagram's AND BE SURE. Seagram's Crown BLENDED FOR FINER TASTE (Seagram's Crown, 1937, p. 101)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

The advertiser begins with the ostensive-stimulus "THINK! OVER 80 YEARS' EXPERIENCE BACK OF SEAGRAM'S." He/she wants to attract consumers' attention to the content of the advertisement by starting with imperative form "think" to direct their attention to the content of the advertisement. He/she wants them to know that Seagram's has 80 years' experience. Moreover, he/she uses non-verbal communication as another ostensive-stimulus by using capital letters to write the first utterance to make it more attractive. Consumers need to know how Seagram's Crown has "80 years' experience." Therefore, the



advertiser states that the “Crown taste” of Seagram’s results from “master blending.” This utterance is also written with capital letters because the advertiser wants to emphasize the point of a good blending.

Then, the advertiser provides more details as reasons to support what has been stated before. He/she states that Seagram’s Crown is founded in 1857. It has very long history in blending and distilling that makes it incomparable to other distillers. Therefore, Seagram’s has a very smooth taste. Furthermore, the number of sales, more than 100,000,000 bottles, is an ostensive stimulus. Based on this number, consumers may infer that this number is a result of the good qualities of the product. In the last lines, the advertiser uses imperative forms with capital letters “THINK DRINK,” “BE SURE,” and “BLENDED FOR FINER TASTE”, to advise consumers, that is, to purchase, and highlight the process of “blending.”

The picture of the product is an ostensive-stimulus that is used to make consumers familiar with the shape of the bottle and with the name of the brand. However, the verbal communication is very clear, to the extent it is understood without the use of the picture. The picture is used in this advertisement to emphasize what has been communicated by the verbal communication. Moreover, there are two bottles of whisky, one of them is five crowns and another is seven crowns. They are used to satisfy different consumers’ preferences. Although there are two bottles, three glasses are shown in the picture. Consumers may infer that amount of whisky in these bottles is enough to more than two glasses. The color of the product is similar to that of the page of the advertisement to highlight the brown color of the whisky.

By combining verbal and non-verbal communication, the advertiser’s informative intention is communicated successfully. Therefore, persuasion is achieved.

Advertisement (2)



French-sliced green beans cause hats to soar from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore.!

1. **Something new!** Both in the way they're sliced (long and thin) and the way they taste (tender, tasty, flavorful.) Yes, these French-sliced Green Beans are something you'll rave about—yet they're economical enough for everyday eating! You've just never met better beans.

2. **Quick-freezing captures their full, garden-fresh flavor at the peak, holds it for you!** All the tenderness, deliciousness—everything. Today—in January!—Birds Eye French-sliced Green Beans are *deuy-fresh!* **MONEY BACK** if they're not the best you ever ate!

3. **Stringless, sliced, and washed, they're ready to pop in the pan!** NO fuss—NO tiring kitchen work. 1 box of these money-saving lovelies serves 4—and these beans cook in half the time ordinary market beans do—try 'em!

4. **And here's a new Bird Eye treat—Red Sour Cherries!** The tartest, most tree-ripened that ever made a man exclaim, **MORE, please!** Ready-sweetened, they are terrific in a pie, a tart, or on ice cream! They come pitted and summed—**WORK-FREE!** Try 'em! **FEATURED THIS WEEK! FRENCH-SLICEO GREEN BEANS CHERRIES** Other Marvelous Values! **MIXED VEGETABLES MIXED FRUITS! NEW! NEW! TWO GRAND NEW BIRDS EYE FOODS!**

MIXED VEGETABLES—Combination of top-quality, garden-fresh Cut Corn, Lima Beans, Green Peas, Carrots, and Green Beans—blended for taste!

MIXED FRUITS—Combination of field-fresh, delicious Apricots, Raspberries, Boysenberries, Green Grapes! Packed in syrup, ready-to-use! Try these delicious, time-&-labor-saving new Birds Eye Foods.

BIRDS EYE
FROSTED FOODS
FRENCH-SLICEO GREEN BEANS
RED SOUR CHERRIES
MIXED VEGETABLES
MIXED FRUITS

French-sliced green beans cause hats to soar from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore.!! 1. Something new! Both in the way they're sliced (long and thin) and the way they taste (tender, tasty, 17. Flavorful.) Yes, these French-sliced Green Beans are something you'll rave about_ yet they're economical enough for everyday eating! You've just never met better beans. 2. Quick-freezing captures their fall, garden-fresh flavor at the peak, holds it for you! All the tenderness, deliciousness-everything. Today in January!-Birds Eye French-sliced Green Beans are deuy-fresh! **MONEY BACK** if they're not the best you ever ate! 3. Stringless, sliced, and washed, they're ready to pop in the pan! NO fuss-NO tiring kitchen work. 1 box of these money-saving lovelies serves 4-and these beans cook in half the time ordinary market beans do_ try' em! 4. And here's a new Bird Eye treat-Red Sour Cherries! The tartest, most tree_ ripened that ever made a man exclaim, **MORE, please!** Ready-sweetened, they are terrified in a pie, a tart, or on ice cream! They come pitted and summed-WORK-FREE! Try 'em! **FEATURED THIS WEEK! FRENCH-SLICEO GREEN BEANS CHERRIES** Other Marvelous Values! **MIXED VEGETABLES MIXED FRUITS! NEW! NEW! TWO GRAND NEW BIRDS EYE FOODS!** **MIXED VEGETABLES**-Combination of top-quality, garden-fresh Cut Corn, Lima Beans, Green Peas, Carrots, and Green Beans-blended for taste! **MIXED FRUITS**_ Combination of field-fresh, delicious Apricots, Raspberries, Boysenberries, Green Grapes!



Packed in syrup, ready-to-use! Try these delicious, time-&-Labor-saving new Birds Eye Foods. (Bird Eye, 1943, p. 26)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

This advertisement begins with an ostensive-stimulus "French-sliced green beans cause hats to soar from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore.!" It is designed to get consumers' attention. It is mixed with non-verbal cues to strengthen its meaning. The picture shows people throwing their hats with joy and happiness. Hence, consumers may infer that eating these green beans makes people throw their hats because they enjoy their taste. However, one may ask, why French, not American-sliced green beans?

The advertiser states that these beans are new because of the way they are sliced. They are sliced in the French way; that is, they are long and thin. This way makes beans do not take a long time in cooking. That is why the advertiser states that "Yes, these French-sliced Green Beans are something you'll rave about."

Furthermore, the utterance "they're economical enough for everyday eating!" is highly ostensive because consumers want to know their price. It should be noted that *Life* magazine is a general interest magazine; that is, this advertisement is not targeted toward specific consumers. It is for everyone, whether for those who have a high economic status or a low economic status. Hence, this utterance is relevant for consumers. The second feature of "quick-freezing" is an ostensive-stimulus. This feature maintains "their fall, garden-fresh flavor at the peak". Consumers want to taste the fresh flavor of beans. These green beans do not take a long time to be frozen, which makes them taste like fresh beans. The advertiser states that you can eat these fresh beans in January, which is not their season.

Another ostensive-stimulus is "MONEY BACK if they're not the best you ever ate!" The advertiser emphasizes this point by writing "money back" in capital letters. He/she is sure that these beans are the best to the extent he/she promises consumers to return their money if they do not like them. The utterance is capable of persuading consumers to buy these beans. These beans are sliced and washed, making them so easy to be prepared; therefore, they do not take too much time to be cooked.

On the left side of this advertisement, two pictures are shown as ostensive-stimuli. Both of them show women surprised when they read the feature of the new offer from Eye Bird. Women rather than men are chosen because they are normally concerned with cooking. They are surprised because Eye Bird offers a new mix of vegetables and fruits.

Moreover, the above picture shows a nutritionist telling a group of women about the vitamins that exist in this meal.

The advertiser, then, mentions the new offers from Bird Eye, which save time and labor, such as mixed fruits and mixed vegetables. He/she uses capital letters and red color to highlight these new offers for this week. Moreover, he/she uses several pictures in this ad. These pictures are designed to inform consumers about the content of the advertisement and the name of the brand. As a result, by combining verbal and non-verbal communication, the message of the advertisement is communicated successfully. Hence, persuasion is achieved by communicating the advertiser's informative intention.

Advertisement (3)



We focus on one thought...

For a TREAT instead of a TREATMENT... smoke Old Gold (Old Gold, 1951, p. 27)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

The utterance "For a TREAT instead of a TREATMENT... smoke Old Gold" is an ostensive-stimulus. The two nouns "treat" and "treatment" are written in capital letters to highlight the point of that smoking Old Gold is a treat. Some cigarettes advertisements take another route, that is, they give medical endorsements. For example, Camel, an American brand of cigarette, uses the slogan "more doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarettes" (Camels, 1948, p. 126). Old Gold takes another different

route; that is, there are no medical endorsements to the extent the advertiser claims that smoking this cigarette is a treatment by itself. The use of non-verbal cues is another ostensive-stimulus. The picture shows a cigarette, a camera, and photos. One of these photos shows a man smoking a cigarette. Hence, a cigarette is considered a complement for taking photos and creating good moments. The advertiser uses the orange and golden colors to write the message of this advertisement. In addition, the same colors are used on the product to make a strong association with the name of the brand (i.e., OLD GOLD). By combining verbal and non-verbal communication, the advertiser's informative intention is recognized. Hence, persuasion is achieved.

Advertisement (4)

"THE MOST WIDELY COPIED ENGINE IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS WILL BE BUICK'S SUPERB NEW ALUMINUM V-8" *Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960*

"Buick built a better engine" *Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960*

"When a better engine was built, Buick built it" *Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960*

"There's never been a major component failure during the whole testing program!" *Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960*

Why Sports Cars Illustrated made Buick blush

We knew our new Buick Special had a beauty under its bonnet, but we're happy so many other people think so, too. In fact, Sports Cars Illustrated, one of the world's leading car magazines, raves so over Buick's new aluminum V-8 in its November issue, we're blushing. Not only do they devote an entire 6-page story to this spirited V-8, but they picture it in full color on their cover. Shown above are just a few quotes. Sports Cars Illustrated Rails Buick's V-8 as a revolutionary advance in go-power, and they predict it will be "in furious demand among enthusiasts for all kinds of sporting uses, most especially for engine swaps . . ."

Actually this new V-8, together with the Special's new aluminum transmission, give the Special the power that would normally have meant adding over 500 pounds more weight. It has twice as much power per pound as the engine of most compacts, more even than many full-size sizes and V-8's! Yes, in gas savings, it's right there with the compacts . . . and in price, too! See the new-size Buick Special at your Dealer's today—see why "if it's Buick's Four," Buick Motor Division—General Motors Corporation.

SPECIAL-SIZE BUICKSPECIAL
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Copyrighted material

THE MOST WIDELY COPIED ENGINE IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS WILL BE BUICK'S SUPERB NEW ALUMINUM V-8" Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960 Buick built a better engine" Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960 "When a better engine was built, Buick built it". Sports Cars illustrated, November, 1960 "There's never been a major component failure during the whole testing program!" Sports Cars Illustrated, November, 1960. Why Sports Cars Illustrated made Buick blush? We knew our new Buick Special had a beauty under its bonnet, but we're happy so many other people think so, too. In fact, Sports Cars Illustrated, one of the world's leading car magazines. Raves so over Buick's new aluminum V-8 in its November issue, we're blushing. Not only do they devote an entire 6-page story to this spirited V-8, but they picture it in in full color on their cover. Shown above are just a few

quotes. Sports Cars Illustrated hails Buick's V-8 as a revolutionary advance in go-power, and they predict it will be "in furious demand among enthusiasts for all kinds of sporting uses, most especially for engine swaps..." Actually this new V-8, together with the Special's new aluminum transmission, give the Special the power that would normally have meant adding over 500 pounds more weight. It has twice as much pow per pound as the engine of most compacts... more even than many full-size sixes and V-8's! Yet, in gas savings. It's right there with the compacts... and in price, too! See the new size Buick Special at your Dealer's today-see why '61 is Buick's Year! Buick Motor Division-General Motors Corporation. SPECIAL-SIZE BUICK SPECIAL THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (Buick, 1960, p. 106)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

The first thing that consumers look at is the picture. Therefore, it is an ostensive-stimulus. It shows a car with seven men reading a magazine. It creates curiosity to know what these men are reading. Men rather than women are chosen, maybe because women represented 39.6% of all drivers in 1963, which was the lowest percentage during the study period (Sivak, 2015, p. 1). Through verbal communication, the advertiser reveals what they are reading. They are reading what Sports Cars Illustrated writes on the new V-8 Buick engine. Using these quotations is highly ostensive because the advertiser uses them as evidence on the quality of this engine. Sport Car Illustrated predicates that in the next 10 years, the V-8 engine from Buick will be "the most widely copied engine." They also predicate that enthusiasts would be demanding for a variety of sporting applications, including engine swaps.

Using the rhetorical question "Why Sports Cars Illustrated made Buick blush?" is an ostensive-stimulus used to communicate that Buick flushed from the compliment of Sports Cars Illustrated. The advertiser expresses his/her happy feeling on this praise. Moreover, the properties of the car, its engine, and its price are ostensive-stimuli since they are things consumers care about. It has twice as much power per pound as most tiny engines, and more than many full-size sixes and V-8's. It is comparable to the compacts in terms of price.

The last utterance, "SPECIAL-SIZE BUICK SPECIAL THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS" is highly ostensive because the advertiser wants to inform consumers about the special size of Buick. That is why it has been written in capital letters and in a very big size. Beside this utterance, a symbol is used. This symbol is an arrow extending from two connecting circles. This symbol was used as a trademark for this car in the 1960s. As



a result, by combining verbal and non-verbal communication, ambiguity is resolved and understanding is achieved. Hence, persuasion is achieved by recognizing the advertiser's informative intention.

b. People Magazine

Advertisement (5)



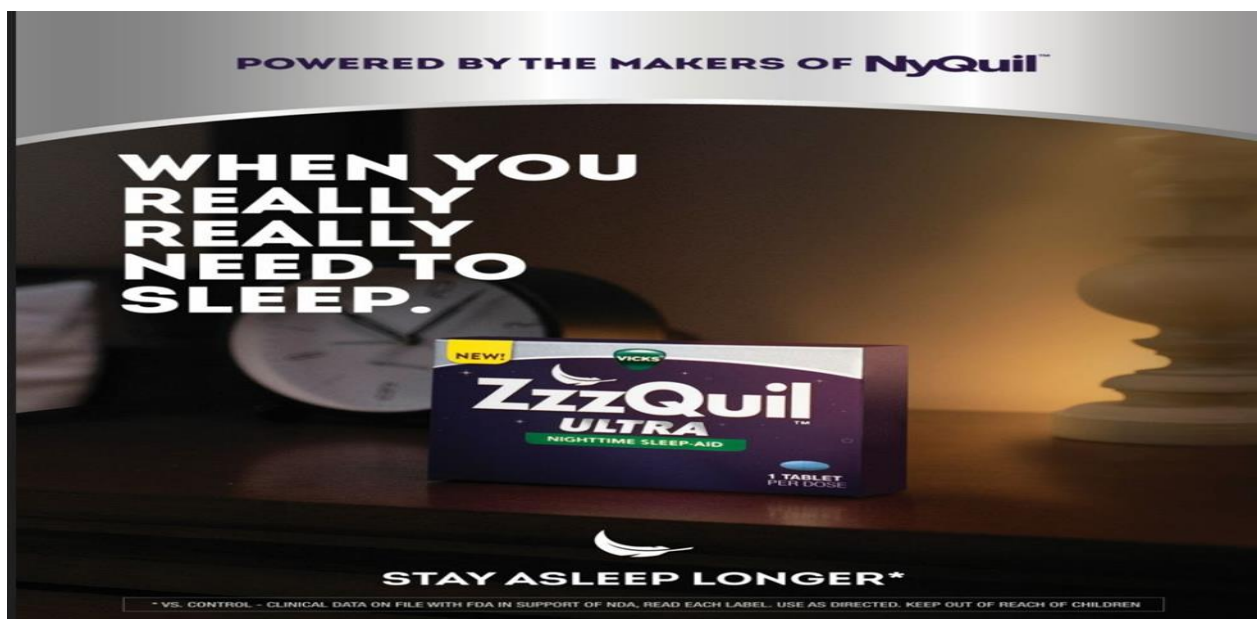
Diet Coke IT'S MINE (Coke, 2016, p. 92)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

The advertisement is basically a picture. It is an ostensive-stimulus. It has been designed in a very clever way to persuade consumers. It shows a woman wearing a formal suit and trying to catch a Coke bottle. Through verbal communication, the advertiser uses the ostensive-stimulus "Coke Diet IT'S MINE." The utterance "IT'S MINE" has been written with capital letters. The Coca-Cola Company (2016) declares a new campaign, which is "it is mine." Through this campaign, Coca-Cola makes a million distinctive and colorful package designs to fit consumers' preferences. Therefore, the utterance "it's mine" means that consumers can express their individuality by choosing the package they like. A woman, in this ad, is flying to catch the bottle of Coke as if this bottle is all she wants. The package design of this bottle is unique and has a special combination of colors. The colors of the bottle are a mixture of red, white, black, and light green. A white background is chosen to place an emphasis on the woman and Coke only. The woman here represents consumers.

As a result, the advertiser's informative intention is recognized through combining verbal and non-verbal communication. Hence, persuasion is achieved.

Advertisement (6)



POWERED BY THE MAKERS OF NyQuil™ WHEN YOU REALLY REALLY NEED TO SLEEP. STAY ASLEEP LONGER**VS. CONTROL CLINICAL DATA ON FILE WITH FDA IN SUPPORT OF NDA, READ EACH LABEL. USE AS DIRECTED. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN (ZzzQuil, 2021, p. 26)

Sperber and Wilson's (1987) Communicative Principle

The advertiser directly communicates to which class this medical treatment belongs, that is, NyQuil. This class is produced by the American company Vicks. This is an ostensive-stimulus. The name of this company appears on the package of this product in a green color. "WHEN YOU REALLY REALLY NEED TO SLEEP" is an ostensive-stimulus. It is designed to attract the attention of those who have sleep disorders. The word "really" has been repeated twice to indicate an urgent need to sleep. Consumers are curious to know what this advertisement offers them. The advertiser does not use verbal communication to mention the name of the medical treatment. Instead, through non-verbal communication, he/she presents a picture of the product itself. That is, the solution for sleep disorder is ZzzQuil.

The name of the brand is an ostensive-stimulus. The first three letters of this medicine are "zzz." These three letters are associated with sleeping. Through this medical product, consumers can "stay asleep longer." In the margin with a small size, the advertiser instructs consumers to read each label and keep this medicine out of children's reach. The background of



this advertisement is an ostensive-stimulus. Dim light helps consumers to fall asleep. The floating feather is associated with good sleeping. The watch refers to the time of sleeping. Therefore, this background is used to create a suitable environment for sleeping. As a result, by combining verbal and non-verbal communication, the advertiser's informative intention is recognized successfully to achieve persuasion.

7-Discussion

In this section, the two research questions are going to be answered. To answer the first question, the second question should be answered first.

Concerning the second question, how is Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle employed to achieve persuasion in the commercial advertisements in American magazines? Through analyzing six advertisements, it has been shown that no advertisement is used without the use of non-verbal communication. In some cases, the use of non-verbal communication strengthens what has been communicated by verbal communication, as in advertisements (1), (3) and (4). Moreover, understanding cannot be accomplished without non-verbal communication, as in advertisement (6). The advertiser uses ostensive-stimuli to attract consumers' attention, whether verbal or non-verbal cues. Understanding is accomplished when the advertiser's informative intention is recognized. Once this intention is communicated successfully, persuasion is achieved. In addition, capital letters, boldface, colors, and different sizes in writing are paralinguistic properties used pragmatically to highlight the main points in the commercial advertisements.

After answering the second question, it is possible now to answer the first question. The first question is, how is 'persuasion' as a pragmatic concept achieved in the commercial advertisements in American magazines? Through the analysis, persuasion is achieved pragmatically through a conscious attempt on the part of the advertiser to change consumers' beliefs and behaviors. It is also achieved through symbolic communication, that is, verbal and non-verbal communication. The communication between the advertiser and consumers is an ostensive-inferential communication. In other words, when the advertiser uses ostensive-stimuli to attract consumers' attention to the content of the advertisement, consumers can use their background knowledge with the provided evidence to recognize the advertiser's informative intention. They have the free will to accept or reject the message of the advertisement. Therefore, persuasion can be achieved through successful, symbolic, and intentional communication, as has been mentioned in Section 1.

The use of language has been changed over time in accordance with consumers' tastes and the development of technology. For example, advertisements (1) and (2), in 1937 and 1943, are so lengthy. Consumers want to know everything related to the product being advertised because only printed media are the source of information at that time. However, one utterance is used in advertisements (5) because consumers can get whatever they want to know about the product online in 2016.

8-Conclusion

Persuasion in the commercial advertisements is a pragmatic concept rather than a logical one. It is achieved through symbolic communication by the employment of Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle. It has been concluded that the mode of communication used in the commercial advertisement is ostensive-inferential communication. The advertiser expresses his/her intention through ostensive-stimulus and consumers infer the advertiser's message based on the provided evidence and their background knowledge. When they recognize the advertiser's informative intention, persuasion is achieved. Furthermore, through combining verbal and non-verbal communication, communication is accomplished successfully and the effect is going to be stronger. Moreover, the use of language has been changed over time in accordance with American consumers' tastes and the development of technology. While this research focuses on persuasion in the commercial advertisements in American magazines, future research could examine persuasion through Sperber and Wilson's (1987) communicative principle in the commercial advertisements across different cultures to explore how the cultural differences shape the communicative principle and, therefore, persuasion.

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