

## STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENT SLOGANS.

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### Abstract

Slogans used in advertisements are very crucial in the process of marketing communication, as they include the overall message of the brand in a concise, catchy, and persuasive way. This paper is devoted to the exploration of the stylistic characteristics of advertising slogans in English, as well as explanation of how linguistic devices contribute to their effectiveness, considering phonetic, lexical, and grammatical stylistic devices according to the classification proposed by several scholars. In this research the analysis of stylistics on famous advertising slogans across brands such as Nike, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Maybelline and the new brand ANAFOOZ is represented focusing on phonetic, lexical and syntactic devices.

### Key words

slogans, stylistic devices, brands, advertisement.

**Introduction.** Slogans of advertisements are a significant part of marketing communication as they own a brand's primary message being concise and memorable texts. In today's extremely competitive commercial world, advertisers utilize slogans not only to introduce their products to people but also to attain attention, because they can spread positive emotions and persuade consumers with the help of very limited linguistic space. To make advertisement slogans such effective the structure of them should be rich in linguistic and stylistic devices. In turns, from linguistic viewpoint, English advertisement slogans demonstrate the massive use of stylistic devices such as alliteration, metaphor, repetition, ellipsis and rhyme. The reason for it is that beside their use for decorative purposes they are employed to represent communicative and persuasive functions. By using manipulation of sound, structure and meaning, the memorability is enhanced and emotional appeal is created such as shaping positive bonds with brands. That is why, learning stylistic devices in advertisement slogans pave the way for

researchers to comprehend how language affects consumer's understanding and behavior.

**Theoretical background.** As a specific way of using language, stylistic devices serve as tools to make speech or writing more expressive and effective. According to Galperin, stylistic devices appear when the importance is gained by the language units due to the contexture with the context<sup>32</sup>. From this view, it is clear that stylistic devices possess a function to be decorative and tend to show particular communication functions through the systematic expressiveness. When it comes to slogans, advertisers make use of them in the form of short texts designed to create the most expressive impression in the smallest linguistic territory and these brief texts contribute to the productivity of message. By this feature, the space or time consumed in advertisements makes slogans powerful, catchy, and memorable and thus, they improve the productivity of advertisements with these brief texts that make consumers remember a brand name. To achieve this huge effect with just that little language, advertisers try to employ more stressed linguistic features with auditory repetition. This refers to repetition of sounds as alliteration and rhyme which make advertising slogans pleasant-sounding and easy to remember.

The advertising discourse, as argued by Cook in 2001, can be generally described as a kind of discourse where linguistic creativity functions well with advertising goals<sup>33</sup>. Supporting this argument, Myers, in his study in 1994, believes advertising language uses its ability to appeal, not to rational attitudes, but to emotional ones in order to influence consumer attitudes<sup>34</sup>. According to a stylistic perspective suggested by Galperin, this kind of influence can be achieved through emphasizing stylistic features for their ability to grab attention for better memorability<sup>35</sup>. Thus, applying Galperin's stylistic theory to advertising slogans enables a linguistic treatment of advertising communication in terms of expressive means.

**Methodology.** The content of the current study includes some of the best examples of advertising slogans used by several international brand names such as Nike, McDonald's, and Coca Cola. These advertisements are selected because of the popularity they have worldwide. Then qualitative stylistic analysis is conducted during the research, which is based on Galperin's classification system of stylistic devices. An exploration is done on all the slogans in accordance with phonetic,

<sup>32</sup> Galperin, I. R. 1977. *Stylistics*. Moscow: Higher School.

<sup>33</sup> Cook, G. 2001. *The Discourse of Advertising* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge

<sup>34</sup> Myers, G. 1994. *Words in Ads*. London: Edward Arnold.

<sup>35</sup> Galperin, I. R. 1981. *Stylistics*. Moscow: Higher School Publishing House.

lexical, and syntactic levels for stylistic devices with assessing stylistic value for advertising discourse.

**Analysis of stylistic features of English advertisement slogans.** The phonetic stylistic devices have a huge impact on advertising slogans and help create rhythm and better memorability. As Galperin writes that the use of similar sounds increases emotional color and emphasizes significant speech elements. For example, McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" slogan shows pleasant rhythm making phonetic harmony by using soft consonants because "m" and "n" as soft sounds follow each other causing the sound to mix together. In addition to it, the use of assonance made by repetition of "i" increases smoothness. From another point, omitted "g" sound assists to create friendly and colloquial feeling being an example of graphon as a type of graphical stylistic expression which is an imitation of spoken, informal language, creating friendliness. This brings the brand closer to every day speech and makes the slogan feel like a personal expression rather than a formal advertisement. When analyzed syntactically, the continuous action expressed with "*lovin'*" suggests an ongoing and real living experience rather than a one-time event, which enhances habitual pleasure. All of these features along with the verb *love* carrying powerful and positive evaluation function together to provide audiences with warm excitement and associate the brand with this emotional satisfaction.

Additionally, Coca-Cola's slogan "Open Happiness" which is well-known around the world can be an example of phonetic expressiveness and rhythm. Because the slogan demonstrates phonetic euphony and a pleasant sound arrangement gives extra tone and hence rises the level of happiness, which is associated with enjoyment. Moreover, as it is formed with two words, this makes the slogan easy to remember. When analyzed according to lexical devices, as being one of main stylistic devices in this slogan, metaphor is considered a way of describing one thing by calling it another thing to show a similarity between them. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explain conceptual features of our thoughts where abstract ideas are associated with real objects<sup>36</sup> are highly noticeable in metaphor. In this slogan, although happiness is an abstract feeling, it is described in a way that can be "opened". **In real-world situations people open bottles of Coca-Cola, but by using slogan "Open Happiness" advertisers give a message of that this drink cheers them up and provides with enjoyment instead of just representing an idea of a physical product. Similarly, according to Charles Forceville's claim, metaphor used in this slogan strengthen expressive meaning by**

<sup>36</sup> Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

connecting physical **action**<sup>37</sup> like opening a drink with **emotional experience** like happiness, which turns a consumption process into a symbolic moment of joy. **Therefore, metaphors which are** so ubiquitous in advertisements among all lexical devices, are **employed in this kind of advertisements to** make ideas more comprehensible, more appealing and more expressive without using words like “as” or “like”.

When it comes to one of the most popular brands, NIKE which is the world’s largest supplier of athletic shoes and a major manufacturer of sports equipment, with revenue in excess of US\$46 billion in its fiscal year 2022<sup>38</sup>, addresses to various stylistic devices in its advertisements. For example, slogan “Just Do It” with which NIKE is known everywhere, displays consonance that is recurrence or repetition of consonants especially at the end of stressed syllables without the similar correspondence of vowels<sup>39</sup> as an example of phonetic stylistic devices with the use of consonant sounds, d and t. This contributes to a strong, dynamic feel of slogan and creates a high sense energy apart from motivation for action. Even though simple words of daily life like *just, do, it* are chosen, their order adds a symbolic meaning with both expressing the urgency and decisiveness. With the use of *it*, the slogan does not directly depict the exact action, otherwise audiences themselves comprehend the action with what they want like running or training, which can be a case for deictic reference. The power of slogan also rises with imperative mood which is among persuasive strategies in advertisement discourse as Goddard said<sup>40</sup> cause advertisers apply a command form to address the audience and make Nike an incentive. As a result, these kind of productive qualities of slogans help the advertisements of NIKE achieve memorability and interest of people.

The next chosen brand for this research is Maybelline which deals with multinational cosmetics, skin care, perfume, and personal care company. The Maybelline advertising slogan “Maybe she’s born with it. Maybe it’s Maybelline.” shows how the use of simple stylistic features can produce a strong persuasive message. The use of “Maybe” at the start of each clause can be a case of anaphora, which helps to give the advertising slogan a simple rhythmic effect and easy memorability. The repetition helps to successfully create a smooth transition in terms of whether the speaker is addressing beauty or cosmetically enhancing it. In turns, it proposes that the product is naturally beautiful. This advertising slogan is further improved by features of alliteration, such as the repeated “m” sound, which

<sup>37</sup> Forceville, C. 1996. Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising. London & New York: Routledge.

<sup>38</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike,\\_Inc.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nike,_Inc.)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consonance>

<sup>40</sup> Goddard, A. 1998. The language of advertising. London: Routledge.

helps to produce a nice and pleasant effect and successfully helps to connect the message of beauty with the brand. According to Roman Jakobson, when messages in language highlight their form and sound, this helps in fulfilling the poetic function, which helps in successfully emphasizing the message of how the message is said, rather than just its content.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from all of these famous brands, newly organized brands also employ several stylistic devices to demonstrate their product's value and to attain the belief and curiosity of their audiences. ANAFOOZ brand whose owner is under a nickname called Madam Saudi on Instagram can be an exemplification for this. It is specialized to produce and sell abayas for female consumers and uses "ANAFOOZ - Elegant, Authentic, Stitched With Love" with its name. This slogan uses enumeration which is defined by Galperin as a stylistic device that sharpens meaning by gathering correlated units<sup>42</sup>. It is shown by the consecutive order of *elegant, authentic, stitched with love* and builds a brand image that consists of beauty, trust and emotion. In turns, as these expressions have stylistic movement from abstraction, this slogans possess gradation, too. In addition to this, metaphor can be found in phrase "Stitched With Love" as result of treating *love* that can be stitched into fabric and despite being metaphorical it illustrates a concise and predictable action connected with manual labor and care. This corresponds with the idea of Leech who defines metaphor as a device that shifts emotional and human qualities to a lifeless products<sup>43</sup> which results in enhancing brand's high value. Therefore, ANAFOOZ brand can depict care, sincerity and personal attention with short linguistic units with the help of several stylistic devices.

**Discussion.** The study makes it clear that stylistic devices have a significant function in increasing the memorability, persuasive nature, and emotional impact of slogans in advertisements. Phonetic devices, including alliterations, assonances, consonances, and rhythm, increase the auditory effects of slogans in advertisements, as in McDonald's slogan "I'm lovin' it", Maybelline's slogan "Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline." and Coca-Cola's slogan "Open Happiness." Lexical devices, especially metaphors bridge abstract concepts with real experiences. In this context, Coca-Cola's metaphor of "happiness", "wings" in the slogan of Red Bull and ANAFOOZ's "Stitched With Love" depict mere products by symbolizing happiness and love, thus validating Leech's concept of how metaphors mark human attributes on non-human entities.<sup>44</sup> Syntactic features such as imperative mood engage the audience and offer immediacy as in Nike's "Just Do It". On the

<sup>41</sup> Jakobson, R. 1960. Linguistics and Poetics. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), Style in Language. Cambridge, MA: MIT

<sup>42</sup> Galperin, I. R. 1981. Stylistics. Moscow: Higher School Publishing House.

<sup>43</sup> Leech, G. N. 1969. A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry. London: Longman.

<sup>44</sup> Leech, G. N. 1969. A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry. London: Longman.

whole, slogans put all these elements together for maximum effect using minimal words. World brands and new brands like ANAFOOZ rely on stylistic elements to convey a brand's features, generate interest, and boost consumer relationships.

**Conclusion.** This study proves that the field of stylistic analysis is rich in advertising slogans in the English language, as it shows how the interaction of phonetic, lexical, and syntactical devices can be effectively utilized to produce a persuasive, expressive, and memorable message. Phonetic devices add auditory value, the lexical devices of metaphor and gradation can express complex meanings, and the syntactical devices of ellipsis and imperative can involve the hearer in the interpretation. Global brands like Nike, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Red Bull and Maybelline in addition to new-age brands like ANAFOOZ, all use these devices in their own manner to appeal to consumer perception and make their brands more memorable. The next step for future studies could be to examine this same aspect in a cross-cultural setting, for example, understanding the effect of stylistic devices used in advertisements in slogans across cultures, among others. The stylistic aspect of advertising language is, therefore, an area that brings linguistics and marketing studies closer together, as explained above.

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