

ADVERTISING LANGUAGE AND PERSUASION¹

Pananda Lerlertyuttitham²

บทคัดย่อ

การจูงใจถือเป็นปัจจัยหลักที่สำคัญของการโฆษณา การที่โฆษณาจะจูงใจผู้บริโภคได้นั้นต้องมีศิลปะในการใช้ภาษาเป็นสำคัญ ดังนั้น งานวิจัยนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาลักษณะของภาษาโฆษณาที่มีผลต่อการจูงใจ โดยรวบรวมข้อมูลจากสื่อสิ่งพิมพ์ประเภทต่างๆ ได้แก่ นิตยสาร และหนังสือพิมพ์

จากผลการศึกษาพบว่า การใช้ภาษาเพื่อจูงใจได้แก่ การใช้คำนามที่รวมผู้อ่านซึ่งเป็นการใช้คำนามเสมือนผู้อ่านเป็นผู้มีส่วนร่วมในเหตุการณ์ด้วย การใช้คำปริมาณเพื่อแสดงคุณภาพหรือลักษณะเด่นของสินค้าและบริการ อาทิ คำว่า *กว่า ทุก หลาย* การใช้การกล่าวซ้ำเพื่อให้เกิดความแจ่มชัดและเน้นย้ำเกี่ยวกับสินค้าหรือคุณภาพของสินค้าและบริการ นอกจากนี้ยังปรากฏการใช้วาทกรรมการชี้นำเพื่อการจูงใจผู้บริโภคด้วย

ABSTRACT

Persuasion is key to a successful advertisement. Persuasive advertisement is an art in using linguistic strategy to convince consumers. This studies aims to study persuasion language used in advertisement based on data collected from printed media as magazines and newspaper.

From the study, there are several techniques for persuasion; use of noun to include the readers, use of quantifiers “about”, “every” and “many” to indicate high credibility of services and products, repetition for emphasis on quality of product and service, and directive speech act to convince the audience.

Introduction

Advertising plays the most important role in present-day business. It is a key strategy to persuade consumers to be interested in products and services in a free trade market. According to Wongmontha (1990:6), “advertising is a mass communication activity to motivate consumers to behave in a way that contributes to prosperity of product sellers or service providers.” One of the important objectives of advertising is to persuade consumers to buy products or services. Linguistic strategies are used in advertisements as tools to draw customers’ attention. The language used in advertisements greatly contributes to the production process as, for example, in the restaurant advertisement saying คิดถึงสีฟ้าเวลาหิว(khítthĩng sǐfá: we:la: hǐu) ‘Think of See Fah, when you are hungry,’ or the drink advertisement เป๊ปซี่ดีที่สุด(pépsî: di: thî: sù) ‘Pepsi is the Best’.

¹ ภาษาโฆษณากับการจูงใจ

² (ปณดา เลอเลิศยุติธรรม) Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand

The language used in advertisements is a key success factor in communicating the message from the advertiser to message receivers (consumers). Prasithrathsint (2005:85) states that advertising language, which aims to persuade message receivers, differs from day-to-day language. Its utmost objective is to persuade. Verderker (Verderker 1996 cited in Siriphatiwirut 2001) differentiated convincing statements and informative statements; that the objective of informative statements is to make message receivers understand, but that of the convincing statement is to give reasons so that the receivers believe.

To date, there have been many studies available in Thailand which have focused on the language of advertising in a variety of media such as printed media and the internet.

In studies of the language in newspapers and magazines, the focus is most commonly on sounds, words, phrases and meanings. In terms of sound, Limkulakomn (1991) found that advertising language on television and in magazines made frequent use of alliteration and rhyming, which were universal features of advertising language to create an impression on readers and listeners enabling them to remember the products better. In terms of words, Bunyanet (1986) and Devaphalin (1988) found that the use of slangs and foreign words was popular in advertisement in the newspapers. Furthermore, Limkulakomn (1991) found that advertising language on television and in magazines which made use of repetition, slang and loan words was due to a lack of existing words in the Thai language. They also increased the credibility of the products' quality. Sangkaman (1995) studied the composition and meaning of words in

advertising language and found that isolating words were more frequently used than formed words, and the type of isolating word most often found was noun. Also, Thai isolating words were more frequent than loan words. Moreover, six methods of word formation were identified: word compounding, morpheme adding, repetition, deletion, shortening and shift in grammatical function. The process used the most was compounding of words and the least was shift in grammatical function. In terms of phrases, Aiyawan (1999) studied advertising language in Thai newspaper and found that phrases in advertising language were divided into seven types: noun phrases, pronoun phrases, verb phrases, adjectival and adverbial phrases, prepositional phrases, conjunctive phrases and interjectional phrases. Among these, verb phrases were most frequently used while interjectional phrases were least used. In terms of meaning, Limkulakomn (1991) found incompliance of words similar to the study of Wichatrong (1981), who studied Thai language characteristics used in advertisements in daily newspapers from 1976-1978. Wichatrong (1981:37-41) found inappropriate collocations in newspaper advertisements such as adjective conflicting with noun as in ครั้ว ھرรฆา (khrua hán sá:) 'Fun Kitchen', verb conflicting with noun as in รสนุ่ม (rót ním) 'Soft Taste', verb conflicting with subject such as วินดีเลอร์ฮีนส์เจ็บทุกรูปแบบ (win di: lă: ji:n cèp thŭk rŭ:p bə:p) 'Win Dealer Painful Jeans', verb conflicting with object such as ชุบราคา (jŭp ra:kha:) 'Flatten price', adverb conflicting with verb such as สวยเจ็บ (súaj cèp) 'painfully beautiful', and words conflicting with each other such as เปลือยแต่ไม่โป้ (plŭaj tà: mŭi pŏ:) 'naked

but not indecent'. The word หรรษา (hán sá:) 'fun' and เจ็บ (cèp) 'painful' are the adjectives which always occur with living things, butครัว (khrua) 'kitchen' and ชีนส์ (ji:n) 'jeans' are not living creatures. The word รส (rót) 'taste' relates to taste perception while the word นุ่ม (nîm) 'soft' relates to physical perception. The word สวย (súaj) 'beautiful' relates to visual perception while the word เจ็บ (cèp) 'painful' relates to physical perception. The word ยุบ (jǔp) 'flatten' does not normally occur with ราคา (ra:kha:) 'price'. In the case of เปลือย (pliaj) 'naked' and โป๊ (pǒ:) 'indecent', the meaning of indecent is included in naked.

Much interest has been paid to studying advertisement language in a variety of media, such as Persuasive Language in Advertising and Televangelism (Kees 1984), Language of Advertising: A Study of Nigeria's Nation Newspaper and Newswatch Magazine (Robert 2013), and Language Choice and Ideology: Examining the Use of the Malay Language in English Newspaper Advertisements in Malaysia (John 2015). Robert (2013) studied the language of advertisement in selected newspapers and magazines. He found that the language of advertisements is persuasive and informative, and serves as a reminder to the consumer to purchase the products. Robert also stated that both linguistic and non linguistic features are employed to compel consumers to purchase goods whether good or bad. The linguistic forms include the manner and style of composition of texts, lexical choices, use of figurative expressions, use of simple diction, use of proper names and emotive

expressions etc. Bruthiaux (2000) presented a description of the syntax of advertising language in texts and stated that the need for writers to manipulate readers' self-image overrides the competing need to present content explicitly. Moreover, many other studies take the relevance account of persuasive language. In "Behind Advertising: The Language of Persuasion" (Kenechukwu, Ezekiel, Leo 2013) the researchers stated that advertising is a force that makes it possible to sell more merchandise due to its persuasive nature. They examined how consumers can be persuaded to buy the goods and services advertised. Furthermore, Flergin (2013) proposed that the media of this century depends more on linguists. The persuasive power of advertising language is very sophisticated today. The basic requirement of advertisements is communication. The persuasiveness of advertising language is explored at three levels: cohesion and coherence, speech acts and, ideology.

However, past studies on linguistic techniques in advertisements only focused on certain characteristics of the language used. Such studies did not analyse unique characteristics that affect consumer motivation, which is the main objective of advertisements. Therefore, this research aims to fill gaps in this area.

This study aims to study characteristics of Thai advertising language strategies. I would like to determine how advertisers use language to attract consumers and persuade them to buy products or services. The data used in this study is from newspapers and magazines, and compresses 50,456 words in total.

Persuasion in Advertising Language

Linguistic strategies used in advertising language to attract consumers are: the use of nouns to include readers as participants in an event; the use of quantifiers to show the high quality or features of goods and services and create credibility among consumers; repetition to create emphasis that consumers will get goods or services which have better specifications or quality than others, and the use of directive speech acts to convince the consumers. These are explained below.

Use of nouns to include readers

In this research, ‘nouns’ means words which cannot occur with the word “not” but can occur before adjectives and verbs. Moreover, nouns can occur before verbs and adjectives. (Prasithrathsint 2010:48). Therefore, in this research, pronouns are included in this class. Nouns to include readers are nouns that create the feeling that readers are part of the event. In the example following, the nouns in focus are in bold letters and italics.

(1) อาหารที่ **เรา** ทานอย่างเอร็ดอร่อยทุกวัน เมื่อ

รวมตัวกับน้ำลายทำให้เกิดกรด แบคทีเรีย

ในช่องปาก

*ʔa:hǎn thi: **rau** tha:n*

food that we eat

jà:ŋʔarètʔaròi

deliciously

thúk wan mîa ruamtua kàp

every day when mix with

ná:m̥la:i thamhâikət kròt bækthi:ria

saliva create acid bacteria

nai tʃoŋpà:k

in mouth (oral cavity)

‘The food, that **we** enjoy every day mixes with saliva to produce acid and bacteria our mouths.’

(2) พัฒนาขึ้นเพื่อขนตาของ **สาวเอเชีย** โดยเฉพาะ

phátthana: khǐn phiâ

developed up for

khǒnta: khǒŋ sǎ:w ʔe:tʃia

eye lash of girl Asia

doitʃaphó

specially

‘Specially developed for **Asian girls**’ eye lashes.’

In example (1), the word เรา (rau) ‘we’ is used to show that readers can have bacterial in the oral cavity. In comparing this sentence to the sentence “อาหารเมื่อรวมตัวกับน้ำลายทำให้เกิดกรด แบคทีเรียในช่องปาก”. ‘Food that mixes with saliva to produce acid and bacteria in our mouths.’, it is found that consumers are more convinced by the early sentence than another. In example (2), the word สาวเอเชีย (sǎ:w ʔe:tʃia) ‘Asian girls’ is used to encourage Asian readers to feel that the product is appropriate for them since the intended readers are Thai.

Use of Quantifiers

Quantifiers are words that relate to counting, quantity or relativity of large and small amounts, and possibly are modifiers of small amounts or part or whole of the sum exclusive of cardinal numbers because, from a syntactic point of view, cardinal numbers are nouns. In Thai, quantifiers cannot occur before the word “not” but occur before nouns and modify nouns such as ทุก (thúk) ‘every, หลาย (la:i)

‘many’, and เพียง(phian) ‘within’. (Prasithrathsint, Indrambarya, and Chaicharoen 2011)

Advertisements make use of quantifiers to show the high quality or features of products or services to create credibility among consumers. Quantifiers used in advertisements are those indicating frequent occurrence large or small amount, an amount that is higher than it appears, and an amount that is smaller than expected. The last type always occurred at the beginning of messages. In the following examples, the quantifiers in focus are in bold letters and italics.

(3) แข็งแรง **ทุก** ครั้งที่ยิ้ม
khǎngrǎŋ thúk khrán
 strong every time
thí: jím
 that smile
 ‘Strong **every** time you smile.’

(4) **กว่า** 15 ปี ของการวิจัย
kwà: sìphâ: pi:
 more than fifteen year
khǒŋ ka:nwícai
 of research
 ‘**More than** 15 years of research.’

(5) **หลาย** ความรู้สึกที่คุณสัมผัสได้
la.ǐ khwa:mrú:sìk thí:
 many feelings that
khun samphàt dâi
 you feel can
 ‘**Many** feelings that you can feel.’

(6) ผู้หญิง **นับ** ล้านคนใช้แล้ว
phû:jǐŋ náp lá:n
 women total millions
khon tǎi léw
 human use already
 ‘Millions of women have tested it.’

(7) **เพียง** 4 วัน รู้สึกได้ถึงการเปลี่ยนแปลง
phian sì: wan rú :sìk
 just four day feel
dâi thīŋ ka:nlianplæŋ
 can achieve change
 ‘You will feel dramatic change **just** 4 days.’

(8) **แค่** เลี้ยววินาทีก็ทำให้เขาตกหลุมรักได้ทันที
 และตลอดไป
khê siâw wina:thi: kô:
 only part second then
thamhâi khâu tòklûmrák
 cause he fall in love
thanthi: lá talw:tpai
 suddenly and forever
 ‘**In only** a split second, he will fall in love with you suddenly and forever.’

In example (3), the word ทุก (thúk) ‘every’ shows frequent occurrence to convince consumers that teeth will always be strong if they use this product. In example (4), the comparative word กว่า (kwà:) ‘more than’ is used to show a longer period of time to create credibility by indicating that the product has been tested for more than fifteen years. The use of intensifiers, including superlatives, comparatives, hyperbole, exaggeration, and many other techniques to hype the product, is a basic persuasion strategy. (New Mexico Media Literacy Project, 2001). In the later two examples, the word หลาย (la.ǐ) ‘many’ and นับ (náp) ‘about’ show a large amount. In example (5), the manufacturer persuades consumers by showing that if the consumers use this product, they will get a sense of variety. In example (6), the consumers are informed that many people use this product, thus the product should have good quality. Many advertisements show lots of people using a particular

product to imply that since everybody is using it, one should ‘jump on the bandwagon.’ Bandwagon is a persuasive technique that hinges on the argument that a person should believe or do something because ‘everybody else’ does. Kenechukwu, Ezekiel, and Leo (2013) also show that an igniting force which stimulates the consumer mindset towards product or service can influence the way consumers view them and convince them that buying certain products can be beneficial for them. In the last two examples เพียง (phiaŋ) ‘within’ and แค่ (khê) ‘only’ show amounts smaller than expected to convince consumers that the products are of high quality. Example 6 “ผู้หญิงล้านคนใช้แล้ว” ‘Millions of women tested it.’ and example 7 “รู้สึกได้ถึงการเปลี่ยนแปลงได้ใน 4 วัน” ‘You will feel dramatic change in 4 days.’ were found to be more effective in convincing consumers than other sentences.

Use of Repetition

Repetition is using the same word, phrase, or clause more than once in a short passage. Repetition of words, one of the persuasive principles (New Mexico Media Literacy Project, 2001), of words in advertisements means that a word intentionally reoccurs in one work of advertisement to emphasize the meaning and create more clarity. Cutlip and Centre (1978) state that one of the persuasive principles is clarity. The things that produce the impression must be clear.

Repetition of Verbs

In this research ‘verb’ means a word which can occur after the word “not” (Prasithrathsint 2010). The repetition of verbs in advertisements aims to create awareness that product manufacturers or service providers have tried their best to offer the highest quality possible or to point out features of the goods or services. In the following examples, the verbs in focus are in bold letters and italics.

(9) XXX ขยาย สัญญาณครอบคลุมทั่วไทย

และ ขยาย ทั่วพื้นที่อีสาน ให้โทรหากันฟรีไม่
อื่น

XXX *khajǎ:j sǎnja:n*

XXX expand signal

khɾɔ:pkhlum thũa thai læ’

cover over Thailand and

khajǎ:j thũa phĩ:nthi: ɸi:saːn

expand over area northeast

hǎi tho: hǎ:kan fri:

to call to each other free

miâ?ân

unlimited

‘XXX *expands* service to cover the whole country and *expands* to the whole Northeastern region for free unlimited calling.’

(10) รองพื้นชุด ใหม่ หยุดความกังวลใจเรื่อง

ความมันและแห้งของผิว พบแป้งรุ่น ใหม่

จาก XXX ช่วยปรับสภาพผิวให้

สมบูรณ์แบบ

ɾɔ:ŋphĩ:n tɸút mài jùt

foundation set new stop

khwamkaŋwoncai riâŋkhwamman

worry greasy

læ hǎ:ŋ khǎ:ŋ phĩw

and dry of skin

phóp pɛːŋ rún
meet powder series
mài cà:k xxx tʃuaj
new from xxx help
práp sàphâ:pphǐw hâi
adjust dermopathy to
sômboonbɛp
perfect

‘**The New** line of foundation will stop you from worrying about greasy and dry skin problems.
The New powder from XXX will make your skin flawlessly perfect.’

In the first example, the word ขยาย (khajǎ:j) ‘expand’ reoccurs to make consumers aware that the service provider has attempted to improve its service with all their resources and capability, while in the latter example, the word ใหม่ (mài) ‘new’ reoccurs to emphasize that the products are newly developed for consumers. Consumers tend to believe they’re better than old things and old ideas. (New Mexico Media Literacy Project 2001) If we compare this example to the sentences “รองพื้นและแป้งรุ่มใหม่ จาก XXX ช่วยหยุดความกังวลใจเรื่องความมันและแห้งของผิวและช่วยปรับสภาพผิวให้สมบูรณ์แบบ” ‘**New** foundation and powder from XXX will stop you from worrying about greasy and dry skin problems and will make your skin flawlessly perfect.’, we will find that the consumers are more convinced by the sentences in the example than another.

Repetition of Quantifiers

As mentioned above, quantifiers are words relating to large or small amounts. In Thai, quantifiers cannot occur before the word “not” but can occur before nouns and modify nouns. Quantifiers can be modifiers of small amount or part or whole

of the sum exclusive of cardinal numbers because, from a syntactic point of view, cardinal numbers are nouns. (Prasithrathsint et al., 2011). They also reoccur in an advertisement to underline that consumers will get goods or services which has better specifications or quality than others. In the following examples, the quantifiers in focus are in bold letters and italics.

- (11) เคี้ยว XXX **ทุกวัน** กินแคลเซียมสู้ผิวฟัน
ได้ **ทุกวัน**

khíaw XXX thúk wan
chew XXX every day
khi:n kænsiâm sù:
give back calcium to
phǐwfan dâi thúk wan
teeth skin can every day
‘Chew XXX **every** day and your teeth will be filled with calcium **every** day.’

- (12) ก้าวล้ำ**กว่า**การปกปิด สว่างสดใส**ยิ่งกว่า**

kâ:wlám kwà:
ahead of more than
ka:npòkpìt sawà:ŋsòtsǎi
concealment bright
jɨŋkwà:
more than
‘**More** advanced **than** concealing and brighter **than** before.’

These examples use repetition of the quantifiers ทุก (thúk) ‘every’ and กว่า (kwà:) ‘more than’ to point out that the products are highly efficient and better than competitors’ products. Therefore, when consumers realize that the features of a product are better than these similar products they will take it. In Example 11, the repetition of ทุก (thúk) ‘every’ underlines that the more consumers use the product, the more calcium is added to

their teeth. If they chew it every day, their teeth will be filled with calcium. In Example 12, the repetition of กว่า (kwà:) ‘more than’ shows that this product can make the consumer more beautiful than other products.

Use of Directives

Searle (1969) states that speech acts are utterances that have a performative function while directives are speech acts in which a speaker desires a listener to follow his/her objective, such as ordering, requesting and suggesting. Therefore, directives commonly occur in advertisements to convince consumers. According to the advertising language in Thai, imperatives and directive verbs such as (tî) ‘must’, (kuan) ‘should’, and (nânam) ‘suggest’ are markers of directives. The illocutionary force of directive speech acts in Thai advertising language is aimed at inducing the consumer to perform an action contributes to the prosperity of product sellers or service providers. Examples are as follow:

- (13) อยากรู้ต้องชม อยากดื่มนมต้องมา

jà:k rú: tîj tfom
want know must watch
jà:k dî:m nom tîj ma:
want drink milk must come
‘Watch it if you are curious and come see us if you want to drink some milk.’

- (14) เปลี่ยนถ่ายน้ำมันเครื่องครั้งต่อไป เราจะ

น้ำมันเครื่อง XXX ที่ศูนย์ XXX เท่านั้น
pliànthà:j ná:mmankriâj
change lubricant
krâj tò:pai
time next

càjcoj ná:mmankriâj XXX thî:
specify lubricant XXX at
sǔ:n XXX thâunán
center XXX only
‘Don’t forget to use nothing other than XXX lubricant at XXX Center at your next lube change.’

In example (13), the directives are used to make consumers curious and interested in joining the activity invited by the advertisement. Comparing the sentence in this example to the sentence “ในงานมีนมให้ดื่ม”. ‘there is some milk in the fair.’, it is found that the consumers are more convinced by the early sentence than another. While in example (14), the advertisement directs the consumers that they must only go to this service center for lube change.

Conclusion

In summary, from the study of linguistic techniques used in advertisements, the primary techniques used to attract consumers’ interest in products or services are: use of nouns to include readers in the scene; use of quantifiers to indicate quality and features of services and products; use of word repetition to emphasize on quality of products or services, and lastly use of directives. Nouns to include readers are used to create the feeling that the product is appropriate for them because the readers are part of the participants in an event. The use of quantifiers is a linguistic strategy to create credibility and raise consumers’ awareness of the high quality or features of their products or services, so consumers realize that the product is better than others. Advertisements also make use of repetition of verbs and quantifiers to underline that consumers will get products or services which have better specifications or

quality than others; therefore, customer will purchase them. The last technique mentioned in this study is the use of directives. Directives occur in advertisement to convince the consumers to perform an action that contributes to the prosperity of product sellers or service providers.

References

- Aiyawan, Worasin. 1999. *The Characteristics of Advertising Language in the Daily Newspapers*. Master's Thesis, Mahasarakham University.
- Boonyanet, Nangnoi. 1986. *Slang in Thai newspapers during 1978-1982*. Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University.
- Bruthiaux, Paul. 2000. In a nutshell: persuasion in the spatially constrained language of advertising. *Language & Communication* 20: 297-310.
- Cutlip, S. and A. Centre, 1978. *Effective public relations*. Fifth Edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Publishers.
- Devaphalin, Suchada. 1988. *Thai slangs in daily newspapers*. Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University.
- Kees, Joseph F. 1984. Persuasive Language in Advertising and Televangelism. *Working Papers of the Linguistics Circle* 4.1: 91-113.
- Kenechukwu S., Ezekiel S. Asemah, Leo O.N. Edegoh 2013. Behind Advertising: The Language of Persuasion. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*. 3(4):951-959
- John, D.A.F. 2015. Malay language in English newspaper advertisements in Malaysia. *Language & Communication* 43: 87-101.
- Limkulacomn, Saksith. 1991. *Strategies of word use in Thai in television and magazine advertising*. Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University.
- New Mexico Media Literacy Project. 2001. *The language of persuasion*. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Language_of_Persuasion_-_Creating_Advocacy_Messages_456276_7.pdf
- Prasithrathsint, Amara. 2010. *Parts of Speech in Thai : A Syntactic Analysis*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University press.
- Prasithrathsint, Amara. 2005. *Language in Thai Society: Diversity, Change and Development*. Forth Edition. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Prasithrathsint, Amara; Indrambarya, Kittima; and Chaicharoen, Nattawut. 2011. *Pan-dialectal Grammar of Thai: vol. 1 Standard Thai*. Research report submitted to Thailand Research Fund.
- Robert, Esther. 2013. *Language of Advertising: A Study of Nigeria's Nation Newspaper and Newswatch Magazine*. *Journal of Education and Learning* 2.3: 61-70.
- Searle, John. 1969. *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University.

- Siriphatiwirut, Nowwanij. 2001. *Persuasive discourse in Thai television commercials : a pragmatic approach*. Master' Thesis, Thammasat University.
- Sungkaman, Umaporn. 1995. *The Language of Advertising: Word Formation and Meaning*. Master' Thesis, Thammasat University.
- Supitch, Kannika. 2006. *Advertising Language on the Internet*. Master' Thesis, Mahasarakham University.
- Verderker, Rudolf F. 1996. *Communicate!.* U.S.A: Wadsworth.
- Wichatrong, Srichan. 1981. *An analytical study of Thai in advertising in daily newspaper during 1976-1978*. Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University.
- Wongmontha, Seri. 1990. *Integrated Marketing Communication*. Bangkok: Diamond in Business World.