

Persuasive Language of Advertisement in People Magazine: A Semantic Study

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Abstract

This research analyzes the persuasive language used in magazine advertisements, namely People Magazine. The research purpose is to discover types of persuasive techniques and recognize the deeper meaning of the persuasive sentences used in People Magazine. The theory of Lamb (2019) is used as the main theory to support conducted this research. The qualitative method is also applied to this research. The object of this research was the article advertisement posted in People Magazine, starting from the headline, picture caption, and content. After analyzing the data, the writer found 12 persuasive techniques out of 25 techniques of Lamb's theory used in People Magazine. From 30 ads, found 12 types of techniques and it can be classified as follow: 6 data of hyperbole, 4 data of evidence, 3 data of simile, 3 data of emotive, 1 data of imagery, 2 data of colloquial language, 1 data of rhetorical questions, 2 data of expert opinion, 3 data of assonance, 1 data of tradition, 3 data of connotation, and 1 data of inclusive language. People Magazine dominantly used Hyperbole techniques on their advertisement. It shows that People Magazine itself wants to posted an advertisement article that can grab reader's attention, make their message notable and underline product qualities.

Keywords: *persuasive language, advertisement, magazine*

Introduction

Language has a close connection with the verbal or written communication process. We can deliver our messages to others by using language in daily life. Isphording's 2014 study (as cited in Oviogun and Veerdee, 2020) stated that language is also a tool humans use to express thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions and influence or be influenced by the meaning of the language itself. One way of communication to convey a message is through an advertisement. Advertisement is an essential medium to persuade people by providing information or ideas about a product or service.

The language used in advertisements is persuasive. Using persuasive language in the ad can gain the trust of potential customers about the products offered. Many companies use persuasive language to build and promote a product image through advertisement. Using persuasive language will be a powerful attraction that can make consumers reconsider buying a product or service offered in the ad.

There are several media types for showing an advertisement, such as print and digital media; one example is a magazine. In general, a magazine is a collection of articles published regularly. It focuses on any topic, especially if it is interesting and trending in a particular

group (Atilano, 2021). Initially, a magazine is only available in the form of print media, which is published once in a weekly or monthly period. But today, magazine media has felt the impact of digital technology, and some have expanded their existence into Online magazines that can be easily accessed on the Internet. The advertisements shown in the magazine are usually written more interesting and detailed than other media. In addition, the design or illustration also supports an ad to be interesting to read. One of the magazines with reliable and diverse advertising content is *People Magazine*, a weekly magazine for the American population with information about celebrity news and interesting stories of people or figures. The published advertisements offer products from fashion to home appliances, written with catchy headlines, images, and content for further analysis.

Some previous authors have analyzed persuasive language usage, such as research by Nggara et al., (2021) entitled "Persuasive Language Used in The Advertisements of Frankie Magazine". They used the theory of 7 persuasive techniques from Keraf (2007), and found only three techniques from the advertisements analysis in the magazine. In addition, there is Auliya & Hastuti (2022), with the research title "An Analysis of Persuasive Techniques Used in Maybelline New York Instagram Captions" used Lamb's theory to support data analysis, and this research discovered 11 persuasive language techniques.

Thus, research on persuasive language in the Online magazine is an interesting topic to develop because *People Magazine* has never been widely used for research data, and it is an opportunity to learn more deeply about the persuasive language used by an ads writer. Furthermore, the research that the writer will develop focuses on analyzing persuasive language techniques in *People Magazine* advertisements using 25 techniques by Lamb's theory (2019), as well as analyzing the meaning of denotation and connotation of persuasive language with Semantic study using two research questions: 1) What are the types of the persuasive technique used in *People Magazine* advertisement? 2) What is the meaning of each type of persuasive technique in *People Magazine* advertisements?

Semantic

Semantics is the study of meaning of word and sentences through language. In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as borne on the syntactic levels of words, phrases, and sentences (Saeed, 2016). Based on Harimurti's 1982 research (as cited in Nafinuddin, 2020) stated that in the field of semantics, the term commonly used for linguistic signs is lexeme, which is commonly defined as a word or phrase, which is a meaningful unit. Meanwhile, word terms, which are commonly defined as independent language units that can occur from a single morpheme or a combination of morphemes, are terms in the grammar field. Those two terms are considered to have the same meaning. It has to note that not all words or lexemes have concrete references in the real world. Semantics has a very important role for linguistics. The Triangle Semantics Theory of meaning shows that symbol, concept, and referent are interconnected in the creation of a language. The relationship between word and referent may only be understood through the existing concepts in the brain, both on the speaker and the listener. The concepts are as a shadow, interpreting, and understanding.

Advertisement

Advertising is defined as the paid, non-personal form of communication about products or ideas by an identified sponsor through the mass media so as to inform, persuade or

influence the behavior of the target audience (Richards & Curran, 2002). Advertising is directed to a large number of people and not to one individual. In addition, advertising language is a special phenomenon and a special field of study of public relations in the field of modern science. It is being studied by experts in various fields: linguists, psychologists, economists and others. Besides, nowadays we can see many advertising in social media. Social media advertising itself is a form of advertisement using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and many more. Using social media platforms, the advertisers will decrease the use of advertisement costs; however, they are able easily to reach their target audience. Advertisements have five main parts to support the purposes of advertisements, such as headline, sub-headline, benefits, image and call-to-action (*The 5 Parts of an Advertising Ad*, 2017).

Persuasive Language

Persuasive language is writing to persuade people to agree with your point of on a topic or issue. Persuasive language used in lots of aspects, especially in printed or electronic media. They usually used persuasive technique in writing to ask other people to do something. Advertisement is an example of a form in which persuasive language is frequently used. The goal of persuasive language is to create a particular effect on the readers. The ad writer will use language, stories, and evidence to convince or influence the reader's response or emotion (Breueur, 2008). According to (Lamb, 2019), there are 25 techniques of persuasive language which applied in conducting this research.

1. Alliteration uses words that start with a similar sound or letter to emphasize something.
2. Analogy is used to show something, and this analogy contrasts two things.
3. *An anecdote* is a personal story that explains a topic in a short time. This technique provides the writer with an authentic connection to the issue and can be used to engage the reader emotionally.
4. *Appeals* is a technique in which the writer draws on the reader's awareness or desire to feel various emotions, such as compassion, common sense, fairness, family values, fear, hip-pocket nerves, patriotism, and tradition.
5. *Assonance* is the repetition of words with vowels that sound similar to emphasize a particular phrase or idea.
6. *Attacks* is a technique in which the author often attacks and criticizes things that do not agree. This kind of attack often has a very critical tone.
7. *Cliche* is a frequently used phrase, although it should be avoided, allowing writers to explain ideas to their audience quickly.
8. *Connotations*, adalah is the emotional meaning associated with the word.
9. *Emotive language* is a word that causes a strong emotional response in the audience.
10. *Euphemism*, adalah, is a mild phrase that is used instead of using other words that might be too harsh.
11. *Everyday/ colloquial language* is the language used in everyday situations. Writers will often use a common language to make themselves seem more approachable.

12. *Evidence* is like providing facts, figures, statements, or graphics that writers often use to support their arguments.
13. *Hyperbole/Exaggeration* often emphasizes something or claims not meant to be taken literally.
14. *Expert opinion* is to use of an expert opinion. It can help to make arguments more persuasive and credible.
15. *Generalization* is a statement that concludes specific examples.
16. *Inclusive language* uses words like 'we' to create the impression that the writer and the reader are on the same side.
17. *Imagery* is descriptive writing that can provide an image in the reader's mind.
18. Jargon refers to terms or expressions that are very specific and are often associated with a particular field of study or research.
19. *Logic/reason* is used to persuade readers with reasonable arguments.
20. *Metaphors* use language that describes one thing as another thing; this is to help make comparisons between the two things.
21. Pun is a joke that relies on the different meanings of a word or words that sound alike. A pun can be used to explain an issue or ridicule a point of view.
22. *Repetition* is giving emphasis and prominence to points or ideas, repeating the reader's ideas to strengthen and make remembered points.
23. A *rhetorical question* is a question whose answers are implied but can help direct the reader to make conclusions.
24. *Sarcasm* is the use of words delivered funnily to mock someone or something.
25. *Simile* functions when one object is contrasted with another object. This technique can create a vivid image in the viewer's mind or illustrate something positively or negatively.

To conclude, the theory used for this research is Lamb's (2019) theory of 25 persuasive techniques to support the analysis.

Method

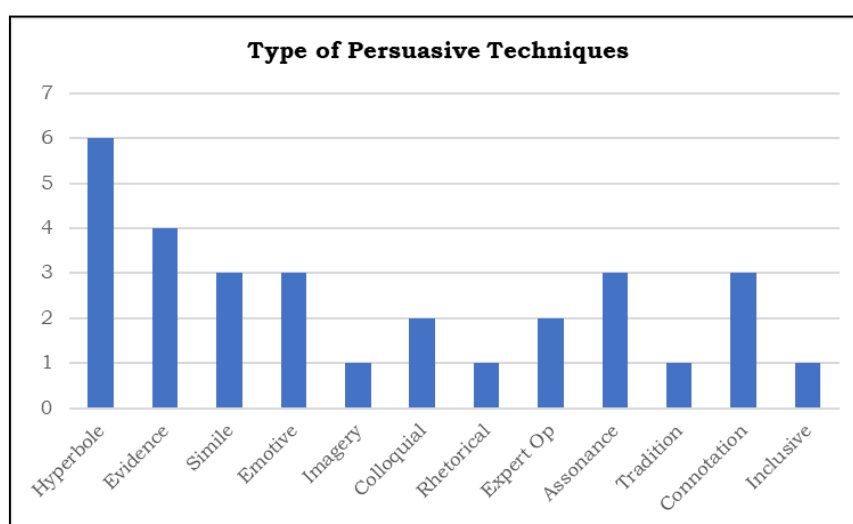
This research used qualitative methods to support the data collection and procession. Qualitative method is defined as a broad term that can be applied to various research approaches that have their theoretical origins in multiple disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, philosophy, social psychology, and linguistics. Qualitative research is concerned with social phenomena and the understanding of meaning (Moriarty, 2011). One design with a qualitative approach is descriptive qualitative. It is the researcher's concern to understand individual experiences in their unique context. This type of research requires a flexible, inductive, dynamic research process that does not alter data beyond recognition of the phenomenon being studied (Lambert, 2013). This method is considered because descriptive qualitative can dig deeper into understanding the explanation of a context.

The data was taken through the People Magazine website with the link <https://people.com> and analyzed for about 30 advertisements published in October 2022 –

May 2023 as data to analyze the types of persuasive techniques and their meanings. The advertisement combines headlines, sub-headlines, image captions, and ad text. Some steps were applied to collect the data, the first reading the magazine ads from beginning to end to understand the content. Second, note the transcript of documenting the data and identifying the advertisements in the magazine. Then, classify the data based on types of persuasive techniques using the 25 techniques theory by Lamb (2019). The last step is connecting each persuasive technique's meaning with semantic studies, whether it includes connotative or denotative meanings.

Results and Discussion

The data in this research were analyzed based on Lamb's (2019) theory about persuasive language. The data is classified in Picture 1. Types of Persuasive Language Found. From 30 ads, 12 techniques were found in People Magazine ads. They are hyperbole, evidence, simile, emotive language, imagery, colloquial language, rhetorical questions, expert opinion, assonance, appeals of tradition, connotation, and inclusive language, with the most type found is Hyperbole. This finding has answered the first research question the writer mentioned previously.



Picture 1. Type of Persuasive Techniques Found

To answer the second research question related to the meaning of persuasive language that appears in People Magazine advertisements, here are the detailed explanations of each type of persuasive language found in the data.

Data 1 (Hyperbole)



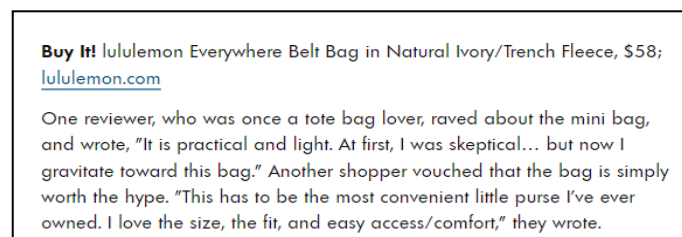
Picture 2. PM- 27/10/2022

"Shoppers Say This Cordless Stick Vacuum Cuts Their Cleaning in Half.."

Analysis

This is an ad for a vacuum cleaner from the Shark brand. The picture above shows the advertisement's headline: **"This Cordless Stick Vacuum Cuts Their Cleaning Time in Half"**. The sentence ***cuts time in half*** has a hyperbolic meaning to emphasize how good or fast the features offered by the vacuum cleaner brand are. Analysis of the meaning of the advertisement sentence above is that the vacuum cleaner supports the cleaning time to be faster than usual. The hyperbole creates a dramatic impact and grabs the reader's attention.

Data 2 (Evidence)



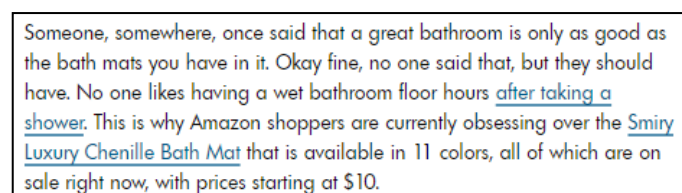
Picture 3. PM- 6/12/2022

One reviewer, who was once a tote bag lover, raved about the mini bag and wrote, "It is practical and light. At first, I was skeptical... but now I gravitate toward this bag.."

Analysis:

This is an ad for a belt bag from the Lululemon brand. In this ad, the writer offers a buyer testimonial to prove to the other viewers that its product is good quality and affordable. An example of a testimonial is, **"It is practical and light. At first, I was sceptical... but now I gravitate toward this bag."** After using the product, the customer delivers a recommendation statement and expresses her feelings about it. This testimonial has the possibility to influence another customer during decision-making before buying this belt bag. Analysis of the meaning of this testimonial sentence is to use the denotative meaning seen from the word "it is practical and light," which means the waist bag is convenient and light.

Data 3 (Simile)



Picture 4. PM- 8/12/2022

Someone, somewhere, once said that a great bathroom is only as good as the bath mats you have in it..

Analysis

This ad promotes a bath mats product from the Smiry brand. The persuasive sentence that contains simile is in the statement, "A great bathroom is only as good as the bath mats

you have in it, " meaning a bathroom can seem reasonable if you put a soft and luxurious mat. The goal here is to entertain the readers and to provide information about how the product has good quality, made from soft & premium material. The bathroom mats can take water absorption to the next level while prioritizing softness. Analysis of the sentence's meaning describes the mat quality that will impact the quality of the bathroom.

Data 4 (Emotive Language)



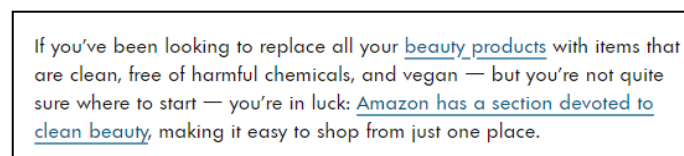
Picture 5. PM- 8/12/2022

Mini Uggs Are So Hard to Get Right Now — but We Found Some for Up to 38% Off at This Under-the-Radar Sale

Analysis

This headline is promoting a product of mini Uggs boots from the Rue La La brand. The sentence **"Mini Uggs are so hard to get right now, but we found some"** is a persuasive sentence that means the reader must buy a pair because it is limited stock. This sentence consists of emotive language because of the statement 'hard to get.' This emotionally affects readers and impacts their fear of missing out if they don't immediately get the product. Analysis of the meaning of the ad has a denotative meaning, such as the phrase 'hard to get,' which has a dictionary meaning that the mini boots are difficult to get at a particular time.

Data 5 (Imagery)



Picture 6. PM- 6/12/2022

If you've been looking to replace all your beauty products with items that is clean, free of harmful chemicals, and vegan.

Analysis

The above ads promote some recommendations for organic beauty products. The imagery was found in this statement, "with items that are clean, free of harmful chemicals, and vegan." The ad writer wants to introduce a beauty product that doesn't contain dangerous chemicals and is indeed safe to use, especially for sensitive skin. This statement also describes the product claims made from natural ingredients and makes the buyer imagine the product's benefits. Analysis of the meaning of the sentences in the bolded sentences is denotative because they contain direct meaning or dictionary meaning to describe the beauty product, with the aim to deliver the message literally.

Data 6 (Colloquial Language)



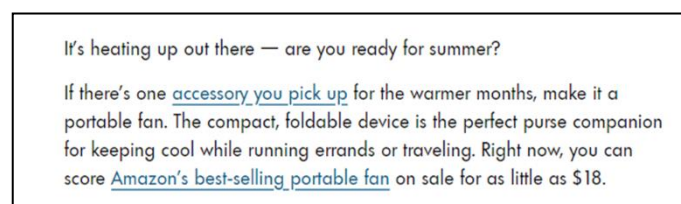
Picture 7. PM- 20/01/2023

The 15 Best Trench Coats of 2023 to Keep You Chic and Cozy

Analysis

This headline promotes 15 recommendations of the must-have coats brand in 2023. The colloquial language can be seen in the word “Chic”, which is another attractive word to read than saying fashionable or stylish. Besides, the word “Cozy” is an informal way to say comfortable. Instead of saying fashionable and comfortable, the ad writer would love to write casually to build a friendly tone that can be more approachable or attract readers to read the recommendation list. This headline has a denotative or literal meaning, where the writer wants to say that they have some recommendations of coats with a sophisticated look and comfortable wearing because they are made from good quality.

Data 7 (Rhetorical Question)



Picture 8. PM- 25/04/2023

It's heating up out there — are you ready for summer?

Analysis

The ad writer writes the statement above in the context of promoting a portable mini fan from the JISULIFE brand. The persuasive writing use of rhetorical questions is shown in the statement, “Are you ready for summer?” This means that when you nearly welcoming the summer season, then it’s just perfect to have a handheld mini fan as a lifesaver to stay cool when the weather is extremely hot. The rhetorical question makes the readers wonder what they should prepare for summer. Then this leads to influence readers to buy the products, because the fan is one of the solutions to getting out of the hot weather.

Data 8 (Expert opinion)

As influencer and lifestyle expert [Caralyn Mirand](#) explains, the best thing to keep in mind when shopping for a sister-in-law is her current phase of life. "Is she just starting out in a new career or has she hit a new milestone?" Mirand suggests to PEOPLE. "Maybe she just welcomed a new baby into the family. Or perhaps she recently discovered a new hobby or interest. From there, it's easier to start brainstorming some categories or ideas she may use or be interested in."

Picture 9. PM- 19/12/2022

As influencer and lifestyle expert Caralyn Mirand explains, the best thing to keep in mind when shopping for a sister-in-law is her current phase of life...

Analysis

The ad is about gift recommendations for a sister-in-law in the last-minute buying. The ad content is written based on lifestyle expert, Caralyn Mirand, to give a trusted message or belief in what an expert is saying. The expert in this ad noted that the best gift to give to sister law is looking at her current phase of life to easier choosing categories gift ideas, such as she has a new hobby of gardening, so it is perhaps the best solution to give her a garden tool set or flower grow kit. Above content ad has a denotative meaning because the ad writer delivers the opinion with the literal meaning and says the truth to attract readers to agree with the content

Data 9 (Assonance)

At PEOPLE, we take beauty testing very seriously. We sift through hundreds — nay — thousands of pitches and products on a regular basis, carefully swatching, spritzing, and applying the latest and greatest offerings so that we can then share with you, dear readers, those that are worth your hard-earned money. And we're keenly aware that beauty products are

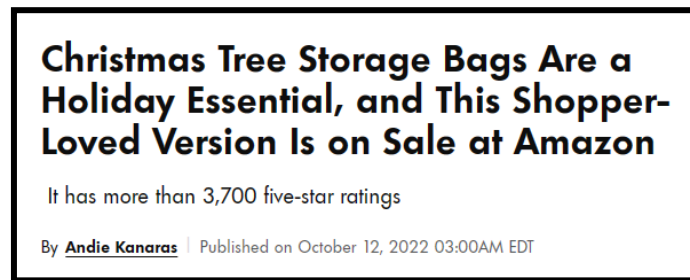
Picture 10. PM- 30/05/2023

We sift through hundreds — nay — thousands of pitches and products on a regular basis, carefully swatching, spritzing, and applying the latest

Analysis

The above content is about promoting the selection of beauty products worth customers' money. There are 19 lists of recommendation products chosen after the ad writer conducts some tests on a hundred products. The product test includes steps of swatching, spritzing, and applying to prove the texture or ingredients are suitable to the claims. The statement "swatching, spritzing, and applying" sounds similar to the suffixes word "-ing". The ad writer uses these words to create mood and memorable saying, emphasising that these three words are essential steps in a product test. The ad has a denotative meaning, which straightly tells the truth of the journey of beauty testing before sharing the result with the readers.

Data 10 (Appeals of Tradition)



Picture 11. PM- 12/10/2022

Christmas Tree Storage Bags Are a Holiday Essential, and This Shopper-Loved Version Is on Sale at Amazon

Analysis

The headline promotes storage bags from the Holiday Spirit brand. The statement "Christmas tree Storage Nags Are a Holiday Essential" shows a traditional system to keep an artificial Xmas tree in a storage bag to protect it against dust or moisture so it could be long-lasting for some years. Putting the artificially decorated tree into a bag is done yearly by some people, especially after the Christmas holiday. So that his headline gives a message of tradition that keeping Xmas tree in a storage bag is essential. The meaning of this ad is denotative, which gives literal dictionary meaning. Through this ad, the writer wants to persuade the readers to use the bag brand to put any Christmas decorations.

Data 11 (Connotation)



Picture 12. PM- 16/11/2022

These Beauty Products Blew Our Minds Last Month

Analysis

This ad talks about some recommendations for beauty products. The headline doesn't mention the brand name, but it's only claimed that that product will "Blew Our Minds". The words in the quotes mark have connotative meanings and convey that the recommended product will surprisingly give customers an unbelievable impression and excitement. By showing this headline, the ad writer expects the reader to get curious to read the whole content because they want to discover what brand it is or what ingredients the product offers.

Conclusion

Based on the research result and discussion, it was found that persuasive language was used in People Magazine advertisements. Referring to Lamb's (2019) theory, there are 25 categories of persuasive language. In this research, there were 12 types of persuasive language were found which can be classified as follows: 6 data of hyperbole, 4 data of evidence, 3 data of simile, 3 data of emotive, 1 data of imagery, 2 data of colloquial language, 1 data of rhetorical questions, 2 data of expert opinion, 3 data of assonance, 1 data of tradition, 3 data of connotation, and 1 data of inclusive language.

To sum up, the most frequent type found in People Magazine ads is Hyperbole. This shows that People Magazine wants to underline the best quality or feature products or even make the product look far better than it really is. The headline and content advertisement is written use Hyperbole techniques to give curiosity to the readers to further check or prove that the product offered is suitable for the ad writer's saying. Besides, the second frequent technique found is evidence. Most of the ad writers in People Magazine always show some buyer testimonials to support their arguments on the ads page. This is to gain the reader's trust and to prove the product's value based on facts.

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