

## LANGUAGE STYLES IN ADVERTISEMENT: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC COVER PLANET OR PLASTIC?

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### Abstract:

Language has the power to influence people and their behavior in many instances, one of which is in the field of advertising. Magazine advertisements are not simply constructed but they are carefully made with many considerations. One of the considerations is that they have the intention to attract readers to buy any products advertised. Magazines in many instances employ more than one language style to produce a splendid advertisement. Magazines have their own way to manifest their ideas to promote a product. Language styles of advertising in magazines play an important role to attract the reader's attention. The purpose of this study is to identify the language styles of advertising employed in National Geographic Magazine and to explore how the delivery of meaning is set to the readers through the language styles of advertisement employed. This study utilizes qualitative descriptive methods and focuses on the theory of Pop. The data were taken from National Geographic Cover: Planet or Plastic? Issue. The results of this study showed that the advertisements in National Geographic Magazine used four language styles: morphological, syntactical, rhetorical, and slogan style. Among these four, the rhetoric style was the most used in this National Geographic Cover

### Keywords:

LanguageStyle,  
NationalGeographic  
Magazine,  
Advertisement.



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## INTRODUCTION

Language plays a significant role in communication (Mishina, 2020). Since communication is an act of transmitting or conveying ideas, thoughts, or messages, it will be construed that advertising may be a type of interaction. As language plays a key role in communication, its importance is key within the world of advertisement. As a kind of communication advertising involves the sender (advertiser), the message (the advertisement itself), and also the receiver (the target audience). The advertiser uses persuasive and artistic language to draw the eye of his audience.

The selection of language varieties influences how advertisements are structured and conveyed to the audience. Therefore, the advertiser's choice of language to positively influence the attitude of the audience is incredibly critical. Advertising could be a type of a register therein it's its unique style, distinct language and mode of expression. Oxford

dictionary defines that to advertise is to present or describe a product, service or event within the media so as to extend sales. Advertising involves notifying, calling, or drawing attention to or communicating products, services, or ideas. Cook (2008) affirms that advertising's innovative use of language creates a powerful domain for language and analysis of discourse. In relevancy this, advertising and language are interwoven. Magazines company advertisement strategy is becoming a serious issue thanks to how they'll make dashing advertising for a brand. In general, advertisements in magazines use a slogan or tagline (Foster, 2001).

Goddard (2002) has defined a slogan as an expression made specifically to be memorable. The subsequent slogans are usually the body text that transfers more exhaustive information about the merchandise being advertised. In order to form an excellent advertisement, magazine companies also consider the morphology and syntax of their language choices. This can be just like Tanaka who asserts that for the sake of goals achievement, the advertisers need mechanisms to steer their audiences to satisfy their wants through consumption. The rhetorical and metaphorical devices, techniques and methods are needed so as to maneuver their audience and alter their attitudes (Tanaka, 2005:7).

Language style is the way people use language in communication whether in the form of speaking or writing since it has a relationship between the ideas or messages with speakers or writers. It makes listeners or readers easy to understand the information that is stated. The way of delivering their thought whether in the form of formal or informal can be understood from the styles of their language. The formality or informality is established by circumstances and factors (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). The formal style is usually used in a certain ceremonial event and the informal style is used in a casual conversation. Besides that, the factors that determine the language style are usually age, social, and emotion. In addition, it is a general term referring to linguistic features used in the form of writing. It is one way to express feelings or thoughts in such a way that the impression and effect on readers can be achieved as maximally and intensively as possible. To sum up this, it is the ability to use the language in writing correctly so that it can be captured by others.

In the study of literature, the style relates to the aesthetic in interpreting text (Coupland, 2007). It means that a literary work is inseparable from the acceptance of readers. The ability of readers' interpretation is very influential in the understanding of meaning from the text they read. Thus, readers' interpretations are not the same as one another, and this is usually influenced by their horizons. Therefore, the aesthetic writing must be adapted to the background of readers. Thus, language style is the aesthetic of delivering information to readers so that they can understand the information conveyed based on their interpretation abilities. Further, style is the way of using the language based on a certain context, subject, and purpose, (Leech & Short, 2007, as cited in Mozūraitytė, 2015). It means that the language that is set depends on consumers targeted. In other words, it refers to how language is written so that it can be understood by customers from different resources. Thus, the language style must be adjusted to those who read the advertising. By identifying targets that will be persuaded to present the contents of the advertising, advertisers can achieve their purposes, namely persuading their targets to buy or use their products.

### **Language Styles of Advertising**

In today's world, economic development has been marked by growing competition in world trade. It is very common that producers or industries contend with one another to attract and consider buyers. Every producer and industry make an advertisement to endorse his/her products. This advertisement is used to introduce their products with the intention to control the market. They are aware that advertisement plays an important role in the marketing and business world. This implies that advertising is an effective way to promote multiple products or services and increase market share. Media such as newspapers, magazines, radios, and television are places where producers or industries can put their advertisements. Each of those media has its own characteristics. We can find advertisements in the newspaper appear only in a few columns in the form of words, phrases, or sentences, and in the form of image accompanied by words on it. Quite differently, the advertisement in a magazine can consist of a full-page magazine with colorful pictures. On the radio, listeners can hear the announcer's voice promoting the product, while advertisements on television are more interesting where the audience can see the product and the model promotes the product. Since making an advertisement is a creative skill, very often people cannot directly understand what messages the advertisement intends to suggest. We often find that the utterances or sentences delivered by advertisements are not well defined. They may not always straight to the point; making the reader wonders what it actually means. They may interpret the messages on their own, and consequently, it ends up in various interpretations. Mirabella and Ariana (2010) proposed a number of language styles of advertising with the intention of making ease of the interpretation of advertisement. These language styles have been categorized into four categories, namely: morphology, syntax, rhetoric, and slogan.

### **Language Styles Category**

In the morphological category, an advertiser may employ simple and formal language, misspelling words and coinage, loan words, verbs, or adjectives. In some advertisements, we may find some deliberate misspelled words or some suffixes or prefixes that are added to common words. The newly created words still retain their original meaning, but they become distinctive in spelling; making the advertisement looks more interesting and fascinating. Meanwhile, loan words are a good method to express the exoticism of the product. Verbs have been used in many beauty industry advertisements. Action verbs and phrasal verbs are among the words frequently used (Mirabella & Ariana, 2010). The use of adjectives is necessitated in describing the features of a product such as size, color, nature, and quality.

The second category is syntax. In the syntactical category, an advertiser may use simple sentences, interrogative, imperative sentences, and minor clauses. It is generally concede that using simple sentences will result in a better effect than compound sentences. It is common that a reader will lose interest in reading complex sentences. Interrogative sentences are employed as a fast and effective way to get the reader's response. Meanwhile, the imperative sentence has the meaning of claims, calls and orders similar to the purpose of advertising; to persuade consumers to buy products or services. Meanwhile, small clauses contain simple elements that emphasize keywords that not only reduce length and cost but also spread information more effectively. The third category, rhetorical devices, is used to make thinking more conspicuous and effective. Rhetoric as

the study of language has been practical in its usage. Rhetoric is focused on giving the effects of persuasive languages. In this category, figurative language and poetic devices are used. Metaphorical language is a striking change from what is understood by language users as the standard meaning of words, or standard word order, to achieve some special meaning or effect (Abrams, 1999: 96). Figurative languages are sometimes described primarily poetic, but they are an integral part of the function of language and are indispensable for all modes of discourse.

Some of the figurative languages that are often used in advertising are personification, similes and metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and hyperbole. Meanwhile, poetic devices that are used together are puns, repetition, rhyming, and alliteration. The last category is sloganized category. Slogans and taglines are styles that fall under sloganized category. Slogans and taglines have been proved to be effective marketing tools. Basically, both these tools share many things in common, yet they serve a distinct function. Slogans serve to elaborate on a company's goal or product's stand. Goddard (1998) defines a slogan as a phrase that is designed to be easy to remember, attached to a product or service during a particular advertising campaign. Slogans can be in the form of expression, saying, idiomatic expression, phrases, or notable trademark. Slogans are used in campaigns in which the company usually takes part in. Slogans keep changing over time to adapt to current trends. They are usually in a brief form and may last on a certain period of campaigns.

### **Advertisement**

Advertising as a method used in promoting a product and service that we often see in various media is something that needs to be known by those who struggle in the business world. According to Moriarty et al. (2009, p. 6) advertising is a complex form of communication that is used to obtain goals by using various strategies to influence consumers' thoughts, feelings, and actions. The communication strategy used in advertising has a very strong role in influencing consumers. Thus, with their interest in the intentions desired by marketers, it is easy to invite them to comply with what marketer wants. Furthermore, as cited in Frolova (2014) said that advertising is a notification to the public about goods or services through the media.

Thus, advertisements are used to promote goods and services. They are grouped into several types according to the goods or services advertised. In general, advertisements that are popular are found in newspapers, magazines and TV and other mass media. At this time, there are so many advertisements found in various mass media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. In addition, there are many types of advertising in mass media nowadays. According to Bovee and Thill (2012, p. 369), advertising is grouped into two types, namely institutional advertising, which focuses on the attention of a company rather than promoting a product, and advocacy advertising. Whilst, Moriarty et al. (2009, pp. 15-16) mentioned that there are some other types of advertising, such as brands, retail, direct response, business to business, nonprofit and public service advocacy. However, seen from the type of advertising, Belch and Belch (2003, p. 19) concluded that the type of advertising mentioned by Moriarty et al. (2009) was categorized into two categories, namely advertising to consumer markets, and advertising to business and professional markets. Therefore, it can be concluded that advertisement writing depends on the needs of the community and the type of product advertised.

## METHOD

This study was a qualitative enquiry using stylistics as an approach to analyze the written context from the magazine advertisement being studied. A qualitative approach is appropriate to use for this particular study in order to explore a problem, add a detailed understanding, and when the researchers tend to write in a flexible and literary ways (Cresswell, 2009:51). Stylistics is the linguistic study of style in writings. Style can be considered as a choice of linguistic way, as a deviation from the norms of language use, as an iterative feature of linguistic forms, and as a comparison. Style occurs from the possibilities of choice among alternative forms. It is the study of the ways in which meaning is created through language in texts (Page et.al, 2019). That is why the main purpose of the language style itself is to show how the technical linguistic features of the magazine; such as grammatical structure, types of sentences, and their meaning and influence. This study was limited to analyze the language styles of tagline cover of National Geographic under four categories: morphological, syntactical, rhetorical, and sloganized style.

The data were taken from issues of National Geographic Magazine namely: National Geographic issue of June 2018. To collect the data, the researcher employed content analysis. In this analysis, the researchers examined the tagline that Nat Geo made for the cover. The data were then treated by using data collection procedures advocated by Miles and Hubermann (1994). The procedure of data analysis includes three activities such as data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. In data reduction, this study underwent a process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming rough data from all advertisements studied. This process continued through sharpening, classifying, directing, getting rid of, and organizing data up to achieve a conclusion. In data display, the information was organized in the form of written-up text to give a possibility for data conclusion as the final step. These three steps are interconnected and interactive which enabled the researchers to move back and forth among them to make sure that the data were completely analyzed..

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Picture 1. National Geographic Cover: Planet or Plastic?

This study used National Geographic Magazine as the primary source of data. The study revealed that National Geographic portray their advertisement by considering four language styles of advertisements based on our framework, namely: morphological style,

syntactical style, rhetorical style, and sloganized style. As elaborated earlier in the introduction section, two research problems will be discussed: the language styles of advertising employed, and the delivery of meaning of the language styles of the advertisement. The following table is presented to show the language style used based on the four categories above.

Table 1. Review of Tagline

Planet or Plastic?		
No	Language Style Category	Types
1	Morphological	<p><b>1. Simple and Formal Language</b> This extract can be interpreted as a simple and formal language with the intention of making the reader and consumers easy to understand the advertisement.</p> <p><b>2. Use of Nouns</b> The use of nouns in this advertisement is important to encourage people to know about what are they going to read</p>
2	Syntactical	<p><b>Interrogative</b> Using interrogative sentences has been a fast and effective way to get the reader's response. The special questions or the tag questions in an advertisement can trigger curiosity and interest of customers so as to draw their attention and leave deep impression to the readers.</p>
3	Rhetorical	<p><b>1. Provocative</b> Provocative is a style that give a view to the reader in an extreme way. They can attract and affect the readers mind to think exactly like what the author trying to say.</p> <p><b>2. Satire</b> Satire is a figure of speech that gives perspective to readers about the irony but delivered softly. It clearly described that the magazine wants us to know that we live in planet or a plastic.</p> <p><b>3. Metaphor</b> Metaphor is a figure of speech that gives a situation that similar to the message that the author's want to give. They parallel the earth as a plastic for instance t inform that this land is full of plastic waste.</p>
4	Sloganized	<p><b>Tagline</b> A tagline with a meaningful message, short, simple will represent with a real essence of the situation will be easier to make the readers attached to the message.</p>

### Discussion

The language style of advertisements used showed that the use of noun as a morphological style of advertisement has become an awareness of the advertisers in Nat Geo due to the delivery of meaning to the readers. The morphological style in advertising presents an attractive, creative, and persuasive way to describe the simplicity, cheapness, completeness, safety, and peacefulness. This is in line with the aim of advertisement itself which is to persuade the readers to become consumers for their product. In this case, the morphological system of advertising language has certain phonemic and morphemic

forms in its morphological process which are specifically used to make the submission of meaning to the reader clearer and the advertisement will be attached to the reader's mind. Provocative way it's one of the style that been used to attract and attach the readers more to what the author's trying to say. It gives a boost implicit message to the readers about how important the world is.

The tagline itself is a brief description of the company that conveys its message. This brief catchy description would establish the company's personality and position in the market. When we talk about branding, then tagline is a very significant part of it. Some taglines may provide recognition to their brands and they also influence their brand position in the market. A tagline conveys the company's message so convincingly that it gets stuck in the mind of people. So that it would have a long term impact. In simple words, it tells the company's personality and what benefits it offers to its customers.

Provocative tagline means that those taglines could influence the reader deep emotionally. By this tagline; Planet or Plastic? The readers persuaded to understand about the climate that is happening in the world right now which occurred by so many plastic waste abundant in the land and sea. We all know that the world is already full of waste, but we need to know that we have to keep environmental friendly by not using any plastic for daily necessity. For a long time, plastic bags were used as a free and painless solution for carrying your weekly supermarket shop and for a range of other purposes. It's only recently that the damaging effects have been realized and so a 5p fee has been introduced since 2015 to discourage people from buying bags. So why are plastic bags bad for the environment? Plastic bags are made from crude oil like other plastics. This is a problem because crude oil emits significant amounts of pollution and it means the product is not biodegradable.

By now you should know some of the effects that plastics have on the environment, but let's look specifically at plastic pollution. Plastic pollution causes harm to humans, animals and plants through toxic pollutants. It can take hundreds or even thousands of years for plastic to break down so the environmental damage is long-lasting. It affects all organisms in the food chain from tiny species like plankton through to whales.

So the delivery also being supported by the cover layout about plastics that floating in the ocean half bottom through but half top is looking like an ice mountain. This clearly answered the provocative tagline comes. The readers can see implicit message just also by seeing the cover only. The important question, where will the earth going through? What happened if it's not combative? This should be answered not only by environmental activist, but also by us as human being..

## **CONCLUSION**

Apparently, the use of language styles of advertisement is basically intended to attract readers. However, each style serves a different function as discussed in the previous section. In the morphological category, simple and formal language serves the function to make the readers easily understand the message. The use of noun is meant to encourage people to understand about what they are reading. In the syntactical category, the use of interrogative sentences may trigger curiosity among readers and leave a deep impression on them. In the rhetorical category, provocative, satire, and metaphor serves to evoke the

readers' emotions. Provocative can help influenced the reader by impactful, the satire can also be a trigger to the readers to rethink about what we did to environment, and the metaphor also useful to make readers imagination can expand wide and see what will happen to the future. Tagline as a style under sloganized category serves as persuasive language and affirmation of advertisement ideas.

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