CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USED IN NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT SLOGANS

1Rachel Lee See Yan, *2Nor Jijidiana Azmi, & 3Saiful Mohd Shuib

12 Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21300, Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia
3 Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, 06000, Arau, Perlis.

*Corresponding author: jijidianaazmi@unisza.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyse the figurative language that are used in newspaper advertisement slogans in The Star. Apart from that, this study also aims to identify the types of industries that uses newspaper as their medium of advertising. A content analysis was used as a research method for this study. This study employs McQuarrie and Mick’s (1996) and Perrine’s (1992) theory of figurative language. The finding of this study reveals that metaphor and rhyme are the most used figurative language in newspaper advertisement slogans. The finding also shows that the industry that uses newspaper advertisement the most is healthcare and education.

Keywords: advertising slogan, content analysis, figurative language, Malaysian newspaper, The Star


1.0 INTRODUCTION

Advertising has become essential to the society and economics. Advertisements are seen everywhere. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), "Advertising means any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor." Companies and organizations have been using advertising as a tool to strengthen brand equity and increase profits for the last few centuries. Advertisers uses various and different media to reach their audience and printed media is one of them. In this study, the researcher is going to focus just on newspaper advertisements.

An effective advertisement copy should have characteristics like interesting, attractive, retention valued, suggestive, creative, educative, believable and has the appropriate appeal (Trehan, 2014). Most of these features could be achieved by a strong and memorable slogan
that represents the message that the company wanted to deliver to its audience and almost all advertisement contains one or more slogans.

In this study, the researcher will be identifying the figurative languages that are used in newspaper advertisement slogans from The Star and also the types company or organisation that uses newspaper as their medium of advertising in the Star.

1.1 Newspaper Advertisement In Malaysia

In Malaysia, newspaper remains as one of the most preferred media to advertise and Malaysians still prefer to get their news through the print newspaper, radio and television. According to Nielsen’s survey on media consumption in 2016, The Star’s daily readership increased by 18% to 1.4 million readers from July 2015 to June 2016, compared with 1.185 million a year ago and weekly readership increased 12% from 1.548 million to 1.734 million. Besides that, for 2017, according to the Nielsen Consumer and Media View July 2016-June 2017 report, News Strait Times recorded a 10% growth in readership to 200,000 from 182,000 during the period.

As the popularity of newspaper in Malaysia remains unaffected, companies and organisation will continue to use newspaper as a medium to advertise. However, it is undeniable that advertisement clutter in newspaper is a problem, as it is in all of the other major media. Shimp (1997) stated that readers are bombarded with a large amount of advertisements, that compete for their limited time and only a small portion of it receives attention from the reader. Advertisers finds it hard to break through the clutter and stand out among their competitors as not much can be done with newspaper advertisements. We all know that the larger the placement space of the advertisement, the more expensive it will be. Besides that, unlike magazines, newspaper advertisements are not printed in glossy papers with colourful pictures, they are often black and white in colour which is not that appealing in the eyes of readers. The only thing that could really help to create brand recalling in newspaper advertising is the language of advertisement, which also includes the advertisement’s slogan and language techniques used to create a memorable slogan.

Newspaper advertisement is apparently advertisements that are printed in newspapers. Although the mass media is evolving in this digitalized era, people still uses newspaper as a medium to advertise. Newspaper has been existing for so long that it is simply hard to imagine doing business without advertising in newspaper or magazines. People still buy newspapers for their news values. According to Trehan (2014), newspaper advertisements could be divided into 3 types, including local and regional advertisements, classified advertisements, and also inserts and special supplements. Local and national advertisements are classified under display advertisements. Local advertisements are placed by local retailers and organizations while national advertisements are advertisements that were placed by marketers promoting services and products at a national level. Classified advertisements, on the other hand, falls under subheads like “Vehicle For Sale”, “Vacancies”, “Tender-Notice” and etc. Inserts and supplements are printed pamphlets that are inserted in newspapers by distributors before selling the newspapers.

“The first advertisement appeared in the country’s first newspaper, ‘Prince of the Wales Island’s Gazette’ that was published in 1805 when Malaysia was still known as Malaya.” (Saman, 1980, p. 9) At that time, Singapore, Malacca and Penang was the first three states to be introduced to the print media of newspapers and magazines as they were the main trading
centres in Malaya. The available print media in these trading centres enables traders to advertise their goods and services to the locals and other traders. The ‘Straits Times’ was the first newspaper to be published in Singapore. At that time, Singapore was still a part of Malaya. The ‘Straits Time’s was published on the 15th of July 1845 ad it was filled with different types of advertisements. From shipping to hotels and household to medicinal products. Although advertisements at his period was straightforward, copy-oriented and limited in scope, but they all serve one basic principle of advertising, that is to sell and to inform.(Hashim, 1994)

1.2 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

According to McQuarrie and Mick (1996), figurative language is described as an artful deviation on the form taken by a statement (p.424). Figurative language is one of the most effective devices for producing persuasive discourse which can achieve the ultimate goals of advertising that is to build readers’ motivation and memorability (Kpolugbo and Masagbor, 2006). According to Perrine (1992), figurative language is the way to say something other than the ordinary way (p.61). This definition is supported by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their theory where they define figurative or imaginative languages is the sentence that fall outside the domain of normal literal language.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by using content analysis. According to Cavanagh (1997), content analysis is regarded as a flexible research method for the analysis of text data. At first, content analysis is used either as a qualitative or a quantitative research method (Berelson,1952). However, these days, majority of content analysis study primarily employ quantitative method. Quantitative content analysis deals with process of text data being coded into explicit categories and is then analyzed using statistics. This approach is sometimes described as quantitative analysis of content analysis (Morgan,1993).

For this study, researcher employ directed quantitative content analysis. This type of content analysis usually starts with a theory or relevant research findings as a guideline for initial codes. Directed content analysis is also known as deductive content analysis. Existing theory or research provides guidance for researchers to focus on their research questions. According to Mayring (2000), existing theories also predicts about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes. Since this study applies deductive content analysis, researcher had developed a conceptual framework as the foundation of the research.

For this research, slogans from 60 newspaper advertisements were found in The Star. The criteria of selecting these newspaper advertisements are:

a) All of them must be in English
b) All of these advertisements were selected form The Star as The Star is has the highest circulation in Malaysia
c) Only newspapers from year 2017 were selected.
3.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Slogans are usually short catchy phrases are often used to grab attention of the audience. It has to be memorable to enable brand recalling. This study uses a theoretical framework that combined McQuarries and Mick’s (1996) as well as Perrine’s theory of figurative language. 22 types of figurative language that were proposed by these researchers were used as a guideline in the process of data analysing. These 22 types of figurative language includes rhyme, chime, assonance, alliteration, anaphora, epistrophe, epanalepsis, andiplosis, parison, antimetabole, antithesis, hyperbole, rhetorical question, epanorthosis, ellipsis, metonym, synecdoche, metaphor, pun, irony, paradox and personification.

Result shows that the only figurative language that was found in the newspaper advertisement slogans are rhyme, chime, assonance, anaphora, parison, rhetorical question, metonym, synecdoche, metaphor, paradox, pun and personification. The chart shows that metaphor is the figurative language that was mostly used in the advertisement slogans, which was found in 10 of the slogans. Followed by rhyme, which was detected in 7 slogans. The figurative language that was used the least were assonance, ellipsis, and synecdoche. However, there were no traces of epistrophe, epanalepsis, andiplosis, epanorthosis, irony, assonance, ellipsis and hyperbole found in these advertisement slogans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Num.</th>
<th>Type of Figurative Language</th>
<th>Number of Slogan N=60</th>
<th>Percentage N=60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>rhyme</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>chime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>assonance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>alliteration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>anaphora</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>epistrophe</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>epanalepsis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>andiplosis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>parison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>antimetabole</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>antithesis</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>rhetorical question</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>epanorthosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ellipsis</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>pun</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>paradox</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>personification</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings above, we can conclude that metaphor is the most effective figurative language to be used in advertisement slogans. This is expected as metaphor creates a vivid creation for imagery. It leaves audience to their own interpretation on the message that the writer intends to deliver and different audience will have different interpretation. Hence, this
type of figurative language transfers of emotion from the audience towards the advertisement, which allows them to interpret the meaning of the text that is associated with their own experience. This is proven by Aaker et al (1986) as cited in Ruiz and Sicilia (2004), which stated that some individuals, may exhibit a characteristic tendency to experience their emotions with greater magnitude of intensity when exposed to an emotionally charged advertising appeal.

The discussion for each type of figurative language used is presented in the following section which will be associated with the explanation for some examples of the slogans.

**Rhyme**

Rhyme is the repetition of syllables at the end of words. It is the second most used figurative language in the advertisement slogans. The examples of advertisements that uses rhyme in their slogans are:

a) ‘Drink For Agility and Vitality’ by Kinohimitsu
   The end of the word ‘Agility’ rhymes with ‘Vitality’.

b) ‘No Pain, No Gain’ by Taisho
   The syllable at the end of ‘pain’ is the minimal pair of ‘gain’, where they both rhyme at the end with the sound ‘ain’.

**Chime**

Chime are key words in a phrase begin with identical sounds or letters. For example:

   In this slogan, the main focus is on the word ‘simple’ and ‘secure’ as both of these are the most important elements that are requested in security systems. Since both of the key words begins with a ‘S’, it is said that this advertisement uses chime in its slogan.

b) ‘Defend Against Dengue’ by Caring Pharmacy.
   The word ‘Defend’ and ‘Dengue’ is the key words of the phrase. When people talk about Dengue, what comes to mind is how what could they do to defend it. So it can be concluded that the main words in this slogan is ‘Defend’ and ‘Dengue’ and since both of these words starts with the same letter, which is ‘D’, the type of figurative language used is chime.

**Alliteration**

Assonance is a figurative language where three or more repetitions of a consonant is present in a word or phrase. For example:

a) ‘Stay Slimmer & Smarter’ by Khind
   This advertisement uses alliteration in its slogan. The repetition of the sound /s/ is present at the beginning of ‘Stay’, ‘Slimmer’ and ‘Smarter’, thus it is said that this slogan uses alliteration.
b) ‘bye bye Blade’ by Vista Eye Specialist
Just like the previous slogan, this slogan contains the repetition of the sound /b/ at the beginning of ‘bye’ and ‘blade’, thus the figurative language that is detected in this slogan is alliteration.

Anaphora

Anaphora is the repetition of words at the beginning of the phrase. Examples of slogan:

a) ‘Be Tall, Be Strong and Be Smart’ by Nature’s Way
The word ‘be’ is repeated at the beginning of each phrase, thus it is said that anaphora is used in this slogan. It serves a purpose to emphasize the adjectives that are used in this slogan, which is strong, tall and smart.

b) ‘Consistent Hand Placement. Consistent Results’ by ALIGN Technology
The word ‘Consistent’ is being repeated here, which aims to highlight the effects of using this product.

Antithesis

Incorporation of binary opposites in a phrase.

a) “Intel Inside, Extraordinary Outside” by Intel
Since antithesis is the incorporation of binary opposites in a phrase, the opposite pairs in this slogan is ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, where one acts as a thesis, the other act as an antithesis.

b) ‘Big Screen , small price’ by MariGold
Just like the Intel’s slogan, this slogan contain a opposite pair which is ‘big’ and ‘small’ that contrasts each other.

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical Question is all about asking a question so as to make an assertion in order to create a dramatic effect or make a point rather than to ask questions.

a) ‘Knee Pain? Use Atroxene Flex’ by Atroxene
This slogan uses a rhetoric question to make a point that if someone has knee pain, they should use their product.

b) ‘Looking to Lose A Few Pounds?’ by Lennox
In this advertisement, Lennox’s slogan uses rhetoric question to encouraged people who wanted to lose weight to buy their product.

Metonym

Metonym is a figurative language that substitutes a name of one object for something that is closely associated with it.

a) ‘Increase business efficiency when you go digital’ by Digi
The term “go digital” here is a substitution for Internet. People often describe the world today as a digitalized world, which means a world that means everything is done by using the Internet or any other smart devices.

b) ‘Give Your Kids an A+’ by Nature’s Way
The ‘A+’ here of course refers to great results, and great future. Since nowadays people focus so much on academic performance and claimed that one’s success is based on examination results, it is important to get an A+ in order to be successful in life.

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is actually quite similar to metonym, it is where a part is employed for the whole, or the whole for the part.

a) ‘Short Game Charger. The wedge will never be the same.’ by Cleaveland
In this slogan, the use of the term ‘wedge’ is referring to a part of a golf club. The word ‘wedge’ is used to represent a golf club as a whole.

Metaphor

This is the most used figurative language among all the slogans that has been analysed. Metaphor is the comparison between two things without using words such as ‘like’ and ‘as’, Metaphor usually consists of underlying meanings that requires interpretation from the reader.

a) ‘Protection so tasty , they’ll beg for it’ by Nexgard
The ‘protection’ here refers to the dog bites that protects dogs from getting flees, and since it is so tasty, the dogs will beg to have it.

b) ‘Masterpiece of Intelligence’ by Mercedes-Benz
In reality, one can describe intelligence with the word masterpiece, so by using the word masterpiece on intelligence, it gives a characteristics to the ‘intelligence’. This slogan indicates that the new car is the masterpiece created by the company. Intelligence represents the people in the company.

Pun

A humourous play on words, often involves double meanings.

a) ‘Find the calm in their day’ by Herbs of gold
The term ‘calm’ in this slogan does not only mean peaceful, as the product itself is named Ezicalm, the word ‘calm’ also refers to the product itself.

b) ‘Time to Captur a great deal’ by Renault.
The words Captur in this slogan contains two meaning, as the product name is Captur, it refers to the car itself, The word Captur also means capture, which is the real spelling of this word.
Paradox

A self-contradictory, false, or impossible statement.

a) ‘Incredibly Light Unbelievably Tough’ by Samsonite
This advertisement from Samsonite uses paradox in its slogan, the statement in the slogan contradicts itself as how could something that is light be tough?

b) ‘Red is Never Monotonous.’ By Honda
This slogan contains elements that is shows self-contradiction. It is stated that red is never monotonous. But how could red as a single basic colour not be monotonous?

Personification

Personification is a famous kind of figurative language that is widely used. It applies human nature to inanimate or lifeless object.

a) ‘Thanks to CG210, hair comes rushing back’ by Abott
Unlike human, or any living objects, hair cannot rush back

b) ‘Add a nutritious punch to your breakfast’ by Nutri Grains
This slogan applies human nature to human object. ‘Punch’ can only be performed by a human.

4.0 CONCLUSION

60 newspaper advertisements from The Star were selected and analysed in this study. From the results of analysing the sample, it is found that the only figurative language that are used in these newspaper advertisement slogans are rhyme, chime, assonance, anaphora, parison, rhetorical question, metonym, synecdoche, metaphor, paradox, pun and personification. Metaphor and rhyme were used the most in these advertisement slogans, which was detected in 14 and 9 slogans respectively. The reasons for these two figurative language to be used the most is because metaphor uses emotional appeal and creates mental relationships with its readers while rhyme is catchy and unforgettable, so it enhances the odd of brand recalling.

REFERENCES


