

Rudyard essential
rightness which is
conveyed to the



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Rudyard Kipling once said, Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind. This statement is so very true within all aspects of life especially in the advertising industry. Creators of advertisements use powerful words in unusual combinations, sometimes with visuals, to inhabit and manipulate the readers/viewers minds.

Consumers need to be aware of the various linguistic (relating to language) devices used in advertising in order to lessen the suasive effect from the manipulation within advertisements. According to Alan C. Harriss article entitled, Sell! Buy! Semiolinguistic Manipulation in Print Advertising, manipulation of linguistic form means that a small idea or object will undergo some enhancement, change, transformation, mutilation, or mutation that is relatively unexpected on behalf of the reader/viewer.

The manipulation usually stands out of the ordinary to grab the attention of potential purchasers which increases the purchasing consideration of the advertised product/service to the exclusion of all other similar products/services. Advertisers use foregrounding to provide the manipulation within their advertisements. In advertising, foregrounding is a linguistic process in which certain components such as words, phrases, intonations (inflections), or symbolic visuals are made more meaningfully significant and prominent. By using linguistic devices in foregrounding, the advertiser marks, stresses, or contrasts in a unique, noteworthy manner which is conveyed to the consumer.

One of the more widely acknowledged linguistic devices used in foregrounding is the claim. The claim is the verbal or printed part of an

advertisement that makes some claim of superiority by providing an appealing manipulation sometimes with creative visuals. Advertisers use the claim to portray an essential rightness which is conveyed to the reader/viewer. There are ten common claims that Jeffrey Schrank identifies in his essay, *The Language of Advertising Claims*. As Jeffrey points out, a few of these claims are downright lies, some are honest statements about a truly superior product, but most fit into the manipulation category with carefully chosen linguistic devices. The first claim Jeffrey mentions is the weasel claim which is a modifying device that practically counteracts the claim and is appropriately named after the egg eating practices of the weasel. When consumed, the shell of the egg appears undamaged, but the weasel has actually sucked out the core of the egg.

Likewise, the linguistic device initially appears considerable but proves to be meaningless. Some of the pinpointing weasel words are helps; like (used in comparison); virtually; enriched; and many other manipulative enhancers. An advertiser might claim that their dish soap will leave dishes virtually spotless. They want us to think of spotless, but the advertisers slipped their sly, glorified, weasel word virtually into the phrase hoping the reader/viewer will disregard it. The second claim is the unfinished claim which suggests a product is better than something else but is unclear, because the comparison wasn't finished. The car manufacturer could claim, Ford is seven hundred percent quieter. If given this information, the reader/viewer would be under the impression that this fact is part of a comparison to another vehicle.

In actuality Ford used this manipulation to promote that their car was seven hundred percent quieter in the interior as opposed to the exterior. The third claim is the We are different and unique claim. This claim is suppose to provide a unique distinction above similar products/services. An example of this claim is Only Zenith has chromacolor. Other manufacturers make similar television sets but can not use the word chromacolor in their ad because of a copyright trade name Zenith holds. The fourth claim is the Water is Wet claim.

This type of claim is usually factual but is also true in similar products/services. A billboard sign could say Mobil: the Detergent Gasoline. This is a true statement and tries to show a unique quality, but in actuality, all gasoline acts as a cleaning agent.

The fifth claim is the so what claim. This claim might have a slight advantage over another product/service but without any relevance for the consumer. An example of the so what claim is Geritol has more than twice the iron of ordinary supplements. Does the consumer really benefit with the increased intake? The sixth claim is the vague claim which overlaps some of the other claims. The vague claim is also unclear and usually contains a weasel word that uses subjective opinions that do not have adequate verification.

The claim, Winston tastes good like a cigarette should, uses an appealing personal opinion, tastes good, along with the weasel word, like. The endorsement or testimonial is the seventh claim Jeffrey identifies. The endorsement or testimonial involves the use of a superstar to promote a product/service.

Sometimes the celebrity or authority will claim to use the product but quite often they do not. Michael Jordan endorsed Wheaties by using the claim, Breakfast of Champions. The eighth claim is the scientific or statistical claim which uses specific numbers from a scientific experiment or an enhanced mystery element. An example of this claim is Wonder Break helps build strong bodies twelve ways. The number twelve provides an impressive support for the statement, but the claim also uses the weasel word, helps. The ninth claim is the compliment the consumer complaint which flatters the reader/viewer.

We think the cigar smoker is someone special, is one illustration. The claim advertises the product and provides a good reassuring feeling for the consumer who smokes cigars. The last claim Jeffrey identifies is the rhetorical question. This technique is used to assert the products/services appealing qualities to the reader/listener by demanding a response. Ford uses many videos and pictures of their vehicles in their advertisements and then asks their audience Have you driven a Ford lately? This claim along with the nine others mentioned by Jeffrey Schrank are some of the more common manipulative devices in advertising. There are also symbolic visuals that are often manipulated or enhanced. In America and many other countries, advertisers often exploit models for their sexual characteristics in order to promote their product/service.

Advertisers also use supernatural visuals to market. Mountain Dew is widely known for this endorsement in their Do the Dew campaign. In one of their commercials, an outdoorsman drinks a can of Mountain Dew, challenges a mountain goat, and wins a ramming battle for territorial rights on the <https://assignbuster.com/rudyard-essential-rightness-which-is-conveyed-to-the/>

mountain. Granted, Mountain Dew does have a significant amount of caffeine, but their enhanced triumph isn't realistic.

However, the ad does stand out of the ordinary and captures the viewer's attention. The various manipulations of advertisement in all of the mentioned devices are constructed to appeal to the reader/viewer by the unique properties of the ad and increase the consideration of the products/services. By recognizing the diverse variations of linguistics devices, the consumer should be able to minimize the chance of falling victim to the manipulation in the advertising industry.