

Describing some of the rhetorical choices

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



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Rhetorical Choices for a Super Bowl Segment: Commercials

In a McDonald's ad, the rhetorical situation is one where lip reading as an obsession to know what other teams and players are up to is interpreted so that they seem to be obsessed about McDonald's menu items. The overall rhetorical situation for all of the ads can be construed as this effort by the ads to address an audience, namely those watching the Super Bowl on TV, or following the ads for their own sake from the Internet. The constraint is that the interpretations of the words coming out of the mouths of the players and coaches in the NFL games sampled must match with the silent utterances over which the words are layered/put on. In the McDonald's ad, there are several rhetorical choices that are evident. One is the use of hyperbole as a means to exaggerate the obsession for McDonald's fare among the NFL players and coaches, in the middle of games. The first person mentions the menu, and the obsession becomes a kind of backdrop rap melody that the other characters then rapped to. The words that were put into their mouths consisted of variations of the burger fare, and an emphasis on bacon. There is also an element of parody as a rhetorical choice for the ad, where the intense obsession with what the players and coaches are saying on court, via lip reading, is flipped on its head so that their utterances are not about the game but about McDonald's burgers (Super Bowl 2014 Commercials; Broderick).

The rhetorical situation in the Toyota Highlander ad, on the other hand, is

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essentially the same as for the McDonald's as well as for the all of the commercials in the Super Bowl. That rhetorical situation consists of the ads trying to convey the product message to TV viewers and general Internet followers of the Super Bowl ads. In the Toyota ad it is clear that the overall goal seems to be to entertain and to associate the Camry with images of fun and the iconic Muppets characters. Juxtaposition is a key rhetorical choice for this ad. The juxtaposition consists of the side by side placement of a relatively conventional, middle-class African American man who lives in the suburbs and drives around in a Highlander on the one hand, and on the other hand the psychedelic gang of the musical Muppets, headed by the wild Animal. This is a very good rhetorical choice, given that the Toyota's traditional image is one of being practical and reliable, if utilitarian and lacking in the fun aspect. On the other hand, the juxtaposition with spontaneity, adventure and fun as embodied by the Muppets and by the Animal conveys a flipside to the reliability image of the Toyota Highlander. The overall effect of the use of the rhetorical device is to convey an image of the Toyota as enabling fun and spontaneity precisely because the Toyota is practical and reliable. One can only have fun and be spontaneous if standing on solid ground. Toyota is that solid ground, and provides a nice dependable backdrop for fun. The two juxtaposed images go together like two sides of one coin (Toyota USA; Broderick).

Works Cited

Broderick, Ryan. "The Only Super Bowl Commercials Worth Watching". BuzzFeed. 2 February 2014. Web. 3 February 2014. Super Bowl 2014 Commercials. "McDonald's Super Bowl 2014 Commercial- Lip Reading".

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