

A Discourse Analysis of Metropolitan Namibia and Sanlam Namibia's English Print Advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

In Namibia, various insurance companies (inclusive of Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia) place English advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper for persuasion purposes. This paper investigates the English language of persuasion leveraged in the two companies' print advertisements. It equally explores the various advertising techniques that support the English language of persuasion in selected print advertisements. A qualitative approach was used to analyse the advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper. A desktop study, which employed discourse and content analysis as data collection methods, was utilised. Data collected were critically examined based on the English language employed in selected print advertisements. The paper was informed by a critical discourse analysis theory which addresses issues of how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in various communities, schools, the media, and the political arena. This study reveals that three language elements are utilised in selected advertisements. The first is the pattern of print advertisement, which focuses on the headline, body copy, slogan and logos. The second is the language leveraged in each advertisement, with the use of elements like alliteration, repetition, metaphors, similes, puns, personification, adjectives and adverbs. The third is a revelation of various advertising techniques that support the English language used in selected advertisements. These findings suggest that along with most linguistic elements, the Aristotelian elements (ethos, pathos and logos) and the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) principle of advertising were necessary ingredients of persuasion in the advertisements.

Keywords: persuasion, advertising techniques, linguistic elements, advertising language, discourse

Introduction and background

The focus of this article is to analyse how language and stylistic techniques are utilized when advertising in national newspapers. The paper equally intends on exploring how visual elements and the AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action) principles of advertising support the English language of persuasion used in selected advertisements. The central goal of this study is to investigate the language and design in Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia's English print advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper. Although a desktop study, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and strategies on how print advertisements, especially those designed by insurance companies in Namibia, utilise language and other

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linguistic/ stylistic components during advertising. This study was led by the following three questions:

1. How is the language of persuasion leveraged in Metropolitan Namibia and Sanlam Namibia's print advertisements?
2. How does the English language used in selected print advertisements reflect the AIDA principle of advertising?
3. How do various advertising techniques, including visual techniques, support the English language of persuasion used in these advertisements?

Metropolitan Namibia (a joint venture insurance company with Swabou Life) and Sanlam Namibia are insurance companies, currently operating in Namibia. According to Sanlam Namibia's Intergraded Report (2007), Sanlam Namibia has been operating in Namibia for eight decades, and is one of the most prominent long-term insurance companies currently operating in Namibia. On the other hand, the Metropolitan Namibia's News forum (2009) indicated that the company has been operating in Namibia for almost 40 years now, and has established a wide network of distribution channels across the country. The two companies' print advertisements seem to use various discourses such as slogans, pictures, puns, alliteration, different font size, various colours, repetitions, fallacies, metaphors and visuals in *The Namibian* newspaper. In Namibia, this newspaper appears to be used frequently by different advertising agencies inclusive of Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia. Gath (2006) claims that national newspapers are ideal sources for showcasing a corporate image for public service and for open-letter advertising. In fact, national newspapers are ideal vehicles for any message intended to be quickly conveyed to a large audience.

Metropolitan Namibia and Sanlam Namibia's utilisation of various discourses is to attract and persuade people to take out insurance policies offered by them. In order to effectively persuade people to do something, one needs to grab their attention and arouse interest in them on how one's product or service could assist and persuade them to take the action that the insurance company wants them to, such as buying the product. The terms "attention" or "attract", "interest", "desire" and "action", constitute the AIDA principle, which is a critical tool of advertising. These are the four steps that advertisers take their audience through when they want them to buy certain products. In other words, advertisers employ these components of AIDA in their advertisements. McNamara (2002) argues that behind each advertisement there are specific stylistic features that capture the attention of consumers. Depending on the product and the type of consumer advertisers are targeting, they use one, or a variety of methods to sell an idea. The language used in advertisements is also designed to target a specific demographic segment. Sometimes an advertisement is directed at a particular sector of society in such a way as to create an affiliation, by association to a product. Advertisements and the language they employ also target members of society according to age, gender, occupation, social class, race and sometimes geographical area.

Advertisements simply lay out the information and the consumer needs to make a decision about the product. In other advertisements, according to Gath (2006), a popular spokesperson may be utilised. Similar to using testimonials, using a famous name to verbally endorse a product is meant to establish trust with the audience. The language employed in advertisements may also appeal to those with a desire for affluence, as many people aspire to look and feel wealthy. Through employing specific linguistic and stylistic features, advertisements can also exaggerate a product's benefits by embellishing the truth in an attempt to draw attention. For example, an advertisement for a man's cologne that compels women to chase him down the street allows the advertiser to entertain while creating a memorable scenario for the consumer which might

influence a purchasing decision (McNamara, 2002). In addition, as far as rhetorical features are concerned, Andrew (2004) posits that “the vast majority of advertising methods could be classified into three modes namely: ethos, pathos, and logos” (p.11). Andrew (2004) further expresses that “ethos makes an appeal of character or personality and pathos makes an appeal to the emotions whereas logos appeals to reason or logic” (p.11).

Literature Review and the theoretical framework

Several theories have been developed to explain how and why studying advertisements and content analysis is crucial, however this study has adopted only two theories: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multi-semiotic Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Theory

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method was employed to identify various discourses used in the print advertisements. CDA is defined as “the study of the ways in which language is used in texts and contexts” (Gee, 2010, p. 22). Developed in the 1970s, CDA concerns itself with the use of language in a running discourse, continued over a number of sentences, and involving the interaction of speaker (or writer) and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions (Gee, 2010, p.23). Van Dijk (2000) maintains that CDA is concerned with “studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to deduce the implied meaning, power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these concepts are initiated, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic and political” (p.128). Furthermore, Gee (2010) explains that CDA is “one way to engage in a very important human task, which is to think more deeply about the meanings we give people's words to make ourselves better, more humane people and the world a better, more humane place” (p.34). Therefore, CDA involves linguistic studies such as syntax, grammar and phonology and uses figurative speaking through varieties of elements such as personification, metaphors, alliteration, hyperboles and many others.

Multi-semiotic Discourse Analysis (MDA) Theory

While CDA is concerned with “studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to deduce the implied meaning (Van Dijk, 2000), the Multisemiotic Discourse Analysis (MDA) theory expands from CDA theory as it looks at the grammar of visual design which considers how a certain text draws on multiple modes of communication such as pictures, film, video, images and sound as well as words to make meaning (Halliday, 2009). Briefly, Halliday (2009) expresses that the MDA theory came about to highlight the significance of using different semiotics, other than language, such as studying the visual design and images in advertisements. In addition, Halliday believes that semiotic tools such as color, framing, focus and positioning contribute significantly to the meaning making in the text. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) state that the main mission of this theory is to understand the power and meaning of texts in activating several modes (such as visual, verbal, and aural). MDA has been used to analyse a wide range of texts including magazine covers, magazine advertisements, movies, children’s storybooks, online advertisements, beauty product advertisements, moving images, commercials, cosmetic surgery leaflets and surgical websites (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Objectives of the study

The central objective of this paper is to analyse how the language of persuasion is leveraged in Metropolitan Namibia and Sanlam Namibia’s print advertisements and how various visual techniques and the AIDA principle of advertising support the English language of persuasion in selected advertisements. McNamara (2002) argues that behind each advertisement, there are specific features that capture the attention of consumers. Additionally, Gath (2006) believes that the design of different advertisements should conform to the AIDA principle of advertising.

Therefore, this study hopes to make a contribution to the literature on how Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia's print advertisements conform or not to the attention, interest, desire and make the audience take informed actions. The reason for choosing to focus on the two Namibian companies is because both have been operating in Namibia for several years, and have a wide network of distribution channels across the country. Additionally, this paper aims to offer an insight on how the English language is used by insurance companies in Namibia for persuasion purposes. Moreover, the paper might provide the basis for future research in the stylistics of advertisements in English and might also provide a link between the field of research into advertising and the field of research into stylistics. However, the findings do not directly apply beyond Namibia as the selected sample for this study is small and could lead to making overgeneralized and invalid conclusions.

Methodology

Research design

This paper has employed a qualitative method since analyzing print advertisements was the central point of this study. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) define qualitative method as "an approach used by researchers in order to gain a detailed insight of underlying reasons, beliefs and motivation" (p. 17). For the purpose and descriptive nature of this study, a qualitative research approach was used as the researcher gained new understanding of stylistic elements found in selected print advertisements. Furthermore, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) express that a qualitative approach allows the scholar to gain new understandings about a certain phenomenon and to ascertain the problems that occur within the phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative method is of utmost importance in gaining a clear description of the language, stylistic elements and images used in this study. This is a desktop study where sources already published are used for the purpose of analysis of selected advertisements.

Population and sample

The population of this study was *The Namibian* newspaper that publishes Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia's print advertisements on a regular basis. *The Namibian* is widely read in Namibia, and readers are aware of the two insurance companies' advertisements that are frequently published in this newspaper.

Purposive sampling was used for this study. According to Silverman (2010), this procedure provides "a diverse range of cases relevant to a particular phenomenon or event" (p.141). It ensures that the features to be studied are represented in what is scrutinised. Four print advertisements (two from each insurance company) were selected for the analysis of language, stylistic elements, images portrayed and how the language used reflected the AIDA principle of advertising. The selection of print advertisements was done based on the availability of the companies' print advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper.

Procedure

In selecting advertisements for this research, the physical layout of each advertisement was analysed, including visuals, such as pictures, logos, brand imaging, white spaces, and font sizes, to see how various advertising techniques supported the English language used in selected advertisements to persuade people. The two insurance companies' selected print advertisements were also compared for language, stylistic elements and the AIDA principle of advertising contained in them. Moreover, collected advertisements were grouped and analysed to find out how the usage of varying advertising techniques (visuals such as pictures, logo, brand imaging, white spaces and font sizes) related to the English language used in selected advertisements. Data were presented under emerging themes.

Data Analysis

This study made use of a multi-semiotic text based approach to analyse selected print advertisements. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) define this approach as “the theory investigating the combination and relationship of the language, visual elements and knowledge in advertising” (p.93). In other words, it shows how visual elements and other textual components relate to one another in order to create a particular meaning. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), this approach also entails “deducing and deconstructing the ways in which texts are designed and crafted and investigating the relationship between knowledge and signs portrayed in advertisements” (p.96). Bignell (2008) points out that a multi-semiotic text based approach is crucial to value the totality of semiotic resources such as the title, layout, colours, design, language, advertising content and so forth.

Advertisers seem to mostly use different patterns of advertising, various semiotic resources and the AIDA principle of advertising to persuade potential readers. Therefore, this paper has analysed these elements together to facilitate the understanding of the content among Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia’s selected English print advertisements in *The Namibian* newspaper. Each selected print advertisement was analysed separately from others and a comparison was made thereafter. Selected print advertisements were firstly analysed to examine how the patterns of advertising, language used in each advertisement, visuals and the AIDA principle of advertising were employed. Following the analysis was the discussion of the relationship between selected print advertisements of the study. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) emphasise the importance of the relationship of various elements portrayed in various persuasive writings. In addition, text analyses was carried out in this study using the information gathered from selected print advertisements.

Findings and discussions

This section has sampled out two Metropolitan Namibia and two Sanlam Namibia’s print advertisements for analysis. Advertisements for Metropolitan Namibia are analysed first and then Sanlam Namibia’s thereafter.



Figure 1. Metropolitan Namibia’s print advertisement 1

Pattern of advertisement

The headline of the advert in Figure 1, “Financial provider”, is well thought out for readers to immediately consider opening a savings account with Metropolitan Namibia. The headline is written in simple words and readers do not have to spend time thinking of it as it already simplifies what is expected of readers from this advert.

The advertiser used a deviation process. According to Ren (2013), deviation refers to a selection of a linguistic item outside the range of allowed selections. This process encourages readers to develop interest in reading. The word “Financial” is bold and has a different font size. Furthermore, the headline, in a white colour, catches and attracts viewers’ attention. The advert is designed with the company logo attached, and the slogan “together we can”. The slogan persuades customers to invest with Metropolitan Namibia’s “Financial Provider”. The advertiser has made him/herself part of the readers by using a pronoun “we” in the slogan.

Language used in the advert

The content of the advert is used in a creative manner to inform, convince, persuade, amuse as well as communicate information to the target audience efficiently. The advertiser creatively chose terminologies such as “education, new house, new car, insurance, vacation, retirement and healthcare”, which are some basic needs and wants in any person’s life. The alliterative phrase “new house, new car” (foregrounded through repetition) provides an emphasis on the need to start a savings account with Metropolitan Namibia. Gee (2010) believes that alliteration is used quite often in advertisements because it is catchy and an attention grabber. In addition, alliteration is used to draw the reader’s attention and to make the advert stand out (Simpson, 2010). Moreover, a personal pronoun ‘I’ is used to make it easy for readers to relate to the subject of the advert. This personal pronoun is likely to be understood by readers as it creates a personal connection between the advertiser and target audience. Using a personal pronoun “I” makes the writing sound like a spoken communication. The language used in this advert is manipulative in the sense that the advertiser has used a temporal discourse marker (linking words depicting time) “now” to manipulate readers to start up a “Financial Provider” immediately without considering other needs.

Visuals

The image of a piggy bank depicted in the above advertisement makes the advertisement humorous and memorable, especially its orange colour. A piggy bank is a simple object, which takes form of a pot or a jar, usually given to children as their savings bank at birth or christening present (Dai, 2012). Children normally receive pocket money from visiting relatives, which was often supplemented by money paid for running errands and helping with household chores. Dai (2012) affirms that piggy banks are used as a safe box, where money is kept for safety purposes. In the advertisement above, a piggy bank image has been carefully chosen by the advertiser as an attention seeking device to increase the level of sophistication of the advert. One of the most effective ways for parents to teach their children the value of saving money rather than spending it is through saving using piggy banks. More importantly, Dai (2012) affirms that the piggy bank is also a good reminder for parents who may have forgotten the importance of saving. Therefore, in an effort to persuade and encourage customers to save with Metropolitan Namibia, a piggy bank has been used to depict the simplest and most convenient way to save with Metropolitan Namibia. In the advertisement, ‘two individuals’ hands are shown putting money into the piggy bank for saving and safekeeping reasons. The piggy bank depicted in the advertisement works well alongside the content of the advertisement to create a convincing advertisement. The advertisement manipulates readers to start savings insurances immediately or else their education, retirement, new car, new house, vacation and insurance might hardly be obtained.

The AIDA principle and Aristotelian proofs

Readers are attracted to the advertisement in Figure 1 through its design and the use of white and pink colours on a blue background. After studying this advertisement thoroughly, readers may be left with no other choice but to opt for a savings account with Metropolitan Namibia, a “Financial Provider”, to achieve their needs and wants. In addition, the advertisement interests clients and

readers through the humorous piggy bank image that is employed. The advertisement is not a lengthy one, and does not prevent readers from thorough scrutiny of it.

Furthermore, the advertisement in Figure 1 stimulates a desire in readers to want to know more about the “Financial Provider”, how it works and to take action thereafter. The statement in the body copy, “If I don’t save now, I may not have enough money for everything I still want to achieve” appeals to the readers’ emotions and convinces the audience to start a savings account with Metropolitan Namibia. The same statement creates an emotional response among the audience, especially those that have money at present. Their minds are triggered by the advertisement to take an action immediately. Magyar (2010) believes that “emotion (pathos) is one of the main ingredients in any advertisement as it drives people’s emotions and breaks down or overrides logical counter-arguments people might make” (p, 37). Additionally, the advertiser has used an abbreviation *etc.* to indicate some important needs and wants in life. The following image (figure 2) presents another sample of Metropolitan Namibia’s selected print advertisement.



Figure 2. Metropolitan Namibia advertisement 2

Pattern of advertisement

The headline “Pension provider” in Figure 2 gives the audience a piece of mind for their lives after retirement. Readers are encouraged to have a “Pension Provider” before retirement to be financially fit when they retire. Just like the “Financial Provider” in Figure 1, this headline is written in simple words, and readers do not spend time analysing it. The advertiser used a deviation process in the headline. The process of using a different font size to put an emphasis on something is called deviation (Shen, 2007). The bold word “Pension” in the headline has a different font size from all other words used. Deviation persuades readers to develop interest in reading the advert. Written in white, the headline catches and attracts readers’ attention and develop interest in them as Camino (2012) has expressed that “the design and context of advertisements should “attract and hold an audience’s attention (p.13)”. Additionally, white colour is associated with safety, possibility and protection. In other words, readers who opt for a pension through Metropolitan Namibia’s “Pension Provider” might have a high probability of being financially safe and protected.

The slogan “Together we can” in this advertisement persuades customers to invest with Metropolitan Namibia’s “Pension Provider”. The advertiser makes him/herself part of the readers by incorporating a pronoun “we” in the slogan. The advertisement has employed one of the

patterns of a print advertisement, a body copy (the use of words in the content of an advertisement). A body copy usually comprises a line or two sentences or a short paragraph to shorten the content. In the advertisement above, the content is compressed in one sentence only. This is effective because readers' time is saved as they spend less time reading the advertisement.

Language used in the advertisement

The content of this advertisement is designed to persuade readers to have a "Pension provider" with Metropolitan Namibia before they retire. An element of markedness, as one of the components of language of persuasion, has been utilised. Nuerk (2007) defines markedness as the process by which words are changed or added to give a special meaning. The term "provider", in the title, is marked by adding a suffix "er" at the end to become a noun. This marked noun gives a special meaning to the reader. A provider is someone who provides, but, in this case, it is Metropolitan Namibia that seems to provide and not the reader. In general, when the marked choice (the non-normal choice) is chosen, a person is making a statement and another meaning is to be inferred.

The advertiser has used an adverb, "financially", to impress and convince customers more effectively. Shen (2007) expresses that adverbs and adjectives are crucial in persuasive writing as they assist in making the writing attractive and more interesting and visualising what is happening. Being financially fit and independent, compared to physical fitness, after retirement is what everyone is eager for. Therefore, Metropolitan Namibia appeals to readers to have a "Pension Provider" that will help them to be "financially fit" when they retire. The content of the advert is used in the form of a metaphor, juxtaposing an actual thing with a figurative one to give more meaning. The phrase "financially fit" is not used to mean that the person is fit financially. It is an expression which is used to signify that the person, investing in a "Pension provider", is likely to be financially provided for by Metropolitan Namibia after retirement. A personal pronoun "I" is used to make it easier for readers to relate to the subject of the advertisement. The personal pronoun is likely to be understood by readers as it creates a personal connection between the advertiser and target audience. Using a personal pronoun "I" makes the writing seem like spoken communication.

Visuals

The advertisement portrays a photo of an old man and woman (gender sensitive) with happy faces. The two elders look young and energetic, although they are pensioners. Their smiles are a symbol of a happy couple, with friendliness and openness. Smiling equally makes the whole advertisement attractive. The pensioners are portrayed in the advertisement as energetic enough to still ride on bicycles despite their age. The advertisement depicts the idea that, through Metropolitan Namibia's "Pension Provider", individuals are likely to be happy when they retire.

However, what is questionable is: Will the pensioners without a "Pension Provider" be physically fit and energetic as the ones portrayed in the advert? Will they get old faster than the ones with the "Pension Provider"? Will they be "financially fit and independent" or not at all? Are they able to ride on bicycles? The above questions create a puzzle among individuals without a "Pension Provider". In other words, readers are persuaded to have a "Pension Provider" before they retire. The advertiser has used a picture of a man and a woman with grey hair to show that they are still energetic. Age is merely just a number when one is fit financially. Additionally, the pensioners in the advertisement seem to be a couple. Therefore, couples are manipulated by this advertisement to have a "Pension Provider" for a happy life when they retire.

The AIDA principle

This colorful advertisement attracts readers to want to read it in detail. The design and use of white content on a blue background makes the advertisement more concise and stand out. After a thorough analysis of this advertisement, readers may be left with no other choice but to opt for a “Pension Provider” with Metropolitan Namibia. The advertisement interests clients and readers through the humorous image of an energetic and independent, but old couple as depicted. Van Leeuwen (2005) claims that “just like any linguistic structures, visual structures also express meanings and contribute to the overall message of a text” (p. 87). Furthermore, the advertisement is not a lengthy one, and does not prevent readers to make a proper analysis of what is depicted in it. The advertisement stimulates a desire in readers to want to know more about the “Pension Provider”, how it works and to take action thereafter. The next figures (3 and 4) present an analysis of Sanlam Namibia’s selected print advertisements.



Figure 3. Sanlam Namibia advertisement 3

Language and visual used in the advertisement

The advertisement portrays a big picture accompanied by the heading “You can be that doting grandparent who is always spoiling the kids”. The implication is that grandparents, who are financially stable, will always want to treat their grandchildren very well. However, this advert seems to imply that if a grandparent does not have “Sanlam Namibia’s retirement solution,” their grandchildren may lose interest in them. Therefore, the verb “spoiling” in the heading has two connotations. The first one is of treating grandchildren well but only if a grandparent is financially secured. The second connotation of the verb “spoiling” implies a reduction of love and interest of grandchildren in their grandparents if a grandparent does not show love to their kids.

Furthermore, the designer has specifically used the adjective “doting” which describes grandparents who care and love their kids. Other adjectives “golden”, “more” and “favourite” express the quality of the “Retirement Solution” that Sanlam Namibia offers and gives readers a better picture of what is conveyed in the advertisement. The advertiser has equally incorporated another language element, a disjunctive syntax, in this advertisement. This is a process of omitting some words in order to make a sentence short and memorable (Miguel, 2015). In the sentence “perhaps it’s your favourite hobby, places you have dreamed of travelling to...” a word “going” was omitted. It could read: “perhaps it’s your favourite hobby, going places you have dreamed of travelling to”. However, this would defeat the purpose of the statement being short and catchy. Johnson (2007) believes that most advertisements use disjunctive syntax, which is the use of sentences without verbs or subjects, or sentences consisting of one or two grammatical elements only. Additionally, De Lima (2014) asserts that advertisers design phrases by leaving something out which readers must supply or omitting some words for readers to figure them out. On the other hand, anaphoric resolution was used in the advertisement. The “it” in a statement “plan for it with a retirement solution from Sanlam Namibia”, refers back to the favourite hobby which was mentioned earlier on in the sentence. Anaphoric resolution has been used in the advertisement to avoid the repetition of the phrase “favourite hobby” and to make the advertisement interesting to read. The words “hope” and “reality” are juxtaposed, reiterating the fact that it is what the consumer needs to make their kids happy.

Aristotelian proofs

The statement “you can be that doting grandparent who is always spoiling the kids” is emotive and appealing to readers, especially ones with grandchildren, to be loving and caring towards their grandchildren. The emotive words “doting” and “spoiling” make the advertisement more appealing. Without a “Retirement solution” from Sanlam Namibia, it becomes hard for children to receive that special treatment from their grandparents. Together with the emotive slogan “thinking ahead”, the advertisement appeals to readers to have a “Retirement Solution” with Sanlam Namibia. The phrase “plan for it with Sanlam Namibia” logically appeals to readers to make their dreams of travelling or spending more time with their families, come true. Magyar (2010) attests that logos encompasses the logical influence by convincing the audience through displaying facts, explanations and figures. The advertiser has used the pronoun “we” as a way of fostering the feeling of being part of Sanlam Namibia’s customers. The character (ethos) of a happy couple, as grandparents, and a granddaughter persuades readers to imitate the example of being a “doting grandparent”, hence emotive. The smiles on their faces have the implicature of happiness arising from the use of Sanlam Namibia’s “Retirement Solution investment”. The next figure (figure 4) presents an analysis of Sanlam Namibia’s selected print advertisement.



Figure 4. Sanlam Namibia advertisement 4

Language and visual used in the advertisement

The language and linguistic elements used in this advertisement create strong feelings in readers. It is powerful that people are made to believe that a certain individual has to jump the high bridge of life in order not to risk his or her life. In the statement “We’re that reliable rope that will safely swing you through the bungee jump of life”, the advertiser has used the pronoun “we” to show the unity that exists between the company and its clients. Additionally, adverbs “safely and ardently” are purposefully used to describe the verbs in the sentences in order to give the reader a better picture of what the designer is trying to convey. In the same manner, an emotive statement “we are that reliable rope” is used as a metaphor. Simpson (2010) claims that metaphors are used to enrich readers’ minds and allow people to understand and feel what the advertiser wants them to. Furthermore, the adjectives “reliable and tiniest” are used to express the quality of the “rope” and “detail” and to make the advertisement more convincing. Equally, the superlative (form of adjective which expresses the highest quality of something) “tiniest” is also common in the advertisement. It has an illocutionary force of persuading customers that Sanlam Namibia cares for them. Sanlam Namibia is able to do anything possible to solve even the smallest problem. The statement “peruse through even the tiniest detail” is emotive. Readers are encouraged to take out insurance with Sanlam Namibia.

The image of a man jumping over a high bridge proves the point that Sanlam Namibia equips its clients with necessary protective materials to help them when a sad event or situation happens. The image has the illocutionary force of persuading customers to take out insurance with Sanlam Namibia. The rocks and stones, visible in the bridge, symbolize tragedy and failure. The image of water shows that it has a lot of pressure and is very dangerous. Sanlam Namibia, therefore, persuades customers to think of having insurance in order to avoid falling victim to the dangers posed by the bridge.

The Aristotelian proof and AIDA principle of advertising

The general structure of this advertisement attracts the attention of the reader through its language use. In other words, the language elements like pronouns, the repetitive transitional word “that”, onomatopoeia (bungee jumping), adjectives and metaphor create a puzzle which persuades consumers. The blue coloured lettering makes the advertisement attractive to potential readers. The image of a man bungee jumping off the high bridge makes the advertisement interesting. By looking at it first, readers might want to read more to associate the content of the advertisement with the image. The advertisement creates a human desire for security and protection and readers are motivated to take a step further (action) after reading through this advertisement. The advertiser appeals to the emotions of readers by using the phrase “we are that reliable rope”. Readers are made to believe that Sanlam Namibia is a company that works according to people’s expectations.

Conclusion

This article sought to analyse the English language used in Metropolitan Namibia and Sanlam Namibia’s English advertisements. The English language used in the selected advertisements of the study is well-crafted and well thought-out to win the hearts and minds of potential customers. The proofs of persuasion (ethos, pathos and logos) were explored. The AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action) principle of advertisement as suggested by Gath (2006) was also revealed. In most cases, the advertisers incorporated various advertising techniques, such as bold lettering and striking design in the selected advertisements to draw emotions from readers. The selected advertisements contain pictures, photos or other natural images. This study’s findings concur with Mayr (2010) who suggests that the image is “one attention seeking device or strategy that has been developed recently in order to increase the level of sophistication in different advertisements

(p.65).” Therefore, the content and design of advertisements are aimed at changing people’s behaviours, habits and attitudes in relation to the products that are advertised.

Recommendations

The language of advertising has a powerful influence over people’s behaviour and attitudes. This is especially true in the fields of marketing and advertising. Advertisers should, therefore, be aware of the choice of language used to convey specific messages if their intentions are to influence and manipulate potential readers into buying the advertised products. The visual content and design in advertising have a very great impact on the consumer, but it is language that helps people to identify a product and remember it. In addition, the consumer of an advertisement that is crowded with illustrations may not connect to it. Using illustrations does not mean that a certain advertiser has to fill the advertisement with a maximum number of illustrations. Sometimes one good illustration will suffice.

Advertisers should also be well aware of their target audience. The target audience may belong to different age groups and gender. On the other hand, Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia should also focus not only on financing lives and savings policies but at least advertise their products based on current issues trending in Namibia. For instance, quite a number of people in Namibia are going through issues of retrenchments, car accidents, alcohol and drug abuse, rape, suicide and so forth. It is imperative that images and illustrations to these effect are portrayed in their print advertisements to constantly keep reminding the Namibian nation of these hazardous issues. At the moment, the world is going through the deadly pandemic Covid-19. It is also crucial that Metropolitan and Sanlam Namibia’s recent print advertisements incorporate issues related to this virus and mechanisms on how it can be financed. Finally, further research needs to be carried out on the English language of advertisement by insurance companies in Namibia and elsewhere to explore effective advertising strategies that are unique to Namibia.

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