Advertising English and ESP: the *British Cosmopolitan* ad as an example of 'specialised' text

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Abstract

Advertising English is characterised by several linguistic, pragmatic and functional features that distinguish it from other varieties of English that are not specialised. In this paper we have analysed the linguistic (i.e. graphic-phonologic, morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic), pragmatic and functional features of advertising English, using a sample of 1142 advertisements run in *British Cosmopolitan* in 1999 and 2000, and have considered their closeness or distance from general English texts. In short, this analysis has proved that advertising English is a variety of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) with a low degree of specialisation and of a social type, which is on the borderline between GE (General English) and ESP. It has also proved that although related to EBE (English for Business and Economics), because of its economic content and purpose, advertising English seems to be closer to GE than EBE.

Key words: advertising, English varieties, ESP, discourse analysis

Resumen

Inglés publicitario e IPA: el anuncio de "British Cosmopolitan" como ejemplo de texto especializado

El inglés publicitario presenta una serie de aspectos lingüísticos, pragmáticos y funcionales que le confieren unidad frente a otras variedades del inglés que no son especializadas. En este artículo analizamos las características lingüísticas (gráfico-fónicas, morfosintácticas, y léxicosemánticas), pragmáticas y funcionales del inglés publicitario, utilizando para ello una muestra de 1142 anuncios publicados en 1999 y 2000 en *British Cosmopolitan* y consideramos su proximidad o alejamiento respecto a las características que presentan los textos del inglés general. Nuestro estudio ha evidenciado, en síntesis, que el inglés publicitario es una modalidad del IFE (Inglés para Fines Específicos) con un ligero grado de abstracción, de carácter divulgativo y en la frontera entre el inglés general y el IFE. También ha evidenciado que aunque el inglés publicitario guarda relación con el Inglés Empresarial y Económico, debido a su contenido y finalidad, el inglés publicitario parece aproximarse más al inglés general que el Inglés Empresarial y Económico.

Palabras clave: publicidad, variedades del inglés, IFE, análisis del discurso

Introduction

LSPs (Languages for Specific Purposes) have traditionally been described in opposition to LGP (Language for General Purposes). While LSPs are used to discuss specialised fields of knowledge, LGP is the language that we use every day to talk about ordinary things in a variety of common situations. Every language has both LGP and LSP. English, for instance, has ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and GE (General English) (cf. Alcaraz Varó, 2000: 15; Bowker & Pearson, 2002: 25).

ESP consolidates in the 60s and 70s; according to Swales (1988), the first publications on ESP were Barber (1962), Herbert (1965) and Lackstrom et al. (1972). From then onwards there have been many different studies on ESP (Swales, 1988, 2000; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Alcaraz Varó, 2000; García Mayo, 2000).

Advertising English has traditionally been considered a variety of ESP, more specifically of EBE ("English for Business and Economics") (Gómez Moreno, 1994: 180). However, in our view, although related to EBE because of its economic content and purpose, advertising English is different from EBE in that it has very particular discursive features that seem to show that advertising English is closer to GE than EBE.

In this paper we claim that advertising English is a variety of English that is different from other varieties that are not specialised, although closer to GE than more specialised varieties of ESP, such as EBE.

Theoretical Framework

According to Cabré Castellví (1993: 151), specific texts contain regular linguistic features at each level of grammar, such as those that are graphic-phonologic, morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic, also including a lexical choice, presence and absence of concrete units and structures, and the use of diverse codes. In this sense, they usually show particular linguistic patterns and units, such as foreign words that are transformed into English words, complex noun groups, adjectives in noun premodifying patterns, verbs in the indicative mode, the present tense, neologisms, borrowings, learned terms, group units, abbreviations, acronyms, specialised borrowings, nouns derived from verbs and short sentences. Advertising English presents, as we will see, many of these specialised morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic features.

With reference to syntax, the specific languages seem to depend on general language since in them "the relatively few special syntactic features do not constitute an independent grammatical system" (Sager et al., 1980: 185). Hence, the language for science and technology often uses a simple syntax: "progressive reduction of syntactic complexity to the absolute minimum and exposition, as well as through the extended use of functional terms" (Gerr, 1942, in Sager et al., 1980: 185).

Regarding the syntax of advertising discourse, Sager et al. (1980: 185) state that "within the entire range of technical literature –including advertising, popular science and trade journals– almost any of the syntactic devices available in general English might be expected to occur."

With regard to the use of different codes, in specific texts there are usually verbal and non-verbal codes, for example images, etc. This combination of codes is rare in general texts (cf. Sager et al., 1980: 103; Cabré Castellví, 1993: 153). In addition, as stated by Sager et al. (1980: 45), "it can be said that linguistic communication which relies essentially on the social and emotive use of language is difficult if not impossible to represent in a non-linguistic code." However, advertising English incorporates, as we will see, this social and emotive use of language in many of the images it uses.

From a pragmatic point of view, an LSP is a language that shows very particular features determined by the elements of its communicative contexts: participants (addresser and addressee), the communicative circumstances, and purpose (Cabré Castellví, 1993: 129). These elements usually appear in a discursive modality that most often characterises specialised texts, that is, the informative discursive modality. Nonetheless, some scholars claim that there are other important discursive modalities in specialised discourse; for instance, persuasion. Indeed, although persuasion has largely been ignored in ESP varieties, there are grounds to suspect that it constitutes an important discursive modality to characterise ESP (cf. Alcaraz Varó, 2000: 129).

Theories such as Sperber and Wilson's (1986, 1990) Relevance Theory, the Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962) and the Reception Theory (Eco, 1984), have dealt with the role of participants in different types of persuasive discourses. The Speech Act Theory and the Reception Theory have mostly focused on the addressee. Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1990) have, nonetheless, devoted attention to both the addresser and addresee of persuasive discourses.

Relevance Theory is nowadays considered as one of the most influential models within the field of pragmatics. As Grice's (1975) model has done, relevance theory emphasises the fact that there is a difference between what we say and what we mean,

between the abstract semantic representations of sentences and the particular interpretations of statements and utterances in context. Relevance theory constitutes an attempt to characterise communication as achieved by means of the recognition of intentions, the consequent mutuality of the cognitive environment and the operation of inferential processes. In this sense, the distinction between informative intention and communicative intention, the audience's search for optimal relevance and its interest in cost-effectiveness are of crucial significance in characterising covert communication (Tanaka, 1994: 40-43):

- First, regarding intention it is seen as involving an informative intention which is embedded within a second-order communication intention. Overt communication consists of the revelation of these two layers of information, whereas covert communication hides the informative intention by making assumptions more manifest, but not mutually so.

- Second, as opposed to ostensive communication, covert communication does not bear a guarantee of optimal relevance. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 158), an utterance is optimally relevant only if it achieves enough effects to be worthy of the hearer's non-gratuitous effort to achieve an effect. In covert communication, the hearer does not have the speaker's guarantee of optimal relevance to guide his/her interpretation, but other stimuli to overcome this deficiency. The communicator relies on the addressee noticing certain non-linguistic stimuli.

- Third, since processing information requires effort, the request to undertake this task has to be accompanied by reward. By requesting the addressee's attention, the communicator indicates that he/she has reason to believe that he/she is providing relevant information which will make the addressee effort worthwhile (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 124-125; Tanaka, 1994: 20).

The notion of covert communication works within a relevance-theoretic framework and different scholars have advanced the idea that advertising discourse is a typical example of 'covert communication' (Dyer, 1982; Tanaka, 1994; Forceville, 1996; Díaz Pérez, 1999, 2000; Fuertes Olivera et al., 2001; Crook, 2004). Bencherif and Tanaka (1987; in Tanaka, 1994: 41) defined covert communication as "a case of communication where the intentions of the speaker is to alter the cognitive environment of the hearer, i.e. to make a set of assumptions more manifest to her, without making this intention mutually manifest."

According to Tanaka (1994: 43), the advertiser engages in covert communication for two main purposes:

(1) to try to make the addressee forget the advertiser is trying to sell something, and

(2) to avoid taking responsibility for the social consequences to certain implications arising from advertisements.

In short, Tanaka (1994) argues that "covert communication, if and when it works, allows the advertiser to have his cake and eat it."

With regard to communicative circumstances, we have matters or topics addressed. Different varieties of ESP communicate different topics that can be scientific, technical or professional. Yet nowadays specialised topics include broader matters from different fields of knowledge that include the use of everyday topics along with specialised ones. A case in point is trade (Kocourek, 1982) or advertising (Buchholz, 1978).[1] In those fields specialised topics appear in combination with topics related to everyday issues as in women's magazines. More specialised journals, for instance computer publications, would probably use more specialised topics.

As far as the degree of specialisation of discourses is concerned, it must be argued that there are different discursive levels or styles (cf. Cabré Castellví, 1993: 142) which are in turn determined by the degree of specialisation of its users. In LSPs there can be five different styles (cf. Bergenholtz & Tarp, 1995: 19; Velasco-Sacristán, 2003: 175-176):

1. Academic, formal and personal style: from expert to expert. It is characterised by a formal register and a high degree of shared knowledge between participants. For instance, a conference on "e-commerce" and Web advertising.

2. Professional, formal and impersonal style: from expert to semi-expert. There is a high degree of shared knowledge although not as specialised as in the academic style. For example, a training course in advertising strategies for the staff of an advertising agency.

3. Professional, formal, impersonal style: from semi-expert to semi-expert. Intermediate degree of shared knowledge and specialisation. A talk from an expert in foreign trade and semi-expert in advertising for students doing Advertising in a Business Graduate school is a good illustration of this type of style.

4. Professional, formal and personal style: from expert to lay people. This is the style that is on the borderline between specialised and social language, with a low degree

of shared knowledge. For instance, articles from *Advertising Age*, a popularising journal on advertising.

5. Popularising, formal and personal style: from semi-experts to lay people; the lowest degree of specialisation, with a high degree of social language and an intermediate degree of shared knowledge. Print advertisements are a case in point.

Advertising texts from women's magazines, like *British Cosmopolitan*, fall within this fifth degree of specialisation. Texts with a low degree of specialisation usually have distinguishing features that normally characterise impersonal and objective texts, such as scientific or technical ones. On the one hand, they present features like implicit dialogue between the addresser and the addressee, implicit personal viewpoints and implicit purpose, metalinguistic elements, such as explanations, definitions, synonyms, and so on and so forth, along with linguistic elegance as shown by a somehow poetic function of language. On the other hand, they contain other linguistic features that show an impersonal and objective style; for instance, present tenses, short clauses, impersonal formulas, noun groups and other representation systems in texts (cf. Cabré Castellví, 1993: 155-156). Advertising English texts have, as we will see, both types of characteristics: impersonal and objective ones. In addition to these styles, attention has to be paid to different geographical, historical and social dialects, and the personal style of the ad addressers and, occasionally, that of addressees.

Finally, considering the functions of language as proposed by Jakobson (1970: 504-506), sociological models such as Hymes' (1972), or the functional-sociological model proposed by Halliday (1978, 1985), it can be argued that the main function of LSPs is that of informing (Cabré Castellví, 1993: 155). Yet, this seems true of very specialised LSPs, such as EST, but not so in the case of LSPs with a low degree of specialisation. Advertising is a good illustration of this low degree of specialisation. In functional terms, advertisements seem to be better represented as a continuum of text functions fluctuating between 'informing' and 'manipulating' (Hatim, 1990: 117; Fuertes-Olivera et. al., 2001: 1291).

Corpus and Methodology

Following Cabré Castellví (1993: 136) and taking linguistic, pragmatic and functional features as general criteria for distinguishing ESP from GE, we will analyse the linguistic, pragmatic and functional features of *British Cosmopolitan* ads in a sample of 1142 advertisements published between 1999 and 2000.

British Cosmopolitan is a women's magazine published in more than 25 countries, which includes articles showing a mixture of entertainment and information. Winship (1987) claims that this magazine was first launched in the UK in 1972 for a middle-class, single and twenty-five year-old readership. She adds that a key to the success of *British Cosmopolitan* is that it offers a plurality of opinions and profuse advertising which offers consumer spreads with all the associations of female desire, pleasure and fantasy.

Our discursive analysis will pay attention to the form and function of these ads focusing on their linguistic, pragmatic and functional features to assess whether they are different from other non-specialised English varieties, and whether they are closer to GE than the discursive features of EBE

Linguistic, Pragmatic and Functional Analysis of *British Cosmopolitan* ads

Linguistic features

In line with any other specialised language, in advertising English there are regular specific features at each level of grammar. In this sense, from a linguistic point of view, advertising shows certain features that are frequent in ESP texts, mostly morphological, lexical and syntactic, along with the use of non-verbal codes. In our analysis we have found the following remarkable linguistic features:

At a graphic level advertisements usually draw attention to the written form by using (Myers, 1994: 32-44):

- Unexpected letters; example[2]:

  "New Impulse <u>ICØ</u>"   [Brand name, picture of a woman who is frozen, May 1999, *Impulse ICØ* deodorant.]

- Numbers to fill a slot in a word usually filled by a letter; example:

  "EGYPT WELCOME TO OUR <u>SE7NTH</u> MILLENIUM"   [Slogan, picture of a landscape from Egypt, May 1999, *Egypt Designated Millenium Host* touristic office.]

- Letters that usually only occur infrequently; example:

  "GAP <u>K</u>HAKIS"   [Brand name, picture of a model wearing the clothes advertised, *Gap Khakis* clothes.]

- Unpredictable spellings; example:

  "<u>Cheez</u> Dippers Light"   [Product name, picture of the product advertises, July 1999, "Cheez Dippers Light" by *The Laughing Cow*.]

- Alterations of letters to draw attention to their shape or name as well as their place in a word.

- Foreign names that are transformed into English words.

- Homophones, namely, words that sound alike but are spelled differently.

At a phonologic level there are also regular features in advertising English that occur infrequently in general English:

- Unexpected parallelisms in sounds, not just spellings.

- Repetition of consonants, i.e. alliteration, which in some positions is more insistent; example:

  "HP. <u>B</u>rilliant <u>B</u>aked <u>B</u>eans"   [Slogan, picture of the product advertised, November 1999, *HP Baked Beans*.]

- Repetition may also work through similar, rather than identical sounds.

- Repetition of vowels, i.e. assonance.

- Rhyme; example:

  "Feel<u>ing</u> is everyth<u>ing</u>"   [Slogan, picture of the product advertised and a couple inside a car who are seemingly making love, January 1999; *Durex Comfort* condoms.]

- Tunes and intonation, i.e. the effect of any foregrounding of sound can be brought out or played down by spoken intonation or by music in a jingle.

- Homophones.

- Onomatopoeias. Example that shows an onomatopeia for silence:

  "<u>Shhhh</u>.... let your nails say it all"   [Heading, pictures of lips and a finger on them and a picture of the products advertised, July 1999, *Manicar*e manicure products.]

- Repetition of formal schemes, i.e. "correspondence or partial identity between pieces of text in proximity which are often 'rhetorical' in a familiar sense of the word, in that they heighten the emotional tone of the message, giving insistent emphasis to points of strategic importance" (Leech, 1966: 190), etc.

At a morpho-syntactic level there is also preference for certain units, for example:

- The noun, for instance complex noun groups with heavy premodification that describe the product in a precise, attractive and efficient way (Bhatia, 1993: 146; Alcaraz Varó, 2000: 3); example:

"Seven days from now you could have <u>smoother</u>, <u>softer</u> skin"	[Heading, picture of the product advertised, April 1999, *Dove* soap.]

- The adjective, especially that in noun premodifying patterns and in the comparative and superlative forms; example:

"The <u>toughest</u> watch of all times. Baby-G"	[Slogan, picture of cinema stills, the product advertised and x-rays, January 1999, "Baby G" watches by *Casio*.]

- The verb, in its frequent use of the imperative; example:

"<u>Enjoy</u> the difference"	[Slogan, picture of a man besides a woman who is jumping, June 1999, clothes with Lycra by *Dupont*.]

- The infinitive.

- The indicative; example:

"Allure <u>makes</u> the man"	[Heading, picture of an Olympic medal winner in Barcelona 1992, May 1999, "Allure Homme" male fragrance by *Chanel*.]

- The present tense; example:

"Nothing stops diarrhoea faster"	[Slogan, picture of a woman who is twisting her legs up, July 1999, "Diacalm" drug against diarrhoea by *Seton-Scholl*.]

- The second person singular and plural; example:

"Kellogg's. Because <u>You</u> Are What <u>You</u> Eat"	[Slogan, picture of a woman, a bathroom scales, and the products advertised, September 1999, *Kellogg*'s cereals.]

- The determiners, especially those with a deictic value; example:

"Color. <u>That's</u> holiday"	[Slogan, picture of a woman who is wearing the clothes advertised, November 1999, *Gap* clothes.]

- The adverbs, mostly those used to modify adjectives; example:

"New Impulse ICØ. <u>Refreshingly</u> glacial"	[Slogan, picture of a woman who is frozen, May 1999, *Impulse ICØ* deodorant.]

- Sentences, such as simple short clauses, consisting of, for instance, a juxtaposed noun group preceded by "for"; example:

"Canesten. <u>For burning cistitis</u>"	[Slogan, picture of a fire extinguisher, April 1999, "Oasis for Cistitis" drug against cistitis by *Canesten-Bayer*.]

- Or by an adjectival group conjoint; example:

"<u>Difficult to define. Impossible to resist</u>"	[Heading, picture of a woman and the product advertised, April 1999, "Allure" female fragrance by *Chanel*.]

- There can also be noun group appositions; example:

"<u>Sport. Edition. Rover 200</u>"	[Heading, picture of a car and drawing of a storm, May 1999, "Rover 200 car" (Sport Edition) by *Rover*.]

- Elliptical sentences.

- Substitution.

- Juxtaposed sentences.

- Coordinated sentences, etc.

At a lexico-semantic level there is a preference for:

- Both emotive vocabulary; example:

"<u>Beautiful. Very beautiful</u>"	[Slogan, picture of a woman and the product advertised, November 1999, "Daily Hand Cream" by *Cutex*.]

- And technical vocabulary; example:

"Introducing the Motorola V3688, the smallest lightest <u>dual-band GSM</u> phone in the world. Small in size, long on <u>battery life</u> [...]"	[Copy, picture of a woman and the product advertised, August 1999, *Motorola V3688* mobile phone.]

- Neologisms[3] that often begin as colloquial terms; example:

"Elizabeth Arden <u>Smartwear</u>"	[Brand name, picture of a woman who has seemingly used the product advertised, July 1999, "New Recital" hair dyes by *L'ORÉAL*.]

- Borrowings; for instance those in a group next to English words; example:

"New Recital. Les <u>Blondissimes</u>"	[Brand, picture of a woman who has seemingly used the product advertised and that product, July 1999, "New Recital" hair dyes by *L'ORÉAL*.]

- Puns; example where there is a pun based on the homophone "date" that creates semantic ambiguity:

"One <u>date</u> that won't let you down"	[Heading, picture of a woman, February 2000, *The Cosmopolitan Show*.]

As far as the choice of vocabulary is concerned, there is a great deal of terms from the GE language, along with a considerable amount of specific technical vocabulary and vocabulary that are on the borderline between GE Language and ESP. The use of both technical and general vocabulary seems to be justified by the audience's specialisation degree. Advertising copywriters have to create a message for a plural audience that comprises readers of different degrees of specialisation: lay public, experts and semi-experts in the topic addressed in the ad.

- Example of advertising vocabulary from the GE language:

"Forget <u>dull</u>, <u>fading colour</u>. With the new Pantene Pro-V <u>color range</u>, <u>vibrant</u>, <u>colourful</u> hair <u>in only three steps away</u>"	[Subheading, pictures of women and the products advertised, June 1999, *Pantene Pro-V Color* hair dyes.]

- Example that contains specialised technical vocabulary:

"Introducing the Motorola V3688, the smallest lightest <u>dual-band GSM</u> phone in the world. Small in size, long on <u>battery life</u> [...]"	[Copy, picture of a woman and the product advertised, August 1999, *Motorola V3688* mobile phone.]

- Example of vocabulary on the borderline between Specific and General English language:

"Hydra Zen. <u>Skin de-</u> <u>stressing moisturiser</u>"	[Heading, picture of a rose and the product advertised, May 1999, "Hydra Zen" moisturiser by *Lancôme*.]

In addition, the vocabulary used in advertising English is one of its most distinguishing features. In addition to the informative function that specific vocabulary has, advertising terms usually have an additional social function in that it is thanks to advertising that some specific terms, such as aspirin, get to the general public (cf. Cardona & Fernández Besararte, 1972: 61). They therefore fulfil a social function, called "banalisation" by Galisson (1978), that is most useful to introduce specific vocabulary in our everyday life (Svobodová, 1981: 116-117; Cabré Castellví, 1993: 136). Hence, some technical vocabulary is usually "banalised" in the copy of an ad and the product brand name. In this sense, 'aspirin,' 'Togal' in pharmacology, 'Kodak' or 'Hoover' in commerce are very good cases of this banalisation function (cf. Asher & Simpson, 1994: 2011).

Regarding structural patterns, advertising English shows differences in the usage of certain language structures. On the one hand, there are particular patterns and units that are frequently used in specialised texts, such as morphological structures composed of learned terms, group units, abbreviations, acronyms, specialised borrowings, nouns derived from verbs, short clauses; on the other, there are some units that do not appear very often, for instance complex subordinated sentences. In this sense, advertising English has:

- Frequent complex morphological patterns, especially in noun and adjectival groups.

- There are also learned Latin or Greek terms together with Germanic ones.

- Group units in noun groups containing premodifications; example:

"<u>Sunwater</u> Lancaster"	[Brand name, picture of a woman and the product advertised; May 1999, "Sunwater" perfume by *Lancaster*.]

- Nonce-compounds and embedded constructions in adjectival groups; example:

"[...] <u>anti-perspirant</u> deodorant <u>roll-on</u>"	[Copy, picture of the product advertised, May 1999, *Dove* deodorant: nonce-compounds.]

- Abbreviations; example:

"[...] it helps Speed recovery from <u>UV</u> and environmental damage [...]"	[Copy, picture of a woman and the product advertised, August 1999, "Advanced Night Repair Cream" by *Estēe Lauder*.]

- Symbols.

- Borrowings.

- Nouns derived from verbs; example:

"The Daily Telegraph. <u>Writing</u> that demands <u>reading</u>"	[Slogan, picture of a child's hand wearing a hospital bracelet indicating that he/she is HIV positive, April 1999, *The Daily Telegraph*.]

- Short clauses, such as minor and non-finite clauses; example of a non-finite clause:

"<u>Loves skin</u>. <u>Hates sweat</u>"	[Heading, picture of the product advertised, May 1999, *Dove* deodorant.]

- There are, nonetheless, and also in line with the usual trend in specific languages, a few examples of subordinated clauses which are mainly of three types: sentences introduced by "when," "if" and "because"; example:

"L'ORÉAL Paris. <u>Because I'm worth it</u>"	[Slogan, picture of a woman who has seemingly used the product advertised, March 1999, "Id Collection" of stencils and tattoos by *L'ORÉAL*.]

In the syntax of advertising discourse there is, as in general English, shifts in the logical order of elements, ellipsis and substitutions. In this sense, there are, for instance:

- Unfinished sentences that use periods when commas should be used; example:

"Strong, Soft. Beautiful. Shiny"	[Subheading, picture of a woman and the products advertised, March 2000, Kms Daily Repair products.]

- Language from everyday conversations, such as idioms; example:

"Looking good <u>from hair to toe</u>"	[Slogan, picture of a "Wella Experience" label next to a drawing of a woman, May 1999, *Wella* hair products.]

- Or colloquialisms; example:

"<u>Gotcha!</u>"	[Subheading, three pictures of shoes, lips and a handbag, March 2000, *Alldays Normal* pads; slang; dialectal varieties; etc.]

As far as the use of different codes is concerned, the use of non-verbal codes is one of the most remarkable features of advertising English. Although these codes are usually found in specialised texts, the non-verbal codes used in the discourse of advertising are more similar to general English texts than to specific ones, since in them there is social and emotive content, as it is in the verbal content of advertisements. In addition, advertising images are semiotic devices that show a seeming analogy and objectivity, which is or can be distorted by digital programs (e.g. Photoshop, etc.).

- Example in which an icon of an envelope is used with very clear emotive and social meaning:

    "The ✉ is Vodafone" [Slogan, picture of the product advertised, February 2000, *Vodafone* mobile phones: use of a non-verbal code in combination with a verbal code.]

Pragmatic features

From a pragmatic point of view advertising English shows very particular features determined by its participants, the communicative circumstances and its purpose. Regarding advertising participants, Forceville (1996: 81) argues that they are

> the most important components since all the other components only matter in the light of the fact that in a communicative situation one more or less specified agent wishes to convey something to another more or less specified agent.

The addresser and addressee of advertising texts are therefore key elements of the advertising communication. In advertising a specialised or semi-specialised agent, that is the advertiser, communicates persuasive information by means of a typical example of covert communication that characterises persuasion.

As far as the communicative discourse modality is concerned, Tanaka (1994) considers advertising in terms of "covert" rather than "ostensive" communication arguing that "covert communication is a response to the interrelated problems which advertisers face in their task of persuading or influencing" (1994: 36). Advertising is, indeed, typical of a situation in which there is a low level of trust and social cooperation between advertisers and their audience. The advertiser's task is to make the audience believe something about a product without her[4], namely the addressee, distrusting him, namely the addresser (Tanaka, 1994: 43). This leads to a variety of strategies on the part of the advertiser. Covert communication is one of these (Tanaka, 1994: 40).

Advertising covert communication can be seen, for instance, in the use of metaphors and the extended use of words in the projection of the image of women in advertising to make indirect claims for which the advertiser can later avoid responsibility (Tanaka, 1994).

▪ Example of a metaphor that is covertly communicated and is also used to project the image of women in advertising:

"Exquisite ... isn't she?"   [Slogan, picture of a sexy young woman wearing the product advertised, September 1999, "Eva" lingerie by *Naturana.*]

In this metaphor the nonhuman entity of a commodity is understood in terms of a person who is often the consumer and the different human features, motivations and activities related to this person, giving rise to the metaphor THE COMMODITY IS THE CONSUMER, which is indeed an example of ontological metaphor ITEMS TO SELL ARE PEOPLE (Kövecses, 2002: 59) that evokes in the reader the same attitudes and feelings that they have in connection with a person (consumer). The use of "she" in the example seems to point to the lingerie to convey definitional attributes of "womanhood," such as sexiness, exquisiteness, etc. This metaphor is, in our view, an example of covert communication as in it the metaphor, the producer's informative intention, is not mutually manifest, there is no optimal relevance and the metaphor interpreter uses the visual cues as a reward to compensate his/her processing interpretation effort.

In short, covert communication strategies serve as attention-grabbing and interest-raising devices, because of its puzzling, amusing and entertaining nature, and also as social enhancers, strengthening the social bond between the advertiser and the consumer, enhancing the credibility of the persuader while leading to an attitude change in the audience. The advertiser, on the one hand, wishes to use problematic areas of particular sensitivity, for example, sex or snobbery, as a means of cultivating intimacy, escaping any responsibility for doing so and avoiding negative social reactions emanating from the public. The hearer, on the other hand, can benefit from becoming more involved in the process of communication, receiving a reasonable pay-off for his/her efforts at interpretation in terms of a number of contextual effects products, and can eventually accept or reject the advertiser's message.

In short, the addresser, i.e. persuader, uses language strategies and visual images to suggest meaning to an audience, but the audience, using its own attitudes and reasoning skills, constructs its own meaning. This type of persuasion seems to be the

result of an elaborated process of communication between a more or less specialised addresser, that is expert and semi-expert, and a more or less specialised addressee who is often a lay person.

As far as communicative circumstances is concerned, in the advertising of women's magazines there is a combination of scientific, technical or professional topics along with everyday topics and female topics:

- Example of a female topic:

    "Non-applicator tampons.   [Slogans, drawing of a personified tampon
    Comfort at your fingertips"   with a label saying "99p Trial Pack"; April
                                  1999, *Tampax Regular Non-Applicator
                                  Tampons*: menstruation topic.]

British Cosmopolitan style falls into the fifth style we described in the theoretic framework when we introduced different degrees of specialisation in so far as it is a social, formal and personal style. Indeed, advertising texts have distinguishing diversifying features that usually characterise impersonal and objective texts like scientific or technical ones, such as:

- An often implicit dialogue between an addresser and an addressee; example:

    "Want great skin? Got two   [Heading of the ad insert, pictures of the
    seconds? Take the tape   products   advertised,   August   1999,
    test?"   *Clinique 3-Step Skin Care System*.]

- Implicit personal viewpoints and implicit purpose: texts contain quotations, examples, explanations, etc.; example:

    "Most pasta sauces sound   [Heading, picture of a man who is holding
    Italian. Mine taste Italian" one of the products advertised, October
                                  1999, pasta sauce "Pastagusto" by *Sacla*.]

- Metalinguistic elements, e.g. explanations, definitions, synonyms, etc.: the quantity of these elements varies depending on the degree of specialisation and shared knowledge between addresser and addressee. The more specialised the addressee, the more metalinguistic elements. Example of a definition:

    "Time is what you make of   [Slogan, picture of a man and a woman
    it"   who are playing beach volleyball and the
                                product advertised, June 1999, "Oragin
                                'Zest' watch by *Swatch*.]

- Linguistic elegance, appropriate structures, adequate layout. There is a somehow poetic function of language. Example of a simile:

"Dior Dune. For her. For him. As free as the wind [...]"	[Slogan, picture of a woman in a dessert and the product advertised, August 1999, "Dune" female fragrance and "Dune Pour Homme" male fragrance by *Christian Dior*.]

Present tenses, short clauses, impersonal formulas, noun groups and other representation systems in texts are abundant in advertising English and convey an impersonal and objective style.

With regard to the purpose of advertising communication, there are grounds to claim that advertising has multiple functions. Ads persuade potential consumers to buy a product or service but "they may (also) amuse, inform, misinform, worry or warn" (Cook, 2001: 10). As Cook argues, "if an ad is defined by its selling function alone, then one might wonder what it becomes when the product is no longer available, or when the receiver is someone who cannot or will not buy the product [...]" (Cook, 2001: 10).

Hence, it seems reasonable to say that advertising fulfils multiple functions. The advertisement addressee knows that purpose and therefore interprets the ad adequately. In other words, the ad addressee knows that the ad public or institutional goal is to sell a product or service, reorganises the ad information according to that intention and that leads him/her to the correct ad interpretation (cf. Corrales Crespo, 2000).

Advertising addressees first realise that they are facing a case of persuasive-informative discourse when they encounter an ad, namely a text type. An ad is therefore easily recognised as a case of persuasive-informative discourse by addressees. Advertising discourse can be classified as follows (cf. Velasco Sacristán, 1999: 32; 2003: 272) (see Figure 1)[5].

```
INFORMATION AND PERSUASION (Discourse)
    ADVERTISING (Genre)
        Publicity (Subgenre)
        Commercial advertising (Text type)
            ADVERTISEMENT (Text type)
                Publicity advertisement (Text type class)
                COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT (Text type class)
                Broadcast commercial advertisement (Text type subclass)
                Web commercial advertisement (Text type subclass)
                PRINT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT (Text type subclass)
                    PRINT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT HEADING (Text)
                    PRINT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT SLOGAN (Text)
```
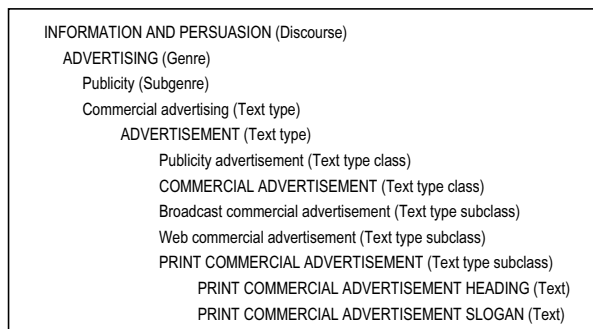
Figure 1. Classification of advertising discourse (adapted from Velasco Sacristán 1999: 32; 2003: 172).

In advertising the main function is persuasion along with information. The following discursive level is that of genre; it is classified into two subgenres: publicity and commercial advertising. The next level is that of the text type which is the advertisement that can be found in publicity and commercial advertising giving rise to publicity or commercial ads. In each type of advertisement there are different text type subclasses determined by the media where advertisements are published. They are generally speaking of four types: broadcast, radio, web or print commercial advertisements. They are composed of different texts, for instance, headings, slogans, etc.

We can conclude that, from a pragmatic point of view, advertising shows a low degree of specialisation between experts or semi-experts and laypeople by means of a typical example of covert communication. It is also of a social type.

Functional features

As advertising texts fluctuate between 'informing' and 'manipulating' in order to highlight a particular function of language, linguistic prominence should be given to the corresponding pragmatic elements. The pragmatic elements of advertising communication and their corresponding functions of language are shown in Figure 2.

```
                          REALITY
                       Product/Service
                     Referential function

                          CHANNEL
                     Written/Spoken/Digital
                       Phatic function

                          CODE
           Advertising language + images/sound, etc.
                     Metalingual function

  ADDRESSER          MESSAGE or TEXT          ADDRESSEE
   Advertiser       Advertisement as part of a    Target audience
 Emotive function       Poetic function        Conative function
```
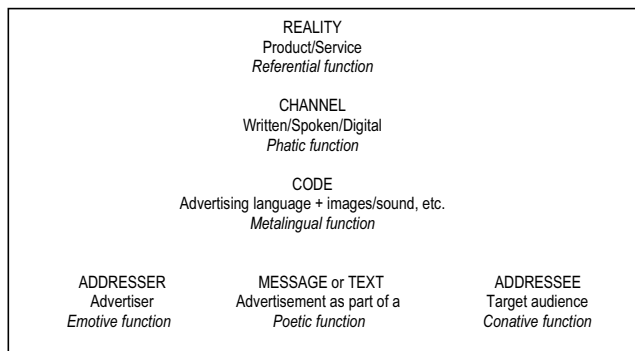
Figure 2. Pragmatic elements of advertising communication and their corresponding functions of language
(adapted from Fuertes Olivera et al., 2001: 129).

In our view, advertising is a genre that is an example of covert communication as we have seen above, where there are two main orientations: one towards the product or service advertised, that is a referential function and one towards the addressee, namely, a conative function. The second orientation is often predominant in advertising texts although it is usually combined with a referential function. In this vein, successful advertising avoids

pushing consumers to buy, but rather persuades them, thus reducing the psychological burden consumers suffer during their buying sprees (Fuertes Olivera et al., 2001: 1293).

Advertisers use referential functional devices such a:

- Deictic determiners; example:

"Color. <u>That's</u> holiday"	Slogan, picture of a woman who is wearing the clothes advertised, November 1999, *Gap* clothes.

- Numerals; example:

"<u>One</u> capsule once. Clears thrush"	Slogan, drawing of a woman's half face and the product advertised. "Difflucan One," drug against vaginal thrush, by *Pfizer Consumer HealthCare.*

- Classifying and defining adjectives; example:

"New Impulse <u>ICØ</u>"	Brand name, picture of a woman who is frozen, May 1999, *Impulse ICØ* deodorant.

- Noun groups used in noun premodifications; example:

"<u>Double Wear Stay-in-Place Makeup SPF 10</u>"	Brand name, picture of a well-known model and the product advertised, October 1999, "Double Wear Stay-in-Place Makeup SPF10," by *Esteē Lauder.*

Advertising information, as shown by the referential function of advertisements, is nonetheless different from information in more specialised objective LSPs, e.g. EST, in that the seemingly objective information if subjectively chosen gives rise to a somehow artificial type of information where there are conative linguistic features such as:

- Metaphors; example:

"<u>Le Parfum de Washing Up Liquid</u>"	Slogan, picture of a woman running outdoors and the product advertised, April 1999, "Citrus Burst" washing up liquid, by *Persil*: metaphor (THE WASHING UP LIQUID IS PERFUME).

- Disjunctive syntax and incomplete sentences.

- Inferential devices, for example person markers, hedges, emphatics, etc.; example of a hedge:

"<u>No wonder</u> Anadin is Britain's Most Popular Brand of Pain Killer"	Slogan, picture of several women making up themselves, April 1999, "Anadin Extra" by *Whitehall*.

- Informal conversations containing rhetorical questions and commands.

- 2nd person singular pronouns.

- Vocatives.

- Colloquial terms like idioms, slang, etc.; example:

"<u>Freak</u>. Only 25% of people   Heading, picture of skin, June 1999, *Lutsia*
never suffer from problem   *Laboratoires Dermatologiques*.
skin"

All in all, in functional terms advertisements show fluctuation between information and persuasion giving rise to the use of both referential-conative functions with a predominant orientation towards conative features.

Conclusion

Advertising English shows regular features at each level of grammar. In this sense, advertising English shows certain features frequently found in ESP texts. These characteristics are mostly morphological, lexical and syntactic, such as the use of foreign names that are transformed into English words, complex noun groups with heavy premodification, adjectives in noun premodifying patterns and in the comparative and superlative forms, verbs in the indicative mode and/or in the present tense, neologisms or borrowings. The syntax of advertising English also presents, on the one hand, particular patterns and units that are frequently used in specialised texts, such as morphological structures composed of learned terms, group units, abbreviations, acronyms, specialised borrowings, nouns derived from verbs and short sentences. On the other hand, and also in line with the usual trend in specific languages, there are a few examples of subordinated clauses which are mainly introduced by "when," "if" and "because."

Along with these linguistic features, advertisements also show linguistic characteristics from the GE language and features on the borderline between GE and ESP. For instance, the choice of advertising vocabulary shows that there are many terms from GE, along with a considerable amount of specific technical terms and vocabulary that are on the borderline between GE language and ESP. This vocabulary is also one of the most distinguishing features of the advertising discourse as it is especially used. In addition to the informative function that specific vocabulary has, advertising terms usually have an additional social function in that it is thanks to advertising that some specific terms, such as aspirin, get to the general

public. In the syntax of advertising English there is also, as in GE, shifts in the logical order of elements, ellipsis, substitutions, unfinished sentences that use periods when commas should be used, idioms, colloquialisms, etc.

As far as the use of different codes is concerned, the use of non-verbal codes in advertising is more similar to GE than to ESP, since in them there is social and emotive content, as in the verbal content of advertisements. In addition, advertising images show a seeming analogy and objective which is or can be distorted by means of digital programs.

From a pragmatic point of view, in advertising a specialised or semi-specialised agent, that is the advertiser, conveys persuasive information by means of a typical example of covert communication that characterises persuasion. The discursive modality of persuasion has largely been ignored in ESP varieties but, as argued by recent studies like Alcaraz Varó (2000), we think that it can constitute an important discursive modality to characterise ESP. Advertising covert communication can be seen by examples of metaphors and the extended use of words in the projection of the image of women in advertising to make indirect claims for which the advertiser can later avoid responsibility (Tanaka 1994). In our view, covert communication strategies are, on the one hand, the result of an elaborated process of communication between a more or less specialised addresser, that is expert or semi-expert, and a more or less specialised addressee who is often a lay person. On the other hand, these strategies play a social function as they are attention-grabbing and interest-raising devices and also social enhancers that aim at strengthening the social bond between the advertiser and the consumer, enhancing the credibility of the advertiser. The advertiser wishes to use problematic areas of particular sensitivity, for example sex or snobbery, as a means of cultivating intimacy, escaping any responsibility for doing so and avoiding negative social reactions emanating from the public. In addition, the use of advertising topics shows also a clear overlap between ESP and GE as there is a combination of specific topics along with everyday ones.

In functional terms, advertising texts fluctuate between 'informing' and 'manipulating' showing two main orientations: first, towards the product or service advertised; and second, towards the addressee, namely the consumer. On the one hand, there are referential devices, such as deictic determiners, numerals, classifying and defining adjectives, noun groups used in premodifications, etc. On the other hand, there are conative linguistic features like metaphors, disjunctive syntax, incomplete 2nd person singular pronouns, vocative and colloquial terms. Unlike ESP texts, in advertising texts there is a predominant conative function rather than the referential one, hence showing that advertising texts are functionally closer to GE.

In short, as shown by our linguistic, pragmatic and functional analysis of advertisements from *British Cosmopolitan*, advertising English is a variety of ESP with a low degree of specialisation and of a social type, which is on the borderline between GL and LSP. Its closeness to GE makes it different from other varieties of ESP that are more specialised. In this sense, and regarding EBE, the variety of ESP where advertising English is usually located (Gómez Moreno, 1994), this article has proved that although advertising English is obviously related to EBE, because of its economic content and purpose, the particular linguistic, pragmatic and functional features of advertising English make it somehow different from EBE in that advertising English is closer to GE than EBE.

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NOTES

1. Although only in specialised journals (cf. Cabré Castellví, 1993: 154; Sager et al., 1980: 183).

2. Each of our examples in this article shows a transcript of the verbal content of the ad, on the left, and on the right in square brackets, a description of its illustration, the month and year the ad was published, the product and brand names, the feature(s) observed in the ad. We have also underlined the feature(s) in the example.

3. The use of some of these words is sometimes short-lived but others get consolidated into the system (Pérez-Llantada & Plo, 1998: 85; Alcaraz Varó, 2000: 50).

4. Tanaka (1994), as opposed to Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1990), uses the convention of referring to the addressee as 'she' and the addresser as 'he'.

5. Capital letters and small case letters have been used to make a typographical distinction between classes and subclasses in our classification.