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ABSTRACT

The unrelenting initiative of copywriters manifests itself in their growing tendency to use interaction within print advertisements and in their use of interactive print advertisements. Interactive advertisements demand more time and involvement of the target market that has to participate in some way in order to grasp the marketing message. In particular, people want to satisfy their curiosity – since part of the message is often missing – by interacting with the advertisement (and thus the brand name). In the case of interactive print advertisements, the focus is on heightened involvement, which is the ultimate reward for the brand in an era of information overload. A clear distinction is made between interactive print advertisements and interaction within a print advertisement, where the objective is a more believable or authentic message. Such advertisements emphasise the use of spoken language (as opposed to written language) which is reflected in the lexical choices, sentence structure, etc. Because people are usually sceptical of advertising messages, print advertisements try to mirror word-of-mouth advertising and, in so doing, address the scepticism of their possible target market by exploiting the characteristics of normal conversation.

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INTRODUCTION

Bittner (1989: 18) defines advertising as the messages that are communicated to a large group of people by mass media. According to Engel *et al.* (1994: 5), advertising describes all forms of existing non-personal communication of ideas, products and services (via mass media) by an identified sponsor. As defined by the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006), the term interaction suggests a reciprocal action or influence that (can) occur (i.e.) between different organisations, individuals and/or parties. The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008: 752) explains that interaction occurs “when two or more people or things communicate with or react to each other”. Liu and Shrum (2002: 54) define interactivity as “the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronised”. Thus an indication of some or other form or manner of interaction is an essential requirement for a print advertisement to be termed interactive.

The most obvious reason to use interaction markers is that these help to increase the reader's involvement and in so doing claim the attention of the target market. However, some advertisements use intra-action, which refers to interaction within the advertisement itself. Interactive advertisements do not necessarily guarantee an increase in reader involvement or attention but they create the illusion of verbal endorsement/approval (as in the case of “word-of-mouth” advertising which by implication makes the advertisement more credible):

Research is showing that WOM (word-of-mouth) has quantitative benefits, long-lasting benefits compared to traditional marketing. The long-term elasticity for WOM referrals is approximately 2.5 times higher than the average advertising elasticity reported in the literature. In addition, the estimated WOM effect on new member sign-ups is substantially larger than that of traditional forms of marketing used by the site. Long-term WOM is approximately 20 times higher than the elasticity for marketing events (.53 versus .026) and 30 times higher than the elasticity for media appearances (.53 versus .017). Part of the reason for the high long-term effect of WOM relative to traditional marketing is that it has a much longer carryover period (Brandperiscope.com n.d.).

With the ever increasing growth of social media and the options that social media open for word-of-mouth, this effect becomes higher every day. The focus of this article is however not on social media but on print media and the use of linguistic and linguistic-related tools to echo word-of-mouth advertising. Accordingly, this research will attempt to give an overview of the nature, value and scope of interactive and intra-active advertisements in the South African (traditional) print media.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The essence of this investigation is the presentation of a rationale for and an analysis of the different types of interactive and intra-active advertisements within the field of applied linguistics. The specific objectives of this article are to 1) differentiate between interactive and intra-active print advertising; 2) show upon different forms or manifestations of interaction and intra-action used in print advertisements; and 3) list the value and risks of this mechanism in terms of communication for the applied linguist or copy-writer.

DATA SET

An arbitrary set of data was used for this purpose and this set includes, for the purpose of analysis, an equal number of South African Afrikaans and English print advertisements from popular general circulation magazines published between 2003 and 2009¹. These print advertisements were regarded as interactive in focus group discussions with undergraduate marketing students and postgraduate applied linguistic students. The inclusion of the elements of real-life (communication) interaction like hesitation markers, informal spoken lexicon choices, and feedback between speaker and listener within these advertisements give these print advertisements the character of everyday word-of-mouth communication (with less emphasis on selling).

In order to achieve the aims, the following have been taken as criteria or grading principles: the deployment of similar methods of interaction (or, more simply, the use of the same sort or type of interaction) within advertisements. In other words, patterns in terms of communication interaction in the data were sought, based on the guidelines from Myers (1994) and Goddard (1998) and using different definitions of communication (Crystal 2004: 85) and a communication model by Shannon and Weaver (1948) and Foulger (2004) as blueprints of how the process of interpersonal communication proceeds.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An empirical-deductive investigation was followed in which the data set was the point of departure for the establishment of the scope and nature of communication in interactive print advertisements.

Many communication models, like the one by Shannon and Weaver (1948), portrays communication as the flow of information from one person's mind (a source) to the mind of another person (a destination). A strong objection to this model is that it depicts communication as a one-way process; a linear sequence from a source to a receiver. Many communication theorists, like Weiner (1967), later included

the feature of feedback. Feedback is also true of real-life communication (Wood 2004: 33-34).

From the data set it was evident that copywriters sometimes manage to include this feedback loop in print advertising communication. In the Shell Helix (Advertisement C) and Clorets (Advertisement A) advertisements, for example, the advertiser reacts to the target market's response (after feeling or smelling) in the sense that the copy-writer foresaw the first response of the target market, like touching the page or sniffing at the page.

Language communication is based on four communication skills, viz.:

- ◆ speaking – encoding a message by means of speech;
- ◆ listening – decoding the spoken message. The medium of delivery is by means of the sounds of the language;
- ◆ writing – encoding a message by means of writing; and
- ◆ reading – decoding the written message. The medium of delivery is in the form of written text.

The speaker-listener roles change continually in order to ensure that each person taking part in the conversation gets a chance to speak. In the case of interpersonal communication the medium through which the message is transferred is the spoken word.

One of the many ways in which copy-writers attempt to attract the attention of their target market (and try to be convincing) is to model the characteristics of spoken language in print advertising communication by transferring the characteristics of spoken language to written language. When feedback (as a feature of interpersonal communication) is evident in print advertising and the speaker-listener roles change like in real-life communication, ultimate success is achieved by the copy-writer.

A brief list of the typical characteristics that differentiates between spoken and written language will serve as pointers in the template of analysis. These characteristics will be discussed in more detail in the discussion of the examples. The list includes forms of address, turn-taking, hesitation, the use of crude language, lexicon, interruptions, forms of slang, tone of voice, pronunciation, interjections, abbreviations/contractions/assimilation, repetition, code-switching, code-mixing, and word games (Van Niekerk & Bertram 2012: 212-215).

Authors such as Goddard (1998) and Myers (1994) enforce and describe the importance of these characteristics of normal everyday communication in the creation of credible radio advertisements that echo word-of-mouth advertising.

Russell (2001:188) maintains that, “[v]isual images may be the first thing (sic) that catch the eye in advertisements, but for them to have their fullest effect, they need the help of words”. All the linguistic and visual strategies in advertising communication are aimed at promoting recognition and recall (cf. Myers 1994).

Based on the empirical analysis, interactive strategies allow the target market to become the co-creator of the message (because the person being targeted has to do something active in order to decode a meaningful message). This implies that he/she spends more time as a captive audience and thus pays more attention to the particular brand.

Apart from interactivity, print advertisements use a considerable number of linguistic and language-related mechanisms in order to create the illusion of intimate interpersonal communication within the advertisement. In so doing, the message conveyed seems more credible. This entails that the copy-writer should be fully aware of the precise nature of the spoken language in order for the text markers of the spoken language to be included in print advertisements. Apropos of this, compare the rationale of Goddard (1998: 37-46) and Myers (1994: 118). These authors list the general characteristics of spoken language that should be considered in order to generate authentic dialogue, for example in radio or television. These characteristics are obviously used with great success in print advertisements to create the illusion of interpersonal communication. In an advertisement for Graca wine, three wine bottles (two large bottles and a smaller one) have a conversation by means of three speech bubbles. Elements of dialogue (like turn-taking, fillers, address forms, etc.) are also used. One of the bubbles next to the smaller wine bottle says: “So, Mum, where do I come from?”

These elements of dialogue and feedback are also more and more evident in social media campaigns that make use of Facebook, Twitter and cellphone advertising. This topic, however, is outside the scope of this article which focuses solely on print advertising that mirrors or mimics real-life communication.

In the classification and analysis of the print examples there will be constant reference to the tabled characteristics of normal spoken language that were included in Goddard (1998: 37-46) and Myers (1994: 118). The above characteristics and the principles embodied in a communication model, such as the one by Shannon and Weaver (1948), form the basis of the analysis.

Accordingly, the following apply:

- ♦ interpersonal communication always takes place within a period and real-world context known to all the participants involved in the specific interaction;
- ♦ interpersonal communication involves more than one person speaking;

- ♦ interpersonal communication involves turn-taking;
- ♦ the participants and context influence the lexical choices and language structure in interpersonal communication; and
- ♦ interpersonal communication includes the use of deictic elements like I, this, now, etc. without reference problems, etc.

INTERACTION IN PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS: AN EXPOSITION

Leiss *et al.* (1986: 202) comment on the personalisation of products. The advertised product is no longer an autonomous object with an existence independent of the human environment. Rather, it is presented as an integral part of the codification of human experience and interaction. The “identification of the consumer” and the “nature of the act of consumption” within a social situation is important (Leiss *et al.* 1986: 233). Tanaka (1994: 43) points out that the advertiser is continually trying to let the reader forget that he (the advertiser) is trying to sell him (the reader) anything.

Wimbs (1999: 94) emphasises that the manner in which the advertiser addresses the reader determines whether the reader takes the message seriously or not; and it has a direct impact on the influence or impact of the message. Wimbs (1999: 94-95) writes, “If the tone of voice is wrong, the entire message can be lost [...]. The tone of voice you adopt in your writing has to be appropriate to the subject and the person reading it.” It is thus exactly this “tone of voice” that falls under the spotlight as an example of interpersonal communication in the print media.

The advertisement by Clorets (Advertisement A) falls within this category of interaction. After the audience has reacted to the initial “command” of the advertisement, i.e. “to scratch and sniff”, the advertisement provides feedback. It responds to the reader’s reaction by commenting on his/her initial physical response: “Because Clorets Eliminator fights the odours that cause bad breath, there’s no food you need to fear”.

ILLUSTRATION 1: ADVERTISEMENT A



Thus, well-known characteristics of normal communication are exploited in print advertisements that try to simulate interaction. See for example the Soviet Jeans advertisement (Advertisement B) – there is no message unless the target market interacts with the advertisement and changes the spacing between the letters to make sense of the writing.

ILLUSTRATION 2: ADVERTISEMENT B

UMM ERA NGE “ 2 00 2 ☆ S
 EAR D EV ELOPE M N EW J EAN SW
 N TIN G : # BRU () ENT S = TI
 BBING;S AND SHIN G } R U
 HES < ALL INN ING A ND☆ WAS
 B R ICS [] EW DEN IM FA
 S HAD ES☆! AW / SO - ME
 RE N OW : S EE INS TO



Soviet Concept Stores: Seattle City, San Fran + Carlton Centre, Johannesburg - Brooklyn Centre, Pretoria
 Minsk Centre, Toronto + Cape Town, Cape Town + Chesham Centre, Glasgow - Prague, Prague
 Galmey, Durban + Chess Galleria, East London + Pittfield Shopping Town, Chatham, Sydney, Australia

A Shell Helix advertisement (Advertisement C) manages to import some characteristics of normal communication. The headline reads: “The unique character of Shell Helix is best described in Braille.” The target market sees what

appears to be Braille on the page, instinctively touching it and then receiving feedback from the advertisement at the bottom of the page: “Smooth hey?”

ILLUSTRATION 3: ADVERTISEMENT C



INTERACTION VS. INTRA-ACTION IN PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS

Thus far, the term interaction has been used to refer to any/all forms of interplay in print advertisements. Subsequently, the scope of this term will be narrowed in order to refer to the interplay taking place between an advertisement and its reader only. The rationale for this step may be explained as follows: After the analysis of the data set, two main categories of interaction emerged as a matter of course, viz. 1) the interaction of the print advertisement with the reader; and 2) the interaction within the print advertisement itself. In this article, the former form/category of interplay will be referred to as interaction because it takes place between the advertisement and the target market, while the second category will be known as intra-action because of its internal nature. (The diagram in the conclusion provides an overview of the categories identified.)

Interaction in print advertisements

In some print advertisements, certain interplay with the readers takes place. In other words, the reader and the advertisement interact with each other. One could counter this statement with the argument that this means that all advertisements in print are interactive when the advertisement is read. This argument can be refuted as follows: Interactive print advertisements differ from the “usual” print advertisements (which will be referred to as traditional print advertisements [cf. Brown 2007: 22]) in that the reader deliberately assumes the roles of 1) agent/ doer; or 2) the reader. In interactive advertisements, the reader becomes involved

immediately or is a participant (whether as a co-creator or co-conversationalist), and is not a mere receiver. In other words, the level of interaction in interactive print advertisements is intense.

Interaction with the reader in the role of agent

In this category, interaction with the reader is characterised by the fact that he/she is expected to become involved in the advertisement as an agent, a doer or co-creator or co-worker. The reader has to perform a specific action or transaction. Depending on the nature of the task or action that has to be executed or performed, this category can be subdivided as 1) advertisements in which the reader has to act; 2) advertisements in which the reader has to experience; and 3) advertisements in which the reader has to think.

Act

The act of doing involves or requires the motor participation of the reader. For example, he/she has to:

- ♦ lift a paper flap in order to see an advertisement and/or a marketing message (more) completely (see Advertisement D);
- ♦ cut and/or stick something (cf. scissors icon and dots);
- ♦ turn the advertisement around or look at it from different angles (which means that the magazine has to be picked up and turned around);
- ♦ remove or peel off a ticket or bookmark that has been glued to the advertisement or tick off questions from a list (see Advertisement E).

Sometimes the advertisements (Santam advertisement D and Easigas advertisement E) require the reader's participation by means of the use of motor skills, like the ticking of a box of options or linking dotted lines, or flipping a page, etc.

ILLUSTRATION 4: ADVERTISEMENT D



ILLUSTRATION 5: ADVERTISEMENT E



Experience

The demands made on the reader in this case are linked to sensory perception, observation or experience. The reader becomes involved with the advertisement in a sensory manner.

When using the sense of vision the reader participates by using his/her eyes. In an advertisement for the AEG Electrolux stove, the reader has to perform the following instructions that have been printed at the top and the bottom of the page: “For an oven that bakes perfectly, look below” and “For an oven that bakes perfectly, look above”. In both cases the reader sees the picture of the Electrolux stove that has been printed in the centre of the page.

When using the sense of smell the reader becomes involved by using his/her nose. Samples of perfume and makeup are often included with print advertisements.

When using the sense of touch the reader takes part in the advertisement by touching something. Consider, for example, advertisements containing samples of moisturising creams that have been packed in small sachets (see Advertisement F).

When using the sense of taste the reader participates by tasting something. For example, Robertsons provides a Spicy Barbecue spice sample together with a recipe (see Advertisement G).

When using the sense of hearing the reader participates by using his/her ears. Although an example could not be found from this data set, advertisers have been known to include CDs of auditory material such as music with print advertisements.

For English and Afrikaans examples of print advertisements that involve the readers' senses, compare the advertisements for Pond's (Advertisement F) and Robertsons (Advertisement G). The border between the "doing" category and the "experience" category is not cast in stone. The reader sometimes has to perform an action to experience something.

ILLUSTRATION 6: ADVERTISEMENT F

The advertisement features a woman's face on the left and a collection of POND'S products on the right. The headline reads "Q&A with POND'S FACE TO FACE POND'S". Below this, it says "Spring clean your skin! No oil. No stress. Just clear, beautifully balanced skin!" The text explains that it's time to return skin to its natural state and introduces the "All Day Oil Control" range. A list of products is provided: POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover, POND'S All Day Oil Control Makeup Remover. At the bottom, it says "See and feel the difference with POND'S".

ILLUSTRATION 7: ADVERTISEMENT G



Thinking

The act of thinking requires that the reader harnesses his/her intellect. Cognitive involvement is required. A demand is made on the reader's intellectual skill or acuity. He/she is involved in an intellectual game in the advertisement and must, for example, crack a code in order to access the marketing message, identify differences by comparing pictures with each other (Advertisement H), or read between the lines (Advertisement I). According to Liu and Shrum (2002: 61), messages that involve deeper cognitive processing “are likely to be better understood and remembered”.

ILLUSTRATION 8: ADVERTISEMENT H

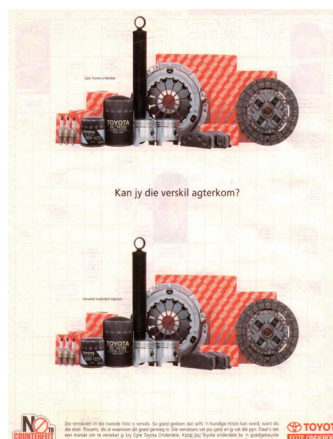
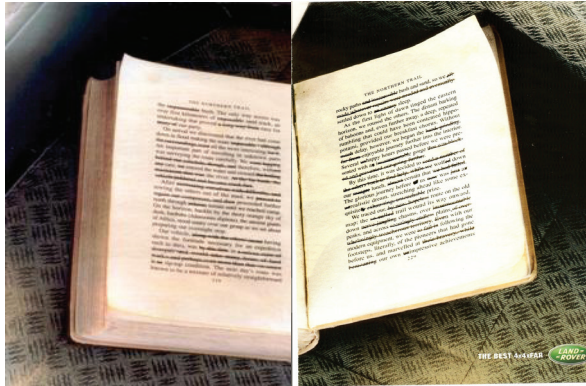


ILLUSTRATION 9: ADVERTISEMENT I



Involving the reader in an advertisement in any of the ways described above, as an agent (doer) or co-creator (colleague), can benefit the advertiser in many ways. Brown (2007: 22) writes that, “people are more likely to buy a brand if they interact with it”; and “in asking people to do more than just read or watch, the level of involvement is greater and as a result the effect is magnified”. By engaging readers, they become active message creators (Liu & Shrum 2002: 60).

Interaction with the reader in the role of the addressee

Print advertisements belonging to this category all behave as if they were in (interactive) dialogue with the reader. The reader plays the role of the person being addressed or the conversation partner. The reader is “spoken to” on paper. The question is in what way does an (interactive) written advertisement create the perception that it is in conversation with the reader? It must be remembered, as Myers (1994: 105) writes, “[i]t is quite a trick to get the conversational sound”. Myers (1994:106) maintains that “an advertiser wants language that sounds like conversation, not the kind of language that might be used, say, in a sales talk or a political speech”. In her answer to the question asked above, Goddard (1998: 37) explains that in order to make a “conversational sound” or a written impression of someone “chatting to you”, “written adverts [...] often use aspects of spoken language”. Both Myers (1994: 118) and Goddard (1998: 37-46) identify aspects/ characteristics of spoken language (with a certain amount of overlap).

Next we will indicate which discourse markers, or spoken language characteristics are used in print advertisements in order to create the illusion of conversation with the reader (in the role of the addressee). After a thorough analysis of the data set, it seems that the following interaction markers are used in this data set to create the impression of interaction:

Time in spoken language is cyclical

Words such as “the whole year”; “always”; “many years”, “in the morning” and “in the evening”; “in the daytime” and “at night” suggest the cyclical quality of time.

Paralinguistic characteristics

Eye contact is made with the reader in some advertisements and the indication of an open mouth reinforces the idea that words are being “spoken”.

Deictic references

The following deictic words are common: I, me, my, you, yours, your, us, it, there and now in English (and ek, my, jy, joune, ons, dit, daar and nou in Afrikaans).

Ellipsis or the omission of words

See the Bio-Oil advertisement with Sue as spokesperson (Advertisement J): “Ek vryf dit aan oor my hele lyf en my vel voel agterna regtig asof dit ekstra voeding gekry het... gepamperlang en bederf.” (“I apply it to my entire body and afterwards my skin really feels as if it has been extra nourished... pampered and spoiled.”)

ILLUSTRATION 10: ADVERTISEMENT J



Prosodic characteristics

Intonation and emphasis are suggested by typographical elements such as coloured print, bold, underlining and punctuation. The Bio-Oil advertisement (Advertisement J) with Sue as spokesperson uses exclamation marks.

Vocabulary

Everyday, ordinary vocabulary and choice of lexicon have been used.

Contractions/ shortened forms

In the Bio-Oil advertisement with Sue speaking, she uses “Daar’s” rather than “Daar is” (“There’s” vs “There is” in English).

Speech bubbles

To indicate that the reader is being “spoken to”, interactive advertisements often use speech bubbles. This is the case in a Bio-Oil advertisement (Advertisement K) in which they maintain, using speech bubbles, that several doctors recommend Bio-Oil “more frequently than any other product for scars and stretch marks”.

ILLUSTRATION 11: ADVERTISEMENT K



The reader can also be “told” directly that he/she is being “spoken” to. In an advertisement for Mitsubishi Triton double-cab pick-up trucks, a thoroughbred horse claims via a speech bubble to engage the reader in conversation. In this advertisement the thoroughbred horse utters the words, “It’s a thoroughbred and you heard it straight from my mouth”. The intertextual reference to the English idiom meaning directly (“straight from [the horse’s] mouth”) from the source of information is also relevant here.

Quotation marks (inverted commas)

People’s direct words are usually indicated by the use of quotation marks (inverted commas) – a technique that is commonly used in interactive advertisements in order to indicate that the reader is being “spoken” to, for example in the Bio-Oil advertisement with Sue as spokesperson telling about her experience.

To consider quotation marks exclusively as markers of spoken language in (interactive) advertisements would be problematic. Quotations from written text

(e.g. from letters) are also usually punctuated with quotation marks. This is the reason why it has not always been easy in this analysis to establish whether words in inverted commas in an advertisement are intended to indicate the spoken or written word. A good gauge to establish whether an utterance written in inverted commas is intended to be a spoken statement or not, is to look for other markers of spoken language in the text, e.g. deictic references, etc. Nevertheless, the fact of an interaction with the reader remains, whether he/she is being “spoken to” or written to.

“Talking” or “chatting” to a reader in an advertisement can be beneficial for the advertiser. Myers (1994: 105) writes that “[e]veryday talk is assumed to have persuasiveness [...] conversation can evoke a kind of ordinariness, of everyday life, that is paradoxically effective in persuasion”. It is important to mention now that some of the advertisements that are in interactive conversation with the reader aspire to be “word-of-mouth advertising” (cf. particularly the Bio-Oil advertisement with spokesperson Sue and the Mitsubishi Triton advertisement). Wisegeek (2008) explains what is meant by word-of-mouth advertising:

Any time you’ve recommended a product to a friend, you’ve engaged in word-of-mouth advertising. Word-of-mouth advertising relies on personal recommendations to promote a product or service. People are sometimes sceptical of standard advertising. Maybe the ad doesn’t appeal to them personally, or they feel like the company is trying to trick them into buying a product that they don’t want. A word-of-mouth testimonial from a friend can be trusted, and it’s more likely to produce results.

According to the above-mentioned website, this is of even greater value when the “word-of-mouth endorsements [are] given by people who are presumed to be experts”. For example, this aspect is relevant to the Mitsubishi Triton advertisement in which a thoroughbred horse (an “expert” in the field of pedigree) confirms that the Mitsubishi Triton is of noble descent. Similarly doctors (experts in the field of health care) are “speaking” in the Bio-Oil advertisement.

In order for an interactive advertisement to be considered successful, an important prerequisite is that the communication (with the reader) should sound authentic. There should be enough, or at least an adequate number of text markers in order to indicate that the language is authentic (cf. Myers 1994; Goddard 1998). In this study the authors are of the opinion that these markers in the advertisements that were examined for this study have not been exploited or applied sufficiently. For example, there is no indication of any lack of fluency such as hesitations, filler words, “ah”s or “mm”s and tags are never used.

Intra-action in print advertisements

As already explained, intra-action refers to the interplay within a print advertisement itself. The communication is not directed at the reader as doer/agent or addressee; nevertheless the reader “hears” (when in fact he/she is seeing) the interaction (in fact the intra-action) taking place within the advertisement. Rather, the reader’s role is that of an eavesdropper or a Peeping Tom. It may be said that the reader behaves like the member of the audience attending a play.

Intra-action in print advertisement can be either verbal or non-verbal. The term verbal means that words are used, while non-verbal means that words are not used. The meaning of the word “verbal” must not be confused with the word “oral”. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Morris 1969/1970: 1422) defines “verbal” as: “Of, pertaining to, or associated with words: a verbal symbol. Verbal is less precise than oral in expressing the sense of ‘by word-of-mouth’. Verbal can also refer to what is written; oral cannot.” The categories of intra-action in print advertisements will now be discussed in detail.

Verbal intra-action in print advertisements

Verbal refers to spoken communication, whether it be out loud (oral) or written. Verbal intra-action in print advertisements can be divided into 1) spoken verbal intra-action; and 2) written verbal intra-action.

Spoken verbal intra-action (oral intra-action)

In a print advertisement in this category, people, animals, or even objects depicted within the advertisement appear to be in conversation (cf. intra-action) with each other (cf. oral vs. verbal). To achieve an authentic “conversational sound” (Myers 1994: 105) in this type of advertisement is just as important as in interactive advertisements in which the reader is addressed. For this reason, conversation markers or the characteristics of spoken language (cf. Myers 1994; Goddard 1998 for a list of characteristics) are also to be found in this category of advertisement. A thorough analysis of the data set revealed that the following intra-action markers in particular were used to create the effect of spoken language in written form (or the effect that someone was “speaking” within the advertisement):

Turn-taking

Speakers taking part in a conversation always take turns to speak, as in the case of the Pendoring advertisement (Advertisement L) using a photo book layout with different scenes and speech and thinking bubbles. The same is true for a Bacardi Breezer advertisement (Advertisement M) where the dialogue takes the form of questions and answers.

ILLUSTRATION 12: ADVERTISEMENT L

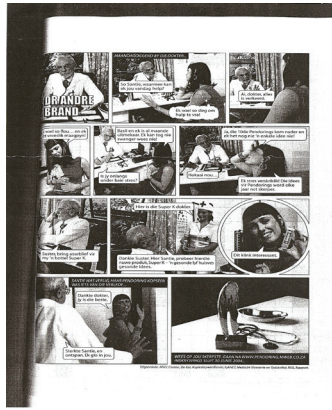


ILLUSTRATION 13: ADVERTISEMENT M



Interruptions

For example in the Pendoring advertisement, in the sixth speech block, we find the typical Afrikaans interruptions/words: “Hokaai nou ...” (meaning “wait a bit” in English).

Hesitations (a lack of fluency)

Cf. the Bacardi Breezer advertisement: “A nurturing personality, a soft voice, long nails and, er, a comfortable chest”.

Interjections

The word “Ai” (word of unburdening) is used in the Pendoring advertisement (in the third speech block: “Ai, dokter, alles is verkeerd.”) together with an address form (“dokter”/“doctor”).

Paralinguistic characteristics

The characters in the Pendoring advertisement make eye contact with each other. In this advertisement one finds other aspects of physical communication, such as gestures and physical posture in the different scenes.

Deictic references

Deictic references are found in almost all the advertisements that were studied.

Ellipsis or the omission of words

Cf. the Bacardi Breezer advertisement: “Just after my first sardine. Preferred the sardine.”

Prosodic characteristics

Intonation and emphasis are suggested by means of typographical elements such as bold printing, the size of the letters and punctuation (such as question marks and exclamation marks) in most of the analysed advertisements.

Filler words (stopgaps)

The word “So” is a typical filler in the Pendoring advertisement (the second speech block) and thus an example of filler words to make the dialogue more believable.

Vocabulary

Everyday, ordinary vocabulary or lexicon choices are also employed in most of the advertisements examined, because the advertisements are not selling anything; normal people talk to each other.

Contractions/abbreviations

Cf. the Bacardi Breezer advertisement (“It’s” vs “It is”, “What’s” vs “What is”, “can’t” vs “cannot” and “Don’t” vs “Do not”).

Speech bubbles

Intra-active advertisements use speech bubbles in order to indicate that “speaking” is taking place in an advertisement, e.g. in the Pendoring advertisement. Comic strip format (with speech bubbles) can be used, e.g. in the Pendoring advertisement.

Quotation marks (inverted commas)

As mentioned earlier, people's direct words are also indicated by inverted commas (quotation marks).

It seems that – in comparison with interactive advertisements – more mechanisms are used in this category to mark spoken language.

Written verbal intra-action

A print advertisement that falls into this category is characterised by the following two features, namely 1) interaction takes place (between people) within the advertisement (cf. intra-action); and 2) it occurs by means of one or another form of written communication such as by means of a letter or a postcard.

The layout of an advertisement often gives an indication of the type of written medium (such as a letter or a postcard) that is being used. Because we are dealing with written language here, it is unnecessary and unsuitable to use characteristics of spoken language. For examples of this category, see advertisements N and O. In the Gomma Gomma Challenge advertisement, Madeleine communicates with Amanda (who is probably a friend) by means of a letter about the Gomma Gomma Challenge horse race. In the Bio-Oil advertisement, a client communicates by letter with the advertiser or company concerned to express her satisfaction with the product or service. It is clear that the subject of the communication is usually the particular product or service being advertised. The product or service can be mentioned either directly somewhere within the (written) communication (such as in both the Bio-Oil and the Gomma Gomma Challenge advertisements) or not, and are thus advertised indirectly. Here too there are some advertisements that claim to be “word-of-mouth advertising”, for example, in the Gomma Gomma Challenge advertisement, the characters Madeleine tells Amanda, and the reader indirectly, about the Gomma Gomma Challenge. An advantage of this intra-active type of publicity is that the written information appears to be genuine and authentic because of its personal nature – particularly if it has been printed in a script that looks like handwriting to help convince their target market to buy the product or use the service (cf. Van Niekerk & Jenkinson 2011).

ILLUSTRATION 14: ADVERTISEMENT N



ILLUSTRATION 15: ADVERTISEMENT O

Hoe 'n hobbelrige pad tot 'n egalige gelaatskleur gelei het.



'Een het nog nooit een "multikleurige gezicht" nie, hetty dit was om "in produk te pres of skander te va nie. Maar hanteer nie moes de nie. By die nie "in produkte geskeel of "in produkte geel tot by vorkke lang geskeel. Dit het goed gekom, maar daar het "in skander kompleet wat baie swaak en oopmaak was. My skander het Bio-Or gevat, met ongelooflike resultate. Die skander het my skander egter en skander het die skander in die van in begin verbyen - en nou kan by dit skander kom! Ek was so skander, dat die dit die skander skander lang in geskeel het, en nu hanteer in Ek skander nie het skander, self nie, maar het die die nog nooit baie goed of geskeel nie. Skander in "in produk wat doen wat dit skander!"



Non-verbal intra-action in print advertisements

This form of intra-action is achieved by means of non-verbal communication, including gestures, eye contact, body language and facial expressions. Words are not used to indicate that communication is taking place in these advertisements (see P and Q). We deduce from people's body language, facial expressions or eye contact that interaction is taking place within the advertisement.

ILLUSTRATION 16: ADVERTISEMENT P



ILLUSTRATION 17: ADVERTISEMENT Q



Self-reflective intra-action in print advertisements

As mentioned earlier, self-reflective intra-action refers to interaction with the self, or with the person's own thoughts within an advertisement. Thought bubbles sometimes embody this visually. The characters in the Engen advertisement (R) have some or other thought, as is indicated in the thinking bubbles. Self-reflective diary entries are found in the Jungle Energy Munch advertisement (S).

ILLUSTRATION 18: ADVERTISEMENT R



ILLUSTRATION 19: ADVERTISEMENT S



Intra-action with technology in print advertisements

Consequent to the technological revolution in the 21st century, increasing numbers of advertisements are found with interaction between the products of technology (such as cellphones, computers, etc.) and the persons depicted in advertisements, for example an MTN advertisement (T) showing someone using the phone.

ILLUSTRATION 20: ADVERTISEMENT T



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a few recommendations regarding interactive print advertisements can be made. Certain characteristics of spoken language sometimes appear only once in one or two advertisements (of the data set); at other times no conversation markers are implemented at all, and/or unsuitable language use (which does not recall the spoken word) occurs. Examples of the latter include the use of vocabulary that is not representative of everyday speech and the use of sentences written in the passive voice.

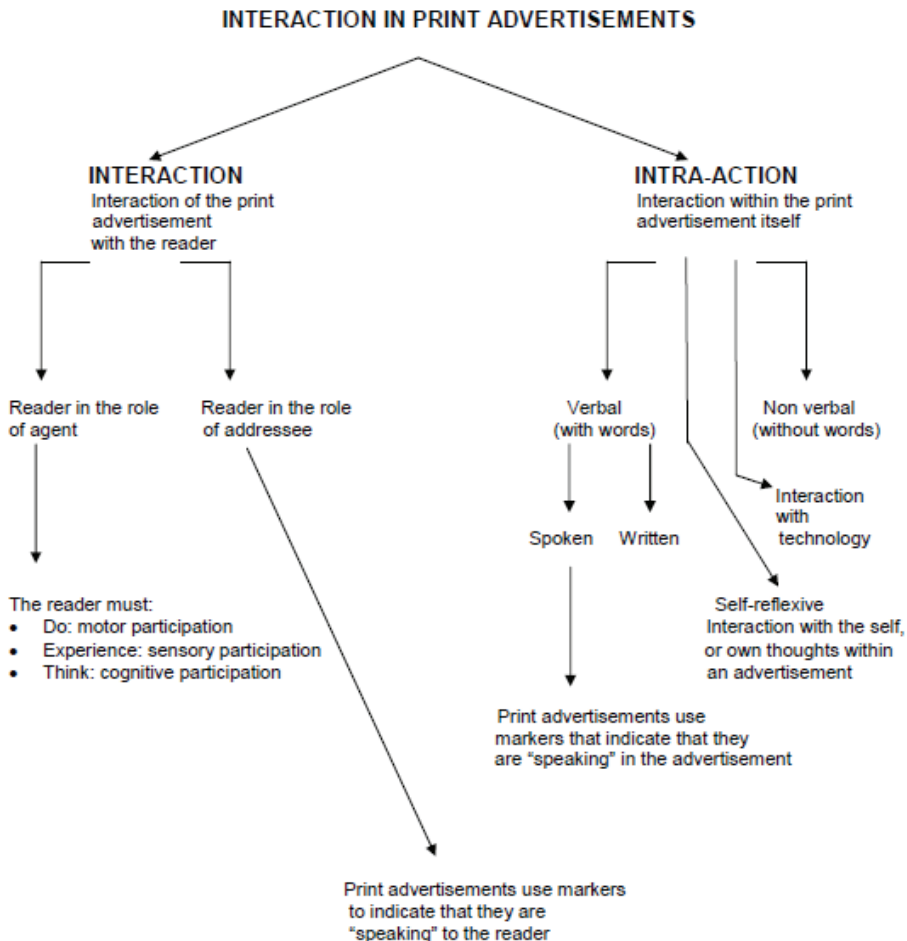
We distinguish between interaction and intra-action in advertisements; interaction takes place between the advertisement and the reader, intra-action refers to interplay within the advertisement itself. The following communicative advantages/benefits of the device for the applied linguist or copy-writer have been identified:

- ◆ the interactive component of the advertisement helps to capture the reader's attention and to keep the reader engaged (think, act, do);
- ◆ a sample of a product offered may convince the reader to buy the brand;
- ◆ interactive advertisements address the reader's scepticism. The advertisement tries to convince the consumer that the product is in fact as good as what is promised; and
- ◆ intra-action helps to make the reader become involved in the advertisement, almost as if he/she were eavesdropping on other people's conversations.

Communicative disadvantages/risks of the device for the applied linguist or copy-writer could be the following:

- ◆ attaching a sample to some interactive advertisements is very expensive;
- ◆ only the first consumers to engage with the advertisement have the opportunity to test the sample. The advertisement loses its value for the subsequent readers;
- ◆ there is a risk that the reader does not play his/her interactive role in the advertisement (i.e. does not handle, tear out, or turn the page, etc.) and thus the marketing message is largely lost; and
- ◆ the reader may not even notice the intra-action since inverted commas, speech bubbles, etc. are used very frequently.

ILLUSTRATION 21: SUMMARY OF INTERACTION IN PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS



 ENDNOTES

¹ The advertisements are also electronically available from the authors and they were published in general circulation magazines in South Africa between 2002 and 2009. The analysis is not an assessment of the advertisement or the brand or the effectiveness of the advertisement. The analysis focuses on the mechanisms used to create interaction or the illusion of real-life interaction or intra-action within print advertisements.

- Advertisement A: Clorets, www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/prints/clorets-eliminator-scratch-and-sniff, September 2009.
- Advertisement B: Soviet Jeans advertisement, *FHM*, 2002.
- Advertisement C: Shell Helix advertisement, Source unknown.
- Advertisement D: Santam advertisement, Source unknown.
- Advertisement E: Easigas advertisement, *WEG*, September 2007.
- Advertisement F: Pond's advertisement. *Real*, September 2008.
- Advertisement G: Robertsons advertisement, *Rooi Rose*, September 2008.
- Advertisement H: Toyota spare parts advertisement, *Huisgenoot*, December 2004.
- Advertisement I: Land Rover advertisement, *Getaway*, January 2007.
- Advertisement J: Bio-Oil advertisement, *Rooi Rose*, July 2008.
- Advertisement K: Bio-Oil advertisement, *Cosmopolitan*, November 2004.
- Advertisement L: Pendoring advertisement, Source unknown.
- Advertisement M: Bacardi Breezer, Source unknown.
- Advertisement N: Gomma Gomma Challenge, Steinhoff, *Rooi Rose*, July 2006.
- Advertisement O: Bio-Oil advertisement, *Sarie*, October 2003.
- Advertisement P: Lilly advertisement, *Rooi Rose*, July 2008.
- Advertisement Q: Qantas advertisement, *Rooi Rose*, June 2008.
- Advertisement R: Engen advertisement, *Huisgenoot*, June 2008.
- Advertisement S: Jungle Energy Munch advertisement, *Sarie*, June 2008.
- Advertisement T: MTN advertisement, *Finansies en Tegniek*, April 2005.

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