

***IN THE NAME OF GOD***



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**Faculty of Literature & Humanities**

**M.A. Thesis in  
Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

**A CONTRASTIVE DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS OF PERSIAN AND ENGLISH  
ADVERTISEMENT SLOGANS**

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December 2014

## **In the Name of God**

### **Declaration**

The undersigned, Sharareh Mirostovar, the student of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), from Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shiraz State University, declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and all the references used, have been addressed exactly in the reference section. I also declare that this study is not a repetition of another study and I hereby promise not to publish the findings of my work and not to make them accessible to others without an authorization from Shiraz State University. In conformity with the Mental and Intellectual Ownership Regulations, all rights of the current study are reserved for Shiraz State University, Iran.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, loopy oval shape with a smaller, more complex signature underneath it.

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A CONTRASTIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PERSIAN  
AND ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENT SLOGANS

BY  
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## **DEDICATION**

My great dedication goes to my precious parents who have supported me a lot and always loved me unconditionally and whose good advice has taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve. I also dedicate this work to my dear husband whose advocacy and accommodation helped me and encouraged me to continue my education and the person who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduation and life and finally I dedicate this thesis to my lovely sons because of their support and presence in my life.

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## **Abstract**

### **A Contrastive Discourse Analysis of Persian and English Advertisement Slogans**

By  
**Sharareh Mirostovar**

The present study is a qualitative study which analyzed five famous English and five Persian advertising slogans. The analytic model is a combination of different models including some main issues which are important in discourse analysis. These are discourse typology, cohesive devices, theme-rheme structure, elements of communication, Grice's cooperative principles, Lakoff's politeness principles, verb function, critical issues of representation of actors and actions (process and participants) and lexical density. The slogans were analyzed based on the analytic model. Then a comparison between English and Persian slogans was conducted to figure out their similarities and differences. The study revealed that their similarities are more than differences. Addressors, observing politeness principles, verb function and text typology are their similarities and they differ according to use of cohesive devices, lexical density and following maxims of Grice.

**Key words:** Discourse analysis, Advertising slogans, Typology, Cohesion, Grice's cooperative principles, Politeness principles, Actor, Lexical density

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0. Preliminaries

According to Lapsanska (2006), advertising is one of the main factors in globalization and is a part of the present life. It has attraction for individuals and is able to manipulate consumers. Marketing experts and advertising agencies are interested in the language of slogans in order to find the useful tricks to make them more effective. Most of the businessmen are using various means of communication in order to reach people around the world that can be further turned into potential customers.

There are many ways for advertisements to be seen by the public including newspapers, internet, radio, T.V., billboards and so on. They can also be in different forms like short movies, pictures, slogans, etc. (Schwartz, 2012). In this study, some advertising slogans which take on the form of introducing products will be analyzed.

Bhattacharya (2014) says that advertising is a potent vehicle which includes imagination, creativity, concepts, ideas and innovation to promote new products and remind the changes in the old ones. Advertising means selling which is accompanied by creativity of mind and the work of beauty and art. It can be both powerful and magical. Advertising proves magical by the 'power of word' which leaves an image in the mind of the customers. Words not only control the minds but they also change the viewpoints completely and help the customers to climb the ladder of inquisitiveness.

In the last decades, the market glut of advertising caused the increased attention to and interest in linguistic aspects of advertising. Advertising has become a science. People began to describe and analyze the linguistic means and evaluate the language, trying to find out the principles, create new kinds of

relationship between elements of language and improve the techniques, with the aim of being unique and to maximize the effect at full blast (Lapsanska, 2006).

The American Heritage Dictionary defines advertising as the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media. For many brands, it is a good strategy to make the products distinct in the minds of people who want to use them. Attitudes differ from country to country and vary in different cultures. Slogans and logos are two kinds of advertisements which are very effective and impressive and most companies pay a lot of money to have an efficient logo or slogan. In each country, slogans should match its culture; otherwise, the ads will not reach the intended results.

Brand communication and management is instrumental for an essential link between a company and its customers; for example, two companies like Pepsi and Coca Cola are competitors and their advertisements determine the size of their customers (Vörös, 2010). Effective brand management enables a firm to utilize its competitive advantage in developing and sustaining the business cross-culturally (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 1999; Batra, 2004; Interbrand, 2004; Steenkamp, 1999).

## **1.1. Slogans**

Wikipedia defines advertising slogans as short, memorable group of words used in advertising campaigns. A slogan is a catchy phrase or series of words used to help consumers remember a company, brand or product. Companies create slogans to use in various marketing efforts in the hope that the phrases will stick in people's minds. In this way, when a consumer needs a product or service offered by a variety of companies, he or she will choose the product or service that is top-of-mind from slogan recognition.

Some slogans are created just for specific limited-time campaigns and others are intended as a corporate slogan to be used for extended periods (Apriana and Karsita, 2012). Various slogans start out as the former, and are, over time, converted into the latter as ideas take hold with the public.

Slogans must be memorable. Foster (2001) says that they must give people an idea of what the company or product does and must relate to the business in some way. Even though they consist of only a few words, slogans can take hours, sometimes much more, to write. Each word has to be perfect. For writing a slogan, the writer should look at the logo for ideas, describe the logo and whittle the description to a few words. The slogan should match the feel of the logo, because they are often displayed together (Newton, 2014). The slogan should be simple but memorable. Use of appropriate rhyming or humor helps people remember the slogan.

Not everyone can write a slogan. It is best to hire a professional writer to help with grammar and creative use of words. He or she can also be asked for feedback or have brainstorming sessions with the employees. Some employees, including sales staff members, might be too close to the product or service to write an effective slogan because their opinions and thoughts are biased (Newton, 2014). Slogans should be honest and not make false promises about the company or product, because they will only annoy and frustrate consumers.

Slogans are of two kinds, some of them like Hamrah-e-Avval (First mobile carrier in Iran) promote the company. Still others like Cheetos (A product of a food company) promote a specific product. Unlike the name of the company and its logo, slogans can be changed over time. Global advertisements are mostly done in English. They usually have unique features i.e., simple language and instant attraction. Advertising has different functions: information-living, brand identity, persuasion, demand, previewing new trends, customer base and pricing. (Stefan, 2013)

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

There have been many studies about the importance of slogans and discourse analysis of them. For example, Dyer (1982) claims that "the primary aim of advertising is to attract our attention and dispose us favorably towards the product or service on offer". Having conducted research on Nike slogan, Deng (2009) showed that since the crucial global economic crisis has arrived, hopefully it cannot become the barrier of Nike business. On the contrary, it can be a good opportunity for Nike to win consumers' hearts along with its new advertising plan "Just Do It". Maksimainen (2011) did a linguistic analysis of some slogans and reviewed imperative clauses, interrogative clauses, exclamative clauses, and incomplete clauses. Therefore, study of ads is an important topic and have to be worked on more and more.

In the past years most studies analyzing the slogans have followed a specific model like that of Van Leeuwen – a framework that does not include some main issues like lexical density. The present study was based on a combination of different models of discourse analysis and main issues which are important and should be worked on. The issues were discourse typology, cohesive devices that are comprised of lexical and grammatical cohesion, theme and rheme, Grice's cooperative principle, the politeness principle, process and principles, clause function, and lexical density. After analysis English and Persian slogans were compared together.

## **1.3. Significance of the study**

Most studies have tended to neglect the effect of the brand on the consumers' attitudes although it is very important. Only a few studies have looked at the strength of the brands and their influence on attitudes (Dimofte, 2007; Lagerwerf, 2002; Puntoni, Ritson & Schroeder, 2010; and Yalch, 2007). Study of slogans and their discourse is essential since ads are an important part of today's life.

As already stated, most of the investigations dealing with the issue of slogans so far have opted for a specific model like that of Van Leeuwen – a model devoid of main issues like lexical density. On the other hand, there are a limited number of studies about the comparison between Persian and English ads. Therefore, conducting more studies is warranted by the researchers or students.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

This study focused on some main aspects of discourse analysis and some English and Persian slogans were compared based on those issues. Five Persian and five English advertising slogans were analyzed and compared here. Adidas, Red Bull, L'Oreal, Nike and Coca Cola were the English brands and the slogans were as follows: Impossible is Nothing (Adidas), It Gives you Wings (Red bull), Because you're worth it (L'Oreal), Just Do it (Nike), The Coke Side of Life (Coca cola). Hamrah-e-Avval, Iran Khodro, Emerson, Cheetos and Absal were the Persian ones and the slogans were: No One is Alone (Hamrah-e-Avval), the Road Calls You (Iran Khodro), Beautiful, Spacious, and Reliable (Emerson), Good Taste of the Moments (Cheetos), and Quality is not by Chance (Absal) which are the translation of “Hichkas Tanha Nist”, “Rah To ra Mikhanad”, “Ziba, Jadar, Motmaen”, “Taame Khoshe Lahzaha” and finally “Keifiat Ettefaghi Nist” respectively.

#### **1.5. Research questions**

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are advertisement slogans in English and Persian presented in terms of discourse typology, cohesive devices, theme-rheme structure, elements of context, Grice's cooperative principles, Lakoff's politeness principles, clause function, critical issues of representation of actors and actions and lexical density?
2. How can the two languages be compared based on issues enumerated in question one?



## 1.6. Key terms definitions

*Discourse analysis:* discourse analysis, is a general term for a number of approaches to analyze written, vocal, or sign language use or any significant semiotic event.

*Advertising slogans:* Advertising slogans are short, memorable groups of words used in advertising campaigns.

*Typology:* typology is the study and classification of languages according to their structural features.

*Cohesion:* cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning.

*Grice's cooperative principles:* cooperative principle describes how people interact with one another.

*Politeness principles:* politeness principles account for the redressing of the affronts to face posed by face-threatening acts to addressees.

*Actor:* Actor is the one performing the action *Lexical density:* lexical density constitutes the estimated measure of content per functional (grammatical) and lexical units (lexemes) in total.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.0. Introduction**

In the first and second parts of this chapter, the importance of advertisements and their purposes will be mentioned. The third segment is a short history of advertisements and the way of their expanding and becoming a main issue in today's life, especially in economy and business, and the last part of this chapter reviews some previous studies that are related to this thesis.

## **2.1. History of advertisements**

Advertising traces its history back to ancient times. Wikipedia says that the first forms of advertising messages were transferred by word of mouth; however, in the ruins of Pompeii commercial messages and election campaign displays have been found. Egyptians used Papyrus to create sales messages and wall posters, while in Greece and Rome lost-and-found advertising on papyrus was common.

With the form of advertising, it could be met in the marketplaces, where the sellers used to shout and extol their products. In the course of time, people more and more tried to differentiate their products and began to find out new ways of presenting. They started to accentuate the visual aspect of the advertisement. With the expansion of color printing and colorful posters, the streets began to revel in colors. These posters were ancestors to our modern billboards.

As the economy and the trade were expanding during the 19th century, the need for advertising grew. Gradually, advertising transformed into a modern, more scientific and sophisticated conception. New visual techniques have been

launched. Not only the content of the message is important, but also the form. The creativity of copywriters, who are finding new ways, leads to the richness of various forms of advertisements and slogans are among those impressive means of presenting goods and products.

The immense growth of technology and the quick spread of worldwide communication and marketing during the last century triggered the proliferation in promotional genres, advertising among them. Moreover, different cultures may have different expectations with regard to stylistic choices, language use and other preferences in the same genre. Hence it is quite interesting to explore the language of English and Persian advertisements.

## **2.2. Importance of advertisements**

As it was stated in the first chapter, advertising is an essential issue in today's life and has become a main body of trade these days. The basic aim of advertising is to create awareness in the minds of people about the availability of products and services and to influence the consumers to use them and the ultimate aim is to enhance the sale of organizations; therefore, advertising complements and supplements a company's selling efforts.

Advertising message about the utility of a product enables the people to widen their knowledge. It is advertising which has helped people adopt new ways of life and give up their old habits. Advertisement also facilitates consumer choice because of the vast information he or she has about products. It enables consumers to purchase goods as per their budget requirement and choice so advertisements are essential parts of life and their analysis and, specifically, getting their real message is very necessary in today's world.