



## A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Interpersonal Features in Health and Cosmetic Advertisements

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare and analyse the discourse used in two advertisements with reference to interpersonal features such as; commands, questions, interactive pronouns, modalisation, and attitudinal evaluation. This is a descriptive qualitative method. The first advertisement, referred to this paper as *IDA2*, promotes private health insurance, while the second, referred to as *IDA3*, advertises a private clinic specialising in cosmetic surgery. The collected data were the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that are used in ads. The findings reveal that both advertisements share several linguistic similarities, yet they also exhibit notable differences. Furthermore, this paper compares how these interpersonal features are employed to influence and persuade readers, encouraging engagement with the advertised products. This paper concludes that such interpersonal features play a crucial role in shaping audience perception and enhancing the persuasive impact of advertising discourse. This paper recommends further research to be conducted to explore relevant types of discourse analysis related to this study with different areas.

### تحليل خطابي مقارن للخصائص التفاعلية في الاعلانات الصحية والتجميلية

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### الملمات

#### المفتاحية:

الإعلان الخصائص التفاعلية بين الأشخاص  
الأوامر  
الأسئلة  
الضمائر التفاعلية  
التعبير عن الدرجة والاحتمال  
التقييم الموقفى

### المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مقارنة وتحليل الخطاب المستخدم في إعلانين من خلال الإشارة إلى السمات التفاعلية مثل الأوامر والأسئلة والضمائر التفاعلية والكيفية والتقييم الموقفى. هذه الدراسة وصفية نوعية. يروج الاعلان الاول عن التأمين الصحي بينما يعلن الاعلان الثاني عن عيادة خاصة متخصصة في الجراحة التجميلية. اعتمد التحليل على دراسة الكلمات والعبارات والجمل والتراكيب النحوية. تكشف النتائج أن كلا الإعلانين يشتركان في عدة أوجه تشابه لغوية ومع ذلك يظهران أيضاً اختلافات ملحوظة. علاوة على ذلك تقارن هذه الورقة كيفية توظيف هذه السمات التفاعلية للتأثير على القراء وإقناعهم وتشجيعهم على التفاعل مع المنتجات المعلن عنها. وتلخص هذه الورقة إلى أن مثل هذه السمات التفاعلية تلعب دوراً حاسماً في تشكيل تصور الجمهور وتعزيز التأثير الإقناعي للخطاب الاعلاني. توصي هذه الورقة بإجراء المزيد من الابحاث لاستكشاف انواع التحليل الخطابي ذات الصلة بهذه الدراسة في مجالات مختلفة.

### Introduction

In our life, advertisements surround us everywhere. When you turn on your TV or read newspapers and magazines texts. It is impossible to ignore commercial messages that argue to persuade to purchase goods or engage with various services. According to *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, the verb advertise derived from the Latin word "*advertere*" which means "turn the mind towards". Vestergaard and Schroder (1985: vii) explain that "Advertising takes many forms, but in most of them language is crucial importance".

Text analysis, commonly referred to as Discourse Analysis (DA), which can be applied to a wide range of text types, including textbooks, advertisements, magazines, and novels. Each type of text is

categorized by distinctive structural and linguistic features. In advertising discourse, certain elements of interpersonal and interactive features - such as commands, questions, modalisation, the use of personal pronouns and evaluation words - are particularly significant. DA helps to illustrate how these linguistic features function to shape meaning and influence interpretation. As Cook (2001:3) explains, DA "examines the links between the texts, the people who make and interpret them, and social situations in which they occur"

As advertisement is an interesting topic, the writer discovered that there are loads of research regarding the discourse analysis of advertising, but there is not so far research on comparing ads with the

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intention of the different resources conducted by the advisers in promoting their products or services.

Due to this fact, This study was designed to compare and analyse the discourse used in two advertisements with reference to interpersonal features such as commands, questions, interactive pronouns, modalisation, and attitudinal evaluation. It will also provide a comparison of how these features are employed to influence the reader and encourage engagement with the advertised products.

#### Literature Review

Advertisement is considered as "persuasive discourse" for the reason that the language used in advertisement is influenced by linguistic communicative means (Villarino & Marina 1997). In the context of advertisements, the use of interpersonal interactive strategies play a crucial role in attracting and persuading the audience. As Bloor and Bloor (1995:9) state, language enables individuals to engage in communicative acts, express attitudes and judgments, and adopt different roles. This communicative function, often referred to as the *interpersonal function*, is especially prominent in advertising discourse. (Cook, 2001) states advertisement can provide information, persuade, remind, influence people and possibly change their attitudes, emotions. It can be concluded that "advertisement do not only give information on product being advertised for selling products but also it can change people's perspective on society, or in other words, advertisement can persuade people to buy things which they do not need." (Susanti, 2019: 4). As well as, Helland (2018) proposes an obvious information about the basic purpose of advertisement. He describes that ad is designed to employ the audience to catch the attention of the audience with the product.

Interpersonal interactive features comprise a wide range of strategies used in advertising discourse. One of the most prominent features is the use of **commands**, which play a significant role in persuading readers to interact with and respond to products or services. According to Myres (1994: 47) "advertisers use commands not because telling you to something really makes you do what they say, but because it will create a personal effect, a sense of one person talking to another". This suggests that commands in advertisements are not merely instructive but serve to establish a direct and personal connection with the audience. Interestingly, such commands often avoid polite expressions like *please*, thereby reinforcing the idea that the intended benefit is primarily for the adviser rather than the consumer (Myers, 1994: 48).

Another common interpersonal strategy is the use of **questions**. Although questions are closely related to commands, their purpose differs in that they invite the audience to engage cognitively with the advertisement. Myres (1994: 49) observes that many advertising questions are rhetorical, assuming only one possible answer. Questions can be classified as either open-example, "How does NRT work?" - which invite broad engagement, or closed -for instance, "Thinking about quitting smoking?"- which typically elicit a predictable response. In both cases, questions are designed to capture the reader's attention and encourage further action, such as visiting a website or contacting the company.

A further significant feature is the use of **interactive pronouns**, particularly the pronoun *you*. This form of direct address is one of the most common linguistic strategies in advertisements, as it personalizes the message and positions the reader as the central focus of the communication. By using *you*, advertisers construct a sense of dialogue and involvement, which enhances the persuasive effect of the text. Moreover, The advertisers may employ personal pronouns in addressing the message to customer directly or indirectly. In relation to Fairclough (1996, 127), the use of pronoun is type of interactional value that assists create a friendly impression to convince the consumer. Myres (1994:79) observes that *you* is particularly prevalent, as it directly addresses the audience and personalizes the message. However, the meaning of *you* is not always straightforward. It may function exclusively, as in "I want you for the U.S. Army," where the addressee remains unspecified, or inclusively, as in "Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?" where *you* refers to the father figure rather than the child.

Similarly, *we* and *I* can carry both inclusive and exclusive meanings. In many instances, *we* represents the advertiser, while *I*

positions the advertiser as the voice of the consumer. Myres (1994:82) further notes that 'the more common use is for 'we' to refer to the advertiser, not including the audience [...] I used for the sales people. Usually, though, I speak as the potential consumer'. In addition, Cook (2001:31) adds that advertisers use pronoun *we* to create a sense of unity, shared aims, implying that the company and costumer have shared values, experiences and inspirations. In contrast, The words 'you' and 'your' (second person personal) is pointed to talk to the consumers instantly and individually (Rashed, Rahman, & Rahman, 2016).

**Modalisation** is another significant interpersonal feature and forms a branch of modality. Thomson (2004:67) explains that modalisation operates at different levels, encompassing degrees of probability and usability. Probability may be conveyed through expressions such as *possible*, *probable*, or *certain*, while usability is typically expressed through adverbs such as *sometimes*, *often*, or *always*. Shifts in tense can also contribute to modal meaning: for example, *can* often changes to *could* and *may* to *might*, reflecting different degrees of certainty in contemporary English. Fairclough (1996:127) presents more clarification with regards to modality, "Modality can be modal auxiliaries (may, shall, must, etc.) which mark relational modality and expressive modality (simple present tense form). Relational modality is a matter of the authority of one participant in relation to others, whereas truth or probability of a representation of reality. Modality is the degrees of uncertainty". The strength of modalisation may range from high to median to low, and can be expressed either explicitly or implicitly.

A further interpersonal feature is **attitudinal evaluation**. "Evaluation concerns the ways in which language is used to encode the speaker's or writer's attitude, stance or emotion, or to value something in terms of goodness, importance, worth or relevance", according to Bednarek (2006:2). Thompson (2004: 75-77) also adds that evaluation may be positive or negative and is realised across three domains. The first, *judgment*, refers to the evaluation of people's character or behaviour. The second, *affect*, concerns the expressions of personal feelings towards issues or individuals. The third, *appreciation*, involves the evaluation of objects, processes, or phenomena. These evaluative resources enable advertisers to persuade audiences not only through rational appeals but also by invoking emotions and value-based judgments. In addition, Hunston and Thompson (2000: 5) clarify that evaluation is 'the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions'. When analyzing texts, appreciation and judgment may appear within the same sentence or across the text as a whole. Furthermore, attitudinal evaluation is commonly divided into two types: *inscribed* and *evoked*. Inscribed evaluation is explicitly expressed and easily recognized, whereas evoked evaluation "happen when the speaker or writer tell us something which is not directly evaluative but which is intended to evoke an attitude" (Martin & White, 2005:61-63).

#### Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher applied the descriptive-qualitative method. A descriptive-qualitative method used in this study, because the data of this research are in from of written text. Private health insurance and private clinic specialising in cosmetic surgery advertisements were chosen to be analysed using interpersonal features. Those ads are in the form of printed papers that taken from health and cosmetic surgery centres, and then they were analysed. The writer analysed the data based on the five interpersonal features; commands, questions, interactive pronouns, modalisation, and attitudinal evaluation. The data are the words, phrases, clauses, sentences found in advertisements. In this present study, the writer presented the data through interpretation and description. The writer also took some words of quotation rather than numeric as the data.

#### Finding And Discussion

Two advertisements have been analysed with respect to interpersonal interactive features. The first advertisement, referred to in this paper as *IDA2*, promotes private health insurance, while the second, referred to as *IDA3*, advertises a private clinic specialising in cosmetic surgery. Both advertisements share a number of similarities in their linguistic strategies, although they also reveal distinct

differences.

To begin with the use of **commands**, which is a common feature across advertising texts. Writers often instruct readers to take specific actions in response to the message. For instance, **IDA2** demonstrates this by first clarifying the purpose of the advertisement and then urging readers to respond through particular means, such as visiting a company's website or calling a freephone number. In a similar way, **IDA3** also concludes with a command. Moreover, cosmetic surgery advertisements frequently attract attention by emphasising how surgery can improve a person's appearance compared to their previous condition, as well as by highlighting the expertise of specialists who provide a comfortable environment. In one case, the writer employed the command 'DISCOVER', which encourages readers to seek further clarification and reinforces the idea that the service is beneficial for them.

**Table 1: Use of Commands in Advertisements**

Advertisement	Example Command	Function/Effect
<b>IDA2</b>	"Visit our website", "Freephone"	Directs readers to take action And seek further information
<b>IDA3</b>	"DISCOVER"	Creates curiosity and emphasised benefits to the reader.

The first advertisement (**IDA2**) opens with a **question**: "worried by NHS waiting times?" This is immediately followed by another: "Thought you couldn't afford private health insurance?" (see table 2). These closed questions are designed to prompt a direct response of *yes* or *no* from the reader, thereby encouraging agreement with the advertiser's implied position. The predictability of these responses reinforces the persuasive function of the text, since the reader is subtly guided toward affirming the advertiser's perspective.

Similarly, the second advertisement (**IDA3**) also begins with questions. However, unlike **IDA2**, its opening question open-ended: "When you like to see?" unlike closed questions, this information does not restrict the reader to a *yes* or *no* responses, but, instead invites more varied and unpredictable answers. This strategy encourages the audience to reflect on their own personal desires or dissatisfactions, which can then be linked to the services offered by the clinic. The second question in **IDA3** - "Is there a part of you that you would like to change?" - is structurally similar to the questions in **IDA2**, since it again seeks a closed response of *yes* or *no*. In doing so, the advertisement blends open and closed questioning strategies to maximise engagement and persuasion.

**Table 2: Use of Questions**

Feature	Advertisement (IDA2)	Advertisement (IDA3)	Function/Effect
<b>Type of question</b>	Closed questions	Both open and closed question	IDA2 seeks predictable yes/no responses; IDA3 mixes open reflection and direct prompts
<b>Examples</b>	"Worried by NHS waiting times?" "Thought you couldn't afford private health insurance?"	"When you look in your mirror what would you like to see?" "Is there a part of you that you would like to change?"	IDA2 emphasises reader agreement; IDA3 invites self-reflection then directs focus to possible dissatisfaction.
<b>Expected response</b>	<i>Yes</i> or <i>No</i>	Open (varied) for first	IDA2 limits choice to

		question; Yes/No for second	reinforce the advertiser's point; IDA3 uses an open question to engage emotion.
<b>Predictability of response</b>	High - reader's answer is anticipated	Mixed - first question unpredictable, second predictable	Creates a difference in engagement: IDA2 confirms a need, IDA3 provokes thought.
<b>Interpersonal function</b>	Builds solidarity through shared concern (e.g., NHS delays)	Creates personal identification and emotional appeal	Both seek to position the reader as an active participant in the discourse.
<b>Overall persuasive strategy</b>	Guides reader towards agreement and a simple solution (buying insurance)	Encourages self-evaluation leading to desire for change (cosmetic service)	Both employ questioning to construct involvement and influence the reader's decision-making.

Another significant comparison between **IDA2** and **IDA3** relates to the use of **modalisation**. **IDA2** employs modalised expressions such as "THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE" which conveys a sense of certainty about NHS waiting times and signal a strong degree of probability (see table 3). This demonstrates the writer's confidence in the claims being made. By contrast, **IDA3** does not appear to employ such modalised expressions. Consequently, **IDA2** seems more interactive and persuasive in communicating the adviser's conviction.

**Table 3: Use of Modalisation**

Advertisement	Example Modalised Expression	Function/Effect
<b>IDA2</b>	"THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE"	Signals high certainty about NHS waiting times; enhances Persuasiveness by projecting Confidence.
<b>IDA3</b>	(No clear use of modalisation)	Appears less interactive and less persuasive compared to IDA2

**Interactive pronouns** are frequently used in advertisements to establish direct interaction between the advertiser and the audience. In the first advertisement, pronouns such as *YOU* and *YOUR* appear repeatedly - nearly six times - indicating an attempt to involve the reader personally. For example the statement: "So *YOU* don't have to put *YOUR* life on hold while *YOU* wait for a diagnosis or for the treatment *YOU* need" addresses the audience directly, creating a sense of intimacy and personal involvement and inclusively. As Cook (2001) explains pronouns in advertising "create an illusion of conversation" (p. 173), drawing the reader to the message as if personally spoken to. This frequent use of second-person reference can therefore be interpreted as inclusive, since it appeals to all readers without singling out anyone in particular.

In contrast, the second advertisement uses pronouns in a more inclusive and participatory way, as seen in "WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?" This phrasing invites the reader to reflect and respond mentally, positioning them as an active participant in the

communicative exchange. According to Fairclough (1989), such linguistic choices help construct "synthetic personalisation," where discourse simulates a personal relationship between institutions and individuals (p, 62). Consequently, the use of *you* and *your* not only personalise the message but also enhances the persuasive appeal by making readers feel directly addressed and involved.

However, pronouns such as *I* and *we* are rarely used in advertising discourses. 'We' appears in the second ad just once as indicated at (table 4). This indicates that the clinic and a costumer hold similar values and desires . Moreover, their absence is intentional: *I* would make the message appear too subjective or personal, while *we* might blur the distinction between the adviser and the audience. When *we* is used, it typically serves to create a sense of shared identity or collective experience, as in "We care for your health" or "We make it happen". As Fairclough (1989) explains, such inclusive *we* constructions help create "synthetic personalisation", whereas advertisers simulate a friendly, cooperative relationship with consumers (p, 62). Thus, the selective use - or avoidance - of pronouns like *I* and *we* plays a strategic role in shaping the tone of advertising discourse.

**Table 4: Use of Personal Pronouns**

Feature	First advertisement	Second advertisement	Function/interpretation
Pronouns used	You, your (repeated 6 times)	You, your (fewer but more engaging)	Establishes direct contact with the reader
Example	"So YOU don't have to put YOUR life on hold while YOU wait for a diagnosis or for the treatment YOU need."_	"WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?"	Creates a conversational tone and emotional appeal
Type of reference	Inclusive/Direct address	Inclusive/Participatory	Encourages reader identification and involvement
Communicative function	Persuasion through personalisation	Engagement through inclusion	Builds relational connection between adviser and audience.
Absence of I and We	Never used (I, WE)	We provide access to some of UK's leading celebrity surgeon. Never used (I)	Attracts attention and convince the reader of the service's superiority

Another point of comparison between the advertisements is the use of **attitudinal evaluation**. Both advertisements share this characteristic, with the first ad containing a wider range of evaluative words such as *worry*, *high cost*, *fast*, *quality*, and *want*. Several of these attitudinal expressions occur multiple times. These words express emotional and value-based judgments that appeal to the audience's feelings. For example, *worry* and *want* convey emotional responses to issues raised in the advertisements, and therefore represent the affect type of attitudinal evaluation. In contrast, such as *fast*, *high cost*, and *quality* appraise the value or worth of products and services, which aligns with appreciation evaluation.

Furthermore, the use of attitudinal language contributes to the interactive tone of the advertisements. The second advertisement,

however, includes only one explicit attitudinal appraisal - the word *BEST* at the end of the text - which evaluates the cosmetic surgery service in a positive light. This type of evaluation focuses on the service itself rather than on characters or readers, and therefore can also be classified as appreciation. Importantly, this evaluation is explicit, as it is directly stated rather than implied. What's more, judgment evaluation in IDA3 is explicit, as the ad employs direct evaluative adjectives for instance, 'leading', 'specialised', 'experienced', 'caring' and 'discreet' to positively evaluate surgeons and staff with reference to both competence and professional behaviour.

The final point identified in both advertisements is evoked attitudinal evaluation. For example, the first advertisement displays this feature more frequently - nearly six instances - two of which are: "*NO WAITING FOR TREATMENT*" and "*NO EXCESSES TO PAY*." These expressions subtly encourage readers to make positive judgements by implying convenience and financial benefit. In such cases, evaluation is implicit, as the advertiser invites the reader to infer a positive meaning without directly stating it. Consequently, the evaluation depends on the audience's interpretation rather than overt description, thereby enhancing the persuasive effect of the advertisement.

**Table 5: Use of Attitudinal Evaluative Features in Advertisements.**

Type of Evaluation	Example(IDA2/IDA3)	Function/Meaning	Explicit or Implicit
Affect	worry/want	Express emotional responses and personal feelings related to issues in the ads.	Explicit
Appreciation	Fast, high cost, quality, BEST	Evaluate the value, quality, or worth of the service or product.	Mostly explicit
Judgment evaluation	'Limited/Leading celerity surgeons'	Evaluates staff as 'specialised, experienced, leading, caring and discreet' highlighting their skill and trustworthiness.	Explicit
Evoked Attitudinal Evaluation	"NO WAITING FOR TREATMENT". "NO EXCESSES TO PAY"	Encourage positive judgement indirectly by implying convenience and advantage.	Implicit

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This research is conducted to analyse and compare discourse advertisements in terms of interpersonal and interactive features. The author investigated five of these features in this study: command, questions, modalisation, the use of personal pronouns and evaluation words. This analysis has provided a comparison between the two advertisements of how those features are employed to attract and persuade the reader to respond to buy the products being advertised.

In terms of using commands, the advertisers use this feature which is common across advertising texts. It should be noted that writers often instruct readers to take specific actions in response to the message and ask for information as in *IDA2*. Similarly, *IDA3* uses commands to encourage engagement and reinforce persuasion.

The author proposes to continue further related research studies due to some limitations in this research. These limitations are expected to provide a research gap for other researchers interested in investigating more about this topic. Hence, more information can be excavated.

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