

Semantic Devices found in Advertisements of Kashmir Valley

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Abstract: *In present modernized society, advertising has a very crucial role to play. It seems almost impossible to even think of a world without it. As far as language of advertising is concerned, a deliberate attempt is being made to create ad messages that have an immense and positive impact on the minds of target audience. Language is being figured and moulded by making use of various linguistic devices at the disposal of ad copy writers. In the present paper an attempt has been made to see the semantic devices being most used in advertisements of Kashmir valley.*

Key Words: *Advertisements, Semantic devices, Metaphor, Personification, Print Media, Electronic Media.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The word advertising has been derived from the Greek word ‘advertere’ which means to turn people’s attention towards the product or service being advertised. Advertising is a communication, aimed to communicate information about the products or services to the target audience. It is meant to inform potential customers about the benefits and availability of the product or services. Hence, we can infer from the above statement that the basic function of advertising is-

- (i) To turn ones attention towards the product or service or idea.
- (ii) To communicate information regarding the products to the audience.

2. METHODOLOGY :

As far as methodology of the present paper is concerned, both print and electronic media has been taken into account for the analysis of ad messages using linguistic techniques. Ads were first collected, transcribed and analysed using semantic devices.

3. DATA COLLECTION:

Data was collected from print and electronic media of Kashmir valley. Ads from electronic media were collected from Sen Channel, Gulistan TV, JK Channel and 92.7 Fm Radio Station. Ads from print media were collected from different daily newspapers of valley viz Srinagar Times, Aftab, Greater Kashmir and Kashmir Uzma and some magazines like Kashmir Narrator and Kashmir Ink.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

In advertng, the use of language is relatively special and there is a reason behind making quite peculiar statements over ordinary ones. According to Dyers, (1982: 139), “Advertising language is of course loaded language. Its primary function is to attract our attention and dispose us favourably towards the product or service on offer.” Advertising language is intended to attract target audience by making use of various tactics and wordplay. Advertisers are in practice of designing consciously crafted ad messages to influence the attitudes and liking of a particular product over other. This is done with the help of making very captivating and eye-catching ad slogans.

Advertisers make use of a very rich reservoir which we call language and make use of linguistic tools at their disposal. The distinctiveness in terms of word choices makes the advertising language a specific field. This paper is expected to give a common sense perspective for the study of the language features of different advertisements at a semantic level.

Semantic devices, being one of the mostly employed and proven devices happen to be used in most of the important ad messages. The use of semantic devices is of very relevance because they serve the function very fairly when it comes to entice target audience. The present paper aims at finding and analysing semantic devices as found in advertisements in media of Kashmir.

“Semantics is the study of word meaning and sentence meaning, abstracted away from contexts of use s a descriptive subject. It is an attempt to describe and understand the nature of the knowledge about meaning in their language that people have from knowing the language.” Griffiths Patrick (2006: 15)

Semantics is that part of linguistics which deals with the study of meanings and its manifestations in language. It is the study of meaning as expressed by words and sentences of human language.

Meaning is the subject matter of semantics and can be perceived in two ways.

- (i) Meaning of speaker.
- (ii) Meaning of word / sentence.

Meaning of speaker can be viewed as to what a speaker has in mind or what he desires to say. The word / sentence meaning means what a particular word or sentence means. Meaning has remained the subject of study for different scholars as per their concerns. It is as such pointed out that various theories of meaning have been put forth by many scholars from time to time.

The study of meaning system of a language and its approaches vary. In its one observation, meaning is regarded as the relationship between language and the external world which is also called its referential or denotative meaning between a word and the concept it stands for. Yet in another view, the mental state of the speaker is involved, which is also called affective or connotative meaning as revealed in a variety of personal, emotional implications.

Some of the meaning theories are as under:

- a) Referential theory.
- b) Denotational theory of meaning.
- c) Mentalist theory of meaning.
- d) Use theory of meaning.
- e) Use theory of meaning.

a) Referential Theory:

Referential theory of meaning has its origin in the philosophy of language, logic and Mathematics. The referential theory is used to give the meaning of a word. It shows what it denotes. According to Saeed John. I, (2003:31), "In its simplest words this theory would claim that reference picks out elements in the real world". For example, a proper name *Jack* refers to or denotes its possessor: a person named *Jack*.

b) Denotational Theory of Meaning:

According to Akmajian *et al* (1990: 232) "The meaning of each expression is the (actual) object it denotes, its denotation." Take for example some expressions of language for instance proper names such as John and deictics such as I, here, their meaning is the thing they refer to.

This relation between a linguistic expression and what it refers to is variously called denotation, linguistic reference, and semantic reference. (ibid : 232)

c) Mentalist theory of Meaning:

The meanings are not actual objects but mental objects and this is what mentalist theory explicate. For example ".....if meanings are not actual objects, perhaps they are mental objects; even if there is no real flying horse for Pegasus to denote, there is surely such an idea, and maybe this idea is the meaning of Pegasus" (ibid:233). As such we can infer from above statement that there is no real flying horse but we have an idea and possibly the meaning lies in the idea of Pegasus

d) The Use Theory of Meaning

The Use theory was given by Ludwig Wittgenstein in 1930s and states that the meaning of an expression is its use. For example, there is neither any mental image associated with the meaning of an expression '*Hi*' nor any denotation to explain it.

Since meaning can be viewed upon by many theories and it has been observed that no satisfactory theory of meaning has been generated as every scholar or philosopher has tried to describe meaning as per his/ her perception and interest.

Keeping in view the focus of paper it becomes pertinent to mention over here that the level of language called semantics, which deals with the meaning, is being used by the ad copy writers to arrive at catching and captivating ad messages. It is the careful use of words that help to the precision and success in advertising language and as such the meaning is conveyed to the audience precisely and intensely.

Chiefly, there are two kinds of meaning i.e. denotative and connotative. Denotative meaning refers to what we mean literal or common dictionary meaning. Connotative refers to the evaluative, inferred or emotional meaning. The denotations will be nearly the same for people using the same dictionary but connotations vary for different people. Here, meanings are subjective to the context in which they are used, by the senders and the receiver's relationship and by other variables. Therefore, the denotation of a word is the unambiguous literal meaning while the connotation is the meaning with which it is associated. Use of words with wide extensions is widely exploited in advertisements and these words always signify excellence, reliability, strength, and other features.

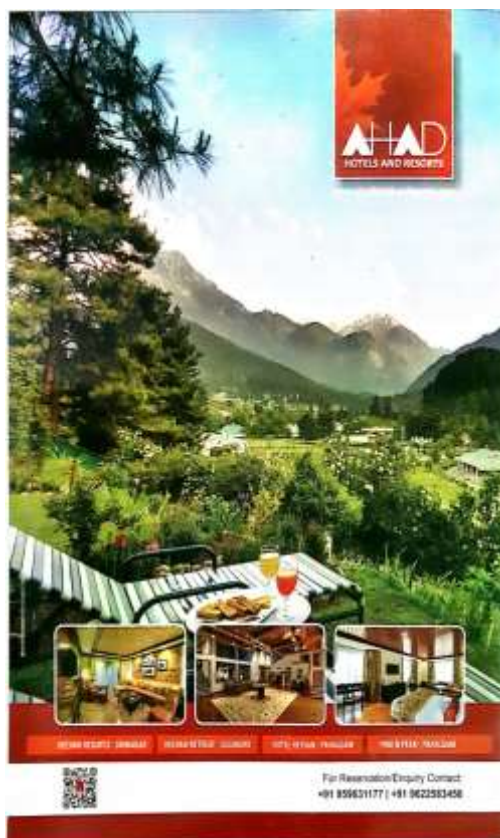
Lets us take a look at some semantic devices as found in different ad messages.

5. Metaphor:

Literally, in this figure of speech one element is taken to describe another element and the meaning remains hidden or implicit. “The function of metaphor is to take the readers from the level of the literal meaning to that of figurative meaning.”(Gargesh, 1990: 175).

Use of metaphor is very frequent in advertising as advertisers often compare brands and try to evoke different feelings. The purpose lies in the fact that they want viewers to associate feelings with the product. Often there are visual metaphors used in advertisements where advertisers try to evoke desired feelings and emotions in the minds of target audience. Take for example the below advertisements.

Advertisement – 1 :



Source : Kashmir Narrator

Semanticdevice used	Visual Metaphor
Significant words used	Advertiser has made use of visual metaphor by just using a resting chair with a couple of soft drink glasses and some snakes. As such no significant and strong written arguments have been used by the advertiser.
Arguments used	Visualization of comfort and enjoyment by comparing the serene beauty of nature by choosing to spent holidays and vacations in these Hotels and Resorts by Ahads.
Central theme	To Promote the tourism by making viewers associate the great and calming experience with these resorts.

In the above ad message, the semantic device, visual metaphor has been utilized by the ad copy writer by depicting the delight and comfort along with the tranquil exquisiteness of natural world.

Advertisement – 2:

*A PILGRIMAGE CAN DO
 WONDERS FOR YOU
 ESPECIALLY IF ITS*

A GOLF PILGRIMAGE
J&K TOURISM

Source: Kashmir Narrator.

Semantic device used	Metaphor
Significant words used	Pilgrimage, wonders, golf pilgrimage, J&K Tourism.
Arguments used	Comparison made between pilgrimage and golfing.
Central theme	Promoting tourism in valley by making audience associate the sensation and amazing thing with golfing.

The semantic device used is metaphor. Sports activity namely golfing is one of the major attractions of Kashmir Valley. People across the globe dream to have an experience of golfing in the beautiful valley of Kashmir. Ad copy writer has targeted the peculiar urge of sports loving people by comparing it with pilgrimage.

6. Personification:

In personification, we attribute human characteristics to an abstract quality, animate or inanimate objects. For example, it is always possible to make use of human qualities to the advertised product. In Kashmiri ads personification is seen in the following ad message.

Advertisement – 3:



Source: Daily Aftab

Semantic device used	Personification
Significant words used	I, Double Zoom Offer.
Arguments used	Addressing to the audience and talking about itself by the product.
Central theme	To get target audiences attention towards the ad message by using the caption “ <i>I AM A DOUBLE ZOOM OFFER</i> ” thereby human attribute to the product which cannot talk.

In the above advertisement, the ad message has been written in such a way as if the product advertised is addressing the target audience itself in the words like “*I AM A DOUBLE ZOOM OFFER*”. Hence, advertiser giving human attribute to the camera of being able to talk and making use of personification in the above ad message.

Advertisement - 4:

I AM THE SPIRIT OF KASHMIR
TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY
I AM KHYBER

Source: Kashmir Ink.

Semantic device used	Personification
Significant words used	Spirit, Dreams, Reality and Khyber
Arguments used	Making audience feel the quality and credibility of the cement Khyber. It is being portrayed as if the Khyber cement is itself addressing the audience about the significance and assurance associated with this cement.
Central theme	To make audience believe that Khyber cement is the soul of Kashmir and by using this brand of cement dreams are transformed into reality.

Above ad message is being portrayed as if the brand of cement is talking about itself to the target audience in the ad line “I AM THE SPIRIT OF KASHMIR” thereby giving the product a human attribute.

7. Hyperbole:

Literal meaning is to exaggerate. In Hyperbole, we describe something and then exaggerate whatever we have described. The following advertisement utilizes hyperbole to convey the communicative content of ad message.

Advertisement – 5 :

US based Haier Washing Machine

Ba: adab ba: mula:hiza: hoshiya:r

With respect with attention wide awake

Ba:dshah sala:mat chu amri:ka: pethI wa:pas tashri:ph ana:n

King soundness(hon.) is America from return come bring

Haier US based kampani: hindi va:shing mashi:n

Haier US Based company of washing machine

[Gloss: With all respect, attention, and conscious self it is announced that his majesty King from America is coming back. US based Haier Washing Machine.]

Source: Radio Kashmir.

Semantic device used	Hyperbole
Significant words used	Ba: adab , ba:mula:hiza:, hoshiya:r, ba:dshah, amri:ka:
Arguments used	Announcing the arrival of US Based Haier washing machine the same way the arrival of kings and princes with a strong and loud voice.
Central theme	To catch audience’s interest towards the Haier Washing Machine which is US Based?

The way advertiser has announced the arrival of US Based Haier Washing Machine reminds us of the era when the arrival of kings and princes was announced the same way in their royal courts. Ad copy writer has used the same pattern and strong voice in announcing the introduction of this washing machine in the valleys market.

8. Metonymy:

It is one of the semantic devices used in advertising language which literally means ‘the change of name’. For example, ‘Crown of France’. (Crown is used instead of King).

Advertisement - 6:

Himalaya Platinum Iron

Ye loha: nahi:n lahu: hai

This iron neg blood is

Jo ima:rtu:n ki rago:n mein doDta: hai

Which buildings of vessels in running is

(Gloss: This is not iron but blood which circulates in vessels of buildings.)

Source : Sen Channel.

Semantic device used	Metonymy
Significant words used	Loha: (iron), lahu:,(blood) imartu:n,(buildings) rago:n,(viens) and Himalaya iron rods.
Arguments used	Use of lahu: (blood) instead of loha: (iron).
Central theme	To lure the target audience by using the significant line “ <i>ye loha: nahi:n lahu: hai jo imartu:n ki: rago:n me doDta: hai</i> ”

The above ad message is about a brand of iron (Himalaya Platinum Rods) used in the construction of buildings. In the line “*ye loha: nahi:n lahu: hai*”(This is no iron but blood), advertiser has tried to compare iron with blood, hence used the name ‘lahoo’ (blood) instead of iron.

Advertisement - 7:

YOU MIGHT HAVE PLAYED ACROSS THE WORLD,

BUT HAVE YOU PLAYED IN HEAVEN

Jammu & Kashmir is a golfers paradise, offering four stunning golf courses; each unique, each a masterpiece, with one common factor—a heavenly experience. Come, see J&K in a new light.

J&K Tourism

Source : Kashmir Narrator.

Semantic device used	Metonymy
Significant words used	World, played, heaven, J&K Golf Course, golfer’s paradise, unique, masterpiece, heavenly experience and J&K Tourism.
Arguments used	The valley of Kashmir has been called the heaven in the ad message and it has also been depicted as to what it experiences to have played golf in Jammu and Kashmir.
Central theme	To promote tourism and making feel about the beauty of playing golf I Kashmir valley.

In the above ad message advertiser has made use of the semantic device in the line “*BUT HAVE YOU PLAYED IN HEAVEN*” here heaven is being used in place of valley of Kashmir.

Advertisement - 8:



Source : Kashmir Ink.

Semantic device used	Metonymy
Significant words used	Paradise , forward
Arguments used	In the advertisement, advertiser has used the word paradise in place of Kashmir.
Central theme	To advance the Kehwa Group's and its all sectors forward to the international scenario.

In the above ad message advertiser has used the metonymy as a semantic device by using the word Paradise for Kashmir valley.

9. CONCLUSION:

In the backdrop of above discussions, it is seen that advertising is crucial in promoting goods, services, products, idea and events. It is a vital tool of increasing sales and creating consumer awareness and educating society. It uses various methods and tactics for creating a desirable atmosphere for getting maximum best results. It is always target oriented and makes use of a variety of linguistic devices including semantic devices. It was observed while analyzing various ads; advertisers make use of metaphor, metonymy, personification and hyperbole as a semantic device with the aim to make people act in a desired direction.

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