



## COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING DISCOURSE: MECHANISMS OF MEANING CONSTRUCTION AND CONSUMER PERSUASION

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**Annotation.** *This article presents a comprehensive cognitive-pragmatic analysis of advertising discourse, examining how linguistic and visual elements interact to create meaning and influence consumer behaviour. Drawing on recent interdisciplinary research, the study explores the cognitive mechanisms—such as conceptual blending, implicature generation, and cognitive bias exploitation—that underpin persuasive strategies in contemporary advertising. Through detailed analysis of multimodal campaigns and influencer marketing practices, the article demonstrates how advertisers construct secondary signifieds that appeal to consumers' motivational needs while often bypassing critical scrutiny. The findings highlight the need for enhanced regulatory frameworks that integrate insights from pragma-cognitive linguistics to protect consumer autonomy in an increasingly complex digital marketplace.*

**Keywords:** *advertising discourse, cognitive pragmatics, multimodality, conceptual blending, implicature, consumer persuasion, influencer marketing*

**Аннотация.** *В этой статье представлен всесторонний когнитивно-прагматический анализ рекламного дискурса, исследующий, как лингвистические и визуальные элементы взаимодействуют, создавая смысл и влияя на поведение потребителей. Опираясь на недавние междисциплинарные исследования, в исследовании рассматриваются когнитивные механизмы, такие как концептуальное смешение, генерация импликатур и использование когнитивных предубеждений, которые лежат в основе стратегий убеждения в современной рекламе. На основе детального анализа мультимодальных кампаний и практик маркетинга влияния в статье показано, как рекламодатели создают вторичные значимые продукты, которые апеллируют к мотивационным потребностям потребителей, часто минуя критическую проверку. Полученные результаты подчеркивают необходимость совершенствования нормативно-правовой базы, объединяющей знания прагма-когнитивной лингвистики, для защиты автономии потребителей на все более сложном цифровом рынке.*



**Ключевые слова:** *рекламный дискурс, когнитивная прагматика, мультимодальность, концептуальное смешение, импликатура, убеждение потребителей, маркетинг влияния.*

In the landscape of contemporary digital communication, advertising has evolved far beyond simple product promotion. Today's advertisements operate as complex cognitive-pragmatic constructs that strategically orchestrate verbal, visual, and auditory elements to shape consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. As a researcher in linguistics and discourse analysis, I have observed that the effectiveness of modern advertising lies not merely in what it says explicitly, but in what it invites consumers to infer—the implicatures, associations, and emotional resonances that emerge from the careful design of multimodal messages. The urgency of understanding these mechanisms has intensified with the rise of social media and influencer marketing. Recent data indicate that Instagram alone hosts approximately 95 million posts daily, with a significant portion constituting sponsored content.

This article addresses these questions through a cognitive-pragmatic lens, integrating theoretical frameworks from pragmatics (Grice's cooperative principles, speech act theory), cognitive linguistics (conceptual blending theory, implicature reconstruction), and discourse analysis. The discussion proceeds through four main sections: first, establishing the theoretical foundations of cognitive-pragmatic analysis; second, examining multimodal meaning construction in advertising; third, analyzing persuasion strategies and cognitive biases; and finally, considering the regulatory implications through recent case studies of influencer marketing.

Pragmatics, as the study of language in use, provides essential tools for understanding advertising discourse. Advertisements rarely state their persuasive intent directly; instead, they communicate through implicatures—meanings that are implied rather than explicitly stated. Following Grice's cooperative principle, advertisers often achieve persuasive effects by strategically violating maxims of quantity, quality, relation, or manner. These violations trigger inferential processes in consumers, who must reconstruct the intended meaning by drawing on contextual knowledge and cognitive resources.

The cognitive dimension of advertising analysis examines how mental representations are formed, stored, and activated during message processing. Al-Shboul's recent study on cognitive aspects of persuasion identifies three interrelated dimensions structuring advertisement effectiveness: attraction (through language features and appeals), evaluation (through beliefs, attitudes, and intention), and behavior.

A particularly powerful framework for analyzing advertising discourse is conceptual blending theory, developed by Fauconnier and Turner. This theory posits that meaning construction involves the integration of mental spaces—small



conceptual packets assembled for purposes of local understanding and action. In advertising, blends are created by selectively projecting elements from different input spaces into a new, emergent structure that carries inferences not available in the original inputs.

Kravchenko and Yudenko's analysis of multimodal advertising demonstrates how conceptual blending operates across verbal, visual, and auditory modes. Their study of Nokia brand advertising reveals how secondary signifieds—connotative meanings such as "self-expression," "inspiration," and "classicism"—are constructed through blends that metonymically connect the brand with classical music and artistic creativity. These secondary signifieds are intended to displace primary signifieds associated with the functional purpose of mobile communication devices, appealing instead to consumers' motivational needs for self-realisation and continuity with tradition.

Contemporary advertising is fundamentally multimodal, integrating verbal text, visual imagery, sound, and increasingly interactive elements. Kress and van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design provides a systematic framework for analyzing how visual elements contribute to meaning: through information value (the placement of elements), salience (their prominence), and framing (connections or disconnections between elements).

The multimodal nature of advertising is not merely additive; different modes interact to create meanings that exceed the sum of their parts. Verbal anchors may direct the interpretation of ambiguous images, while visual metaphors can concretize abstract product claims. This synergy is particularly evident in digital environments, where consumers encounter advertisements while multitasking and often in states of reduced attention—conditions that make them more susceptible to manipulative attempts.

Visual metaphors constitute a central device in multimodal advertising, operating through three main types: juxtaposition (presenting source and target side by side), fusion (merging source and target into a single gestalt), and replacement (presenting only the source, with the target implied). Each type engages consumers in different levels of inferential work.

Nataliia Yemets' research on visual metaphors reveals that implicature reconstruction follows systematic patterns. In juxtaposition and fusion metaphors, consumers restore and detail source and target elements at the level of explicatures—establishing connections between presented objects. At the implicature level, consumers reconstruct information about product characteristics, forming secondary signifieds intended to create stable brand associations. In replacement metaphors, implicatures must restore both source and target spaces, requiring greater cognitive effort but potentially yielding stronger engagement.

Critically, these implicatures are triggered by violations of the maxim of quality through visual metaphorical means. When an advertisement presents an



implausible visual scenario violin constructed from a mobile phone, for instance consumers must infer the intended meaning: that the product enables creative expression comparable to musical artistry. This inferential process, guided by the search for optimal relevance, produces the persuasive effect precisely because consumers experience the inferred meaning as their own discovery rather than as an imposed claim.

The reconstruction of these signifieds occurs through discursive implicatures. When consumers encounter the fusion of musical and technological imagery, the disruption of expected information triggers inferential processes. The restored implicatures shape propositional-locutionary content that, in the elaboration stage of conceptual blending, takes on illocutionary forces: an indirect commissive act promising to satisfy motivational needs for self-expression, and an indirect directive urging consumers to fulfil these needs through product acquisition.

### **CONCLUSION**

This article has demonstrated that cognitive-pragmatic analysis provides essential tools for understanding contemporary advertising discourse. By examining how advertisements construct meaning through conceptual blending, implicature generation, and multimodal integration, researchers can illuminate the mechanisms through which commercial messages shape consumer cognition and behavior.

The findings carry implications for multiple stakeholders. For linguistics researchers, advertising discourse offers a rich site for investigating meaning construction at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture. For marketing practitioners, understanding these mechanisms enables more effective and more ethical—persuasive communication. For regulators and consumer advocates, cognitive-pragmatic analysis provides frameworks for distinguishing legitimate persuasion from manipulative deception. Future research should extend this analysis in several directions. First, the role of emerging technologies artificial intelligence, deep fakes, immersive environments in shaping advertising discourse requires urgent investigation. Second, cross-cultural comparisons of cognitive-pragmatic strategies would illuminate how advertising adapts to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Third, longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of persuasive techniques would inform both theory development and regulatory adaptation. As digital environments continue to evolve, the integration of cognitive and pragmatic perspectives will remain essential for understanding how advertising shapes and is shaped by the human mind. For researchers, educators, and practitioners alike, the cognitive-pragmatic analysis of advertising discourse offers not only analytical tools but also ethical frameworks for ensuring that persuasion serves rather than subverts human autonomy.



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