



LEXICAL INTENSIFICATION IN ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstract: *This thesis examines the concept of lexical intensification in English advertisement slogans. It is related to the use of lexical words whose main function is to emphasize advertising messages by making them persuasive and emotionally stimulating. The various types of lexical intensifiers found in advertising, as well as their functions and effects on consumers are also provided in this work. From the ideas propounded by some prominent linguists, we will show that lexical intensifiers offer advertisers the chance to stress their emphasis on quality and memorability as well as create emotional links with their consumers.*

Key words: *advertisement, intensifiers, lexical intensification,*

INTRODUCTION

The language of advertisement is of utmost importance at calling the attention of audiences and persuading them within a rather limited space. One of the most effective linguistic ways of achieving that goal is lexical intensification, which involves words that raise the level of meaning and help to present products as special, valuable, or superior. In turns, advertisement not only creates consumer attitude and behavior but also provides information to the consumer. As Cook emphasizes “the most characteristic feature of advertisement language is the use of expressive and evaluative vocabulary, often at the expense of neutral description.”¹⁷ Therefore, this paper explores the intensification of English advertisement lexis with regard to its types, functions, and overall communicative function.

Main part. Lexical intensification is a stylistic feature which functions at the lexical level. According to Quirk et al, lexical items which have the ability to increase and reduce the meaning of adjectives, adverbs, and statements are known as intensifiers¹⁸. It is primarily used in the advertisement discourse to emphasize the positive aspects. As linguist Leech writes in the year 1966 that advertisement language encourages the use of the evaluative instead of the factual mode of the language. Therefore, advertising words like “very,” “extremely,” “absolutely,” and “perfect” are never used to state facts. They are mainly used to create an impression in the consumer’s mind.

There are several types of lexical intensifiers used in advertisements. A kind of intensification is the use of degree intensifiers. “Very”, “extremely”, “highly”, and “incredibly” are examples of degree intensifiers. These words are used to strengthen adjectives and adverbs. This can be seen from the examples “extremely effective” and “highly reliable”. The other significant type is maximizers, consisting of examples such as

¹⁷ Cook, G. 2001. *The Discourse of Advertising* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

¹⁸ Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.



“absolutely, completely, totally, and perfectly.” The characteristic in maximizers is that they reflect the highest possible standard. According to Huddleston and Pullum, maximizers do not give much scope for comparison, and that is why they work well in advertisements¹⁹. Furthermore, “just,” “only,” and “simply” as limiters and minimizers also carry considerable persuasive power. While they seem to diminish meaning, their persuasive quality may be intensified by the implication of simplicity or uniqueness, as in “just one step” or “only today.” It should also be noted that evaluative words like “amazing”, “revolution”, “miracle”, and “breakthrough” are often used in advertisements . These words work as intensifiers because they are rich in emotional meaning and their positive connotations²⁰.

When it comes to the functions of lexical intensification in advertisements, persuasion is considered as main purpose because intensifiers assist products to achieve popularity within the competitive market and also help consumers in their decision-making process by making the product appear more desirable. A further function is the appeal to emotions. Exaggerated appeals evoke feelings of trust, excitement, and the urgent fulfillment of desire. “The best you deserve” appeals to the satisfaction and self-improvement. Another way that lexical intensification aids advertising is by increasing memorability. More vivid words lead to advertisements that are easier to remember. As Cook says: “The memorability of an advertisement is one of the most important factors in successful advertising. It is one way in which intensifiers feature prominently.”

Conclusion. Lexical intensification is an essential aspect of English advertisement language. Using degree intensifiers, maximizers, minimizers, and evaluative expressions, advertisers enhances persuasiveness, emotional appeal, and memorability of advertisements. The use of advertisement language is dominated by evaluative words as opposed to facts because the aim of the advertisement message is to influence the consumer's attitude and purchasing decisions. It is, therefore, important for the study of lexical intensification.

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¹⁹ Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁰ Goddard, A. 2002. *The Language of Advertising*. London: Routledge.