



The Advertising Discourse in the Fashion Industry

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Abstract: The contemporary advertising discourse constitutes a highly fertile ground for pragmlinguistic, rhetorical, and stylistic analysis due to its effective utilization of persuasion strategies, lexical creativity, the opposition between verbal and non-verbal elements, and stylistic contrasts. This study aims to provide, on the one hand, an analysis of advertising within the fashion industry and, on the other hand, an examination of consumer behavior and the process of adaptation to the evolving consumer society. The objective of the research is to explore, explain, and describe this phenomenon to facilitate a deeper understanding of both advertising itself and its relationship with members of the consumer society. The primary goal of this study is to develop a model for analyzing advertising discourse, with a focus on elucidating its pragmatic significance. The analysis is centered on interpreting both linguistic and extralinguistic components of discourse, thereby enabling the identification and projection of its pragmatic aspects across different levels of language.

Keywords: advertising discourse, fashion, pragmatics, rhetoric, stylistics.

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1. Introduction. The Context of the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry represents a complex universe, constantly changing and evolving, influenced by various factors such as cultural and social trends, technology, and innovation. In this dynamic environment, advertising discourse shapes consumer perception and promotes fashion brands. With a long tradition of creating images and aspirations, the fashion industry continuously adapts to meet consumers' ever-changing needs and tastes.

Fashion advertising discourse focuses on expressing identity and personal style. Brands seek to become an essential part of consumers' lives, convey a unique message, and create a strong emotional connection. From the most prestigious fashion houses to emerging brands, advertising discourse is a crucial tool in engaging with the market.

Creativity and innovation lie at the heart of advertising discourse in the fashion industry. Stunning visuals, innovative video campaigns, and unexpected collaborations help create an atmosphere filled with desire and aspiration for fashion creations. At the same time, brands seek to be authentic and build genuine connections with consumers by telling unique stories about their brand essence.

Another important aspect of advertising discourse in fashion is the representation of diversity and inclusion. In the past, the fashion industry has often been criticized for promoting a narrow standard of beauty. Today, advertising discourse is rapidly evolving to reflect the real diversity of consumers. Campaigns celebrating beauty in all forms, sizes, colors, and ages are becoming increasingly present, highlighting the industry's commitment to creating an inclusive society.

Sustainability is also becoming a central element in the advertising discourse of fashion brands. Aware of their environmental impact, brands incorporate sustainable messages and practices to address consumers' growing concerns about social and ecological responsibility. Campaigns promoting the use of sustainable materials, responsible production processes, and continuous commitment to environmental protection are becoming essential components of advertising discourse in the fashion industry.

In an ever-changing fashion landscape, technological evolution is another major factor influencing advertising discourse. Fashion brands use digital platforms, social media, and emerging technologies to reach their target audience in innovative ways. Interactive campaigns, virtual reality experiences, and collaborations with digital influencers are becoming more frequent, transforming how consumers interact with the fashion world and its products.

Fashion advertising discourse also shifts its focus toward social responsibility and awareness. Brands are becoming involved in social causes, using their platforms to promote positive messages and support social change. Campaigns

which promote diversity, gender equality, and human rights are becoming an integral part of brands' communication strategies, demonstrating a deeper and more responsible approach toward the community and society.

In a world where speed and accessibility are crucial, fashion advertising discourse adapts to consumers' need for fast and efficient access to products. Marketing strategies frequently include flash events, exclusive launches, and collaborations with e-commerce platforms to satisfy consumer desires instantly. This aspect of advertising discourse aims to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity, fueling consumers' demand for innovation and uniqueness.

With an increasing number of consumers eager to express their individuality, fashion advertising discourse encourages the idea of personalization and authenticity. Brands focus their messages on unique experiences, inspiring consumers to define their own style and feel unique in their fashion choices.

At the same time, in an era of information where transparency is becoming increasingly important, fashion advertising discourse emphasizes open and honest communication. Brands take responsibility for authentically conveying their values, production processes, and impact on the community and the environment. Campaigns that reveal the stories behind products and brands' ethical choices become essential tools for building consumer trust and loyalty.

In a world of ever-changing fashion, digital influence and technological advancements are radically transforming how brands communicate with their audience. Visual and narrative communication are becoming more significant, and adaptability to new digital platforms is a strategic necessity. Beyond the simple presentation of the products, fashion advertising discourse is turning into a complex, immersive, and interactive story.

A rising trend in fashion advertising discourse is the integration of virtual and augmented reality. Brands aim to offer consumers innovative experiences, allowing them to explore collections virtually, participate in exclusive events, and personalize products in a digital environment. This evolution not only enhances consumer interaction with brands but also adds a playful and engaging element to the shopping experience.

In a highly competitive landscape, authenticity and consistency become key currencies in fashion advertising discourse. Brands that maintain their distinct identity and stay true to their core values build long-term relationships with consumers. Consistency in communication, both in messaging and actions, is therefore a crucial factor in gaining consumer trust and loyalty.

Fashion advertising discourse is a dynamic field, shaped by constant change. From leveraging creativity and innovation to emphasizing diversity and committing to sustainability, fashion brands continuously adjust their messaging to align with industry trends and establish authentic connections with consumers. In a world of

rapid transformations, fashion advertising remains an essential tool in building and strengthening relationships with the consumer audience.

2. The Dynamics of Advertising Statement Components in Fashion

Advertising is a constantly discussed topic, but studying the complexity of advertising messages from the perspective of expressive resources remains an area to be explored further. Advertising studies often focus on specific components of these messages. Nicole Everaert-Desmedt analyzed advertising headlines from a semio-pragmatic perspective, while Blanche Grunig approached advertising from a stylistic standpoint. Adam and Bonhomme explored the argumentative structures of advertisements, and Judith Williamson highlighted ideological aspects. Charles Forceville developed a typology of visual metaphors in advertising, while Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle studied Benetton's advertising posters. Thierry Wellhoff classified advertising signatures over the years, and Benoît Heilbrunn discussed the various types of logos used in different advertisements.

Anglo-Saxon authors, such as Marcel Danesi and James Twitchell, placed advertisements in broader contexts of popular culture and marketing, viewing them as an effective branding tool. The works of these authors offer a cultural perspective on the eras in which these advertisements were created. However, their books stop short of analyzing what appears to be a challenging issue: the relationships between the components of advertising discourse.

Discussions with successful advertising creators, such as those recounted by Aitchison, often raise significant issues. For example, it is crucial to determine who drives the narrative: the headline or the image. This is sometimes a matter of juxtaposition, where a simple headline can spark curiosity, but if the image is too simplistic, the entire message becomes superficial. John Hegarty (advertising director and founder of the agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty) argues that headlines and images should complement each other to avoid a struggle for dominance.

There are attempts to integrate the components of advertising statements, suggesting that the relationships between them can vary significantly and offer numerous possibilities. These relationships are considered to fit into a useful typology for describing the specific characteristics of multimodal discourse in advertising: the staged organization of expressiveness at the level of each component, leading up to overall expressiveness.

In advertising, the mode of communication can be verbal, visual, or musical, posing challenges in combining these modes with increasingly sophisticated cultural transitions. A multimodal approach, such as the one suggested by Roland Barthes in *Rhétorique de l'image*, emphasizes that a serious analysis of advertising as a multimodal ensemble must address epistemological issues, shedding light on the

complexity and subtleties of this discipline. These discussions offer new and thought-provoking perspectives on how advertising manipulates and reconfigures well-known functions, as described by Barthes in his work, demonstrating the crucial role of language in interpreting and directing advertising messages.

I will now analyze a few advertisements from a multimodal perspective.

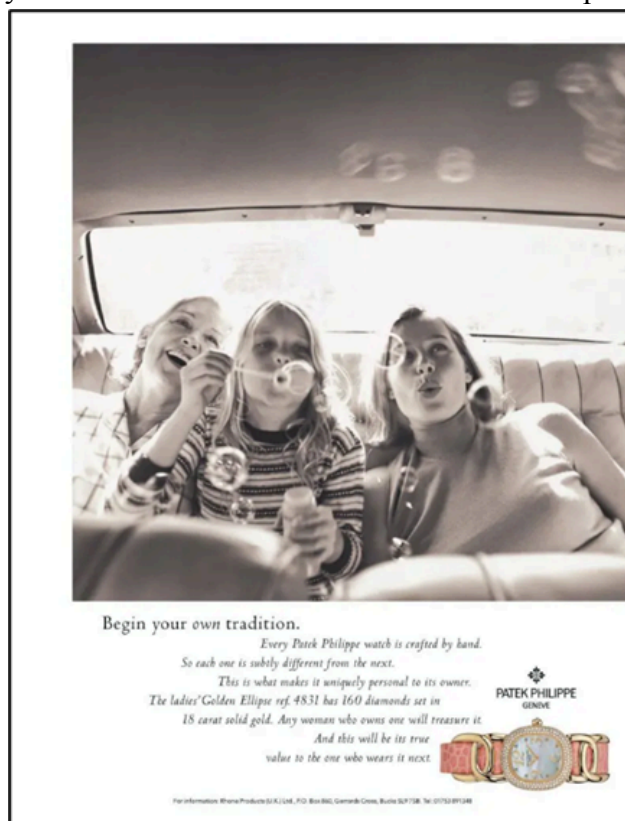


Figure 1. Patek Philippe Advertisement

Patek Philippe (Figure 1) used as a slogan what was originally a headline:

Written in italics to stand out, *own* offered recipients a reimagined perspective on tradition. Usually, when discussing traditions, two main characteristics come to mind:

- a) They are anchored in the past.
- b) They have social relevance.

However, in the analyzed headline, tradition is something to be *begun*, and, at least for the time being, it belongs to someone specific (*own*).

Ordinary people cannot often decide which aspects of their lives will evolve into traditions, passed down through stable values over many generations. Aside from those with significant material resources, individuals targeted by the invitation "*Begin your own tradition*" possess a strong moral character. The future can be uncertain: sometimes, it does not extend beyond a single day. Working now for what will come in twenty years is not something everyone can afford to do—let alone for

what will happen several generations from now. The very duration of a tradition seems to certify the importance of a rule, principle, or custom passed down through many generations. Tradition implies a reality that transcends the individual, relying on a collective that shares a set of values, rules, principles, customs, and so forth. These elements remain constant, and their consistency contributes to the stability of the group, leading to the formation of a shared identity and awareness of that identity. The headline, therefore, suggests to recipients the power to initiate a tradition and, of course, grants them the freedom to decide its content. As long as the meaning of the headline remains somewhat ambiguous (thus stimulating recipients' desire for a complete understanding) and given that the advertisement is not limited to just the headline, it becomes evident that attention must also be given to the other components of the message—such as the text:

"Every Patek Philippe watch is crafted by hand. So each one is subtly different from the next. This is what makes it uniquely personal to its owner. The ladies' Golden Ellipse has 160 diamonds set in 18-carat solid gold. Any woman who owns one will treasure it. And this will be its true value to the one who wears it next."

The text highlights two types of value associated with the watch. The first is its objective, quantifiable financial value, given by the 160 diamonds and the 18-carat solid gold. This value is stable and unwavering. The second is a subjective value—the *true* value—which is enhanced each time the watch is worn by a woman capable of developing the tradition initiated with its purchase. To this value is added the argument of continuity and self-surpassing: the intensification of quality with no visible end to this process.

The text successfully combines two main themes: uniqueness (emphasized through *subtly different...*, *uniquely personal uniqueness...*) and continuity. This combination seems paradoxical, much like the idea of *beginning* a tradition, which at first glance may appear contradictory. This unusual intertwining underscores precisely the tension between the singularity of each moment and the perpetuity of tradition over time.

In the advertisement's image, three women of different ages are sitting on the seat of a car. Most likely, they represent a woman, her mother, and her daughter, who are blowing soap bubbles. Is this merely a game captured in the photograph? What connection might this game have with the tradition mentioned in the headline and the continuity of uniqueness referenced in the text?

Consider Burgin's observation (Burgin: 1982, 39-83) that objects presented in images carry established cultural meanings before appearing in those images. New images can confirm, nuance, or contradict the meanings previously attributed to these objects. Thus, what meanings can be assigned to soap bubbles? Their

surfaces refract light differently, revealing the full spectrum of colors. They vary in size, float in all directions, and, although ephemeral, breaking unexpectedly at times, new bubbles can always be created indefinitely. Could they symbolize feminine charm, always captivating and ever-changing? If so, then the mother is teaching her daughter how to culturally embody womanhood, while the grandmother looks on with a knowing smile. It is not easy to determine the exact meaning of the headline, as doing so might reduce its complexity: the value of the watch (which we now indirectly identify in the headline) increases with each use, representing a subjective value. It speaks of a tradition of refinement, joy, and elegance. The image reflects an element of the text: here are the women who have worn the watch, those who wear it now, and those who will wear it in the future. Various types of relationships unite the components of this advertisement.

The advertisement urges us to direct our gaze toward the future, convinced that the initial value of the watch (18-carat solid gold and 160 diamonds) will be supplemented by another value, called the true value, as the number of its wearers increases. The person who lays the foundation for what will be recognized in the future as a tradition—the custom of wearing valuable objects passed down from generation to generation—has an awareness of belonging to a group (the family) that is stable, confident in its values, and trusting in its ability to perpetuate tradition. This awareness is expressed through an act of will: the initiation of what will become a tradition.

I will now analyze an advertisement from Romania: the 2018 campaign by Meli Melo Paris (Figure 2), a Romanian accessories brand.

About your mother, your sister, or your office colleague. It's about us, today's women—stubborn and multifunctional. Because we have fought for equality and proven that we are true sources of energy and inspiration. Because we can coldly run a business, yet be moved in an instant by our children's smiles; because we handle dozens of tasks at work but still find the energy to prepare dinner for our husband or partner. Because no matter how much we have to do, we always make time to look good. Because the transformations of society have not taken away our femininity! Because we are who we are—perfectly imperfect, yet Unique! *Femme Actuelle* is not an illusion; she is here, ready to conquer the world.

Figure 2. Meli Melo Advertisement

The discourse begins with a direct address, *Femme Actuelle is about You*, which creates an immediate and personal connection with the audience. This strategy increases the receiver's engagement, making them feel part of the message. By listing different roles (*mother; sister; office colleague*), the text highlights the identities of modern women and the relevance of the product to each of these roles.

The modern woman is capable of managing responsibility and stress (*running a business, handling multiple work tasks*), yet at the same time remains sensitive and attentive to personal and family needs (*children's smiles, preparing dinner*). The message emphasizes that despite challenges and evolving social roles, femininity is not compromised but rather celebrated as an essential part of female



identity. *Femme Actuelle is not an illusion; she is here, ready to conquer the world and serves as a call to action*, encouraging women to embrace and harness their power and uniqueness.

The advertisement image presents an intimate scene between a mother and her daughter, seated in a stylized home setting. This décor choice conveys warmth and comfort, elements often associated with home and family life. The background elements (*mirror, floor lamp, vintage furniture accessories*) contribute to creating an elegant yet accessible lifestyle atmosphere. Additionally, the warm color tones enhance the feeling of intimacy and coziness.

The mother, with her hair in curlers and working on a laptop, symbolizes the modern woman who juggles professional and family responsibilities. The daughter,

smiling, looks at her mother with admiration. The little girl dreams of conquering the world in her mother's shoes. She will be the new *Femme Actuelle*, unique and irresistible.

The brand's multimodal approach creates a coherent message about women's ability to balance different roles and responsibilities. The image, with its visual details, not only illustrates but also amplifies the text's statements by presenting concrete examples from the modern woman's daily life. Meli Melo promotes its products while simultaneously building a brand image that deeply resonates with the values and aspirations of its target audience.

3. Logos and Slogans: The Essence of Brand Identity in the Fashion Industry

In the fashion industry, logos and slogans represent more than just design elements or marketing phrases. They are essential for building brand identity and communicating the values and lifestyle associated with the offered products. These elements function as visual and verbal signatures that differentiate brands in a highly competitive market and help establish an emotional connection with consumers.

The logo is the tool that indicates to the audience who is conducting the advertising campaign. In fashion, a strong and memorable logo can become a symbol of status and style, significantly contributing to the recognition and prestige of the brand. For example, the logos of famous brands such as Chanel, Gucci, or Louis Vuitton are instantly recognized worldwide and are associated with luxury, quality, and elegance.

Allen Adamson (Adamson: 2010) emphasizes that in advertising, creation has a solid economic and commercial foundation, and the logo must reflect this. Fashion logos are not just visual signatures, but also emblems of the brand's values and philosophy. For example, the simple and elegant logo of the Chanel brand, featuring two interlocking Cs, symbolizes refinement and simplicity, which are essential to the brand's identity.

Slogans in fashion function as pledges, capturing the essence of the brand in a memorable phrase. They communicate the brand's promises and fundamental values. A classic example is Nike's slogan *Just Do It*, which has transcended the realm of sports and become an inspirational motto for millions of people. In fashion, slogans must be both evocative and relevant to consumers. For instance, L'Oréal's slogan *Because You're Worth It* emphasizes the idea of self-worth and beauty, deeply resonating with its target audience. Similarly, BMW's slogan *The Ultimate Driving Machine* communicates a promise of performance and luxury, which is essential to the brand's identity.

A crucial aspect of branding in fashion is the consistency between the logo and the slogan. These elements must work together to create a unified and strong

brand image. For example, the iconic Adidas logo, featuring three parallel stripes, is complemented by the slogan *Impossible Is Nothing*, which conveys the idea of performance and determination.

As demonstrated by Benoît Heilbrunn's studies (Heilbrunn: 2002, 15-43), brand signatures (logos and slogans) are essential for strengthening brand identity. Logos can be linguistic (Nike), iconic (Apple), or mixed (Mercedes-Benz), and their effectiveness depends on their ability to clearly and memorably communicate the brand's values.

Specific Cases in the Fashion Industry:

Chanel (Logo: two interlocking Cs; Slogan: *Inimitable style*; Values: elegance, refinement, simplicity)

Gucci (Logo: interlocking Gs; Slogan: *Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten*; Values: luxury, tradition, innovation)

Nike (Logo: swoosh; Slogan: *Just Do It*; Values: performance, inspiration, self-improvement)

4. Conclusion

Logos and slogans are fundamental to building and maintaining the identity of fashion brands. They function as signatures and pledges, communicating the brand's values and promises to consumers. The consistency and clarity of these elements are essential for a brand's long-term success in the fashion industry, where competition is fierce and differentiation is key to success.

The detailed exploration of this topic followed several stages: first, we identified the nature and described the object of analysis; then, we examined the relationship between the text and the context in which it is presented, considering the interactive aspects of advertising communication; and finally, we analyzed the effects used in advertising.

The type of discourse analyzed can be described as three aspects of language (semanticity, creativity, and alterity), each with specific roles. Semanticity is articulated at the idiomatic level and forms the foundation for later pragmatic determinations. Advertising creativity focuses on how the text is constructed by exploring linguistic resources that engage both idiomatic competence and the expressive competence of the speaker and recipient. Alterity guarantees objectivity, as the only existing reality is the one that unfolds in the space of intersubjectivity, where meaning is created.

Advertisements represent a specific type of discourse with precise goals: attracting and maintaining consumer attention as well as convincing them to purchase the advertised product. To illustrate how these objectives are achieved, this paper analyzes the language used by advertisers.

In this study, we examined a limited number of Romanian commercials because, in our media, the idea of creativity and humor has only recently started to be seriously explored. Until now, reluctance has led advertising specialists to focus on objective and purely informative messages.

In conclusion, modern advertising is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating social phenomena, a fundamental factor in influencing individuals, their attitudes, and their lifestyles.

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