



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Rhetorical Figures (and other linguistic devices) in the Advertising Discourse

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ABSTRACT

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This research paper is to investigate the usage of linguistic devices in the advertising discourse of the automobile and watch industry. The advertisers as the power behind the discourse apply a variety of linguistic strategies to manipulate the consumer ideology. The study is going to use the three-dimension framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse the text, along with other semiotic elements in the advertising discourse to explore the power dynamic and reveal the discourse’s production and reception process and its sociocultural factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Bloor and Meriel (2013) discussed the rapid global growth of consumerism and technological advances that have increased the channels and modes of discourse (print, radio, video). According to Cook (2001), advertisements inform, persuade, remind, influence, and possibly change opinions, emotions, and attitudes. Advertising discourse employs persuasive language and other appealing semiotic modes such as images and photographs to influence and sometimes mislead customer decisions. The design and use of automotive brand advertising discourse are crucial to the shaping of brand image and market promotion by leaving favourable first impressions and being distinguished from other companies (Freeman, 2005). This paper aims to explore the features of the advertising discourse of different levels of car brands and identify commonalities and differences, and also of watch brands.

Luxury	Bentley
Semi-Luxury	Porsche
Premium	BMW (MINI), Mercedes-Benz
Semi-Premium	Jaguar, Volvo, Land Rover, Alfa Romeo
Mainstream	Toyota, Volkswagen, Chevrolet, Ford, Peugeot, Subaru, Skoda, Nissan, KIA, Honda, Citroen

Figure 1 Hierarchy of car brands

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rhetorical figures in advertising discourse

Durand (1987) emphasises the role of rhetorical figures in conveying persuasive messages to consumers. McQuarrie and Mick (1996) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding rhetorical structure in advertising language and consumer responses including ad preference, ad recall, and attention. Marcoci et al (2014) posit that advertising discourse, with its roots in the consumer society, has evolved to become a unique form of persuasive communication. Marcoci explains that figures like metaphors, hyperbole, and alliterations, serve to captivate the audience's attention and enhance the persuasiveness of the message. Michalik et al (2016) conduct a qualitative investigation on advertising slogans to study the target recipients' responses and suggest that figurative language can aid in sustaining viewers' attention and influencing their mode of consuming behaviours. Miller and Toman (2016) investigate rhetorical figures and other linguistic devices in the design of slogans and find a variety of phonetic, syntactic, and semantic devices that are commonly used. McQuarrie and Mick (1999) explore the visual rhetoric and the contribution of stylistic elements. Kjeldsen (2012) explores pictorial argumentation in advertising, focusing on visual tropes and figures as tools for creating visual argumentation which helps to narrow down possible interpretations to evoke the desired anticipation for products and brands. Meanwhile, studies have shown that metaphor is one of the most effective means of advertising strategies (Švažienė, 2010). Jeong (2008) studies the metaphors of visual forms in an advertising context and suggests that a visual presentation may have stronger persuasive effects due to more cognitive elaboration efforts and is easier to comprehend compared with a verbal metaphor (Kim & Park, 2019).

Multi-modal CDA in advertising discourse

Baig (2013) introduces a three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2014) in his paper to study the discourse of TV, print, and Web advertisement. It goes beyond the textual level and delves into the power relations between producers and consumers.

A multi-modal perspective of CDA further investigates the complex interplay between visuals, language, ideologies, and societal norms within advertising discourse. Silveira (1969) explores the representation of Brazilian women in multimodal advertisements and emphasises the importance of analysing images and linguistic expressions to uncover underlying meanings. Wong (2019) examines the operation of multimodal strategies in luxury property advertising discourse, highlighting how verbal and visual modes can work together to have a synthetic effect.

This research is going to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the textual features of car advertisements?
2. What are the features of the production and reception processes of texts?
3. How do the institutions and social conditions influence the discourse?
4. What are the advertising strategies?

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CDA investigates how power is established and strengthened by discourse practices. The paper focuses on the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) that incorporates semiotic elements and looks at thintersection between semiotic resources and other resources of social practices. The analysis framework originated from Fairclough's (2014) book *Language and Power*. It built a Three-Dimensional Model to conduct a discourse study with a social and political perspective and borrowed the methodology from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which views language as a product of social functions. However, the lack of a cognitive dimension in the DRA is a significant theoretical gap in critical discourse studies. Therefore, this article introduced conceptual operations and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Wodak & Meyer, 2001) from cognitive linguistics to take into account the mental aspects of discourse. The first dimension is the analysis of a "Text" in verbal or visual form, which can be called 'text analysis' or description. This dimension

includes both linguistics analysis and semiotic analysis (genre, discourse, and style). The second dimension ‘processing analysis’ or interpretation focuses on the interactive nature of a discourse fragment by treating it as a discursive practice, analysing how it is produced and received in a particular context. This context is intertextual and extends into wider social aspects through speech acts, coherence, and so on. The final dimension ‘social analysis’ or explanation views discourse as social practice, it exerts ideological effects and contributes to the production and reproduction of texts as an undercurrent force.

At this level, SFL can assist in textual analysis by evaluating text structure, identifying thematic structures, and observing cohesion and coherence, mood, and modality. In the second and third parts, the triad of Field, Tenor, and Mode in SFL can define the context, each corresponding to one of the three meta functions of language (ideational, interpersonal, textual). Field refers to the content of the discourse, that is, what is the topic of this conversation. Tenor points towards the interrelationships between the interlocutors. Mode focused on how the event is taking place and the role language is playing in this specific discourse. Additionally, Multi-modal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) examines how images, photographs, diagrams, and graphics work together to evoke emotions in consumers and encourage them to make a purchase.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

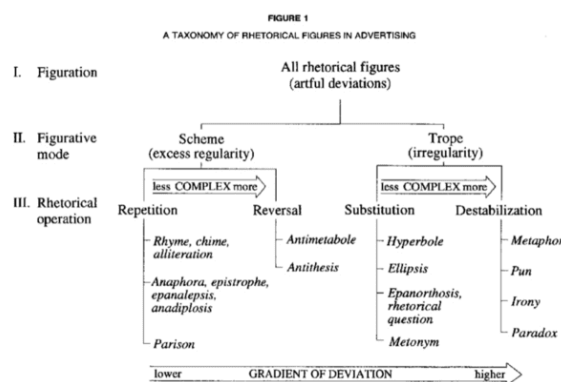
Data were collected from the Internet, including official websites, magazines, news reports, and social media comments. They are mostly multi-modal, employing visual and verbal rhetorical devices.

Coding

Each slogan is coded according to its brand name, figurative mode, and rhetorical operation and contains at least one linguistic device that makes it memorable and persuasive.

Taxonomy

McQuarrie and Mick (1996) explore the use of rhetorical figures in advertising and their impact on consumer response and propose a system that classifies rhetorical figures into two modes: schemes and tropes, which can be further divided into four rhetorical operations (repetition, reversal, substitution, and destabilisation), as shown in the graph:



Scheme indicates over-regularity, including two operations which are repetition and reversal. Alliteration is a typical example of repetition, for instance, in “Chevy puts the purr in the performance”, there is a repetition of the consonant sounds [p] that adds a pleasing rhythm without changing its meaning.

DISCUSSION

5.1. Textual Analysis

5.1.1 Rhetorical Devices

1) Luxury brand

Brand Name	Bentley
Founded Year	1919
Headquarters	Crewe, England
Price Range (RMB)	2.46-12.88 million

Advertising discourse:

(1) Beyond Expectation. Beyond compare.

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition

Figurative mode: scheme

As a luxury car brand, Bentley positions itself as providing automotive products with exceptional craftsmanship and luxurious design. The repetition of “beyond” sets the customer anticipation at a very high level, making a promise about an exceptional driving experience.

BENTLEY. EVERY DRIVER’S DREAM

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

The brand influences people's impression and judgment of the brand's products through emotional resonance with customers. The brand's use of the word "desire" suggests the target customer's need for its product. Meanwhile, in this slogan, the potential customer's attention is drawn to the salient sound pattern of “driver” and “dream”, a prototypical alliteration that is defined as a word-initial repetition of at least one consonant (e.g., live with will)

2) Semi-luxury brand

Brand Name	Porsche
Founded Year	1937
Headquarters	Germany
Price Range (RMB)	246-1288 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Once you buy a Porsche, there is no other kind of car.

Rhetorical Operation: Substitution (Hyperbole)

Figurative mode: trope

Syntactic structure: hypotaxis

Logical meaning: enhancement

Not just a drive, it's a dare. (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

The tagline describes the driving experience of the car, focusing on the description of the sensory experience. In addition, “jealous” is a word that is often used in the advertising slogans of luxury brands.

Popular brands usually emphasise the function of the products, through real-scene simulation to solve various problems in people's daily lives.

3) Premium Brand

Brand Name	BMW (MINI, Rolls-Royce)
Founded Year	1916
Headquarters	Germany
Price Range (RMB)	14 -253 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Driving the world ahead.

Rhetorical Operation: Substitution (Hyperbole)

Figurative mode: trope

As the world's leading provider of products and services for premium personal mobility, the BMW Group is committed to change and innovation in the automotive industry and sets standards for future technologies.

(2) Is it Love? (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Substitution (Rhetorical Question)

Figurative mode: trope

The international slogan "Is it love?" symbolizes MINI's cross-border, cross-racial, and cross-class identity, reflecting MINI's global and inclusive brand image, which demonstrates the MINI brand's slogan "We're Different. But Pretty Good Together"

In the commercial video released by MINI (Mini.com/Big Love), the protagonist drives his MINI car along the street, encountering people with different ethical backgrounds playing along with each other.

(3) Little car. Big heart. (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Reversal (Antithesis)

Figurative mode: scheme

The MINI Cooper range, as a compact car, has a petite and distinctive shape with a rich colour palette. This first part of the tagline is a good representation of the car's exterior features while the second part can open up to further interpretations.

(4) Get used to being followed. (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (pun)

Figurative mode: trope

There are deeper meanings embedded in this tagline by employing puns. This tagline can be interpreted in several ways depending on the meaning of "follow." Lagerwerf (2002) found that compared with non-ambiguous slogans, ambiguous ones can activate more favourable affective responses. Delving into deeper meaning, we can interpret "being followed" as "being a guide, a leader or an example, being imitated."

Another tagline that uses this rhetorical device is "MINI ON", which employs puns both visually and verbally. The abbreviation for "Minion", a fictional cartoon character in yellow created in the *Despicable Me* series by Universal Pictures has been well-received worldwide.



“MINI ON”

Similarly, in the advertisement “See You at the Top” (See in **Appendix**), we can see the double layers of meanings in the word “top,” especially under the explanation of the text below:

“The fast lane is your lane! The MINI Cooper S and MINI Cooper S Clubman, with their cutting-edge direct injection and 1.6-litre twin-turbocharged engine, delivers 5,500 rpm and 175bhp. Chassis with more sporty suspension and thrill beyond the karting, lead the way for those who want to exceed both on the road and in the workplace! Guide you to the top of your racing career (English Translation).”

“Both on the road and in the workplace” serves as a context to explain “top,” sending out a message that the enterprise spirit is bold and pioneering which corresponds to the advertising and competitive spirit of those workplace elites as MINI’s major consumer group.

(5) Think twice, still do it. (See in **Appendix**)
Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (parody)

Figurative mode: trope

This tagline is a successful adaptation of the proverb “Think twice before you do,” indicating that this car is worthwhile buying even after a second thought. Another similar tagline is “Keep calm and buy one” which uses the famous saying “Keep calm and carry on”. Likewise, it emotes that a MINI car can withstand careful consideration. The use of parody is a recurrent advertising strategy found in MINI taglines. Similarly, there is “God save the queen, MINI helps” (See in **Appendix**) adapted from the British National Anthem “God save the queen”.

(6) Great hero with great horsepower.
Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (allusion)

Figurative mode: trope

A particular rhetorical device used in an advertising discourse may be culturally restricted to a specific region, such as the employment of an adaptation of proverbs, an allusion, or an aphorism seen in (5) above, relevant to only native English-speaking countries and regions. Similarly, the successful communication of information in the tagline of (6) requires a knowledge of Chinese history and culture. The figure shown in the picture is Guan Yu, a famous historical figure in the late Eastern Han Dynasty of China. As a military general, he is regarded as a cultural hero in Chinese culture and is often called the “Lord Guan” (Guān Gōng) in Chinese folk culture. There is even a famous Chinese idiom “关公面前耍大刀”, meaning “to wield the broadsword in the presence of Lord Guan”, to describe someone who makes a show of oneself by flaunting in front of an expert. This multi-modal discourse has a picture of Guan Yu standing in a red MINI car with the text “Great hero with great horsepower”. “Great hero” is certainly linked to the great historical figure Guan Yu through a visual application of the rhetorical figure allusion. “Great horsepower” literally evokes the animal horse that was ridden by the hero in ancient times.



“Great hero with great horsepower.”

The phenomenon of "intertextuality" is observed in this discourse. In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), analysing intertextuality means studying how literary texts refer to, react to, or question current social, cultural, and ideological discourses. This multi-modal discourse applies visual and verbal allusion to connect with ancient Chinese folk literature.

While others play playlists, the MINI is its soundtrack.

Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (metaphor)

Figurative mode: trope

In this multi-modal discourse, the image shows a personal stereo playing the song *My Way* by Limp Bizkit, an American nu-metal band whose music style is socially critical and furious and discredited by mainstream music. The stereo’s cord stretches and twists downward with a text in the middle in capital letters “WHILE OTHERS PLAY PLAYLIST, THE MINI IS ITS OWN SOUNDTRACK.”



“While others play playlists, the MINI is its own soundtrack.”

The above image plays an auxiliary role in the text. In the text, the audio track is likened to a runway while in the picture, the earphone cable is likened to a runway.

4) Semi-Premium Brands

Brand Name	Jaguar
Founded Year	1922
Headquarters	UK
Price Range (RMB)	29.98-69.9 万

Brand Name	Land Rover
Founded Year	1948
Headquarters	UK
Price Range (RMB)	25-370万
Parent Company	Jaguar

Phonological devices, characterized by the proper use of speech sounds that are pleasant to the ear and help with the conveyance of ideas, thoughts, and feelings, bring about stylistic effects that contain sound patterning such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and so on.

Advertising discourse:

(1) Don't dream it. Drive it

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant cluster in stressed syllables. In this slogan, the words "dream" and "drive" share the same consonant. This slogan encourages consumers to take action, making their dream of having a Jaguar car a reality.

Grace, space, pace

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Rhyme)

Figurative mode: scheme

Rhyme is defined as the identity of sound between words or the ending of words. Symbolic value and functional value are both highlighted in this tagline. "Grace" is related to the attitude attached to the brand's storytelling strategy as a high-end brand. "Space" and "pace" emphasize the car's function in interior space design and engine performance.

(2) **Jaguar. Born to perform.**

This slogan features its use of verbs, which can direct the reader's attention to the feature the advertiser wants to sell. It helps to convince customers that the product has the power to satisfy their needs and meet their requirements.

(3) **Design. Innovation. Performance.**

This slogan consists of only nouns which stresses the functions and features a company can offer to its target consumers. As it released on its official website: "Designed to create a new benchmark in environmental, societal and community impact for luxury business." Under its Re-imagine global strategy, Jaguar announced its global sustainability targets in March 2022, focusing on a 'two-decade' phase: by 2030, the company will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its operations by 46 percent and average carbon emissions per vehicle in its value chain by 54 percent. By 2039, Jaguar Land Rover aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions across its supply chain, products, and operations.

Brand Name	Alfa Romeo
Founded Year	1910
Headquarters	Italy
Price Range (RMB)	33-44 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Without heart we would be mere machines. (See in **Appendix**)

The Alfa Romeo brand philosophy is deeply rooted in its commitment to passion, performance, design, and emotion. The slogan is not only an emotional expression of its products, but it is also an adherence to the brand's philosophy.

5) Mainstream Brands

Brand Name	Toyota
Founded Year	1937
Headquarters	Japan
Price Range (RMB)	7.1 -104 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Today, Tomorrow, Toyota

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

This slogan is another demonstration of the advertising strategy which applies rhetorical devices to direct attention. Alliteration links the brand with the present and the future. Similarly, the slogan "Drive your dream" by Toyota also used the same linguistic device to remind target consumers of their dreams to link their brand value with consumers' personal lives.

(2) Let's Go Places.

According to Collin's dictionary, "go places" means someone is showing a lot of talent or ability and is likely to become very successful. The slogan positions it as both personal and universal.

(3) Mean but green.

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Rhyme)

Figurative mode: scheme

This slogan is for the promotion of Toyota's first hybrid car: the Prius. To introduce this model, we first look at this multi-modal discourse. The picture shows a white car parked on a field of green grass under the blue sky with the slogan "Go green. Go Prius" (See in **Appendix**) in the middle and text in the lower right corner:

Go on the road trip you always dreamed of without spending your savings on gas. Invest wisely and buy the 3rd Generation Toyota Prius Hybrid, taking you around faster for less.

Make your gas last longer.

Make your savings last longer.

Make your dream come true.

Go Prius.

This advertisement foregrounds the economical and fuel-efficient features of the Prius. Then looking back at the slogan "mean but green," it tries to send out a message that the car is environmentally friendly while also using the rhetorical device of personification to describe the car as being "mean," which means unwilling to spend much money.

Brand Name	Chevrolet
Founded Year	1911
Headquarters	US
Price Range (RMB)	7.8 -30 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Charge the battery. Change the world. (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

In this slogan, the two words “charge” and “change” attract the readers’ attention and connect the following words “battery” and “world” together, visualizing sustainable green earth and the efforts Chevrolet has made on the path towards new energy transformation. The background image on the left shows two hands holding the earth with a paragraph of text below:

The Chevy Volt, with its bold styling and revolutionary E-Flex propulsion system, was an immediate star when it was unveiled at the 2007 North American International Auto Show. Capitalizing on many technologies and innovations developed in the earlier EV1 electric car, it represented the most radical departure from the internal combustion engine in more than a century. The plug-in Volt is designed to use a common 110-volt household plug for charging the battery.

On the right side, there is a brand logo at the top, a lightning bolt in the middle, and a model car at the bottom. Through the picture of handing over the Earth to human beings, the fragility of the Earth can be reflected, which is caused by a series of problems triggered by human activities such as environmental pollution, ecological damage, biodiversity reduction, global warming, and resource shortage. The advert demonstrates Chevrolet's sense of corporate social responsibility and promotes its brand value of striving to improve the world.

Likewise, in the case of “Fresh, fine, and fashionable” (See **Appendix**), the three words share identical consonants. This print advertisement of Chevrolet released in the 20th century introduces the Impala Sport Coupe and its engine, exterior, steering wheel, brakes, and interior space.

(2) **Together Let's Drive.**

This new slogan for Chevrolet since 2023 builds a bond with the customers as if they are stepping on a journey together with the corporation. As the brand explains the idea while designing the slogan: “Let’s’ is an active word. 'Drive' is what we do in our vehicles, but it’s also that internal drive, so it has a nice double meaning. The old one "Find New Roads" launched in 2013, also uses imperative mood to express the innovation and originality of corporate value.

Brand Name	Ford
Founded Year	1903
Headquarters	US
Price Range (RMB)	14-40 万

Advertising discourse:

(1) Anywhere, anytime. (See in **Appendix**)

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

The picture shows a truck parked in the desert with the Grand Canyon in the background. There is also a small village on the left and an eagle flying in the sky above the car. The whole picture is in the colour of tangerine, reminding people of the barrenness and wildness of the desert, corresponding to the text explanation:

Watch our most impressive F-150 Raptor adapt to all-natural conditions -(desert, jungle, and Snow). Equipped with a high-power 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine and a Terrain Management System, the F-150 Raptor takes on all obstacles, taking it to a frightening new level.

It suggests that the truck can adapt to any road condition, no matter in the jungle, snow, or desert as an off-road vehicle.

(2) Ford. Feel the difference.

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition (Alliteration)

Figurative mode: scheme

Similar to the linguistic strategy used in “Jaguar. Born to perform,” this slogan also uses verbs to direct the reader’s attention to the product’s selling point, persuading consumers to buy the car by outputting its symbolic value.

(3) Go Further.

This slogan is another example of the application of imperative mood as a way of persuasion. On the one hand, for the customers, it refers to the range of the car being further extended which means that it can cover more miles and thus offers high mileage.

Additionally, it can also stand for the corporate spirit, that is, Ford continues to explore and forge ahead. The tagline builds a connection and a common goal among its employees, which is internalized into part of its corporate culture.

Brand Name	Citroen
Founded Year	1919
Headquarters	France
Price Range (RMB)	9-20 万

Advertising discourse:

Nothing moves us like Citroën. (See in **Appendix**)

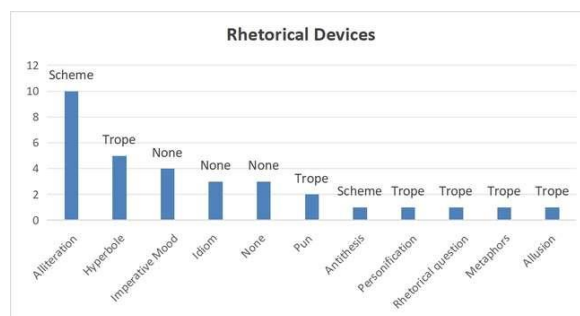
Rhetorical Operation: Substitution (Hyperbole)

Figurative mode: trope

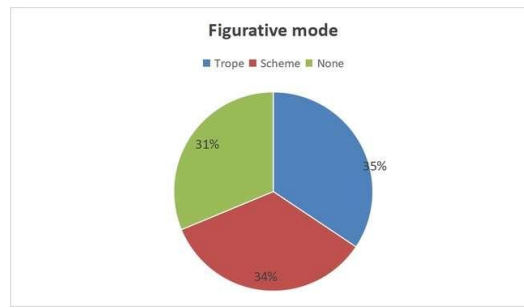
Profound changes in corporate advertising strategy are a vital step toward building an innovative and avant-garde brand identity. In 2022, Citroën unveiled a brand-new brand logo with the slogan “Nothing moves us like Citroën”. “Moves” does not only refer to the transporting nature of a mobile vehicle but also indicates the emotional and sensual experience the brand promises to offer to the consumers once they buy a Citroën car.

Reviewing the advertising slogans of Citroën, the sensual experience outweighs its functional value. In the advertising film “The Power of Calm” for Citroën C4 X Electric car, a boy who is about to play the cello in front of a crowd waits backstage. Gripped by panic, he runs away and gets into his parents’ Citroën car. As his father drives the car, he sits in the backseats and observes everything outside the window in slow motion and freeze-frame.

Further data analysis shows the distribution of rhetorical devices and the proportion of figurative modes.



Rhetorical Devices in Car Advertisements



Figurative Mode in Car Advertisements

According to Berlyne (1971), irregularity in schemes is one of the elements that contribute to the attention-grabbing process. Therefore, in a random glimpse without any intention, schemes are cognitively easier to catch.

It is evident from the charts that the advertisements employ almost equal proportions of schemes, tropes, and non-figurative modes, corresponding to the three most frequently used rhetorical devices alliteration, hyperbole, and imperative mood. Notably, 10 out of the 32 samples apply alliteration to create favourable musical and mnemonic effects.

5.1.2 Thematic Structure

The effect of a tagline can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as consumers’ attitudes toward the ads, the need for cognition (NFC), sentence length, and syntactic structure.

The table analyses the thematic structure of the 32 advertisements in the car industry. It can be seen that most of them are paratactic, which means that advertisers prefer simple sentences to complex or compound sentences as they design their corporate advertising taglines.

example	Parataxis				Hypotaxis			
	elaboration	extension	enhancement	projection	elaboration	extension	enhancement	projection
Beyond Expectation. Beyond compare.		✓						
BENTLEY. EVERY DRIVER'S DREAM	✓							
Chevrolet. An American revolution	✓							
Charge the battery. Change the world.		✓						
Ford. Feel the difference.	✓							
Don't dream it. Drive it.		✓						
Little car. Big heart.		✓						
Long trips.Short distances.		✓						
Think twice. Still do it.		✓						
God save the queen. MINI helps.		✓						

Keep calm and buy one.			✓														
You may get lost, but not in the crowd.			✓														
Skoda. Simply clever.	✓																
Get in. Get happy.			✓														
Volkswagen Polo. Built to protect.	✓																

In terms of syntactic structure, many taglines in this table are made up of only noun phrases or verb phrases, not complete in terms of grammatical structure.

In terms of logical meaning, most taglines take the structure of elaboration or extension. Elaboration can be achieved by providing examples, clarifying, or restating, while extension can be achieved by introducing new elements, exceptions, or alternatives. The samples in elaboration are mostly using the second clause to explain and the first one is usually the name of the brand: “Chevrolet. An American Revolution.” “Ford. Feel the difference.” “Skoda. Simply clever.”

5.1.3 Transitivity

example	process type						particip ant	
	material	men tal	relatio nal	Behavi oral	ver bal	existen tial	er-rol e	ed-rol e
Beyond Expectation. Beyond compare								
BENTLEY. EVERY DRIVER'S DREAM								
Driving the world ahead.	Driving							
Is it Love?			Is					
Chevrolet. An American revolution								
Fresh, fine and fashionable								
Chevy puts the purr in the performance.	puts							
New look, new life, new everything.								
Charge the battery. Change the world.	Charge							
	Change							
Chrysler: Drive = Love	Drive	Love						
Why pay more for a car ?	pay							
Loaded with adrenaline.								
Ford. Feel the difference.				Feel				
Everything we do is driven by you.	do							
	driven							
Quality is Job 1.			is					
Go Further.	Go							
Anywhere, anytime.								

'We make it simple'	make							
New thinking. New possibilities.								
Don't dream it. Drive it.	Drive	drea m						
Grace...space...pace								
Born to perform.	Born							
	perform							
Design. Innovation. Performance.								
Little car. Big heart.								
Long trips. Short distances.								
Think small.		Thin k						
Get used to being followed.	Get used							
	being followed							
Think twice. Still do it.	do	Thin k						
God save the queen. MINI helps.	save							
	helps							
Keep calm and buy one.	keep							
	buy							
Once you buy a Porsche, there is no other kind of car.	buy							
Not just a drive, it's a dare.			is					
Fast, faster, fastest.								
You may get lost, but not in the crowd.	may get lost							
The little big car.								
Drive the future.	Drive							
Skoda. Simply clever.								
Today, Tomorrow, Toyota								
Mean but green – Toyota Prius.								
Who could ask for anything more?								
Drive your dreams.	Drive							
Let's Go Places.	go							
Do something memorable	do							
Get in. Get happy.	get							
Volkswagen Polo. Built to protect.	built							
	protect							

We can see from the table that the er-role and ed-role are absent. Most do not have subjects, or objects (participants), and thus avoid redundancy.

The most frequently used process type is material like “drive”, “buy” and “perform”, followed by the mental type such as “love”, “think” and “dream”. A close examination can reveal that the material types and mental types correspond to the functional value and symbolic value respectively. Many successful slogans manage to combine the two values together: “Drive your dreams.” “Drive the future.” and “Driving the world ahead.”

5.2. Discourse Practice Analysis

According to Fairclough (2014), certain text features can stimulate a specific aspect of MR (‘members’ resources’) and generate interpretations in the relevant discourse type. It draws upon the SFL model of language in the social context in three dimensions: field, tenor, and mode.

Dimensions	Questions	Meta-function
Field (content)	What is being talked about?	Ideational
Tenor (interrelationships)	Who is talking to whom?	Interpersonal
Mode (channel)	How is the activity taking place?	Textual

Field, Tenor, Mode

MR which serves as background knowledge helps the subject to determine the discourse type as a meaning potential that contains the possible vocabulary, social conventions, as well as frames and schemata in a certain domain. A schemata is a representation of a social behaviour mode and a frame is a representation of subject matter.

Situation	Discourse Type
What’s going on?	Contents
Who is involved?	Subjects
What are the relationships between participants?	Relations
What is the role of language?	Connections

Situation and Discourse Type

In the case of automobile advertising taglines, the readers who are exposed to the text will activate their consumption experience through MR and activate the relevant frame (a car product) and schemata (automobile advertising).

In the MINI advertisement, the reader will see that in the text section, there is a slogan “Think twice. Still do it.” in capital letters and a few lines at the bottom:

THE NEW MINI ROADSTER. ANOTHER DAY. ANOTHER ADVENTURE.

Many things come out in a MINI Roadster going 80 km/h: Adrenaline, excitement...and now even an automatic rear spoiler. See what this MINI will bring out in you. Ask your nearest MINI dealer for a test drive today and get ready to be surprised. www.MINI.com.

The readers, upon reading this page, know what to expect in this MINI advertisement.

Moreover, MR is not just about these cognitive resources, but also the condition of their use. Advertisers use minimal word combinations in their advertising discourse to decrease the cognitive efforts required.

The “one-sidedness” nature

The producer-consumer relationship in power dynamics is rather unbalanced. Producers wield power because they have the sole right to design the advertisement, how to represent their products, and what kind of mode (radio, TV, magazine, etc). Also, unlike face-to-face communication, there is no immediate feedback for the advertisers to flexibly change their discourse to fit into the specific needs of their interlocutor.

Designed for the masses

Like all the other types of media discourse, advertising faces the public. The producer cannot select its listeners, readers, or audiences. But every corporate discourse, no matter how inclusive and diversified in content or form, must have a specific group of target consumers in mind.

5.3. Social Practices Analysis

The social practice is the underlying force that determines the discourse practice, that is, the production and reception of text. It shapes MR ('members' resources'), people's representation of the world, their values, beliefs, and knowledge. There are three levels as shown in the table which enact power within and behind discourse.

Social conditions	
Level 1	the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs
Level 2	the social institution which constitutes the wider matrix for the discourse
Level 3	society as a whole, which corresponds to three agents in the discourse

Agents	
Level 1	the situational agent that exerts power within the discourse
Level 2	the institutional agent behind the discourse
Level 3	the societal agent behind the discourse

The car industry has been stratified into Luxury Brands, Semi-luxury Brands, Premium Brands, Semi-luxury Brands, and Mainstream brands according to their product pricing, target audience, and brand positioning. Compared with mainstream brands, the symbolic value of luxury products is superior to their functional value (Belk, 1985).

Development Status of the Automotive Industry

1) Environment Protection and Electrification Transformation

The automotive industry is standing at the "crossroads" of electrification transformation, and the market needs to redefine the superiority of traditional luxury brands in the fuel-car era.

Ultra-luxury car brands are also making positive changes in the face of the electrification wave. Bentley presents its 'Beyond100' business strategy, centred on the concept of sustainability. A plug-in hybrid option will be available for all models by 2025 and the entire product range will be purely electric by 2030.

Premium car Brand BMW also makes great technological progress in the scale of electrification. Since 2016, the BMW Group has launched seven models with purely electric drive or plug-in hybrid solutions combining an internal combustion engine and an electric motor.

Jaguar Land Rover develops plug-in electric hybrids and strives to provide seamless charging experiences globally. Before 2030, Range Rover, Discovery and Defender collections will offer a pure-electric range, while Jaguar will be entirely electric. Also, as a leading automotive company campaigning against climate change, it attended the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021 and signed the Glasgow Declaration.

Ford Motor Company is pursuing leadership roles in electrification. According to its 2024 Annual Integrated Report, it aims to offer a range of powertrain options including gasoline, hybrid, and fully electric vehicles (EVs) to global customers. Meanwhile, it partnered with Tesla in North America to gain access to over 15,000 Tesla Superchargers.

Citroën has also launched a new brand philosophy 'Power to the People' - reaffirming its commitment to making electrification accessible to all. It provides 100%-electric vehicles and hybrid versions of the New C5 Aircross and New C5 X, which is its new flagship model.

2) Digitization

As digitization sweeps the global mobile landscape, the trend is to make mobile life simpler, safer, and more convenient. As a result, to inspire a whole new customer base, automotive companies are committed to expanding their technological expertise.

Development Status of the Watch Industry

In recent years, China has played a crucial role in driving growth in the mechanical watch and luxury goods industry, greatly influencing the performance of luxury brands. The digitization trend is evident both in the car industry and the watch industry. Mechanical watches have a long history of technical and design evolution spanning centuries, which can sometimes impede innovation.

High-end Luxury Watches	Vacheron Constantin
Luxury Watches	OMEGA
	Rolex
Basic Luxury Watches	Longines
	Tag Heuer
Smartwatch	Apple
	Samsung
	Xiaomi

Hierarchy of Watch Brands

18 samples are collected from the official websites with images, texts, and other semiotic elements that employ visual and verbal rhetorical devices.

Device	Scheme or trope	Example	Brand name
Metaphor	trope	Elegance is an attitude.	Longines
Metaphor	trope	When you take your life in your hands, you need a good watch on your wrist.	OMEGA
Metaphor; Image Schema (a link schema)	trope	The link between past and the future	OMEGA
Metaphor	trope	A crown for every achievement.	Rolex
Metaphor	trope	You can easily own time, but you cannot easily own Vacheron Constantin.	Vacheron Constantin
Metaphor	trope	The future of health is on your wrist.	Apple Watch
Pun	trope	In the America's Cup, there is no second.	Rolex
Pun	trope	Newk knows what it takes to get to the top.	Rolex
Pun	trope	Don't crack under pressure.	Tag Heuer
Pun	trope	Don't just watch. Pay quicker. Don't just watch. Dream bigger. Don't just watch. Push harder.	Samsung

Hyperbole	trope	In all the world, the most wanted watch.	OMEGA
Hyperbole	trope	You've never seen a watch like this.	Apple Watch
Repetition	scheme	The great strength of a Rolex is strength.	Rolex
Repetition	scheme	Do better if possible and that is always possible.	Vacheron Constantin
Imperative mood	none	Live for greatness.	Rolex
Imperative mood	none	Go smart, live more.	Xiaomi
Antithesis	scheme	Big Screen. Huge Impact.	Apple Watch
Personification	none	The watch that knows you best.	Samsung

Slogans in Watch Advertisements

Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (metaphor)

Figurative mode: trope

(1) Elegance is an attitude. (See in **Appendix**)

The source domain “elegance” is expressed as the target domain “attitude.” A thorough interpretation of this slogan requires delving into the complex composition and in-depth understanding of the source domain and finding an explanation of attitude in combination with its corporate culture. Longines, a renowned Swiss watch brand, was founded in 1832. As a member of the Swatch Group, it has over 190 years of history and is recognised for its exceptional craftsmanship, elegant design, superb craftsmanship, and outstanding performance. Other semiotic elements of the advertisement include the brand flying hourglass logo, an autograph, and photography by the famous actor Kate Winslet, utilising the celebrity endorsement effect to symbolise elegance.

(2) When you take your life in your hands, you need a good watch on your wrist. (See in **Appendix**)

This headline by OMEGA uses an ontological metaphor that lacks a clearly defined target domain. It categorises the abstract source domain into concrete entities such as objects, substances, and containers. “Life”, as an abstract concept, is transformed into some concrete object that the readers can hold in their hand as they wear an OMEGA watch. The metaphor conveys a sense of poise and confidence to influence consumer belief and affect.

The main body of this discourse further demonstrates the headline:

When the divers of Operation Janus spent eight days working on the sea bed below the Gulf of Ajaccio, they were all equipped with the same watch; the Omega Seamaster 600, our professional diver's watch. When Commander Cousteau needed a watch for his experiments on man's ability to work at depths of 1,000 ft., he also used the 600.

The 600 is carved from one block of steel, equipped with an immensely strong tempered glass, and has a special twin-locking crown. It is waterproof to 2,000 ft.

Besides the 600, Omega builds a wide range of waterproof watches, all of which go through severe tests before they leave the factory. In pressure tanks, the watches are subjected to the equivalent of a leap from the bottom of the sea to twice the height of Mt. Everest; and this leap is repeated for hours on end.

Is it any wonder that experienced professionals and demanding amateurs have faith in the waterproof qualities of their Omega watches?

The text explains how the Omega Seamaster 600 watch can withstand extreme conditions by recounting the story of the divers from Operation Janus. These divers used the watch during their underwater tasks, conducting experiments at depths of 1,000 feet.

Similarly, the slogan “You can easily own time, but you cannot easily own Vacheron Constantin.” by Vacheron Constantin also uses an ontological metaphor to give time a physical depiction TIME IS A POSSESSION. By equalising time with a Vacheron Constantin watch, the product is given a timeless value. Also, the slogan “The future of health is on your wrist.” by Apple adopts the same rhetorical device by categorising health into a concrete entity people can hold in their hands.

Unlike the traditional luxury watch brands which put focus on their symbolic value of history and craftsmanship, the smartwatch brand foregrounds their functional values.

(3) The link between the past and the future. (See in **Appendix**)

Image schemas are abstract representations of our cognitive structures that stem from our daily interactions and observations of the world. This slogan uses a UNITY schema of the link to give physical properties to abstract entities “past” and “future” so that the OMEGA watch serves as an agency, bridging the past and the future.

(4) A crown for every achievement. (See in **Appendix**)

The Crown is a metaphor for recognition. The crown icon in the logo represents the quality, precision, and perfection that the brand pursues. As the central element of the logo, it symbolizes Rolex's dominant position in the watchmaking industry, as well as the brand's reputation for honour and prestige.

Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (pun)

Figurative mode: trope

(1) In the America's Cup, there is no second. (See in **Appendix**)

This advertisement is composed of the verbal and visual sections. The verbal part includes the title “In the America's Cup, there is no second.” and the text:

On this blue-water course, the winner takes all. Then, timing is priceless, if it makes the difference between winning and losing. This may explain why the superb Rolex Submariner has been the one chronometer worn by all America's Cup defenders since 1958.

The image of a sailboat surfing in the sea as the background and a ROLEX Submariner Watch in the centre, with the brand logo on the right and the text:

The Rolex Submariner Date, official America's Cup watch, self-winding superlative chronometer, pressure-proof to 660 feet. In stainless steel with matching bracelet (1680/9315) \$565. In 18kt, yellow gold (1680/9290) \$4,125. For your America's Cup 1977 Handbook, see your authorized Rolex jeweller.

“Second” can refer to the smallest time unit in a watch while also denotes the person that stands next to the champion. The first layer of meaning refers to the scarcity of time as a precious resource, and the second layer indicates the winner in the game is the spotlight.

(2) **Don't crack under pressure.**



“Don't crack under pressure.”

The slogan not only exhibits the life attitude and sportsmanship of resilience and toughness in the face of adversity by featuring the legendary football player Cristiano Ronaldo.

(3) Don't just watch. Pay quicker. Don't just watch. Dream bigger. Don't just watch. Push harder. (See in **Appendix**)

The word "watch" in this series of slogans serves as a pun, pointing to both the product and the reader. It suggests the watch's various intelligent functions such as convenient payment and health monitoring and thus it's more than a time reminder.

Rhetorical Operation: Substitution (Hyperbole)

Figurative mode: trope

(1) In all the world, the most wanted watch. (See in **Appendix**)

This slogan manages to create a first-class brand image using the rhetorical device of hyperbole, making the reader interested in the product.

(2) You've never seen a watch like this. (See in **Appendix**)

As illustrated by the image, the watch is equipped with a colourful wristband and smart display screen. The Apple Watch aims to stress the intelligent technology behind the watch makes it exceptional.

Rhetorical Operation: Repetition

Figurative mode: scheme

(1) The great strength of a Rolex is strength. (See in **Appendix**)

This slogan applies both the rhetorical devices of pun and repetition. The first "strength" refers to the quality of a Rolex watch that gives it an advantage and the second refers to the physical strength of the watch that can function under extreme environments. The image features the hands of Jean-Claude Killy, an alpine skiing World Cup racer who has achieved success in many walks of life such as making movies and starting up business.

(2) Do better if possible and that is always possible.

The repetition of "possible" indicates the brand's dedication to constantly improving its workmanship and unlocking its potential in new possibilities. It adds a rhythmic and melodic quality to speech or writing, improving the musicality to make the message more compelling.

Rhetorical Operation: Reversal (Antithesis)

Figurative mode: scheme

(3) Big Screen. Huge Impact. (See in **Appendix**)

Similar to the MINI car advertisement "Little Car. Big Heart.", the slogan puts two subjects in juxtaposition, forming a sense of symmetry. Contrasting elements are organised in a parallel structure, which generates a pleasing and memorable rhythm that enhances the overall rhetorical impact.

The largest, most advanced Always-On Retina display yet makes everything you do with your Apple Watch Series 7 bigger & better.

The slogan tries to persuade that an Apple Watch with a big screen can make a huge impact on their everyday lives by providing multiple intelligent functions.

Non-figurative mode: Imperative mood

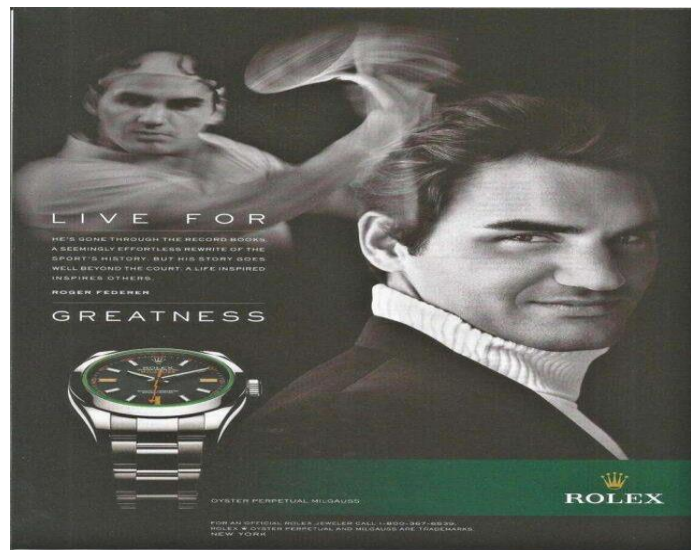
Imperative mood does not belong to one of the rhetorical operations. It uses a manner of command to urge the readers to take action, creating a sense of authority.

(1) Live for greatness.

The advertisement is constructed in a biography style with the title “Live for greatness,” featuring the versatile tennis player Roger Federer who has broken a series of records and is one of the highest-paid athletes in the world:

He’s gone through the record books. A seemingly effortless rewrite of the sport’s history. But his story goes well beyond the court. A life inspired inspires others.

The discourse leads the reader to resonate with the athlete’s legendary life story and identify with the brand’s core values. Therefore, “greatness” refers both to the spokesman’s remarkable success and the brand’s exceptional craftsmanship in producing luxury watches of the highest quality.



“Live for greatness.”

(2) Go smart, live more. (See in **Appendix**)

The slogan by Xiaomi promotes the smart life brought by the Mi Smart Band. It is an invitation to the readers to engage in the user experience and bond with the brand.

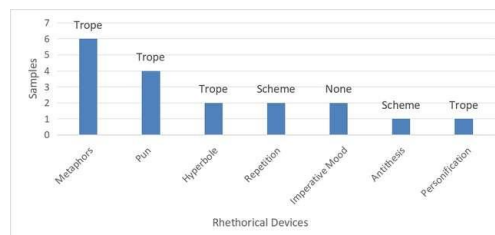
Rhetorical Operation: Destabilization (personification)

Figurative mode: trope

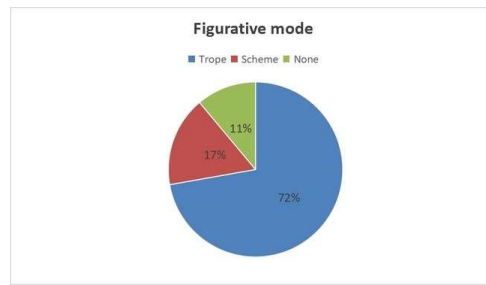
The watch that knows you best. (See in **Appendix**)

In this slogan, the smartwatch is given life and capable of understanding its owner’s needs through measuring heart rate and body composition, running recording, and sleep monitoring as shown in the image. The use of personification vividly shows the advantages of the watch as an electronic device that applies to AIT (artificial intelligence technology).

Further data analysis shows the distribution of rhetorical devices and the proportion of figurative modes in this advertisement.



Rhetorical Devices in Watch Advertisements



Figurative Mode in Watch Advertisements

Additionally, alliteration can be salient in cognition and perception. In the processing of the slogan information, we observe the construal in cognitive linguistics as the ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways through specificity, different mental scanning, directionality, vantage point, figure-ground segregation, etc. The type of operations here is called attention, or salience.

In advertising discourse, ‘we’ usually refers to manufacturers, and ‘I’ frequently points to the advertiser, the expert, the narrator of experiences, and the motivator behind the purchase of a product. The person referred to as ‘he/she’ is often someone who did not use the product, creating a sense of distance through this pronoun, and is observed conspiratorially by ‘you and I’. The use of ‘you’ in ads has double indexicality, referring both to the receiver and the character.

It can be observed from the charts that watch advertisements tend to adopt more tropes than schemes and non-figurative modes, with the three most frequently used rhetorical devices being metaphors, puns, and hyperbole. Compared with the car advertisements that apply alliteration in 10 out of the 32 samples to create favourable musical and mnemonic effects, the watch ads use metaphors in 6 out of 18 samples to create strong visual images and connect with the audience's emotions.

Notably, in the watch advertising discourse, the institutional agent (the watch brand) tends to choose a socially prestigious figure to play the role of situational agent to represent their brand value, referred to as the Celebrity Endorsement Effect.

Slogan	Character Name	Profile
Elegance is an attitude.	Kate Winslet	Actor
Live for greatness.	Roger Federer	Tennis Player
Don’t crack under pressure.	Cristiano Ronaldo	Football Player
The great strength of a Rolex is strength.	Jean-Claude Killy	Alpine Skiing World Cup racer
Newk knows what it takes to get to the top.	John Newcombe	Tennis Player

We can see from the table above that luxury brand watch brands tend to select a celebrity that makes great achievements and fits with its value.

2. CONCLUSION

The paper investigated the use of linguistic devices in commercial advertising through the three-dimensional model of CDA in textual analysis, discourse practice analysis, and social practice analysis.

Advertisers frequently use rhetorical devices in corporate communication to enhance the audience's perception of their products. The commonly accepted advertising strategy is to keep adverts simple to minimise consumers' cognitive processing efforts, enhance readability, and encourage them to read through and remember the content.

We find that the corporate discourse is very focused on the output of product values. Luxury brand cars like Bentley and Porsche promote that their product exceeds the essential travel features and emphasise the sensual experience and the symbolic value behind the brand.

Constructing an evocative brand story is also an integral part of the marketing strategy to strengthen the products with the characteristics of "rare, precious, and valuable". Automobile manufacturers must face the challenge of transforming from fuel automobiles to electric vehicles while the watch brand must face the new trend represented by smartwatches like the Apple Watch.

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