

Rhetorical Devices in Advertising Slogans: A Competitiveness Viewpoint

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Abstract—Due to increasing amount of competition as well as a colossal amount of information people come across, nowadays are needed such advertisements that leave a strong impression on potential customers. Previous research has suggested rhetoric can be used to make ads more competitive. The aim of this report is to comment on the usage, as well as the effectiveness of rhetorical figures in advertising. A sample of 815 advertising slogans was gathered from various Bulgarian media. The slogans were analyzed for the presence or absence of rhetorical figures. The results of the study indicate that rhetorical devices are frequently employed when creating advertising slogans. The most commonly used rhetorical figures are metaphor, epithet and appeal. The product categories in which rhetorical devices are most frequently applied are Foods, Beverages and Fashion. The retailing sector is the only one in which fewer than half of the examined slogans rely on the usage of rhetoric. To assess the effectiveness of rhetoric in advertising, an online survey was developed. Three hundred respondents participated. They were asked to evaluate three pairs of advertising slogans. In each of these pairs, the first slogan was taken in its original form - containing a rhetorical device. The second slogan was transformed in such a manner that the rhetorical figure was removed, while the meaning of the slogan was preserved. The respondents had to assess the slogans according to seven criteria. According to the results of this study, the usage of rhetorical figures increases slogans' perceived persuasiveness, creativity, pleasantness, comprehensibility and memorability. The employment of rhetorical devices increase the competitiveness of advertising communication.

Keywords - advertising slogans, rhetorical figures

I. INTRODUCTION

Never before have people been exposed to such a constant stream of advertising as we witness today. Advertising messages are all around us - on television, radio, newspapers and online where millions of us spend most of our time.

With the advancement of technology, companies will have an increasingly sophisticated and precise arsenal of instruments with which to reach consumers.

However, this rapid process of digitization poses some risks. Every day people are faced with such a colossal amount of information that they often fail to comprehend it.

Advertisements can be easily avoided by potential users. The skepticism that users feel towards advertisements makes them uninterested in them. [1]

Today, more than ever before, advertisements which can easily capture the minds of consumers and leave an impression on them for as long as possible are needed.

A relatively quick, easy, and cost-effective way to achieve this objective is to apply the methods of rhetoric to advertising slogans.

Previous research on the topic can be divided into two broad groups: publications which explore the use of rhetoric in advertising and those which attempt to measure the impact of rhetorical figures in advertising.

The present study aims to examine the impact of rhetorical figures in Bulgarian advertising slogans.

The research goal of this paper is to determine whether the application of rhetorical devices to advertising slogans makes the advertising slogan more competitive. To achieve this goal, seven criteria which make the slogan more competitive have been chosen to be examined.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology consists of five phases.

A. Phase One

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The first phase involves building a database of slogans. The slogans were accumulated from the following traditional and digital media: television, newspapers and magazines, radio, billboards and advertising panels, the Internet, social networks.

B. Phase Two

The second phase is the grouping of slogans by product categories. After collecting the slogans, they were distributed into ten different product categories: Food, Beverages, Cosmetics, Fashion, Technology, Automobiles, Medicine and Pharmacy, Retailing, Tourism and Catering, Financial Services and Others.

C. Phase Three

The third phase is content analysis. It consists of the following steps:

- Analysis of the length of the slogans - the average length of the slogans as a whole as well as by product category is calculated

- Ratio of slogans in Bulgarian and in a foreign language - the ratio of slogans in Bulgarian and in a foreign language by product category is determined. Conclusions about the usage of foreign language in Bulgarian advertising are drawn.

D. Phase Four

The next phase of the research methodology includes a detailed rhetorical analysis of advertising slogans:

- The type of rhetorical figures used in Bulgarian advertising is determined; conclusions are made about which tools of rhetoric are preferred as a whole by advertising specialists.

- A rhetorical profile is outlined for each product category:

- The percentage of advertising slogans which use figurative language is determined.

E. Phase Five

The next phase of the research methodology is the development of a questionnaire which aims to gauge the attitudes of respondents towards slogans with and without rhetorical figures.

The sample size of the survey is 300 respondents. 50,7 % of the respondents are female and 49,3 % - male.

The data was collected from 08.10.2022 until 11.11.2022.

The dimensions on the basis of which the slogans are evaluated are adapted from previous studies such as [2], [3], [4], [5]. Respondents are asked to give their assessment of two versions of the same advertising slogan. In the first version, the slogan is presented in the way it appears in the original advertisement from which it was taken - containing a rhetorical figure. In the second

version, the rhetorical figure is removed, but the meaning of the slogan is kept.

The first pair respondents are asked to evaluate is:

Slogan 1.1: Вода от сърцето на Родопите (BG) vs Slogan 1.2: Вода от Родопите (BG).

Slogan 1.1: Water from the heart of the Rhodope (EN) vs Slogan 1.2: Water from the Rhodope (EN)

The second pair respondents are asked to evaluate is:

- Slogan 2.1: Кредит на мига (BG) vs Slogan 2.2: Кредит веднага (BG)
- Slogan 2.1: Credit on the spot (EN) vs Slogan 2.2: Credit immediately (EN).

The third pair of respondents are asked to evaluate is:

- Slogan 3.1: Пералнята живее по-дълго с Калгон (BG) vs Slogan 3.2: Пералнята работи по-дълго с Калгон (BG)
- Slogan 3.1: Credit on the spot (EN) vs Slogan 2.2: Credit immediately (EN).

Respondents are asked to rate the slogans according to the following criteria: Originality, Creativity, Persuasiveness, Comprehensibility, Likability, Memorability, Degree to which the slogan incites a purchase.

The lowest grade they can rate a slogan is one and the highest - seven.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Linguistic Characteristics of Slogans

The linguistic characteristics of the analyzed slogans are examined by product categories.

The highest percentage of advertising messages in a language other than Bulgarian was recorded in the Tourism and Hospitality sector (38.96%). This is not surprising, considering that tourism slogans are aimed not only at the local population, but at guests of the country as well, who may not speak Bulgarian.

In second place is the field of fashion (34.54%), and in third place with a significantly lower percentage is the product category Beverages (20.40%).

Advertising specialists least often use slogans in a foreign language when they aim to promote products and services in the field of medicine and pharmacy 3.80 %. Slogans which advertise financial services rarely use a language different than Bulgarian as well. This can be explained with the higher level of complexity these two product categories possess.

B. Rhetorical Analysis of Slogans

A rhetorical analysis of advertising slogans is conducted. The relative share of slogans with and without

rhetorical figures in the Bulgarian advertising space as a whole, as well as by product categories, is calculated.

The majority of slogans - 63.43% contain at least one rhetorical device. It can be concluded that marketers frequently use the tools of rhetoric in the Bulgarian advertising space.

The relative shares of rhetorical figures in different product categories are examined (Table I).

TABLE I: RELATIVE SHARES OF RHETORICAL FIGURES BY PRODUCT CATEGORY

Product Category	Slogans with a rhetorical figures
Foods	83.88 %
Beverages	83.67 %
Fashion	61.82 %
Cosmetics	72.22 %
Technology	59.70 %
Automobiles	71.43 %
Medicine and Pharmacy	63.80 %
Tourism and Hospitality	61.03 %
Financial Services	61.53 %
Retailing	46.29 %
Other	50.79 %

Advertising specialists use rhetorical tools most often when promoting food (83.88%) and beverages (83.88%).

About 60% of the analyzed slogans use figures of speech in the following sectors: Fashion (61.82%), Technology (59.70%), Medicine and Pharmacy (63.80%), Tourism and Hospitality (61.03%), and Financial Services (61.53%). A lower share is observed in the Other product category (50.79%).

The field of retailing is the only one in which less than 50% of the slogans contain a rhetorical figure.

The relative shares of different rhetorical figures in Bulgarian advertising slogans are examined (Table 2).

The most common tool of rhetoric is metaphor. This regularity confirms the observations made in previous studies about the fundamental role of metaphor in advertising [6], [7].

The appeal (21.47%) and the epithet (10.30%) rank second and third in terms of representation in advertising messages in our country. Other common rhetorical figures are exclamation, hyperbole, and gradation.

Synecdoche, oxymoron and pun can be found extremely rarely in the advertising space in Bulgaria (0.49%).

Epistrophe and neologism are present in only 0.36% of slogans.

In the next phase of the study, 300 respondents are asked to compare the three pairs of slogans.

TABLE II RELATIVE SHARES OF DIFFERENT RHETORICAL FIGURES

Type of rhetorical figure	Relative Share
Metaphor	44,90 %
Appeal	21,47 %
Epithet	10,30 %
Exclamation	7,11 %
Hyperbole	3,92 %
Gradation	2,57 %
Rhetorical question	2,45 %
Antithesis	2,33 %
Anaphora	1,84 %
Personification	1,84 %
Parallelism	1,59 %
Comparison	1,47 %
Rhyme	1,10 %
Application	0,98 %
Synecdoche	0,49 %
Oxymoron	0,49 %
Pun	0,49 %
Epiphora	0,36 %
Neologism	0,36 %

C. Comparison Between the Average Scores of Slogans

Comparison between the average scores for Slogans 1.1: "Water from the heart of the Rhodope Mountain" and Slogan 1.2: "Water from the Rhodope Mountain".

In regards to originality, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,56. The mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,27. A difference of 2,29 is observed. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing Creativity, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,48, while the mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 2,97. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,51. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to persuasiveness, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,61. The mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,35. A difference of 2,26 is noted. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing comprehensibility, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,68, while the mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,32. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,36. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to pleasantness, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,87. The mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,32. A difference of 2,55 is detected. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

With reference to memorability, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,69, while the mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,42. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,27.

The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing the degree to which the slogan incites a purchase, the mean score for Slogan 1.1 is 5,49, while the mean score for Slogan 1.2 is 3,10. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,39. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

The largest difference between the mean score for Slogan 1.1 and Slogan 1.2 can be observed in regards to memorability. When fast moving consumer goods are being advertised, the usage of rhetorical figures has the biggest impact on how well the slogan is being memorized.

The smallest difference between the mean score for Slogan 1.1 and Slogan 1.2 can be seen in relation to persuasiveness. When promoting fast moving consumer goods, advertising specialists should keep in mind that applying the tools of rhetoric has the smallest effect on how persuasive a slogan is.

The T-criterion of Wilcoxon test is preformed and it shows that all the differences for all seven criteria are statistically significant. All the differences point favourably towards Slogan 1.1.

The differences between the ratings of Slogan 1.1 and 1.2 are large enough to argue that the usage of rhetorical figures makes Slogan 1.1 was rated as more original, more creative, persuasive, understandable, pleasant, memorable, and encouraging to purchase.

Therefore, it can be argued that the employment of rhetorical figures makes advertising slogans more competitive on the basis of all seven criteria which were chosen for this study.

Slogan 2.1 and Slogan 2.2 are compared in the same manner.

Comparison between the average scores for Slogans 2.1: "Credit on the spot" and Slogan 2.2: "Credit immediately".

In regards to originality, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 4,99. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,27. A difference of 2,29 is observed. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing Creativity, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 4,85, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,57. The difference between the two mean scores is 1,28. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to persuasiveness, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,03. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 4,03. A difference of 1,00 is noted. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing comprehensibility, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,08, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 5,49. The difference between the two mean scores is -0,41. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to pleasantness, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 4,65. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,85. A difference of 0,80 is detected. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

With reference to memorability, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 4,86, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,96. The difference between the two mean scores is 0,90. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing the degree to which the slogan incites a purchase, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 4,68, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,84. The difference between the two mean scores is 0,84. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

The largest difference between the mean score for Slogan 2.1 and Slogan 2.2 can be observed in regards to originality. When financial services are being advertised, the usage of rhetorical figures has the biggest impact on how original the slogan is perceived to be.

The smallest difference between the mean score for Slogan 2.1 and Slogan 2.2 can be seen in relation to comprehensibility. When promoting financial services, advertising specialists should keep in mind that applying the tools of rhetoric has the smallest effect on how comprehensive a slogan is. It is important to note that, according to the results of the study, rhetorical figures make the slogan less understandable.

The T-criterion of Wilcoxon test is preformed and it shows that all the differences for all seven criteria are statistically significant.

The differences between the scores for Slogan 2.1 and 2.2 are large enough to conclude that slogans which use figurative language are perceived as more original, creative, persuasive, pleasant, memorable, and inciting to purchase.

For all criteria, except for comprehensibility, the difference is in favor of the first slogan which contains figurative language. The use of rhetorical figures has its price when advertising financial services - it makes the advertisement less understandable to people.

The usage of rhetorical figures increases the competitiveness of advertising slogans in the sphere of financial services for all criteria, with the exception of comprehensibility.

Slogan 3.1 and Slogan 3.2 are compared in the same manner.

Comparison between the average scores for Slogans 3.1: "The washing machine lives longer with Calgon" and Slogan 3.2: "The washing machine works longer with Calgon".

In regards to originality, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,91. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,54. A difference of 2,37 is observed. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing Creativity, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,76, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,34. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,42. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to persuasiveness, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,70. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,66. A difference of 2,04 is noted. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing comprehensibility, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,74, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 5,26. The difference between the two mean scores is 0,48. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

In regards to pleasantness, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,72. The mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,41. A difference of 2,31 is detected. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

With reference to memorability, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,90, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,38. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,52. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

When comparing the degree to which the slogan incites a purchase, the mean score for Slogan 2.1 is 5,77, while the mean score for Slogan 2.2 is 3,28. The difference between the two mean scores is 2,49. The level of significance is 0,000, therefore we accept the Alternative Hypothesis (H1).

The largest difference between the mean score for Slogan 2.1 and Slogan 2.2 can be observed in regards to memorability. When everyday life products are being advertised, the usage of rhetorical figures has the biggest impact on how well the slogan is remembered.

The smallest difference between the mean score for Slogan 2.1 and Slogan 2.2 can be seen in relation to comprehensibility. When promoting products for everyday life, advertising specialists should keep in mind that applying the tools of rhetoric has the smallest effect on the degree to which a slogan is understood. It is important to note that, according to the results of the study, rhetorical figures make the slogan more understandable.

The T-criterion of Wilcoxon test is preformed and it shows that all the differences for all seven criteria are statistically significant.

All differences are statistically significant and in favor of the first slogan, which uses figurative language. With the help of rhetorical tools, advertisements become more original, creative, persuasive, enjoyable, memorable and, last but not least, more inciting to purchase.

It can be argued that rhetorical figures prove to be an amplifier of slogans' competitiveness in regards to all seven criteria chosen for this study.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Rhetorical figures have a beneficial effect when advertising fast-moving consumer goods, financial services and household goods.

Through the usage of rhetorical figures advertising slogans in the field of fast-moving consumer goods, such as mineral water, prove to be original, creative, persuasive, enjoyable, memorable and, last but not least, more inciting to purchase when compared to slogans without rhetorical figures.

By applying the tools of rhetoric, advertising slogans in the financial services sector turn out to have increased originality, creativity, persuasiveness, enjoyment, memorability and incentive to purchase.

It is important to note that when the object of advertising is products and services in the field of finance, the use of rhetorical devices makes the slogan less understandable.

Rhetorical figures make advertising slogans for everyday usage products more original, creative, persuasive, enjoyable, memorable and more inciting to purchase.

In summary, it can be said that according to the results of our study, rhetorical devices increase the competitiveness of advertising slogans.

A direction for future research would be to develop an index for competitiveness of advertising slogans. Each of the criteria according to which competitiveness is being measured would receive a weight and the index would be measured.

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