



PRAGMATICS IN ADVERTISING BANNERS: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

In the digital era, advertising banners serve as impactful tools for brand communication, relying not only on visual appeal but also on linguistic strategies that influence interpretation. This study explores how pragmatic elements – such as implicature, presupposition, context, and deixis – are utilized in advertising banners to convey meaning beyond literal expressions. A qualitative research approach using pragmatic discourse analysis was applied to banner slogans from global brands including Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola, Airbnb, and Spotify. The data were collected through purposive sampling and analyzed by identifying pragmatic markers and contextual meanings. The findings show that these brands consistently employ implicature and presupposition to imply values, suggest actions, and foster emotional connections without overt claims. Contextual cues and deixis further enhance the interpretability and relevance of the message for diverse audiences. In conclusion, the strategic use of pragmatics in advertising banners plays a vital role in audience persuasion, increasing engagement and brand recall through subtle yet powerful language use.

Keywords: pragmatics; advertising banners; implicature; presupposition; discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

Advertising banners are not just visual tools; they are powerful pragmatic instruments that communicate implicit messages to the audience. Pragmatics in advertising refers to how brands use context, implicature, presupposition, and metaphor to convey meanings that go beyond literal interpretation (Huang & Jia, 2020).

Advertising banners play a crucial role in modern marketing, communicating messages swiftly and persuasively. As digital media platforms continue to evolve, banners are increasingly designed not only to inform but also to engage users emotionally and cognitively (Smith, 2023). Pragmatics, which studies meaning in context, significantly influences how audiences interpret these messages (Huang & Jia, 2020). In advertising, pragmatic strategies such as

implicature, presupposition, deixis, and contextual inference help brands craft powerful and memorable banners (López, 2021).

These pragmatic tools allow marketers to imply meanings beyond what is explicitly stated, tailoring communication to be subtle yet effective. For instance, slogans such as “Open Happiness” or “Just Do It” rely on the audience’s shared cultural and emotional assumptions, illustrating how meaning is shaped by context (Chen, 2024). With increasing competition for attention in online spaces, understanding the pragmatic dimension of banner advertisements becomes essential for both linguists and marketers (Zhang & Wei, 2022).

This essay examines how pragmatics operates within advertising banners from globally recognized brands, exploring how meaning is constructed and interpreted through both linguistic and visual cues.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study adopts a **qualitative research approach**, as it aims to explore and interpret the pragmatic elements embedded in advertising banners. Qualitative methods are appropriate when the research seeks to understand how language and visuals function contextually to convey implicit meanings (Dornyei, 2020).

Type of Research

The research is categorized as a **descriptive qualitative study**, focusing on describing how pragmatic strategies such as implicature, presupposition, deixis, and contextual inference are applied in selected English-language advertising banners. The descriptive nature of the study allows for a detailed examination of linguistic and semiotic features without manipulating variables (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using **documentary analysis**, specifically through the selection and examination of authentic advertising banners from internationally recognized brands such as Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola, Airbnb, and Spotify. These banners were chosen based on their global popularity and use of minimal yet contextually rich language. Sources include official brand websites, social media campaigns, and archived digital advertisements published between 2019 and 2024. The collected banners include both visual and textual elements.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis was conducted using **pragmatic discourse analysis**, drawing from theories of implicature (Grice), presupposition, and context-based meaning interpretation. Each banner was analyzed to identify:

- Implicatures and suggested meanings beyond literal language.
- Presuppositions embedded within the slogans.
- The role of visual context in shaping interpretation.
- Audience positioning and the use of deixis or indexicals.

The analysis was guided by the frameworks proposed by Yule (2020) and reinforced by recent research (Zhang & Wei, 2022; Chen, 2024). Data were coded thematically, and interpretation was cross-referenced with prior studies to ensure validity and theoretical grounding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Advertising banners often communicate more than what is explicitly stated. The pragmatic elements embedded in slogans and visuals guide the audience toward inferred meanings and emotional responses. This section presents an analysis of five well-known advertising banners:

1 Nike - "Just Do It"



Pragmatic Strategy: Implicature

Nike's slogan implies that hesitation is unnecessary and that one should take action. The phrase does not specify *what* to do, but relies on the audience to infer action based on personal goals or sports context (Huang & Jia, 2020). The strong imperative mood is softened by its colloquial tone, creating a motivational message that resonates across cultures.

Implicature: Encouragement to be bold, decisive, and committed without being directly instructive.

Banner: Usually only features the logo and slogan "Just Do It." **Pragmatic Meaning:** Invites the audience to act and build motivation without giving explicit instructions (Smith, 2023).

2 Apple - "Say Hello to the Future"



Pragmatic Strategy: Presupposition and Contextual Anchoring

Apple's use of the phrase presupposes that the product (e.g., new iPhone) represents the future. It also assumes that the audience values innovation. The act of saying "hello" anthropomorphizes technology, inviting emotional engagement (Zhang & Wei, 2022).

Presupposition: The future is embodied in the product.

Context: The audience is likely already familiar with Apple's positioning as a technological leader.

Banner: Displays the latest iPhone product with the text "Say Hello to the Future."

Pragmatic Meaning: Suggests that purchasing an iPhone equates to embracing future technology (López, 2021).

3 Coca-Cola - "Open Happiness"



Pragmatic Strategy: Metaphorical Implicature and Visual Support

This slogan links the act of opening a drink with the act of accessing happiness. Through metaphor and strong imagery (e.g., joyful faces, vibrant colors), Coca-Cola suggests emotional reward. The drink is not literally happiness, but the audience infers it symbolically (Chen, 2024).

Implicature: Emotional uplift is attainable via the product.

Visual Pragmatics: Reinforces affective meanings.

Banner: Shows an open Coca-Cola bottle with people displaying happiness.

Pragmatic Meaning: Implies that opening a Coca-Cola bottle leads to opening happiness and positive experiences (Zhang & Wei, 2022).

4 Airbnb - "Belong Anywhere"



Pragmatic Strategy: Contextual Deixis and Identity Building

This slogan plays on the desire for connection and acceptance, especially among travelers. It suggests that the feeling of belonging – typically tied to home – can be experienced in any Airbnb location. The word "belong" indexes emotional safety, while "anywhere" removes geographical limitation (Smith, 2023).

Deixis: Creates inclusive identity regardless of user's origin.

Pragmatic Function: Establishes trust and emotional appeal.

Banner: Features various types of accommodations with the slogan "Belong Anywhere."

Pragmatic Meaning: Suggests that users can feel at home wherever they go (Huang & Jia, 2020).

5 Spotify - "Music for Every Mood"



Pragmatic Strategy: Personalization through Presupposition

Spotify's slogan presupposes that (1) people experience different moods, and (2) music is effective in responding to those moods. The implicit message is that Spotify understands you and can offer tailored content. The slogan aligns with the company's AI-based playlist generation, reinforcing technological personalization (López, 2021).

Presupposition: Users' emotions are variable and deserve customized experiences.

Implicature: Spotify is attentive to your needs.

Banner: Highlights mood-based playlists like "Workout," "Chill," "Sad," and "Happy."

Pragmatic Meaning: Recognizes that individuals have varying emotional states and matches them with appropriate music (Chen, 2024)

Summary of Strategies

Brand	Pragmatic Element	Communicative Effect
Nike	Implicature	Motivates action and self-drive
Apple	Presupposition, Context	Connects product with innovation/future
Coca-Cola	Implicature, Metaphor	Links product to emotional happiness
Airbnb	Deixis, Identity Framing	Suggests emotional belonging anywhere
Spotify	Presupposition, Personalization	Emphasizes emotional connection and tech-adaptivity

CONCLUSION

Pragmatics plays a vital role in advertising banners, shaping the way audiences interpret and emotionally connect with brands. Through strategies like implicature, presupposition, and context-awareness, companies craft messages that are powerful yet subtle, enhancing engagement and brand loyalty.

This study highlights how pragmatic strategies significantly shape the meaning and effectiveness of advertising banners. By examining banners from globally recognized brands – Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola, Airbnb, and Spotify – it is evident that slogans often carry implicit meanings that rely on shared cultural knowledge, emotional associations, and contextual relevance.

Strategies such as **implicature**, **presupposition**, **deixis**, and **contextual anchoring** help these brands convey persuasive messages beyond literal content. Rather than stating facts, banners subtly guide audience interpretations, promoting engagement, emotional resonance, and brand loyalty.

Understanding these pragmatic elements is essential not only for analyzing existing advertisements but also for designing new ones that resonate across diverse markets. Future research may explore multimodal aspects (e.g., sound, motion) or examine cultural differences in interpreting pragmatic cues in advertising.

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