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The effectiveness of print advertisements containing visual rhetorical devices

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The Effectiveness of Print Advertisements Containing Visual
Rhetorical Devices

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass
Communications

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by

Denis Minov

August 2003

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS CONTAINING VISUAL RHETORICAL DEVICES

by Denis A. Minov

The purpose of this study was to investigate if the use of visual rhetorical devices in advertising images enhances the effectiveness of print advertisements. The performance of advertisements based on pictorial rhetorical devices was compared to advertisements that do not contain a rhetorical device to determine if the application of rhetorical devices led to greater recall, liking, and persuasiveness of print magazine ads.

An experiment was conducted where 36 magazine readers were exposed to 13 pairs of ads featuring a range of brands and their response to the advertisements was measured. The research revealed that advertisements with rhetorical devices in their images were remembered by the viewers better, liked better, and had greater positive influence on the viewers' brand attitudes, than the advertisements containing realistic images.

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Introduction

Unlike argumentation presentation in other fields which must rely exclusively or heavily on the verbal component, presentations in advertising can rely more heavily on the nonverbal components: olfaction, visual, auditory, and tactile. The use of smell strips allows consumers to experience the fragrance of perfumes and colognes. Consumers are exposed to pictorial portions of advertisements and packages. Computer chips talk and sing to consumers from the printed page. Free product samples offer consumers the opportunity to touch and/or taste the product. Promotional items serve as tangible reminders of the persuasive communication. Of these nonverbal components, the visual component is the predominant nonverbal element of presentation in advertisements.

Many advertisements rely entirely on the image to get the message across to the viewer. In other ads the picture is a key focus point that links the headline and the copy together. The importance of the images in advertising has prompted a great deal of research in this area, and also is the reason why we have chosen to address this problem.

The purpose of this study was to investigate if the use of visual rhetorical devices in advertising images enhances the effectiveness of print advertisements. In the course of the research, advertisements that are based on pictorial rhetorical devices were compared to advertisements that are not to determine if application of rhetorical devices leads to greater recall, appeal, and persuasiveness of print magazine ads. However, before we continue the overview of the present thesis, we should clarify the notions of rhetoric and rhetorical device.

The Discipline of Rhetoric

Understanding of rhetoric has been changing over the hundreds of years of its existence. The classical rhetorical theory viewed the discipline of rhetoric as the "art of discourse." In this classical tradition, the focus on rhetoric emphasized the public, persuasive, and contextual characteristics of human discourse (Lucaites & Condit, 1999). *Public* discourse focused attention on communication that affected the entire community and was distinguished from technical discourse addressed to specialized audiences, and from private discourse addressed to more private audiences. Public discourse was believed to

have capacity for *persuasion*, that is, ability to affect belief and behavior through the power of symbolic interaction (Lucaites & Condit, 1999). The central concern of rhetoric, therefore, was the determination of the most effective persuasive methods of presentation: how to discover the most effective way to express a thought in a given situation, and how to alter its expression to suit different situations (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). Finally, the classical rhetorical perspective treated the relationship between language and meaning as *contextual*. This implied that the meaning of a particular linguistic usage derived from the particular experiences and understanding of a particular audience addressed by a particular speaker at a specific moment in time (Lucaites & Condit, 1999).

Contemporary rhetorical theory, which started to develop in the mid-1960s, sought to adapt our understanding of rhetoric to the changing conditions of the new era. Modern rhetoricians questioned the three characteristics attributed to rhetoric by the classical tradition. Rhetoric was not seen any more as integral to public discourse, but rather it was interpreted as a central and substantial dimension of many facets of the human social experience

(Lucaites & Condit, 1999). By locating the essence of rhetoric in the broader social situation rather than in the intent of the speaker, modern rhetoricians posed the question: to what extent is rhetoric bound to its context (Bitzer, 1999)? The persuasiveness of rhetoric became questionable because audiences started to be regarded as active participants of rhetorical discourse, able to interpret and respond to the message in various ways (Lucaites & Condit, 1999).

Rhetorical Figures

One of the characteristics of rhetoric communication is the use of *rhetorical figures/devices*. A rhetorical figure/device can be defined as an artful deviation in the form taken by a statement (Corbett, 1990). Rhyme, pun, and hyperbole are examples of rhetorical devices. Rhetorical devices can be verbal and visual. Both verbal and visual rhetorical devices employ artful deviations that provide a twist on the familiar, and make the familiar look strange. This resultant incongruity between the expected and the given form of the message allows rhetorical devices to carry additional meaning(s) (Genette, 1982). Indeed, when told that the alcoholic drink "Chartreuse" is a "Green

Fire" (see Figure 1), which literally does not make sense, because fire flames are most commonly red, the consumer looks for a translation to this metaphor: Chartreuse has green color and it is so strong that it leaves a burning sensation after drinking. The consumer understands that the advertiser simply meant to say that "Chartreuse is very strong", "Chartreuse will burn your throat", but none of these paraphrases quite succeeds in conveying the idea captured in the phrase "Green Fire". This is a good example of the use of a verbal metaphor in advertising. The long-running Absolute Vodka advertising campaigns are particularly well known for their use of pictorial rhetorical figures (see Figure 2).

The goal of this research was to determine whether or not print advertisements of this sort are more effective in getting the point across compared to advertisements containing literal images and messages. An experiment was chosen as the method for conducting the study. It tested consumers' response to pairs of magazine advertisements - one based on a figurative image and the other based on a realistic image. The participants' ad recall, ad attitude, and brand attitude for the two types of advertisements were

Figure 1. Visual Pun.

Figure 2. Visual Metaphor.

measured and compared.

The choice of subject matter for this study was guided by theoretical and practical considerations. Several writers have commented on the vital role that advertising plays in the sense-making process by which people organize their experiences and comprehend their physical and social environment (Dyer, 1982; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1986).

Furthermore, figures of rhetoric are believed to play an increasingly significant role in advertising. For example, McQuarrie and Mick (1992) found that 86% of 154 full-page print ads (132 of 154 ads) used a figure of

speech in the headline or subhead and Leigh (1994) found that nearly 75% of a sample of 2468 print ads (1851 of 2468 ads) used at least one figure of speech in the headline alone. Leiss et al. (1986) found research evidence for the dominance of the visual modality and metaphorical depictions in modern advertising. They contend, for example, that "metaphor is the very heart of the basic communication form used in modern advertising." Much of this pervasiveness probably has to do with the impracticability of distinguishing many products such as alcoholic beverages on the basis of their technical characteristics. Metaphors are therefore ideal structures of conveying abstract qualities of an entity (Kaplan, 1992).

Whereas the use of linguistic rhetorical devices in advertising has recently been researched fairly well (Toncar & Munch, 2001; Tom & Eves, 1999; Leigh, 1994; McQuarrie & Mick, 1994), the use of figuration in the imagery of advertising has not been receiving as much attention (Phillips, 1997; McQuarrie & Mick, 1999). Messaris (1997) pointed out that although the study of persuasive communication has a history of more than two

millennia, the focus of this scholarly tradition has tended overwhelmingly to be on verbal strategies, while the systematic investigation of visual persuasion is still in its infancy. According to another researcher, current "literature on advertising images fails to encompass the rhetorical richness so characteristic of this form," due to the wrong assumption that all pictures reflect objects in the real world (Scott, 1994). The apparent lack of research is to an extent what has prompted my choice of this topic for the thesis.

The thesis consists of an introduction stating the purpose of the research, a theoretical literature review, a research design section, and a results section. Bibliographical references and appendices are included at the end of the thesis.

Literature Review

The prevalent theoretical approach to the research investigating the pictorial element of advertising has been the copy theory. In the copy theory, pictures are conceived as natural, realistic reflections of reality, and elements such as visual viewpoint, focus, graphics, and layout are considered as variables independent of the message. Scott (1994) has noted the shortcomings of the copy theory and has suggested that a theory of visual rhetoric be based upon the key premise that "pictures are not merely analogues to visual perception, but symbolic artifacts constructed from the conventions of a particular culture."

A theory of visual rhetoric would recognize that pictures are a symbol system employed for the purpose of persuasion. Pictorial elements are altered, combined, and arranged to create artful deviations, characteristic of rhetorical figures. Kaplan's (1992) investigation of the use of visual metaphors in advertisements is one of very few studies representative of research that recognizes the use of rhetorical figures in the pictorial component of advertisements. But what exactly is a pictorial rhetorical figure/device?

Definition of a Rhetorical Figure

A rhetorical device has been defined as an artful deviation (Corbett, 1990) and occurs when an "expression deviates from expectation, the expression is not rejected as nonsensical or faulty, the deviation occurs at the level of form rather than content, and the deviation conforms to a template that is invariant across a variety of content and contexts" (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996). Any particular figurative expression can deviate to a greater or lesser extent, and, thus, be more or less congruous. This condition applies to both individual instances of any figure (e.g. a particular occurrence of a pun) and to entire categories of figures (some types of figure, e.g. puns, may in general involve a greater degree of deviation than others).

McQuarrie and Mick (1996) pointed out some cases that should not be taken for rhetorical figures. For example, if the deviation drops below a certain threshold, then it is no longer a figure. For example, metaphors that have been used over a considerable period of time may become frozen or conventional (e.g. the sports car "hugs" the road). Additionally, figuration will not include errors. Bad

grammar or faulty diction also deviate from expectation, but these represent failures of expression. Deviations in content are not figures either. For example, a claim that "cereal X is preferred by retired airplane mechanics" would deviate from our expectations but would not constitute a rhetorical figure because the deviation lies at the level of content: the reference to retired airplane mechanics rather than the more customary reference to champions or athletes. The final limiting condition distinguishes figures in the broader category of stylistic device. For a deviation to be a figure, it must be possible to define the deviation independent of any individual occurrence. Skillful deviations in form that have a onetime character, or where a rule applicable across content elements cannot be formulated, are only stylistic devices.

Classifications of Rhetorical Devices

Researchers of rhetorical figures in advertising have made numerous attempts to categorize the entire range of rhetorical figures. Different principles of classification have been proposed in previous literature on the topic. McQuarrie and Mick (1996) proposed a framework of four rhetoric operations, which all individual rhetorical

devices fall under. They are repetition, reversal, substitution, and destabilization. The complete list of rhetorical devices resulting from these operations is given in Appendix A.

1. Repetition.

The rhetorical operation of repetition combines multiple instances of some element of the expression without changing the meaning of the element. Repetition can be applied to sounds (rhyme, chime, alliteration, or assonance), to words (anaphora, epistrophe), and to phrase structure (parison). An example of the latter will be K-mart's tagline: "The price you want. The quality you need."

2. Reversal.

The rhetorical operation of reversal combines elements that are mirror images of one another in an expression. Antimetabole (reversal of a phrase), alliteration (reversal of sounds), and antithesis (semantic reversal) are examples of reversal. Consider, for instance, the following tagline for a shampoo brand: "Easy on eyes. Tough on tangles."

3. Substitution.

The rhetorical operation of substitution selects an expression that requires an adjustment by the message recipient to grasp the intended content. The adjustment always take place along one of the four dimensions: exaggerated/understated claims (hyperbole), absence/plentitude of expression elements (ellipsis), strong/weak assertive force (rhetorical question), and part/whole relations (metonym). Rhetoric figures created by means of substitution are called tropes. An example of a trope/ellipsis will be the Suzuki headline: "Everyday vehicles that aren't." Here the word everyday is omitted on purpose to prompt the recipient to fill in the gap by supplying a particular sense of the word "everyday" - ordinary.

4. Destabilization.

The rhetorical operation of destabilization selects an expression which in the given context creates multiple coexisting meanings, none of which offers a final solution. Rhetorical figures formed by destabilization leave it up to recipient to provide the expression with an appropriate meaning. To render multiple meanings tenable, destabilization may make use of relationships involving

either opposition (paradox and irony) or similarity (metaphor and pun). For example, consider this headline by Kodak: "This picture was taken by someone who didn't bring a camera". This statement does not make sense until it is reinterpreted: the picture was taken with a disposable camera that was bought on the spot.

Jacques Durand (1987) proposed a somewhat different system of rhetorical figures in the advertising image. He arranged the whole spectrum of rhetorical devices in a two dimensional grid, based on two criteria: 1) the "rhetorical operation": addition/suppression/substitution/exchange; 2) the relation between the variable elements: identity/similarity/difference/opposition. This classification generated 30 figures of rhetoric laid out in Table 1.

1. Additive figures

Repetition - reproduction of the same image or an element of an image several times, e.g., representation of the seven days of the week by seven versions of the same picture.

Table 1. Durand's Grid of Rhetorical Devices

Operation Relation	Addition	Suppression	Substitution	Exchange
Identity	Repetition	Ellipsis	Homeophore	Inversion
Similarity - of form - of content	Rhyme Comparison	Circumlocution	Allusion Metaphor	Hendiadys
Difference	Accumulation	Suspense	Metonymy	Asyndeton
Opposition - of form - of content	Anachronism Antithesis	Dubitation Reticence	Periphrasis Euphemism	Anacoluthon Chiasmus
False homologies - double meaning - paradox	Antanaclassis Paradox	Tautology Preterition	Pun Antiphrasis	Antimetabole Antilogy

Rhyme/comparison - e.g., if a product is presented in different varieties, or the same product is presented by different people in similar situations.

Accumulation - adding to the simple proposition a great number of different elements, without any similarity relation. The aim is to give the impression of a great number, density, disparity, incongruity, etc.

Antithesis - opposition between two pictures, e.g., between two pictures of competitive products, or the pictures of before and after the use of the same product.

Antanaclasis - the same visual element is shown twice, once as a real action, then as a slide of the same action.

2. Figures of suppression

Ellipsis - deliberate omission of an element of an image.

Circumlocution - the similarity of form is effected by the use of a dotted line drawing the form of the missing element.

Suspense - one element is delayed by the presentation of some other elements unrelated to it, e.g., ads with teasers use such a figure.

Reticence - the suppressive form of the antithesis: two elements (for instance two competitive products) are placed in opposition, but one element of the opposition is not shown.

Preterition - "I say that I don't say something, but in fact I say it very well." In the visual transposition of this figure, one element of an image is seemingly hidden, but is really visible.

3. Figures of substitution

Homeophore - substitution for an element with that element itself, usually with a change of degree in the element in question, as in the "hyperbole" and the "litotes". The visual hyperbole shows an enlarged object, the visual litotes shows a reduced object.

Allusion - substitution is based on similarities of form, e.g., a flower used to pour wine because of its formal similarity with a glass.

Metaphor - the representation of an object through another object that is different in kind but which bears a resemblance to the first object.

Metonymy - there is a substitution between two elements connected only by a relation of contiguity, e.g., a person is replaced by a hand, or a car by a wheel.

Anacoluthon/chiasmus - an element is replaced by another connected to it by an oppositional relation, that is "an implicit antithesis". For example, the situation before and after the delivery of products may be shown to suggest that a company offers a great variety of products.

Pun - the substitutive figure homologous to the antanaclasis, e.g., the replacement of a gramophone by a plate of noodles.

Antiphrasis is an ironic figure which paradoxically conveys an idea which is the contrary of its textual meaning, e.g., the picture of a metal box broken like a bottle demonstrates the solidity of the metal.

4. Figures of exchange

Inversion corresponds to repetition: the elements of the proposition remain the same but the order is changed. Examples of this may be a picture of a reversed product, or a picture of a person beside a giant bottle.

Hendiadys creates a similarity of form between two elements, one abstract and one concrete.

Asyndeton modifies the relations between the elements of the proposition by cutting the picture into vertical and horizontal stripes.

Anacoluthon - the result of the exchange is in opposition with the reality.

Chiasmus - there is an exchange between opposite elements.

Antilogy paradoxically connects two apparently opposite elements in the same proposition, e.g., a girl with a bathing suit in a winter landscape.

Fernando Santos (2003) borrowed Durand's classification of rhetorical devices and developed it further by adding one operational category and one relational category, *mutation* and *neighborhood*,

Table 2. Classification of Rhetorical Devices by Santos

Operation Relation	Addition	Reduction	Substitution	Exchange	Mutation
Identity	Palico- nia Hyper- bole Auxesis	Ellipsis Prolepsis	Antonymy Adnomination Metalage	Anaphora Antís- tase	Iconis- mus Calig- rama
Difference	Polico- nia	Litotes	Antilogy	Aquíro Catach- resis	Adiano- eta
Similarity	Simile	Antisagoge	Antísteco	Periph- rasis	Polipto- ton
Opposition	Antiphra- sis Anti- thesis Sineci- ose	Anesis Antananoge	Irony Euphemism	Para- lipsis Prolep- sis	Oxymoron
False homologies	Paradox Prosopop- eia	Antiproso- popeia	Paronomasia, Antanaclasis	Sylepsis Synaes- thesia	Metaphor Allegory
Neighbor- hood	Sinae- resis Sinquise	Synecdoche	Metonymy Periphrasis	Amphi- bology	Metaphor

respectively (Table 2). Many of the resultant visual figures of rhetoric are based on the interplay between the image of the advertisement and its copy. Since the object of our study is limited to figuration in ad images only, we will review only those visual figures which are not linked to the ad copy. Their definitions and examples of advertisements with those rhetorical devices are presented below (see Figures 3-21).

Figure 3. Paliconia

Paliconia is the repetition of images or elements, for instance, the accumulation of perfume bottles in Chanel N5 advertisement.

Figure 4. Hyperbole.

Hyperbole is the exaggeration of a claim or the characteristics of a product, as in the ad for a vacuum cleaner, which is shown to be able to suck in big toys.

Figure 5. Policonia.

Policonia is the repetition of different elements in the image. The ad above for a Compaq computer shows a great many devices thrown together that have the same functions that a single computer performs.

Figure 6. Auxesis.

Auxesis is the exaggeration of the effect of a product application. In the given example the car is shown to have wrinkled the asphalt to imply extremely strong and safe breaks.

Figure 7. Simile.

Simile is a direct comparison of a product with another object as in the Givenchy ad, where the shape of a perfume bottle is compared to the shape of a female body by positioning them.

Figure 8. Paradox.

Paradox is a superficial comparison between two objects which are in fact incompatible due to their dimensions or other characteristics. In the Toyota ad the paradoxical image of a whale splashing into a bath tub is used to claim the large interior space of the small car.

Figure 9. Prosopopeia.

!Sport Rich!

Para quem se preocupa em desportar de corpo e alma

Luso. Two cultures in one bottle

Prosopopeia is the animation of inanimate objects or the showing of animals as humans. For example, the Luso advertisement shows a water bottle with a towel hung over the bottle neck to resemble an athlete.

Figure 10. Synchisis.

Synchisis is the illogical combination of images to achieve a great aesthetic effect, or demonstrate the interaction of a consumer with the product. The SEGA ad shows the image of a computer monitor flying into soccer goals followed by a soccer ball to stress the realistic "feel" of the video games.

Figure 11. Ellipsis.

Ellipsis is the omission of an element, which can be restored by the viewer from the context. In the ad for a leg pain reliever, the woman's clothes are removed from her legs to focus the viewers' attention.

Figure 12. Antilogy.

Antilogy is the symbolic representation of a concept with

Sometimes you need a little lateral thinking to be ahead of the race. It's a way of expecting the unexpected, meeting the challenge of the unpredictable. If you expect a different kind of thinking from your bank, you should talk to us. Because in everything we do we want to be not just any bank, but the right bank for you. UBS

an image contradicting common expectations, though not impossible. In the UBS ad the idea of original thinking is visually represented by a horse racer galloping along a corridor of a building instead of a race track.

Figure 13. Metonymy.

Metonymy is the representation of a whole by its part. In the Fastio ad the water inside the bottle is represented by the image of its source – mountains.

Figure 14. Antistasis.

Antistasis is the reversed repetition of the same element, for instance, of a woman's image in the ad for Vitos.

Figure 15. Catachresis.

Catachresis occurs when the advertised product is shown to be used in an irregular way, such as pouring cognac on a female body in the Remi Martini advertisement.

Figure 16. Synaesthesia.

Synaesthesia is the substitution of one physical feeling or function with another, for example, the substitution of the fresh viewpoint with the feeling of freshness on the eyes.

Figure 17. Iconismus.

Iconismus occurs when the image itself becomes the message as in the CNN ad where the idea of both sides of the story is represented by arranging the text on the opposite sides of the page.

Figure 18. Caligramma.

Caligramma is the presentation of an object or an idea

through a creative arrangement of text or other image elements. In the Vaqueiro ad the product images and copy are arranged in the shape of a flower to visually convey the idea of natural ingredients.

Figure 19. Polyptoton.

Polyptoton consists of the repetition of the same element with a slight difference, for instance, the repetition of a cup of tea in the ad for a Portuguese TV channel.

Figure 20. Metaphor.

Metaphor is the representation of an object through another object that is different in kind but which bears a resemblance to the first object. In the ad for a Tracer shaver the basketball represents the curves of a man's face, and the texture of a man's shaved skin.

Figure 21. Allegory.

Allegory is the use of one metaphor to construct another. In the ad for a computer technology magazine, the choice of ways to go is depicted through a number of mouse holes and a computer mouse.

Figure 22. Oxymoron.

Oxymoron is the fusion of elements contradicting each other such a male athlete and female shoes on his feet in the Pirelli tires advertisement.

Figurative Mode

As we have mentioned above, a **rhetorical figure/device** is an artful deviation in the form taken by a statement. McQuarrie and Mick (1996) suggested distinction between two different kinds of figuration - *schemes* and *tropes*. They encompass two distinct modes of formal deviation. *Schemes* deviate by means of excessive regularity. For example, rhyme, with its unexpected repetition of sounds, is a scheme. Thus an ad for motor oil that proclaims "Perfomax. Protects to the Max" would hold an advantage over the less deviant "Perfomax. The Top Protection." The headline "Now Stouffers makes a real fast real meal Lean Cuisine" is excessively regular because of its repetition of sounds and words, and, therefore, also represents a scheme. It violates the convention that sounds are generally irrelevant to the sense of an utterance; that is it violates the expectation held by receivers that the distribution of sounds through an utterance will be essentially unordered except by the grammatical and semantic constraints required to make a well-formed sentence.

Tropes deviate by means of an irregular usage. For example, metaphors, with their literally false but illuminating equation of two different things, and puns, with their accidental resemblances, are tropes. Thus, the punning headline "Make fun of the road," can be construed either as an invitation to scorn or to enjoy. This deviant construction, whose exact meaning is evasive and is open for personal interpretation, would hold an advantage over the more straightforward "Dominate the road" or "Enjoy the road." The headline from an ad for a skin care product "Science you can touch" is based on a figurative metaphor, because "touch" does not belong to the set of verbs that can take as their object an abstract collective noun as "science."

In addition to being qualitatively distinct from tropes, schemes are also quantitatively distinct. Specifically, a depth-of-processing perspective argues that, on average, schemes will be less deviant than tropes. This is because excess regularity is obtained via rearrangements of the surface of the text; it occurs at a sensory level, as when one repeats sounds to achieve a rhyme or inverts the order of words to create an

antimetabole. By contrast, tropes such as rhetorical questions or puns are not sensorially apparent features of the headline but become manifest as the text is related to semantic and background. Deviation thus tends to be greater in the case of tropes because irregularity represents incongruity at a deeper, semantic level of processing (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996).

Figuration and Consumer Response

The most important question here is how effective figurative advertisements are. The objective of our research is to evaluate the effectiveness of advertisements with figurative imagery against realistic ads by means of measuring consumer response to the ads of both kinds and comparing the data. Three theories of cognitive information processing will serve as the groundwork for our research hypotheses: the theory of visual argumentation, the theory of elaboration, and the theory of "a pleasure of the text".

Visual Argumentation

One of the perspectives on studying visual argumentation is audience-centered perspective on the creation of meaning in images. This perspective situates

the viewer as the dominant factor in the construction of arguments from images. Images are not propositional in the sense that verbal discourse is. Whereas verbal discourse "has a content: a semantic paraphrasable, propositional content," with an idea, fact, or claim as the inevitable result, any proposition attributed to an image derives from the viewer's attribution and not from properties inherent in the image. Although we use the data of images as the basis for the development of argumentative claims, the arguments made by images are not seen as embedded in their material components or physical characteristics. Although material form is considered essential to the construction of claims for visual images - and certainly makes some claims more likely to be developed than others - it is not believed to determine the claim that results; that is the task of the audience (Foss, 1994). However, the viewers have been shown to process visual information differently depending on whether the information presented to them is expected or unexpected.

Incongruency and Elaboration

Results of incongruency research (Houston, Childers, & Heckler 1987; Meyers-Levy & Tybout 1989; Sujan, Bettman, &

Sujan 1986, Heckler & Childers, 1992) demonstrated that, when information that is somehow incongruent with prior expectations or schemata is presented, individuals will engage in more effortful or elaborative processing.

Elaboration reflects the amount, complexity, or range of cognitive activity occasioned by a stimulus (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). The idea here is that non-literal language cannot be processed automatically or peripherally. When a consumer encounters and recognizes figurative communication, he or she has to engage in abstract, metaphorical thinking to be able to subjectively interpret the message. This process involves a deeper level of comprehension, than the process of understanding explicit message content. Regarding the visual element of an advertisement, it has been suggested that the presence of visual rhetorical figures in advertising increases consumer elaboration of ads (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). A picture's deviance from reality or pictorial convention triggers "thinking into" an ad, and consumers tap into their cultural and product knowledge to infer the ad's message (Phillips, 1997), thus engaging in more elaborative processing of the ad.

Elaboration and Memorability

Greater elaboration is believed to be able to result in better memorability of ads with figurative language over ads with literal language (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996), because "the additional elaborative effort expended in the reinterpretation increases the number of associative pathways stored in memory" (Hastie & Kumar, 1979). Greenwald and Leavitt (1984) found that effortfully processed information was more readily retrieved from memory than less effortfully processed information. Heckler and Childers (1992) found that the presence of a pictorial element representing unexpected information, compared with expected information, led to (a) greater recall of the individual pictorial element contained in the ad, (b) more detailed processing of the individual pictorial element contained in the ad, and (c) enhanced overall ad recognition. Houston et al. (1987) found that incongruency present in a print ad led to superior memory performance, but only in a condition presenting interactive imagery (e.g., one in which the picture and copy shared a linkage of brand and product class). Homer and Kahle (1986) found that ads with surrealistic content stimulated greater

recall and higher degree of reported purchase intent than the ads with more conventional pictorial content.

Connecting this research on ad memorability with the issue of figurative language, evidence has been demonstrated that verbal figures of rhetoric specifically can enhance the ad recall. Toncar and Munch (2001) found that under low involvement conditions language tropes can significantly enhance the effectiveness of a print ad, making the ad more persuasive and more memorable. It would be logical to presuppose that figurative images can also improve an ad's memorability. Thus, the existing research allows us to form the first hypothesis of this inquiry:

H1. Advertisements with visual rhetorical figures will be more memorable than the ads with images reflecting reality.

Figures of Rhetoric and Ad Attitudes

Previous studies in the field showed that figures of rhetoric can affect a person's attitude towards the information coded in them. Barthes (1973) introduced the notion of two sorts of language use: the written, readable "readerly" text, fulfilling the reader's pattern of

expectations, and the "writerly" text that, conversely, disturbed the expectations. He theorized that the deviation from the expected produced "a pleasure of text", that is the reward that comes from processing a clever arrangement of signs. The fundamental idea behind this is that texts that allow multiple readings or interpretations are inherently pleasurable to readers. Texts of this kind may be said to have poetic or aesthetic value. The initial ambiguity is stimulating, and the subsequent resolution rewarding. Texts that are simple and one-dimensional are less likely to be sources of pleasure.

It would be logical to infer that the concept of "a pleasure of text" equally applies to visual communication too. The images that contain artful deviation from reality, from the expected, may create "a pleasure of image."

The rewarding character of artful deviation thus suggests that figurative ad language, as compared with literal ad language, should produce a more positive attitude toward the ad (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992). Increased enjoyment while processing the ad makes it probable that consumers will regard the overall ad more favorably. Two experimental analyses, done by McQuarrie and

Mick (1999), showed that ads with figurative pictorial elements stimulated more elaboration and a more positive attitude toward the ad. The effect of visual rhetoric was robust over different samples, across different ad executions, and over multiple product categories. Our second hypothesis, therefore, will be:

H2. Advertisements with rhetoric devices embedded in their images will generate more favorable attitudes toward them, than ads without pictorial rhetoric devices.

Figures of Rhetoric and Brand Attitudes

Although the relationship between ad attitude and brand attitude is not yet entirely clear, some studies have proved that it exists. Brown and Stayman's (1992) research indicated that there is indirect influence of ad attitudes on brand attitudes. It has also been found that established brand attitudes toward familiar brands are not likely to be as strongly affected by ad attitudes as are brand attitudes toward novel brands about which consumers have little other information (Johnson and Eagly, 1989).

Thus, we can infer that visual deviation and, therefore, visual figures of rhetoric in advertising are

likely to lead to a more favorable attitude toward the brand, which leads us to our third and last hypothesis:

H3. Brands featured in print advertisements with visual figures of rhetoric will have better brand attitudes than brands featured in advertisements with regular images.

McQuarrie and Mick (1996) suggested that consumer responses should not be uniform across all kinds of rhetorical figures. They believed that tropes have greater impact on readers' elaboration, attention, memory, and attitude. This is due to the fact that tropes and schemes involve different levels of processing. The excess irregularity of linguistic schemes, for example, is obtained via the rearrangements of the surface of the text; it occurs at a sensory level, as when one repeats sounds to achieve a rhyme or inverts the order of words to create an antimetabole. By contrast, tropes such as puns or rhetorical questions are not sensorily apparent and tap on the semantic and background knowledge. In other words, tropes represent incongruity at a deeper, semantic level of processing, and therefore, are expected to be more powerful.

To test the hypotheses an experiment was conducted.
The design of the experiment will be described in the next
chapter.

Research Design

The goal of this research was to use performance data to compare the effectiveness of advertisements that use visual rhetorical devices to advertisements that do not use rhetorical devices.

An experiment was chosen as the method for the research. Consumer response to two types of ads - one with figurative images and the other with literal images - was collected from a sample of consumers and then compared to see the effectiveness of each type of advertisements.

Advertisements

Real print advertisements were used for the experiment. They were collected from real magazines such as Newsweek, Businessweek, Allure, Fortune, Men's Health, Time, Health, and Outdoor Photographer, dated between 1997 and 2002. The selected advertisements featured brands from 13 product categories: a breath freshener, skin care, energy bar, snack bar, canker/cold sore treatment, nasal treatment, whisky, airline, credit card, multivitamin, camera, TV, and watch. Two types of ads were selected for each product category: the ads of the first type contained

a pictorial rhetorical device, while the ad of the second type was based on a realistic picture. Two pairs of ads were selected for snack/energy bars. Thus, a total of 13 pairs of magazine advertisements were chosen for experiment. The ads with figurative images were selected to represent a range of visual rhetorical devices. The complete list of the selected advertisements and rhetorical devices represented in them is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Advertisements and Rhetorical Devices Selected for the Experiment

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
Skin care	<p><i>Metaphor.</i> An ad for Curel moisture therapy lotion. The ad's message "Heals Like a Cream Feels Like a Lotion" is illustrated with a tube coming out of a Curel lotion</p>	<p>An advertisement of Aveeno skin clarifying cleanser with a picture of a smiling woman rinsing her face and an image of the product itself.</p>

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
	bottle and pouring cream out of the other end into a cream can.	
Breath freshener	<i>Simile.</i> An a for Mentos Cool Chews depicts a hippie wearing John Lennon style glasses which have round Mentos mints in lieu of the lenses. The tagline "Reject The Established Mints" capitalizes on the homonymic link with the slogan "reject the establishment" which plays into the hippie theme of the image.	An advertisement for Wrigley's Extra chewing gum. The image is a photograph of a golf course with a caddie in the forefront and two golf players at the background. The picture of a golf game which normally lasts a long time is supposed to imply the long lasting flavor of the gum.

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
Canker/cold sore treatment	<i>Simile</i> . An ad for Zilactin canker and cold sore gel. The ad is based on a black and white photo of a woman's face with a colored orange slice placed over her mouth to resemble a smile. The message says "Bite into an orange without fear of it biting back."	An advertisement for Abreva cold sore treatment with the tagline "Abbreviate Your Cold". The image consists of two close-up photos of a woman's face, one with a circled canker sore on her lips, while the other photo shows a woman's healthy and smiling lips.
Snack bar	<i>Paliconia/Catachresis</i> . An ad for Nutri-Grain yogurt bar shows the picture of a girl	An advertisement for Balance Gold bar shows the image of a half eaten energy

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
	bar lying next to its wrapping.	bar lying next to its wrapping.
Airline	<p><i>Metaphor/Simile.</i> An advertisement for Air France. A woman's knee and hand are shown sticking out of a bath tub thickly covered with soap foam. This image is set against a cloudy sky so as the foam comes to resemble the clouds and blends the two images together. An airplane is shown flying far up in the sky. The image of a relaxed bathing woman supports the tagline "Treat Yourself to a Few-Hours of Well-Being".</p>	<p>An advertisement for AeroMexico shows the picture of a woman sitting on a sandy beach by the sea. The Message is "AeroMexico is the airline with the most destinations in Mexico".</p>

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
Energy bar	<p><i>Metaphor.</i> An ad for ProteinPlus energy bar. The image shows blocks of weights with the words "Shirt", "T-Shirt", "Tight T-Shirt", "Tank Top", and "No Shirt" written on each of the weights to imply the growth of muscle that follows the increase of lifted power. The answer to the posed question "How To Pull It Off" is clear: ProteinPlus.</p>	<p>An advertisement for Harvest whole grain energy bar. The image shows the wrapping of the bar and pieces of the bar next to it. The message says "When you wake up, will you tap your potential? or tap the snooze button?".</p>
Whisky	<p><i>Pun.</i> An ad for The Famous Grouse Scotch</p>	<p>An advertisement for Jameson Irish</p>

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
	<p>whisky. The message "Voted Best Blend" matches the image of a bird's plumage mixing with a background of a similar color.</p>	<p>whiskey features the photo of friends sitting at a table in a crowded area, laughing, enjoying their drinks.</p>
Credit card	<p><i>Synchisis</i>. An advertisement for Discover credit card. The ad offers the customers to "double your Cashback Bonuses by redeeming it at The Sharper Image". To illustrate this message the card is shown as one of the tools of a multi-tool folding pocket knife.</p>	<p>An advertisement for American Express introduces a new credit card that enables its owner to get 30% discounts for CDs at Virgin Megastores. The image of the credit card is placed upon a background of concentric circles resembling the tracks of a record.</p>

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
Nasal treatment	<i>Paradox.</i> An advertisement for Breathe Right nasal strips shows the famous painting of	An advertisement for Nasonex nasal allergy spray. It shows the image of the product and the word "Aaah-
	Mona Lisa with a nasal strip placed over her nose thus altering the original look of the picture.	chooo" next to it, with the "chooo" part crossed out in red ink.
Multivitamin	<i>Paradox.</i> An advertisement for GNC Mega Men dietary supplement. The ad shows the photo of an office desk and a miniature man standing	An advertisement for Centrum Performance multivitamin. The image depicts a smiling man next to his car in the middle of a desert,

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
	next to it. The tagline says "Looks like someone could use the right multivitamin".	working on his cell phone and laptop. A large image of the product is placed in the bottom right-hand corner of the page.
TV	<p><i>Hyperbole.</i> An ad for a Panasonic Plasma Flat HDTV. The image contains a flat TV screen showing the surface of the water. A swan is shown taking off the water surface and simultaneously off the TV screen, thus illustrating the message "Want Reality TV?"</p>	<p>An advertisement for a Pioneer Pure Vision Plasma Display consists of a TV screen showing a beautiful coastal landscape with a car driving on the very edge of the ocean at a distance. The tagline "I wonder if he knows his plates are expired" implies</p>

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
		great quality of the picture enabling the viewer to discern such minuscule details on the screen as the license plate of the car still far away.
Camera	Auxesis. An advertisement for an Olympus camera shows a photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge rising out of thick fog which is shown to be spilling out of the photo and onto the page. The image	An advertisement for a Cannon camera. The message "Elevate Ordinary Sights", obviously capitalizing on the double meaning of the word 'elevate', is illustrated by an elevated view on a

Type of ad/ Product Category	Advertisement with a pictorial rhetorical device	Advertisement without a pictorial rhetorical device
	illustrates the claim that the Olympus camera takes "the most realistic images".	train crossing a bridge rising above a scenic valley.
Watch	Catachresis. An advertisement for SEIKO men's watches. The message "Seiko Science. Now available as a fashion accessory" is demonstrated by a guy wearing a suit and a Seiko watch instead of a necktie.	An advertisement for Breitling men's watches. It shows an image of the watch in the foreground and an image of a jet pilot walking toward his airplane in the background. The message is "Breitling builds quality instruments for professionals".

Thus, out of the whole list of visual rhetorical devices (see Appendix A) only a limited number (eight) of them were chosen for the experiment to make this study manageable within available resources and time. The presence or absence of rhetoric figures in the selected ads as well as the intended message of the ads were determined in discussion with the advising professors.

The selected pairs of advertisements and articles of general human interest were assembled into a magazine to create the conditions of natural exposure. The articles for the magazine were chosen and arranged in such a way that the magazine included a women's section, a men's section, and a part that could appeal to both genders. The articles were taken out of real magazines, Newsweek, BusinessWeek, Time, New Scientist, Men's Health, Health and were devoted to such themes as pop culture, book reviews, health news, dating, fashion, food and drink, science and technology, personal technology, online shopping, consumer product reviews, travel, television issues, war, law, retirement, injuries, psychology, and music. The topics were chosen so that people of any age within 21-45 range could find some articles of interest to them. The advertisements were

inserted throughout the entire magazine in such a way that they related to the articles.

Participants

Participation in the experiment was voluntary. Volunteers were selected from the 21 - 45 age group. Invitations (see Appendix B) to take part in the experiment were sent out to the households in the neighborhood of the research location, which was SJSU International House. Past research has demonstrated that consumers draw on their cultural knowledge and experience to interpret complex messages (Phillips, 1997). A sufficient stock of cultural knowledge is required to interpret the rhetorical structure assembled by the advertiser (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). Lack of cultural knowledge may result in miscomprehension of the ad's message. To prevent this, only volunteers who have lived in the United States for 15 or more years were selected to participate in the experiment. Also, to make the research more accurate, volunteers had to be regular or occasional readers of leisure magazines to be eligible for participation in the experiment. A total of 36 participants were chosen for the purpose of the experiment.

Procedure

The participants received the magazine to read for an hour. To simulate natural ad exposure conditions the participants were not informed of the actual purpose of the experiment. Instead, they were told that a new magazine concept was being tested. They were instructed to pay attention to and assess all aspects of the magazine - information content, design, and advertising. This ensured that the readers did not ignore the advertisements completely and paid equal attention to both types of advertisements. The following instructions were given to each volunteer before he or she was given the magazine to look through:

"The purpose of this experiment is to test the market for a new leisure magazine. Please, read this magazine as you would normally read any periodical magazine, reading the articles that appeal to you, and skipping the ones you are not interested in. Pay attention to and assess all aspects of the magazine: its design, the articles included, and the topics addressed in them. Also, look at the advertisements - what products are advertised? Are they

relevant to you as a consumer? As soon as you are finished with the magazine, let the researcher know.

Thank you for your cooperation."

After participants have read the magazine, they were interviewed to measure their unaided ad recall, ad attitudes, and brand attitudes. After the interviews the participants were debriefed on the actual purpose of the experiment. The data for the figurative and non-figurative ads were then coded and compared.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Advertisements

There are four basic criteria or categories of response that are widely used in advertising research:

The first is advertisement **recognition** measured by Starch test. Recognition refers to whether a respondent can recognize an advertisement as one he or she has seen before. The second is **recall** of the commercial and its contents. The third is *persuasion*. How persuasive is a commercial, for example? Finally, the criterion of **purchase intentions** is used. Does the advertisement or the advertising campaign have an effect on purchase behavior?

A slightly modified set of effectiveness criteria have been selected for our research to measure the aspects of ad performance laid out in our research hypotheses. Within the framework of our research, to be considered effective, an advertisement must be:

1. Memorable. Unaided ad recall was measured.
2. Liked. As we showed in our hypothesis development, positive ad attitude is likely to lead to favorable brand attitude.
3. Persuasive. The persuasiveness of an ad was measured through the change in brand attitude.

Since the participants might have encountered the advertised brands before the experiment, they might already have certain attitudes to those brands. Therefore, it was important to ascertain the existing attitudes before the experiment, and to measure the change in those attitudes as a result of the participants' exposure to the advertisements in the magazine. A questionnaire (Appendix C) was developed to be filled out by the participants before they were given the magazine to read. This questionnaire asked the participants to indicate their

attitudes to the brands whose advertisements were inserted in the magazine. The brand list was deliberately shuffled to prevent the respondents from seeing the pattern.

Procedure and Coding

The volunteers were given the magazine to read and the instructions on how to read it. After they were finished with it, their unaided recall of the advertisements was tested. The participants were asked what advertisements for the products from the 13 product categories they remembered. They were asked to describe the image of the advertisement and pinpoint the message that the picture helped communicate. Those advertisements whose images were remembered with sufficient detail and whose message was understood received 1 point. Advertisements were given 0 points if they were described without sufficient detail or incorrectly, or if their message was miscomprehended or not recalled at all. Our first hypothesis would be supported if the advertisements with rhetoric images were recalled a greater number of times than the advertisements with realistic images.

After the participants described all the advertisements they could recall without any aid, they were shown the ads again pair by pair and asked to choose the advertisement they liked better than the other in the set. The ad that was favored more received one point, and the alternative ad received 0 points. The second hypothesis of the research would be supported if the figurative advertisements were preferred a greater number of times than the advertisements of the alternative type.

Lastly, the participants were asked about their attitudes to the brands (their interest in trying the brands) featured in the advertisements:

1 point was given to the brand if there was no interest in it whatsoever;

2 points in case the participant was not particularly interested in trying the brand but did not totally dislike it;

3 points were given to the brands which the interviewees felt indifferent about;

4 points were given to the brands that were somewhat desired by the interviewees;

5 points were allocated to a brand when a participant expressed very high interest in it.

The points were tallied up for all the ads and the scores of brand attitude before and after the exposure to the advertisements were compared to see if there was a change. Our third hypothesis would be supported if the attitude change was greater for rhetoric advertisements than it was for the advertisements with realistic images.

The results of the experiment are presented in the next chapter.

Results

The key findings of the experiment are summarized and presented in Appendix D.

Hypothesis 1 stated that advertisements with visual rhetorical figures would be more memorable than the ads with images reflecting reality. This hypothesis was supported. Advertisements based on visual rhetorical devices were recalled 112 times (65.9%) - almost twice as often as the advertisements with realistic images, which were remembered 58 times (34.1%). A T-test yielded $t=2.529$ and $p=0.0184<0.05$, which shows that the mean difference between the scores of the two types of advertisements is significant enough to conclude that rhetorical advertisements are more memorable than realistic advertisements. Nine out of thirteen advertisements with rhetorical devices were consistently recalled by more participants than the advertisements of the alternative type. The best remembered advertisements were the ad for Seiko watches based on a visual catachresis, the ad for Breathe Right nasal strips based on a visual paradox, and an Air France ad based on a simile.

Hypothesis 2 stated that advertisements with rhetoric devices embedded in their images will illicit more favorable attitudes toward them, than ads without pictorial rhetoric devices. The hypothesis was supported. Advertisements with visual rhetorical devices elicited more positive attitudes from the interviewees in 314 (67.1%) cases versus 154 times (32.9%) that realistic advertisements were preferred. A Chi-square test yielded a Chi squared = 48.507 and $p < 0.0001$, two-tailed, which almost excludes the possibility that the obtained result was accidental. In ten out of the thirteen cases the ads with a pictorial rhetorical figure were chosen as more visually appealing than the alternative ads.

Hypothesis 3 stated that brands featured in print ads with visual figures of rhetoric will score higher on attitudes toward the brand than brands featured in baseline ads. The hypothesis was supported by the data. Whereas the attitude toward the brands featured in figurative advertisements rose 8.4% after the participants' exposure to those advertisements, the interest in the brands featured in realistic advertisements was down 5.5% from the pre-experiment level. The difference 13.9% is a significant

indication that the advertisements with visual rhetorical devices were more effective at selling the intended message. Ten out the thirteen advertisements with figures of rhetoric demonstrated improved attitude toward the presented brands, while only five advertisements of the alternative type gained in brand attitude as a result of the experiment. The brands in the first group that got the biggest increases in brand attitude were Mentos (simile), Nutri-Grain (paliconia/catachresis), Air France (simile/metaphor), Discover credit card (synchysis), Olympus (auxesis), and Seiko (catachresis).

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to compare the effectiveness of print advertisements with and without visual tropes. The benchmarks for effectiveness were suggested by past studies which had direct and indirect evidence that the presence of a rhetorical device in an advertisement's image might enhance ad recall, ad attitude, and brand attitude. Three hypotheses were developed and tested by means of an experiment involving thirteen pairs of figurative and realistic advertisements. The results of the experiment supported all the three hypotheses.

However, these results should be treated with caution because they are cumulative. The data for all the 13 advertisements together demonstrate the advantage of rhetorical ad images in ad recall, ad attitude, and brand attitude. Many individual ads such as the ads for Mentos, Nutri-Grain, Zilctin, Air France, Discover, Panasonic and Seiko showed consistently superior performance in all the three tests. But not each individual case supports these outcomes. For instance, though the ad for Curel was remembered by many respondents, it was liked in as many cases as the alternative ad, and produced only a minuscule change in the participants' brand attitude. Similarly, the ad for Breathe Right nasal strips was inarguably more memorable than the alternative Nasonex ad, but they both were equally liked and both failed to make a serious impact on the participants' ad brand attitudes. On the other hand, though the advertisements for Olympus and Cannon had equally poor recall, the Olympus ad was almost always preferred to the Cannon ad, and it created interest in the brand, whereas the interest in Cannon dropped.

What these discrepancies indicate is the fact an ad's good memorability, ad attitude, or brand attitude does not

automatically lead to the ad's good results in the other two dimensions. A well remembered ad, for example, does not necessarily have to be liked or have to improve brand attitude. What the results of our research probably mean, is that visual rhetorical devices increase the chances of the ad to be remembered better, liked better, and to sell more effectively, but there may well be a break in this chain.

Why does this happen? First, though rhetorical figures influence ad attitude, ads may be liked or disliked for reasons other than the presence of visual tropes. Many of the respondents' comments suggested that they favored this or that particular advertisement because of its colors, objects shown, layout, and the product image size. For example, a number of the interviewees liked the advertisement for Zilactin canker sore treatment because of the color contrast, the advertisement for Protein Plus energy bar because of its sex appeal, and the Olympus camera advertisement because of its high quality picture. On the other hand, the ad for Breathe Right nasal strips was extremely well remembered because of the paradoxically modified image of the Mona Lisa, but it was not liked

exactly for the same reason - the image has been overused in advertising. Other reasons for disliking certain advertisements were their "corny look", "bad color choice", and irrelevance of the image to the product advertised.

The data showed that advertisements with certain rhetorical devices performed consistently better than the others in all the three tests. However, it would be a mistake to infer that these particular rhetorical devices are superior to the others. As we have just discussed, whether an ad will be remembered or not also depends on a number of other aspects of the ad design such as colors, layout, objects depicted, the quality of the print. An interesting observation in this regard was that one of the least recalled advertisements was the ad for GNC multivitamin, also based on a paradox. A separate comparative study is required to see which visual figures of rhetoric lead to the creation of more memorable ads than others.

Thus, our study has determined that rhetorical figures can enhance the effectiveness of advertisements. However, more research is needed on other aspects of rhetorical

devices in advertising to make theoretical conclusions applicable in practice.

Suggestions for Future Research

Our research has demonstrated that advertising images with visual rhetorical devices create greater ad recall, ad attitude, and brand attitude than realistic images. However, due to the limited character of our research, we have not been able to determine which visual rhetorical devices make more effective advertisements than other rhetorical devices do. Research on whether such a difference in fact exists and on the advantages of different visual rhetorical figures would be a logical and useful continuation of our research.

In our study we looked at only three criteria of advertising effectiveness: ad recall, ad attitude, and brand attitude. However, many advertisements in low involvement media do not seek to persuade. Instead, they seek to inform and develop top-of-mind brand recall among consumers in the belief that, when the consumer is ready to purchase, the advertised product will be among those considered. For these advertisers, influencing product

attitude may be of little consequence. The effectiveness of an advertisement may rest on how well the brand name is remembered. It would be interesting, therefore, to investigate in the future the effect of visual rhetorical figures on brand memorability.

Another problem that should be addressed in future studies of visual rhetorical figures is the comprehension and interpretation of advertisements with visual tropes. Some of the responses for unaided ad recall during our experiment were discarded because the meaning of the image was not understood or its interpretation deviated significantly from the intended message of the advertisement. What is the risk of making an advertisement too hard to understand by using a rhetorical figure? How does miscomprehended meaning of a rhetorical figure affect ad and brand attitudes?

Finally, research on the effectiveness of rhetorical figures in forms of advertising other than print advertising is necessary. A TV commercial, for example, differs from a print ad in many ways such as exposure conditions, dynamism, and obtrusiveness. It may very well be that figures of rhetoric improve the effectiveness of

one form of advertising and fail to make any positive change in another.

Conclusion

In their research Mitchell and Olson (1981) addressed the question of whether viewers of ads were able to make analogical conclusions that the creators of ads wanted them to make. The experiment was based on four versions of a print ad for an imaginary brand of tissues. The first contained a picture of the product but no other image. Instead there was verbal text declaring that the tissues were soft. In each of the other three versions, the picture of the product was juxtaposed with an image, but there was no text. The three juxtaposed images were a kitten, a sunset, and an abstract painting. Each of the four versions of the ad was shown to a separate group of viewers; the viewers were then asked to rate various aspects of the product and the ad. The key finding was this: both the verbal text and the image of the kitten produced higher ratings of the tissues' softness than did the other two images. Moreover, the softness rating for the kitten image was even higher than the one for the text.

What this finding demonstrates is the fact that images can be even more effective in communication than words. Taking a step further, our research demonstrated what kinds

of images are most effective in visual communication, and specifically in advertising. The present study revealed that visual figures of rhetoric enhance the communication power of advertisements. Compared to advertisements with realistic images, advertisements with rhetorical devices in their images were found to be remembered by the viewers better, liked better, and had greater positive influence on the viewers' brand attitudes.

These conclusions may have implications for advertising creative process. If the advertiser knows that figurative images produce a stronger impression on the consumer or sell better, such creative ideas may be preferred to others, leading to more focused creative processes and increased effectiveness of advertising. Many advertisers seem to have started to realize the capabilities of visual rhetoric. As we have mentioned above, a number of content analysis studies have observed the growth of the proportion of advertisements with rhetorical devices used in today's advertising.

The importance of research in the area of imagery in advertising is hard to overestimate. As the speed of life increases people have less and less time for reading, and

instead rely on visual perception. Even the speed of visual communication is increasing progressively. There is a growing need to find images able to effectively communicate as much information as possible in as little time as possible. Our research shows that visual rhetoric can be a promising direction in which to look for a solution.

Another problem that highlights the importance of research in visual communication and visual rhetoric is the illiteracy rate in the US. As many as 40 to 44 million adults in the country are basically English illiterate. A whopping 90 million - about half of the entire U.S. adult population - can perform tasks only up to a medium level of difficulty (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993). Not that illiterate people are a lucrative market to advertise to, but they are target audience for various public service advertisements, social advertisements and other forms of advertising. It is obvious that advertising to that category of the population must predominantly be pictorial, and again, this is where the findings of our research may be useful.

The primary advantage of this research is that it simulated to a great extent the natural conditions of

exposure to the advertisements. Unlike in other studies, where the ads were shown to viewers in labs, in our experiment the advertisements were seen by the participants in an actual magazine without their knowing that their response to advertising was being studied. Also, whereas in many other studies the participants were recruited among students, the respondents in our experiment represented consumers from a wide range of ages and occupations.

The main drawback of the present research is its general character. The data for all advertisements with rhetorical devices were combined and analyzed as one, and therefore, our conclusions were not informative of the effectiveness of each individual rhetoric device. A separate study addressing this problem would be useful.

Nevertheless, we hope that the results of this research will contribute to the theory of both advertising and visual communication, and will be used in advertising practice.

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Appendix A

*Classification of Verbal Rhetorical Devices Used In
Advertising*

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Repetition <i>1. Sounds</i>			
Rhyme	Repetition of syllables at the end of words	KitchenAide. For the way it's made.	KitchenAide refrigerator
Chime	Key words in a phrase begin with identical sounds or letters	The tradition of trust.	Merrill Lynch brokerage
Assonance and alliteration	Three or more repetitions of a vowel or consonant	No one knows the land like a Navajo	Mazda four- wheel drive

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
2. Words			
Anaphora	Repetition of words at the beginning of a phrase	Easy treatment. Easy cure.	Gyne Lotrimin medicine
Epistrophe	Repetition of words at the end of phrase	Choose to be your most beautiful. Salon beautiful.	Salon Selectives hair products
Epanalopsis	Repetition of a word toward the beginning and the end of a phrase	Smart phone smarts.	AT&T
Anadiplosis	Repetition of a phrase toward	Kleenex Ultra. Ultra	Kleenex tissue

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
	the end of one phrase and the beginning of the next	softness is all you feel.	
1. Phrase structure			
Parison	Marked parallelism between successive phrases	The quality you need. The price you want.	K-mart stores
Reversal			
1. Syntax			
Antimetabole	Repetition of a pair of words in a phrase in reverse order	It says what it does. It does what it says.	Listerine mouthwash
2. Semantic			

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Antithesis	Incorporation of binary opposites in a phrase	We got hot prices on cool stuff.	Musicland stores
Substitution 1. Claim extremity			
Hyperbole	Exaggerated or extreme claim	Laser beams move at the speed of light. Our engineers move faster.	Uniden laser and radar detector
2. Assertive force			
Rhetorical question	Asking question so as to make an assertion	Don't you have something better to do?	HP plain paper fax

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Epanorthosis	Making an assertion so as to call it into question	Chances are, you'll buy Ranger for its value, economy and quality. Yeah, right.	Ford pickup truck
3. Presence or absence			
Ellipsis	A gap or omission that has to be completed	Everyday vehicles that aren't.	Suzuki four-wheel drive
4. Center or periphery			
Metonym	Use a portion to represent the whole	The imports are getting nervous.	Buick
Destabilization			
1. Similarity			

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Simile	Explicit comparison of two dissimilar objects	Like a rock.	Chevy trucks
Metaphor	Substitution based on underlying resemblance	Science you can touch.	Jergens skin care
Pun	Substitution based on accidental similarity		
Homonym	One word can be taken in two senses	How to make a home run.	Whirlpool appliances
Antanaclasis	Repeating a word in tow different senses	Today Slims at a slim price.	Slim cigarettes

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Syloopsis	A verb takes on a different sense as clauses it modifies unfold	Built to handle the years as well as the groceries	Frigdaire Refrigerator
Resonance	A phrase is given a different meaning by its juxtaposition with the picture	Will bite when cornered (with a picture of a car splashing water as it makes a turn)	Goodyear tyres
1. Opposition			
Paradox	A self-contradictory, false, or impossible statement	This picture was taken by someone who didn't bring a camera	Kodak

Operation and formal element	Brief description	Example in an ad headline	Product and brand
Irony	A statement that means the opposite of what it said	We spent years developing this incredibly comfortable contact lens, and this is how you treat it (a picture of a finger flicking the lens away).	Acuvue disposable contacts

Appendix B.

Invitation for Participation in the Experiment

Dear Sir/Madam

This is an invitation for you to participate in an academic research in the area of media.

I am a graduate student at San Jose State University. As a requirement for my graduation I am conducting a research on the popularity of a new magazine targeted at a wide public.

I am looking for experiment participants who meet the following criteria:

- 21-45 years of age;
- have lived in the United States for at least 15 years;
- occasional or regular readers of general interest magazines.

The following experiment procedure will be employed. You will be given a copy of the prototype magazine for a few hours to read at your leisure. After you have finished with the magazine, you will be asked to come to the research

location for a brief interview about your impressions of the magazine.

If you satisfy the above specified criteria, and feel like contributing some time to the research, please contact me as soon as possible at:

Denis Minov

Telephone: (408) 373-6103

Address: International House, 360 South 11th Street, San Jose, CA

Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Confidentiality is guaranteed.

Thank you.

Denis Minov

Graduate Studies

School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

Appendix C.

Brand Attitudes Prior to the Experiment

Please, rate your attitudes to the following brands:

Brand	Very interested to try it (again)	Somewhat interested to try it (again)	Indifferent/ not familiar with it	Not particularly interested to try it	Not interested to try it at all
Mentos cool chews					
Curel therapy lotion					
Balance Gold energy bar					
Aveeno skin cleanser					
Zilactin canker/cold sore gel					
Nasonex nasal spray					
Nutri-Grain yogurt bar					
The Famous Grouse whisky					

Air France					
Abreva cold sore treatment					
Discover credit card					
BREITLING watch					
Centrum performance multivitamin					
American Express credit card					
GNC Mega Men multivitamin					
Canon cameras					
Olympus cameras					
AeroMexico					
Breathe Right nasal strips					
Panasonic					

flat HDTV					
SEIKO watch					
Pioneer TV					
Harvest power bar					
ProteinPlus bar					
JAMESON whisky					
Wrigley's Extra gum					

Appendix D. Experiment data

Questions/Product categories	Breath freshener	Skin care	Energy/ Snack bar	Canker/ cold sore gel	Nasal treatment	Whisky	Airline	Credit card	Multi- vitamin	Camera	TV	Watch	Total
H1. Describe the ads for the following products that you remember seeing in the magazine. What message does the ad's image help convey? (Number of times advertisements were recalled)	Mentos 12	Curel 10 r	Protein Plus/Nutri- Grain 5 / 10 h	Zilactin 12 e	Breathe Right 16 t	Famous Grouse 1 o	Air France 14 r	Discover 6 i	GNC 2 c	Olympus 2 a	Pana- sonic 6 l	Seiko 16	112 (65.9%)
	Extra gum 2	Aveeno 6 r	Harvest/ Balance 5 / 6 e	Abreva 7 a	Nasonex 2 l	Jameson 4 i	Aero Mexico 11 s	American Express 2 t	Centrum Perfor- mance 3 i	Cannon 2 c	Pioneer 4	Breilung 4	58 (34.1%)
H3. Which of the two advertisements do you like better (communicates to you better)?	Mentos 27	Curel 18 r	Protein Plus/Nutri- Grain 20 / 25 h	Zilactin 26 e	Breathe Right 18 t	Famous Grouse 12 o	Air France 30 r	Discover 27 i	GNC 21 c	Olympus 33 a	Pana- sonic 28 l	Seiko 29	314 (67.1%)
	Extra gum 9	Aveeno 18 r	Harvest/ Balance 16 / 11 e	Abreva 10 a	Nasonex 18 l	Jameson 24 i	Aero Mexico 6 s	American Express 9 t	Centrum Perfor- mance 15 i	Cannon 3 c	Pioneer 8	Breilung 7	154 (32.9%)

Questions/Product categories	Breath freshener	Skin care	Energy/ Snack bar	Canker/ cold sore gel	Nasal treatment	Whisky	Airline	Credit card	Multi- vitamin	Camera	TV	Watch	Total
H2. What is your attitude to the advertised brand? a. Very interested to try it (again) (5 points) b. Somewhat interested to try it (again) (4 pts) c. Indifferent (3 pts) d. Not particularly interested to try it (again) (2 pts) e. Not interested in it at all (1pts)	<i>Mentos</i>	<i>Curel</i>	<i>Protein Plus/Nutri- Grain</i>	<i>Zilactin</i>	<i>Breathe Right</i>	<i>Famous Grouse</i>	<i>Air France</i>	<i>Discover</i>	<i>GNC</i>	<i>Olympus</i>	<i>Pana- sonic</i>	<i>Seiko</i>	1,503 (+117 or +8.4%)
	150 (+18)	111 (+3)	84 / 135 (-24)/(+21)	110 (+8)	87 (+3)	84 (-9)	120 (+30)	121 (+25)	69 (-6)	153 (+18)	153 (+9)	126 (+21)	
		r	h	e	t	o	r	i	c	a	l		
	<i>Extra gum</i>	<i>Aveeno</i>	<i>Harvest/ Balance</i>	<i>Abreva</i>	<i>Nasonex</i>	<i>Jameson</i>	<i>Aero Mexico</i>	<i>American Express</i>	<i>Centrum Perfor- mance</i>	<i>Cannon</i>	<i>Pioneer</i>	<i>Breitling</i>	1,375 (-80 or -5.5%)
	168 (+3)	114 (+15)	63 / 69 (-33)/(-36)	83 (-31)	105 (0)	96 (-12)	123 (+39)	116 (+26)	84 (-27)	117 (-15)	138 (+6)	99 (-15)	
		r	e	a	l	i	s	t	i	c			