Cohesive Devices in Advertising Discourse

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the cohesive devices used in advertising discourse, more precisely, in audiovisual advertising discourse.In order to examine how cohesion is achieved, ten television commercials in English are selected as the main source of data,and are analyzed within the framework of Halliday and Hasan'smodel of cohesion.The findings of the study suggest that cohesion is caused by the high number of reiteration instances as well as collocation pairs. The study concludes that lexical cohesive devices are dominant in advertising discourse. Conversely, grammatical cohesive devices are less frequent in the advertisements under study.
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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze a number of English advertisementsfor the purpose ofidentifying the cohesive devices used in the formation of advertising texts. It also attempts to examine which type of cohesion contributes most substantially to texture, and whether this type is effective or not in achieving persuasion which is advertising main function.In other words, the relevance of the cohesive elements that are present in advertisements and how they contribute to the overall aim of advertising discourse which is to persuade people to take action and buy the product being advertisedfor.This model of analysis approaches language as discourse and not as sentences in isolation. Text linguistics looks at the text as a semantic unit, not of form, but of meaning and it is not defined by its size but by its communicative function.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أدوات الربط المستخدمة في الإعلانات التجارية التليفزيونية أي في الخطاب الإعلاني السمعي البصري. تم اختيار عشر إعلانات تليفزيونية باللغة الانجليزية من اجل تقصي الطريقة التي يتحقق بواسطتها الترابط النصي في هذا النوع من الخطاب وتمت عملية تحليلها في اطار نموذج هاليداي وحسان للتماسك النصي. تبين نتائج الدراسة أن الترابط النصي راجع بالدرجة الأولى إلى التكرار اللفظي وكذا التراص المفرداتي. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن التماسك النصي في الخطاب الإعلاني يعتمد على الاختيارات اللفظية أكثر من أدوات الربط النحوية.

Advertising language

In our global societies, the role of advertising discourse is undeniable. Advertising is a form of communication used to persuade an audience of the benefits of a product or a service. Generally speaking, advertising aims at increasing the consumption of certain products or services. According to Cook (1992:4)"advertising is a prominent discourse type in virtually all contemporary societies."Advertising is a genre, an everyday feature and format across contemporary media, alongside other genres, such as news, sitcoms, films, talk-shows and games. Advertisers use every possible way to create successful advertisements; advertisers make use of images and music but the linguistic message whether verbal or written remains the most important element of an advertisement. Advertising is to a large extent a craft of persuasion.Sternkopf (2005: 200)says that "The advertiser's art consists largely of making persuasive statements." In order to construct their advertisements, the copy-writers make use of a formula, summarized in the acronym AIDA. According to Breuer e*t.al.*(2008), AIDA means "Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action."First, the advertisement aims at gaining your attention, then to hold your interest long enough to tell you about its product or service. This may be achieved through the visual appeal or through creating suspense, humor or surprise. Positive associations of words and images make the product seem attractive, hence, desire is aroused. Finally, all of this will prompt the audience to take action and buy the product. Consequently, linguistic choices are of a great importance in this genre whose aim is quite obvious: persuasion. In general, advertisers present their message in a factual way or in an emotional way. In other words, the focus can be either on the practical value of the product or on the way the product will give personal satisfaction. Since the aim of advertising is to persuade the largest possible number of people, most advertisements combine factual information with an emotional load. One crucial choice advertising copy-writers have to make has to do with the choice of cohesive devices. As pointed out by Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive markers do more than provide continuity and thus create the semantic unity of the text; the choice involved in the types of cohesive ties used in a particular text can affect the texture as well as the style and meaning of that text. Advertising texts are not ordinary in the sense that they aim at influencing people and this will, in turn, have an impact on the cohesive devices selected in the construction of advertisements.

Halliday and Hasan's Model of Cohesion

Cohesion is a concept put forward by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Many linguists consider Halliday and Hasan's book *cohesion in English*as the best known and most detailed model of cohesion; it is a book that made cohesion an important concept and has evoked wide discussion and application ever since. According to Brown and Yule (1983:190)"this model is by far the most comprehensive treatment of the subject and has become the standard text in this area". Baker (1992:180) holds the same point of view and says that the model outlined by Halliday and Hassan is "the best known and most detailed model of cohesion available." Halliday and Hasan (1976: 4) define cohesion as follows: "The concept of cohesion is   a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and define it as a text. Cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded

except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation ofcohesion is set up."Cohesive devicesare the explicit linguistic devices that cause texts to stick together.However, cohesion on its own does not create a text; cohesion is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for the creation of text.Halliday and Hasan maintain that a text is atext because it has texture, it constitutes a semantic unit and itis not and just a jumble of disconnected sentences.Thesemantic unity of the text lies in the cohesion among sentences of which it is composed and in being operational within some context of situation, *i.e.,*when it is communicative and makes sense to its receivers.Therefore, texts are said to have the following properties, they are: self contained, well-formed, hang together (cohesive),make sense (coherent) have a clear communicative purpose and are appropriate to their contexts of use.Halliday and Hassan's approach deals with the semantic relations which make the text cohesive by means of a number of structural ties that rely on grammatical and lexical relations. That is to say, cohesion is expressed partly through the grammar and partly through the vocabulary. Hallidayand Hasanidentify five main cohesive devices in English.These devices are: *reference,substitution, ellipsis, conjunction*, and *lexical cohesion*.This latter as the name implies is a lexical relation, the other four relations are based on grammatical relations.

The term *reference*is used to describe the relationship of identitywhich holds between two or more linguistic expressions; certain items cannot be interpreted semantically on their own, but rather make reference to something else for their interpretation.Reference, in this sense, is a cohesive device that allows the reader or hearer to retrieve the identity of what is being talked about (participants, entities and events)by referring to another expression in the immediate linguistic context.The linguistic tools of reference are: personal pronouns such as: *he, she* and *they*, demonstratives such as: *this* and *that,* and comparatives such as:*same* and *identical*. Reference can be anaphoric orcataphoric.In cataphora, we need to look forward in the text to identify the referent. While, in anaphora, which is much more common, we need to look backward in the textto identify what is being talked about. When the source of the necessary information for the interpretation of a reference item is an element in the text itself, we are dealing with what Halliday and Hasan call *endophoric* reference.Reference outside the text is exophoricreference, outwards reference often directs us to the immediate context as when someone says: *"leave it on the table,"*when talking about an extra house key. So, here the recovery of the identity of the pronoun *it*relies on information provided by the situational world not the textual one.Exophoric reference is not cohesive according to Halliday and Hasan because it is not text internal. However, they do admit that it is an equally important part of the reader/listener's active role in creating coherence as it contributes to textuality that is the feelingthat something is a text, and not just a random collection of sentences. Brown and Yule (1983) state that sometimes the distinction between endophoric reference and exophoric reference becomes much harder to draw.For Mc Carthy (1991), the distinction may be a useful one for practical reasons.It enables us to evaluate to what extent any discourse isself-contained,supplying its referents internally or,to what extent it depends heavily on external, culture specific and real-world referents. Reference within the textual world plays a dual role; it unifies the text and

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saves us from having to repeat the identity of what we are talking about again and again.Unlike reference, *substitution* is a grammatical rather than a semantic relation. In substitution, an item (or items) is replaced by another item (or items). Words such as *do* and *so are* used to substitute for a word or words that have generally appeared in a previous sentence.*Ellipsis* involves the omission of an element.Thiselement is replaced by nothing, but it is recoverablefrom the surroundinglinguistic context. It is the case of leaving something unsaid which is nevertheless understood. *Conjunction* involves the use of formal markers to relate sentences, clauses and paragraphs to each other.Unlike reference, substitution and ellipsis, the use of conjunction does not instruct the reader to supply missing information by looking for it elsewhere in the text. Instead, conjunction signals the way the writer wants the reader to relate what is about be said to what has been said before.Conjunctions can be *additive*such as: and, also, in addition, for instance, etc. *Adversative*such as:but, yet, however, nevertheless, etc.*Causal* such as: so, for, for this reason, consequently, etc.*Temporal*such as: then, next, finally, at last, etc. It should be noted, however, that the same conjunction may be used to signal different relations, depending on the context.In *lexical cohesion*, the cohesive effect within a text is achievedby the selection of vocabulary. Lexical cohesion covers any instance in which the use of a lexical recalls the sense of an earlier one.Halliday and Hasan divide lexical cohesion into two main categories: *reiteration*and *collocation*. *Reiteration* involves repetition of lexical items. Reiteration does not include only the repetition of the same lexical item, but also the occurrence of a different lexical item that is systematically related to the first one. A reiterated item may be then,a repetition of an earlier item, a synonym, a near –synonym, a superordinate term or a general word. All these instances have in common the fact that one lexical item refers back to another, to which it is related by having a common referent.*Collocation* is seen by Halliday and Hasan as the most problematical part of lexical cohesion. Collocation is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur irrespective of whether or not there is identity of reference. In collocation, the lexical relationships that have a cohesive force include the following categories: pairs of opposites of various kinds such as: *boy- girl, wet- dry,* pairs of words drawn from the same ordered series (words belonging to the same lexical set) such as: *chair- table,dollar-cent,* and part- to-whole relationships like *eyes-face* or *chapter-book*. All of these categories of collocation are based on systematic semantic relationships of co-occurrence. However, there are collocations where the word relationship is not systematic. Such collocation relationships exist between words that tend to occur together in similar lexical environments such as: *hair-comb,garden- dig, pay-money*, *patient-hospital* and so on.This type of relationship is rather problematic, the exact relationship between these words can be hard to classify, but there does exist a recognizable relationship.Halliday and Hasan (1976) maintain that collocation or collocational cohesion groups together all the various lexical relations that do not depend on referential identity. All lexical cohesion that is not covered by reiteration is treated under the general heading of collocation. Collocation can serve as a source of lexical cohesion since it is one of the factors on which we build our expectations on what is to come next, for example *smoking* collocates with *pipe* and therefore making the occurrence of *pipe* cohesive. It is the occurrence of the item in the context of related lexical items that provides cohesion and gives the passage its quality of text.

Sample, Method and Data analysis

This study is descriptive in nature. Asample of ten English advertisements will be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.The advertisements are television commercials collected from two satellite channels in the Middle East that broadcast their programs in English:*MBC2 and DUBAI ONE.* First, the cohesive devices are going to be identified in our sample. Second, data are to be analyzed in terms of the frequency of the cohesive elements occurrence, *i.e.,* quantifying the frequency of the occurrence of cohesive devices by means of percentage to find out the most dominant use of cohesive devices. A discussion of the findings will then follow.

1) *Nescafe Gold*

"It starts like a symphony, a taste so satisfying.It awakens your senses like a dance. Its luxury mirrors the beauty of the moment. Only Nescafe Gold can give you the rich taste and aroma of prime coffee beans in every cup. Enjoy the magic of coffee with the New Nescafe Gold. Let the rich aroma take over."

We can notice three instances of reference, the pronouns *"it"*and*"its" a*re used to refer to *Nescafe Gold*. We do not establish the identity of *"it"* is until the third sentence. We are given the pronoun first, and then kept in suspense as to its identity, which is revealed later. This is known as cataphoric reference. One main function of cataphoric reference is to engage and hold the attention of the reader or listener.There are six instances of lexical cohesion through the exact repetition of the following lexical items:*Nescafe Gold, aroma,coffee, like, taste*and *rich.*There is also lexical cohesion through collocation. Chains of collocational cohesion include the following: sy*mphony……dance;   beauty…….mirrors;taste…..aroma;luxury……rich; coffee….beans* and*coffee………cup.*

2) *New Dove Oil Replacement*

"Your hair is your greatest treasure and it deserves greatest care. Introducing new Dove oil replacement with its lightweight texture, it is more easily absorbed compared to others, leaving your hair smoother and touchably soft. Enjoy the Dove difference in your hair with new Dove oil replacement."

In this advertisement, just like the first one, the cohesive devices used include: reference and lexical cohesion.The first *"it"* (*it deserves greatest care*) refers anaphorically to the previously mentioned noun phrase *"your hair".* The second*"it"*in (*it is more easily absorbed*) as well as the possessive pronoun *"its"* in(*its lightweight texture)*refers to the product itself:n*ew Dove oil*replacement.Lexical cohesion is achieved through exact repetition and through near- synonymy. The words*"your","hair" and "Dove"*are repeated two times, the items*"greatest,new, oil and replacement"* arerepeated one time. Lexical cohesion takes place through near– synonymy in the use of*smooth*and *soft.*Cohesion through collocation is seen in the following   lexical   association:*oil………absorbs,hair………smooth* and*hair…………..soft.*

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3) Chevrolet Trailblazer 2013

"Turn a summit into destination. Turn a climber into pedestrian. Turn seven individuals into a family. The all new 2013 Chevrolet Trailblazer, with the capability to go anywhere,you'll see the world in a whole new way."

This advertisement is characterized by the use of lexical cohesion with its two types: reiteration and collocation. Theword *turn*is restated twice, and the term *into*is also repeated two times. The lexical item *new* is repeated one time. Collocation is expressed through the following lexical chains: *summit……..destination;climber………pedestrian* and *individuals…………family*.We have here one instance of using conjunctions,*"with"*in thefourth sentenceexpresses addition.

4) Nestle Klim Milk

"Nothing gives you more happiness than being there for your family every step of the way. This is possible when your bones are strong and healthy. But, to be able to move downwithout any discomfort your bones need Nestle Klim a delicious way to healthy bones. It has 50% more calcium and a unique calcilock formula tohelp lockcalcium in your bones making them strong and healthy. So, you can enjoy the freedom to move the way you want to today and tomorrow. Nestle Klim: lock calcium, unlock freedom."

Here, we can notice more variation in terms of the cohesive devices used. First, the demonstrative pronoun *"this"* in the second sentence is used to refer anaphorically to a situation as a whole rather than one specified item. *"This"* refers to the fact of *"being happyto be there for your family every step of the way."* So, the reference item refers practically to the whole previous sentence, *i.e.*, to segments of discourse and not just a single item. Such an instance of reference is called extended referenceaccording to Halliday and Hassan. Other instances of reference include the use of" *"it"* and *"them."It"* in (*it has 50% morecalcium)* refers anaphorically to *Nestle Klim*,*"them"*in (*making them strong*) refers backwards*, i.e.,* anaphorically to *your bones*.Conjunctions mark the logical connections between sentences, two conjunctions are used in this advertisement: *"but"*and *"so"*.The former is adversative (expresses contrast), the latter is causal (expresses consequence). Lexical cohesion is achieved through the exact repetition of a number of lexical items.The items which are repeated, sometimes more than one time, include the following items:*you, your,bones, strong, healthy, calcium, freedom, way,* and *Nestle Klim*. Lexical cohesionthrough collocation can be noticedin the following lexical associations:*lock……unlock; today…..tomorrow; step…….way; strong…..bones; healthy……..bones* and *calcium…….bones*.

5) Chanel 2013 (Skincare products)

"Where does beauty begin? Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself, just yourself,not wanting to resemble anyoneelse. Beauty is inside, it is revealed, it does not have to prove itself,it just moves you. I believein chance, in the odor of the moment, in beauty even with the eyes closed. Beauty growswhere not expected. Itnever finds itself, it often hides. Beautyis mysterious, unexpected;sometimes imperfect, always

unique. It isan inner feeling, the promise of confidence.Experience a new way to take on time with our skincare products.Chanel: where beauty begins."

The focus of this advertisement is the concept of beauty. The lexical item *beauty*is either retrieved through the use of the pronouns "*it*and "*itself*", or via its constant repetition throughout the advertisement. So, reference and lexical cohesion are the dominant cohesive nties in the current advertisement. This makes a kind of chain running through the advertisement, in which each expression is linked to another. We notice several instances of anaphoric pronouns, the pronouns "*it*"and "*itself*", referto "*beauty*" whenever they occur. Lexical cohesion is achieved through the exact repetition of the item *"beauty",* it is repeated five times. There are alsoother instances of repetition where the following items are repeated:"*yourself, you, where, begin, you,* and *moment."* The use of the items *"unexpected*" and *"not expected"* involvesreiteration through the use of synonymy. There are two interesting incidences of ellipsis in our text in the fourth and sixth sentences. In the fourth sentence, the omitted element which is recoverable from the surrounding linguistic context is *"I believe"*; *(I believe) in the odor of the moment, (I believe) in beauty even with the eyes closed.* In the sixth sentence the omitted element is "*beauty is"; (beauty is) unexpected, (beauty is) sometimes imperfect, (beauty is) always unique.*Collocation is achieved through the following lexical associations: *moment……..time, sometimes…………always, find…………hide.*

6) Nivea NourishingBody Lotion

"*Nivea deeply nourishes your skin with natural minerals and almond oil keeping it touchably smoother for longer. If your skin could choose, it would choose Nivea nourishing body lotion from Nivea. Nivea: a hundred years of skin care for life."*

In this advertisement of Nivea body lotion, we notice the use of reference in the first and second sentence. Both occurrences of the pronoun "*it*"in *(keeping it touchably smoother) and in (it would choose Nivea)*refer anaphorically to "*your skin*".Lexical cohesion is achieved through reiteration and collocation. The lexical items that are repeated include:*Nivea (three times), nourish, your, skin(twice),* and *choose.*Collocationis seen in these lexical associations: *skin……….nourish; skin……… smooth; skin……touch*and *nourish………lotion.*

7) New Lipton Clear Green

"*The new Lipton clear greeneffect begins with the youngest green leaves. So that every cup is brimming with Catechins that are good for you and every sip has a new, light and fresh taste. New Lipton clear green: feel light, feel active. "*

In thisadvertisement, we notice the absence of reference as a cohesive tie.Lexical cohesion with its two types: reiteration and collocation is present in here as was the case with all the previous advertising passages. Reiteration involves the repetition of the following items*: green, clear, new, Lipton, feel* and *light.* Collocational cohesion is expressed through the following lexical associations:*green……..leaves,cup……..sip,*and *fresh……… taste.*Two conjunctions are used in this advertisement: "*so"* in the second

sentence expresses consequence (causal), *"and"* in the second clause of the same sentence expresses addition (additive).

8)   *Rexona Deodorant*

"There are many unexpected reasons for swept. Protect yourself from swept and use Rexona. It won't let you down."

In this short advertisement, we notice the use of lexical cohesion through reiteration.The word *"swept"* is repeated. Reference is also used, the pronoun *it*refers to *Rexona.*

9)   *ClearMen Shampoo*

"Heat, swept, and grease make you more prone to dandruff, but not anymore. Try new Clear men shampoo which is cool in mint, ginseng and tea tree. It gives you all day freshness and zero dandruff. New Clear men shampoo: all day freshness, zero dandruff. Clear men shampoo: world's number one selling men shampoo."

The pronoun *"it"* in (*it gives you all day freshness)* refersanaphorically to *"n*e*w Clear men shampoo".*Lexical cohesion is also present in this advertisement as was the case with the previous advertising passages. Reiteration takes place through the repetition of the following lexical items: *dandruff (twice), shampoo*and *men (*three times*), new,freshness, zero,Clear* and *all day.* Cohesion through collocation can be seen in the following lexical associations: *heat……swept, heat…….cool, mint……..tea, zero……. one (number one).*

10)   *New Dove Essential Nourishment*

"New Dove gives you twice the nourishment and another surprise. It is less greasy than other creams. Good-bye greasiness, hello twice the nourishment. New Dove essential nourishment: discover it for yourself."

Here, we have two instances of reference. The pronoun *"it"* in *"it is less greasy than others"* refers anaphorically to *New Dove.* The second occurrence of the pronoun *it* refers to *New Dove essential nourishment.* Reiteration occurs through the repetition of the following items*: new, Dove, nourishment* and *greasy.* We can also observe the following collocational chains: *good bye………………hello* and *cream………………nourishment.*

Discussion of the findings

After identifying and classifying the cohesive devices used in ouradvertising messages, we counted the instances of each cohesive tie. Out of one hundred and fifty three instances of cohesion, 79,74 % are achieved by lexical cohesion and 20, 25% are achieved by grammatical cohesion. Within lexical cohesion, there are one hundred and twenty two instances. 57, 52% of them are achieved by reiteration (most often the exact repetition of a previously mentioned lexical item), 22, 22 % are achieved by collocation. As far as grammatical cohesion is concerned, reference comes first with 15, 03%. Conjunction and ellipsis are rarely used, they represent 03, 92 %and01,30 % respectively, while substitution is not used at all. This quantitative analysis reveals

that the discourse of advertising does have its own cohesive features.Lexical cohesion represents the most used cohesive device. Within lexical cohesion itself**,** reiteration outnumbers collocation;instances of reiteration represent more than the double of collocation occurrences.When it comes to grammatical cohesion, reference represents the first choice of advertising copy-writers who tend to rely mostly on anaphoric rather than cataphoric reference. However, it is clear from the statistics that when referring to the product, advertising favors the use of repetition over the use of referring expressions. It is the insistent reiteration of the product's name or of its qualities that brings the consumer to believe that the product in question is of superior quality. According to Cui and Zhao (2013), repetition deepens audiences' impression and enhances their memorization; it allows the addresser to emphasize what is important and enhances the coherence of text. Therefore, we can say that the kind of cohesive links we choose will depend upon the kind of discourse we are seeking to create. In this respect Halliday 1994 (quoted in Schiffrin 2001: 37)maintains that: "for a text to be coherent it must deploy the resources of cohesion in ways that are motivated by the register of which it is an instance.'' Repetition is not always desirable, it may sound pretentious and odd in everyday conversation; but it is what is needed in advertising discourse. The recurrence of a lexical item several times in advertisements is meant to have a specific stylistic significance: to reinforce the persuasive message. Repetition is considered as a bridging and persuasive device which makes a great aid in the memory as it contributes infixing the attention of the recipient of the advertisement on the key words or phrases in the text. Repetition is used regularly by advertising copy-writers in order to engrave in the readers', listeners' or viewers' memory the information which the advertiser wants to transmit to the consumers.Therefore, reiteration is not a chance event in advertising discourse; it is a conscious strategy that serves well the ultimate aim of advertising messages.

Conclusion

In this study we focused on the cohesive patterns in advertising texts and their stylistic role. The results showed that the most frequent relation is simple repetition relation, collocation comes second. That is to say, the chains of repeated words or those of related words represent the main source of cohesion in advertising discourse. Reiteration is a common instrument of persuasion not just in advertising discourse but in any discourse type whose aim is persuasion. Kuran (1997:165) observes that political discourse and advertising discourse are similar in this aspect. He writes: "anyone familiar with political campaigns knows that they are highly repetitive. Campaigners reiterate the same points at every opportunity. Like politicians, advertisers of consumer goods use repetition as an instrument of mass persuasion. ''It can be said therefore that advertising copy-writersmake deliberate choices and select the cohesive devices that are more likely to contribute in creating successful advertisements.

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