

The Power Of Persuasive Language In Political And Food Advertisements

Henry James Rantung¹, Caroline V. Katemba^{2*}
Universitas Advent Indonesia
ctobing@unai.edu

ABSTRACT

This study analyses how persuasive language is used in food and political advertisements, emphasizing how language techniques influence audience perception and behavior. The study finds important rhetorical strategies, such as emotional appeals, repetition, and nostalgia, by examining commercials from food brands (KFC and McDonald's) and political campaigns (Trump and Harris) between 2016 and 2024. Food advertising uses nostalgia, price, freedom to pick what kind of menu customers want, and convenience to draw in customers, whereas political campaigns frequently use fear, hope, and unity to connect with voters and non-voters. According to the research, persuasive language changes as society does, mirroring adjustments in political environments, consumer expectations, and the norm of today's language use. This study emphasizes more toward the need for strategic messaging in advertising and offers suggestions for future campaigns that modify their language to better meet the needs of shifting target audiences.

Keywords: food advertisement, political campaign, persuasive language.

INTRODUCTION

“Persuasion is an important part of the daily life of every human being. Persuasion is a central feature of every sphere of human communication. Persuasion is found wherever you find people communicating”. (Katemba & Tobing, 2020). In influencing consumer decisions and influencing their public perception, in the realm of advertising is very critical for anyone or organization who wants to advertise their product or ideas to anyone. With the development of the Internet, users are spending less time on traditional media such as TV and radio. Today, social media has become a popular topic in the internet (Wu Shaozhi, 2020). This is why many Advertisements utilise various strategies to appeal to wide or niche consumers using non-traditional ways to advertise, whether it is in the fields of politics, or food marketing that is shown anywhere. Persuasive Language is the core and crucial element of these strategies; short words and phrases can be used to develop compelling narratives, stimulate thoughts, and finally drive action to buy the product. In any big or niche advertisements, it is important to be precise with a messaging that can express important cultural value, establish trust among people, and persuade any customers in only a short brief of time, and persuasive language words is highly effective and desired by many.

Advertisements in political campaigns frequently use the important and professional language to influence the public's opinion, provoke powerful emotions to any listener, and convey important issues or topics in a way that promotes the agenda of the candidate or the

party. On the contrary the side, marketing for food typically to cater towards the tastes of customers by highlighting taste, cultural references, and nutritional perks

Though an abundance of research that continues to be performed on advertising persuasive languages are using interesting or even niche approaches, which many majority of which particularly determines the persuasive language used in different sectors, such as covering topics like food, and even politics. Various Campaigns for food, and politics are all targeting various target demographics and objectives, which could leave influence overall the persuasive language that was utilized. Politicians, commercials, or even consumers who desire to initiate investigating on what advertisements they encounter need to become well informed of these variances. This study seeks to answer the following questions: (1). What persuasive language techniques are commonly used in political, food, and toy advertisements? (2). How does the use of language vary between these two types of advertisements? (3). What impact do these linguistic strategies have on the intended audiences? The objectives of this study are to: First, Identify and analyze the most common persuasive language techniques used in political, food, and toy advertisements. Second, To compare the use of rhetorical devices such as ethos, pathos, and logos across these advertising types. Then, Examine the specific vocabulary, tone, and stylistic elements employed in each domain. Finally, determine how these linguistic strategies aim to influence the behavior and decisions of the target audiences.

Significance of the Study

To further the domains of marketing, linguistics, and English education, this study examines at the use of persuasive language in food, and political advertising. The study provides on how persuasive language affects political votes non-voter behavior and customer decisions on buying food advertisements, while also giving useful knowledge for English education to see how persuasive language is being used. Through a review of each of these categories of advertisements and watching the ads from social media especially YouTube, the study is going to show how persuasive language is tailored according to the needs of different audience segments. The results may also increase English Education awareness on how it shows how it will help certain consumers review advertisements critically and determine the tactics employed to influence their opinions. In addition, by offering a more profound comprehension of language's persuasive power in everyday circumstances, this research supports English education and advances media literacy, a crucial ability in modern-day society.

For scholars, the research will provide a comparative framework for analyzing persuasive language, contributing to the broader conversation about communication strategies in different industries.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study examined ads from two specific areas: political campaigns, and food products. It reviewed a range of online and television ads that have been put up in many social media ads. This is why ads will be from the United States of America and the United Kingdom in 2016 and 2024 to ensure up-to-date information. However, the research also look at certain aspects like visuals, the audio, the color, the grammar, and the tone of the advertisement. However, the primary focus remained on the language used in the ads, making it more useful for English education by exploring how language influences different situations.

Definition of Terms

- **Persuasive Language:** The use of specific words, phrases, or rhetorical techniques intended to influence the attitudes or behaviors of an audience.
- **Rhetorical Devices:** Strategies used in language to persuade an audience, often including ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic).
- **Ethos:** A rhetorical appeal based on the character or credibility of the speaker or brand.
- **Pathos:** A rhetorical appeal to the audience's emotions.
- **Logos:** A rhetorical appeal to logic and reason.
- **Political Advertisements:** Advertisements created by political parties or candidates to influence public opinion or voter behavior.
- **Food Advertisements:** Advertisements that promote food products, often focus on taste, health, and cultural associations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While much political communication now occurs online, traditional media like newspapers and television still play a significant role in shaping political discourse (Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2024). Linguistic framing in political ads is crucial, as it constructs narratives that appeal to voters' values and emotions. Messages about economic growth or national security are often designed to tap into voters' desires for financial stability and safety, using rhetorical techniques such as repetition to reinforce campaign ideas.

In food advertising, sensory and visual language is commonly used to emphasize product qualities like flavor, freshness, and health benefits (Arrona-Cardoza, Labonte, Cisneros-Franco, & Nielsen, 2024). Persuasive language in these ads connects consumption with positive emotional experiences, whether linked to indulgence, health, or social trends. Both political and food advertisements use tailored messaging to influence their target audiences through strategic use of language.

The effectiveness of persuasive language in advertisements can be explained through the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which outlines two primary routes of message processing: the central route and the peripheral route (Shahid, Paul, Gilal, & Ansari, 2024). Consumers engaged with the message through the central route typically evaluate advertisements deeply, such as political ads seen on television or online, where highly involved individuals critically assess the content and arguments presented. In contrast, the peripheral route involves superficial processing, where consumers are influenced by cues like a candidate's appearance or tone of voice, as seen in less prominent ads or neighborhood billboards. This dual-processing framework helps explain how different audiences respond to persuasive language based on their level of involvement with the message.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the power of persuasive language in advertisements across political, and food advertisement sectors. But the analysis is more on the qualitative side of the study. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of linguistic techniques and their impacts.

In gathering the data on the two advertisements the following procedures are taken into action.

1. Political Advertisements: Collect a sample of political advertisements from recent elections (2016-2024) across various media channels (television, and online platforms).
2. Food Advertisements: Gather a sample of food advertisements targeted at different age groups, focusing on both print and digital media.

The samples should be representative of different brands and political parties, and cover a range of advertising formats. The data were gathered and selected through;

1. Television: Record advertisements from popular channels and timeslots.
2. Online Platforms: Extract advertisements from social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) and video platforms (e.g., YouTube).

The selection criteria are based on the (1) Relevance: Advertisements should be recent (from 2016 to 2023). (2) Diversity: Include a range of political parties, food products, and toy brands. And (3) Format: Ensure inclusion of various formats (video, audio, print).

Data Analysis & Interpretation

The data was analyzed through qualitative analysis and was focused on content analysis. In this content analysis: analyze the language used in the advertisements to identify recurring persuasive techniques, themes, and rhetorical strategies. In Analyzing the two advertisements including the political campaign was focused on the following:

- Political Advertisements: Focus on language that appeals to emotions, fear, the nation needs, or patriotism.
- Food Advertisements: Examine language that emphasizes health benefits, taste, or lifestyle enhancements.
- Thematic Analysis: Identify key themes and patterns in the persuasive language used across different advertisement types.
- Coding: Develop a coding scheme based on initial readings and categorize the language into themes (e.g., appeals to authority, emotional appeals, use of statistics).

In considering the use of quantitative analysis, Frequency analysis, Sentiment Analysis, and the Tool used, please take a look at the details of the considered items used in the quantitative analysis:

- Frequency Analysis: Quantify the frequency of different persuasive techniques used in each type of advertisement. Example: Count the number of times emotional appeals or statistical claims appear in food advertisements versus political ads.

- Sentiment Analysis: Use computational tools to assess the sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) of the language in the advertisements.
- Tool: Utilize software like NVivo or sentiment analysis APIs to process and analyze the text data.

In the interpretation of the data, a comparative analysis is used in which it compares the use of persuasive language across political and food, advertisements to identify similarities and differences. Besides that it also looks into the impact assessment where it assesses the potential impact of different persuasive techniques on audience perception and behavior.

To ensure the validation and reliability of the data, a Triangulation: Use multiple data sources (e.g., different media platforms) and methods (qualitative and quantitative) to ensure the validity of findings. This study also considers on the ethical considerations in which the study focuses on the ‘Informed Consent: Ensure that any data used from online platforms adheres to privacy policies and terms of service’. As in the case of data privacy it handled all collected data responsibly, ensuring that personal information is anonymized where applicable.

This study used descriptive data to examine the demographics and exposure patterns of persuasive language across different advertising that include McDonald, KFC, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. Additionally, non-parametric statistics were applied in the computation of data to assess the frequency and effectiveness of persuasive strategies. To ensure content validity, experts reviewed the data collection instruments, and the gathering of the ads were taken from many forms of social with the intended linguistic concepts. The gathering data was focused on certain uses of the persuasive from 2016 to 2024. Ethical considerations were integral to the study, ensuring informed consent was obtained and confidentiality was strictly maintained. The study acknowledges limitations such as potential biases in the video ad, especially on political side context.

Data Collection Period and Variability in Persuasive Language

The advertisements analyzed in this study were gathered from political campaigns and food brands between 2016 and 2024. This time frame was chosen to observe how persuasive language has changed over the years, considering key political events and evolving consumer trends in food advertising. It's important to note that persuasive language may have shifted during this period due to changes in society, technology, marketing strategies, even the specific words used in the current year, and the gender language of the political candidate. For example, political ads might have adopted new techniques to appeal to different groups, using non-traditional or niche language to attract non-voters, while food ads might have increasingly focused on health, affordable pricing, and big demographic shifts that may also have influenced how ads are written to resonate with the audience or stopping relied on famous people to advert the product. The study acknowledges that these changes could affect the results, and efforts made to account for these differences when analyzing the effectiveness of persuasive language across the years.

1. The use of persuasive language in Food Advertisement



“KFC 2 for 5 dollar wrap, now has five flavors. There is classic, spicy slaw, honey BBQ, new mac and cheese, and new spicy mac n cheese. The choice is yours, plus add free a wrap in KFC app. “It’s finger lickin’ good”



“KFC Famous bowls is only 3 bucks, a whole pound of tasty food but how? It’s a famous pour of this and a famous bit of that, and famous chicken on top of all that stuff and more gravy. KFC famous bowl a whole pound of delicious food for 3 bucks”



“Looking for a reason to try the new 5-dollar meal deal at McDonalds. Here’s one, two, three, four and the price makes five. That’s everything you get from 5 dollar meal deal at McDonald”



“McDonalds has made a small improvement to the classic. Syringing a 100% British and Irish beef patty, they juicer. Adding onion to the grill for extra flavor, new toastier buns, and serving it hotter for even meltier cheese. Now the classic is more ‘mmm’”

Table1. Comparison of food ads pre and post-pandemic

McDonald Ads	KFC Ads
Pre-Pandemic	Pre-Pandemic
McDonald, that’s everything you get with new 5 dollar meal (2018)	KFC, Famous bowl using the \$3 famous bowl (2018)
Post-Pandemic	Post-Pandemic
McDonalds classic make a small improvement to the classic with more ‘mmm’ (2024)	KFC Wraps using the word of the ‘choice is yours’ (2024)

2. The use of persuasive language in political advertisement



“The politician can pretend is something else but Donald Trump calls it radical Islamic terrorism which is why he calls for a temporary shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until we can figure out what’s going on. He’ll quickly cut the head off of ISIS and take their oil, and he will stop illegal immigration by building a wall on our southern border that Mexico will pay for. We will make America Great Again”.



Today, I’m also announcing as part of our additional tax cut, we will all end taxes on overtime, you know what that means? Look at that, think of that. That gives more people incentive to work, it’s a gift to the company, and it’s gotten a lot easier for the people getting new work force. No taxes on overtime, the people who work overtime is the hardest working citizens who work and so many times Washington never looks at them. They are police officer, nurses, factory workers, construction workers, truck drivers machine operators. It’s time for working men and women to finally catch a break, that’s why we are doing it, it’s good and I think it’s going to be good for the country.



Fearless that’s what Elizabeth Warren said about Kamala taking on the powerful from the behalf of California. Harris prosecuted violent predators and transnational gangs exploiting women and children. Took on big oil companies violating hazardous laws and Kamala Harris sued the big banks and won 20 billion for California homeowners. Kamala Harris was Fearless. Kamala Harris is for the senate



I grew up as a middle-class kid. Focusing again on the aspiration of the dreams of America. I career as a prosecutor, and most of my career creating opportunities for the economy, which is about investing in areas that really need a lot of work. Well, I’m obviously not Joe Biden. The vast majority of us Americans have so much in common that won’t separate us

Table 2. political campaign on the pre and post-pandemic

Kamala Harris	Donald J Trump
Pre-Pandemic	Pre-Pandemic
The repeating of Fearless (2016)	The repeating words of ‘Make America Great again’ (2016)
Post Pandemic	Post Pandemic
The majority of us, American have so much in common than separate us (2024)	We will end all taxes or overtime tax (2024)

RESULTS

Presented above are the findings from Table 1, which illustrate the patterns of persuasive language used in political and food advertisements. The findings reveal that certain persuasive techniques and linguistic strategies have become more prominent and evolved, showing noticeable changes with each passing year. This shift reflects how advertisers adapt their messaging to align with societal changes, consumer preferences, and emerging trends in both political campaigns and the food industry.

Table 1 compares McDonald's and KFC from pre-pandemic, showing significant changes in their choice of words over the years, reflecting important trends during those times. For example, phrases like "McDonald's \$1 \$2 \$3 Menu: It's your menu, and it's your favorite" and "KFC Famous Bowl: Get the \$3 Famous Bowl" emphasize pricing to attract customers. McDonald's focuses on offering a variety of menu items at affordable prices, while KFC highlights their popular Famous Bowl, featuring mashed potatoes and gravy, to draw in customers by promoting their well-known dish.

Further, we can see also in Table 1 comparing McDonald's and KFC advertisements after the pandemic. It highlights how both brands use nostalgic and familiar language to connect with customers, evoking memories from before or during the pandemic. For example, McDonald's uses the phrase, "Classic with a small improvement for more 'mmm,'" emphasizing their classic menu with a slight upgrade. KFC, on the other hand, uses the phrase, "The choice is yours," with their wraps, focusing on giving customers more options.

Table 2, regarding on political advertisements compares pre-pandemic campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, focusing on their use of persuasive language. In his campaign, Trump used the slogan *"Make America Great Again"* and highlighted issues like stopping illegal immigration, which resonated with voters concerned about America's future at the time. The phrase *"Make America Great Again"* was seen as highly effective in attracting support and persuasive language. On the other hand, Kamala Harris used phrases like *"prosecuted predators"* along with her repeated use of the word *"fearless,"* which aligned with her image and encouraged more people to vote for her.

Further looking closely at Table 2, still on political advertisements compared post-pandemic campaigns from Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, focusing on their use of persuasive language. Trump's recent slogan, *"We will end all taxes or overtime tax,"* aims to attract voters burdened by taxes, promising financial relief. In contrast, Kamala Harris emphasizes unity with the phrase, *"The majority of us Americans have more in common than what separates us,"* appealing to voters by highlighting shared values and common backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the significant role that persuasive language plays in both political and food advertisements. Through a comparative analysis, it is evident that linguistic strategies such as emotional appeals, repetition, and the use of familiar or relatable terms are effective in capturing the attention of target audiences. Political advertisements, particularly those of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, successfully use language to appeal to specific voter concerns, whether by focusing on issues like taxation or unity. Similarly, food advertisements from McDonald's and KFC leverage pricing strategies, nostalgia, and popular menu items to

attract consumers. Over time, both industries have adapted their language to reflect evolving societal concerns, trends, and consumer preferences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Political Advertisers: Political campaigns should continue to refine their use of persuasive language by addressing current social and economic concerns. It is important to focus on emotionally charged issues that resonate with voters, while also providing clear, actionable promises that voters can relate to. Consistent messaging and simple, powerful slogans should be maintained to foster stronger connections with the audience.

Food Advertisers: Food companies should focus on combining value-based offers with emotionally appealing language that aligns with consumer values such as health, sustainability, and convenience. Furthermore, incorporating a sense of nostalgia or familiarity with traditional menu items can enhance brand loyalty.

Future Research: Given the constantly changing nature of societal values and media, future research should explore how digital platforms and social media influence the effectiveness of persuasive language. Additionally, cross-cultural studies can help determine how persuasive strategies differ in various regions and markets.

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