

The Lingopragmatic Role of Punctuation Marks in Digital Advertising: A Comparative Case Study in Belarus, Egypt, and the UK

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Abstract

Our task is to investigate the linguistic use of punctuation marks in digital advertising texts throughout three different cultures: Belarus, Egypt, and the UK. Our objectives are not only to understand the linguistic role of punctuation marks and their impact on message clarity but also to identify cultural differences in punctuation usage and to determine the practical implications for advertisers and marketers. We applied a qualitative and quantitative methodology research design; particularly, we conducted content analysis and utilised frequency counts to enhance the robustness of our findings. We analysed two cases of each culture to understand the linguistic implication of punctuation marks in each language. Additionally, we explored how punctuation affects the overall message of an advertisement and influences consumers to take action, including purchasing goods or utilising services. Our study's findings have both linguistic and practical implications. Our analysis shows that punctuation reflects cultural communication styles, which advertisers can use to create messages that are more effective. We identify distinct usage patterns: English advertisements prioritise clarity with frequent full stops and moderate commas, while Arabic ads favour fewer full stops, using commas and dashes for fluidity.

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advertisements employ exclamation marks to convey excitement and urgency. Our research impacts our comprehension of the linguistic role of punctuation marks in digital advertising texts, as well as it is beneficial for advertisers and marketers to adhere their ads to the proper linguistic rule for applying punctuation marks to generate well-structured advertising ads, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of advertisements by ensuring clarity.

Keywords: Punctuation marks, digital advertising, linguopragmatics, cross-cultural communication, marketing implications, linguistic analysis, communication styles, exclamation marks, full stops, commas

Introduction

Punctuation is an important component in writing a proper advertising text that can communicate to the audience and persuade them to buy this product or service. In this regard, readability of the advertisement text as well as influences on the interpretation and emotional response of the target audience relies on using punctuation marks in an effective way. Although the main objective of advertising is to communicate messages and grasp the attention of the audience, punctuation serves as an essential tool for increasing the persuasive effect of the advertising text.

As Moore (2016) argued that punctuation marks donate to the syntactical structure and rhythm of sentences, correspondingly, it is essential in linking the reader's comprehension and engagement with the ad's text [1]. In this sense, Gad (2022) stated that the accurate placement of periods and commas could influence the message, which can affect the audience's perception [2]. This is quite relevant in advertising text since the ad's message can evoke an emotional response, which can accordingly determine the successfulness of the advertising campaign. The interaction between punctuation and the semantic structure of the advertising text underscores its significance; thus, punctuation helps to present notions and establish a connection between them, incontestably, in order to create a cohesive narrative able to resonate with the target audience [3]. In addition, Chen et al. (2018) assert that the importance of punctuation expands beyond grammatical correctness; it obviously integrates the writer's stylistic and personal characteristics, which can improve the appeal of ads [4]. In this regard, Burrell & Beard (2022) claimed that the inappropriate, playful, or unconventional usage of punctuation could attract attention and create a long-lasting impression only among the young audience [5]. Similarly, Beard et al. (2016)

suggest that effective advertisement relies upon the capability to connect with the needs and obviously the desires of consumers; clearly, this connection can be achieved through thoughtful punctuation [6]. The role of punctuation in advertising texts is evidently supported by its influence on cognitive processing. In this context, Lamprou et al.'s (2023) research has demonstrated that punctuation helps in the cognitive coding of information, which certainly allows readers to navigate complex messages more easily [7]. This cognitive facilitation is essential in advertising, where messages should be quickly comprehended and memorised. In contrast, the omission, or laxity of punctuation, can lead to misinterpretation and ambiguity, which can correspondingly determine the intended message and hence alienate the audience [8]. In this study, we argue that, typically, the function of punctuation in advertising is not merely a set of grammatical rules but a powerful tool in written communication. Its efficiency to improve clarity, influence emotional responses, and help cognitive coding makes it pivotal for crafting proper and more accurate advertisements. In consequence, advertisers should be alerted of their punctuation choices to enhance the impact of their messages.

The Theoretical Implications

The utilisation of punctuation, generally, in advertising texts is marked by its power to arouse emotions and craft a specific tone, which is accordingly fundamental for attracting the attention of the audience and relocating the intended message successfully. Concerning this, Smetonienė (2013) stated that advertising texts lack neutral punctuation, assuring that every single punctuation mark has an emotional-expressive function and that it is actually vital for enhancing the persuasive nature of the advertisement [9]. In essence, punctuation plays a big role in making advertising text comprehensible. In sequence, according to Pogoda and Walkowiak (2021), it indicates that punctuation restoration is important for the readability of texts through Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) systems, which are increasingly used in advertising [10]. Accordingly, this is important because ads need to communicate clearly and quickly to grab people's attention. Additionally, the absence of accurate punctuation can, naturally, lead to misunderstandings or a lack of engagement from the audience owing to the fact that punctuation marks guide the reader's interpretation [11]. Punctuation marks can also be utilised to create a distinctive brand voice besides increasing emotional expression and readability. The use of "unconventional punctuation marks", including ellipses and exclamation marks, can communicate a sense of excitement or

urgency in advertising texts, which is proven through a scientific study (Yi et al., 2017) who discussed how punctuation marks could be treated as hidden interword events that significantly affect the interpretation of text. With regard to this, we can argue that the jugglery of punctuation marks can be observed as a stylistic choice that enhances the overall influence, on occasion, of the advertisement. Camacho et al. (2023) stated that different languages and cultures have their unique punctuation standards, which accordingly can affect the perception of these ads by different audiences; thus, the cultural context in which advertisements are placed, to some extent, can impact the use of punctuation [13]. This clearly shows how important it is to understand the linguistic and cultural nuances to craft proper advertising texts, as inaccurate punctuation can lead to misinterpretations or cultural insensitivity [14]. Therefore, punctuation marks are not only just functional elements in advertising texts; in particular, they are integral to emotional, readable, and cultural dimensions of advertising communication.

It is worth noting the theoretical implications of punctuation marks in advertising texts have many facets: 1) encompassing aspects of persuasion; 2) consumer psychology; and 3) the structural elements of language. In this context, Pan and Zhang (2023) asserted that the effectiveness of advertising is tied to the central cues presented to consumers, where the clarity and structure provided by punctuation can increase the persuasiveness of the content [15]. Punctuation marks, in a broader perspective, have an impact on the prosody and rhythm of advertising messages that is, correspondingly, can influence how consumers respond to these messages. A study examined the relationship between punctuation and prosody showed that punctuation can largely lead the reader's emotional processing of text (Kalbertodt et al., 2015), which suggests that the proper placement of the accurate punctuation can significantly change the perceived tone and urgency of the advertised message as well as have an impact on consumer behaviour [16].

For instance, exclamation marks, in general, create excitement; ellipses may show curiosity that can be employed to increase the effectiveness of an advertisement.

On top of that, the implications of punctuation marks expand rapidly to the digital advertising landscape, where the consumption of content involves not only clear but also impactful messaging. In the context of social media advertising, more precisely, the ability to deliver messages concisely and effectively is important.

Dondolo's argued that negative beliefs about advertising can be organized through effective communication strategies that indeed include the accurate use of punctuation to improve clarity and engagement, which is clearly relevant on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, where their impact is vital for drawing consumer attention [17],[18]. Briefly, the theoretical implications of punctuation marks, in general, in advertising texts are significant. They have an impact on both the persuasive effectiveness of messages and the psychological responses of consumers. Additionally, the well-structured use of punctuation can advance clarity, arouse emotions, and, incontestably, drive consumer behaviour, making it a critical element in the design of effective advertising campaigns.

Functions of using punctuation marks in advertising

Typically, advertisers use punctuation marks to emphasise some parts of their message or to create contrast and guide the reader's interpretation, as stated by Crystal (1998). One important technique that is utilised is the use of exclamation marks. In fact, exclamation marks are not only employed to keep the attention of the audience on some important pieces of information but also to create a sense of urgency as well. Advertisers some other times use exclamation marks to put some emphasis on product features, discounts, or calls to action, such as "Buy now!" or "Limited time offer!" as highlighted by [19]. Accordingly, this technique is especially important in producing a sense of immediacy. Moreover, to suggest incomplete thought or to create a sense of anticipation, advertisers usually use ellipses (...). According to Tanka (1994), advertisers use ellipses in order to encourage the reader to guess and fill in the blanks or to imagine the usefulness of their advertised service or product [20].

For instance, an advertisement for a skincare product should involve this slogan: "Brighten your skin and feel confident in your own skin..." Here, the reader needs to guess and imagine the transformation and the positive impact on their life. Ellipses can also create a kind of suspense or intrigue. In addition, punctuation marks can be used to create a sense of contrast and to differentiate between products or services.

As Leech and Short (2007) have noted, advertisers use commas, semicolons, or dashes to highlight and separate benefits and features of their products [21]. For instance, an advertisement for a restaurant should be like the following slogan, "Delicious food, mouth-wateringly tasty, and

stunning view," using commas here to create a balance or to emphasise each aspect of the restaurant's appeal.

Nevertheless, the use of punctuation marks is not universal; it is influenced by cultural and linguistic factors. As indicated by Mooij (2019), to craft an advertising text, one should consider key factors such as the cultural context and the target audience's expectations [22]. Therefore, it has been pointed out that what is acceptable in one culture can be unsuitable in another. Similarly, the utilisation of punctuation marks can alternate between languages and cultures. As indicated by Crystal (1998), in the English language, the usage of exclamation marks is to express excitement or put some emphasis, whilst in some other languages; it may have a distinctive connotation or be used in a more sparing manner [23]. In consequence, advertisers should make sure that their use of punctuation marks follows and reflects the linguistic and cultural norms of their target audience to avoid any kind of misinterpretations or misunderstandings.

Clarity is undoubtedly one of the primary principles of punctuation in advertising. The proper understanding of the general principles of punctuation is pivotal to create effective advertising content. For instance, the employ of full stops can originate definitive statements that improve the ad's assertiveness. In addition, proper use of punctuation can increase memorability, notably in advertisements that utilise short sentences and phrases, which are recommended for their capability to assist quick understanding among diverse audiences. This is scholarly proven in the study of Galagunga & Musa (2022) that suggests that accurate layout and graphological features of advertisements can play a role in strengthening communication as well as maintaining reader interest [24]. Punctuation marks, in fact, can have a stylistic function that contributes to the emotional appeal of advertisements. Nonetheless, it is important to make a balance because an excessive or inappropriate use of punctuation can, undoubtedly, lead to confusion or diminish the advertisement's message. In this context, Khanova et al. (2017) noted that those who utilise figurative language and stylistic devices, including punctuation marks, are usually effective at appealing to emotions and making the content memorable [25]. Correspondingly, common problems, particularly in the use of punctuation, like overuse or misuse, can cause confusing messages; thus, one should be cautious not to let creativity overshadow clarity. In connection with this, if creative punctuation enhances originality, it can also distract from the brand message if not executed thoughtfully, according to Pieters et al. (2002), and poor punctuation choices can obscure the message [27],[28].

Besides, an important technique that is utilised is the use of bold text to introduce some pivotal information or to draw the reader's attention to some parts of the message. For example, to advertise new products, one can use the headline "Introducing the latest innovation in technology!" In relation to this, Williamson (1978) assured the use of bold text to emphasise the newness and excitement of the product [29].

Punctuation marks are utilised to create a balanced flow or to achieve a rhythmic effect in the message. Tanaka (1994) asserted that fairly rhythm is beneficial in constructing a sense of energy or momentum. This is obvious in advertisements that use a series of short sentences or phrases. The following three examples apply punctuation marks to generate a sense of rhythm, as in "Get fit in just 30 minutes a day!" "Lose weight and feel great!" "Join the fitness revolution!" This type of rhythm fosters enthusiasm and encourages the reader to take action. Advertisers sometimes apply an exclamation mark and a dash in advertisements for a limited-time offer to build a sense of urgency that is clear in the following example: "Don't miss out—act now!"

Furthermore, contrast is considered one of the key techniques used in punctuation. To create a sense of contrast or separation between different components of the message, in fact, contrast involves using punctuation marks, including dashes or commas. According to Leech and Short (2007), contrast is used to construct a kind of balance and harmony in advertisements that utilise a mixture of short and long sentences or phrases.

For example, Demalex's advertisement for treating psoriasis, "Effective, finally, an innovative treatment for psoriasis, steroid free", it is worth noting that the advertiser used commas not only to create a sense of balance but also to emphasise each aspect of the medicine's characteristics.

This type of contrast actually creates a sense of clarity that makes it easier for the reader to understand and remember the key features of the product as highlighted by [20].

Another relevant technique of contrast is the use of dashes. Dashes are used to add separation or interruption to the message. For instance, an advertisement for a financial institution might feature the headline "Investing in your future—today," using a dash to create a sense of separation between the two parts of the message. This type of contrast makes the reader aware of the main message of the ad.

Punctuation marks in cross cultural studies and its cultural and linguistic considerations

Undoubtedly, the use of punctuation marks in advertising texts carries some cultural and linguistic nuances. As highlighted by Mooij (2019), what is considered effective and adequate in one culture may be perceived as inappropriate in another. With reference to this, Aslam (2006) research has proved that using certain punctuation marks or even symbols can have different meanings or connotations across cultures [30]. Thus, advertisers should be aware of these dissimilarities to avoid any kind of misunderstandings or misinterpretations. It could be assured that the semiotic and linguistic associations of the punctuation marks can differ from culture to culture. Thus, one should understand the culture and linguistic nuances of their target audience to create a relevant advertising language to communicate to their consumers on a deeper level [31].

The results of scientific studies have demonstrated that punctuation marks in multicultural contexts vary and are similar across various languages and affect communication and translation. In a broad sense, punctuation marks can take the role of structural elements, as well as a cultural marker, which can reflect linguistic norms and cognitive frameworks. In a scholarly study by Askerova (2022), it states that universally there are traces of similarity in punctuation marks lying around indicating a shared linguistic heritage and different grammatical structure [32]. Furthermore, the functions of punctuation marks are governed by rules that may vary among languages, which, to some extent, may influence how these texts are interpreted [33].

As for the interplay between punctuation and translation in linguistics, it is considered one of the multifaceted topics. Kondratieva (2018) remarked that translators sometimes neglect to monitor the nuances of punctuation marks; further, they treat them as formal separators rather than vital components carrying meaning [34]. In this light, the translation of punctuation can lead to misunderstandings, specifically when languages have varied conventions, as in the example of English-Persian translations [35]. Another function for punctuation marks is to work as an indicator for writers of the native language to impact how information is organised and conducted [36]. This suggests that punctuation has multifunctional roles; one is to perform a reflection of cultural identity, and another one is a stylistic choice. Although the research on punctuation marks emphasises their significant role in communication, it must be noted that the use of these marks may differ widely and thus may result in misinterpretations in cross-cultural exchanges.

Significantly, the use of punctuation in advertising texts can vary across different cultures and can have an impact on the effectiveness of communication strategies. Also, comprehending these dissimilarities is important in crafting messages that communicate to a diverse audience. In this

regard, we consider punctuation marks as an important tool in shaping textual meanings in the formation of advertising texts. According to Caracciolo (2014), they have noted that em dashes and parentheses can shift not only the reader's perception but, in a broad sense, the reader's emotional response as well [37]. Given that, the complexity of punctuation systems differs by language; English punctuation is in general more sophisticated than that of languages like Kurdish, as outlined by [38]. In addition, cultural assumptions have a role in how punctuation is interpreted and influence the success of advertising campaigns across different languages [39]. In light of the fact that the translation of advertising texts often encounters challenges connected with punctuation, which can lead to misunderstandings if not carefully controlled.

As a matter of fact, the debate between globalisation and localisation in advertising strategies highlights the need for culturally aware punctuation used to guarantee successful communication [40].

Briefly, punctuation is an important aspect of written communication, but its interpretation varies from culture to culture, and so, to avoid miscommunication and maximise effectiveness, advertising texts should be formed with appropriate consideration of the matter.

Methodology

Methodological design

We used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodology to conduct this study. In the qualitative section, we analysed two case studies representing each country, in particular food and beverage online advertising texts. On top of that, we thoroughly analysed the presence of punctuation marks and their function in these ads. Along with their integral role in crafting a persuasive message as well. We also paid some attention to their strategic use, and finally we took into account their semantic, semiotic, and syntactical implementation guided by frameworks such as semiotic theory and discourse analysis in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic role in ads. By analysing these elements, we can appreciate how punctuation shapes consumer perception and behaviour in advertising contexts. As for the quantitative approach, we

counted the frequency of punctuation marks in the given sample meticulously, as well as their interpretations, which provided us with insightful remarks.

Sample materials

A sample of 36 online advertising texts representing three different countries, accordingly characterising three different countries or cultures—Belarus, Egypt, and the UK—is conducted. A more concise and precise version of the criteria for selecting the advertisements for punctuation analysis was applied as follows:

1. The sample materials must represent the diversity of brands.
2. The sample materials must represent cultural and linguistic diversity features across three different countries.
3. The selected sample materials must encompass a temporal range.
4. The sample materials must employ various techniques (e.g., humour, emotional appeal)
5. Each ad of the sample materials must be tailored to specific consumer groups.

Methodological limitations

The restricted generalisability of results from a small sample and possible researcher bias in qualitative interpretations can be considered two flaws in the methodology. In addition, quantitative analysis may oversimplify the nuanced meanings of punctuation and lacks consumer input, which accordingly restricts understanding of interpretation. On top of that, sampling bias and resource constraints may affect the study's validity. Future studies should involve not only a bigger sample size but also a more diversified one from additional countries to enhance generalisability.

Analysis data and their quantitative interpretations

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Count	Digital advertising type	Full stop	commas	Exclamation	Question mark	colon	Semi colon	Das h	ellipses
The UK	Food and beverages	18	5	1	1	-	-	1	-
Egypt	Food and beverages	2	4	1	-	-	1	2	1
Belarus	Food and beverages	5	-	11	-	2	-	2	1

The upcoming analysis of punctuation marks in advertising text across three distinct languages—English, Arabic, and Belarusian—offers some considerable differences in usage patterns. Correspondingly, we illustrate these findings as follows:

1. Full stop: We notably observe that full stops in the English language came first with a high frequency of (18) full stops, which shows a preference for clear and complete sentences in the English language. This approach agrees with common practices in advertising, which seek clarity and decisiveness in representing messages to consumers. While in the Belarusian advertising landscape, it appears to prefer a balance between clarity and brevity; however, it is still less than English. Remarkably, in the Arabic language, the frequency of full stops came last, with a count of (2), which offers a distinct stylistic approach, which signifies favouring fluid sentence structures and actually relies on other punctuation marks to represent the message.
2. Commas: The employing of commas in English advertising texts is really moderate, with a count of (5), which indicates an approach to separating clauses and, of course, improving readability. Arabic advertising texts effectively use commas in order to manage longer phrases as well as lists, a slightly higher count of (4). While the absence of commas in Belarusian advertising texts offers a preference for shorter and also more direct sentences.
3. Exclamation Marks: With a high count of (11), Belarusian advertising texts came first, which displays that a strong emphasis is put on excitement or urgency, accordingly

reflecting culture favourability for more expressive communication styles. In contrast, in English and Arabic advertisements with a count of (1), which represents a reserved use of emphasis, where enthusiasm is delivered through other punctuation marks or means.

4. Question Marks: While the absence of question marks in Arabic and Belarusian advertising shows that direct questioning is not a favourable tactic in those contexts. Given that, we note that the presence of (1) question mark in English advertising indicates that rhetorical questions may be used to engage the audience without overwhelming them.
5. Colons and Semicolons: In both Arabic and Belarusian, texts display minimal use of colons and semicolons. On the other hand, we see that English texts did not utilise either colons or semicolons. Therefore, it obviously suggests differing syntactic preferences within different languages.
6. Dashes: We notice also that these languages use dashes (1 in English, 2 in both Arabic and Belarusian), which offer a shared stylistic choice across these languages to not only create breaks but to add parenthetical information as well.
7. Ellipses: The fact that ellipses are used so sparingly in all of the languages that were studied—just one example each in Arabic and Belarusian ads—indicates that they are rarely used in advertising texts.

Discussion

Egyptian Cases

تمتع بعروض بابا هنود بمناسبة العام الجديد، عرض البيبسي؛ إشتري

Case Study 1: هنود بابا (PAPA HNOUD) –

New HNOUD PAPA "Enjoy 2 Year's offers, Pepsi offer; Buy 2 large sandwiches and get a free liter of Pepsi, or buy 2 meals and get a liter and a half of Pepsi for free." Brand: "هنود بابا" PAPA HNOUD " in 2014, Category: Food & drink

We notice that words such as "تمتع" (enjoy) and "عرض" (offer) are used semantically to create a kind of positive associations. In addition, they associate the brand with pleasure and value. We can also notice that the language used in this ad is informal and imperative. Here, the imperative construction generates a sense of urgency. Its aim is to persuade consumers to take action, that is,

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to buy the product. On top of that, the assertive imperative tone is used to create a powerful way

to influence purchasing decisions. In this ad, we notice that there are a few punctuation marks are used, such as semicolons and commas.

As we mentioned prior, a comma is used to separate a list of items or to indicate a pause, and in this case, it separates two different offers: "أشترى 2 ساندوتش لارج وأحصل علي لتر بيبسي مجاناً" and "أو 'وجبتين وأحصل علي لتر ونصف". Although a semicolon (;) is employed in general to separate two independent clauses that are related in meaning to some extent, in our case it separates the main offer from the alternative offer. Moreover, the usage of punctuation helps to achieve not only clarity and readability in the structure of this sentence but also distinguishes between the two distinct offers by providing obvious pauses and separations.

Given that, in this ad, punctuation marks syntactic function is to divide the sentence into clear parts, which assists in communicating the message without any kind of ambiguity. Moreover, the second semantic function is to influence how the reader interprets the meaning of the sentence. The semicolon shows that the second clause is an alternative to the first, rather than a subordinate clause. It is clear that in Arabic, punctuation marks are used similarly to the English ones, but we notice some minor differences, which are vivid in usages as well as frequency. Although the ad is concise and well organised, it could be improved by breaking it down into two simple sentences or clauses with appropriate punctuation, like adding a comma after "مجاناً".

Study Case 2: دومينوز بيتزا عرض دومينوز لا يزال قائماً وحتى الجمعة " (Domino's – بيتزا دومينوز 2) Pizza "Domino's! القادماً. إحصل على خصم ٥٠٪ لأي بيتزا كبيرة تطلبها بالعجينة الأصلية. إطلبها الآن واستمتع بأطعم بيتزا

The Domino's offer is still valid until next Friday. Get a 50% discount on any large pizza you order with original dough. Order it now and enjoy the most delicious pizza!" Brand: "دومينوز بيتزا"

This ad uses imperative language to encourage consumers to take action. That is so apparent in the use of "إحصل على خصم ٥٠٪" (Get a 50% discount) and "إطلبها الآن" (Order it now) to clearly create a persuasive message. This is compatible with the previous research findings that Arabic advertisements use "أسلوب الأمر" (imperative style) in order to present products [41].

We can argue that some words are used semantically to notify the offer distinctly, including words like "50) % خصم ٥٠٪" (discount), "بيتزا كبيرة" (large pizza), and "العجينة الأصلية" (original dough). These words also have a semiotic application since they are used in the ad to act as signs that show particular meanings and associations symbolising both quality and authenticity. The morphological structure of the words with clear roots and patterns that convey specific meanings is actually typical of Arabic (e.g., "خصم" (discount) and "بيتزا" (pizza) are used

in their standard forms to ensure clarity). The ad consists of three sentences, each with a particular punctuation mark; they help in presenting the meaning without ambiguity. While the first full stop separates the announcement of the offer's duration and the second piece of information, which certainly gives the reader a sense of closure, the second full stop separates this detailed information from the final call to action to ensure that each piece of information is easy to understand. Consequently, the full stop boasts the strength of the message. We can state that when a sentence ends with a full stop, the reader thinks that there is an exclusive recommendation that he should take an action.

The exclamation mark given in this ad expresses both enthusiasm and emphasis and is also used here to grab attention. Further, it shows not only the importance of the offer but urges the reader to take action as well. Besides, it creates a sense of urgency and a desire to respond. To sum up, the punctuation marks play a role in 1) advancing understanding, 2) attracting attention, and 3) motivating the reader to take action.

English Cases

Case Study 1: Nestle - "BUILDING HEALTHIER LIVES, Drink Well. Live Well."

The phrase "BUILDING HEALTHIER LIVES" suggests a sense of improving health, which means taking much care of health in the long term. Words such as "healthier" and "well" have positive semantic connotations associated with the brand and wellness. A close look at the grammatical structure shows that the first part of this ad is a declarative sentence followed by a command phrase. This dichotomy correspondingly increases the overall persuasiveness of the message.

On top of that, the repetitions of the word "well" in the ad create a rhyming effect and make the slogan memorable. Additionally, the phrase "building healthier lives" is used metaphorically, equating the act of drinking the health drink with the construction of a healthier life. The ad uses clear and concise language and directly communicates the benefits of the product. Yet, it combines various linguistic devices. As for the semantic analysis, we observe that the first segment, "building healthier lives", represents the company's dedication to wellbeing. The second segment supports the notion of healthy living through consumption of Nestlé's products. While the utilisation of the imperatives "drink well" and "live well" is to encourage consumers to adopt healthy habits.

About the employment of full stops, there are two full stops in this ad. The first full stop is used for the two imperative sentences, which makes each sentence not only distinct but emphatic as well. In addition, this use, in fact, agrees with the trend of using full stops to create a confident and assertive tone. Nonetheless, there is no agreement on whether periods should always be used in ads or slogans. Some argue that periods are useless unless the ad is a complete sentence, while others suppose that it adds a little flair. In this ad, punctuation marks create an emotional shade to emphasise the main idea of the ad. For instance, the use of full stops makes the message more persuasive. In this ad, the comma is used after "lives" to separate the main clause from the subsequent imperative sentences. It therefore aids in the structuring and flow of the message. Thus, commas can really add a rhythm to the text that makes it much easier to understand. However, their use should be consistent and totally in line with the tone and style of the brand. Additional note: the choice of punctuation can also be stylistic. While the use of full stops can make the message feel assertive, commas can add a rhythmic feel. Given that, it is not just that the punctuation marks in this ad are deliberate; it is that they matter to the message.

Case Study 2: Amoy - "The dark sauce for a light stir-fry."

The ad shows that clear and easy-to-follow syntax, together with the absence of complex stylistic devices such as metaphors or alliterations, enhances message understandability. The ad's clarity, combined with the contrast between "dark sauce" and "light stir-fry," makes it effective in one way in attracting attention and in another way in representing a comprehensible message. The use of some words, such as "dark" and "light", has connotations that go beyond mere description. In our perspective, "dark" implies depth or richness, whereas "light" suggests freshness and healthiness. This dichotomy accordingly attracts consumers looking for a balanced meal. Although the ad does not have many linguistic devices, the contrast between "dark sauce" and "light stir-fry" can be interpreted as a form of juxtaposition. This contrast correspondingly creates a memorable image in the consumer's mind. Moreover, the ad's simple and direct language, including a subject "the dark sauce" and a prepositional phrase "for a light stir-fry," makes the message clear, concise, and easy to understand. This clarity is correspondingly a hallmark of effective advertising language.

To examine punctuation marks presented in this ad, inevitably, one should consider not only the role of the full stop but also its implications in the context of this ad. The full stop at the end of this sentence indicates that the entire thought is complete. In fact, the full stop works as a

terminal punctuation mark. This is actually a fundamental aspect of written communication to inform the reader that the message is final. A full stop at the end of an advertisement is a conventional practice to indicate the completion and clarity in the communication. In addition, the convention is consistent with the syntactic structures found in advertising, which are characterised by brevity and directness [42]. Short sentences and simple syntactic structure are well documented as being used in advertisements for their readability [43]. In a broader sense, the ad tone can be influenced by the full stop. It can give the message a little bit more formality, assertiveness, and clarity. This is especially crucial when it comes to advertising texts because clarity and credibility are so important.

Belarusian Cases

Case study 1: "ДАРИМ МАКИ! КАЖДОМУ НОВОМУ ГОСТЮ."

The entire text of this ad is written in capital letters. This device is used not only to emphasise the offer but also to make it more noticeable.

From one angle, this technique is effective in grabbing the attention of the target audience. From another angle, it can be seen as unprofessional and may violate advertising guidelines that stand against excessive capitalisation. The utilisation of exclamation marks at the end of the first sentence serves in communicating excitement, urgency, and enthusiasm. Exclamation marks, common syntactic devices, are used to create not only emotional response but also encourage immediate action. The phrase "КАЖДОМУ НОВОМУ ГОСТЮ" (to every new guest) serves as a direct address to foster a sense of inclusivity with consumers. The technique of direct address for which this stylistic device is rooted provides a relatable and compelling message. It is a common practice that ads use linguistic devices such as rhyme, alliteration, or assonance to enhance memorability, but in this ad they do not exist. On top of that, the lack of these linguistic devices makes the ad depend more on not only capitalisation but also exclamation marks for impact.

As a matter of fact, the ad's structure is simple and declarative, which is typical in advertising texts, to ensure quick and easy comprehension. Besides, the ad's language is simple and concise and, also combined with the use of exclamation marks, is designed to enhance memorability. Exclamation marks, in general, have a significant psychological impact on the reader by facilitating a shared understanding between the writer and the reader. In this ad, the use of an

exclamation mark helps to divide the flow of the message into units, each containing an element. Accordingly, the exclamation mark, in this case, separates the main action and highlights the key message. Therefore, we notice that the use of an exclamation mark at the end of "ДАРИМ МАКИ!" turns the sentence into not only a more forceful but also an attention-grabbing statement. Undoubtedly, the application of a full stop at the end of the sentence points out that the ad's notion is complete. Actually, it is consistent with standard Russian punctuation rules overall, which use a full stop to indicate the end of a sentence.

In Russian, as common knowledge, the full stop is used, generally, in a similar manner to its use in English for the most part. Thus, it is employed to mark the end of a sentence, indicate abbreviations, and separate decimal numbers (though in Russian, a comma is used for decimal numbers instead of a period).

Case study 2: "Королевская баварская дача. Kaltenberg. Королевское баварское пиво."

The syntactic structure of this ad consists of three short sentences. Although they are connected in meaning, each phrase is a separate unit, though. The first phrase sets the scene or atmosphere; it is regal and traditional Bavarian. The second phrase introduces the specific brand or name associated with this setting. The third phrase also makes it clear that what is being promoted is royal Bavarian beer. If we semantically analyse this ad, we will figure out that the phrase "Королевская баварская дача" represents a reflection of a traditional Bavarian setting. The phrase "Kaltenberg" helps as an identifier of the brand that is famous for its authenticity. On top of that, "Королевское баварское пиво" strengthens, to some extent, the idea of high-quality, traditional Bavarian beer, paying attention to both its royal and prestigious nature. As for the stylistic analysis, especially those that related to style and tone, we find the ad employs a formal and elegant tone, which is, to some degree, suitable for advertising a premium product. We also observe that the ad is fairly concise and effective simply because the ad uses brief and clear language. The ad applies a linguistic device of repetition. Words such as "Королевская" and "Королевское" are utilised to communicate a sense of consistency and strengthen the idea of quality and prestige. The utilisation of descriptive words like "баварское пиво" (Bavarian beer) crafts an image of the product. Descriptive language is often used in Belarusian to paint a detailed picture. The use of foreign words and concepts is a sign of a cultural openness and a respect for international standards that is steadily coming out of Belarus.

When we examine the punctuation marks function in this ad, first we will notice that the ad consists of two simple sentences, and each sentence is separated by a full stop, which indicates that each is a complete thought or statement. Remarkably, the full stops have a role in crafting a sense of clarity as well as emphasis on each element.

In addition, the use of full stops also allows the reader to pause and absorb each part of the message separately, which enhances the impact of each phrase.

General Observations and Cross-Case Analysis

The examination of advertisements from English, Belarusian, and Arabic case studies reveals several points that illustrate the complexities of effective advertising in different cultural contexts.

1. The first point is **punctuation marks and syntactic structure**; punctuation marks role in advertising is quite essential. They are functioned indeed strategically to craft many roles, including creating clarity, adding emphasis, and/or conveying emotional appeal. In the case of the English ads, in particular the Nestlé ad, full stops separate the declarative and imperative phrases that make each single sentence clear-cut, distinct and emphatic. In this regard, this syntactic structure increases the persuasiveness of the message through crafting a clear call to action. In the same vein, in the Egyptian Domino's Pizza ad, full stops separate the announcement of the offer's duration from the very detailed information and the final call to action to ensure both clarity and readability. Commas are used to separate clauses and items, as seen in the PAPA HNOUD ad where it separates two different offers. Significantly, semicolons in the Egyptian PAPA HNOUD ad function to separate the primary offer from the alternative offer and to introduce pauses that make the message, indeed, more clear and understandable.
2. The second point is **the linguistic devices and their cultural resonance**. The application of linguistic devices such as metaphors, alliteration, and repetition is a wide-ranging strategy across the analysed advertisements. In the Nestlé ad "BUILDING HEALTHIER LIVES, Drink Well. Live Well." a metaphor is used to connect the consumption of the health drink with the concept of constructing a healthier life. It is obvious that the repetition of the word "well" in the English Nestlé ad creates a kind of rhyming effect,

which makes the ad accordingly more memorable. This technique does not exist in the Amoy ad, which relies on the contrast between "dark" and "light" for memorability.

Correspondingly, the use of metaphor not only has a memorable effect on the target consumers but also influences their health-conscious values as well. Alternatively, "the dark sauce for a light stir-fry" employs juxtaposition to spotlight the contrast between two contrasting concepts, therefore appealing to consumers' appetite for a balanced meal. "ДАРИМ МАКИ! КАЖДОМУ НОВОМУ ГОСТЮ." This Belarusian ad uses both capitalisation and an exclamation mark to craft a feeling of excitement. This is to be precise culturally relevant in contexts where direct and emphatic communication is valued. In addition, imperative sentences are used in several ads to stimulate rapid response. For example, the Nestlé ad uses "Drink Well. Live Well," while the Domino's Pizza ad uses "إحصل على خصم ٥٠%" (Get a 50% discount) and "اطلبها الآن" (Order it now). Clearly, this is effective in the Arabic PAPA HNOUD and Domino's Pizza ads, which, in fact, instill a sense of urgency and motivate consumers to take some target actions.

3. The third point is the **semantic connotations and cultural significance**. Given that, in the abovementioned ads, we observe that words that have positive semantic connotations are selected to link and relate the brand with some desirable qualities (e.g., "healthier", "well", "تمتع" (enjoy), "عرض" (offer), "Королевская" (royal), and "баварское пиво" (Bavarian beer)), all create positive associations that resonate with the target audience's values and aspirations. To be precise, these semantic choices are not merely profound; they represent an understanding of the cultural context in which the advertisements are located. A clear instance, the use of "Королевская" in the Kaltenberg ad calls to mind a feeling of prestige that is quite valued in European cultures.

Several similar themes emerge from the cross-case research, highlighting the fundamental principles that underpin effective advertising in varied cultural situations. 1) The first common theme is **persuasiveness and memorability**; the utilisation of linguistic devices such as metaphors, alliteration, repetition, and contrast is, in fact, a clear common theme across the ads. The function of these devices is to enhance the persuasiveness and memorability of the messages that accordingly make them more likely to communicate to the target audience. Therefore, elements such as repetition alongside metaphor from the English Nestlé's ads,

together with juxtaposition used by Amoy ads, plus exclamatory punctuation and the use of capitalisation from Belarusian ads, enrich our understanding of this subject matter. 2) The second common theme is **clarity and readability**; certainly clarity and readability are key aspects of effective advertising. As a result, the use of effective and proper punctuation marks, plus plain and uncomplicated language, indicates that the message is obvious and easy. The English Amoy ad's clarity, alongside the juxtaposition between "dark sauce" and "light stir-fry" makes it effective in both attracting the attention of the target consumers and representing an understandable message. 3) The third common theme is **emotional appeal**; undoubtedly, emotional appeals are a critical component of advertising. As we analysed prior, those exclamation marks, which exist in the Belarusian and Arabic ads, create enthusiasm and urgency, which are indeed forms of emotional appeal. As well as descriptive words, such as those used in the Belarusian Kaltenberg ad, arouse feelings of quality and prestige, which are also forms of emotional appeal. These emotional appeals are culturally specific, reflecting the values and emotional triggers unique to the target audience. 4) The fourth common theme is **cultural relevance**; cultural relevance is also considered a fundamental theme in advertising. Advertisements that are crafted to the cultural context of the target audience are more effective in not only reflecting their message but also influencing consumer behaviour and, as a result, their future action. In this context, the use of local languages, cultural references, and appropriate linguistic devices guarantees that the message engages with the audience.

Conclusion

Our study shows that punctuation marks have not only grammatical functions but also can reflect deeper cultural communication styles. Understanding these differences, thus, can help advertisers to craft messages that resonate with consumers in a more effective way.

In addition, the analysis represents distinct patterns in punctuation usage across different advertising texts, so English advertisements value clarity and completeness with a high frequency of full stops and moderate comma usage. We argue that punctuation marks in Arabic digital advertising texts express fluidity with fewer full stops; however, they maintain structure through utilising commas and dashes. While Belarusian ads emphasise excitement through the effective use of exclamation marks and dashes. Indeed, these differences show that cultural norms affect the way in which writing styles in advertisements reflect different approaches to

engaging consumers in different linguistic contexts. Thus, comprehending these differences can help advertisers maintain their strategies to connect more meaningfully with target audiences based on linguistic preferences.

Our study also shows that punctuation is not merely a grammatical tool but a strategic element that indeed enhances the effectiveness of digital advertising texts. Punctuation marks have multiple functions beyond the merely structural, creating clarity, adding emphasis, and adding emotional appeal to messages that are persuasive and more readily understood by consumers. The effectiveness of punctuation is heightened greatly by its compatibility with cultural practices. Emphatic or direct communication is emphasised in Belarusian advertising texts by exclamatory punctuation, which highlights the urgency and excitement of a message. In contrast, within the complex framework of Arabic advertising texts, punctuation should be clear enough to drive consumer actions and emotionally appealing enough to inspire those actions.

Consequently, punctuation marks not only ensure the message is clear and readable but also contribute to the overall tone and impact of the advertisement.

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Appendix

English digital advertising list. Category: Food & Drink

1. Let us spend some quality time together. Brand: Smirnoff Ice in 2002.
2. The dark sauce for a light stir-fry. Brand: Amoy in 2002.
3. 100% natural, just like kids. Brand: Sun-Maid in 2003.
4. Triple distilling makes Jameson extra smooth. Brand: Jameson in 2004.
5. Pure natural mineral water from Scotland. Brand : Highland water in 2004.
6. Bad day? Get some job Snackisfaction. Pick a Pink Lady at snackisfaction feels! Brand: Pink Lady in 2016.
7. BUILDING HEALTHIER LIVES, Drink Well. Live Well. Brand: Nestle in 2016.
8. Arabica Coffee, Scottish Raspberry, Sicillian Lemon. Or one by Heston. So many Eggs. So little Easter. Brand: Waitrose in 2016.
9. WE THINK AN ALMOND DRINK IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE ALMONDS IT COMES FROM. Brand: Almond Breeze in 2016.
10. IF YOU make it THEY WILL COME, NOTHING BEATS HOMEMADE LASAGNE. Brand: Dolio in 2016.
11. 0 GRAMS OF GUILT. THAT'S SNACKING GOOD. Brand: California Almonds in 2016.
12. Walk on the slightly wild side. Add a dollop of green pesto to your sausage stew. Brand: Sainsbury's in 2016.

Arabic digital advertising list. Category: Food & Drink

1. "Every story has its own charm." Brand: Coca Cola in 2018
2. "years of love... 25 years of your love." Brand: McDonald's in 2019
3. "Whatever your mood is, you will find it with us." Brand: "Tak3eeba" in 2021
4. "Eat heavily at Studio Misr until you're satisfied. ": Brand: "STUDIO MISR" in 2013
5. "A large size of Burger King meal, scratch, and win ": Brand: "Burger King" in 2013
6. تمتع بعروض بابا هنود بمناسبة العام الجديد، عرض البيبسي؛ اشترى 2 ساندوتش لارج وأحصل علي لتر بيبسي مجاناً.
"Enjoy PAPA HNOUD New Year's offers, Pepsi offer; Buy 2 large sandwiches and get a free liter of Pepsi, or buy 2 meals and get a liter and a half of Pepsi for free." Brand: "PAPA HNOUD" in 2014
7. دومينوز بيتزا عرض دومينوز لا يزال قائماً وحتى الجمعة القادم. إحصل على خصم ٥٠٪ لأي بيتزا كبيرة تطلبها.
"Domino's Pizza The Domino's offer is still valid until next Friday. Get a 50% discount on any large pizza you order with original dough. Order it now and enjoy the most delicious pizza!" Brand: "Domino's Pizza" in 2014
8. بيتزا روما عرض خاص و مميز من بيتزا روما ادفع 20 جنيه زيادة علي طلبك و خذ بيتزا كبيرة اخري من نفس النوع.
"Roma Pizza: A special and exclusive offer from Roma Pizza. Pay an additional 20 pounds on your order and get another large pizza of the same kind." Brand: روما بيتزا "Roma Pizza 2 go" in 2013
9. زيرو كوكاكولا "Coca-Cola Zero without a point of sugar." Brand: "Coca-Cola Zero" in 2021
10. "No matter how different we are, we will unite in cheering." Brand: "Coca-Cola" in 2019
11. "McDonald's offers delivered to your door." Brand: "ماكدونالدز عروض McDonald's" in 2022

.12 "صوصات عالميه ب ايادي مصريه عملت ابداع في الباستا 12. Egyptian by made sauces International hands, creating creativity in pasta." Brand: مصر ابن مطاعم "Ebn Masr" in 2024, Category: Food & drink

Belarusian digital advertising list. Category: Food & Drink

1. 10 лет МакДональдс в Беларуси! С каждым комплексом шоколад в подарок! "10 years of McDonald's in Belarus! Chocolate as a gift with each combo." Brand: MacDonald's in 2006.
2. Lipton Ice Tea МакФреш и Липтон Айс Ти Вкус сезона. вот что я люблю. "Lipton Ice Tea McFresh and Lipton Ice Tea Taste of the season. This is what I like." Brand: MacFresh and Lipton Ice Tea in 2006.
3. GLOBUS! Старый друг лучше новых двух! "GLOBUS! An old friend is better than two new ones!" Brand: GLOBUS! in 2007.
4. Мы знаем о рыбе всё! "We know everything about fish!" Brand: Santa-Bremor in 2007.
5. ДАРИМ МАКИ! КАЖДОМУ НОВОМУ ГОСТЮ. "WE GIVE POPPIES! TO EVERY NEW GUEST." Brand: Sushi Planet in 2007.
6. Вартасць сяброўства: падставіць плячо... Сяброўства даражэй за ўсё! "The value of friendship: to lean on... Friendship above all!" Brand: Syabar in 2007.
7. ВСТУПАЙ В ИГРУ "JOIN THE GAME" Brand: Battika in 2006.
8. Королевская баварская дача. Kaltenberg. Королевское баварское пиво. "Royal Bavarian dacha. Kaltenberg. Royal Bavarian beer." Brand: Kaltenberg 2006.
9. ЗАПРАВЬСЯ НА ВСЮ НОЧЬ! "FUEL UP FOR THE ENTIRE NIGHT!" Brand: Ambassador 2005.
10. СОБЕРИ 2 МЕМБРАНЫ И ВЫИГРАЙ: 1 КРАСНАЯ КРУЖКА - КАЖДОМУ 1 АВТОМОБИЛЬ — СЧАСТЛИВЧИКУЛ "COLLECT 2 MEMBRANES AND WIN: 1 RED MUG - 1 LUCKY CAR FOR EVERYONE" Brand: Nescafe Classic in 2007.
11. Мой любимый чай! "My favourite tea!" Brand: Imperial tea in 2007.
12. 15 лет для здоровья людей! "15 years for people's health!" Brand: Darida in 2007.