

The Language of Persuasion in *Grammarly's* Advertisements on YouTube

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Abstract

This research analyzed the persuasion strategies in Grammarly's advertisements on YouTube. The types of persuasion strategies derived from McPheat's linguistic tools to persuade (2010). This research focused on the linguistic tools to persuade which include reframing, using someone's name, mind reading, lost performative, cause and effect relationships, presupposition, universal beliefs, tag questions, and embedded commands. Therefore, the objective of this research is intended to describe the types of persuasion strategies in Grammarly's advertisements on YouTube based on McPheat linguistic tools to persuade (2010) theory. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The source of data was taken from Grammarly's advertisements published on YouTube in February 2019-October 2022. The researcher collected data by downloading, transcribing, watching videos and reading the script, capturing, conducting data reduction, coding, and then analyzed by presenting, describing, and interpreting the data using McPheat's, then concluding the data. The results showed that only 7 out of 17 types of persuasion strategies were found in a total of 20 data. Those are presupposition, cause and effect relationships, embedded commands, lost performative, universal beliefs, reframing: change the time frame, and reframing: appeal to the positive intention behind the belief. The most dominant strategy is presupposition that features other strategies in one data set. The conclusion is that effective communication relies on a successful exchange of information, and Grammarly achieves this through a diverse range of persuasive strategies, ensuring its message is well-received by the targeted audiences.

Keywords: *advertisement, grammarly, linguistic tools to persuade, persuasion strategy, youtube*

INTRODUCTION

Persuasion is the process of influencing another person's viewpoint so that they adopt the persuader's viewpoint and act in a way that aligns with the persuader's implicit desires. Another important characteristic of persuasion is that it tends to involve at least some strategizing (Reardon, 1991). Persuasion strategies are a complex set of linguistic tools employed to change or influence someone's thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors and get responses without forcing ideas on them (Romanova, & Smirnova, 2019). One of the forms of persuasive communication is advertising or advertisement. Advertising is the structured and formed non-personal communication of information about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors and is typically paid for and designed to persuade through

diverse media channels (Arens et al. (2008)). Social media is now a popular way to persuade people, such as YouTube, which is used by Grammarly. Inc. to advertise Grammarly. *Grammarly* is a smart writing tool that uses AI. It's owned by Grammarly Inc. and was started by Alex Shevchenko and Max Lytvyn in 2009. Grammarly checks spelling, grammar, punctuation, plagiarism, and delivery errors in English content. Its ads on YouTube showcase these features, demonstrating how it improves users' writing skills. Grammarly has been advertising on YouTube since at least 2016, targeting viewers struggling with writing. It has been downloaded over 10 million times on the Play Store, proving the advertiser uses persuasive strategies to support advertising work and help the brand gain the public's attention. So, the researcher intends to see the types of persuasion strategies described in Grammarly's advertisements on YouTube.

This research focuses on the linguistic tools used to persuade in Grammarly advertisements, in which these tools are used to encourage a stronger sense of connection between the persuader and the target audience. Thus, increasing the effectiveness of persuasion. The types of linguistic tools to persuade are based on McPheat are reframing, which consists of: redefine the words, change the time frame, explore the consequences, change the chunk size, find a counter-example, ask for evidence, appeal to the positive intention behind the belief, and change the context so that the relationship does not apply in the same way. Other strategies are using someone's name, mind reading, lost performative, cause and effect relationships, presupposition, universal beliefs, tag questions, and embedded commands. These elements are contained in Grammarly's advertisements on YouTube. The reason the researcher uses linguistic tools to persuade is because their use is intricately linked to the effectiveness of Grammarly's YouTube advertisements in capturing audience attention, shaping perceptions, and influencing viewer behavior through Grammarly's advertising efforts.

This study is fundamentally important to answer an aspect that has not been answered in previous studies, that is the types of linguistic tools used to persuade that occur in Grammarly advertisements based on McPheat's theory. The researcher chose to investigate Grammarly's advertisement videos as the research object and the advertisement script as the data source because it is interesting to investigate and contains many persuasive words. The researcher observed in delivering its advertisements, the company uses linguistic tools, which these tools are likely to be used to build more rapport between the company and its audiences and

strengthen the company's arguments to persuade others and make the advertising successful. Moreover, another intriguing aspect of Grammarly is that it hasn't been thoroughly examined in terms of McPheat's linguistic tools to persuade theory.

This research complements previous studies on persuasion strategies, such as "An Analysis of Persuasion Models in Cosmopolitan Magazine" by Wardani (2019), "Figurative and Persuasive Language in Nivea Advertisement on Instagram" by Pratiwi (2022), and "An Analysis of Persuasive Language in Facebook Advertising" by Nirwati (2020). The current research adopts a distinct theoretical framework, which is McPheat's Linguistic Tools to Persuade theory. It specifically focuses on analyzing Grammarly advertisements on YouTube as the object, exploring aspects of persuasion strategies within Grammarly's YouTube ads that haven't been explored in previous studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design or type is to translate a research problem into analyzable data in order to provide relevant answers to research questions (Asenahabi, 2019). To explore the research question, this research uses qualitative research. Creswell (2012) describes qualitative research as typically used to establish the importance of the central idea, to explore the problem, and to develop an understanding of small individuals in social problems. The researcher applied the qualitative method for this research because this method involves collecting data in the form of words or utterances. This research aims to provide a precise description, and accurate analysis, and present the phenomenon of persuasion strategies found in Grammarly advertisements on YouTube based on McPheat's theory (2010).

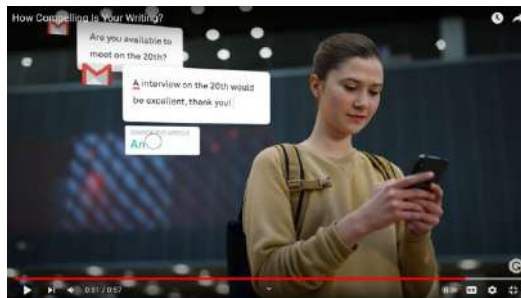
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic tools to persuade in Grammarly advertisements on YouTube videos

The persuasion strategy in this research can be seen from the narrator or advertiser's script where the advertiser uses linguistic tools to persuade the viewer. This persuasive communication not only aims to inform but also to create a compelling narrative that resonates with the audience. Through these persuasion strategies, the advertiser empowers and influences audiences, encouraging them to take proactive steps, such as incorporating

Grammarly into their writing routine, to improve their overall communication skills, leading them to download Grammarly. The researcher found each type of persuasion strategy in the Grammarly advertisements script based on McPheat's theory. The elaboration is as follows:

Data 1

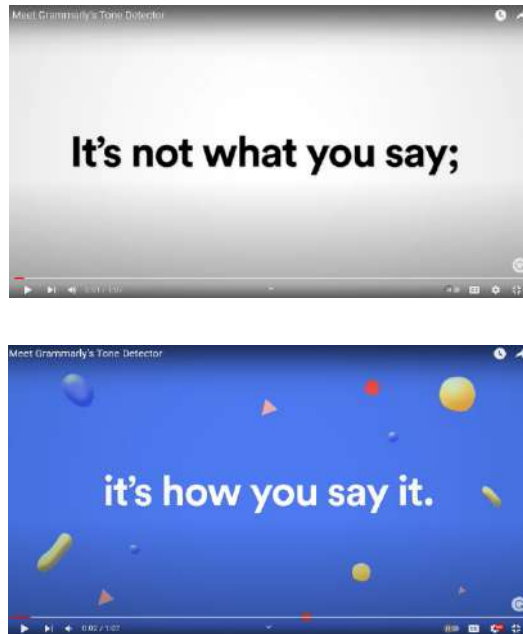


Pict.1 How compelling is your writing
Duration 0-43 – 0:57

***Imagine** what you could do with the secrets of the world's best writers at your fingertips anytime you need them?. Are you ready to give it a try? Installation is simple and free, Visit grammarly.com today.*

The advertisement above is categorized as the Embedded command strategy. The opening phrase 'Imagine,' indirectly directs the receiver to imagine whatever the speaker suggests (Young, 2016). Therefore, the use of the opening phrase 'imagine,' subtly directs the viewer to mentally visualize the scenario proposed by the advertiser. The ad specifically prompts viewers to contemplate the possibilities of what they "could achieve with the secrets of the world's best writers at their fingertips anytime they need them." This indicates that the advertiser encourages viewers to envision the potential benefits of them accessing and using Grammarly. The utilization of a rhetorical question enhances this effect, prompting viewers to consider how their writing and overall skills might improve with such access to Grammarly. The "imagine" phrase serves as an attention-grabbing technique, actively involving the audience's imagination. When individuals encounter phrases like "imagine," it triggers a mental process, prompting them to vividly picture a scenario or situation. This not only enhances the message's compelling nature but also establishes a stronger connection between the advertisement message with the audience.

Data 2



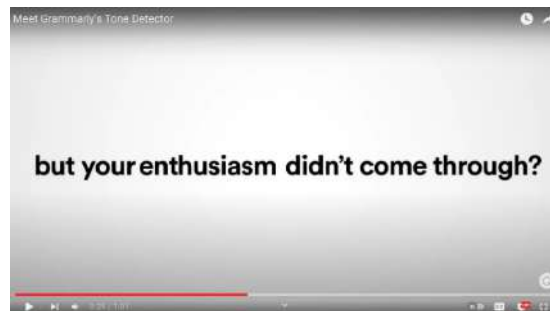
Pict 2. Meet Grammarly tone detector
Duration 0:01-0:02

It's not what you say, it's how you say it—introducing Grammarly tone detector.

The advertisement above is categorized as Lost performative. A lost performative is when someone talks about judgments, beliefs, or rules, but they don't say who's making those judgments or rules from their own point of view (Lewis, 2012). The ad aligns with the characteristics of a lost performative by discussing a judgment '*it's not what you say, it's how you say it*' which expresses the same idea as the importance of the manner of speaking over the content of speech, but doesn't specify who is making this judgment or who considers the manner of communication to be more important. It leaves that part unstated. The speaker doesn't use phrases such as 'i believe' or 'i think' or mention 'according to who'. This lack of attribution makes it a neutral statement that can potentially allow the speaker to control the conversation without taking a clear position or responsibility for the judgment expressed.

In addition to Lost performative, The ad also employs the strategy of existential presupposition. It presupposes the existence and effectiveness of the Grammarly tone detector as a solution for enhancing the viewers' way of communication. Indicating the advertiser's intention to attract the viewers by promoting that the Grammarly tone detector exists and is an effective means to improve their communication skills.

Data 3



Pict 3. Meet Grammarly tone detector
Duration 0:17-0:34

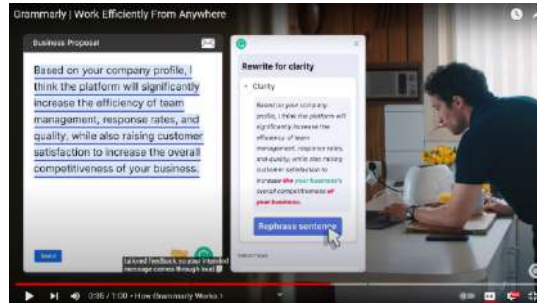
Have you ever wanted to sound confident? But end up sounding defensive. Or you wanted to be encouraging, but your enthusiasm didn't come through. We're here to help with Grammarly's tone detector.

Every person has positive intentions. Analyzing a person's positive intentions is one of the persuasion strategies to convince others. The advertisement is categorized as reframing: appeals to the positive intentions behind the belief. By talking about this “*Have you ever wanted to sound confident?Or you wanted to be encouraging,*” the part aligns with the speaker understanding the viewer's positive intentions. It achieves this by acknowledging common experiences where people aim to convey specific positive tones, like confidence or encouragement. Nonetheless, due to various factors, these intentions might not translate seamlessly, leading to unintended undertones such as defensiveness or lack of enthusiasm. This phenomenon underscores that, despite well-meaning intentions, miscommunication can arise. The instances “*But end up sounding defensive*” and “*but your enthusiasm didn't come through*” emphasize this notion. As part of reframing, this strategy aims to shift the viewer's perspective on a situation, or belief, in a more positive and constructive outlook. In the sentence, the advertiser also recognizes the challenges that might hinder achieving that goal. By introducing the solution, Grammarly's tone detector is reframing the initial issue as an opportunity for improvement and getting better. It suggests Grammarly as a practical tool that can bridge the gap between their positive intentions and the actual conveyed tone. In essence, it creates a persuasive context for the introduction of Grammarly's tone detector, which is presented as a supportive resource to help align intentions with communication effectively.

This ad also employs the existential presupposition strategy. It takes for granted the existence and effectiveness of the Grammarly tone detector as a solution to help the viewer use tone the way they intended. Indicating the advertiser's intention to attract the viewers by promoting the Grammarly tone detector exists and functions as an effective tool to assist them in

achieving the intended tone in their communication.

Data 4



Pict 4. Grammarly| work efficiently from anywhere
Duration 0:21-0:26

When you're thinking fast and writing faster, Grammarly provides tailored feedback, so your intended message comes through loud and clear.

This advertisement is categorized as a cause-and-effect relationship. It is linked by the word 'So,' which shows the narrator's conclusion, indicating what happens as a result (Sanders, 2005; Sanders & Sweetser, 2009). The Cause is: "*When you're thinking fast and writing faster, Grammarly provides tailored feedback*", which leads to the Effect: "*So, your intended message comes through loud and clear*". The characteristic of a cause-and-effect pattern is it persuades people by presenting a logical sequence of action where each 'effect' has a cause point (Briggs & Proszek, 2015). Cause-and-effect is used to appeal to people's intellect or reasoning as Aristotle called this strategy "Logos" (Nazim & Yousaf, 2021). The advertiser wants to persuade the viewer by presenting a logical reason for using Grammarly. When the statement mentions, "*When you're thinking fast and writing faster,*" it suggests that the viewer is likely someone who works quickly, possibly in a hurry. The part about *Grammarly providing tailored feedback* means that the advertiser is highlighting Grammarly's ability to give users feedback specifically tailored to their writing style and individual needs. This personalized feedback helps users communicate their message precisely the way they intend, ensuring clarity and effectiveness in their communication. The description of Grammarly's features enhances Grammarly's credibility, thereby gaining the trust of the viewers. Because it fits the characteristics of the cause and effect relationship, then data 6 is classified as a cause and effect relationship strategy.

This ad also employs the existential presupposition strategy. It presupposes that Grammarly exists and has a tailored feedback feature. It indicates that the advertiser intends to attract the viewers by informing them that there is Grammarly, and it has a feature that provides tailored

feedback, which the function is to help the viewer communicate their message in the way they intended when they think and write fast.

Data 5



Pict 5. Better results through better communication | Grammarly business
Duration 0:01- 0:07

Grammarly Business is an AI-powered writing assistant enabling teams around the world to reach their goals faster

The advertisement is categorized as a presupposition strategy. In the ad, the advertiser presupposes that Grammarly Business exists and functions as an AI-powered writing assistant that enables teams to reach their goals faster. It assumes the existence and capabilities of Grammarly Business as true. This ad belongs to the type of existential presupposition. It indicates that the advertiser intends to attract the viewers by informing them that there is Grammarly business and functions as an effective solution for teams looking to achieve their goals more quickly with the help of an AI-powered writing tool.

Moreover, this advertisement also aligns with the presupposition type of persuasion through targeting consumers. The advertiser presupposes a specific group of customers – in this case, businesses or professionals looking for a solution for teams to achieve their goals more quickly with the help of an AI-powered writing tool. By using the term "business," the advertisement is designed to appeal directly to individuals associated with business or professional writing contexts. Also, by using the term "team", the advertisers are implicitly targeting individuals who are likely to benefit from an AI-powered writing assistant in a team setting. With the use of compelling advertising language that emphasizes the efficiency and effectiveness of Grammarly Business in enabling teams around the world to reach their goals faster, reinforces the idea that this AI-powered writing assistant is a valuable tool for businesses seeking enhanced productivity and successful goal accomplishment. Ultimately, it will attract the targeted viewer.

Data 6



Pict 6. Strengthen everything you write
Duration 0:52 – 1:00

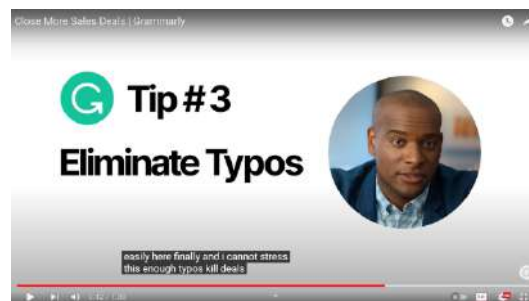
Imagine what would happen if everything you wrote was a little bit better. All those small improvements really add up over time.

In the advertisement above, the research identified two persuasive strategies based on McPheat's Linguistic tools to persuade. These strategies are referred to as embedded command and Reframing: change the time frame. The advertisement uses the weasel phrase “*Imagine*” to subtly direct the viewer to visualize the scenario proposed by the advertiser mentally. ‘What would it be like if’ is a question and another way of saying, ‘Imagine,’ that means the speaker is indirectly directing the targeted audience to imagine whatever it suggests (Young, 2016). The advertiser is embedding the command “*everything you wrote was a little bit better*” while forming a question. This indicates that the advertiser encourages viewers to envision the potential benefits of using Grammarly, without explicitly stating the command. The use of a rhetorical question enhances this effect, prompting viewers to consider how fantastic and beneficial it will be to have improved writing skills through Grammarly. The “*imagine*” phrase serves as an attention-grabbing technique, actively involving the audience's imagination. When individuals encounter phrases like “*imagine*,” it triggers a mental process, prompting them to vividly picture a scenario or situation. This not only enhances the message's compelling nature but also establishes a stronger connection between the advertisement message with the audience.

The featured advertisement was also categorized as a change in the time frame strategy. Changing the time frame is changing how someone sees time that affects how they think. As part of reframing, it means changing how one views time to influence their way of thinking, which helps them to think about things differently in a more positive way. In the ad, “*All those small improvements really add up over time*”, the advertiser aims to make the viewer see time in a way that promotes optimism, motivation, and productivity. This ad “*Imagine*

what would happen if everything you wrote was a little bit better. All those small improvements really add up over time”, The advertiser specifically wants the viewer to imagine the idea that as time passes, their writing quality will improve step by step. This encourages a more forward-thinking and constructive approach to the writing process. The viewer is encouraged to recognize that the accumulation of small, continuous improvements over time will have a significant and positive impact. In essence, this advertisement adheres to the "change the time frame" strategy by influencing the viewer's thinking in a more positive and beneficial way by altering how they perceive time.

Data 7



Pict 7. Close more sales deals
Duration 0:38 – 0:43

Finally and I cannot stress this enough *"typos kill deals"*

The advertisement is categorized as a Universal belief. Universal belief is a statement of something as a universal belief implies that there is no exception to what the speaker is saying. The speaker can use universal beliefs to get the person in the habit of agreeing with them. This part *"Finally and I cannot stress this enough"* emphasizes the seriousness of the message. It conveys a strong sense of urgency and importance, indicating that the advertiser wants to make it very clear that what they are about to say is truly crucial. *"Typos kill deals"* is the core message of the belief. It asserts that typographical errors "typos" can lead to the failure or loss of business deals, agreements, or opportunities. In a business context, errors in written communication can lead to misunderstandings, weaken trust, and potentially result in lost business, partnerships, or opportunities. Some studies have shown that participants expressed reduced interest in engaging with the business when exposed to advertisements containing errors compared to those with error-free content (Mozafari, 2019). Usually, People tend to be less interested in reading content that contains typos compared to error-free material. This can extend to a negative impact on perceived employee and

business/advertisement quality regardless of the type of service offered (Mozari, 2019). Therefore, this is a universal belief strategy, as it is universally accepted that typographical errors can have negative effects on business success.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of findings and discussion, the researcher concludes that in *Grammarly's* advertisements on YouTube, only 7 out of 17 types of persuasion strategies were found from the total of 20 data sets, with some ads combining two different strategies in one. Those are presupposition, cause and effect relationships, embedded commands, lost performative, universal beliefs, reframing: change the time frame, and reframing: appeal to the positive intention behind the belief. The most dominant strategy used is presupposition, and it appears 12 times, making it a frequent occurrence in almost all data sets compared to other strategies. It is a way to persuade by promoting Grammarly's existence and benefits in a relevant way according to the viewer's needs. There were 8 instances of cause and effect relationships, which is a way to persuade by making logical connections of how Grammarly features benefit users. Additionally, 6 occurrences of embedded commands were observed, which is a way to persuade the viewers to subconsciously visualize the good impact of them using Grammarly. 1 instance of lost performatives was identified, which can keep the advertisement neutral, making it more agreeable and preserving credibility in the presence of opposing beliefs. Similarly, 1 instance of reframing: appeal to positive intentions behind beliefs, was noted, is a way to persuade by presenting Grammarly as a product that supports viewers' values and desires, and appeals to emotion. 1 occurrence of reframing: change the time frame was observed, used to direct the viewer's focus to see time as a helpful factor. Finally, 1 instance of universal belief. is the way to persuade by highlighting the universal value of Grammarly advertisement which is effective communication and clear writing, to attract a broader audience that relates to this advertising message.

The conclusion is effective communication relies on a successful exchange of information, and Grammarly achieves this through a diverse range of persuasive strategies, ensuring its message is well-received. By resonating with specific user needs, Grammarly tailors its approach to create relevance and engagement. These elements minimize the risk of misinterpretation, allowing viewers to seamlessly absorb the advertising message and enhancing the overall effectiveness of Grammarly's efforts. Employing various persuasive techniques can establish a strong connection with a wide audience either through aspects such

as logic, emotion, the conciseness of the advertisement, or its trustworthiness. This makes the message more effective in reaching and persuading many people, helping Grammarly achieve its goals. Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the problem in this research has been answered so that the objective of this research clearly found and explained clearly, which is the types of persuasion strategies described in *Grammarly's* advertisements on YouTube based on Linguistic tools to persuade by McPheat (2010).

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