

Language Contact in Philippine TV Ads: The Propaganda Devices and Filipino Culture Examined

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ABSTRACT

Language shaping of reality was the focus of this research which dealt with Philippine TV ads shown during primetime in the two leading television networks – ABS-CBN and GMA and their sister stations. It primarily aimed to determine the propaganda devices in Philippine TV ads, find out the Filipino identities and values reflected in these ads, and the social and cultural stereotypes communicated in these TV ads.

There were 93 ads shown during the period covered by the study. Analysis revealed that glittering generalities ranked first and only one ad did not resort to this type of propaganda. Transfer, testimonial, card stacking, plain folks, bandwagon, and name calling came in that order.

Ranking first in the Filipino identities is being health-conscious. Flexibility, Filipino having happy disposition, being hopeful, being good communicators, and placing value on money tied for the next rank. Being light hearted and finding hope in even the most difficult situations were also reflected in ads.

The following Filipino values were also depicted in the ads: sipag, tiyaga at pakikipagsapalaran, pagpapahalaga sa kalusugan at sariling katawan, pagkamaalalahanin, paggalang, pakikipag-kapwa at pakikisama, pagpapahalaga at pagmamahal sa pamilya, pagtutulongan at damayan, pagkamakakalikasan, pakikialam, pagkamasinop, hiya, swerte, pagtanaw ng utang na loob, at pagiging masayahin at bahala na. Advertisement mirror the Filipino character, preferences and values.

The ads also reflected the following social stereotypes: women, particularly the young ones, are more particular of their appearance. Health-related matters, working for a slim body, eating preferences

of Filipinos, reliance on experts, especially on health-related matters were also found.

With cultural stereotypes, Filipinos generally care for and are protective of their children. They have determination and patience, easy to please, adventurous, easy to get along with and have good hygiene.

Keywords: *Language Contact, Philippines TV Ads, Propaganda devices, Filipino Culture*

INTRODUCTION

Language shapes reality. Its signifying power lends events big or small for interpretation of the people. Language not only clarifies events and notions; it also simplifies them which could not have been made in its absence. This is the overriding concept of language use in media. Media use language in making accounts and these accounts are represented through language. Media, through language, influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relation, and social identities, it is actually language that does so in a means that would pose wider access to people across time and space.

An essential aspect of human existence is language. Nearly every aspect of society uses it, including business, government, health, pleasure, and everyday social connections. Diverse expressions take different shapes in various communities. The way that words and their intended meanings are interpreted by the community is culturally different as a result of this societal language variation. It is possible to gain a better knowledge of how individuals use and perceive language by studying other linguistic cultures. Conflict and misunderstanding could be reduced as a result.

The pragmatic constructs of reason and tickling in the rhetoric of advertising are studied by Simpson (2001).

According to his research, "the distribution of reason and tickle advertising is relative to specific types of commodities, but that distribution is influenced by a host of interrelated factors such as budgetary constraints, prospective audience, and, in the case of TV advertising, the availability of slots in broadcasting schedules." He goes on to say that reason is employed for necessities while tickling is for "the selling of luxury or unnecessary things."

Any researcher who wants to study a culture through its language will face many difficulties because of how many different contexts language may be utilized in. Different theoretical approaches are needed for various linguistic contexts. Understanding a society's culture by focusing on a single linguistic style runs the risk of being too generalized. Therefore, it is much safer to state that a research on a particular discourse register may contribute to the growing body of information about culture gained through linguistic analysis.

This research, which focused on Philippine TV advertisements shown during primetime on the two top television networks, ABS-CBN and GMA, and their sister stations, sought to understand how language shapes reality. Its main goals were to identify the propaganda techniques used in Philippine TV advertisements, identify the Filipino identities and values expressed in these advertising, and identify the social and cultural stereotypes these advertisements propagated.

Methodology

This employed discourse analysis of advertisements. This was particularly guided by theories of communication and theories of language, particularly the communicative (CLT) teaching approach.

Largely, this study was inspired by the research on advertising discourse, advertising being the site of language contact conducted by Ingrid Piller.¹ The said study guided the researcher in determining the identities/values reflected in the ads as well as the social and cultural stereotypes communicated by the ads. Further, this study included aspects such as propaganda devices used in the ads.

The researcher watched the ads shown in the two major Philippine TV networks, during primetime, for one week. And using a self-filled form, the points in

¹ I. Piller. 2003. Advertising as a site of language contact. *Annual review of applied linguistics*. USA: Cambridge University Press.

focus were outlined and thereby assured that all the objectives of the research will be answered.

Results and Discussion

The researcher was able to identify the propaganda devices reflected in the Philippine TV Ads analyzed. Out of the 93 advertisements analyzed, it was found out that glittering generalities was reflected in 92 instances/texts. Only one (1) did not resort to this type of propaganda device. Transfer ranked second, testimonial followed, then card stacking, plain folks, bandwagon, and name calling followed the order.

Table 1. Propaganda Devices reflected in Philippine TV Ads

Types of Propaganda	Frequency	Rank
Glittering Generalities	92	1
Transfer	65	2
Testimonial	37	3
Card Stacking	32	4
Plain Folks	18	5
Bandwagon	5	6
Name Calling	1	7
Total	250	

On the Filipino identities, ranking first is being health-conscious. Flexibility or the character of being able to adjust to situations is highly identified in the ads. That is at a tie with Filipinos having happy disposition, being hopeful, being good communicators or establishing good relationship, and saving or placing value on money. These five (5) identities of Filipinos are reflected in the ads.

Table 2. Identities Reflected in Philippine TV Ads

Identities	Frequency	Rank
Health Conscious	7	1
Flexibility (being able to adjust)	4	4
Happy disposition	4	4
Save/Spend less (value for money)	4	4
Being communicative	4	4
Hopeful	4	4
Affectionate/appreciative	3	8.5
Helpful/Offer help	3	8.5
Protective	3	8.5
Respectful	3	8.5
Recognition/Honor	2	11.5
Hospitality	2	11.5
Adventurous	1	13.5
Work-oriented	1	13.5
Total	45	

There are traits and practices that are of positive direction, something that reflects positive meaning and worth. The analysis of the Filipino values reflected in the Philippine TV ads anchored on the concept of values by Bacungan which states that values are always good.²

Ranking first in the Filipino values are *sipag, tiyaga at pakikipagsapalaran* tied with *pagpapahalaga sa kalusugan at sariling katawan* which both got nine instances/texts. Another valuable practice reflected is *pamamanhikan*, followed by *pakikipag-kapwa at pakikisama, paggalang, pagpapahalaga at pagmamahal sa pamilya, pagtutulungan at pagdadamayay, pagkamakakalikasan, pakikialam, pagkamasinop, hiya, and swerte* or hope for luck. There is also the reflection of *pakikialam* or getting involved, *pagkamasinop, hiya, utang na loob, paninindigan, pagiging masayahin, and bahala na.*

Table 3. Filipino Values Reflected in Philippine TV Ads

Filipino Values	Frequency	Rank
Sipag, tiyaga at pakikipagsapalaran	9	1.5
Pagpapahalaga sa kalusugan at sariling katawan	9	1.5
Pagkamaalalahanin	5	4
Paggalang	5	4
Pakikipag-kapwa at pakikisama	5	4
Pagpapahalaga at pagmamahal sa pamilya	4	6
Pagtutulungan at pagdadamayay	3	7
Pagkamakakalikasan	2	10
Pakikialam	2	10
Pagkamasinop	2	10
Hiya	2	10
Swerte	2	10
Utang na loob	1	14.5
Paninindigan	1	14.5
Pagkamasayahin	1	14.5
Bahala na	1	14.5
Total	54	

² C.M. Bacungan. 1992. Values education. Quezon City: Katha Publishing co. inc.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Advertisements are by and large propaganda using glittering generalities as its main strategy. They also mirror the Filipinos character and preferences as well as values. With this, these Philippine TV ads pose the potential that they can be used as instructional materials in language, sociology, and cultural classes.

It is further proposed that future researches may analyze characters of the TV ads; analyze the visual elements of the ads, its persuasiveness, and the acceptability of the ads.

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