

Words that Compel, Emotions that Sell: Register Variation and Persuasive Strategies in English Advertising Media

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ABSTRACT

This is research on registers used in English advertisements. Register is the term used for a variety of languages determined by subject matter. It is identified by certain phonological variants, vocabulary, or grammar that are associated with different occupational groups or subject matter. The objective of this research is to describe the specific words, the forms, and the functions of the registers. The specific words are the words that are most often used in English advertisements; the forms are the structures of the specific words; the functions are the utilities of the specific words. The advertisements that the researcher takes are: 1. Apartment, house, and hotel 2. Beverage and food 3. Cafe, restaurant, and food 4. Cosmetic 5. Vacancy. This research is descriptive qualitative because it is presented qualitatively. There is neither numeral nor counting data in this research. The sources of data are television, magazines, and newspapers. The researcher used a noting technique in collecting the data. To analyse the data, she used transferring, separating, and changing techniques. The result of the research reveals that every kind of advertisement has its own specific words, which are its registers. These specific words frequently appear in certain advertisements so that people can easily guess what kind of advertisement those weights belong to. These specific words have some forms: one-word form (noun, adjective, verb, adverb, and preposition), phrase forms (noun phrase and adjective phrase), phrasal verb form, and idiom form.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a powerful social tool that shapes and reflects cultural and contextual realities. Its role extends beyond conveying information—it also constructs identities, reinforces ideologies, and influences perception and behavior (Gee, 2014; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In multilingual and multicultural contexts, language variations become increasingly significant, especially in domains such as media and advertising, where lexical choices are not neutral but highly strategic (Cook, 2020; Tagg et al., 2021). The interplay between language, purpose, and audience underscores the importance of understanding language registers, particularly in spaces where persuasion is central.

Within the field of sociolinguistics, register refers to a language variety determined by situational context, including field (what is happening), tenor (who is involved), and mode (how the communication takes place) (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Biber & Conrad, 2019). Registers are not static but emerge dynamically in specific professional, social, or thematic contexts. In advertising, registers carry distinct lexical, grammatical, and discursive features crafted to persuade target audiences. Studies on media discourse (Fairclough, 2015; Koller, 2021) have shown that registers in advertising are not merely linguistic choices—they encode values, aspirations, and cultural norms that influence consumer behavior.

Advertising discourse, therefore, provides a rich site for investigating language registers due to its deliberate linguistic stylization aimed at persuasion. Prior research emphasizes that advertisements often employ emotionally charged, evaluative, and imperative language forms to attract attention and prompt action (Goddard, 2002; Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2020). The effectiveness of such discourse lies in its ability to blend language with imagery and context-specific registers, generating implicit meanings and emotional resonance with consumers (Leech, 2021; Piller, 2017). Given its ubiquity across media platforms, advertising language deserves a close analysis not only for its commercial impact but also for its sociolinguistic significance.

This study examines the specific registers used in English advertisements across different product categories, including real estate, food and beverages, hospitality, cosmetics, and job vacancies. The objective is to identify frequently used lexical items (specific words), analyze their grammatical forms, and interpret their communicative functions within advertising contexts. Previous studies have explored similar linguistic patterns in commercial discourse (Al-Ali & Al-Ali, 2015; Carlin & Love, 2021), but there remains a gap in describing the nuanced variation of registers across thematic categories within mass media. This research responds to that gap by offering a systematic description and interpretation of how lexical choices function in advertising to inform, persuade, and emotionally engage.

The rationale for selecting mass media platforms—specifically television, magazines, and newspapers—rests on their historical and ongoing influence in shaping public discourse. While digital advertising is on the rise, traditional media remain significant in many socio-economic and regional contexts, particularly in Indonesia (Simanjuntak, 2021; Andayani & Permata, 2020). These platforms offer rich linguistic data and diverse communicative contexts that allow for comparative register analysis. Moreover, media texts provide access to language-in-use across genres and offer insight into how persuasive discourse is socially constructed.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the intersection of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and applied linguistics by deepening our understanding of how register variation operates in commercial communication. It supports the notion that register is not only shaped by subject matter but also by institutional and ideological factors that influence how messages are framed and received (Bhatia, 2017; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Practically, the findings of this research are

expected to inform advertising professionals and educators by highlighting effective linguistic strategies and helping learners critically engage with persuasive texts.

By examining the lexical forms and functions of advertising registers, this study aims to uncover the mechanisms by which language compels attention, evokes emotion, and drives action. In doing so, it affirms that language is not a passive vessel but an active force in shaping commercial narratives and cultural meanings in society.

Despite the growing body of research on advertising discourse and persuasive language, few studies have provided a detailed comparative analysis of register variation across multiple advertisement categories within traditional media. Most existing works tend to focus on a single domain, such as cosmetics or job recruitment, or prioritize digital and social media contexts, often neglecting the linguistic richness found in printed and broadcast advertisements. Furthermore, there is a lack of integration between linguistic form and communicative function in prior analyses, which limits our understanding of how register choices simultaneously reflect and shape persuasive intent. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to: (1) identify the specific lexical items frequently used across five advertisement categories; (2) categorize their grammatical forms including one-word units, phrases, and idiomatic expressions; (3) analyze the communicative functions these registers serve in the persuasive architecture of advertisements; and (4) uncover the underlying linguistic patterns that advertisers strategically deploy to align their messages with audience expectations and product positioning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Advertisement

Advertisement, (Crowther,1995:18) is a public notice offering or asking for good service, etc. It is a publication which informs or states something to mass media. Advertisement intends to inform or persuade people. It can be found in printing and electronic media.

Graham (1952:5) is a sales message intended for delivery to the prospect or customers of a commercial firm or individual seller by means of one or more of the various channels of communication or media. The physical form of the message is generally determined by the nature of the media.

Wright, via Liliweri (1992;20), says that advertisement is a communication process which has important power as a marketing instrument, which helps people to sell goods, give services, and ideas through certain channels in the form of persuasive information.

AMA (The American Marketing Association) via Liliweri (1992;21) says that the advertisement is every form of payment of the process of conveying and introducing ideas, thoughts, and non-personal services on the charge of certain sponsors.

2.2 Mass media

Mass media (Crowther, 1995; 720) is the means of communication with large numbers of people. Basically, everybody is involved in a relationship among them through mass media. There are two kinds of mass media, namely printed and electronic media (Liliweri, 1992; 42).

2.1.1 Printed media

Printed media is the media such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers, posters, pamphlets, billboards, catalogues, product packaging, and direct mail. The advertisement language in printed media should be made both briefly and clearly. It is intended to convey the message

without misunderstanding. The language must be brief, clear, precise, and powerful. Clarity will make the message easily understood, while brevity will make the message be conveyed in non-abundant words. The precision will make the words of advertisement language accurate and precise. Power will make the words powerful so that they can stir up people's emotions.

2.1.2 Electronic Media

Electronic media is the media such as television, radio, websites, social media platforms, digital billboards, podcasts, YouTube channels, and streaming services. Unlike printed media, electronic media combines visual and/or audio elements, allowing advertisers to use voice, music, movement, and visuals to enhance the delivery of their message. The language in electronic media advertisements is also expected to be persuasive, but it may rely more on tone, imagery, and timing to create a stronger impact. The register used in electronic media often adapts to the platform and target audience and may include more informal or conversational styles depending on the context.

2.3 Register

Registers (Crowther, 1995;982) is the range of vocabulary, grammar, etc. used by speakers in particular social circumstances or professional contexts. It is the language variety which is associated with particular groups of people or sometimes specific situations of use. Journalists, baby talkers, race-callers, sports commentators, criminals, language in the classroom, and advertisements could be considered examples of different registers (Holmes 1995;276).

According to Wardaugh (1988;48) registers are sets of vocabulary items associated with discrete occupational or social groups. Surgeons, airline pilots, bank managers, sales clerks, jazz fans, and pimps use different vocabularies. Fromkin (1988;265) says that registers are used for a variety of languages determined by subject matter. The subject matter in the register exerts not only upon the type of vocabulary chosen but also upon grammatical choices.

Brown (1993-293) states that the register is identified by certain phonological variants, vocabularies, and other expressions that are associated with different occupational or socio-economic groups. Therefore, it is embodied in the use of particular words and structures.

2.4 Linguistics Aspects of Register of Advertisement

Linguistic context is the relationship between one language element and another one. Linguistic context covers the relationship among words in phrases or sentences, the relationship among phrases in sentences or courses, and the relationship among sentences in courses. The linguistic aspect of the register of certain subject methods can be identified by phonological variants, vocabulary, idioms, and other expressions that are associated with different occupational or socio-economic groups (Brown, 1993; 293). The linguistic aspects that will be discussed here are sets of vocabulary items which cover 1. the specific words used in advertisements, 2. the form, and 3. the function.

2.4.1 The Specific Word

Specific (Crowther, 1995; 1144) means detail and exact, not general, relating to one particular thing. Word (Crowther, 1995; 1374) is a sound or group of sounds that expresses a meaning and forms an independent unit of a language. The specific words mean the words which are detailed, not general, and relating to one particular thing, in this case is relating to advertisement.

Brown (1993;293) states that register is embodied in the use of particular words and structures. The particular words here are the words that are frequently used and then become the

specific ones. Every subject matter has its own specific words which are the registers of it. For example, the specific words of cosmetic advertisements may be different from the ones of electronic, vacancy, or other advertisements. It happens because the writers of advertisements choose suitable words for advertisements of different objects. The word *beautiful* will often appear in cosmetic advertisements because this word represents the utility and the intention of using cosmetics. By using a kind of cosmetics, someone may be able to have good looking and beautiful. That is why the word *beautiful* is often used in the cosmetic advertisements and becomes the register of use in these advertisements.

2.4.2 The Form

The subject matter in a register exerts not only upon the type of vocabulary chosen but also upon grammatical choices (Fromkin, 1988:266). Grammar (Crowther 1995; 117) is the rules in a language for changing the form of words and combining them into sentences. One of grammatical choices is syntax. It is the rule of grammar for the arrangement of words into phrases and phrases into sentences. Syntax includes the form of language units such as part of speech: word, phrase, phrasal verb, clause, and sentence.

The form of register of advertisement are the form of specific words found on them. The element of specific words can be in the form of 1. one-word form, 2. phrase, 3. idiom, and 4. phrase phrasal verb.

2.4.3 Function

The function of registers of advertisements depends so much on the expression of the advertisement itself. Expression here means the speech or utterance that the advertiser uses in making advertisements. Because, in this case, the researcher researches in its vocabulary, thus the function attaches so much to the function of every specific word or specific vocabulary of the advertisement. The register of advertisements can be used to identify, to comment, to state, or to indicate. In other words, the function of registers of advertisements are identifying, stating, commanding, and indicating.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This research belongs to descriptive type because this research intends to describe the things about registers as socio-linguistic phenomena. The writer describes the data qualitatively and therefore the method is a descriptive qualitative one. There is neither numeral nor counting data in this research, thus the research type is descriptive qualitative.

3.2 Object of the Study and Source of Data

The object of the study of this research is registered which is used in English advertisements. The source of data of this research are newspaper, magazine, television, and social media because they are mass media which are familiar to people daily life. Television and social media offer advertisement by two sense sight and sound rather than other mass media too. Demonstration of product performance and exhibition of style, colour, design, and other product features can be achieved. The writer chooses newspaper, and magazine because she thinks they can cover the data that are researched.

3.3 Data Collecting Techniques

The way of using the method is called technique (Sudaryanto, 1992; 33-35). The thesis stated there are five techniques of doing the research. Namely, 1) recording technique, 2) noting techniques, 3) separate techniques, 4) transferring techniques, and 5) changing techniques. The recording technique happens if the way of collecting data is the recording. The noting technique takes place if the researcher writes or takes a note of the data. The separating technique is the way to separate the analysis of the data while the transferring technique is used to transfer the data. In this research, the writer uses the noting technique to collect the data, namely collecting data by taking a note.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

In analysing the data, the writer used separating, transferring, and changing techniques. She used a separating technique to separate specific words from ordinary ones and to classify the forms of those specific words. Then, the writer used the transferring technique to transfer the specific words, which are in the English language, into Indonesian. She used this technique to analyse the function of the register. In the specific words that are found, there are some similar words but in different forms. The writer used similar words to substitute the referred specific words. She does it by using a changing technique. For example, the writer used the words *preferably* and *preferable* to substitute the referred specific word *prefer*.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this research is to analyse the linguistic features of advertisements, focusing specifically on the vocabulary choices, the types of registers employed, and their communicative functions. In this study, the writer selects five kinds of advertisements that frequently appear and are familiar in our daily lives. They are, A) Apartment, House, and Hotel, B) Beverage and Food, C) Cafe, restaurant, and pub, D) Cosmetic, and E) Vacancy. The writer analyses the register of these advertisements, which includes the specific words, the forms, and the functions.

A) Apartment, House, and Hotel

1. Specific Words

The specific words of Apartment, House, and Hotel found are available, beautiful, bedroom, call, contact, facility, for lease, for rent, for reservation, for sale, living, luxurious, price, and spacious.

Examples of specific words are shown in the following advertisement.

- a. Bonavista Apartments in South Jakarta, flood-free with extra facilities: basketball court, fitness, lush gardens and more, 1-4 bedrooms service/non-service apartments *available*. Flexible pricing, weekly leases *available*... (Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03).
- b. *Beautiful* House and Balinese Style in Kemang: four bedrooms, 1st study room,...(Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03).

2. The Form

From the data taken, the researcher can find that the specific words of Apartment, House, and Hotel advertisement contain one-word form and idiom form. The one-word form contained by this advertisement is adjective, noun, verb, and idiom form. For example:

- a. *Beautiful House and Balinese Style in Kemang*: four bedroom, 1study room,...(Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03). This advertisement contains adjective, namely beautiful.
- b. *For rent, big house in North Jakarta*: 5 *bedroom*, swimming pool, ... (Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03). This advertisement contains adjective, namely bedroom.
- c. *Golfhill-Pondok Indah*: 3 bedroom, price started..., please *call*...(Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03). This advertisement contains verb, namely call.
- d. *For sale, a beautiful resort at Ubud Bali*...(Jakarta Pos, June 3rd 03).

3. The Function

From the analysis, researcher can find the function:

- a. Identifying, in the words *available, beautiful, living, luxurious, and spacious*. These specific words are the identification of the property or things advertised.
- b. Commanding, in the words *call* and *contact*. This function is to show the command of advertisers in persuading the people.
- c. Indicating, in the words *bedroom, facility, for lease, for rent, for reservation, for sale, living (as noun), and price (-ing)*. This function can indicate a certain subject matter. By seeing these words, people will automatically know to what subject matter the registers lead.

B) Beverage and Food

1. The specific words of Beverage and Food are: *a range of, dairy, delicious (-ly, -ness), diet (-ary), energy, fat, flavour, food, fresh, fun, good (-ness), better, best, health (-ier, -y), heart, life, nutrient, nutrition (-al, -ist, -ous)*.

The examples of the specific word are shown in the following advertisement.

- a. *Dairy*. The food of life.This week's winning *dairy* ideas... (Woman's Day Magazine, May 5th '03).
- b. Oats favourite:...Oats are also one of the most versatile grains to include in your family *diet*...(New Idea Magazine, July 26th '03).
2. The form are one word form and phrase. One word form: *delicious (-ly, -ness), diet (-ary), energy, fat, flavour, food, fresh, fun, good (-ness), better, best, health (-ier, -y), heart, life, nutrient, nutrition (-al, -ist, -ous)*. Phrase: *a range of*.
3. The functions are identifying (*delicious (-ly), good (better, best), healthy (-er), nutritional, and nutritious*) and indicating (*diet, energy, fats, flavour, food, goodness, heart, and nutrients*). Identifying has function to show the identification of the things advertised. Indicating has function to indicate that they belong to beverage or food advertisement.

C) Cafe, restaurant, and pub

1. The specific words of cafe, restaurant, and pub are: *call, catering, closed, cuisine, delivery, discount, enjoy (-ing), food, for (a) reservation, free, live (...) music, special (-ize, -ty)*.

The examples of the specific word are shown in the following advertisement.

- a. Papa Rons Pizza: Free fruit Danish pizza for every purchase large pan pizza.For dine in, take away, and *delivery*. (Jakarta Pos,June 6th 03).
 - b. Oasis: *Enjoy* your favourite at restaurant...(Jakarta Pos,June 6th 03).
-

2. The forms are one word form, phrase, and idiom form. One word form: *call, catering, closed, cuisine, delivery, discount, enjoy (-ing), food, free, special (-ize, -ty)*. Phrase: *live (...) music*. Idiom form: *for (a) reservation*.
3. The functions are identifying (*closed, free, and special*), stating (*specialize*), commanding (*call, enjoy*), and indicating (*catering, cuisine, delivery, discount, food, for (a) reservation, live (...) music, and specialty*). Identifying function is to identify the things offered such as the condition of the place (café, restaurant, or pub), the menu, or other things. Stating function is to show what the owners of the café, restaurant, or pub state or inform. In commanding function, the advertisers command the people to call and make reservation. Indicating function is to indicate the things offered and the things available.

D) Cosmetic

1. The specific words of cosmetic are *appearance, be, beauty (-ful, -fully), body, care (-ing), clear (-er, -ly), clear, discover (-ed), fragrance, gentle (-ly), look (-ing), love, natural (-ly), nourish, pure, safe, skin, smooth (-er), sparkling*, and *spirit*.
The examples of the specific word are shown in the following advertisement.
 - a. Let's talk Avon: smoother, firmer looking things in four week. After four week, the *appearance* of dimpling is dramatically reduce... (New Idea Magazine; July 26, 2003)
 - b. Schwarzkopf: Professional hair care for you. Going blonde has never been easier new even brunettes can enjoy being *beautiful*, numinous blonde (Woman's Day Magazine, May 5th '03).
2. The form is one word form. All these specific words are one word form.
3. The functions are identifying (*clear, gentle, natural, pure, safe, smooth, and sparkling*), stating (*care, discover, love, and nourish*), commanding (*be, colour*), indicating (*appearance, beauty, care, colour, fragrance, look, love, skin, and spirit*).

E) Vacancy

1. The specific words of vacancy are *applicant, application letter, (at/as) latest (at/by), candidate, curriculum vitae, e-mail, experience (d), fill, individual, join, look(-ing) for, need (-ed), not later (than, by), position, prefer (-able, -ably, -ed), qualify(-ed, -ication), require (-ed, -ment), resume, salary, seek (-ing), send to, submit to, walk in interview, and within*.
The examples of the specific word are shown in the following advertisement.
 - a. *Urgently required*. We need a highly self motivated candidate to fill in the position of Health and Safety Staff (Jawa Pos, Aug 16th, 2003).
 - b. Job opportunity in education field. Needed: English teacher, maximum age 35 y.o. Please send your application letter and *Curriculum Vitae* to this address (Pikiran Rakyat, June 11, 2003)
2. The forms are one word form, phrase, phrasal verb, and idiom. One word form: *applicant, candidate, e-mail, experience (d), fill, individual, join, look(-ing) for, need (-ed), position, prefer (-able, -ably, -ed), qualify(-ed, -ication), require (-ed, -ment), resume, salary, seek (-ing), and within*. Phrase: *application letter, (at/as) curriculum vitae, and email*. Phrasal verb: *fax at, fill in, send to, submit to*. Idiom: *(at/as) latest (at/by), looking for, and walk in interview*.

3. The functions are identifying (*experienced, preferable, and qualified*), stating (*look (-ing) for, need, seek, and required*), commanding (*fax (to,at), fillin, join, send to, and submit to*), and indicating (*applicant, application letter, (at/as) latest (at/by), candidate, curriculum vitae, e-mail, experience (d), individual, not later (than, by), position, require (-ed, -ment), resume, salary, urgently required, walk in interview, and within*).

Identifying functions to identify the kind of person needed by the company. Stating functions to state or inform that the company is looking for people to fill the vacancy. Commanding functions to command people to do something (fax, call, etc). Indicating functions to indicate the fact that we are now embarking on the vacancy.

One of the most prominent findings in this study is that advertisements use highly domain-specific lexis, often marked by adjectives and imperatives, to fulfill distinct communicative purposes. This aligns with recent studies, which emphasize how register choices are strategically crafted to evoke emotional responses and construct brand identity. For example, Cook (2020) explores how advertising discourse uses emotionally charged vocabulary to trigger affective associations with products, particularly in beauty and food advertisements. Similarly, Ge and Gretzel (2018) observe that tourism and hospitality ads frequently employ adjectives like "luxurious" and "spacious" to construct idealized consumer experiences. In parallel, Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2019) highlights the semantic framing of verbs like "discover" or "indulge" in persuasive media as tools to project agency onto consumers. Your findings reinforce this by showing how words like "beautiful," "nutritious," and "submit" function to guide consumer interpretation within their respective domains.

Another key insight is the dominance of one-word and phrase structures, particularly noun phrases and phrasal verbs, in encoding the core messages of different types of advertisements. These forms are concise yet potent, fitting the fast-paced media environments in which advertisements typically operate. Recent corpus-based studies support this structural tendency. Biber and Egbert (2016), for instance, demonstrate how advertising registers across digital media rely heavily on lexical bundles (e.g., "for rent," "apply now") to deliver compressed meanings. Likewise, Chen and Chen (2022) found that in East Asian advertising contexts, the prevalence of compact, formulaic language in English-language marketing was instrumental in cross-cultural readability and emotional resonance. This suggests that the structural patterns identified in your study are not only linguistically efficient but also culturally adaptable—a key factor in globalized marketing discourse.

Furthermore, your analysis of register function, particularly in terms of identifying, commanding, and indicating, echoes recent research that reframes advertising language as performative rather than merely descriptive. Studies by Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2020) and Pérez-Sabater (2017) reveal that register choices in online job ads and cosmetic marketing respectively serve not just to inform but to construct social relationships and power dynamics. For example, imperatives like "call," "submit," or "enjoy" are not neutral; they encode a social expectation for immediate consumer compliance or engagement. In this sense, your functional analysis of registers provides strong evidence that advertisements deploy linguistic forms to shape not only consumer understanding but also their behavior and positioning within the communicative act.

4. CONCLUSION

From the research, the researcher can conclude that every advertisement has its own specific words which are the registers of it. The specific word have different form whether one word form, phrase, phrasal verb, prepositional verb, or idiom. The registers in advertisement function to identify the things advertised

Each type of advertisement analyzed has a distinct set of vocabulary that reflects its communicative goals. For instance, property advertisements focus on adjectives and nouns that describe features and appeal to potential buyers or tenants (e.g., *spacious, luxurious, for rent*), while food and beverage advertisements highlight health, taste, and freshness (e.g., *nutritious, delicious, fresh*). Similarly, vacancy advertisements employ a formal and directive register aimed at job seekers (e.g., *submit to, required, curriculum vitae*).

The different forms and functions of these registers play a crucial role in shaping the message and targeting the intended audience effectively. Registers serve as linguistic tools that not only convey information but also appeal emotionally or persuasively, depending on the context. Therefore, understanding the use of registers in advertisements is essential for both language analysis and effective communication in marketing.

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