VIOLATION OF GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE AS A MEANS OF CREATING MANIPULATION IN ADVERTISING TEXTS (BASED ON ARMENIAN, RUSSIAN, AND ENGLISH ADVERTISING TEXTS)

Spartak MKHITARYAN
PhD student, lecturer at Brusov State University.

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Introduction

Since ancient times, advertising has been regarded as one of the most effective means of selling goods or attracting the attention of a target audience to a particular product. In the twenty-first century an era characterised by rapid technological development the role of advertising in product promotion has become significantly more prominent. Advertising has become so pervasive that individuals have largely ceased to consciously notice it: every person is exposed to advertising influence, and imagining everyday life without it has become virtually impossible. For this reason, numerous scholars both international and Armenian have turned their attention to the study of the characteristics and types of advertising.

Research methodology

This study combines qualitative and analytical methods from marketing, pragmatics and linguistics, including discourse analysis, pragmatic analysis, comparative linguistic analysis, and content analysis. Pragmatic analysis, based on P. Grice's Cooperative Principle, identifies violations of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner as mechanisms of manipulative influence. Discourse analysis examines advertising texts as communicative events with persuasive functions, while comparative analysis contrasts Armenian, Russian, and English ads to reveal cross-linguistic differences in manipulative strategies. Qualitative content analysis of 600 texts classifies features such as vagueness, evaluative language, omission, and exaggeration, enabling nuanced insights into universal and language-specific persuasive techniques.

Literature Review

Manipulation in communication has been studied in linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and marketing. Goodin defines manipulation as covert influence that undermines individual autonomy, while Ware links it to hidden power relations [Goodin, 1980; Ware, 1981]. Coons and Weber distinguish manipulation from persuasion by its intent to bypass rational decision-making [Coons & Weber, 2014].

From a pragmatic perspective, manipulation involves violations of communicative norms. Jacobs and McCornack show that manipulative discourse deviates from principles of informativeness, truthfulness, and clarity, producing misleading implicatures [Jacobs, 1996;

McCornack, 1992]. In advertising studies, manipulation is viewed as an integral part of persuasive communication (F. Kotler; M. J. Phillips), while Russian scholars S. G. Kara-Murza and V. P. Sheinov analyze it as hidden control in everyday discourse [Kotler, 2007; Phillips, 1997; Kara-Murza, 2001; Sheinov, 2001].

Despite extensive theoretical research, cross-linguistic pragmatic analyses of advertising manipulation remain limited. This study addresses the gap by applying Grice's maxims to Armenian, Russian, and English advertising texts.

Scientific Novelty

This study applies pragmatic theory to marketing by analysing how advertising texts manipulate consumer perception through violations of Grice's conversational maxims. Examining Armenian, Russian, and English advertisements, it identifies strategies that create desirability, trust, or exclusivity, revealing both universal and language-specific manipulative techniques. The findings provide marketers with a practical framework to craft more persuasive, engaging, and effective advertising content while understanding how subtle linguistic choices influence consumer behaviour.

Advertising

One of the most widely cited definitions of advertising is proposed by the prominent marketing theorist Philip Kotler, who defines advertising as "non-personal forms of communication carried out through paid media with a clearly identified source of financing" [Kotler, 2007, 541]. Although Kotler conceptualizes advertising as a non-personal form of communication disseminated via paid channels with an explicitly stated sponsor, in practice this condition is not always fulfilled. In certain cases, information about the sponsor may be deliberately obscured or entirely absent, particularly in instances of covert advertising. This circumstance renders the perception of the advertising message less critical on the part of the audience, as it is often interpreted as objective information rather than as a commercial appeal [Gumerova, 2012, 1353].

A broader and more detailed definition of advertising is provided by William Wells, Sandra Moriarty, and John Burnett, who describe it as "paid non-personal communication from an identified sponsor, using mass media to persuade or influence a target audience" [Moriarty, 2008: 6]. It is important to note that advertising is not limited solely to mass media channels. Contemporary brands employ a wide range of alternative promotional strategies, many of which prove even more effective due to their unobtrusive nature. While television, radio, newspapers, and the internet remain the primary advertising platforms, the following methods are also of considerable importance:

- *Outdoor advertising*, including billboards, underground advertisements, and advertising on public transport;
- *Direct communication*, such as email newsletters, telephone calls, and SMS messages;

- *Influencer marketing*, where trust in the opinion of a leader outweighs the impact of a striking headline;
- *Viral content*, comprising narratives that audiences voluntarily disseminate;
- *In-store advertising*, including stands, product samples, and in-store radio announcements;
- *Merchandise and promotional souvenirs*, where branded items such as pens or mugs contribute to brand image formation.

Romat offers a slightly different yet more comprehensive definition, describing advertising as "a paid, one-directional, and non-personal appeal disseminated through mass media and other forms of communication, advocating a product, brand, company, cause, candidate, or government" [Romat, 2002, 145].

Based on the above definitions, advertising may be defined as a paid, non-personal form of communication initiated by an addresser and directed towards an addressee through mass media and alternative channels of information dissemination, with the aim of attracting interest in a particular product and prompting actions beneficial to the addresser. Having examined the concept of advertising, the discussion now turns to the notion of the advertising text as a whole and its constituent elements.

Manipulation

The term manipulation was first offered by Goodin, who defines it as "deceptive and covert influence exercised by a speaker (manipulator) with the intention of directly and deliberately affecting another person's beliefs, desires, and/or emotions in a manner that typically does not correspond to that person's own interests, or at least not to their interests in the given context" [Goodin, 1980, 59]. As a result, the beliefs, desires, and emotions of the manipulator come to dominate. According to this definition, manipulation is presented as a form of deception that remains unnoticed by the addressee, enabling the speaker to achieve goals that diverge from the intentions and desires of the recipient.

However, it should be noted that manipulation does not always involve outright deception. In certain cases, it may consist of withholding information or selectively presenting it, as it is virtually impossible to determine the precise level of the addressee's awareness. If the addressee detects explicit deception, the manipulative process collapses and cannot be sustained. In contrast, selective or incomplete disclosure allows the manipulator to continue exerting influence even when such strategies are recognised.

Similarly, Ware defines manipulation as a form of covert influence exerted by the speaker upon an individual who remains unaware of how their choices are being shaped [Ware, 1981, 149]. This perspective has led many scholars to view manipulation as a pragmatic phenomenon, as it achieves its objectives without explicit disclosure of communicative intent. In manipulative contexts, the speaker deliberately selects forms of expression de-

void of overt indications of intention. This becomes evident when the listener is unable to infer the hidden motives behind the literal content of the utterance [Phillips, 1997, 115]. Another significant contribution is offered by Coons and Weber, who argue that "manipulation constitutes deceptive influence over someone against their presumed will and carries strong connotations of cunning, typically occurring without the victim's awareness" [Coons & Weber, 2014, 59]. They further emphasise that manipulation is distinguished not so much by the use of particular methods such as covert influence or weak arguments disguised as strong ones but by its specific effect on the addressee. In other words, manipulation is a form of concealed influence that alters perception or behaviour, without the individual realising that such influence is being exerted [Gorcheva, 2002, 99].

Drawing on these perspectives, recent research has increasingly attempted to conceptualise manipulation as a linguistic act with considerable creative potential. An analysis of the aforementioned definitions allows manipulation to be summarised as a masked form of influence in which individuals do not recognise that pressure is being exerted upon them. Its principal feature lies in its ability to embed itself within the very structure of communication, violating internal dialogical norms without revealing itself externally. This renders manipulative influence particularly dangerous: individuals fail to notice how their behaviour begins to serve external objectives that they perceive as their own. Thus, manipulation is a form of influence in which genuine freedom of choice is compromised despite the sense of autonomy. It undermines trust in communication, disrupts equality between participants, transforms interaction into a one-sided process of covert control.

In the present study, by analysing manipulative techniques employed to influence readers with the aim of persuading them to purchase a product or use a service, manipulation is examined not merely as a linguistic act but as a communicative act. Communication is not simply an exchange of information; it is an action driven by specific motives and interests. When viewed through the prism of motivation, it becomes evident that every utterance is underpinned by intention: to inform, persuade, influence, attract attention, justify actions, evoke emotions, establish control, or, conversely, create an illusion of equality.

Language used in manipulation is not a neutral medium but a tool through which the speaker realises communicative goals. At the same time, the listener is not a passive participant: they interpret the message based on prior experience, expectations, context, and sensitivity to speech strategies. However, it is precisely within this interaction where one party formulates intention and the other interprets it that opportunities for manipulation arise. If the speaker understands the mechanisms of perception and interpretation, language can be employed as a means of control. Such control may be overt, as in argumenttation or persuasion, or covert, as in manipulation, where the speaker's objectives do not align with the explicit content of the message.

Violation of Grice's Maxims

As it was mentioned manipulation is examined as a specific type of communicative act. According to Grice's theory, effective communication is governed by a set of communicative maxims (or postulates), namely the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. These principles ensure clarity, reliability, relevance, and structural coherence of an utterance.

In the case of a manipulative communicative act, however, a different pattern of behaviour can be observed. The speaker (manipulator) may deliberately violate one or more of these maxims in order to exert covert influence on the addressee. Such violations may manifest themselves through distortion of information, intentional vagueness, excessive detail, or, conversely, deliberate omission. These strategies enable the achievement of manipulative goals without provoking explicit resistance on the part of the listener. Consequently, deviation from the Cooperative Principle, which underlies Grice's maxims, emerges as a defining characteristic of manipulative communication.

Manipulation is thus realised through the management of information as well as through the distortion of communicative structure. In everyday dialogue, interlocutors expect one another to adhere to certain principles: to provide neither more nor less information than necessary, to convey truthful content, to remain relevant to the topic, and to express themselves clearly [McCornack, 1992, 6]. These parameters generate a sense of transparency and trust in communication. Manipulation begins precisely where such expectations are subtly and purposefully undermined. In this context, manipulation does not primarily consist of overt lying but rather of artificial shifts in emphasis, concealment of significant details, or, conversely, their excessive highlighting. Taken together, these strategies construct a distorted representation of reality in the mind of the interlocutor. Crucially, such influence is perceived as natural: individuals do not notice that their perception is being guided in a direction advantageous to the manipulator [Sheinov, 2001: 86].

This renders manipulation not merely a form of deception, but a disruption of the very mechanism of understanding itself [Kara-Murza, 2001: 584]. Even a single covert deviation from the normal flow of conversation may suffice to alter the interpretation of a message. This is where the insidious nature of manipulation lies: it disguises itself as ordinary communication, while its effect is achieved not through direct pressure but through imperceptible semantic shifts that occur within the interlocutor's consciousness.

Analysis of Advertising Texts in Armenian, Russian, and English

In order to identify how and which Gricean maxims are violated in advertising texts written in Armenian, Russian, and English, a corpus of 600 advertising texts was analysed. To illustrate the most salient patterns of manipulative strategies, one representative example from each language will be examined in detail.

Analysis of an Armenian Advertising Text

In the Armenian advertising text "*gioberti.store Reggenza հայկական բրենդ ԱՄ Հայ տղամարդկանց թե սիրված գույնը, թե կաշին...□□☺ Կոկորդիլոսի բնական կաշի: Շաաաաո գեղեցիկ լուք ենք ընտրել 👍 Ամբողջը ձեռքի աշխատանք 🤲*" produced by the clothing store *gioberti.store* , a manipulative effect is achieved through the violation of two Gricean maxims: the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Quantity. The Maxim of Quality is violated due to the use of highly subjective evaluative statements, such as *«հայ տղամարդկան թե սիրված գույնը թե կաշին»* ("both the colour and the leather favoured by Armenian men") and *«Շաաաաո գեղեցիկ լուք»* ("a veeeery beautiful look"). These statements lack any objective basis and are presented as implicit facts rather than personal opinions, thereby creating an impression of universally accepted value.

The Maxim of Quantity, in turn, is violated through the insufficient amount of informational content. For instance, the advertisement provides no information regarding the price, the location of the store, the availability of alternative colours or models, or even the specific type of clothing being advertised (whether trousers, shoes or gloves). The combined violation of these maxims constructs an idealised image of the product while simultaneously concealing potentially relevant or unfavourable aspects. This strategy reduces critical evaluation on the part of the consumer and may encourage the reader to contact the seller or seek additional information about the product, thereby fulfilling the manipulative intent of the advertisement.

Analysis of a Russian Advertising Text

In the Russian-language advertising text *"Как выглядеть в компании ровесниц самой молодой? 💮 Думаете, что все знают о пилингах? □ Вам это только кажется! Домашний пилинг практикует небольшой процент женщин, и лишь единицы делают его регулярно, правильно и выбирая хороший состав! Что это значит? Верно: вы можете получить сто очков форы, просто освоив пилинг. Повторимся: грамотно! И с идеально сбалансированным составом. ♡ Как получить тайное знание: смотрите прямой эфир с Нелли Папикян в среду, 22 января, ровно в 12:00! Эфир пройдет в сообществе в VK, а запись будет выложена в наш Telegram-канал. Эфир мы назвали в честь наступившего 2025 года: Змея меняет кожу. Все о пилингах и энзимах у вас дома. Присоединяйтесь! Ждем вас в 12:00 в нашем сообществе VK! □ "* promoting chemical peels, two Gricean maxims are violated: the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Quantity. The Maxim of Quality is violated through the use of unfounded and unverifiable claims. For instance, the author asserts that only a very small number of people perform peeling procedures correctly. However, no evidence is provided to substantiate this statement: it remains unclear how the author acquired this knowledge, whether any scientific research or experiment was conducted, or whether reliable sources support the claim. The absence of re-ferences undermines the credibility of

the information presented while simultaneously framing it as authoritative. The Maxim of Quantity is also violated, albeit in a different manner, namely through an excess of information. The author deliberately extends the text in order to make it appear more substantial and professional. This intentional verbosity creates an illusion of expertise and depth without necessarily adding informative value. The violation of these maxims contributes to the creation of an intriguing "secret knowledge" effect. As a result, a manipulative influence is established, leading the reader to believe that the author possesses exclusive information accessible only through engagement with them. Consequently, the consumer may be persuaded that only by contacting or visiting the author can they "uncover all the secrets," thus fulfilling the persuasive aim of the advertisement.

Analysis of an English-Language Advertising Text

In the English-language advertisement "*L'Oréal Groupe Introducing Ella Ella by @cacharelparfums, the newest fragrance that captures the free-spirited, joyful essence of modern femininity. This captivating scent, embodies the youthful energy and playful charm of the Cacharel woman. #EllaElla #CacharelParfums #NewFragrance #LorealGroupe*" by *L'Oréal* (Example 3), the manipulative effect is achieved through the violation of three Gricean maxims: the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Manner, and the Maxim of Quantity. Each violation will be examined separately.

The Maxim of Quality is violated through the use of subjective and abstract expressions such as *"free-spirited, joyful essence of modern femininity"*, *"youthful energy"*, and *"playful charm"*. A fragrance cannot objectively possess such characteristics; therefore, these formulations lack verifiable truth value and function as evaluative metaphors rather than factual descriptions. As a result, the informational reliability of the text is compromised. The Maxim of Manner is violated due to the absence of clarity and specificity. For instance, the expression *"the essence of modern femininity"* is inherently vague and may be interpreted differently by various audience groups depending on their cultural background, personal experience, and individual expectations. This intentional ambiguity allows the message to adapt flexibly to multiple interpretations and increase its persuasion.

The Maxim of Quantity is violated through the omission of essential factual information, such as the price of the product, the specific fragrance notes, and its longevity. By withholding these details, the advertisement limits the consumer's ability to evaluate the product critically. All of these violations are strategically employed to produce a manipulative effect by constructing a "false" idealised image of the product in the consumer's mind. This effect is achieved through vagueness, omission, and the use of subjective evaluative language, reducing analytical distance and encourage emotional engagement.

Conclusion

The present analysis demonstrates that advertising texts frequently violate P. Grice's maxims in order to produce a manipulative effect. While some texts breach only one or two

maxims, others may violate three or even all four simultaneously. The findings indicate that the Maxims of Quality and Quantity are most commonly infringed upon. These particular maxims enable advertisers to embellish the image of the promoted product while concealing undesirable or commercially disadvantageous information from the consumer. Furthermore, the analysis reveals cross-linguistic variation in manipulative strategies. Advertising texts written in Armenian and English tend to violate Gricean maxims more frequently, whereas Russian-language advertising texts more often adhere to the Cooperative Principle rather than overtly deviating from it.

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Spartak MKHITARYAN

Violation of Grice's cooperative principle as a means of creating manipulation in advertising texts (based on Armenian, Russian and English advertising texts)

Key words: manipulation, Cooperative Principle, Grice's Maxims, advertising discourse, manipulative effect, analysis, marketing, influence

The article investigates the violations of P. Grice's Cooperative Principle as a linguistic mechanism for creating a manipulative effect in advertising texts. Based on a corpus of 600 advertisements in Armenian, Russian, and English, the analysis examines how the deliberate breaking of the Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Manner, and Relation serves to conceal negative information, embellish the product's image, and exert a covert influence on the consumer. The results indicate that the Maxims of Quality and Quantity are the most frequently violated. Cross-cultural analysis reveals a commonality of manipulative strategies across different linguacultures, with Armenian and English texts tending to exhibit more violations than Russian ones.