

## Rhetorical Figures in Apple Advertisement Slogans

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### Abstract

*Rhetorical figures are often found in advertisement slogans. As a language style, it helps to deliver the advertiser's message more effectively. This study explores how the rhetorical figures are used in Apple's advertisement slogans, using McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) theory. This study aims to identify the rhetorical figures, rhetorical operations, figurative modes, and persuasive functions in Apple's slogans. Using a qualitative descriptive method, it reveals that there are ten rhetorical figures, with parallelism and asyndeton being the most dominant. Also, the data shows that the most rhetorical operation used is repetition and the schematic figurative mode is the most frequently used. In addition, there are three main persuasive functions, namely increasing memorability, emphasizing the main message, and making the slogan more aesthetic.*

**Keywords:** *rhetorical figures, advertising slogans, McQuarrie and Mick, Apple advertisement*

### Introduction

Advertising has become an inseparable part of everyday life. It has spread widely and can easily be found on television, banners, billboards, newspapers, magazines, digital platforms, etc. Because of its wide presence, it shows that most people are familiar with advertisements. As one of the strongest tools in marketing, advertising helps to create a brand image. The Timespro (2014) stated, advertisement can play a crucial role in marketing management. It works to be a bridge between the advertiser and audience in communicating what brand or product image will be presented. Furthermore, information about the product is also provided in advertising. In this case, advertisement will create indirect engagement between the brand and the audience. As a result, advertisement has a big influence on how to build customers' trust and how a customer makes a purchasing decision.

Besides, advertisement can be in various forms, such as videos, pictures, or texts. In general, it can be said that advertising consists of visual and verbal texts. Both visual and verbal texts are effective in an advertisement. A visual text can broadly grab attention and reach a larger audience, while a verbal text can appear more informative and easier for the audience to understand and remember the product. An effective verbal text needs to look stronger and emphasize the important values that the brand wants to convey to the audience. In other words, the verbal text plays an important role in an advertisement in delivering the main points to the customers about their product. The verbal text in advertising includes headlines, catchphrases, taglines, and slogans (Bibee, 2024).

Compared to these three verbal forms of text, a slogan appears as one of the most outstanding elements. According to Murphy (2024), "a slogan applies to a specific

product of your business and is used in marketing campaigns.” Generally, a slogan can be just a short phrase about a product. However, it appears to create a strong first impression that represents the brand or product’s identity and give a long-lasting impact. To reach this, the language used in a slogan not only conveys the advertiser’s message clearly, but also attracts the audience’s emotions (MailChimp, n.d.). From a linguistic perspective, slogans often appear in rhetorical figures to make a powerful slogan in an advertisement. According to McQuarrie and Mick (1996) in his theory *A Taxonomy of Rhetorical Figures*, a rhetorical figure is “an artful deviation in the form taken by a statement.” They further mentioned that there are two figurative modes, namely scheme and trope. In addition, in terms of how the rhetorical figures are formed, there are four rhetorical operations, which are repetition, reversal, substitution, and destabilization rhetorical operations. Here, I would like to analyze rhetorical figures in Apple’s slogans, including the types of rhetorical figures, rhetorical operations, and figurative modes. Next, I would continue the study to reveal the persuasive functions that are supported by the rhetorical figures in the slogan.

Apple is an American multinational technology company that designs, develops, and provides technologies. Recently, Apple has already dominated the global smartphone market because the brand is giving strong performances. As can be proven, Apple’s global sales are increasing 37%, which is increasing 10% year-on-year (Hamlin, 2024). Apple’s slogans are chosen for this subject analysis considering that this company is widely recognized. Through this study, the readers are expected to provide greater awareness of how the slogans can leave a big and lasting impact on them. Furthermore, the study is significant as advertisers can be more highly appreciated for their ability to create such powerful slogans. It also underlines the creativity and linguistic skills required by advertisers to design powerful slogans that not only deliver messages effectively but also evoke emotional responses from their audiences.

Research on rhetorical figures has been widely conducted. For instance, the first study by Nurhadi et al.’s (2023), which examined the rhetorical strategies used in Maybelline’s digital beauty marketing. Their work was based on McQuarrie and Mick’s theory. The study reveals the strategic use of rhetorical devices, such as hyperbole, sensory, language, and repetition that give an effect compelling and engaging to emphasize the quality of the brands or products. This research is similar to this study, which reveals the persuasive function after identifying the rhetorical figures applied.

The second study was conducted by Rosli and Azman (2024); this study deals with women’s fashion advertisements on Instagram. Their study applies McQuarrie and Mick’s (1996) framework. Through the identification, there are eleven types discovered in the five different Instagram online shops. Based on their data and findings, they figured out that the advertisements on Instagram are capable of attracting the reader and influencing their purchasing decision. Besides, this journal paper is similar to my research, both in the theory used and the analysis of the persuasive functions of the rhetorical figures.

The last study was written by Munthe and Lestari (2016) and examines the impression of the rhetorical devices used in Wendy’s taglines. The study is based on Leech’s (1969) framework. In the analysis, they identified 11 schemes applied in this commercial brand; they are aphaeresis, parallelism, asyndeton, alliteration, assonance, anaphora, epanalepsis, homoioteleuton, rhyme, and free verbal repetition. Besides, there are 10 tropes applied, such as irony, metaphor, hyperbole, litotes, onomatopoeia, rhetorical question, periphrasis, anthimeria, polysemy, and pun. Next, they carried out a

quantitative method through the form of a questionnaire to prove whether the rhetorical figure in the tagline gives an effect on the audience. Compared to this study, this research differs in several aspects. This research applied different theories and used a form of questionnaires to support the findings. However, it remains similar in rhetorical figures and the persuasive function at the end of the research.

Therefore, this study aims to analyzed what rhetorical figures are used in Apple's advertisement slogans, what rhetorical operations are used in Apple's advertisement slogans, what figurative modes are used in Apple's advertisement slogans, and how the rhetorical figures support the persuasive function in Apple's advertisement slogans.

### **Method**

This study will focus on the rhetorical figures used in Apple's advertisement slogans. In conducting the research, a qualitative research method is employed. As Bhandari (2020) stated, qualitative research deals with research procedures that involve non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio. The collected data are described to understand the concepts, opinions, or experiences. Moreover, this research also used a descriptive research method, which is a method where the collected data will be described in trying to understand the phenomenon of the subject research, behavior, perception, etc. (Moleong, 2010). The qualitative descriptive method is considered suitable for this analysis, which will not involve any numerical data, but describes the persuasive functions of the rhetorical figures in the advertisement slogan.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data of this research consists of Apple's advertising slogans that contain rhetorical figures. Apple (n.d.) claimed that Apple or Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology company. This company designs, develops, and provides computer software, iPhone smartphones, iPads, Mac personal computers, iPod Portable media players, Apple smart-watches, Apple TV, and many more (Apple, n.d.). The data collection technique employed in this study is categorized as library research. According to George (2008), a library research method is a way of conducting information related to topics from books, theories, and documents. In this research, the data are collected from Apple advertisement slogans which contain rhetorical figures. To support the discussion on the types of rhetorical figures, figurative modes, rhetorical operations, as well as persuasive functions, the information that is gained from a lot of references is referred to.

### **Method of Analysis**

In conducting the research, first, I looked for the rhetorical figures in each of the Apple advertisement slogans. Then, I identified the types of rhetorical figures in each slogan. After that, these rhetorical figures were further classified based on the rhetorical operation and figurative mode. Finally, I analyzed the persuasive functions supported by rhetorical figures in the slogans based on related references.

### **Results and Discussions**

This section presents the findings of rhetorical figures in Apple's advertising slogans and discusses their functions. The analysis covers the identification of rhetorical figures, their classification into rhetorical operations and figurative modes, as well as their persuasive functions in shaping the slogans' effectiveness.

The slogan "*Millions of songs. Thousands of videos. Hundreds of games.*" from the iPod Touch employs consonance, parallelism, and asyndeton. Consonance and parallelism belong to the schematic mode through repetition, while asyndeton belongs to

the tropic mode through substitution. These rhetorical figures enhance rhythm and memorability, which are crucial in advertising (Leech, 1966, as cited in Sun, 2022). The repetition of words such as *millions*, *thousands*, and *hundreds* emphasizes abundance, highlighting the iPod Touch's capacity to store large amounts of media. Apple's product description (Apple Inc., 2008) claimed it by detailing storage capacity and performance.

Another example is the slogan "*Beauty outside. Beast inside.*" from the Mac Pro (2009). This slogan includes antithesis, alliteration, rhyme, parallelism, asyndeton, and allusion. Antithesis, alliteration, rhyme, parallelism are parts of schematic figurative mode with repetition rhetorical operations. While allusion and asyndeton belong to tropic figurative mode with substitution rhetorical operations. The rhetorical figures work together to highlight the product's elegant design and powerful performance. The allusion comes from the well-known story *Beauty and the Beast*, which enhances memorability (Hubbard et al., n.d.; IMDb, n.d.). The persuasive function focuses on Apple's aesthetic features from the exterior and processor (Apple Inc., 2008).

The iPhone 3GS slogan "*More to Love. Less to Pay.*" demonstrates alliteration, parallelism, antithesis, and asyndeton. Alliteration and parallelism are parts of schematic figurative mode and belong to repetition. Antithesis belongs to schematic figurative mode with reversal rhetorical operations. Meanwhile, asyndeton refers to tropic figurative mode with substitution rhetorical operations. These rhetorical figures highlight the contrast between value and cost, effectively persuading readers that the product is worth buying. The persuasive function is to show information that is simple for the readers to recall.

Similarly, the slogan "*More power. Less energy.*" from Xserve employs antithesis, parallelism, and asyndeton. Antithesis belongs to schematic figurative mode and reversal rhetorical operations. Parallelism with schematic figurative mode and repetition rhetorical operations, and asyndeton belongs to tropic figurative mode with substitution rhetorical operations. The contrast between *more* and *less* emphasizes the performance efficiency along with Apple's branding of innovation with environmental responsibility. The persuasive function here is to highlight a message that Xserve of Apple's product can deliver a larger ability of performance while using a smaller energy of power. This reflects Leech's (1966, as cited in Sun, 2022) that simplicity and memorability are essential in advertisement language. Apple's official reports further confirm that the product's SSD improved performance while consuming less energy (LEM Staff, 2009). Another example, the iPod Mini slogan "*Teeny doesn't mean weeny.*", uses assonance and rhyme. These figures contribute to a playful rhythm that increases memorability and aesthetic appeal (StudioBinder, n.d.). The contrast between *teeny* and *weeny* implies that although the product is small in size, its performance is significant. Some unofficial reviews (IGN, 2004) supported this claim by noting the iPod Mini's efficiency despite its compact design.

Finally, the iPod Shuffle slogan "*It's small. It talks. And it's color.*" demonstrates anaphora and personification. Anaphora is part of schematic figurative mode with repetition rhetorical operations. Also, personification belongs to tropic figurative mode with substitution rhetorical operations. This combination increases recall and engagement, fulfilling the persuasive function of attracting readers' attention (Leech, 1966, as cited in Sun, 2022).

Overall, the analysis reveals that Apple's slogans employ various rhetorical figures. The persuasive functions of each data align with the Leech's theory which shows memorability, aesthetic appeal, and reader engagement. These findings confirm that rhetorical figures significantly contribute to shaping Apple's brand identity and

influencing readers perception.

### Conclusion

This study analyzed the use of rhetorical figures in Apple's advertising slogans by applying McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) theory. The findings revealed ten types of rhetorical figures, with parallelism and asyndeton being the most frequent. In rhetorical operations, repetition dominates, followed by substitution and reversal, while destabilization is not found in this study. Furthermore, schematic figurative mode appears more frequently than the tropic mode, showing Apple's preference for simplicity and accessibility in its advertising language. Next, the persuasive functions here are enhancing the memorability, emphasizing messages, and providing the aesthetic features. As a result, it can contribute to shaping brand identity and influencing readers' perception.

Based on this study, it is found that rhetorical figures not only as a simple language style, but also serve powerful persuasive communication to be a bridge between the advertisers and readers. It highlights how rhetorical figures can effectively capture readers' attention and strengthen brand recall which play an important role in advertising.

However, this study is limited in several ways. There are only six data conducted in Apple's advertisement slogans, which not fully represent them. For future research, it is highly suggested to expand the data using a wider range of Apple slogans. Moreover, combining qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for a better understanding of how rhetorical figures influence readers.

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