

Language of Ads: Exploring Persuasive Strategies of Promotional Discourse

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Abstract: *This paper is aimed at exploring persuasive strategies in promotional discourse that refers to the genre which is designed to promote the products or services to potential consumers. One type of promotional discourses is print advertisement which deals with promoting products or services to the consumers through mass media. This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research which investigates print advertisement issued in The Jakarta Post. To identify the persuasive strategies, the writer observed generic structure as well as identified its moves and functions. This research resulted in eight moves of promotional discourse: headline, targeting the market, justifying product or services, detailing the product or services, establishing credential, offering incentives, using pressure tactics, and soliciting response. Those moves function to introduce the product, to promote the product, to announce special offers, and to remind about the product. This finding leads to the conclusion that generic structure reflects the persuasive strategies of promotional discourse.*

Keywords: *promotional discourse, generic structure, move, advertisement*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan strategi persuasi pada wacana promosi, yang mengacu pada jenis teks yang ditulis untuk mempromosikan produk atau jasa kepada konsumen yang potensial. Salah satu tipe wacana promosi ialah iklan cetak, yang bertujuan untuk mempromosikan produk atau jasa melalui media massa. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode deskriptif kualitatif yang mengidentifikasi iklan cetak yang dipublikasikan di *The Jakarta Post*. Untuk mengidentifikasi strategi persuasi, penulis mengamati struktur teks dan juga mengidentifikasi *move* dan fungsinya. Penelitian ini menghasilkan delapan *move* dalam iklan, yaitu: *headline*, membidik target pasar, memberikan pembenaran akan produk atau jasa, memberikan detail penjelasan, membangun kepercayaan, menawarkan insentif, menggunakan teknik penekanan, dan mengumpulkan respons. Kedelapan *move* tersebut menempati empat fungsi, yakni: memperkenalkan produk, mempromosikan produk, mengumumkan penawaran spesial, dan mengingatkan konsumen akan produk atau jasa. Dari temuan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa struktur wacana merefleksikan strategi persuasi wacana promosi

Keywords: wacana promosi, struktur teks, move, iklan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Advertisement functions not merely delivering the information, but also persuading massive consumers to buy or to come with copywriter. Belch and Belch (2007:141) categorized it as a non personal communication since advertisement is not *face to face* communication. Advertisements, especially commercial ads function to introduce and sell the products or services. It leads the copywriter to produce ads in persuasive and interesting way by considering a word composition, word choice, visualization, audio, or a companion of those components.

Generally, advertisement is divided into printed and electronic advertisement. Printed advertisements are published in newspaper, tabloid, or magazine whereas electronic

advertisements published in radio, television, or website. This paper focuses on analysing advertisement published in printed media *The Jakarta Post* which is chosen as the object of the study as it is the largest English newspaper issued in Indonesia.

Printed advertisement is more than just a collection of grammatical units: clauses, phrases, and words. It is made up of those collections in a sequence and in line with its context. The sequence always suits to the function of the text which is resulted in the characteristics, format, and the uniqueness of the text. Printed ad has its own pattern that differs from other texts which determines the type of genre. Recognizing genre is important in discourse analysis to examine the meaning of the text. To reach the function, genre is always staged, goal oriented, and purposeful activity in which speakers engage. In functional linguistics, Eggins (2004:54) stated the generic identity of text lies in three dimensions: the co-occurrence of a contextual cluster or its register configuration, the text's staged or schematic structure, and the realization patterns in the text.

This research addresses generic structure of printed advertisement issued in *The Jakarta Post*. After generic structure is obtained, this paper investigates deeply on the function of each structure and sub structure. Then, the writer discusses the persuasive strategy used in those ads.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Genre Analysis

The study of genre can be divided into three major schools: Australian Systemic School, North American New Rethoric School and English for Specific Purposes School (Luo and Huang, 2015: 201). Swales in Wang (2009: 82) defines genre as a specific type of communicative event which its communicative purposes recognized by its user or discourse community. Looking the text as genre means extending the analysis beyond the textual product to its context. It is aimed at not only understanding the way text is constructed but also the way it is often interpreted, used, and exploited in specific institutional professional contexts to achieve specific disciplinary goals (Bhatia, 2014:23). In sort, genre analysis is the study of situated linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional setting. It refers to the study of language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution. It will be resulted in a stable structural forms by impressing constrains on the use of lexicogrammatical as well as discourse resources.

Moreover, Bhatia explains that genre analysis is typically viewed as textual investigation, yet comprehensive analyses tend to employ a variety of tools, including textual analyses, ethnographic techniques, cognitive procedures, computational analysis and critical awareness dealing with the description in functional variation.

1.2.2. Advertisement

Advertisement is defined as something that is published to the public to announce or sell products or services. Since it does not only concern on giving information, ads must be written in an interesting, original characteristics, and persuasive way that the consumers are urged to act (Jefkins,1995:15). There are seven main categories of advertisement, namely: consumer advertisement, business to business advertisement, trade, retail, financial, direct response, and recruitment advertisement.

Consumer advertisement is divided into consumer goods, durables, services, and social grades. Consumer goods refer to the sales of food, drinks, confectionary, and toiletries. Durables are those with a permanent nature than consumer goods include clothes, furniture,

electronic devices, and mechanical equipment. Whereas consumer services include security service, banking, insurance, investment, entertainment, hotel, travel, and holiday. Those advertisements can be announced through electronic media or printed media. The printed sales including leaflet, booklet, brochure, broadsheet, catalogue, and diary. Bhatia (2014) emphasizes that advertisement is one of the most dynamic and versatile genres which emphasize on innovative and creative use of lexico-grammatical and discourse forms as well as rhetorical strategies.

Since it functions to persuade the potential consumers, many advertisements are skillful, creative, clever, amusing which are more elusive and entertaining than hard selling, as stated by Cook (2001: 2). Moreover, advertisements often seek to lead taste, to make people think in new ways, to mix cultural practices in distinctive ways in the constant struggle for marketing advantage, as stated by Matheson (2005: 35)

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To gain the reliable results, the writer applies descriptive qualitative method by describing 27 printed advertisements issued in *The Jakarta Post*. Those data are the most frequently ads published in *The Jakarta Post*. After collecting the data, the researcher identifies generic structure of each advertisement. This research will particularly answer the following questions: what is the generic structure of printed advertisement published in *The Jakarta Post*? and how the persuasive strategies reflected in the advertisement?

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Generic Structure of Advertisement

To achieve the communicative purpose of advertisement, the copywriter applied typical rhetorical moves. The moves of each advertisement are not always written in a constant order. Copywriters somehow creatively change or innovate the moves to achieve the goals or to target specific audiences. The structures of printed advertisement which is analysed based on Bhatia's theory of promotional discourse (2014), stated that there are 9 moves, namely: headline, targeting the market, justifying product or services, detailing the product or services, establishing credential, celebrity or typical user endorsement, offering incentives, using pressure tactics, and soliciting response. From 27 advertisements, the writer found generic structure of advertisement and the strategies of each move as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. Frequency of moves and strategies in promotional discourse

No	Move	Strategies	Total	Percentage	
1	Headline	a. By giving the name of the product	10	100 %	Obligatory
		b. By Highlighting specialties of the product	17		
2	Targeting the market	a. By defining keywords	4	81 %	Optional
		b. By defining theme of the product	18		
3	Justifying product or services	a. By indicating the importance or need of the product or service	4	62 %	Optional
		b. By establishing a niche	13		
4	Detailing the	a. By identifying the product or service	10	100 %	Obligatory
		b. By describing the product or	3		

	product or services	service			
		c. By indicating the value of the product or service	14		
5	Establishing credential		2	7.4%	Optional
6	Celebrity or typical user endorsement		0	0%	Optional
7	Offering incentives	a. providing preferential policy	0	70 %	Optional
		b. providing additional service	10		
		c. offering discount	9		
8	Using pressure tactics		20	74 %	Optional
9	Soliciting response		27	100 %	Obligatory

One of the ads is *The Harvest Deli*, which utilizes four moves: headline, targeting the market, detailing the product, and soliciting response. This advertisement meets three obligatory moves: headline, detailing the product, and soliciting response. *Headline* is realized by giving the name of the product. Then, *detailing the product* is well illustrated by describing the product. *Soliciting responses* recognized by mentioning the website, address, phone, and social media platform. Another optional move is *targeting the market*, which is applied by defining keywords *office*, to imply that the product suits the office workers after working hours, as displayed in the following figure:

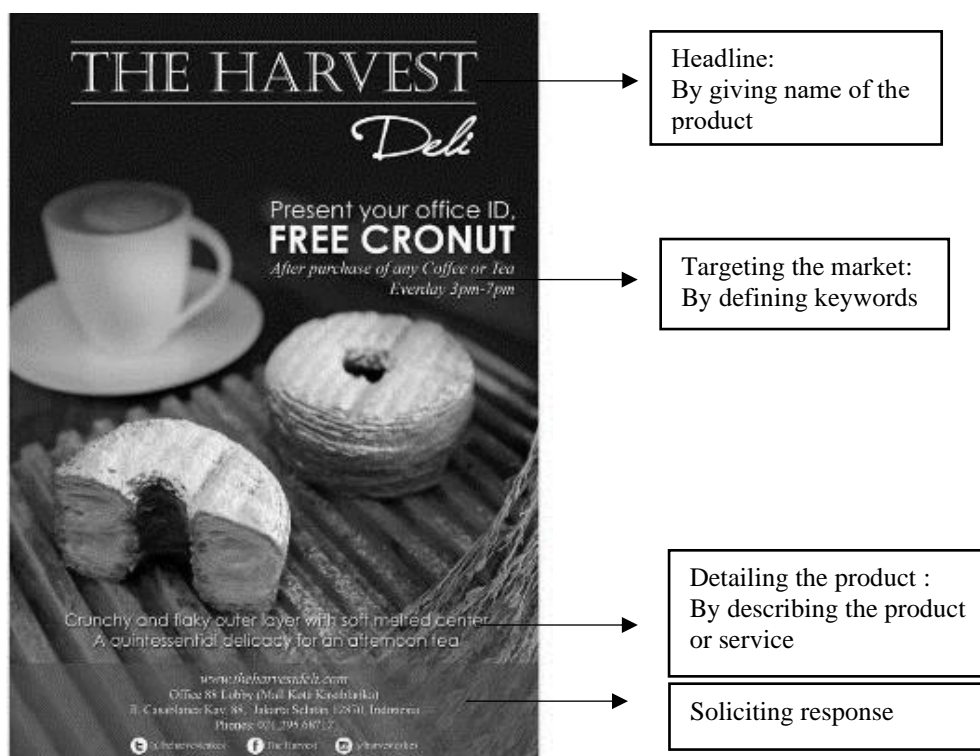
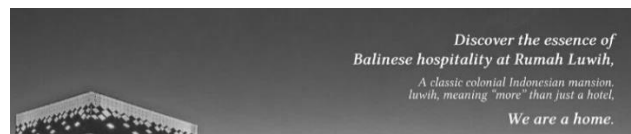


Figure 1. Moves applied in *The Harvest Deli*

To make the explanation clearer, each of 9 moves will be described comprehensively.

1. Headline

Headline is the initial part of advertisement. It is applied by two strategies: giving the name of the product and highlighting specialties of the products. The first strategy emphasizes on informative purpose whereas the second strategy attempts to attract the readers' interest. Headline is the first main part of advertisement which usually printed differently than other parts. The example of headline and its strategies applied in headlines displayed below.

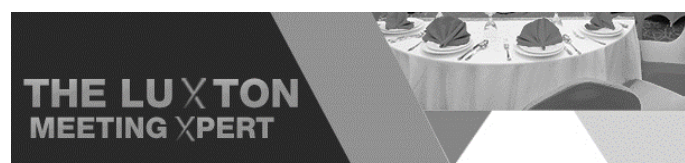


The first strategy applied by highlighting specialties of the product is shown in *Rumah Luwih* advertisement *Discover the Essence of Balinese hospitality*. It is popular that Bali is one of the most attractive tourism destinations in Indonesia. Thus, this hotel highlights Balinese hospitality. By defining its specialties, *Rumah Luwih* can arouse reader's attention to choose it as a place to stay. Meanwhile, the second strategy is realized by giving the name of the product: *Outback Steakhouse* and *Optik Melawai*. This strategy is aimed at introducing the product to the readers.



2. Targeting the market

This move is conducted to attract potential reader by applying two strategies: defining keywords and defining theme of product. Defining keyword is shown in *The Luxton Meeting Expert*. The keywords *meeting* used to attract specific market. The target market of this advertisement is business people, company, or government institution.



The second strategy is by defining theme of product. For illustration, the theme of J.W Marriot is *Culinary Getaway*. This theme is suitable to attract the guests who is interested in culinary. J.W Marriot creates a different statement by introducing the different concept, to stay and to enjoy culinary.

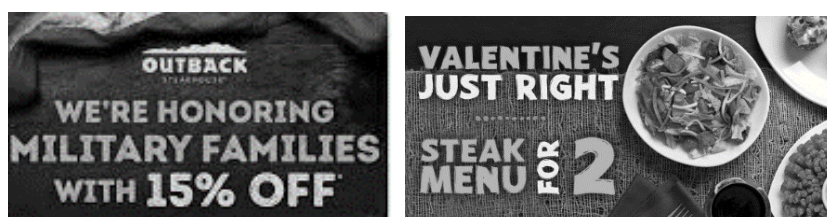


3. *Justifying products or services*

Justifying product or service is applied by two strategies: by indicating the importance or need of the product or service and by establishing a niche. The first strategy is shown in *Hotel Borobudur*. This advertisement emphasizes the importance of professional meeting. By stating *Enhance business with exclusive and professional meeting service*, copywriter hopes the professional worker will choose this hotel for meeting.



The next strategy is by establishing niche. Niche refers to a job, activity, etc that is very suitable for someone. *Outback Steak House* is the best illustration of this strategy. It is shown in *We're honoring Military Families* and *Valentine's Just Right*. The move clearly indicates that *Outback Steak House* is a most suitable place for enjoying food with special persons. Product justification is important to make the product or service distinguished from the competitors.



4. *Detailing the products or services*

This move is aimed at giving description of product or service. Copywriter can explain the products or services in three ways: by identifying the product or service, by describing the product or services, and by indicating the value of the product or service. The first strategy is proposed by *Grand Mirage* ad, explaining the detailed product offered as shown in the excerpt below.



In this strategy, *Grand Mirage* explains its service in a brief explanation which is realized in words and phrases. By applying this strategy, copywriter expects the readers can get the message efficiently. The second strategy is conducted by describing the products or services as shown in *Rumah Luwih* ad. This strategy is different from the first strategy which describes the service in a beautifully arranged sentences, not merely mentioning the services as showed in this move.

Step into a delightful oceanfront elegance designed by the distinguished architect Hadiprana. Rumah Luwih brings a five-star affordable luxury hospitality set amidst lush tropical gardens at one of Bali best beach in Gianyar. It's conveniently situated just 25 minutes north of Sanur and provide free a regular shuttle service to both Sanur and Ubud.

Furthermore, the third strategy is applied by indicating the value of the product or service which used by *Negev* as illustrated below:



The advertisement indicates the value of *Negev* which is committed in providing the place to eat with arts performance. Therefore, the visitors can enjoy the meal and feel the art performance. It provides the perfect venue for dinner as illustrated in body copy *Enjoy a Dazzling Evening of Fine Food, Elegant Champagne Cocktails & the Jazzy Rhythm of Safira Trio*. By reading this, readers can appreciate that the product or service is highly recommended.

5. Establishing credential

This move is needed to build company's credibility. Three strategies can be applied in this move: by referring to the needs of the potential customers, by referring to the long-standing service of the company, or by well-established track record of the company. The strategy found in this research is the third strategy, referring to the well-established track record of the company as stated in *The Luxton* ad by claiming *the Luxton meeting expert*.



It indicates that handling the meeting successfully, providing excitement feeling, warm service, and extensive menus are the expertise offered by *The Luxton*. The similar strategy is portrayed in *Negev*, which proudly stated *Art is a Lifestyle*, indicating that *Negev* is credible in handling such event.

6. Celebrity or typical user endorsement

Luo and Huang (2015:204) define endorsement as a social recognition. It refers to positive comments of authorities or feedbacks from former visitor. This strategy is considered as the most convincing strategy to build reliable image to readers’ mind. Bhatia (2014: 113) categorized this move as the one of the most honoured advertising strategies for a whole range of promotional purposes. This move cannot be found in this advertisement. None of the data apply celebrity or user endorsement to attract readers’ interest

7. Offering incentives

In advertisement, offering incentives is very common strategy. It can be applied by three choices: providing preferential policy, providing additional service, and offering discount or combination of them. The last two strategies are found in this research as will be illustrated in the following table.

Table 2. Offering incentives found in Promotional Discourse

Providing additional service	Offering a discount
 <p>Free fruit basket upon arrival Free wifi in resort area Free shuttle service to Sanur</p>	
<p>Inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of meeting room as per schedule Welcome freshly coffee and potpourri of tea bag prior to the meeting Coffee Break with selected snacks, coffee and tea 1 (one) buffet lunch or/and dinner with menu selectic at meeting room foyer Free exclusive Wi-Fi for maximum 3 (three) users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 (one) LCD projector and screen Free local call <p>Free exclusive Wi-Fi for maximum 3 (three) user Free local call</p>	

Grand Mirage and *Atta Kamaya Resort* are taken as the example of providing additional services. It indicates that staying at those hotels, visitors will not only get a regular service but also the additional services mentioned: free fruit basket upon arrival,

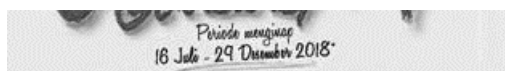
free wifi in resort area, free shuttle service to Sanur, and free local call. Those two examples clearly indicate that advertisements need this move to attract consumers.

Moreover, offering a discount is considered as a main driving force. It is believed as the most effective way to influence the readers to buy because of the cheaper price or rate. It is shown by 12 advertisements. Two of them are *Optik Melawai* and *Air Asia*. To attract readers' attention, *Optik Melawai* offers a discount: *Get voucher 25 % + 15%*. Furthermore, *Air Asia* also applies this strategy to attract readers' attention: *Up to 50% off, Book Early, Save More*.

8. Using pressure tactics

In commercial advertisement, pressure tactics is commonly used to encourage the number of purchasing. Pressure tactic is aimed at leading consumers to buy the products immediately. 20 advertisements apply pressure tactics as a persuasive strategy. It is applied by mentioning exact date and requirement. The example is illustrated in *Grand Mirage* and *J.W Marriot Hotel* ads which mention: *Valid 6-8 March 2019* and *Periode Menginap 16 Juli-29 Desember 2019*. By mentioning an exact date, it drives people to book and stay in a given period which implicitly force people to come.

(Valid from 6th – 8th March 2019 for Domestic and KITAS holder)



9. Soliciting response

To achieve the expectation, advertisement must be completed by soliciting response from intended consumers or visitors. Soliciting response is a very typical characteristic of advertisement. Usually this is written in the last part of printed advertisement. This strategy is an obligatory structure in advertisement and all data utilize this move as the last structure. To obtain a massive response, copywriter put the address, telephone number, email address, and website as illustrated in *The Patra Hotel*:

Jl. Ir. H. Juanda, South Kuta Beach, Kuta 80361, Bali – Indonesia | Ph. +62 361 751 161 | Fax. +62 361 752 030
Email. reservation@patrabali.com | Web. www.patrabali.com

As technology improved, copywriter today also provides social media accounts in advertisement. This attempt conducted by *The Harvest Deli* which not only displaying the address but also social media accounts to ease consumers in reaching the products. It is stated in the following information:



1.1. Persuasive Strategies Gained from the Generic Structure of Promotional Discourse

Jefkins (1994:39,158) proposed several persuasive functions of advertisements which reflected from their structure: to introduce new product, to promote a product, to remind about well-established product, and to announce special offers. Those functions express how copywriter communicates the message of advertisement. Those functions are reflected from the moves of advertisement as drawn in the figure 2:

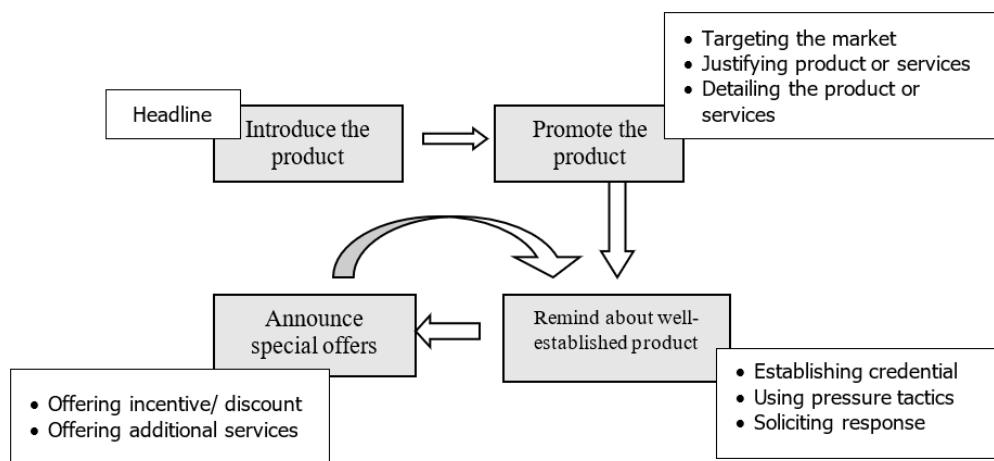


Figure 2. The communicative process of advertisement

Persuasive strategy in ads is started by providing informative function which is described by introducing the product through advertisement headline. Then, it is followed by promoting the product which is conducted by targeting the market, justifying as well as detailing the product or services to provide detail information and illustration. To persuade the consumers, the stage is continued by reminding consumers about the well-established product. More than just giving description and information, this stage is needed to build the image of the product or service. The other persuasive function is built by announcing special offers which can be conducted by offering incentive, additional services, or discount. The last process, to reinforce consumers about buying the product is by reminding it. This stage is needed to repeat in closing stage to remind consumers to buy the product when needed.

4. CONCLUSION

From the data gained and elaborated theories, it is proved that advertisement is well structured based on nine moves. Some of them are obligatory moves and the others are optional. Headline, detailing the product or services, and soliciting response are the obligatory moves that must exist in advertisement for their basic function. Moreover, targeting the market, justifying product or services, establishing credential, celebrity or typical user endorsement, offering incentives, and using pressure tactics are the optional moves. Only one move which is not found in the data: celebrity or typical user endorsement.

Each move brings distinctive function in promotional discourse, those are: introduce the product, promote the product, announce about the product, and remind the product.

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