

## LANGUAGE STYLE OF BEAUTY PRODUCT IN COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT DISPLAYED ON JAPANESE TELEVISION

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### Abstract

This study examines the diction and style of language in commercial advertisements for Nivea beauty products and aims to describe and explore the meanings of the expressions written in the advertisements. Data in the form of phrases, sentences, and images are analyzed using a qualitative descriptive analysis. The results of the study show that the dictions in the Nivea-UV (予防美容ケア) advertisements are all directly related to the vocabulary for beauty care. There are also borrowed words from English to clarify the products offered. The style of language in the advertisement consists of eight hyperboles, two metaphors, and one synecdoche, metonymy, repetition, and onomatopoeia, respectively. The style appears in the form of exaggeration, presenting something clearly, repeating words, emphasizing certain words, showing the same word order, having words that express a relationship, and having words that represent associations or attributes. To refine language, there is politeness in the language forms of *kenjou* and *teinei*. The diction and style of language have their own characteristics, namely firmness and solidity, so that the intentions and meaning of the advertisement can be understood by the target audience.

**Keywords:** semiotics; diction; language style; commercial advertisement; Japanese television

### 1. Introduction

In advertising communication, language is not the only tool; there are also other tools, such as images and colours, among others. Commercial advertisements can be in print media (newspapers, magazines, brochures, and billboards) or electronic media (radio, television, and films) and touch all aspects of our lives. When we watch television, advertisements are bound to be tucked into the shows we watch; when we go out, we often find advertisements along the way in the form of billboards, brochures, posters, and advertisements on transportation equipment. Advertisement refers to any form of non-personal delivery and promotion to direct one's attention to specific commodities or certain services performed by certain companies (Agus, 2012; Danesi, 2017; Fadillah & Sounvada, 2020) or of commercial communication of information about a product that is intended to persuade and convince the public to give it a good reception (Sudiana in Vera N. (2015). Thus, it is a form of mass communication that does not only function as a promotional tool

to offer products but also presents symbolic meaning through language and visualization in advertisement messages.

The use of language and style is an important aspect for the success of advertisement, which must be fully firm, clear, and attractive with the aim of persuading and convincing the audience to be interested in the product being advertised. Language style, besides functioning for aesthetic aspects, is also used to convey the speaker's thoughts (Ratna in Subandi, 2000). Thus, the language in the advertisement or commercials must be interesting and easily understood by all audiences. Previous research on language style in slogans for Japanese food product packaging was conducted by Mustika & Hasanah (2020). There are four types of figurative language in food packaging: hyperbole, personification, parallelism, and preterito. Since the language style in advertisements is interesting, we formulated two research questions: what words and styles of language are used, and how do they affect the delivery of information about Nivea-UV (予防美容ケア) so that Japanese people easily recognize the product and are interested in buying it.

## 2. Literature Review

Semiotics and semiology are two terms that refer to the science that examines the meaning of a sign or symbol. Semiology, as a science, examines the signs of life in society, and semiotics is concerned with signs and marking. Semiotics, in a broad sense, is the study of fundamental human activities, namely creating meaning. Signs include all styles or types of verbal, non-verbal, and natural elements that carry meaning (Lechte, 2001; Sobur, 2017). The sign structure is described as: Signifier + Signified = Sign. The signified relates to the meaning of content in Nivea-UV cosmetic product commercials, and the signifier refers to the content of Nivea-UV. Figure 1 is a sign portraying a Japanese woman wearing a kimono and holding a fan, which can be interpreted to mean that she is beautiful, has white and clean skin.



Figure 1. A Japanese woman wearing kimono and holding fans

Text might refer to all forms of language, not just words printed on sheets of paper, but all kinds of communication expressions, including speech, music, pictures, sound effects, and images, among others. Halliday & Hasan (1985) argue that language has three functions in human life: ideational (describing and explaining), interpersonal (exchanging), and textual functions (framing experiences). Text is related to the signs that form it, and a sign is an inseparable unit between the signified and the signifier. Text can convey the meaning of exposure, exchange, and organizing (Saussure in Saragih, 2011) and make signs and signifiers if it is associated with objects and interpretations in accordance with the agreement of the language system in a society. Text is also a texture, providing the ability to be noticed socially as a whole and having meaning (Piliang, 2003; Sinar, T. S., 2010).

Words are arranged in linguistic norms to form a sentence and are used in communication, referring to a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour (Webster in Chaer & Agustina, 2010). "Communication is the process of exchanging information between individuals through a system of symbols, signs or behaviour." In every communication process, there must be participants, or senders and receivers of communication, information to be communicated, and tools used in communication. The sender of the message tries to make his or her recipient (receiver) understand the message being conveyed. The process of obtaining information by displaying advertisements; uses tools that can be in the form of language, images, and others. The choice of the right words to convey information or ideas to potential consumers is done so that certain effects are obtained.

In the case of linguistic politeness, Japanese politeness uses the *keigo* language variety to express respect, elevates the degree, and is polite to the interlocutor used by the speaker (Matsumoto, 2000). Sanada (1993) divides *keigo* into three types, namely, *sonkei go*, *kenjou go*, and *teinei go*. The *sonkei go* is used to talk about a third person who has a higher social position, the *kenjou go* is uttered by speakers to humble themselves, and the *teinei go* is a way of speaking to respect and appreciate the feelings between the speaker and the interlocutor. Basically, *keigo* is used to soften the language used by speakers to respect the interlocutor.

Language style, or figure of speech, becomes part of the diction or word choice of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to express thoughts through language in a special way. According to Morita (2000) in (Nurhadi, 2010), the style of language or *hiyu* ( 比喻 ) in Japanese means "hiyu wa, sono taishoo no tokuchoo ya jookyoo wo, imi no chigau hoka no go wo motte rensoo ya ruisui saseru hyoogenhoo de aru" (figurative is a form of expression whose meaning is derived from an analogy or thought by using other words with different meanings to indicate certain characters or circumstances). Yamanashi (1998) explains that figurative language is interpreted as a form of expression that does not refer to lexical meanings but instead refers to presuppositional meanings in the form of comparisons. Dale et al. (in Tarigan, 1985), and Kridalaksana (2001) explain that figurative language is a beautiful language metaphor used to elevate and enhance effects by comparing an object or certain thing with another object or stuff so that it can change and create a sense of value or a certain connotation, as well as the utilization of the wealth of language in speaking or writing, the use of certain varieties to obtain certain effects, and the characteristics of the language of literary writers.

In short, style of language compares one thing with another so that the visualization is clear in the form of rhetoric in a distinctive language to get a certain impression and attention and to make advertisement more attractive. Language in advertisements must be understood to convince, influence, and increase the appetite of message recipients or potential consumers who are interested in the products offered.

There are two types of language styles, namely, comparison of language styles and repetitive language styles.

### **1. Comparisons of Language Styles**

Comparisons of language styles are divided into simile, metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, personification, and synecdoche. A simile is a comparison of two things that are essentially different but are considered the same and is explicitly explained by using words such as *like*, *as*, and the like (Tarigan: 1985). Nakamura (1985) and Tjandra (2016) explain

that simile in Japanese is called *chokuyu* (直喩) which means to compare something clearly with something else by using the post-verb or adverbial words that contain comparative meanings such as the words *yooda*, *mitaida*, and so on (see example 1).

(1) りんごのようなほっぺた 'cheeks like apple' (as sweet as honey)

Metaphor is an expression that tries to relate one concept to another where there is a correlation and similarity between the two, or the use of other expressions for objects or other concepts based on figures of speech or similarities (Lakoff, 1987; Kridalaksana, 2001). Metaphor in Japanese is called *inyu* (隠喩) which is a figure of speech that looks clearly and directly at the object being liked (Nakamura, 1985; Matsuura, 1994). This language style can be said to be an implicit comparison since it uses words that do not have the true meaning (see example 2).

(2) 時間は金なり 'time is money' (the library is a storehouse of knowledge)

Hyperbole in Japanese is called *chooyu* (張喩) relating to a figure of speech that expresses exaggeration or exaggerated thoughts or facts (Nakamura, 1985). Ducrt & Todorof (1979) (in Tarigan, 1985) explain that hyperbole is a rhetorical expression that exaggerates something, number, nature, or size with the intention of emphasizing, increasing the impression, or elevating something that is expressed. This style of language is used to give a deep impression of what is being said (consider example 3).

(3) 汗が滝のように流れている。 'Sweats flow like waterfall' (I say a thousand thanks)

Metonymy comes from the Greek, where meta means 'exchange' and onym means 'name'. Metonymia is a figure of speech that uses a characteristic name linked to a person, object, or thing as a substitute (Moeliono: 1984). In line with the opinion of Nakamura (1985), metonymy (*kanyu* 換喩) is an expression or word used to express something with a word that is close to the thing intended and has a connection to it. The use of names for other objects that are associated with them or that become their attributes is called metonymy.

(4) テブルをかたずける。 'cleaning the table' (the glasses or person)

Personification in Japanese is called *katsuyu* (活喩) or *gijinhoo* (擬人法). The style of language treats inanimate objects as objects that have souls and can move and express themselves like humans (Seto, 2002). Kridalaksana (2001) stated that personification is a simile of inanimate objects with human-like characteristics. This style of language also treats inanimate objects like humans or depictions of something inanimate, as if it were alive (see example 5).

(5) 花笑い、鳥歌う 'flower laughing, bird singing' (leaves waving)

Synecdoche states the overall or partly based relationship of varieties and types and already represents the things mentioned (Tarigan: 2009). Nakamura (1985) stated that synecdoche, or *teiyu* (提喩) in Japanese, is a figurative language that symbolizes or expresses a relationship in part or in whole. The style mentions the name of the part instead of the name of the whole (consider example 6).

(6) 花 'flower' is an expression of sakura 'flower name' (every year more and more mouths have to be fed)

## 2. Repetitive Language Style

Two kinds of repetitive language styles are repetition and onomatopoeia. Repetition is a style of language that contains repetition of the same word or group of words (Ducrot & Todorov 1981 in Tarigan 1985). Nakamura (1985) emphasized that repetition (反復法) is a figurative language that repeats the same or similar words, phrases, or clauses more than twice as an affirmation or emphasis. Thus, the meaning of repetition is the same (consider example 7). Onomatopoeia (声喩) is a figurative language that describes a condition or a situation with sound imitation (Nakamura, 1985). Onomatopoeia includes *fukushi joutai* (adverbial circumstances), including *gisei go*, a language that is an imitation of animal sounds; *gitai go*, a language that is an expression of feelings when seeing objects; and *gion go*, an imitation of sounds produced by natural sounds (see example 8).

(7) 足臭い、足臭い。。。臭い強烈 '(the person) feet smelly, (the person) feet smelly, very smelly' (We have to work, work and work to reach our goals)

(8) 猫はワンワン鳴く 'cat meow' (gisei go)  
石がブーク落ちた 'buuk, falling rock' (gitai go)  
雨がパラパラ降る 'it rains, para-para' (gion go)

## 3. Research Method

Nivea cosmetic products consist of lipstick, body wash, and others, but this paper discusses one of Nivea's cosmetic products, namely Nivea-UV (予防美容ケア 'youbouiyoukea'). The commercial advertisement was downloaded from the links: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=stCQEyya4k> and <https://www.nivea.co.jp/highlights/deep-protect-and-care> showing various Nivea products appearing on Japanese television. Nivea-UV was chosen because this product has long been known by Indonesians and Japanese. The advertisements were selected with the aim of further examining the style of language. This research was qualitative, with analytical descriptive reasoning adapted from Moleong (1991) and Sugiyono (2013). The technique in the data analysis followed the stages of data reduction or summarizing, presenting data, and finally drawing conclusions. The results of data processing were presented in words, but not in numbers or simple calculations (Moleong: 1991). Bogdan & Taylor (1975) argued that qualitative research is the one that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral data from the object studied.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis on Nivea-UV products (予防美容ケア "youbouiyoukea") in Japanese television, there is a choice of words (diction) aimed to describe the advertised product and is directly related to cosmetics, namely "防ぐ *fusegu* 'to prevent', そばかす *sobakasu* 'dark spots', 日焼け *hiyake* 'sunburn', 肌 *hada* 'skin', 顔 *kao* 'face', and 体 *karada* 'body'. Also, the use of *gairaigo* (foreign words) is aimed at clarifying the products offered, for example: ニベア *nivea*, デーププロテクト&ケア *deep protect care*, ブロック *block*, カット *cut* する, スーパーウォータープルーフ *super waterproof*, リッチなジェル *rich gel*, エッセンス *essence*, クリアプロローラル *clear prolal*.

The purpose of using *gairaigo* in this advertisement is to show that Nivea-UV comes from outside Japan, namely, originally from Germany, so that consumers are interested in buying them. The polite language used in the Nivea-UV advertisement is a form of *kenjo go* 謙讓語 and *teinei go* 丁寧語 with the aim of softening the language and attracting the audience's attention. Consider forms of *kenjou go* and *teinei go* in examples (9)–(13):

(9) このような方に、ぜひお使いいただきたい日焼け止めです。

Kono youna hou ni, zehi otsukai itadakitai hiyake tome desu. (kenjou go)

'This is a sunscreen that you should definitely use for this useful method'.

(10) 海、プール、スポーツ、レジャー。強い日差しの外出時におすすめです。

Umi.puuru.supootsu.rejaa. tsuyoi hisashino gaishutsutokini osusume desu. (kenjou go)

'Ocean. Pool. Spo Otsu. Leja Ah. She is recommended when going out for a strong Kyu'.

(11) お近くのドラッグストアやホームセンターなどでお買い求めいただけます。

Ochikaku no doraggu sutoa ya houmu sentaa nado de okai motomete itadakemasu.

(kenjou go)

'You can purchase it at your local drug store or legal outlet'.

(12) そばかすを防ぎながら、肌にうるおいを与えます。

Sobakasuwo fuseginagara, hadani uruoiwo ataemasu. (teinei go)

'Moisturizes the skin while preventing freckles'.

(13) 時間が経っても触れるたび、美容ケアしたようなうるおいを感じます。

Jikan ga hettemo sawarerutabi, biyou kea shita youna uruoiwo kanjimasu. (teinei go)

'Even if it takes less time, you can still feel the moisture of beauty care'.

Table 1 shows fourteen samples of expressional types on the basis of language styles for Nivea-UV (予防美容ケア 'yoboubiyoukea') advertisements that can be seen from Japanese television.

Language Style	Data Amount
Hyperbole 張喩	8
Metaphor 隱喩	2
Synecdoche 提喩	1
Metonymy 換喩	1
Repetition 反復法	1
Onomatopoeia 声喩	1

Table 1. Language styles with their number of expressional types

#### 4.1 Hyperbolic Style (張喩)

Eight examples of hyperbolic styles can be learned from examples (14)–(21) below.

(14) 日焼けによるシミ予防\*UV,このような方にぜひお使いいただきたい日焼け止めです。

'UV\* can prevent black spots caused by sunburn, this sunscreen is a must for people with sunburn.'

- (15) 日焼け止めには、うるおいなど美容効果も期待したい。  
'For sunburn protection, this sunscreen will provide moisture, beauty and more effects.'
- (16) SPF 50+で使用感がよく毎日心地よい日焼け止めを選びたい。  
'Choose a sunscreen with SPF50+; it feels good and comfortable for use every day.'
- (17) 強力紫外線をしっかりブロック。  
'Very strong protection against harsh UV rays.'
- (18) さわって驚く密着感とうるおい感のある使い心地  
'So shocking to the touch, moisturizing and very comfortable for the use.'
- (19) リッチなジェルがするするとろけて、手肌に吸い付き、ぴたつと密着して軽くなる。  
'A rich gel that is easily absorbed, making it very soft when applied by hands.'
- (20) 時間が経っても、触れるたび、美容ケアしたようなうるおいを感じます。  
'Even for a long time, every time I touch it, I can feel the moisture is like after beauty treatment.'
- (21) 全身にたっぷり使えるジェル。  
'Amazing gel that can be used all over the body.'

The styles of language in (14)-(21) exaggerate the cosmetic quality of Nivea-UV products, thus giving the television audience the impression that Nivea-UV products are good to use, so that consumers are interested in owning Nivea-UV cosmetics.

#### 4.2 Metaphoric Style (隠喩)

Metaphorical language style (隠喩) looks like something clear and direct about the object or thing being liked. Actors in cosmetic advertisements for Nivea-UV products use this language to beautify strings of words, show the quality of Nivea-UV products, and attract the audience's interest in buying Nivea-UV products. Pay attention to two examples of metaphoric style in (22)–(23).

- (22) 紫外線を浴びて、肌にシミができそうで心配。  
'Worried about getting dark spots on the skin due to exposure to sunlight?'
- (23) 強力紫外線をカットします。  
'Withstand strong sun exposure'

After instantaneous interpretation, the clauses 紫外線を浴びて means 'shower in the sun' and 紫外線をカットします denotes 'cut off the sun'. The lexical meaning of 浴びて conveys 'to bathe' and カットします designates 'to cut'. So, the clauses in the examples

explain that an abstract object is equated with something concrete. The 紫外線 implies 'sunshine' in the clause 紫外線を浴びて giving representation to the object 水 'water', and the 紫外線 connotes 'sunshine' in the clause 紫外線をカットします which represents the objects like 木 'tree', ケーキ 'cake', etc.

#### 4.3 Synecdochic Style (提喩)

(24) シミ予防-UV

'prevention of UV stains'

Synecdoche-style language expresses the relationship between some of the parts and the whole. The actors in this advertisement use a synecdoche style to show cosmetic products from Nivea-UV, which has several products, including シミ予防-UV (see example 24). So, consumers can have several other products.

#### 4.4 Metonymic Style (換喩)

(25) ニベア UV, 化粧下地に使える。

'Nivea-UV can be used for the foundation of makeup (like a primary makeup)'

The actors in this advertisement use Nivea-UV, which is an association or attribute of Nivea-UV 予防美容ケア products (consider example 25). The clause 化粧下地に使える denoting 'can be used as foundation of makeup (primary makeup)' shows the audience that, if they use Nivea-UV 予防美容ケア, they will no longer need to use foundation, so this product is very good to use, because of its multiple functions.

#### 4.5 Repetitious Style (反復法)

(26) 日焼けによるシミ予防。日焼けによるシミ。そばかすを防ぐ。肌にシミができて  
そうで心配。

'Spot prevention of sunburn, prevent sunburn stains. Prevent spots/dark spots.  
Worry about stains on the skin.'

Because of the repetition of words, the clauses are considered important to pressure so that the audience can clearly receive information about the product being offered. In this advertisement, there is a repetition of the clause 日焼けによるシミ and the repetition of the word シミ which are the hallmarks of Nivea-UV cosmetic products.

#### 4.6 Onomatopoeic Style (声喩)

(27) リッチなジェルがするするとして、肌に吸い付き

'A gel that is luxurious comes out easily and absorbs easily on the skin'

Such a language style describes a condition or situation with sound or sound imitation. The actor in this advertisement uses this style of language to express his feelings that he really likes this Nivea-UV 予防美容ケア product because the gel is luxurious, easily absorbed into the skin, and comes out effortlessly.



## 5. Conclusion

The dictions used in the cosmetic advertisements for Nivea-UV 予防美容ケア are all directly related to beauty care. There are also borrowed words from English to clarify the products. The style of language in the Nivea-UV 予防美容ケア to eight hyperboles, two metaphors, one synecdoche, metonymy, repetition, and onomatopoeia, respectively. This style of language appears in the form of exaggeration, likening something clearly, repeating words, emphasizing certain words, having the same word order, consisting of words that express a relationship, and possessing words that represent associations or attributes. In terms of language refinement, there are polite forms of *kenjou* and *teinei*. The advertisement communication, the diction, and the style of language show their own characteristics, namely, firmness and solidity, so that the intent and meaning of the advertising language can be understood by the target audience.

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