View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Central University Of Technology Free State -...

GRAPHOLOGY IN PRINT ADVERTISING: ICONIC FUNCTIONS

A VAN NIEKERK AND A JENKINSON

ABSTRACT

Typography and layout are two powerful graphic tools in print advertising. They are used to arrest the attention of the target market by creating a positive association, a controversy or stimulate some kind of intellectual game. This means that much of the message has already been conveyed by creatively expanding and diversifying the conventional values embedded in certain graphic means and basing the advertisements on prevailing textual norms and our past experiences before the message itself has even been read, by just focusing on the typography used (e.g. compare the text layout and typography of a newspaper or a cell phone SMS). Based on a randomly selected South African dataset, aspects of the graphological options with their functional values will be described.

Keywords: layout, font, graphology, print advertising, icons

1. INTRODUCTION

The word advertise comes from the Latin word, advertere, which means to turn towards. This is exactly the function of advertising and specifically the trend towards a more visual approach. The options and strategies, in terms of layout and typography, may be seen as the para-language of the visuals (Goddard, 1998: 22). However, it has been observed that "[…] the scholarly discussion of the impact of typography […] what many call the 'personality' of type, is still in its infancy" (Brumberger, 2003: 206).

In line with his view that "The literature on advertising images fails to encompass the rhetorical richness so characteristic of this form", Scott (1994: 252) advocates the development of a theory of visual rhetoric that moves away from the idea that pictures are symbolic artefacts constructed from the conventions of a particular culture. This implies the use of shared knowledge, different languages and conventions. Moreover, in terms of the view of pictures as symbols, visuals communicate by means of convention and not by resemblance to nature (Scott, 1994: 253).

Typography and layout are two powerful graphic tools which may be exploited to catch the eye of the potential buyers. When these visual images are used as a technique of persuasion, they become a form of visual rhetoric.

[1] Graphology: This term is used by linguists to refer to the writing system of a language. Graphological analysis is concerned with the minimal contrastive units of visual language (Crystal, 2003: 211).

The utilization of visual rhetoric to create a positive association, a gleam of humour, an element of surprise, or even an intellectual game of controversy, facilitates conceptual rhetoric and enhances the attractiveness of the advertising text. By creatively employing the conventional values embedded in certain graphic means (that are based on our collective internalized experience), it is possible to convey part of the message before the advertisement has even been read (e.g. compare the layout and typography of a newspaper with those of the SMS text of a cell phone).

This can be achieved by superimposing typographical imitations of these text types upon the conventional orthography of the text in order to mimic the real item. By means of this multiple-level layering of typography, layout, ideography and orthography (analogous to linguistic "double articulation"), these advertisements possess a complex semiotic composition and they are semantically more transparent than an ordinary written or printed text. In terms of communication model dynamics, such multiple-layered semiotic compositions are texts which have a degree of functional redundancy encoded to overcome the "noise" in the medium or channel; the noise or distortion in the media being the competing advertisements in the newspapers, magazines or other publications. The functional redundancy in the multi-layered text enables it to stand out above the competition - and hence be noticed. The conventional mode (the orthography) and the semantically driven modes of textual signification (graphological iconicity) create a synergistic textual composition, a kind of visual rhetoric (or conceptual rhetoric) which facilitates the semantic decoding of the intended message of the advertisement.

The perceived appropriateness of assigned meaning to font is based on the connotative meaning of font per se, and is independent of the type of product described that has been based on recent research in consumer psychology (Doyle & Bottomley, 2006: 112).

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives are:

- to give an overview of the graphological options used in print advertisements; and
- to describe the symbolic meaning of these language-related visual signs within print advertising.

The secondary objectives are:

- to give a broad background on the principles of layout and typography in advertising design as background to the primary objectives; and
- to justify the growing tendency towards a visual focus and list the options in a visual focus in print advertising.

3. DATASET AND ANALYSIS

An empirical study was done based on a randomly selected sample of print advertisements gathered from magazines that have been in general circulation since 1996. These were initially used in several different applied linguistic courses. Although the advertisements were initially gathered to study other aspects of advertising communication (such as intertextuality, mythology, brand names, the use of controversy, etc.), a pattern of iconic resemblance in terms of layout and type was soon discovered and confirmed after reading research done by Fischer (1999).

The primary dataset on graphological iconicity was selected from the initial dataset by means of the above-mentioned research by Fischer (1999), which to an extent served as a blueprint for identifying graphological iconicity in South African data. Fischer's (1999) research focuses primarily on the appeal of the spelling and writing conventions including font, type, space, etc. In our research we argue for an expansion of the domain of graphological iconicity (see diagram 1), not only to appeal to linguistic knowledge but also to appeal to textual knowledge and extra-linguistic knowledge. Different types of graphological iconicity were identified by Fischer (European examples until 1998); and South African advertisements employing the same types of graphological iconicity have been identified and analysed in this article. In classifying the South African examples of graphological iconicity, it was necessary to expand on the domain and classification of Fischer (1999).

The secondary dataset includes examples of advertisements with a visual approach in order to explain the reasons for a visual focus and the use of graphics as an attention-getting device. The Rapport advertisement showing a rugby ball in the form of a human skull is an example of an advertisement making use of a visual focus.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Recent research indicates that personality judgments are based on the typeface used and the appropriateness of aspects such as the type and font based on the genre, context and purpose of the advertisement (Shaikh, Chaparro & Fox, 2006).

Irrespective of the opposing perspectives regarding the relationship between written and spoken language through the history of language, modern communication provides for two very different systems with unique characteristics that influence one another (Crystal, 1995:178-179). The attempt to display the sound of spoken language in very early literature can be seen as the basis of the graphological options used in modern print advertising. These graphic conventions are language specific: for instance emphatic speech is usually printed in heavy typeface in Chinese fiction but not in English.

The graphic effects widely used are the alteration of the punctuation system, altered spelling to represent accent, etc., with a variation in the use of capital letters conveying loudness, etc., a variation in type size and spacing, the repetition of letters and hyphens to show extra spoken emphasis, etc., the use of italics to convey tone, etc. (Crystal, 1995: 180-181).

Crystal (1995: 182-184) distinguishes between pure linear, interrupted linear, lists, matrices, linear branching, non-linear viewing and graphic symbolism. The latter is very relevant for this research because it surpasses the linguistic and textual domains when it is used to represent the extra-linguistic world in an iconic manner (Crystal, 1995: 184). Crystal (2003: 224) defines an icon as "A suggested defining property of some semiotic systems, but not language, to refer to signals whose physical form closely corresponds to characteristics of the situations to which they refer." This semantically driven - and thus decodable - physical form (concept signification) correlates with Fischer's (2006: 6) definition which states that an icon is an image that reflects something from the real world.

These graphic representations are still widely used in modern communication and print advertising and also include the use of animated letters to help children learn to read. Distinctive typographical designs can be used to reinforce the relevant message in context by means of some form of "double articulation", for instance a danger sign near a construction site where the -e in DANGER falls out of place.

According to Crystal's (1995: 194) definition, "Graphology, in its linguistic sense, is the study of the systems of symbols that have been devised to communicate language in written form". In addition, a functional and formal dimension can be identified. The former includes writing systems such as orthography, stenography, cryptography, paedography and technography. The focus of this article is on the formal dimensions within print advertising language while keeping the communicative goal in mind.

5. RHETORIC

Rhetoric is defined as "the study of how effective writing achieves its goals […] which typically focuses on how to express one correctly and effectively in relation to the topic of writing or speech, the audience and the purpose of communication. […] Cicero, the ancient Roman orator and writer, described rhetoric as 'the art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end'" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1999: 316).

In line with this, the rhetorical approach has become popular in recent years to explain how visual aspects of advertising are understood. It is widely accepted that the target market comprehends these messages by drawing on their cultural knowledge of features such as symbols, contextual clichés, etc. (Phillips, 1997: 78; Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

The linguistic segment of this article focuses primarily on the visual aspects of type, font and layout, which are collectively referred to as graphological iconicity (Phillips, 1997: 77).

Phillips refers to other authors, such as McQuarrie and Mick (1996) and Scott (1994), when explaining the value of such an approach that focuses on any expression that systematically deviates from the convention an aspect that is also stressed by Fischer (1999) - from conceptual to visual rhetoric.

An article by Van Niekerk and Möller (2006: 164) describes the unique character of the genre of advertising messages as one that has its own conventions. When studying graphological iconicity (thus focusing on font, type and layout as part of the marketing message), the emphasis is on the so-called visual "attractiveness" to be effective.

6. SEMIOTICS

The research on semiotics by Umberto Eco, in his Theory of Semiotics (1976), is regarded as being seminal to the world of codes and signification. Crystal (2003:412) defines semiotics as "the scientific study of the properties of signalling systems whether natural or artificial".

Knowledge of semiotics and reference to the topic are relevant because knowledge of the different modes of existence, different signifiers and the different ways of calling up a certain context make it possible to identify the visual or graphological icons used to create a context or specific message. A Shell Helix advertisement uses the Braille (The headline only looks like Braille, but it is not Braille.) typography to attract attention This device makes sense in terms of the marketing message that implies that even in Braille (to blind people), which is not something smooth to touch the uniqueness of Shell Helix lies in its smoothness.

The (specific visual character of the) layout, type and font (graphological icons) may function as symbols of something else. A distinction may be made between the signifiers (the physical form) and the signified (the intended meaning). This study of signs is part of the academic field termed semiotics.

According to Jordan (1996: 66), semiotics draws parallels between music, (legal) language, theology, architecture, advertisements, visual art, etc. Eco (1976: 7) describes it as follows: "Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything that can be taken as significantly substituting for something else". The graphological icons are instrumental in creating a world of make believe. For instance, it is possible to portray the advert as if it is a newspaper article or a post-it memo note, although it is in fact an advertisement.

In terms of the semiotic model, the differences between symbols, icons and indexes are formulated by several authors, such as De Saussure (1966) and Barthes (1977). Myers (1994: 137-139) gives powerful concrete examples of what is meant by a symbol, an icon and an index in advertising. The relationship or resemblance found between a picture of a can of Coke and a real can of Coke is called an iconic relationship. A relationship where the signifier results from or is associated with the signified (such as in tyre tracks that signify a car; or water droplets on a can of Coke to signify cold) is called indexical. A relationship based on an arbitrary (language) convention such as the letters THIRSTY beneath a can of Coke or the use of a butterfly to indicate the freshness of perfume, is called a symbolic relationship.

This selection and combination of icons to convey a certain message is known as iconicity. De Saussure's first principle of the nature of the language sign states: “The linguistic sign is arbitrary” (1916: 67). This arbitrary principle used to be the dogma of formal linguistics but, according to Nöth (2001: 17) and Fischer (2006: 1), recent studies indicate a new iconic paradigm: “More and more iconic features are being discovered in language and literature at the levels of phonology, morphology, word formation, syntax, the text, and the domain of language change” (Nöth, 2001: 17). This iconic paradigm can be traced back to the use of pictograms as early as 3000 BC. Some of the early writing and communicating systems (pictograms and ideograms) are more visual, as is the case when educating illiterates or young children today. This means that the signs used are semantically inspired and transparent. Modern language and literate people are able to communicate on a more abstract level that consists of a more complicated conventional system of language (words alone). In the modern visual era there seems to be a tendency to move away from language as an arbitrary complementary system because the writing system in advertising language tends to be more iconic than previously. This is very evident when comparing the design of school text books (to include newspaper articles, advertisements, postcards, etc.) with books from twenty and more years ago.

The focus is on the way written language can be used in an iconic or mirror-like manner. In contrast to signs icons are not arbitrary or conventional but relatively natural, transparent and motivated.

7. GRAPHOLOGY: SEMIOTIC OPTIONS WITHIN THE VISUAL RHETORIC

Advertisements often function as self-reflective artefacts in the sense that their “very physical substance imitates or enacts the meaning that it represents” (Fischer, 2006: 5). The textual iconic simulation and the conventional writing reinforce and replicate the message.

The semantic associations and connotations attributed to type go beyond the content of the text and may even change the meaning of the message and the brand (McCarthy & Mothersbaugh, 2002: 666-668).

Iconicity (as a semiotic notion) refers to a natural resemblance or analogy between the form of a sign (signifier) and the object or concept (signified) it refers to in the world - or rather, in our perceptions of the world (http://home.hum.uva.nl/iconicity/). The chosen graphic options indicate the context: in other words, whether the message should be interpreted as, for example, a cell phone message, a newspaper billboard, a love letter, a magazine questionnaire, etc. By creating an intertextual context, meaning is facilitated. One of the basic copy-writing principles, "less is more", may be achieved by choosing specific graphic design options to say more, but without using more (pictures or words).

A specific text type, the simulation of the real "hard copy" text echoes specific messages. A "copy cat" duplicate of a specific text type is needed. "Iconic words or structures are attempts to represent the way in which we perceive the world more concretely; they aim to give a text more palpability" (Fischer, 2006: 1).

The term graphology indicates that this form of linguistic iconicity uses font, type and layout as means with which to deviate from the conventional Roman system (Fischer, 1999: 251). Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that not all deviations from the writing convention inherit iconic potential. Any deviations should be semantically transparent or prompted - in other words, form should mimic meaning.

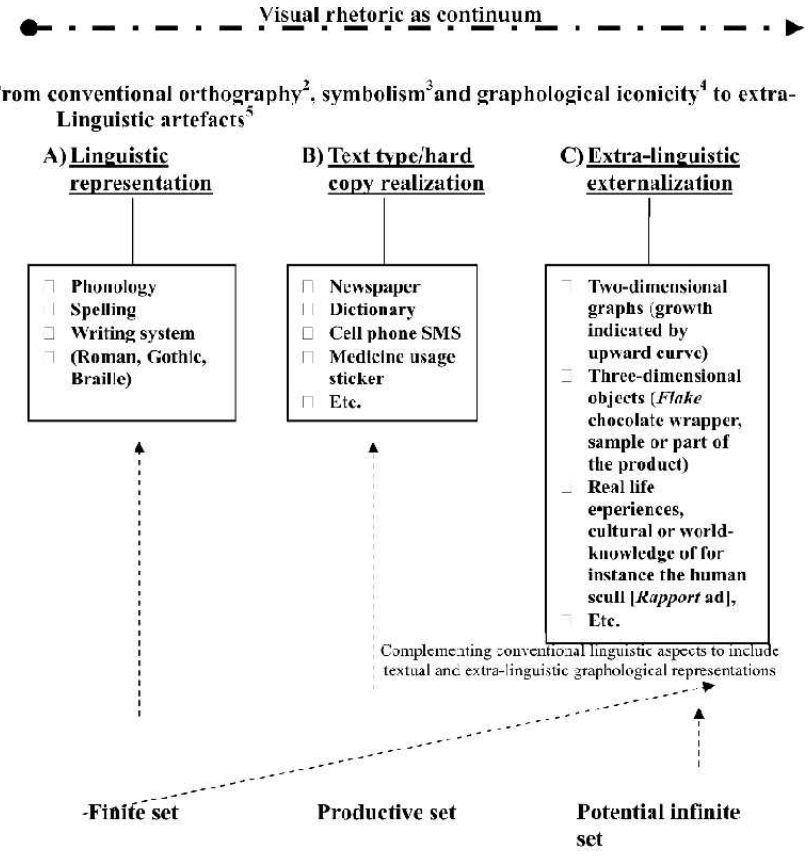
Graphic contrasts (such as the use of italics, boldface or colour) are ways of conveying the relative importance of parts of a message. The use of Gothic type in contrast to Roman type may signal connotations such as classical, antique, or old fashioned, although different languages have different possibilities. For example, all nouns in German start with a capital letter but capitalization has no use (hence no value) in Hebrew (Crystal, 1995: 204).

The history of the non-phonological system of writing can be traced back to the study of pictograms, a writing system dating from 3000 BC. Ideograms (a later development of pictograms) have an abstract and conventional meaning with a less clear link to the extra-linguistic world. The symbols represent words or sounds such as in early Egyptian scripts (Crystal, 1995: 196-198).

Modern-day signs - such as "no dogs allowed" or "do not iron" - represent a mix of pictograms and ideograms and are very often found in print advertising communication. Examples of this are discussed in the following four categories: typed based visuals, visuals mirroring text, pictures as letters and letters as pictures.

Diagram 1:
An overview of graphological iconicity in print advertising communication

When the examples are analysed and classified, it seems that graphological iconicity always appeals to either our linguistic knowledge (e.g. how a word sounds or how a word is spelled), our knowledge of different text types, "hard copies" of visual intertextuality (e.g. the format of the Bible versus the format of a telephone directory), or the extra-linguistic knowledge or background knowledge of the target audience. These multiple levels of articulation (A, B and C in the diagram) enhance the semantic interpretation of the text. Thus, visual rhetoric facilitates the conceptual rhetoric (comprehension of the text). An indication of the type of appeal will be given when discussing the different examples.



[2] Linguistic signs
[3] Children street crossing sign
[4] SMS text format
[5] Chocolate wrapper as advertisement

8. CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC IN SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION IN ADVERTISING

The excessive use of graphological iconicity may be ascribed to the externalization of linguistic and textual elements which often have intertextuality in mind.

According to Myers (1994:4), a copy-writer and author of the copy-writing textbook, Words in Ads, the concept of intertextuality can be described as the way in which linguistic features of one text are interpreted in relation to those in other texts. since “all ads, even those making no explicit allusions, carry associations from other texts, ads, movies, novels, everyday talk.”

Intertextuality is the way in which one text echoes or refers to another text, according to Goddard (1998: 124). Thus it can be said that besides creatively experimenting with the modern writing conventions (font, type, size, spacing and combination of letters), the textual type as a holistic entity is sometimes chosen in an intertextual way in which to appeal to our conventional knowledge of what the look and feel of the texts that have been referred to (as “hard copies”) are like. This visual intertextuality is a specific example of graphological iconicity and, as such, contributes to visual rhetoric. These dimensions of the text structure all contribute significantly to the comprehensibility, intellectual appeal, authenticity, acceptability and attractiveness of the text with the purpose of maximizing the conceptual rhetoric. There may be several reasons for activating the target market's knowledge of the writing conventions and textual types.

- Visual intertextuality as basis for graphological iconicity

As stated in the section describing the domains of graphological iconicity, very often the device used to arrest the consumer's attention is a function of the appeal to our knowledge of certain textual types. An appeal is often made to our knowledge of the look and feel of specific text types: for instance, a medical prescription note (Engen advertisement), newspaper (Rapport), a handmade gift card by a preschooler (Tipp-Ex), the handwriting on a memo note (Flake), a photo-story magazine (Pendoring). The examples are included in the addendum or are electronically available from the authors.

- Intellectual appeal

The most obvious reason is that the product or service being advertised is inherently linked to the layout: for instance, when the layout of a newspaper advertisement resembles the conventional look and feel of newspaper advertising posters (Rapport); or when the layout of a magazine advertisement resembles the layout found on an Internet website in order to indicate in this way that the magazine is also electronically available (SARIE).

Graphological iconicity opens the possibility of making the message come as close as possible to the real product/service. This practice of conveying the same message in text content and design options - complementary representations - makes perfect sense in terms of the unique characteristics of advertising as a genre - where repetition is expected and needed. Furthermore, it perfectly enforces the IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) principle widely accepted in Marketing Practice today (Percy, 1997), namely that a powerful message could come across if a "one voice one image approach" is followed in all aspects of the promotional mix. This is an even more valuable approach if that "one voice" and "one image" may be found in one advertisement and may be seen as an interesting way of repetition.

On the other hand, the use of a conventional text type (such as the prescription sticker on a medicine bottle to advertise a fuel station (Engen), may attract the attention of the target market in order to make sense of the incomprehensible connection between the product or service being advertised. Paradoxical deviations from the conventional representation may be successful in attracting the attention but they are risky because manipulating the conventional layout could be misunderstood or rejected.

- Authenticity: synergy between text and context

The Flake chocolate advertisement, which consists only of an empty chocolate Flake wrapper with a seemingly conventionally familiar post-it memo note on it in a font, type and layout that resembles hurried handwriting, is an example of a design that is used to convince or to authenticate. Nobody would write "Stolen" on his/her friend's or partner's chocolate or would type him/her a message, but at most would write a note saying "Sorry, I am the guilty one" or as the advertisement says: "Sorry, just couldn't resist!"

The same convincing layout is found in the pork advertisement, which resembles a typical magazine questionnaire in terms of the layout. By completing the questionnaire (look-alike advertisement), you get the marketing message that, unlike your dog, you do have a choice in what you eat and that there is more than one option in white meat.

9. TYPES OF GRAPHOLOGICAL ICONICITY IN PRINT ADVERTISING

- Visuals mirroring text

Visuals and text
This mirroring is the result of the incorporation of extra-linguistic aspects such as spatial orientation and inverse movement, the presence or absence of entities, analogous features, logical deduction, contradiction and transformations.

The Uno car advertisement in the addendum is a very good example because the visuals echo the textual content of the advertisement exactly; the text is the visuals. The Uno advertisement conveys that the car is light on fuel to and from any destination ("Lig op brandstof soontoe en terug"). The visual includes a cut-out car moving to the right direction of the page and when one turns the page, one sees the same cut-out Uno going in the opposite direction. A Consol glass advertisement conveys the message that glass does not affect the content of anything that is stored in it. The advertisement (in Afrikaans and English) says: "Glass is like nothing" (in Afrikaans: "Glas is soos niks"). The visuals contain a blank white page with the cut-out shape of a Consol glass bottle. On turning the page, one sees a whole page of tomatoes - because the glass (of the container) has not changed the shape, colour or taste of the content in the container.

Type-based visuals

The layout of a very ordinary font and type is constructed in such a way as to echo the content of the advertisement by means of a visual image of that content (text). In this way, the target market receives the same message (Integrated Marketing Communication Principle of "one voice, one image") from both the text and the visuals. In its extreme form, the text would be laid out in such a way that it formed the image needed for the marketing message visually. In the Air Mauritius advert in the addendum, the text is laid out in the form of a deck chair, and in case of an advert for endangered species, the text/content is laid out in the form of a tadpole (any animal form referring to an endangered species would have done).

- Iconic transformation: the Roman alphabet and the iconic alphabet

Pictures as letters

In terms of the conventional Roman alphabet, letters are not combined or replaced by pictures that are not part of the Roman alphabet. In this category letters are often replaced by pictures of objects that resemble letters, replace the letters and, in so doing, the visuals and text echo the same message. Consider the Chicco example in the addendum in this regard where the letters are often replaced by typical baby type of pictures (play blocks for example) or icons since this is a baby product company.

Letters as pictures

Fischer (1999: 275) argues: "All letters of the alphabet can be used in this fashion, but […] certain letters such as the round O lend themselves to iconic modifications more easily than others." If one examines the American Swiss example, the letter O is formed by the diamond jewellery piece and the mirror image of the word MOM spells WOW.

Even the form or position of a letter can be manipulated to call on the iconography of a specific relevant object. The letters KK in the word HAKKE (meaning heels in English) are slightly tilted to the right in the promotional article on high heel shoes to represent high heels by means of an icon.

- Iconic play with spacing and margins

Conventionally writing moves from left to right horizontally; and any alteration in this pattern is used to signify change or reversal (Fischer, 1999: 252).

The second most conventional type of writing is horizontal writing elevated in an upwards direction to carry a positive association in the same way that a negative notion may be conveyed by writing in a downward direction.

Fischer (1999: 262) maintains that because conventionally words are separated by empty spaces and syntactic units by punctuation marks, the manipulation of these conventional, anticipated spaces - or the excessive use or non-use of punctuation marks - may indicate details such as an interruption. The alteration of the conventional use of spaces between words and letters may result in a secret code which requires the active involvement (intellectual play) of the target market to crack the code in order to understand the message and, in so doing, give their active attention to the advertisement. The Soviet advertisement in the addendum is an example of this technique.

The change in the spacing between letters and words may also result in a functional type of ambiguity as in the SA Post Office advert which is poskantoor in Afrikaans and because of the change in the spacing, also conveys the message that postage (pos) can (kan) perform magic (toor).

Furthermore, the unconventional use of margins and the violation of conventional norms of layout (which may result in the cutting off of letters or parts of the message) also have several iconic functions. As Fischer (1999: 268) indicates, besides using the unconventional margin space of a page, there are many other possibilities to indicate loss or absence iconically.

Another example of an advertisement that uses the same graphic tools to create interest is that of ABSA Bank in the addendum. The use of two different sets of margins (indicated by a dotted line) opens up the possibility that the target market could receive two totally different messages.

- Unexpected size, position, repetition or combination of letters

In print advertising, emphasis is often managed by manipulating the conventional font in unexpected and unconventional ways in order to stress, integrate or accommodate the product name, the logo, the main feature or the main message of the advert.

For example, the brand name Lose it which is both the product name and a description of the type of product that is emphasized in the typography and layout of the message, which says in Afrikaans “Bly vet of LOSE IT” (Stay fat or LOSE IT). The headline of the advertisement of an Elizabeth Arden beauty product (in lower case and black) is: “Reveal your inner beauty”, but the -e and -a in reveal are in a different colour (red) in order to stress (part of) the brand name. Typography and layout are the graphic means by which advertisements are created to be both smart and beautiful (Felton, 1994:161).

The unexpected repetition of letters or unexpected combination of letters in a specific language may also have different functions iconically. One of the main functions is very often simply to emphasize the brand name. Examples such as the headline fantazztic in an advertisement for the TAZZ car brand; velocity to advertise the brand name of a specific Citi Golf car known for its speed; and C-kuriteit/C-curity instead of the normal lexicon items (sekuriteit in Afrikaans and security in English) in a Cell-C phone advertisement makes use of such unexpected combinations to emphasize the brand names (TAZZ, Cell-C). Another technique that is often used (and which Fischer does not mention) is the use of unexpected letters in a specific language in order to refer to something else in terms of their icon. In case of the fcuk advertisement, the “strange” brand name is conventionally accepted because of the icon (fcuk French Connection, UK) in which a rearrangement of the letters would spell fuck and the controversial advertising message: Everyone's talking fcuk® is both ambiguous and also controversial.

The use of abnormal spelling to stress, identify or contrast implies that a name or trade mark is very old. S Jacobson (1966) (in Crystal, 1995: 204) listed examples such as Bar-B-Q, EZ lern (U.S. driving school) Koffee Kake, Savmor (discount store), etc.

Another feature closely linked to the typography of the advertisement, is the play with the colour and size of specific letters in the advertisement to create a controversial message or a seemingly controversial message. The ATKV (an Afrikaans language and cultural organisation) advertisement in the addendum is not controversial at all, but because of the bigger font of just one phrase in the complete text, the target market at first glance sees only wit mense dink nie (white people do not think), which is very racist and controversial in post-apartheid SA. Yet the complete text says that white people do not have the same attitudes towards (i.e. think the same about) race anymore, conveys a message that is totally opposite to what was indicated by the first impression. The same is true for the Kyk-net television channel advertisement, which by means of the different colour and font within one word (also given the choice of visual focus), at first glance conveys a very controversial message: “dit is paartyd” which means “it is the mating season”. This controversial interpretation is reinforced by the sperm-like appearance of the microphone.

When reading the complete text, one realises that the message means that it is time for people to enter a singing competition in pairs.

Myers (1994: 42) gives the example of a UK Campaign aiming to reduce the risk of cot death with the slogan Back to sleep, where the B is in a horizontal position in order to reinforce the message by means of the icon.

- Extra-linguistic knowledge as a basis for graphological iconicity

Examples of the last category in our diagram on the domains of graphological iconicity, which appeals to our extra-linguistic knowledge, are included in most of the above-mentioned examples. The ATKV advertisement (unexpected size, position, repetition or combination of letters), where the size of the letters has been manipulated to create controversy, also appeals to our world knowledge about apartheid and the political history of South Africa. The same holds true for the Kyk-net advertisement, which requires prior extra-linguistic knowledge about the appearance of a sperm cell in order to be attracted to the visual controversy showing a female egg and male sperm.

10. CONCLUSION

All writing is done in a specific font style and this conveys covert messages through the choice of typeface used in the advertisements, brand names and even packaging for a specific brand.

Using the right or appropriate typeface can definitely contribute to the image and sales of the brand (Doyle & Bottomley, 2006: 112-122).

Synergy is the key, not abundance or clutter; in other words, there should be a synergic link between the visuals and the language. To get the attention of the target market, we need to focus on one aspect of the product initially.

Secondly, one idea or concept per advertisement is the ideal; this may be mainly a visual or linguistic idea (word play, for instance).

Although “less is more”, several options are available in terms of the design, such as:

- a letter-dominant layout;
- an image-dominant layout; and/or
- a multi-element layout (Felton, 1994: 196).

Moreover, the marketing concept also has to fit the visual representation. This means that the visuals, the type, the font and layout as graphic means all have meaning in terms of a semiotic model and they are the 'voice' of the message. To achieve brand identity and brand awareness, this voice is very important: without a focus on the content, it would be possible to identify the brand being advertised immediately.

This is made possible by being consistent in terms of using unique and identifiable graphic means (unique italic font of Coca Cola versus the bold type of Absa Bank), the same spokesperson or character or concept (e.g. stereotyping men in the First for Women insurance advertisements).

Typography and layout are graphic means used to make the advertisement interesting, clever and beautiful and - most importantly - to help create brand identity.

ADDENDUM

The following brand names/advertisements were referred to in the article. The examples are briefly analysed in terms of graphology but no assessment has been done on the effectiveness of the advertisement. No judgments are done on the brand or advertisement. Brand owners were informed of the inclusion of these advertisements for the purpose of the article. These examples are also available in full colour electronically from the authors. Many more examples of the same type (same categories) of graphological iconicity were found but due to space restrictions only one example per category is included where necessary.

Brand names and examples referred to:

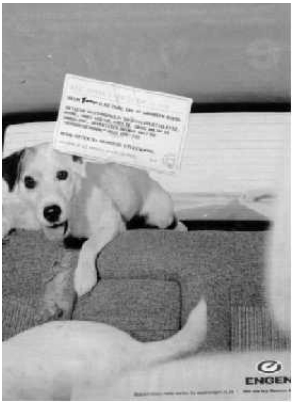
Rapport, Rapport magazine, June 2006
Shell Helix, Huisgenoot, August 1996
American Swiss, Huisgenoot, June 2008
Cell C, Landbouweekblad, September 2000
Engen, Huisgenoot, September 2005
Flake, SARIE, June 2000
Kleenex, You, September 2006
Pendoring, Tuis, July 2004
Uno, Huisgenoot, July 1999
Air Mauritius, You, September 2005
Soviet, FHM collections: Summer 2002
ABSA, Huisgenoot, August 2004
Chicco, Discovery: Spring 2004
ATKV, Taalgenoot, 2005
Kyk-NET, Huisgenoot, March 2003
Hakke met houding, SARIE, March 2008
Women 24, SARIE, August 2003

ONS HET NET EEN DING
OP DIE BREIN.
Rapport

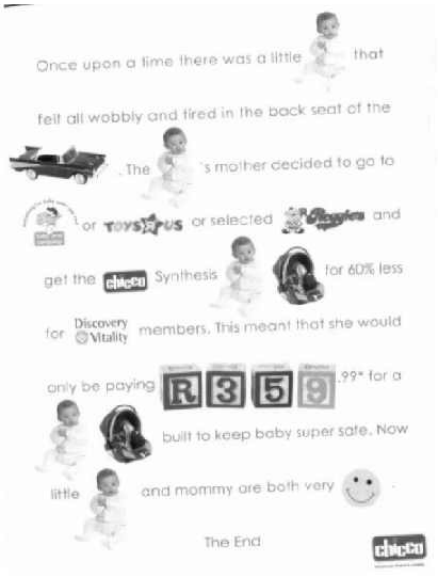
WOW
MOM
WEES HAAR GUNSTELING HIERDIE MOEDERSDAG, 11 MEI
AMERICAN SWISS
IT VERDIEN DIT

Die unieke aard van Shell Helix
word die beste in Braille beskryf.

Sorry!
couldn't resist

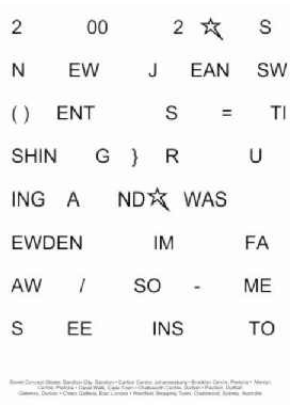

ENKEN

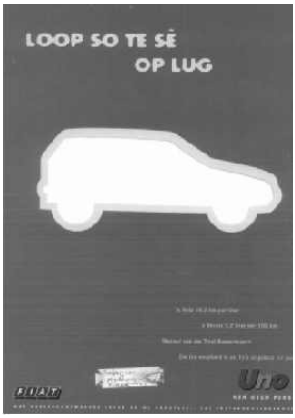
-kuriteit
cell


Once upon a time there was a little that
felt all wobbly and tired in the back seat of the
. The 's mother decided to go to
or TOYSRUS or selected and
get the chicco Synthesis for 60% less
for Discovery Vitality members. This meant that she would
only be paying R359.99* for a
built to keep baby super safe. Now
little and mommy are both very .
The End
chicco

HAKKE
met
HOUDING
'n Elegante paar
hoëhakskoene doen
dit darem vir énige
vrou. Al ooit gewonder
wat is dit dan met ons
en mooi skoene?
deur MARGUERITE VAN WYK
foto's CHARL MARAIS
38

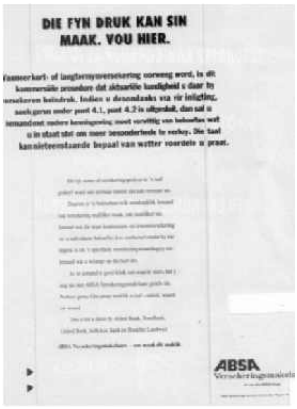
INBOX
I've met someone else...
Options
Back
You never know when you might need one.
Kleenex
Pocket Packs


2 00 2 ☆ S
N EW J EAN SW
( ) ENT S = TI
SHIN G } R U
ING A ND☆ WAS
EWDEN IM FA
AW / SO - ME
S EE INS TO


LOOP SO TE SÊ
OP LUG

DIE DAE VAN ONS LEWENS

YOUR SEAT IS WAITING FOR YOU
AIR MAURITIUS
Non-Stop Caring


DIE FYN DRUK KAN SIN MAAK. VOU HIER.
ABSA

Dis paartyd
Kry vir jou die regte maatjie en wen sing-sing groot pryse in kykNET se vlamwarm ZING! kompetisie.
kykNET

SEKSWENKE
WAT JOU
TROUPLANNE
N HUPSTOOTJIE
SAL GEE.
women 24

wie mense dink nie

11. REFERENCE

Barthes, R. (1977) Image-Music-Text, Glasgow: Fontana.

Brumberger, E. (2003) 'The rhetoric of typography: The persona of typeface and text', Technical communication, vol.50 no. 2, pp. 206.

Collins English Dictionary Complete and Unabridged. 2003. Bank of English. Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers.

Crystal, D. (1995) The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2003) A Dictionary of Linguistics & Phonetics. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.

De Saussure, F. (1964) Course in General Linguistics, London: Peter Owen.

Doyle, J. & Doyle, B.P. (2006) 'Dressed for the occasion: Font-Product Congruity in the perception of logotype', Journal of Consumer Psychology, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 1112-1123.

Eco, U. (1976) A Theory of Semiotics, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Felton, G. (1994) Advertising Concept and Copy, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Fischer, A. (1999) Graphological iconicity in print advertising. In Nänny & Fischer, pp. 251-283.

Fischer, O. (2006) Seminar: Iconicity in language and literature. http://home.hum.uva.nl/o.c.m.fischer/bestanden/Weminar (Accessed: 01/05/08).

Goddard, A. (1998) The language of advertising, London: Routledge.
Jacobson, S. (1966) Iconicity: a definition, [Online], Available: HYPERLINK "http;//home.hum.uva.nl/icconicity" http;//home.hum.uva.nl/icconicity [4 May 2008].

Jordan, P. (1996) 'A Semiotic Reading Strategy: Text and Ideology', Ekklesiastikos Pharos, vol. 78, pp. 64-75.

McCarthy, M.S. & Mothersbaugh, D.L. (2002) Effects of typographic factors in advertising-based persuasion: A general model and initial empirical tests. Psychology & Marketing, 19, pp. 663-691.

McQuarrie, E. & M.D. (1992) 'Advertising Resonance: A critical pluralistic inquiry into advertising rhetoric', Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 19, pp. 180-197.

Myers, G. (1994) Words in Ads, London: Arnold.

Nänny, M. & Fischer, O. (1999) Form miming meaning: Iconicity in language and literature: Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Percy, L. (1997) Strategies for implementing integrated marketing communication, Chicago: American Marketing Association.

Phillips, B. (1997) 'Thinking into it: Consumer interpretation of complex advertising images', The journal of advertising, vol. xxvi, no. 2, pp. 77-87.

Richards, J.P.J. & P.H. (1999) Dictionary of language teaching, United Kingdom: Longman.

Scott, L. (1994) 'Images in advertising: The need for a theory of visual rhetoric', Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 21, pp. 252-272.

Shaikh, D., Chaparro, B. & Fox, D. (2006) Perception of fonts: Perceived personality traits and uses. Retrieved from http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/81/PersonalityofFonts.htm. (Accessed: 20/07/2011).

Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. (1996). Relevance: Communication and Cognition. Oxford: Blackwell.

Van Niekerk, A. & Moller, J. (2006) 'Gedagtes oor mites in reklamekommunikasie', Communitas, vol. 11, pp. 135-168.

Van Niekerk, A. (2008) 'A discourse-analytical approach to intertextual advertisements - a model do describe a dominant world-view. Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, vol. 26, no 4.

With acknowledgement to Mrs. Gini Keyser for her dedication to this project and for the help with gathering data.