

## A Cognitive Linguistic Study of the Persuasive/Attention Strategies Used in Selected American English E-Advertisements

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Received: 5/13/202

Accepted: 7/2/2021

Published: 7/26/2021

### Abstract

The present paper aims to examine the use of the persuasive rules in texts and images to determine the role of these visual modes in recalling or adding what they mention. Such a study helps set clearly which visual mode is much more convincing, the image or the text. Scholars generally agreed that the visual mode is more persuasive. However, such a statement is general as it does not state exactly which type of visual mode is more convincing. Accordingly, the research questions highlighted here are: What are the persuasive strategies invested in any of these two visual modes, texts and images? And, what is the role these visual modes play to enhance the sense of persuasion? To achieve the objectives, the researchers will adopt the cognitive linguistic theory of frame semantics by Fillmore (1995). Since the study is qualitative, the study's data will be limited to four randomly selected American English advertisements posted on Facebook. Findings have revealed that the number of the evoked frame units is unlimited and subjective, reflecting, as a result, a person's imagination power, his needs, and desires. The study has concluded that the visual, written text is more persuasive than the pictures and photos. The text reflects a bricolage of various persuasive strategies that help pull the attention. Besides, the images provided played a vital role, though secondary to the texts, supporting the textual information and flavor it realistically.

*Keywords:* American advertisement, cognitive linguistics, Facebook e-advertisement, frame semantics, persuasive strategies, visual language

**Cite as:** Al-Bahrani, R. H., & Ali, S. K. (2021). A Cognitive Linguistic Study of the Persuasive /Attention Strategies Used in Selected American English E-Advertisements *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on CALL (7)*. .

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/call7.20>

## Introduction

Different types of skills have been invested or used in advertisements for the sake of pulling people's attention and getting them persuaded and buy ultimately. The differences in usage of these persuasive strategies reflect a shift from the mere use of a simple technique, or a single-mode to complex and integrated modes. Designers or announcers usually combine many of these advertisement techniques with persuasive techniques to ultimately achieve communicative and persuasive functions (Beasley & Danesi, 2010).

The majority of scholars believe in the dominance of visual language. For instance, Al Ries (as cited in Homem, 2012) maintained, both words and pictures have to work together; supporting his statement with the following illustrative example:

the best hammer in the world is useless if the hammer misses the nail. And the best nail in the world is useless unless there's a hammer to hammer the nail in. The visual is the hammer. It's difficult to build a strong, powerful worldwide brand without a strong, shocking, dynamic visual (p. 211).

For Malamed (2009), "visual language triggers autobiographical memories, arouses curiosity and interest, and enhances the viewer's involvement" (p. 208). Eynullaeva and Woodward-Smith (2012) admitted that "without a verbal element, a picture is worthless, and that marketing managers must first decide on the verbal message they are trying to send out, but without ignoring what kind of visuals can accompany it" (p. 211). Finally, Jordan (2021) specified that images communicate meaning fast and powerfully.

Here, one can notice that the term visual that has been referred to by Malamed (2009) is too general in comparison with that of Jordan, who limited the term to only images. Besides, different scholars have different views regarding the importance of any of these two visual modes. Accordingly, the researchers are to conduct the present study to examine the application of the persuasive strategies, and to investigate whether it is only images, only written texts, or together the written texts, and images are persuasive. Knowing which of these visual modes play a role in persuading people will help sellers and designers invest that visual aspect to meet many purposes. Moreover, it will clarify and attribute the differences of opinion among scholars.

Accordingly, the two research questions that lay here are: What are the persuasive strategies invested in any of these two visual modes, texts and images? And, what is the role any of these visual modes play to enhance the sense of persuasion? Based on these two research questions, the study aims to examine the application of the persuasive rules in texts, and images and investigate the role of these visual modes in enhancing the persuasive aspect.

## Literature Review

### *Advertising as a Concept*

Etymologically, the term 'advertising' was derived from the medieval Latin verb 'advertere', meaning to pull one's attention to something (Beasley & Danesi, 2010, p.1). Conceptually, this term implies any type of public announcement designed to capture people's attention to services or meet an appeal and salability to any product or service using even a rudimentary style. Today, the art of

advertisement has enhanced, where persuasive strategies have become an omnipresent technique in them. The content of the ad, together with the language used in it, i.e., the message delivered, has been extensively accentuated.

In (2012), Pawlowski said that the sense of persuasiveness is available in advertisements, different fields, and communicative modes. Designers and sellers usually invest persuasiveness to shape and change people's minds; that is why it is considered morally neutral. He added, to be persuasive, one needs to select terms loaded with positive connotations.

Kumari (2014) defined advertising as "a powerful communication force and vital marketing tool helping to sell goods, services, images, and ideas through channel of information and persuasion. It is highly visible force in the society" (p. 41). Woodward and Denton (2014) further maintained that the parctical piece of ads addresses a specific group of audiences, their problems, needs, and desires and gives solutions as well. Besides, the mode chosen for advertising plays an essential role in convincing and activating the audience.

There is a sort of old and new media convergence. Traditional media means, such as radio, television, cinema have been integrated with recent advertising forms, such as the out-of-home billboards, mobile, transit, and the newsprint media of magazines, newspapers, and directories. The new combination between the different modes of advertisements has been referred to by Jenkins (2006, as cited by Wharton, 2013) as "a new media-related participatory culture" (p. 147). The amalgamation between the two forms, i.e., the bricolage, involves physical and mental engagement and activity. There is a movement from the passive mode to the active mode, from the mere use of pictures or words to video watching or to digital media convergence (Wharton, 2013, as cited in Strapparava, Guerini, & Özbal, 2011).

From the cognitive point of view, Strapparava et al. (2011) stated, for an ad to be persuasive is highly dependent on a person's "generated cognitive and affective responses" (p. 357). From a cognitive perspective, an ad can have any of the following effects: a) cognitive; that is, one's understanding and memory of an ad; and b) attitudinal, i.e., the feelings that an ad arouses and the behavioral effect as well, or how much a person is get persuaded by an ad. Some other researchers believed that any advertisement involves a hierarchic effect; cognition leads to attitude and the latter to behavior. This rule is valid if the consumer got persuaded already.

### ***Components of Visual Persuasive Advertisements***

For Messaris (1997), any mode of advertisements consists of semantic and syntactic elements. The former component involves images, words, musical tones, etc. The syntactic part, on the other hand, is concerned with the way the semantic elements are linked with one another to produce communicative units. The semantic elements also lie within the field of semiotics, the science of signs. Cognitively, Danesi (1994) maintained that such a link between what people see and read, i.e., between image and reality, should at least be rudimentary. If the designer depends on a simple sketch or stick figure, the brain will not match between the visual interpretation and reality. Thus, from the cognitive point of view, to be much more communicative, the designer should be careful in matching words and images.

Messaris (1997) further outlined three major roles visual images play in an ad. These include the following: first, the emotional role which is associated with the feelings aroused when a given object, word, or person appears; second, a “photographic proof that something really did happen; and, [third], (...) an implicit link between the thing that is being sold and some other image(s)” (p. vii). These roles, by essence, reflect the advertising strategies adopted, such as ‘celebrity endorsements’, ‘hidden-camera interviews’, and photos of politicians standing in front of flags (p. vii).

The term persuasive techniques is used in pragmatics and stylistics, whereas attention phenomena is used in cognitive linguistics. Cuyckens and Geeraerts (2007) defined attention phenomena as a

fundamental language system ...[that] in a speech situation, a hearer may attend to the linguistic expression produced by a speaker, to the conceptual content represented by that expression, and to the context at hand. (...) Various portions or aspects of the expression, content, and context have differing degrees of salience. Such differences are only partially due to any intrinsically greater interest of certain elements over others” . (p.264)

Accordingly, some elements or codes are foregrounded, whereas others are backgrounded. From the cognitive linguistic point of view, certain factors play a role in such a situation. For instance, clarity, significance, and distinctness increase attention while vagueness, and ordinariness decrease it.

Cognitively, advertisements require the investment of mental and visual imageries that have to do with memory, perception, and cognitive awareness (Jeannerod, 2006). In this vein, Shields (1990) added that for an ad to be communicative, the designer needs to use a complex combination of visual codes and a text that is culturally loaded, together with a subjective spectator.

Speaking of the persuasive features of advertisements, De Kantzow and Stubbs (2000) classified the persuasive or attention strategies in advertising into ‘language features’, and ‘visual features’. The former involves the use of fact, statistics, descriptive language, figurative language, Jargon or slang, emotive words, sense of humor, formal or informal. As for visual features, they include photographs or drawings, color, shading, font type, and size. Scott (1994) proposed, visuals are not an adjunct to verbal messages, but they are an essentially persuasive device. That is, pictures reflect not only reality, but also motivate argument and creative cognition. Such devices include the use of camera angles, illumination, lighting, and typefaces.

### ***Related Studies***

Speaking of the studies conducted on persuasive visual language, the researchers have divided these studies into two sections. The first section is concerned with reflections on the importance of visuals in triggering meaning. The second section, on the other hand, deals with reflections on persuasive language or advertisements.

Al-Bahrani and Al-Azzawi (2017) studied quantitatively and qualitatively the role of visual images in triggering creative cognition. Accordingly, a random symbolic social caricature that tackles early marriage in Iraqi society has been selected. Seventy-six participants were randomly selected from the second-year university level at the College of Education for Women-University of Baghdad. Their answers were then analyzed following Lyons' (1977) types of meaning: expressive and descriptive. The study revealed that the participants' level of visual literacy is acceptable, yet it needs to be improved.

In (2019), Al-Fatlawi and Al-Bahrani conducted a study to examine the role of the figures of an image in evoking meaning. The participants' answers were analyzed using Tolman's cognitive-linguistic Theory of Mental Maps (1948). The study revealed that the number of comprehensive thinking instances is higher than that of strip thinking. Moreover, image reading depends on the type of thinking invested and the number of figures identified. In image reading, the complete identification of figures is necessary for grasping the meaning. However, what is much more important is to know which of the figures of the panel requires comprehensive description and what is the sequence to be used in linking or mapping these figures.

Weiksner, Fogg, and Liu (2008) studied the persuasive patterns invested in Facebook using grounded theory as an approach. To meet the objective of the study, the researchers examined 100 Facebook pages. The study revealed that there are six persuasive patterns adopted in Facebook advertisements. Four of these patterns are virally adopted, including 'Provoke and Retaliate', 'Reveal and Compare', 'Expression and Group Exchange' (p. 151). The other two, on the other hand, are adapted, such as competition and description. Besides, the use of these patterns varies from an online social network to another; each website has a degree of acceptance and involvement with a specific pattern. That is why; the researchers concluded that the act of persuasion follows 'regular observable patterns' (p. 151).

Al-Shekhly and Mohsin (2013) studied the persuasive strategies in Blurbs, an advertising discourse. The study aimed to explore the persuasive function of blurbs. They stated that blurbs represent a genre that has its own communicative and persuasive purpose. They help persuade readers to buy a book by describing books' contents or praising their qualities. Using a rhetorical structure, which consists of three main moves "description, evaluation, and the biography of the author" (p. 170) helps reflect the communicative purpose of blurbs. The study concluded that blurbs are "a persuasive text as it aims to influence others to buy the book" (p. 170).

In (2016), Eshreth conducted a qualitative comparative study on the problem caused due to the English–Arabic translation of brand names. The data included (20) audiovisual ads, (10) English ads, and (10) in their Arabic translation. After displaying the ads to the Palestinian audiences, they did the translation to examine the various strategies followed in translating brands' names. Results showed that the ads translated into Arabic reflect the adoption of the domestication of English advertising to make sure that branded goods achieve optimum benefits in the audience's target language.

Waad and Al-Bahrani (2020) investigated the role of non-verbal language in enhancing the sense of persuasion among tourists. Accordingly, the researchers selected randomly recreational

touristic images from Iraqi and Malaysian touristic brochures. They adapted some non-verbal persuasive devices based on Dimbleby and Burton (1998), Jewitt and Oyama (2001; as cited in Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2004), Beasley and Danesi (2002), and Wang and Gut's (2011) suggested devices. The study concluded that for an image to be persuasive, photographers have to take them from different angles to reflect a comprehensive and realistic view of the place. In addition, various content strategies need to be adopted to trigger a positive mental image in the tourists' minds.

Based on the literature reviewed so far, the present study differs from all previously conducted ones by the following: It is a qualitative cognitive linguistic study. It involves examining randomly selected American English female cosmetic e-advertisements announced on Facebook. It aims to investigate the application of the persuasive rules in texts vs. images to determine the role of these visual modes in recalling or adding what any of these visual modes mentions.

### ***Adopted Theory in Data Analysis***

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers will adopt the theory of Frame Semantics by Fillmore (1995). This theory is considered the most effective form of cognitive-linguistics and a re-thinking of the goals of linguistic semantics (as cited in Croft & Cruse, 2004). It is a link or a continuous and flexible link between language and experience. In this vein, Fillmore (1982, as cited in Geeraerts, 2006) maintained that a frame is a "system of categories structured in ... [which] some words exist in order to provide access to knowledge of such frames to the participants" (p. 381).

This theory entails that each word is associated with a set of associated words or triggers. That is, a word can evoke a particular semantic frame in a given event. As a result, the model involves the identification of the salient terms or linguistic elements to be later attached to frames, i.e., the highlighted associations or frame units derived from the elements themselves. To clarify this point, the researchers put the following example: the word needle represents a frame element whereas the associations evoked, such as (pain, operation, blood, fear, hospital, drug) mean the frame units.

Fillmore (1985) added that the term frame is synonymous to any of the following terms: "frame, schema, script, global pattern, pseudo-text, cognitive model, experiential gestalt, base, scene" (p. 223). Fillmore and Petrucci summarized the essence of this theory, saying that word/image, practice, belief, etc., can all be mapped into semantic frames to be appropriately interpreted (as cited in Sheard, 2011). The totality of the frames will give a comprehensive meaning to the event in question. In other words, understanding a frame, i.e., a conceptual structure, entails its derived frame units.

### **Method**

The study is qualitative as it involves descriptions of the senses aroused by a single linguistic element. Such a type of study, as stated by Merriam and Grenier (2019), involves researchers striving to "understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences" (p. 5). One of the significant features of a qualitative study is that data is limited, and the method is inductive. Since the study is qualitative, the researchers will limit the data to four

events; that is, American English advertisements. Besides, the study is cognitive-linguistic as it adopts the theory of Frame Semantics.

### **Procedures**

To meet the objective of the study, which reads, examining the application of the persuasive rules in texts and images to determine the role of these visual modes in recalling or adding information, the researchers are to do the following steps:

- a. Selecting randomly four American English Facebook advertisements that are concerned with female cosmetics. Each of these ads involves both text and an image;
- b. Identifying the main frames of each event;
- c. Pinpointing the elements(s) of each basic frame;
- d. Listing the unit(s) evoked by each frame element;
- e. Determining the sense of persuasiveness based on the number of attentive or persuasive techniques invested; and
- f. Specifying the role of the texts and images in either recalling or adding something new to what was previously stated in them.

### **Data Analysis**

Based on the theory of frame semantics, the researchers will use the term EVENT to refer to each piece of advertisement. Each EVENT comprises basic frames, elements, and variously highlighted units, as shown below:

#### **Event One**

“Beauty that makes you the Star. ✨ Discover Act IV, a camera-ready makeup collection that’s inspired by Hollywood glamour and designed for your moment in the spotlight. Brought to you by Estée Lauder’s great-granddaughter, Danielle Lauder – discover her collection now! (Estee Lauder, 2020)

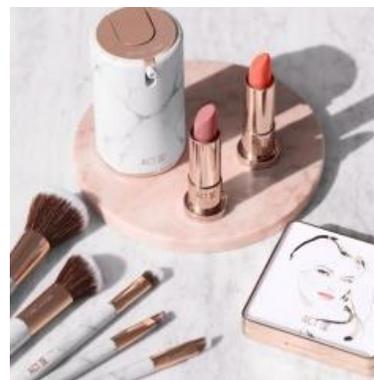


Image 1. Estee Lauder’ Collection

This event involves three primary or basic frames: the virtual seller, the virtual product, and the virtual consumer. Here, the virtual seller uses certain words to describe the product and help evoke specific senses. These words represent the frame elements or sub-frames that are related to the three main frames as tabulated in table one:

Table 1. *The Basic Frames and Frames' Elements of Event 1*

Virtual Seller	Virtual Product	Virtual Consumer
	beauty	Star
		Discover
	camera-ready makeup	
	Hollywood glamour	
	moments in the spotlight	
	<u>Danielle Lauder</u>	

These words have been chosen on purpose to inspire consumers. As one can see, there is a causative relation between the frame elements *beauty* and being a *star*. If one wants to be a star, she has to have beauty; one cannot gain beauty unless s/he tries the new collection. Besides, another causative relation is between these frame elements and the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME. Not only this, *beauty* and *star* help evoke the *Result* unit or *Result* frame. These two elements indicate the result one will gain due to using that product. Besides, the element *star* has been enhanced by using its iconic visual effect, a meme. The mere mentioning of the word *star* highlights the connotations of being *well-known*, *attractive*, etc. However, the use of the star icon highlights the idea that you will not be any star, but a *shining one*, as indicated by the effects that appear close to the star icon.

Accordingly, the frame elements, i.e., the words: *beauty*, *star*, *camera-ready*, *Hollywood glamour*, *a moment in the spotlight*, are all related to the basic VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME, and help activate many frame units as the following: (*shinning*, *getting lights*, *good looking*, *purity*, *softness*, *youth*, *attraction*, *smoothness*, *perfect coverage*, *wrinkles free*, and other stunner objects).

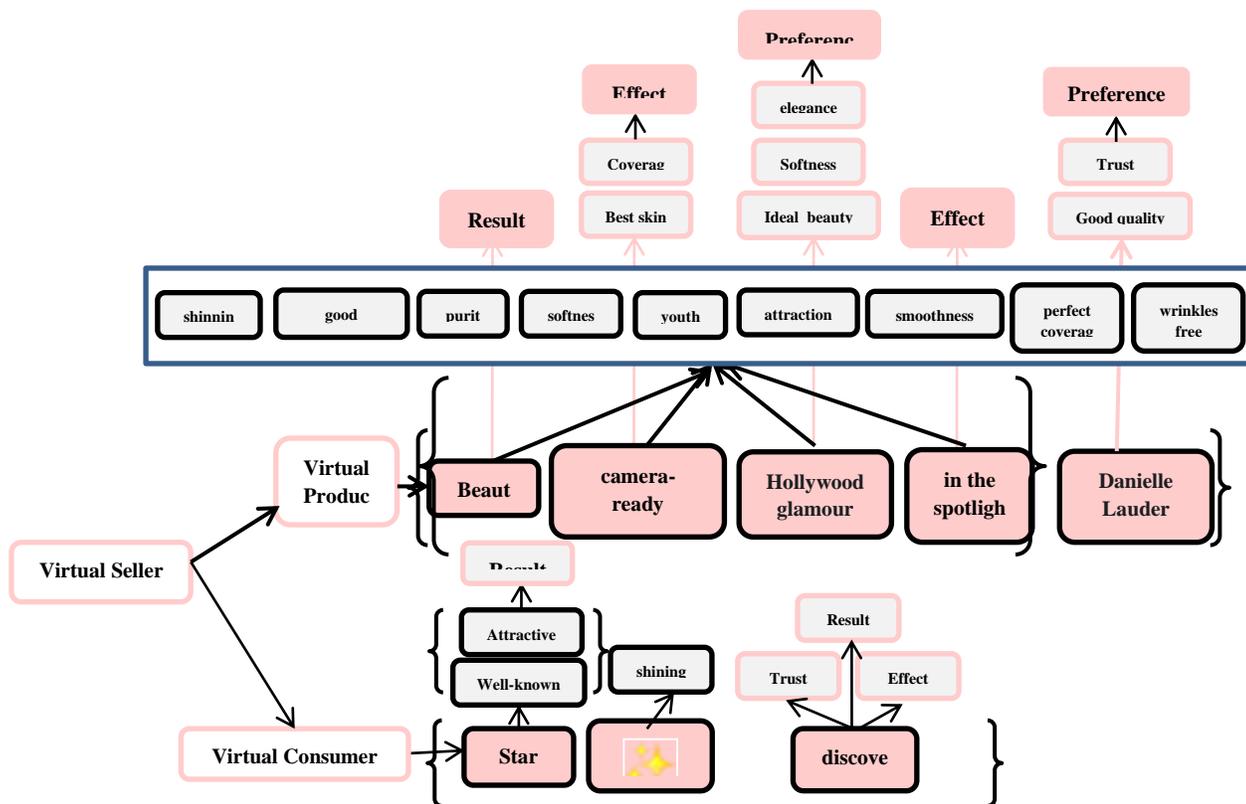
What is the relation between the *camera* element and the main VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME is that when taking photos, people desire to look good, have a pure and healthy face that has no wrinkles or black spots. If one uses this product, then there is no need to fear the resolution of any camera. Here, there is a symbolic relationship between the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME and the *camera* element. The high resolution of a *camera* opposes to the *best skin coverage*, and evokes the unit of effect. The high resolution of a *camera* reflects the way the product perfectly covers skin faults, having ultimately a resolute face appearance.

Moreover, the *Hollywood glamour* element, which evokes the *ideal beauty*, *elegance*, *softness*, and all good attributes, activates the unit of *preference*. Because of its perfection and good quality, it is being inspired by uneasy convincing people. Thus, there is a causative relation between the basic VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME and *Hollywood glamour* element. Besides, this element helps activate other positive units that are associated with Hollywood.

Another element related to the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME is the celebrity, the model and actress *Danielle Lauder*, the pretty blonde young granddaughter of Estee Lauder. Danielle Lauder is known for her beauty and the soft and unique color of her outer skin. Choosing the proper blogger, the virtual seller will succeed in activating the frame unit of *trust* on the part of the consumer and highlighting the frame unit of *good quality* regarding the VIRTUAL PRODUCT.

The repeated use of the word *discover*, once in the first line, and another at the last line, is considered one of the strategies of pulling the attention. Persuasively speaking, the VIRTUAL SELLER begins with an element of the main VIRTUAL BUYER FRAME, *Discover*, to highlight the *result, effect, and trust* frame units. The virtual seller foregrounds the elements *Beauty* and *Star* to activate the units of *result and effect*, whereas the VIRTUAL PRODUCT itself is backgrounded, ACT IV.

The visual code used in this event came to enhance the verbal code by focusing on the components of beauty, i.e., the lipsticks, cinematic complexion liquid, which are placed almost in the center of the image and then came aside the photo of Danielle Lauder, who suggested this brand of collection to the consumer. The image of her face represents a visual element that evokes many units or frames, such as *her person, beauty, attractive skin color, shine, purity, beauty, softness, clarity, Hollywood celebrity, trust, etc.*, and all positive attributes. The white brushes with their soft hair reflect the units or frames of *cleanliness and softness*. The bright red and light pink colors connote the units or frames of *contrast and suitability* with this type of collection. The shape of the cinematic complexion liquid activates the frames of *size, durability, and multiple trials and uses*. The light rosy color of the base and the collection’s cover evokes the *romantic feeling, softness, delicacies* frames. In brief, the visual code reflects the elements mentioned textually and precedes the verbal code as it gives an idea of what the collection includes. However, as with the text, it does not clarify the color of the liquid and the palette. Leaving some items with no clarification might also be a persuasive technique that urges people to step forward to experience; consider figure one:



1. The semantic frame of event one

Figure 1. The semantic frame of event one *Event Two*

To our #OleGlow family: We thought long and hard about the timing of this launch. Our goal at OLEHENRIKSEN is to bring happiness and glow into people's lives, whether through our products, our memes or our founder himself. We know that skincare and self-care can be sources of stress relief for you during these times and decided we all need something bright to look forward to.

Cheers to brighter days ahead and to our newest member of the Truth family: Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum, a powerful age-defying serum that delivers brighter, bouncier skin in 7 days\*. It combines three Ole Glow icons—vitamin C, PHAs (polyhydroxy acids) and banana powder-inspired pigments—to help improve skin's elasticity, boost radiance and defend skin against pollution. Leave a 🍌🍌🍌 if you can't wait to bounce back with this serum. NOW AVAILABLE ON OLEHENRIKSEN.COM. \*In an independent 8-week clinical study on 33 women.

From now until 4/3, with every purchase of Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum on OleHenriksen.com, we are offering a free mini Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum PLUS free 2-day shipping so you can get your hands on it ASAP 🍌. (OleHenriksen, 2020a)



Image 2. A New OleGlow Member

Table 2. *The basic frames and their elements of event two*

Virtual Seller	Virtual Product	Virtual Consumer
our #OleGlow family	skincare and self-care	
We thought long and hard about the timing	stress relief	
Our goal	something bright	
to bring happiness and glow into people’s lives	brighter days	
We know	newest member	
decided we all need	a powerful age-defying serum that delivers brighter, bouncier skin in 7 days	
our newest member of the Truth family	three Ole Glow icons—vitamin C, PHAs (polyhydroxy acids), and banana powder-inspired pigments—to help improve skin’s elasticity, boost radiance and defend skin against pollution	
	a 	
	NOW AVAILABLE ON OLEHENRIKSEN.COM.	
	In an independent 8-week clinical study on 33 women	
	From now until 4/3, with every purchase of Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum on OleHenriksen.com, we are offering a free mini Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum PLUS free 2-day shipping so you can get your hands on it ASAP	

Any advertisement of such a type consists of three BASIC FRAMES, the VIRTUAL SELLER, VIRTUAL PRODUCT, and the VIRTUAL CONSUMER. The first paragraph of the ad highlights the frames of *passing through a long, tiring, and arduous journey*. It further evokes the frame units of *having serious concern about people’s lives* and of *being a united family*, as exemplified through the use of certain adjectives, such as *hard, long, we, our, we all*, etc. The pronouns by themselves reflect the inclusive sense of language. All these elements are related to the VIRTUAL SELLER FRAME. Besides, addressing one of the common problems most ladies suffer from represents a persuasive technique that highlights the frame of being *concerned about others*. The VIRTUAL PRODUCT here represents a source of *stress relief*.

In the second paragraph, there is a parenting metaphor where the new product is regarded as a new family member to enter into the family of *OleHenriksen*, the *Truth family*. To grasp the attention, the VIRTUAL SELLER mentioned some facts about the ingredients of this product, the results it can achieve, and its speed results. Thus, there are three frame units of the product: *ingredients, results, and time/speed*.

The mentioning of the product’s name, *Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum*, represents part-part metonymy between the name of the product and its ingredients. The word *bright* also evokes the *bright color of bananas and oranges*. Accordingly, the phrase *brighter days* activates the frame unit of *result*, where the unit of *result* is in a causative relationship with the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME. Moreover, even the memes () used in the event are related to the natural components of the product, which, in return, activate the frame units of *originality, freshness, smoothness, and natural materials*.

Mentioning where one can get the VIRTUAL PRODUCT is a persuasive strategy that helps *facilitate things* to THE VIRTUAL CONSUMER and invest her time. In addition, referring to the time taken to produce this product and the test conducted on (33) women highlights the frame units of *trust* and *safety*.

Giving an offer, *a free mini Banana Bright Vitamin C serum*, and limiting the offer by time are persuasive techniques that activate the frame units *to speed up* and *winning the offer*. The presentation of one offer after another represents another persuasive technique that helps get the attention and highlights the frame units of *speeding up* and *getting the offer*. The last meme (🤩) activates the frame unit of *enthusiastic love* from the side of the VIRTUAL SELLER to the VIRTUAL CONSUMER.

As for the displayed image, it is clear that the orange background color reflects oranges as one of the natural components of the product. Such a color activates the frame units of *originality*, *freshness*, and *natural materials*. Besides, using the orange color gives the sense that the main component is orange, i.e., vitamin C. However, there is no mentioning of the banana component. The open containers activate the frames of *smoothness*, *softness*, *creamy touch*, and *purity*. The brand name of the product is indicated in the outer cover of the product as a *gentle reminder technique*. Here, the image provided partly supports what the text mentioned; consider figure two:

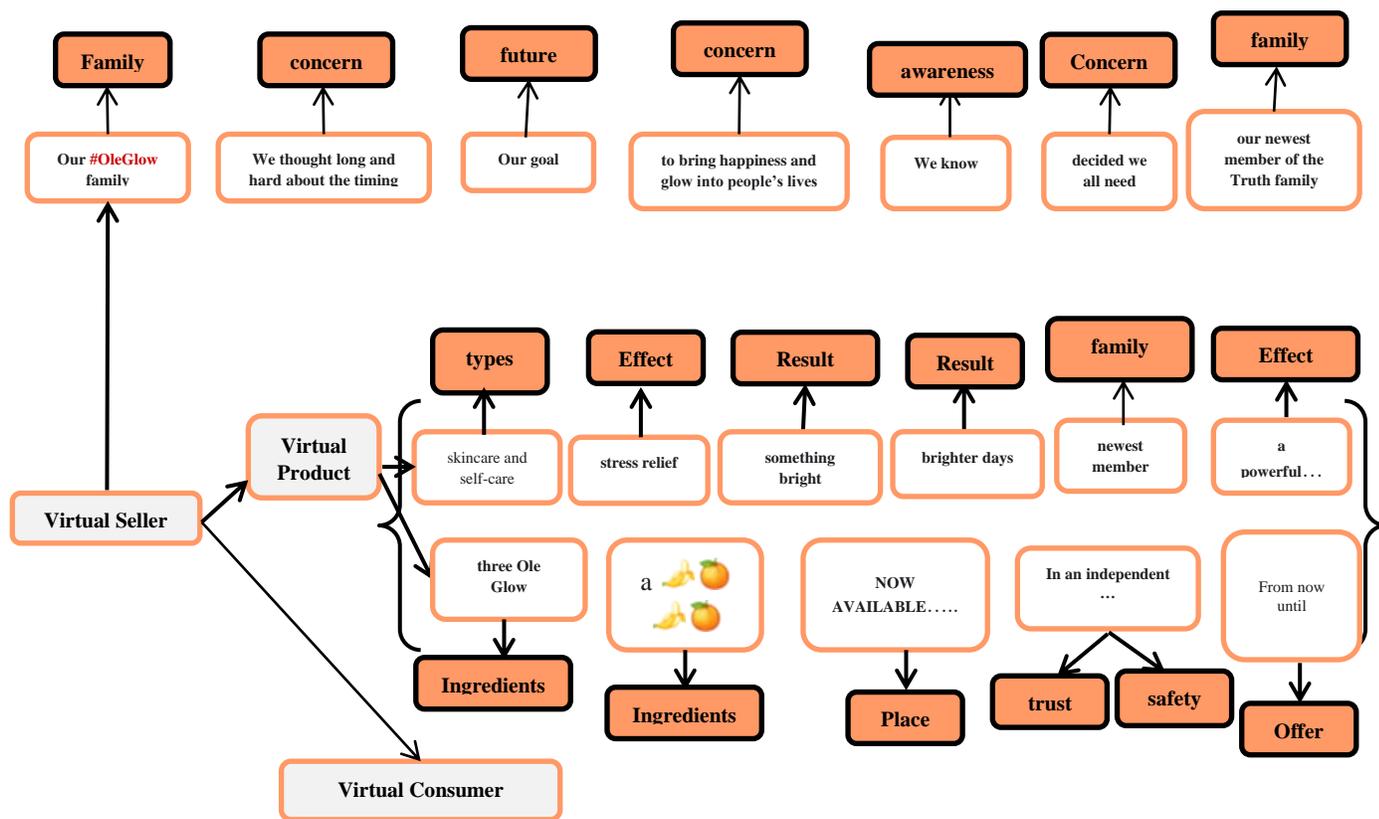


Figure 2. The semantic frame of event two

**Event Three**

“ Total pamper alert!   
 Choose our Luxury Pedicure for total foot care and relaxation.  
One hour 15mins to make you feel like you’r walking on air.  
 Includes all the aspects of a pedicure PLUS Bubbly foot soak,  
collagen socks and a luxury foot massage.” (The Vantage Beauty  
 Box, 2020)



Image 3. The Vintage Beauty

Any advertisement of such a type consists of three BASIC FRAMES, the VIRTUAL SELLER, VIRTUAL PRODUCT, and the VIRTUAL CONSUMER. Each of these main frames consists of several elements, as shown in table three:

Table 3. *The basic frames and their elements of event three*

Virtual Seller	Virtual Product	Virtual Consumer
Our	Total, all aspects of pedicure, PLUS	choose
	pamper	
	Alert	
	Luxury, foot care, relaxation, you’re walking on air	
	The Pedicure	
	I hour 15 mins	
	bubbly foot soak, collagen socks, and a luxury foot massage.	

The advertisement starts with a brief statement put between two flowers. This briefing strategy helps pull the attention to the essence of the ad, which is an alert of total comfort and relaxation. Thus, the words, *total*, *pamper*, and *alert*, represent the elements of the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME. Mentioning this brief statement helps tell the virtual consumer that this product gives a *solution to all body problems*, and there is no need to think of others and waste time. Here, *pamper* evokes the frame unit of *treatment*, whereas *alert* highlights the frame units of *attention*, and *importance*. As for the meme () , it stimulates the frame units of *love*, *natural product*, *freshness*, *life*, and *beauty*.

The second line, on the other hand, specifies the type of treatment related to foot care. The virtual seller describes the product as being a *luxury* and a source of *relaxation*. Thus, these words *luxury*, *care*, and *relaxation* represent the elements of the VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME. The word *total* again specifies the type of *treatment*, whether it is partial or total. Besides, the definite pronoun *our* evokes the frame that the VIRTUAL SELLER highly *trusts* their product and that the product is *trustworthy* and has a *good effect*. Not only this, the word *choose* represents a *directive*, or an *encouraging call* from the VIRTUAL SELLER to the VIRTUAL CONSUMER to *experience* this product. The overall statement “Choose our Luxury Pedicure for total foot care and relaxation” represents the pinnacle point that serves to *speed people’s thinking of the significance of using the product*.

Then, the VIRTUAL SELLER gives much more information about the time needed to get a smooth foot, which is *one hour 15mins*. Here, one can find another unit related to the main VIRTUAL PRODUCT FRAME, which is that of *time*. The phrase, ‘make you feel like you’r walking on air’ highlights another frame unit, which is that of *effect*. Then, the words or phrases, ‘bubbly foot soak’, ‘collagen socks’, and ‘a luxury foot massage’, all represent another unit of the PRODUCT FRAME, which is the *components* of this product. The use of the word *PLUS* in its upper case form represents a persuasive technique to attract people’s attention towards other things that this product has. Besides, the phrase ‘*all aspects*’ evokes the frame units that this product is *comprehensive* and *complementary*.

Concerning the image, the colorful roses highlight the frames of *freshness*, *relaxation*, *smoothness*, *love*, *natural product*, *beauty*, and *relief* highlighted in the textual message. It additionally includes all pedicure components, such as foot soak, collagen socks, and a luxury foot massage. These aspects can also bring the frame of *trust* and recall or support what the text mentioned before. The appearance of Rosebery and green leaves activates the frames of being *natural*, *safe*, *fresh*, and *oily*. Thus, the image here supports and recalls the same textual information highlighted and adds nothing to the text; consider figure three:

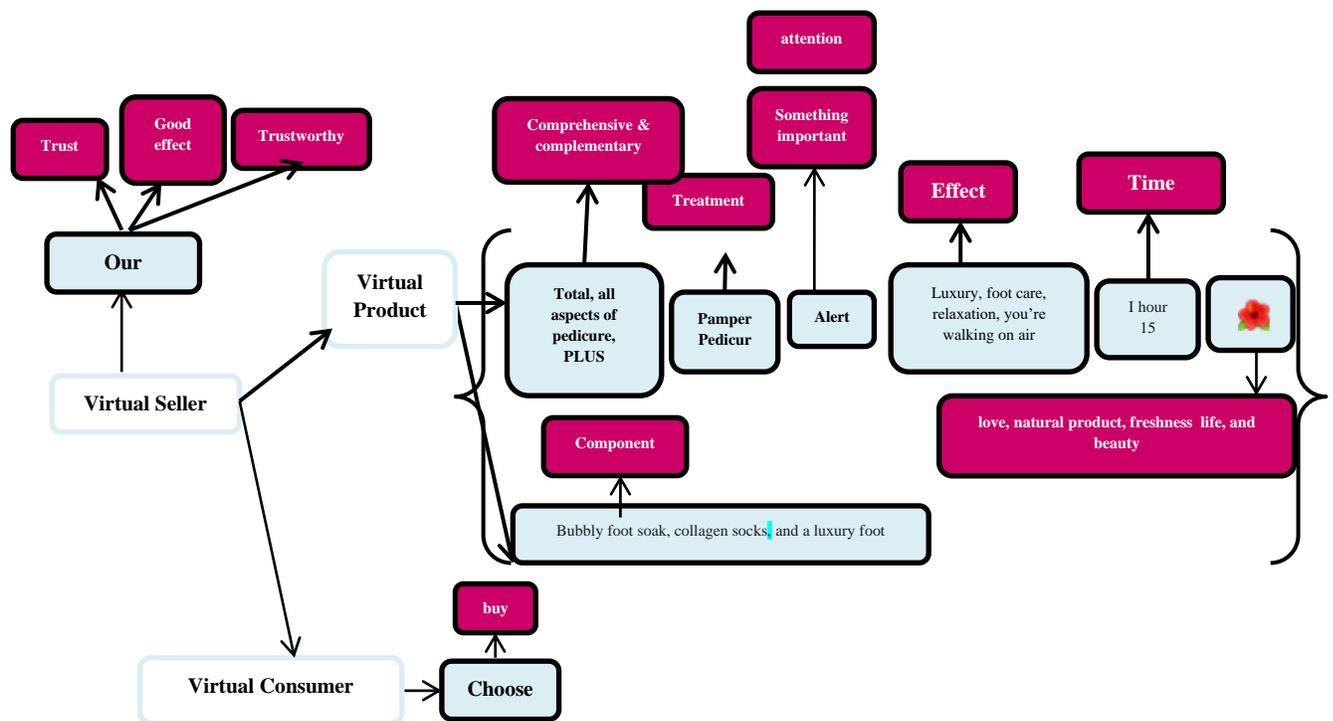


Figure 3. The semantic frame of event three

**Event Four**

Labor Day weekend is for the DEALS! Get this FREE mini 4-piece set with any \$60+ order on .com. Who else needs to add these adorable minis to their #shelfie? 🍌🥒  
Gift includes minis of Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum, C-Rush Brightening Gel Creme, Goodnight Glow Retin-ALT Sleeping Creme & Glow2OH Dark Spot Toner. Ends 9/7/20. Use code: LABOR DAY.” (OleHenriksen, 2020b)



Image 4. Minis of OLEHENRIKSEN

Any advertisement of such a type consists of three BASIC FRAMES, the VIRTUAL SELLER, VIRTUAL PRODUCT, and the VIRTUAL CONSUMER. The main PRODUCT FRAME consists of several units, as shown in table four:

Table 4. *The basic frames and their elements of event four*

Virtual Seller	Virtual Product	Virtual Consumer
	DEALS	Get
	FREE	
	OLEHENRIKSEN.com	
	<u>Who else needs to add these adorable minis to their #shelfie?</u>	
	🍌🥒	
	Gift	
	<u>minis of Banana Bright Vitamin C Serum, C-Rush Brightening Gel Creme, Goodnight Glow Retin-ALT Sleeping Creme &amp; Glow2OH Dark Spot Toner</u>	
	<u>Ends 9/7/20</u>	
	<u>LABOR DAY</u>	

The event invests the advantage of the Labor Day weekend to promote an exciting deal. Here, the word *DEAL* has been written in upper case to pay the attention of the VIRTUAL CONSUMER to this product. Thus, the word *DEAL* evokes the frame of an *offer*. Immediately after mentioning the word *deal*, there is a call to all VIRTUAL CONSUMERS to get the *FREE* mini pieces of the product. Here, *Get* represents an encouraging technique for the consumer; it evokes the frame units of *buy*, *experience*, and *win something*. Besides, the word *FREE* is also written in an upper case to pull people’s attention to the frame unit of the *offer*. Then, there is a direct reference to the website that one can resort to for buying. Thus, mentioning the website evokes the frame units of *buying* and *easiness*. The question, ‘*Who else needs to add these adorable minis to their #shelfie?*’, again prompts the frame units of *buying* and *calling to buy*. The word *else* by itself highlights the frame unit of *having buyers*. The word *adorable* activates the frame unit of *effect*, whereas the word *mini* activates the frame units of being *suitable* and *portable*. The memes used (🍌🥒) highlight the frame units of being *required* and *adorable by people*. Thus, the answer to the question is *responsive*.

The word *gift* evokes the frame unit of the *offer*; it appears after mentioning the components of the offer. Saying the details of the product activates the frame units of *relief*, *satisfaction*, *attractions*, and *quantity*, as well. The mentioning of the date evokes the frame units of *limitations* and *to hurry*. Finally, mentioning the code highlights the frame units of *easiness*, and *buying*. Giving all the necessary means of contact is a persuasive technique the virtual seller invests in urging virtual consumers to buy.

As for the image displayed, one can notice that the image supports what has been mentioned textually about the product by being mini and four in number. The selected blue background evokes the frames of *purity* and *harmony* with the color of one of the products, and *contrast* with other products. Here, again, the image precisely tells what the text has stated. Thus, its roles are to support and recall the already-mentioned information; consider figure four:

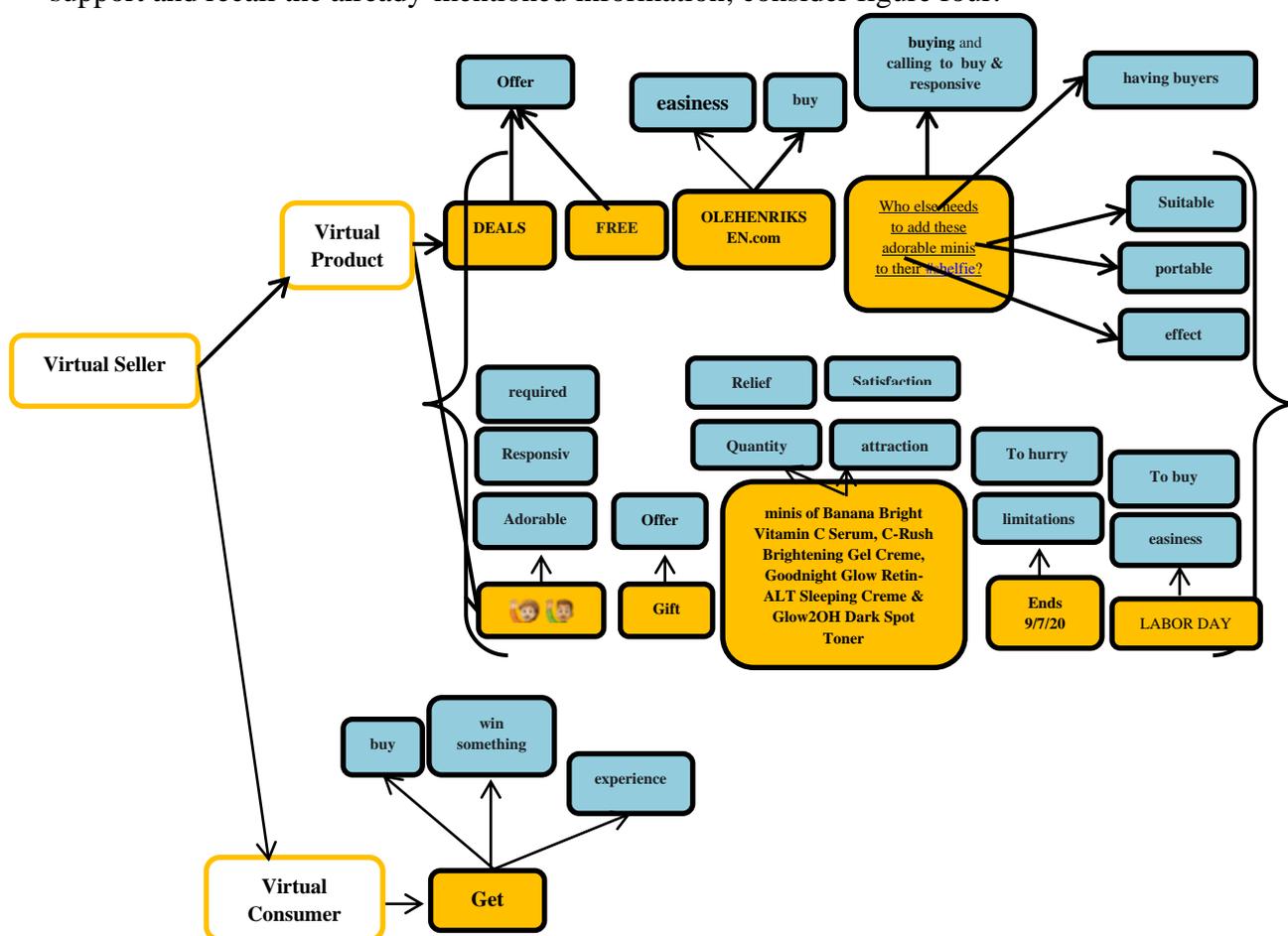


Figure 4. The semantic frame of event four

### Discussion

Each event consists of three main frames, the virtual seller, the virtual consumer, and the virtual product. Then, these three main frames are further sub-divided into elements. The number of elements depends on the text offered or figures of the image provided. The virtual seller usually

writes the text using persuasive strategies to convince people to buy. However, the number of the highlighted units differs from one person to another depending on his mental activity, the power of his imagination, or his psychological or physical needs and desires. That is, the derivation of frame units is a subjective process. The total number of the main frames, frame elements, and the evoked units, gives a comprehensive image of the event in question.

Besides, in all these four events, the words represented by the texts are considered highly persuasive because they display more details and pieces of information. The role of the images provided, on the other hand, is supportive. They repeat what the texts mentioned before though sometimes partially. Further, they give the texts a realistic conceptual image of what the virtual seller advertises, and enhance the sense of persuasion. That is, texts have a primary role in persuading people, whereas images enhance that textual role and accentuate its effectiveness or impact. This finding is in line with Al Ries (as cited in Homem, 2012) and Eynullaeva and Woodward-Smith's (2012) statements. Moreover, whether texts or images, both represent the components of the visual language, and this means that visual language is much more persuasive. However, the finding that illustrates the primary role of the texts over images is not in line with what Jordan (2021) stated.

## Conclusions

As stated earlier, the present work aims to examine the application of the persuasive strategies and investigate the role of images and written texts in persuading people to buy. Accordingly, the research questions highlighted here are what are the persuasive strategies invested in any of these two visual modes, texts and images? And, what is the role of these two visual modes in enhancing the sense of persuasion? Based on these objectives and research questions, the study has concluded the following:

The written text was more persuasive than the images provided as the former depended highly on strategies, such as the lexical items, questioning, metaphoric language, addressing real problems, the use of celebrity, the use of upper case, repetition, a gentle reminder, or call, memes, etc. The major role of the image provided was to support what the text described before. Thus, texts have the primary persuasive role, and images come second to them.

The texts used are replete with positive and emotional lexical items; a matter that helped evoke the positive frame units. This conclusion is in line with what Pawlowski (2012) stated, to be persuasive, one needs to select terms that carry positive connotations. It also supports Strapparava et al.'s (2011) view that words in ads have attitudinal functions.

To be persuasive, advertisements need to address specific females and deal with specified problems. This conclusion goes with Woodward and Denton's (2014) conclusion; good advertisements are the ones that address issues, needs, desires and give solutions as well.

The textual code reflects a bricolage of many persuasive devices that help pull the attention.

Despite the fundamental role of texts, one cannot ignore the role of images in reflecting reality and supporting what the texts denotes and connotes. This point highlights Danesi's (1994)

statement that to be much more communicative cognitively, designers need to be careful in matching words and images.

Virtual purchasers need to develop and comprehensively construe the primary, linear or denotative function of images by examining their angles and some symbolic references as stated by Waad and Al-Bahrani (2020).

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