

Exploring Pragmatic Strategies in Energy Drink Advertisements: A Comparative Gricean Analysis of Pakistani and Indian Sting Ads

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Abstract

The marketing of energy drinks in the global markets is often based on dramatic and hyperbolic messages targeting the youthful consumers in the fast-growing markets in regions like Pakistan and India. This paper has used comparative pragmatic and multimodal study of ten advertisements of Sting energy drinks; five advertisements of Sting energy drinks in Pakistan and five advertisements of Sting energy drinks in India. Based on an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach, the study explores the relationship between verbal and visual elements and the way in which these elements of communicative messages strategically comply or do not align with the Cooperative Principle introduced by Grice (1975), including the Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance and Manner. The results reveal that both Pakistani and Indian adverts are overly dramatizing, and violate the Maxim of Quality, building on their use of fantastical and hyperbolic imagery to form aspirational meaning. However, Indian adverts are more traditional and more willing to include declarations regarding the health of their products, and are overt in regard to product details, which serves to curb the possibility of misunderstanding and indicates a stronger level of regulatory and corporate accountability. In Pakistani advertisements, however, emphasis is placed more on foregrounded real-life situations and culturally identifiable metaphors, like witches, exam success, and transformation in the workplace, but there is often a lack of disclosure in terms of health, so Pakistani youth viewers are more likely to be ethically troubled. Combining semiotic analysis (Barthes, 1977; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), with Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), the paper contends that seemingly irrelevant or exaggerated visual features serve to create cognitive salience and produce implicatures that help advertisements to get remembered and persuade audiences. Such comparative analysis would develop a global discourse as it provides a Gricean pragmatics approach to the multimodal advertisement in the South Asian region and, in the process, would explain how the regulatory cultures and repertoires influence pragmatic choices, applied when creating

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marketing practices of health-sensitive products, that reach younger customers. Policy implications and future work related to the experimental work are outlined.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Energy-Drink Advertising, Grice's Maxims, Strategic Non-Observance, Relevance Theory, Semiotics, South Asian Context, Pakistan, India, Ethical Marketing

Introduction

The term “energy drink” refers to any beverage that claims to contain a mix of ingredients intended to boost energy and alertness (Petit et al., 2012). Burde (2008) defines advertising as a persuasive communication strategy disseminated through mass media, intended to inform and influence public attitudes toward goods, services, or ideas. A known sponsor pays for and controls advertising, deciding when, where, and how ads are displayed.

Globally, ethical persuasion concerns and deceptive claims have been associated with energy drink advertisements (Smith, 2021; Alcaraz, 2022). By locating this study in the background of such a common discussion, we can better understand how South Asian advertising is or isn't reflective of global trends. Energy drinks such as Sting are advertised aggressively in Pakistan and India to their youth on the promise of social acceptance, individual performance and boost activity. As Chhetri (2019) suggests, the promotion strategies rely on attractive graphics, celebrity recommendations and dream imagery to reinforce that such drinks are going assist students perform better academically and socially. These promotions often couple energy drinks with messages of adventurousness, assertiveness and energy and appeal to youths through an appealing image.

Brands present these beverages as immediate remedies for fatigue, promising enhancements in both physical stamina and cognitive alertness. Students, professionals, an athlete often turns to energy drinks to improve their stamina or performance.

The majority of energy drinks include excessive level of caffeine, sucrose and other stimulants. Massive drinking has been linked to a variety of negative health effects, such as dehydration, increased anxiety, disturbed sleep patterns, and more serious effects, including cardiac palpitations or high blood pressure (Ibrahim and Iftikhar,

2014). This risk is especially acute in the group of younger consumers because the physiological systems of that group are more sensitive to caffeine and other stimulants. However, such potential health risks are seldom considered in the marketing of such products. Rather, promotional scripts often present energy drinks as harmless and empowering to the society.

This is achieved by intentionally influencing consumer cognitions and manipulating their behavior in turn. Teenagers and young adults, being the primary target group, are particularly susceptible to advertising as their decision-making processes are still in formation. The pervasive nature of advertising, on TV, social media and in sponsorship, means this message reaches everyone. As a result, it becomes it seems to be hard for teenagers to critically assess the long-term implications of consuming these substances.

While many studies focus on the health impacts of energy drinks on humans, there is a scarcity of research examining the linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms through which advertisements in non-Western contexts shape young consumers' perceptions.

❖ **Rationale of the Study**

Despite the increased consumption of energy drinks in countries such as Pakistan and India, there is a big gap in literature about advertising and its effects on perceptions and behavioral tendencies of young consumers in these regions. Prior to this there are many researches that have been carried out focusing on the health impact, but have not bothered themselves with pragmatic or linguistic strategies employed in advertising. To narrow it down, no previous study has used Grice's Maxims for dissecting meaning manipulation or conveyance of meaning in advertising of energy drink.

This study is of great importance, both theoretically and practically, as it addresses the current gap that i in literature and offers valuable insights for various stakeholders. It adds value to the study of pragmatics through utilization of Grice's Maxims as a framework for scrutinizing construction and interpretation of commercial messages in advertisements.

While previous studies have extensively emphasized the health effects of energy drinks, scant attention has been given to the communicative strategies that influence consumer behaviors.

The current research paper is an addition to the current academic conversation about advertising ethics, specifically in the field of consumer protection. The results demonstrate that promotional efforts can be biased in regard to focusing on the perceived benefits and minimizing or completely ignoring the risk to health. This study also explains the impact of marketing causeways, which focus on young populations, that is, teenagers, in how they are able to mold attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, it highlights the need of greater ethical questioning in advertising processes particularly in the societies where the number of young and highly impressionable individuals is usually high and prone to persuasive communication.

Moreover, the existing analysis is highly relevant to the community of public health practitioners, policy makers and regulatory authorities, which are contrary to philosophical ideologies. Making the borderline between the processes of manipulation and persuasion be enlightened, the research highlights the need of increased responsibility and transparency concerning marketing strategies. As a result, a very powerful necessity to have well defined regulations in place exists. Such insights can be used by policy makers to develop advertisement policies that would value consumer protection especially when it comes to the consideration of vulnerable youth populations.

Review of the Literature

H.P. Grice (Grice 1975) introduced the Grice's Maxims as part of his Cooperative Principle where meaning and inference on conversation are focused. This principle states that, in the context of communication, people work together to ensure they reach a common understanding. Grice has defined four conversational maxims, which entail: Maxim of Quantity- espousing a level of discourse that is neither minimal nor excessive; Maxim of Quality- espousing that one says only what he believes to be true, and has sufficient evidence to support his argument; Maxim of Relation- espousing that what is said is relevant to the prior or subsequent discourse; and Maxim of Manner- espousing that one avoids saying things that are obscure or vague, but presents them in a logical order. These maxims help prevent speakers from supplying either too much or too little information and from straying off the topic. As Mey (2001) notes, these norms not only tell about language use but also unveil speakers' attitudes and purposes especially in cases of their deliberate violation.

However, Grice noticed that speakers often breaks the maxims in order to deliver implicit meaning, which generates so-called conversational implicature. Essentially, the audiences can find meaning through shared context and background information outside the literacy (Riemer 2010). Levinson (1983) claimed that such violations require the audience to actively make sense, citing communication as an interpretative process. This is particularly applicable in advertising since the words, images, and soundtrack are intentionally blended to create an indirect evocation of meaning, as opposed to the explicit information.

Unlike the Grice model, the Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1995) assumes that communication is regulated by the principle of relevance, and speakers and listeners aim to be cognitively efficient, as they tend to achieve the mental effect with minimal effort. This theoretical framework gives a profound insight into studying multimodal communication when textual, visual, and auditory modalities are effectively exposed to each other to produce the ultimate level of interaction.

In advertising context, seemingly superficial aspects like the use of the symbol of the witch in some Pakistani Sting campaigns, can be used to bring into consideration the contextual relevance by evoking humor, curiosity and memorability. Though the presented scenario can directly violate the Maxim of Relation presented by Grice, it nonetheless provides positive cognitive behavior, which is expressed in enhanced brand memory and emotional reaction. Therefore, the breach of Gricean maxims can go together with, and even promote, relevance, where consumers not only see exaggerated or humorous representations as part of the persuasive process, but also as part and parcel of the argument and hence as true information.

The semiotic theory, which is articulated by Barthes (1977) and later developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) examines how meaning is constructed using signs, images, gestures, as well as symbols. These semiotic elements interact with verbal commodities in the advertising field in order to create elaborate meanings. The advertisements of the energy-drinks, especially, are often characterized by the use of bright color schemes, motion pictures, and timed sound effects to create the image of freshness and energy.

Even though this paper does not conduct a multimodal analysis, it recognizes that semiotic variables, such as color (e.g. red as a signifier of power), movement and lighting have a strong influence on consumer perception. These semiotic signs are

directly related to the Grice Maxims, in that exaggeration, humor or visual dramatization can be thought of as a semiotic flouting; a creative infraction that makes an argument more compelling without necessarily stating factual claims.

The Cooperative Principle of Grice and its maxims have been widely used when discussing media and advertising. Scholars have examined the degree to which such maxims are followed or violated so as to evoke the viewer emotions and reactions. For instance, Eman (2018) found that the advertisements of beverages in Pakistan often contravene the Maxim of Quantity as they contain little information about the product and at the same time make bold product claims. Also, Darane et al. (2022) indicated that the Indian energy-drink advertisement usually violates the Maxim of Quality by employing exaggerated or oblique words.

The Grice Maxims are also violated which influence consumer understanding. Chen and Yang (2020) reviewed Asian television advertisements and found out that humorous or farcical content often depends on the inferential abilities of viewers in order to identify intended messages. These deliberate digressions bring in emotional richness and cultural relatability especially to South Asian young viewers who prefer the indirect, creative means of communication.

The study of the Maxim of Relation has also shown the way in which the advertisers interlink their products with the aspirational life. As it was pointed out by Ullah et al. (2023), the Pakistani advertisements of energy-drinks associate their brands with extreme sports, so they create the images of power, freedom, and excitement in their advertisements which are not explicitly explained, but rather implied. On the same note, investigating celebrity endorsement, Sama (2019) discovered that these ads tend to violate the Maxim of Manner by using ambiguous catchphrases and overusing visual representations.

Such strategies can be seen to undermine communicative clarity but they do not necessarily undermine communicative efficacy. Instead, they boost pragmatic inference, which encourages viewers to derive meaning with the help of common cultural and social knowledge (Waller et al.,2023).

Although the majority of the literature previously used the Maxims of Grice as analytical instruments, the current academic literature points to more and more to their combination with cognitive and visual theories to gain a better insight into modern advertisements. Relevance Theory explains why the audience tolerates

exaggeration by having inference of metaphorical intent (Wilson and Sperber, 2004) and Semiotic Analysis gives meaning to the way visual symbols either enhance or replace the verbal meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). This combination allows the researchers to document the simultaneous operation of the verbal and the visual in passing across of persuasive, memorable messages in marketing energy drinks.

Earlier scholarly research on advertising of energy drinks in South Asia has focused mostly on socio-cultural or health-related consequences, focusing on consumer behaviour as opposed to pragmatic structure. Singh et al. (2024) studied the ways in which energy drinks are positioned as productivity and stamina tools, but Rambe (2017) discussed the ways in which they are marketed as branding practices based on sports and travelling image. On the same note, Kumar et al. (2014) also found that the Indian energy drink advertisements placed lifestyle aspirations, such as ambition, rebellion, and modernity, ahead of product facts.

Nevertheless, these studies did not often investigate the use of Griceian Maxims or their violation to create persuasive meaning. Although Bleakley et al. (2022) and Teraiya et al. (2023) addressed the role of emotional and visual messages in the advertising of energy drinks, they failed to combine linguistic-pragmatic approach with semiotic or relevance-based views. Neither had previous studies taken a comparative approach between Pakistan and India though they share but differ in terms of cultural norms of communication.

This research therefore addresses this gap by concentrating on the use of pragmatic violations in advertisement of Sting energy drinks and the use of semiotic in the advertisement of the drink in the two culturally related markets. It combines Cooperative Principle, Relevance Theory, and Semiotic Analysis of Grice in order to show the interaction of exaggeration and visual storytelling as mutually dependent persuasive instruments.

Methodology

This paper analyses how advertising campaigns used in commercials of energy drinks affect the consumer perception, focusing on Sting-brand adverts that were spread in 2022-24 in Pakistan and India. Through an interpretivist paradigm, the study aims at explaining the subjective meanings embedded in the advertising content. Investigating how viewers make sense of visual information, and the

persuasive meanings that emerge as a result, interpretivism is considered an appropriate framework to identify the latent intentions and reactions of the audience.

The study uses a qualitative research design with the purpose of exploring more profound meanings, rhetorical strategies, and reception of visual material by the audience. The qualitative methodology allows a detailed explanation of verbal and visual meanings, which allows seeing how and why some maxims are intentionally broken in order to achieve persuasion. Instead of the testing of hypotheses or quantifying the data, the study attempts to explain the consistency or inconsistency of visual aspects with pragmatic principles in the cultural and advertising context.

❖ **Data Collection**

The purposive sampling strategy was used to select advertisements that were characterized by thematic and stylistic differences. Ten advertisements were picked including five Pakistani and five Indian ones based on official television programs and YouTube videos. The advertisements that were chosen were those that were shown in prime time (8 p.m. to 10 p.m.), usually before or after a drama serial, or at the same time as a broadcast of a national news, and therefore reach the greatest number of TV viewers. Advertisements were done digitally especially on YouTube but in strategic positions before or during the entertainment programs, thus guaranteeing high viewer participation.

A code was assigned to each of the ads (PK₁-PK₅ to Pakistan and IN₁-IN₅ to India) to be able to analyze them analytically. All the ads were given codes (PK₁-PK₅ in Pakistan, IN₁-IN₅ in India) to make analyzing them more analytical. Appendix A shows the coding set-up.

❖ **Justification of Sample Size:**

The decision to interpret five advertisements in a country was based on the fact of data saturation whereby it was observed that there were similar pragmatic and visual elements that were common in the five ads selected thus covering the entire situation without repetition. The timeframe was established between 2022 and 2024 to ensure that the current advertising trends were captured and to explore the practical change that had been noticed in post-pandemic campaigns wherein the visibility of the brands and creative experimentation significantly rose.

Theoretical Framework

The current study is based on the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975), which argues that effective communication is subject to following four conversational maxims formed as Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner. These maxims are used in the collaborative meaning-making of quotidian interaction. However, in the field of advertising discourse, they are often deliberately violated in order to produce humor, exaggeration, or irony that promotes persuasiveness. This kind of strategic disobeying is not a failure in communication, but a careful diversion with a purpose of getting attention and arousing the audience.

As a result, the Maxims developed by Grice form the primary analytical framework of the research, explaining how advertisers control the principles of conversations to provoke a particular behavior on the side of the consumer. To provide a more detailed prism of interpretation, the analysis uses Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) and Semiotic Analysis (Barthes, 1977; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) as supplementary approaches. Relevance Theory explains how the audience is able to infer the intended meaning through relating seemingly exaggerated or irrelevant visual information to brand identity, and Semiotic Analysis asks how signs, colors and visual metaphors prove these pragmatic strategies.

Altogether, these theoretical frameworks enhance our understanding of the concomitant functioning of linguistic and visual messages as the tools that deliver persuasive messages. Although the framework by Grice still plays a central role, the relevance theory and Semiotic Analysis are all added to the further explanation of the mechanisms through which meaning is perceived and visually built in modern advertisements.

❖ Data Analysis Technique

Each advertisement was viewed three times by two independent coders.

- During the first viewing, the overall theme, storyline, and message were noted.
- The second viewing focused on identifying specific instances of Gricean Maxim violations (Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner) in both verbal and visual components.
- The third viewing confirmed agreement between both coders.

The coding followed a codebook based on the Maxims of Grice (1975). The categories included exaggeration, omission, ambiguity, and dramatization and thus covered the intentional distortion of meaning by advertisers towards persuasive purpose. Table 2 -Coding Framework Based on the Maxims of Grice is provided in Appendix B.

The level of inter-coder reliability was measured as Cohen κ 0.86, and the 0.86 represents the high degree of agreement among coders. A parallel audit trail was kept in order to record the decision taken analytically and to maintain transparency of methodology. There was an iterative discussion on the disagreements to maintain analytical consistency throughout the dataset.

After the coding, the data were analyzed thematically, and a comparative emphasis was made on Pakistani and Indian advertisements. This methodology at least allowed singling out common and unique pragmatic patterns within the respective cultural settings. The persuasive mechanism of strategic non-observation of Gricean Maxims as opposed to communicative failure highlighted by the thematic analysis controlled how the audience interprets and reacts to energy drink advertising.

❖ Data Analysis

This chapter provides an in-depth examination of the Sting energy drinks advertisements in Pakistan and India using the Maxims of Grice as a tool of analysis namely: Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner. The research aims at determining the degree to which such advertisements as channels of communication adhere or fall out of the cooperative principles as well as reflecting on how consumer interpretive processes are affected by cultural allusions, hyperbole situations, and regulatory frameworks.

Pakistani Advertisement 1: Northern Side (2022) Tagline: "Life Ka Switch On"



This advertisement features a girl unable to explore the northern regions of Pakistan due to time limitations. After consuming Sting, the title character (a boy) becomes energized and swiftly travels across various scenic locations, encountering the

problem in a miraculous way. The tag line indicates emphasizes the energizing properties of Sting.

- Maxim of Quality: The advertisement violates the maxim of quality as the transformation described is unrealistic. The fact that the protagonist can cover great distances in a flash when she takes the drink gives a false impression of supernatural influences. There is no disclaimer in it.
- Maxim of Quantity: The advertisement fulfills this maxim, by being a concise and unambiguous message: Sting gives immediate energy.
- Maxim of Relevance: Despite the focus of the narrative on dynamism and energy, the exaggerated locomotion segment is somehow relevant to the actual effects of the drink.
- Maxim of Manner: The narrative is clear and is direct, but the unrealistic nature of the story can be deceptive as to what the product is truly able to do.

Interpretation: The advertisement is more oriented to visual fantasy and traveling aesthetics than to objective reality. The lack of any disclosures thereof also highlights the lapse in the regulatory compliance and creates ethical considerations of the implications that might be misleading.

Pakistani Advertisement 2: Bikers and the Witch (2023) Tagline: "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi!"



Two bikers risk going into a forest and meet an enchantress. Later intake of Sting by one of them creates a sense of self-confidence thus leading to bring a rose to the witch, hence a form of energy and daring.

- Maxim of Quality: This maxim is violated by use of fantastical characters and over the top reactions to the consumption of the drink. There is no regulatory obscuration that is noted.
- Maxim of Quantity: The ad manages to meet this maxim because the emphasis on
- the stimulating power of Sting is made without unnecessary information.

- Maxim of Relevance: The witch character though providing some entertainment, is an outlier to the core message, a symbolic element, loosely related to the intended functionality of the product.
- Maxim of Manner: The advertisement lacks realism despite the visual consistency, as the surrealism and the magic conclusion are too obvious.

Interpretation: The advertisement uses metaphorical language and fantastical imagery as hyperbole and metaphorical representation of courage and vigor, thus, appealing to the younger population; however, to the detriment of the clarity of information conveyed. The constant exclusion of disclaimer texts is another indication of the laxity of the existing advertising rules.

Pakistani Advertisement 3: The Casual ‘Witch’ Reference in Driving Scenario (2023) Tagline: “Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi!”



The ad under consideration makes a metaphorical reference to a witch to suggest the quick acceleration speed after the consumption of the drink Sting and provide a comparison of it with the Pakistani advertisement titled Ad 2.

- Maxim of Quality: There is a use of augmented driving capabilities as a direct result of taking Sting, which violates the maxim of quality. The advertiser does not give any disclaimer to indicate that the assertion is hyperbole, therefore, there is a likelihood of misleading the viewers on the actual pharmacological impact of the product.
- Maxim of Quantity: The advert meets the criteria of conciseness in terms of the maxim of quantity. It presents a concise, clear message saying that Sting increases energy, thus keeping the message short and precise enough to capture the gist of the offer.
- Maxim of Relevance: The metaphor of a witch does not fit thematically with the main story that makes the beverage the booster of energy. Therefore, its inclusion provides little significance to the claim that is advertised and can water down the coherence of the intended message.

- Maxim of Manner: The advertisement already has a clear interpretability; however, the use of the symbolic hyperbole, can easily distract the perception of the audience about the seriousness of the message.

Interpretation: Upon interpretation, the advertisement is very clear and simple to read, but the symbolic exaggeration can be charged with causing confusion to the audience when it comes to the severity of the advertised consequence.

Pakistani Advertisement 4: The Office Woman and Sting Energy Drink (2024)

Tagline: "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi!"



A tired female office employee takes Sting and after that her productivity is considerably enhanced.

- Maxim of Quality: The character of the ad violates this maxim because it over exaggerates the effect of Sting which would bring about immediate production after consumption without any written disclosure.
- Maxim of Quantity: The essence or the message is fully brought out: Sting resiliently energizes.
- Maxim of Relevance: The situation corresponds to the everyday life of a consumer making it more approachable as compared to other fantastical models.
- Maxim of Manner: The story is concise, straight forward and easy to understand.

Interpretation: This advert is as close to a realistic depiction as allowed; it shows the recovery of energy within realistic boundaries. It indicates a progressive movement to responsible representation in the future Pakistani campaigns.

Pakistani Advertisement 5: The Exam Preparation Scenario (2024) Tagline:

"Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi!"



In this ad, a young male drinker takes the drink called Sting and later claims that his energizing mood has been improved instantly and that he has acquired an overall command of the intellectual content involved in his tests. Answering his peer about his preparedness, the person responds confidently that he is sufficiently ready. The ad ends with a disclaimer; acts displayed in it are dramatized and digitalized.

- Maxim of Quality: The advertisement violates this maxim by implicating that the use of Sting grants immediate scholarly knowledge that is invaluable during exams, therefore falsifying the genuine impact of the item.
- Maxim of Quantity: The advert does not violate the Maxim of Quantity as they present a concise text on the screen about the stimulating impact of Sting; it does not include any extra information like caffeine concentration.
- Maxim of Relevance: The ad focuses on exams preparation, which are not related to the actual physiological value of the drink, as the product does not prepare the brain but only provides energy.
- Maxim of Manner: The ad is clear in its storyline but may be confusing to watch as it suggests an unrealistic effect of the drink on test results.

Interpretation: This ad is an example of the partial regulatory progression by use of a disclaimer, yet the hyperbolic statement still contravenes the Maxim of Quality, which points out that transparency is never enough to go with unrealistic statements.

Indian Advertisement 1: Action-Packed Energy (Akshay Kumar – 2022)
Tagline: “Sting.Energy ka Naya Sense!”



In the advertisement, the actor Akshay Kumar performs exaggeration stunts, crossing an under construction building and fighting with a gorilla after consuming Sting.

- **Maxim of Quality:** The depiction blatantly breaches this maxim, with the stunts being a matter of fantasy, and not empirically related to the real impact of the beverage. Ethical responsibility would ensure the inclusion of relevant disclaims.
- **Maxim of Quantity:** The aesthetical display of the product floods the people with non-essential details thus losing emphasis on the actual use of the product.
- **Maxim of Relevance:** Introduction of a gorilla and unrealistic abilities does not fit the theme of energizing product making the message less relevant to the target consumer.
- **Maxim of Manner:** The visual chaos as shown in the scenes clouds the intended message of the scenes, creating ambiguity on the real capabilities of both the drink.

Interpretation: The semiotic use of gorilla as a symbol of primitive strength plays as a metaphor to increase the brand power; this coincides with the Relevancy Theory since it provides a greater emotional response despite the implausible facts. Therefore, the advert shows a conscious lack of consideration of the maxims set out by Grice to gain dramatic effect and appeal to the audience, focusing on action and humor instead of the communication through excessive theatrics.

Indian Advertisement 2: Energy in the Lab (Akshay Kumar – 2023) Tagline: “Energy Bolay To Sting!”



The setting is a futuristic laboratory where an actor known as Akshay Kumar starts a fan which throws a scientist into the laboratory floor after ingesting Sting.

- **Maxim of Quality:** The advertisement violates this maxim by implementing an exceptionally implausible situation the supposed transmission of energy

waves by a fan cannot be explained by established physics, despite the inscription of performance disclaimer provisions.

- Maxim of Quantity: Although the communication claims to be communicating the benefit of energy boosting, this assertion is hidden, and it is dwarfed by excessive dramatization.
- Maxim of Relevance: The dramatic nature and the setting in the ad cannot be relevant compared to the actual functionality profile of the product of the advert at hand hence, the relevance of the advertised is lost.
- Maxim of Manner: The style of the presentation by being whimsical and theatrical clouds the factual information, making the intent of communicating unclear.

Interpretation: In short, the promotional art uses exaggerated images of technology in order to signify the power of man, thus adhering to modern conventions of digital aesthetics at the cost of logicity.

Indian Advertisement 3: Energy-Powered Rescue (2024) Tagline: "Energy ka King, Sting!"



The advertisement under consideration is humorous in the sense that it portrays a politician being saved by a kind of energy-powered arrow deflecting a bullet.

- Maxim of Quality: The ad clearly breaks the maxim of quality since the situation of the rescue is impossible and possibly deceiving altogether, however, it contains obvious caveats.
- Maxim of Quantity: The complex storyline sees the viewer lose focus on the underlying invigorating message, thus the cognitive overload.
- Maxim of Relevance: A political rescue and a superhero-style action sequence do not relate to the actual use of a product, and, thus, the ad loses contextual relevance.
- Maxim of Manner: The sensational story presents uncertainty, which may leave the audience puzzled.

Interpretation: This ad underlines tension of creative expression versus product realism as an experience that is very pronounced in the marketing of energy drinks, which is especially the case in this advertisement.

Indian Advertisement 4: Raksha Bandhan – The Shopping Rescue (2022)
Tagline: "Energy Bolay To Sting!"



After drinking a Sting drink, actor Akshay Kumar promptly completes commercial tasks on behalf of his sisters on the occasion of the cultural celebration of Raksha Bandhan.

- Maxim of Quality: The advert violates the maxim when it suggests that people who
- drink Sting gain superhuman speed and strength. The advertisement material has used warnings to reduce the possible misinformation.
- Maxim of Quantity: The story is unambiguous and detailed, which focuses on quantified vitality in a festive and socially vibrant environment.
- Maxim of Relevance: The advertisement is also relevant to the revitalizing needs of the youthful segment in the society and its ambiance and motifs reinforce the relevance to the purpose of the ad.
- Maxim of Manner: The advert has a logical structure and depicts a single narrative.

Interpretation: The cultural framing makes narrative relevance and makes the hyperbolic description palatable as a symbolic representation, thus meets the mainstream norms of South Asian advertising.

Indian Advertisement 5: Lift Scenario (2022) Tagline: "Energy Ponay Do!"



A young man drinks Sting and lifted up a woman by taking her up a stair after there is a failure of a lift.

- Maxim of Quality: The advertisement is mostly realistic but inflates physical strength somewhat, which does not fully conform to this maxim. There is a disclaimer to this exaggeration.
- Maxim of Quantity: The message is brief and effective, stating clearly that physical activity is connected to energy provision.
- Maxim of Relevance: It is related to the purported energizing effect of the product in question; every detail shown in the scenario is highly relevant to it.
- Maxim of Manner: The story is clear, linear and graphic.

Interpretation: The advert is balanced in terms of dramatization and possibility, ultimately fulfilling the principle of cooperative Gricean principles, but maintaining the level of entertainment.

Comparative Findings

Comparative analysis indicates that there are systematic differences in advertisement strategies of the two countries:

- Pakistani advertisements put more emphasis on narratives that are relatable, compromising the clarity of facts and ethical message disclosure, often leaving the required elements of disclaimers on the cutting room floor.
- Indian advertisements exhibit the aspect of regulatory conformity by using explicit inclusion of disclaimers but concealing exaggeration in culturally attractive background or humorously charged situations.
- Both of them use strategic breaches of Gricean Maxims to attract people, but the observance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by India can give the campaigns a more ethically convincing tone. To obtain a detailed picture of the comparative analysis of the two national advertisements, one may refer to Table 3.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Grice's Maxims in Pakistani vs. Indian Ads

Maxim	Pakistan (2022-2024)	India (2022-2024)	Interpretive Comment
Quality	Frequently violated; no disclaimers; exaggerated depictions of physical/mental power.	Violated but accompanied by disclaimers; ethical responsibility evident.	Reflects difference in regulatory and CSR culture.
Quantity	Limited product data; high dramatization, few factual cues.	Balanced information with disclaimers and narrative clarity.	India combines entertainment with responsible information.
Relevance	Symbolic/fantasy storytelling often distracts from product message.	Exaggeration embedded within culturally relevant or festive themes.	Cultural context strengthens message coherence in Indian ads.
Manner	Fast-paced visuals and ambiguity reduce clarity.	Clear sequencing and disclaimers improve comprehension.	Clarity maintained through structure and ethical framing.
Regulation / Ethics	Minimal regulation and public-health guidance.	Adherence to ASCI guidelines and ethical codes.	Highlights gap in national advertising governance.

Research Findings

The current analysis indicates that there is a general trend in the advertisement of Sting energy drinks in both Pakistan and India with special focus on breaching the Maxims of Grice. The Maxim of Quality is violated significantly in most of the commercials that are reviewed. Through such advertisements, the characters are

seen to perform unrealistic acts, like racing through urban areas, fighting fantasy villains or making heroic saves right after drinking the drink. Although viewers might see such exaggerations as standard puffery, the key ethical issue is the lack of the health warnings and disclosed ingredients. This lack of balancing information is a serious violation of the Maxim of Quality, since this distorts the true effects of the drink and may give consumers false information about health risks.

The majority of advertisements, though, follow the Maxim of Quantity because they convey a central message in such a way that Sting would provide one with energy without inundating the viewer with unnecessary information. However, the fact that Pakistani adverts do not mention ingredients and health warnings does not only break the Maxim of Quantity, it also brings up the ethical issues, with the audience potentially making incorrect assumptions about the safety and appropriateness of the product.

There is inconsistency in the application of the Maxim of Relevance. Whereas certain adverts suggest the effects of the product in terms of its energizing properties through instances of situations that the audience can relate with such as work-related exhaustion or shopping around the season, other adverts use fantastic and unrelated storylines, such as paranormal battles or political rescues. Though these components improve the entertainment aspect, they distract the practical utility of the product thus contravening the Maxim of Relevance.

The Maxim of Manner is mostly supported through the use of coherent visual hierarchy and systematic sequence of the narration, which enables understanding of the advertisements by the audience. However, there are still isolated cases of fragmented or disorganized images, which creates a sense of ambiguity and thus creates uncertainty among the audience, as to the physical advantages that the product can bring. This inconsistency reduces the clarity of communication and can create possible misunderstandings of the effects of the product.

Taken altogether, the results indicate that Sting ads, despite being culturally captivating and amusing, rely on intentional overstatement and dramatization alongside the omission of crucial health-related information. Although such strategies are effective in grabbing attention of the audience, they also compromise informational and ethical integrity of the advertisements and thus they may end up misinforming consumers on the real benefits and risks of Sting energy drinks.

Discussion

The chapter explains the findings of the empirical study as they relate to the Cooperative Principle, Relevance Theory and Semiotic Analysis by Grice. It analyzes the ways in which Pakistani and Indian (2022-2024) advertisements of Sting energy drink strategically, violate, or redefine the Gricean Maxims, which are Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner to influence consumer perception. Moreover, the consideration of ethical implications and the cultural peculiarities of the two advertising worlds are considered.

❖ Maxim of Quality: Truthfulness and Realism

The Maxim of Quality argues that a communicator must avoid uttering statements that are either false or are not sufficiently substantiated by evidence (Grice, 1975). This principle is deliberately violated in both Indian and Pakistani commercials promoting the product Sting, purportedly to increase the entertainment quality and persuasiveness. However, the essence of such violations and their ethical aspects are significantly different in the two markets.

The transformations in Pakistani advertisements are often exaggerated and the characters involved are shown having gained extraordinary strength or getting seemingly miraculous results after taking Sting without giving any accompanying disclaimer or a contextual frame. These omissions are misleading to audiences because of such implication of a direct causal relationship which is contrary to the known physiological facts. Through the dramatized presentation, therefore, the advertisement is changed into a medium of information to a medium of symbolic storytelling.

Conversely, Indian advertising still utilizes similar exaggerative tactics but addresses the potential ethical issues with the help of incorporating clear disclaimer and product disclaimers, such as, contains caffeine, not to be taken by children or pregnant women. This accountable disclosure that aligns to the principles of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) shows an increased concern of protecting consumers and telling the truth.

Semiotic perspective on such exaggerations makes them signs not false words; they refer to vigor, alertness, and superiority, not actual events. The exaggeration, according to Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), yields positive cognitive processes that help the viewers in drawing symbolic meaning of the brand and

associates it with energy, speed and control. In turn, the breaking of the principle of quality is not only the deception: this is a deliberate, planned, and successful increase of involvement with the formation of symbolic membership.

However, the lack of such assurances in Pakistani adverts precludes the interpretation of the symbolic exaggeration as safely metaphorical. Relating to this, the violation of the postulation of quality in Pakistan turns into a purely creative choice as opposed to the country of India where it becomes an ethical issue, but in India it is a rhetorical mechanism with controllable speech.

❖ **Maxim of Quantity: Balance between Information and Persuasion**

The Maxim of Quantity forces the communicators to provide sufficient information by not providing too little or too much. In advertising, it controls the volume of factual and context information which is used in conjunction with persuasive appeals. Ads in Pakistani also have a tendency of incomplete provision of information in that they are only restricted to well-worn-out taglines like Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi or Life Ka Switch On and lacking evidence in the form of written or vocal explanations about ingredients or consumer health. This kind of minimalism can increase visual attention at the expense of the communicative openness required of health-related products.

In contrast, Indian advertisement, being also as dramatic, has a good balance of emotive attractiveness and the content information. The micro-level informational strategies include disclaimers, visual description of ingredients, and textual notes, which will meet certain Maxim of Quantity without losing the level of entertainment.

The commentators have noted that there is a need to explain the importance of such selective disclosure. Pragmatically speaking, under-informing is the opposite of cooperative communication and violates the vital principle of providing the necessary information thus incorrectly informing consumers about the actual consequences of the product. The Maxim of Quantity is relevant in the situation of ethical advertising in the context of quantity of information and in its relevance to consumer protection.

Thus, Sting Indian campaigns reflect the partial adherence to this maxim by the balance between the narrative and the truth but the Pakistani campaigns show

systematic under- information, in favor of fantasy and humor, without concerns of enlightenment of the consumers.

❖ **Maxim of Relevance: Staying on Message**

The maxim of relevance described by Grice assumes that communicative interactions are contextually and thematically relevant to the discussed topic. This is an internal principle that is essential when understanding how symbolic or fantastical imagery contributes to either enhancing or devaluing brand meaning.

The features of fantastical motifs, such as witches, supernatural forces, and allegedly beyond possible acts are widespread in the Pakistani advertising environment, although they seem to have nothing to do with the actual purpose of the product. Even though these aspects increase brand salience, they simultaneously downplay the logical connection between the drink and its factually based energizing benefits.

Indian commercials, on the other hand, would like to place hyperbole in culturally resonating parameters. An example is the advertisement of the Raksha Bandhan where the theme of vigor and speed are associated with the theme of family responsibility. This form of contextual tethering maintains thematic relevance and as such, the audience is able to comprehend the dramatized content according to social conventions that use them.

The criticism also emphasizes the need to conduct demanding theoretical exposure, which can be illustrated with the implementation of the Relevance Theory. To this framework, even fantastical content could be found to qualify on criteria of relevance in the event that it provokes a high degree of affective or cognitive incentives. Therefore, the use of amplified or figurative imagery does not have to go against the principles of cooperation so long as the audience views such images as metaphorically justified in the context.

The Pakistani ads can be interpreted in this theoretical perspective: the allegedly witch figure although superficially extraneous symbolically suggests the theme of temptation, exhilaration, or underground power, thus aiding the conventions of indigenous comic. Nevertheless, unless a warning is given about it, the symbolic under-text can be misunderstood as a literal distortion. In line with this, the maxims of relevance are transgressed in the prerogative of the rhetoric but are often understood out of context at the pragmatic level in the Pakistani milieu.

❖ **Maxim of Manner: Clarity and Structure**

The Maxim of Manner prescribes the necessity of clarity, coherence, and the avoidance of ambiguity. Although the advertisements of the two countries employ the active visual features and high-speed editing methods, they are significantly different in terms of how they control the understanding of the audience.

Indian advertisements are very well sequenced, he/she has coherent stories, and there are visual signifiers to guide the viewer. Hyperbole is interpreted through structured stories, supported by overt disclaims, and thus allows audiences to receive the message of a hyperbole correctly. On the contrary, Pakistani commercials use speedy cuts, disjointed narratives, and do not contain textual prompts, which makes the clarity of information weak.

Although both countries use exaggeration to draw attention, the advertisements produced in India contribute to the Maxim of Manner by providing the structural coherence and advertising that Pakistani advertisements violate the concept by giving attention to sensory stimuli instead of providing interpretative information.

These results validate the claims of Grice that, in as much as there is mutual contextual understanding, there would be a possibility of effective communication even in the face of breaches of Cooperative Principles. Indian advertisements develop such insight, and Pakistani ones by not resolving narrative structure enhance the probability of being misunderstood.

❖ **Celebrity Endorsements and Cultural Framing**

A deeper nexus can be identified between celebrity endorsement, cultural semiotics, and Gricean pragmatics. The association of beverage brand Sting with Akshay Kumar plays out in the Indian context by enhancing the symbolic credibility of the celebrity though his energy persona acts as a semiotic signifier to add credibility to the product brand. Such correspondence is a case of pragmatic cooperation through the similar cultural significance of the identity of the endorser and the thematic content of the product.

In contrast, Pakistani advertisement campaigns would largely consist of mundane subjects or familiar situations, therefore, putting authenticity over aspiration. This strategy helps in the identification of the audience and at the same time limits symbolic intensity. Therefore, the dichotomy of communicative approaches in the two countries can be discussed due to the different cultural orientations: in India,

the aspirational ethos of communication was opposed to Pakistan, which tends to equate to realism and humor.

In a theoretical sense, these difference in approach can help shed light on convergent nature of semiotic cues, including gestures, color schemes, and rhythm, and pragmatic approaches toward persuasive effectiveness. The celebrity, in that sense, is a multimodal marker of vitality, prosperity and masculinity hence, is an interpretive frame-work that has a moderating effect on exaggeration and maintains viewer credibility.

❖ Ethical and Regulatory Implications

The analysis highlights the existence of significant regulatory differences between the two markets. In Indian advertisements, there is strict compliance with the ethical standards of the American Society of Cinematographers (ASCI) but in advertisements of Pakistan there is the inconsistency of regulations and weak supervision. The effect of this divergence is significant in audience perception of exaggeration, and this affects the perceived validity of such rhetoric practices.

According to a pragmatic perspective, the placing of disclaimer statements in the text operates as the meta-communicative signifier which steers the means of interpretation by clearly stating that exaggeration was purposeful. Without such indicators, exaggerated content may just be perceived as deceptive as opposed to creative rhetorical tool.

The regulatory transparency, in turn, presupposes the incorporation into the Cooperative Principle in the sphere of mass communications. Not only are the maxim of truthfulness (Quality), the maxim of adequacy (Quantity), the maxim of relevance (Focus), and the maxim of clarity (Manner) only conversational norms, but also ethical demands of the discourse.

Theoretical Synthesis

The paper is based on the Cooperative Principle of Grice, Relevance Theory, and semiotics to explain the creation of persuasive messages in energy-drink advertisement.

- Gricean Maxims are the analytical basis of identifying communicative violation and manipulation.

- Relevance Theory is an explanation that exaggerated or humorous details retain relevance due to the opportunity of offering cognitive and affective rewards to audiences.
- Semiotic analysis shows how these pragmatic cues are subsequently translated into culturally coded messages using symbolic means through the use of color, pace, celebrity endorsement, and fantasy imagery.

Taken altogether, these frameworks clarify that the advertising discourse has a deliberate intent of subverting the norms of an ordinary communication in order to produce not only emotional resonance but also build brand loyalty. The difference is not necessarily only in the manner of the use of exaggeration but in how it will be framed responsibly.

The results support the hypothesis that despite systematic breach of the Gricean Maxims on both Indian and Pakistani sting operation, Indian advertisement look at the ethical accountability of the advertisement and its structure, but the Pakistani advert is indicative of cultural innovation and ethical ambiguity. The theoretical perspective synthesis, i. e. the Grice, Sperber and Wilson and the Barthes works, supports the idea that any specific deliberate violation of norms, a cooperative one, can be a persuasive tool employed in a responsible approach. However, where regulating oversight is less intense like in Pakistan, these plans can create wrong interpretations and misconceptions about the public and health.

Conclusion

The research has investigated the way in which Sting energy drink advertisements created in 2022 and 2024 in Pakistan and India use or break Grice Maxims of the Cooperative Principle of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner to build persuasive and culturally sensitive messages. A qualitative study carried out with the help of the Relevance Theory and Semiotic Analysis established that the manipulation of linguistic and visual elements to elicit emotions and influence consumer perceptions of energy, confidence, and vitality is indeed a make by the advertisers.

Both advertisements belonging to Pakistan and India have their basis on intentional exaggeration and dramatization but the ethics of their presentation have significant differences. Advertisements by Pakistanis will often depict unrealistic power or success without the relevant disclaimers thus the Maxim of Quality is contravened. Although Indian adverts, as well, are exaggerated, they alleviate the ethical issues

with the inclusion of health warnings and Codes of the ASCI. Indian campaigns offer a better mix of entertainment and information; thus, they meet the Maxim of Quantity, and give relevance to the narrative process by connecting the product to social or festal settings. Pakistani advertisements, however, being creative and humorous, often lose focus on the message taking the unrelated element of fantasy as well.

Considering the Maxim of Manner, the Indian advertisements have more structural clarity that is created by orderly visuals and statements placed with disclaimers, whereas the Pakistani ones use quick images, creating interpretive uncertainty. In general, the two use deliberate pragmatic deviations in strengthening persuasion, but uncontrolled communicative tactics are at risk of deceiving consumers. The research has found that Indian campaigns are more ethically responsible and compliant to regulations whereas Pakistani commercials are more creative and culturally stimulating but need to provide better guidance to the consumers and more stringent control.

Recommendations

The current research points at considerable implications to advertisers, regulating bodies, school instructors, and buyers. Some of the major recommendations are made to facilitate ethical advertising practices and maximize the awareness of the audience.

Advertising agencies and production departments are encouraged to focus on communicative transparency with the inclusion of any dramatized or photo-enhanced information with clear disclaimers. This clarification can help viewers distinguish between a representational fiction and factual assertions, which allows avoiding the development of a false impression about the effectiveness of a product. The incorporation of disclaimers in settings where regulatory intervention has not taken shape, as in the example of Pakistan, it should be made a necessity in the frame of professional standards, which will make advertising action in line with the Gricean principle of Quality.

The regulatory agencies are advised to develop and implement stringent guidelines that guarantee accuracy, honesty, and accountability in the selling of energy drinks. These standards must be enforced to reveal the amount of caffeine in it, the possible side effects, as well as age- based consumption. The advertisers need to restrain

between persuasive appeal and the integrity of facts thus meeting the Maxim of Quantity.

The creative and linguistic strategies must still be within the overlaying purpose of communicating the product. Using fantasy too much or irrelevant imagery dilutes relevance, but culturally recognizable symbolism and realistic scenes increase the level of coherence and clarity to the message, which is compliance to the Maxim of Manner.

Lastly, media literacy should be encouraged among the young consumers to promote critical awareness. The preservation of ethical transparency and regulatory predictability will eventually make consumers gain confidence, and persuasion will work professionally within the cultural and social limits.

Further Research Directions

Despite the fact that this study provides a comparative evaluation of Pakistani and Indian Sting advertisements of the energy drink, the future research must expand its methodological and geographical scope. The enlargement of the data corpus into other South Asian markets such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Srilanka would provide a finer interpretation of how the heterogeneous nature of culture and regulation affect the pragmatic and semiotic architecture of the advertising messages.

Future research should adopt quantitative or mixed-methods research designs to directly corroborate perceptions of the audience, and more precisely the youth and regular drinkers of energy drinks. These studies may be used to test how intentional violations of the Grice Maxims affect the consumer trust, retention of message and the buy intention.

Furthermore, the increasing use of artificial intelligence in advertising requires some investigation to learn how the AI-generated images, words, and sounds are changing the images of truth, clarity, and relevance in the discourse of promoting products and services.

Lastly, future studies are recommended to examine the intersection of advertising ethics and public-health communication through evaluation of the effectiveness of DISCLAIMERS, warning messages and visual representations in responsible consumption. These avenues would contribute on a better understanding of how

innovative creative strategies in the energy-drink industry can be synchronized with ethical and communicative integrity in various cultural contexts.

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Appendix A: Advertisement Coding Configuration

ID	Country	Title / Tagline (short)	Brief description	Celebrity (Y/N)	Year	Platform (TV/YouTube)
PK1	Pakistan	Northern Side — "Life Ka Switch On"	Boy energized and travels across scenic northern locations after drinking Sting.	No	2022	TV / YouTube.
PK2	Pakistan	Bikers & Witch — "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi"	Two bikers encounter a witch; dramatized boost after Drinking Sting.	No	2023	TV / YouTube.
PK3	Pakistan	Driving Witch scenario — "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi"	Witch metaphor used in driving context; symbolic dramatization.	No	2023	TV / YouTube.
PK4	Pakistan	Office Woman — "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi"	Office worker regains productivity immediately after consuming Sting (disclaimer present).	No	2024	TV / YouTube.
PK5	Pakistan	Exam Preparation — "Taste Bhi, Tez Bhi"	Student claims instant exam readiness after Sting; includes on- screen disclaimer.	No	2024	TV / YouTube.
IN1	India	Action-Packed Energy — "Sting. Energy ka Naya Sense!"	Akshay Kumar performs exaggerated stunts (gorilla fight).	Yes	2022	TV / YouTube.
IN2	India	Energy in the Lab — "Energy Bolay To Sting!"	Futuristic lab — scientist blown across room by fan after Sting.	Yes	2023	TV / YouTube.
IN3	India	Energy-Powered Rescue — "Energy ka King, Sting!"	Energy-powered arrow deflects bullet; political/rescue humour.	No	2024	TV / YouTube.
IN4	India	Raksha Bandhan Shopping Rescue — "Energy	Akshay completes shopping tasks rapidly (festival tie-in).	Yes	2022	TV / YouTube.

		Bolay To Sting!				
IN5	India	Lift Scenario-- "Energy Ponay Do!"	Energetic activities tied to aspiration	No	2022	TV / YouTube.

Table 2. Coding Framework Based on Grice's Maxims

Maxim	Description	Indicators in Advertisement	Example Code
Quality	Truthfulness /evidence	Unrealistic transformation, lack of disclaimers	PK1, IN1
Quantity	Adequate information	Omission of ingredients or excessive visual data	PK2, IN2
Relevance	Thematic consistency	Disconnected fantasy or cultural metaphors	PK3, IN3
Manner	Clarity and order	Fast cuts, chaotic visuals, confusing symbolism	PK4, IN4

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