

Generalized Conversational Implicature in the Slogans of Popular Chocolate Brands

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ABSTRACT

Slogans are widely used in advertising to stand out and to persuade the audience to purchase the products, especially in the chocolate industry. Rather than using direct persuasion, brands use creative language to craft their slogans, which can lead to misinterpretation. This study applied Levinson's Generalized Conversational Implicature to identify the principles applied and the meaning implied in the slogans of seventeen chocolate brands. It was found that two slogans applied the quantity principle – one with the scalar implicature and one with the clausal implicature, eleven applied the informativeness principle, and four applied the manner principle. After identifying the principles, this study further analysed the implicatures and found that they could be categorized into three types of persuasion: direct persuasion, persuasion through brand identity and differentiation, and persuasion through emotional connections. These findings confirm that language functions effectively in slogans and allows brands to insert elegant persuasion in their slogans.

Keywords: chocolate brand, generalized conversational implicature, persuasion, slogan

INTRODUCTION

Slogans are short and impactful phrases used widely in advertising (O'Guinn, Allen, & Semenik, 2011). Unlike other lengthy advertisements, such as TV commercials, magazine advertorials, billboards, or YouTube ads, slogans deliver the message in just a few words. Their brevity boosts brand recall and recognition, which significantly affects consumer purchasing decisions (Silveira & Galvão, 2016).

The chocolate industry particularly relies on effective slogans to stand out in a competitive market, evoke emotions, and show brand identity. This is shown by an increase in the number of consumers who are becoming aware of its health benefits (Spherical Insights, 2024). These brands often use creative or playful language in their slogans to subtly persuade consumers. However, this implicit messaging can sometimes lead to confusion or misinterpretation. This can be avoided by applying Levinson's Generalized Conversational Implicature.

Levinson's (2000) framework originated from Grice's implicature (1957) which provides a general approach to the study of meaning and communication. Grice (1975) explains that an utterance can communicate both the literal meaning of the words or what is said and the meaning behind or what is implicated. Grice (1989) elaborates the two ways meanings are implied: conventionally and conversationally. Conventional implicature arises from the use of specific word or expression, while conversational implicature happens in a conversation and the meaning depends on the listener's ability to understand what the speaker intended to say. What is implied in a conversational context is distinguished into two types, which is based on how much context is needed to infer the meaning (Grice, 1989). As the name suggested, Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) means that to infer what is implied requires less to no understanding of the context (Grice, 1989). On the other hand, the implicature from

Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) depends heavily on the context of the conversation (Grice, 1989). One clear distinction between the two is that GCI can provide an interpretation that applies broadly unless specific contexts suggest otherwise, while PCI depends heavily on the context of the utterance (Levinson, 2000).

Under the Gricean umbrella, there have been many recent advances in the classic Gricean theory of conversational implicature. One of them is Levinson's Generalized Conversational Implicature. Levinson (2000) substituted the maxims as heuristics. He proposed three heuristics: the Quantity principle (Q-principle), by stating "What isn't said, isn't"; the Informativeness principle (I-principle), by stating "What is simply described is stereotypically exemplified"; and the Manner principle (M-principle), by stating "What's said in an abnormal way, isn't normal; or Marked message indicates marked situation" (Levinson, 2000, pp. 31-33).

The Q-Principle, Levinson's (2000) first heuristic, is linked directly to Grice's first maxim. Levinson (2000, p. 75) explains that this principle generates inferences when the speaker uses a certain expression, a weaker expression, so that the listener can assume that the stronger expression does not apply. The Q-Principle is responsible for both scalar and clausal implicature. The former arises from the contrast set where the speaker uses the weaker alternates so that the stronger alternates do not apply, while the latter emphasizes the structure of the clauses and their logical relationship.

The I-Principle or informativeness principle is Levinson's (2000) second heuristic which is linked to Grice's second maxim. While Q-Principle is the conclusions drawn from the speaker's inability to provide enough information, I-Principle arises from the absence of additional details to the absence of its necessity. Through the I-Principle, Levinson (2000) suggests that the speaker makes a statement with minimal but sufficient information and that the hearer will make an assumption by finding the most precise interpretation that aligns with the speaker's intended message. Levinson (2000, p. 37) provides some examples for the I-Principle: "*John's book is good*" implicates '*the one he read, wrote, borrowed, as appropriate*'; and "*a secretary*" implicates a '*female one*'.

The third heuristic, M-Principle, is related to Grice's maxim of Manner, specifically his first and fourth sub-maxims of Manner (Levinson, 2000, p. 38). The I-Principle and the M-Principle have a contradicting and parasitic relationship, meaning that when something is said concisely without any marking, the hearer will assume the most stereotypical interpretation. However, if something is said concisely with marked expression, stereotypical interpretation should be avoided. For instance, uttering "*Bill stopped the car*" implicates (under the I-Principle) '*in the stereotypical manner with the foot pedal*' (Levinson, 2000, p. 39). Meanwhile, "*Bill caused the car to stop*" implicates (under the M-Principle) '*indirectly, not in the normal way, e.g., by the use of emergency brake*' (Levinson, 2000, p. 39).

Levinson's framework can help identify the principles applied in the slogans and analyse the implied meanings in slogans. His three principles help understand how slogans communicate beyond literal words. Generalized implicature ensures that slogans maintain consistent meaning across contexts and platforms. By applying these principles, readers can understand the meaning implied behind slogans and how language is used in advertising. Brands can also craft slogans that are not only interesting but also leave a huge impact on the audience.

METHOD

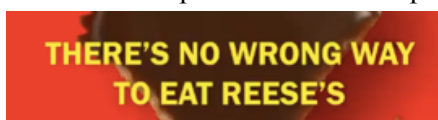
This study used a qualitative approach to analyse the slogans of chocolate brands. The data was collected from Bashir's (2024) survey result about the most popular chocolate brands

in the United States which was uploaded in Statista (<https://www.statista.com/>), an online platform that provides statistics and reports on multiple fields and businesses. The writer continued to look for the main slogan of each brand by visiting each brand's official website. The writer obtained seventeen slogans from the twenty brands initially listed. After listing the brands and their slogans, the writer identified the principle of generalized conversational implicature before interpreting the generalized conversational implicature of the slogans.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Generalized Conversational Implicature's Principles of the Slogans

This study found two slogans applied to the quantity principle, one being the scalar and one being the clausal. The first slogan, *Reese's*, applied the scalar implicature. The scalar principle induces inferences when a certain phrase or word suggests a degree. Usually, the phrase or word suggests a stronger alternate that the speaker is not in the position to do.



Reese's slogan displays a negative scale from the scalar principle by using the phrase “no wrong way.” Levinson (2000) explains that negative scales <not wrong ($\sim S$), not right ($\sim W$)>, correspond to the positive scale <wrong (S), right (W)>. The phrase “no wrong way” is equal to “not wrong” which Q-implicates “not not-right,” suggesting “some way(s) must be right or acceptable” or an even more positive alternative “all ways must be right or acceptable.” In conclusion, the phrase “no wrong way” in *Reese's* slogan eliminates every wrongness and suggests “all possible ways to eat a *Reese's* are considered right.”

The second slogan, *Snickers*, applied the clausal implicature. Clausal principle refers to a relationship between clauses, whether it is between two independent clauses or between an independent clause and a dependent clause connected with a subordinating conjunction (Levinson, 2000).



In this

Snickers' slogan, “You’re not you” is the independent clause and “when you’re hungry” as the dependent clause. Levinson (2000) explains that using the weaker conditionals, as in <if p , q >, stands in opposition to the stronger causal form, as in <since p , q >. The word “when” in *Snickers'* slogan produces a similar level of uncertainty as the word “if,” forming the structure “if you’re hungry, you’re not you.” It implies that “The hunger might or might not cause an individual to behave differently. The same goes as in an individual might or might not behave differently despite being hungry.” By using the weaker conditional, *Snickers* avoids making a stronger claim, as in “Since you are hungry, you’re not you” which implicates that since an individual is hungry, he or she will definitely not be himself or herself.

The second principle, the informativeness principle or I-Principle, generates interpretation when a speaker makes brief and simple expressions, and the hearer will make the best interpretations in the most stereotypical way (Levinson, 2000). The first example is *Crunch* with its slogan “Turn up the fun.”



Crunch uses the word “fun” which is an extremely general term. This word can be interpreted differently, yet everyone has the common knowledge of what and how fun is. The word “*turn up*” can be stereotypically understood as a way to either increase something, to make an appearance, or to get energetic. This general association is supported by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) which shows “turn up” means “to raise or increase by or as if turning a control,” such as in turning up the volume on the radio.

The second example of I-Principle is *Godiva*’s slogan “*Godiva is chocolate.*” The audience can directly make the most stereotypical interpretations, that is: *Godiva* is indeed a chocolate. However, the word “*chocolate*” encompasses far more than just a sweetened cocoa bar.



When an individual hears the word “*chocolate*,” there are a lot of words associated with chocolate, such as food, sweet, snack, treat, luxury, indulgence, quality, relaxation, premium, and other words related to chocolate. Therefore, “*chocolate*” does not merely refer to the item itself but also all the words associated with it. Hence, saying “*Godiva is chocolate*” implicates “*Godiva is a food, sweet, snack, treat, luxury, indulgence, quality, relaxation, premium, and other words related to chocolate.*”

The third principle, that is, the manner principle or M-Principle, uses a marked expression to prevent the audience from picking up the most stereotypical information. In the findings below, the slogans show unusual wording and creative phrasing.

The first slogan is *Toblerone*’s “*Be more triangle.*” Unlike other chocolate, *Toblerone* uses a triangular shape and is now known for its unique shape.



Toblerone made a smart choice by incorporating the “*triangle*”-ness of its chocolate in its slogan. The use of “*triangle*” in *Toblerone*’s slogan makes it distinct by avoiding some generic adjectives such as *unique*, *special*, *distinct*, or *dynamic*. This makes the word “*triangle*” become the marked expression because of the unique choice of word. Rather than crafting a slogan with words that are widely known and predictable, such as “*unique*,” *Toblerone* chooses a word that captures and embodies the uniqueness of *Toblerone*.

The second slogan applying the M-Principle is *Cadbury*’s “*There’s a glass and a half in everyone.*” *Cadbury* sets an exceptional example in using creative phrases that are out of the ordinary yet still able to capture the essence of the slogan.



THERE'S A
GLASS AND
A HALF IN
EVERYONE

The phrase “*a glass and a half*” is uncommon and may require the audience to pause and think for a moment. The phrase seems a little abstract, but then someone can imagine having a glass of milk, and since there is extra, one can pour it into another glass. The extra-ness that is highlighted by *Cadbury* refers to both its chocolate and the audience. Rather than saying “there’s extra in everyone,” *Cadbury* combines the two ideas and uses the metaphor “*a glass and a half*” to emphasize the “extra.” By using this metaphor, *Cadbury* is able to direct the audience in understanding what extra refers to.

The Implicature of the Slogans

It was found that the message the brands wanted to convey incorporated persuasion in seemingly ordinary slogans. After analysing all of the implicatures behind the slogans, they could be categorized into three types of persuasion: direct, through brand identity and differentiation, and emotional connection. These types of persuasion are inspired by Aaker (1996), Gobé (2010), and Perloff’s (2017) study on branding and persuasion.

In direct persuasion, slogans generally avoid explicit persuasion. Instead, they subtly encourage certain actions by implying certain ideas without stating them directly. Advertisers aim to provide consumer information about the products or services without being too explicit but still clear enough by providing keywords within the slogans (Prabowo, 2018).

Even though all brands subtly persuade their consumers through their slogans, there are some slogans that focus mainly on encouraging their customers to make an immediate purchase. One clear example is KitKat’s slogan.



Have a break, have a KitKat

When *KitKat* was first found in the 1930s, it was envisioned to be an on-the-go snack that was mess-free and suitable for a quick nibble (<https://www.kitkat.com/>). This kind of treat will be perfect for a short break after a long day of work to recharge. In addition, since *KitKat* comes in several bars attached as one, the breaking sound when breaking the bars to several pieces is supposed to leave a satisfying feeling. Here, *KitKat* is merely encouraging people to have a break, but also persuades its customers to have a break with *KitKat* for maximum satisfaction during one’s short break time.

The next slogan is *Dove*. With its creative concept, *Dove* brings up the connection between pleasure and the taste of chocolate.



CHOOSE PLEASURE™

Applying the I-Principle, the audience can immediately understand that *Dove* is suggesting the audience to choose things that bring pleasure in their lives. There are a lot of things that bring pleasure, so choose ones that bring it like *Dove*. In *Dove*'s website (<https://www.dovechocolate.com/our-story>), *Dove* always promoted its chocolate as a silky and smooth chocolate. These qualities can bring pleasure for people who eat it. However, *Dove* still leaves space for the audience to make a choice. It emphasizes that pleasure is a choice and *Dove* is an option. Thus, people are encouraged to find and choose pleasurable things in life, for instance *Dove* chocolate that leaves a silky and smooth feeling that can satisfy any cravings for pleasure.

The writer found that these brands perform a direct persuasion by highlighting the discomfort in people's daily lives and offering themselves as a solution to overcome the discomfort. Perloff (2017, p. 420) states that the discomfort drives individuals to take steps to reduce it. One of the ways people do this is by changing their attitude in the direction the persuader recommends (Perloff, 2017, p. 438).

Another way brands persuade their consumers to make a purchase is by displaying their brand identity and differentiation. Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain (Aaker, 1996, p. 70). Since a slogan is part of a brand identity, it must communicate the brand's personality, value, characteristics, culture, mission, credibility, and others (Aaker, 1996).

Hershey's is one brand that displays its identity to persuade the audience to make a purchase. *Hershey's* makes a strong statement as its slogan by implying "*The great American chocolate bar*"



Hershey's claims itself not just as any chocolate, but as *the great American chocolate bar*. People can indirectly align *Hershey's* as a brand associated with America and that its chocolate is great. The term "*great*" does not indicate that the chocolate is better than good, but indicates the experience or memory associated with it. Rather than justifying its greatness, the slogan allows consumers to find their own reasons why *Hershey's* is great. This slogan also plays a role in determining *Hershey's* position in the market which currently is dominating the United States chocolate manufacturer. This greatness makes people wonder how great the chocolate is that makes it loved by the whole country and even becomes the biggest chocolate manufacturer in the United States.

Lindt is another brand which conveys its brand identity through its slogan. *Lindt's* slogan reflects the essence and philosophy of its brand: premium and exclusivity.



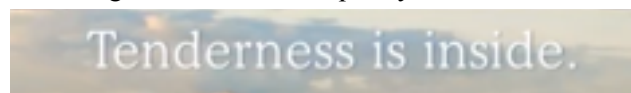
Under the logo, *Lindt* displays its slogan "*Master Swiss chocolatier since 1845.*" Through this slogan, the audience or viewer can infer that *Lindt* is making a claim of being a Swiss chocolate master because of its long history. The phrase "*since 1845*" shows that *Lindt* has been perfecting its chocolate and eventually mastered the art of chocolate. Its expertise resulted in the title "*Master Swiss chocolatier*". The slogan can also lead people to think that

since *Lindt* has been established for such a long time and mastered its chocolate, the product must be delicious, premium, and has a good quality. Otherwise, it will not be able to operate until today and still become one of the most well-known chocolate brands. These kinds of qualities lead people to develop a belief that *Lindt* is a reliable and trustworthy chocolate brand compared to new brands whose expertise may still be unproven.

The exposure of brand identity can shape the brand image which is the audience's perception of the brand. Consumers try to align their purchase behaviour with their identity and lifestyle. If the consumer feels that their values align with the brand identity, the consumer may develop the confidence and trust to make a purchase. This finding aligns with Acar, Büyükdağ, Türten, Diker, and Çalışır's (2024) findings where they found that brand identity depicts a brand lifestyle and affects brand satisfaction as well as consumer purchasing behaviour.

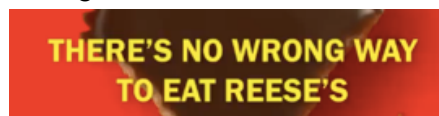
The last type of persuasion that the writer identified is persuasion through emotional connections. Gobé (2010) explains that building stronger connections and relationships with their audience can determine success. Brands can tap into people's loyalty by understanding and aligning the brand's message with people's needs and desires.

The first slogan which is built to connect with its audience emotionally is *Milka* "Tenderness is inside". *Milka* aligns its chocolate's quality with kindness and comfort.



Milka's slogan focuses on the tenderness quality within each person. Its slogan does suggest that its chocolate provides a tender or comforting experience. However, it also highlights that the brand values tenderness and quality in every person. Analysed under the I-Principle, people usually associate tenderness with softness. This association is supported by Merriam-Webster's (n.d.) definition which describes tenderness as showing care, as in being considerate. With this understanding, the "tenderness" value *Milka* intends to show is not only applied through its products but also in the way it builds its relationship with its consumers. It takes care of its consumer by providing them with a comforting experience which evokes the feeling of warmth, care, and softness. This is done by understanding that all humans have the desire for receiving kindness and feel comfortable. These qualities make the brands seem close to the audience and relatable.

Unlike the two previous slogans, *Reese's* promotes its freedom and individuality through its slogan "There's no wrong way to eat a Reese's." Its value for freedom and individuality makes the brand feel welcoming.



The slogan suggests any thinkable to unthinkable way of eating a *Reese's* is acceptable and will not be considered wrong. People can eat it anyway they prefer which offers a personalized experience. Every individual's experience in eating a *Reese's* will be different, and it embeds the idea that *Reese's* is a welcoming snack. This makes *Reese's* feel like an approachable choice for everybody since it is suitable for any mood or personality. Furthermore, the slogan also taps into consumers' emotional need for acceptance. The message delivered through the slogan reassures the consumer that their choices are valid, personal, and unrestricted. People tend to feel inclined to buy a product, especially when the values of the consumer and the brand align. *Reese's* is able to offer them more than taste, but experience on personal choice, enjoyment, and confidence in their preference. Slogans under this type of

persuasion also tend to be remembered because the audience has something positive to associate with.

Brands which focus on engaging emotionally do not promote and persuade their audience to buy the product. Instead, they focus on how an individual usually behaves and their desires (Gobé, 2010). Brands aim to fulfill the audience's desire for material satisfaction and emotional fulfillment (Gobé, 2010). When they provide these two aspects, the audience will automatically feel more connected to the brand and this can affect their purchasing behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Levinson's generalized conversational principles can help identify the principles applied in the slogans and the implied meaning brands intended to convey. The analysis reveals that most of the brands applied the informativeness principle, which relies on the audience's general knowledge. The findings also reveal that the message of slogans is a form of subtle persuasion for the audience to buy the products. Understanding the slogan allows consumers to understand what brands intend to convey and allow brands to craft a simple slogan that can elegantly persuade the audience. Future studies are suggested to explore how different industries use slogans as industries outside the chocolate industry might use different methods and delivery.

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