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Directive and Dialogic Constructions in Uzbek and English Advertising Texts

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Abstract: This article compares the pragmatic functions of imperative, interrogative, and addressee-oriented forms in Uzbek and English advertising texts. The analysis is based on selected examples from a corpus of 25 Uzbek and 25 English advertising units. The findings show that the imperative form in advertising does not only express a strict command; it can also convey an invitation, a choice, participation in an experience, or a social action. Interrogative constructions may remind the audience of a need and then be answered by the advertisement itself, or they may leave the response open to the addressee’s imagination. Rather than treating Uzbek and English examples as two opposing models, it is more productive to examine how the same grammatical form functions in different contexts. The article therefore distinguishes grammatical imperatives, explicit address, simulated dialogue, and actual audience response.
Keywords: advertising discourse; directivity; imperative sentence; interrogative sentence; dialogicity; addressee; pragmatic function.

Introduction

Advertising does more than provide information about a product or service; it also assigns a role to the reader or viewer. The addressee may be presented as a buyer, a decision-maker, a person recognizing a need, someone sharing an experience, or a participant in a particular action. Such roles are often encoded in sentence structure itself: an imperative presents the addressee as the performer of an action, whereas a question appeals to the addressee’s need, desire, or point of view. Grammatical form, however, should not be equated directly with pragmatic meaning. “Share a Coke” and “Choose what makes you happy” are both imperatives, yet the first directs the addressee toward sharing and the second toward making a choice. Likewise, Uzbek “Tanaffusmi?” (“A break?”) and English “What would you like the power to do?” are both interrogative in form, but they organize the response in different ways. This is one of the central features of advertising syntax: the same form can perform different communicative functions.

The aim of the article is to identify the syntactic realization of directivity and dialogicity in Uzbek and English advertising examples. Three issues are considered: what kind of action an imperative construction proposes; what kind of response space a question creates within the advertisement; and how the addressee is marked grammatically. The analysis thus moves beyond simply counting sentence types and focuses on what they do within the text.

Theoretical Approach

Imperatives and forms of address were recognized early as important features of advertising language. Leech (1966) notes the active use of direct address, minor clauses, and imperative forms in English advertising. Geis (1982), in a pragmatic analysis of television advertising, shows the importance of distinguishing the literal meaning of a sentence from the communicative inferences

that follow from it. Malyuga (2019, pp. 102–104) relates imperatives, interrogatives, and other syntactic forms in advertising discourse to the argumentative organization of the text.

Korableva and Alyoshina (2019, pp. 41–42) show that advertising questions may occur at the beginning or end of a text and may in some cases be followed by a possible answer. This makes it difficult to regard advertising as a simple monologue: even without an actual conversation, a text can create an impression of dialogue through a question-and-answer sequence. At the same time, the mere presence of a question mark does not justify classifying every interrogative as a rhetorical question.

A pragmatic perspective also helps to place the relationship between advertising and its addressee in a broader context. Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) focus on persuasive strategies, Myers (1994) on active audience interpretation, Tanaka (1994) on implicit and context-dependent meaning, and Cook (2001) on the interaction between advertising language and its verbal-visual environment. Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001) show how interpersonal resources in slogans and headlines contribute to reader engagement, while Aleksandrova, Korableva, and Kharkovskaya (2020) discuss expressive syntax as a stylistic and pragmatic resource of advertising. Building on these approaches, the present article treats grammatical form and communicative function as related but distinct levels of analysis.

In this study, "directivity" refers to the pragmatic orientation of the addressee toward an action, a choice, or a stance. "Imperative construction" refers specifically to grammatical form. "Dialogicity" does not mean an actual conversation; it refers to the way an advertising text creates a space in which the addressee can answer, recognize a response, or place themselves in the situation. Keeping these three notions separate is essential to the analysis.

Material and Method

The research base consists of 25 Uzbek and 25 English advertising units. This article qualitatively analyzes examples that clearly display imperative, interrogative, and addressee-oriented structures. The aim is not to calculate overall language-specific frequencies, but to show how the same form can take on different pragmatic roles in different advertising contexts.

The English examples were checked against official corporate or brand pages. The Uzbek material was taken from transcriptions prepared by the author. The analysis therefore focuses on verbal form and textual sequencing; no claims are made here about intonation, actual audience response, or purchasing behavior.

For each example, the form of the verb, the interrogative marker, and any person marker were identified first. The analysis then considered what action the advertisement invites the addressee to perform or what kind of response space the question creates. Finally, the textual evidence supporting that interpretation was examined. The following table summarizes the main distinctions used in the analysis.

Point of analysis	Feature examined	Example and brief explanation
Grammatical imperative	An imperative verb together with its object, complement, or circumstance.	"Share a Coke" - the imperative is short and grammatically complete; the product becomes the object of the act of sharing.
Explicit address	Forms such as you, your, Uzbek sen/siz, or person-number markers.	"Obey Your Thirst" - the possessive your links the need directly to the addressee.
Interrogative construction	An interrogative particle, interrogative word, or interrogative sentence structure.	"Tanaffusmi?" ("A break?") - a short nominal question invites the addressee to place themselves in the situation.
Simulated dialogue	The advertisement itself occupies the response slot after a question or deliberately leaves the response open.	"Allergiya qiynab yubordimi? L-set bor." ("Has your allergy been troubling you? There is L-set.") - the product is presented as the answer to the question.
Pragmatic directive	The action or stance proposed in context, considered together with the grammatical form.	"Choose what makes you happy" - the imperative directs the addressee to choose, but leaves the criterion for that choice to the addressee.

The features listed in the table are not mutually exclusive. "Obey Your Thirst," for example, is both a grammatical imperative and an instance of explicit address through a possessive form. These features are not subsequently counted as separate advertisements. The purpose is not to multiply labels, but to show which linguistic resource serves which communicative function.

Different Pragmatic Functions of the Imperative

In Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke," directivity is simple and explicit: "share" is an imperative verb and "a Coke" is its object. The pragmatic centre of the slogan, however, is not "buy" but the social act of sharing the product with someone else. Because the campaign combines personalized packaging with the idea of sharing, the imperative takes on the character of a social action.

Sprite's "Obey Your Thirst" sounds grammatically more forceful. "Obey" is an imperative verb, while "your thirst" names the addressee's own need. As a result, a structure that resembles an external command paradoxically strengthens the idea of personal choice: listen to your own desire. The example shows that the imperative mood does not always equal the semantics of obedience.

Jeep's "Choose what makes you happy" is also an imperative, but its directive meaning is built around freedom of choice. "Choose" clearly identifies the action, while "what makes you happy"

links the criterion for that choice to the addressee. The construction therefore combines an imperative form with the meaning of personal autonomy.

The Uzbek example “Pepsi bilan ovqatdan zavqlan!” (“Enjoy your meal with Pepsi!”) also contains a direct imperative. “Zavqlan” (“enjoy”) directs the addressee toward an action, while “Pepsi bilan” (“with Pepsi”) places the brand within that experience. English “Share a Coke” foregrounds social sharing, whereas the Uzbek example foregrounds enjoyment during a meal; in both cases, the product is linked to a broader experience rather than to the command itself.

In “Hayotning betakror ta’midan bahramand bo‘l!” (“Enjoy the unique taste of life!”), the analytic imperative “bahramand bo‘l” (“enjoy / take pleasure in”) offers the addressee a positive experience. The form does more than provide information: it invites the reader to imagine a particular state. The promise made by the advertisement and the consumer’s actual experience are, of course, not the same thing; the present analysis is limited to the communicative role proposed by the text.

Sequences of Action and Forms of Address

Mastercard’s campaign title “Tap Your Phone, Pay in Style” contains two successive imperatives. The first part names a concrete action - tapping the phone - while the second combines the act of payment with an evaluative manner. The short verbs divide use of the service into two steps. The normally unexpressed subject “you” in English imperatives is treated here not as ellipsis but as a grammatical property of the imperative construction.

The Agrobank extract “Maoshni kutmang. Atigi 10 daqiqada rasmiylashtiring.” (“Do not wait for your salary. Complete the application in just 10 minutes.”) illustrates a different model. The first sentence rejects an existing action - “kutmang” (“do not wait”) - and the second proposes an alternative - “rasmiylashtiring” (“complete/apply”). The time phrase “Atigi 10 daqiqada” (“in just 10 minutes”) strengthens the second directive by adding the meanings of speed and convenience. The number is analyzed as part of the advertising text, not verified as the actual duration of the service.

In Uzbek forms such as “kutmang” (“do not wait”) and “rasmiylashtiring” (“complete/apply”), the addressee is grammatically visible through person-number morphology. In English imperatives such as “Share,” “Choose,” and “Tap,” “you” is normally not written overtly. This does not mean that the addressee is absent from English advertising; the two languages simply use different grammatical resources to encode address.

It is therefore useful to approach addressee orientation through two questions: who is the action directed at, and how is that person represented in the text? The English possessive “your,” the Uzbek pronoun “sen” (“you”), and person-number marking on an imperative verb are not the same formal device. Their functional similarity can be noted without erasing the grammatical differences between them.

How Questions Organize the Response

In “Allergiya qiynab yubordimi? L-set bor.” (“Has your allergy been troubling you? There is L-set.”), the question recalls a need or problem, and the following sentence places the product in the position of an answer. This is not an actual conversation: the advertisement does not wait for an oral response from the viewer. Nevertheless, the question-and-answer sequence recreates a two-sided interactional model within a very short text.

The same model appears in the KitKat advertisement “Tanaffusmi? KitKat bor!” (“A break? There is KitKat!”). The first question invites the addressee to assess their own situation - the need for a break - and the second part fills the resulting open slot with the brand. Dialogicity here arises not from the question mark alone but from the semantic sequence of the two parts.

The Fanta question “Fantaning ajoyib ta’mi uchun sen nimalarga tayyorsan?” (“What are you ready to do for Fanta’s amazing taste?”) does not provide a ready-made answer. The explicit pronoun “sen” (“you”) strengthens the address, while the interrogative “nimalarga” (“what are you ready for/to do”) leaves the response space open. It would therefore be too narrow to treat the sentence only as a rhetorical question; it can also engage the addressee through play, imagination, and a personal response.

Bank of America’s brand question “What would you like the power to do?” likewise does not predetermine an answer. “Would like” encodes desire, while “what” creates an open semantic slot. Rather than directly instructing the audience to use a banking service, the question places the addressee’s goal at the centre of the message and thereby creates a dialogic effect.

Advertising questions, then, do not all work in the same way. In examples such as “Allergiya qiynab yubordimi? L-set bor.” and “Tanaffusmi? KitKat bor!”, the advertisement supplies its own answer after the question. In the Fanta and Bank of America examples, by contrast, the response space remains open. Dialogicity is therefore more accurately identified through the relation between the question and the subsequent text than by the simple presence of an interrogative sentence.

Discussion

The analysis does not support a simple division in which English advertising is characterized only by imperatives and Uzbek advertising only by questions. Both directive and dialogic structures occur in both languages. The more meaningful distinction lies not in the language label itself, but in the action proposed by a particular advertisement, the linguistic means used to represent the addressee, and the way a response is organized after a question.

The examples point to three main pragmatic orientations: directing the addressee toward a specific action, appealing to a personal need or choice, and creating a response space through a question. These functions are not mutually exclusive. “Choose what makes you happy,” for instance, both directs the addressee toward an action and links the criterion for that choice to the addressee’s own evaluation.

At a later quantitative stage, it would be useful to annotate imperative form, explicit person marking, and question-answer sequencing separately. Otherwise, if every imperative were automatically coded as “explicit address,” for example, part of the apparent relationship between the two features would arise from the classification scheme rather than from the data itself.

The present article is based on a qualitative analysis of selected examples. Media type, advertisement length, and product category were not strictly matched, and not all Uzbek transcriptions were rechecked against the original audio or video. The findings should therefore be read as a description of syntactic-pragmatic relations within the corpus rather than as a general statement about either language or culture.

Conclusion

In the Uzbek and English advertising examples, imperative and interrogative constructions assign different communicative roles to the addressee. An imperative may direct the audience not simply to purchase a product, but to share, choose, enjoy, or use a particular service. A question may recall a problem, present the product as a ready-made answer, or leave the response to the addressee.

Grammatical form should therefore serve only as the starting point in the analysis of advertising syntax. Distinguishing imperative form, explicit address, simulated dialogue, and actual audience response makes the analysis more precise. The present corpus shows the pragmatic possibilities created by the text; whether these possibilities actually affect persuasion, recall, or purchasing behaviour would require a separate experimental study.

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