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MODES OF ADDRESS IN PRINTED ECO ADVERTISING AND THEIR IMPACT ON AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract: ***This article explores the use of ecological printed advertisements in raising environmental awareness and promoting eco-friendly behavior. By analyzing various examples of eco-centric slogans and their underlying modes of address, the article examines how different strategies influence public perception and call to action. The interplay between textual context, social context, and technological constraints is also considered in the construction of these messages. By analyzing these linguistic strategies, we can better understand their persuasive potential and their role in fostering ecological consciousness.***

Key-words: *Mode of address, eco-advertising, audience engagement, multimodality, discourse analysis, environmental communication*

The study of modes of address falls under the domain of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and ecolinguistics. According to Jakobson [7], the conative function of language is instrumental in directly influencing the recipient. Similarly, Fairclough's [4] critical discourse analysis highlights how language structures power dynamics and social relations. In the context of ecological advertising, these theoretical perspectives allow us to examine how address forms shape public perception and engagement with environmental messages.

Ecological printed advertisements play a pivotal role in fostering environmental consciousness and encouraging sustainable practices among the public. The effectiveness of these advertisements largely hinges on their modes of address - the way in which they communicate with the reader. The primary objective of this article is to investigate the nuances of these modes and their potential impact, using examples such as *Don't complain about the heat. Plant a tree* and *The planet suffocates* to illustrate key points. Understanding these modes of address can illuminate the strategies used to encourage public engagement with environmental issues.

In the study of multimodal and media discourse, the concept of modes of address is foundational to understanding how texts position their audiences. Originating from the intersection of semiotics, narratology, and critical discourse analysis, the mode of

address refers to the specific linguistic, visual, and structural means by which a text addresses to its audience, constructing relationships between senders and receivers [4;8;9].

Mode of address occupies a central role in the analysis of mediated communication, as it pertains to the ways in which texts position their audiences both linguistically and semiotically. Drawing on Chandler [2], the mode of address is not an isolated rhetorical choice but the result of a complex interplay of contextual factors—textual, social, and technological—which collectively shape how audiences are constructed and interpellated by discourse.

From a textual perspective, genre conventions and narrative structures impose significant constraints and possibilities on how address is realized linguistically. The lexico-grammatical choices—including tone, modality, voice, and deixis—are heavily influenced by the genre-specific expectations of formality, subjectivity, or evidentiality. For instance, a documentary typically adopts a factual and impersonal tone, employing declarative mood and nominalizations to project authority and objectivity. In contrast, advocacy advertising might employ second-person pronouns, imperative mood, and evaluative adjectives to forge an emotional connection and urge action, aligning with the persuasive aims of the genre. Thus, textual context governs not only the stylistic register but also the communicative stance of the speaker toward the audience.

The social context further refines the mode of address by anchoring it in the sociodemographic and ideological positioning of the audience. The perceived identity of the addressee—whether a child, consumer, policymaker, or activist—determines the level of linguistic accessibility, politeness strategies, and even the semiotic density of the message. For example, advertising targeted at children often incorporates simplified syntax, direct address, and highly salient visuals, whereas messages aimed at institutional audiences employ bureaucratic jargon, hedging, and formal deixis to construct credibility and detachment. Moreover, the visibility or invisibility of the text producer—whether the speaker is foregrounded as a personal voice or remains effaced—affects the interpersonal dynamics encoded in the discourse. This reflects a Bakhtinian view of language as dialogic, where utterances presuppose not just a respondent but a socially-situated interlocutor.

In addition to genre and social identity, technological constraints serve as material conditions that shape the communicative behavior embedded in the mode of address. As Messaris [10] suggest, each medium offers a specific set of affordances that guide how language is realized and received. Print media privilege visual hierarchy and spatial layout, often relying on typography and color to direct attention and encode affect. In digital and interactive environments, the mode of address becomes increasingly conversational and responsive, mimicking oral interaction through chat interfaces, comment sections, or algorithmically personalized content. Here, linguistic immediacy—expressed through elliptical constructions, emojis, or informal contractions—enhances engagement and simulates interpersonal proximity.

The mode of address not only determines the interpersonal relationship between the text and the viewer but also influences the persuasive power of the message. The advertisements depicted in the visual corpus reflect a diverse array of strategically deployed address forms, each eliciting varying degrees of engagement, emotional response, and cognitive involvement.

Many of the eco-ads utilize second-person pronouns—a hallmark of direct address—to establish a dialogic relationship with the viewer. This is linguistically realized through the use of *you* or its implied presence, such as in the slogans *"Dear human, please don't destroy me"* and *"You can help by becoming a community volunteer"*.





Such constructions personalize the ecological issue, appealing to individual agency and moral responsibility and exemplifies this mode by anthropomorphizing nature and invoking a letter-like structure that positions the reader in a deeply personal and moral relationship with the natural world. According to Goddard, this form of address enhances message recall and emotional involvement, situating the reader not as a passive observer, but as an active participant in the environmental narrative. Moreover, the use of imperative mood in the phrase *please don't destroy me* adds a pleading tone, intensifying the emotional weight of the message. The lexical choice of *destroy* introduces moral urgency, casting the viewer not merely as an observer but as a potential agent of harm and, implicitly, of salvation. This form of ideological interpellation [1] positions the viewer as a moral actor, compelled to reassess their ecological impact.

Other advertisements opt for first-person plural pronouns like *we*, which constructs a sense of collective identity and shared responsibility. For instance, the ad stating *We only have one planet. Let's keep it clean.* enacts a communal ethos, inviting the audience to align themselves with a broader societal movement.



From a sociolinguistic perspective, this aligns with social identity theory, wherein language constructs in-group cohesion, prompting viewers to act not just as individuals, but as members of a collective cause.

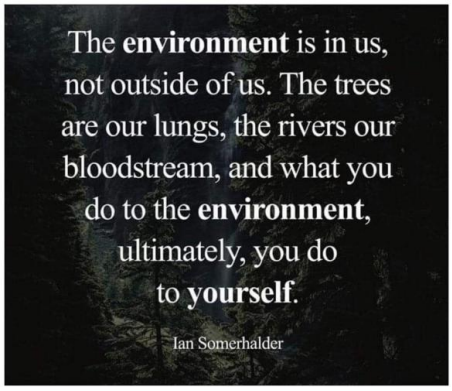
A substantial number of eco-ads make use of imperative mood constructions, such as *Protect the forests, Get involved now, or Stop building a spaceship to Mars and just plant some damn trees*.





These verbal imperatives function as calls to action, linguistically encoded to generate urgency, directive force, and behavioral intention. The use of command language aligns with Cook's [3] findings on the efficacy of imperatives in advertising, particularly in promoting environmentally responsible behaviors. Notably, these structures are often visually reinforced by bold typography and striking imagery (e.g., litter, endangered animals), amplifying the emotional and moral force behind the directive.

In contrast, certain advertisements adopt a more detached and abstracted tone, eschewing personal pronouns in favor of nominalizations and passive constructions. Statements like *The environment is in us* exemplifies this approach.



While such formulations may appear less interactive, they lend objectivity and authority to the message [6], placing the content as universally relevant and grounded in facts

rather than opinion. This discursive neutrality is often associated with institutional or governmental discourse, where the aim is to inform and instruct rather than directly persuade.

It is also important to note that the linguistic mode of address does not operate in isolation; it is embedded within a multimodal framework where visual, textual, and spatial semiotics converge. In the ad that spells *THE END* using cigarette butts, the linguistic minimalism is counterbalanced by powerful symbolic imagery, which reinforces the message of environmental degradation and finality without explicit textual persuasion.



Similarly, the image of a tree as an umbrella (*Protect the forests, they are the climate umbrella of our planet*) uses visual metaphor to anchor the declarative slogan in an emotionally resonant and easily interpretable icon.

In ecological advertising, the audience is not merely a passive recipient of information but is actively constructed, positioned, and interpellated by the text. Drawing on Althusser's [1] theory of ideology, advertisements operate as ideological apparatuses, where language and image collaborate to interpellate the viewer into a predefined role—such as the responsible citizen, the ignorant perpetrator, or the empowered eco-activist. This interpellative function is central to the mode of address and relies on the dynamic interaction of linguistic, visual, and narrative strategies that assign meaning, identity, and responsibility to the audience.

The linguistic choices embedded in eco-ads—particularly the use of personal pronouns, imperative mood, and nominalization—serve to construct a specific ideological relationship between the viewer and the issue at hand. For instance, the ad with the message *Dear human, please don't destroy me* anthropomorphizes the environment, directly addressing the viewer through second-person appeal. This intimate, emotionally charged address constructs the reader as both a culpable actor and a potential savior, leveraging pathos to elicit empathy and guilt.

On the other hand, ads that employ passive constructions, such as *Pollution must be reduced or Sustainability is the future*, enact a more abstract and institutional tone, distancing the reader from direct blame while invoking a sense of shared social responsibility. These linguistic forms—characterized by nominalizations and the omission of agentive subjects—position the audience as collective observers or evaluators, thereby promoting reflection rather than confrontation.

Complementing linguistic address, visual codes such as gaze, salience, framing, and camera angle [8;10] play a significant role in constructing the *ideal viewer*. For example, in the image that spells *THE END* using cigarette butts, the downward angle and centered composition direct the viewer's gaze toward a finality—a visual metaphor that positions the viewer as a witness to impending environmental collapse.

In the ad showing a giant cigarette butt standing upright among buildings, the exaggerated scale and low-angle perspective elevate the object to monstrous status, framing pollution as an overwhelming force. The viewer, in turn, is cast as the critical observer who must acknowledge the disproportionate impact of human behavior.

Narrative structure also plays a critical role in defining audience engagement. Eco-ads often construct their narratives around the contrast between human action and environmental consequence, embedding the viewer within a storyline that requires moral evaluation or action. In the ad that reads *We are not planting trees on Earth, but we dream about planting trees on Mars*, the viewer is positioned within a paradoxical and ironic scenario—framed not only as complicit in environmental neglect but also as part of a society that misplaces its technological ambitions. The mode of address here functions simultaneously on rational and emotional levels, invoking logos through contrast and pathos through irony.

The constructed *ideal reader* is not a universal subject but a culturally situated, morally responsive, and ideologically shaped figure, whose engagement is orchestrated through precise semiotic cues. Whether addressed directly (*You can help*), collectively (*We must act*), or abstractly (*Pollution hurts all of us*), the audience is consistently positioned within a communicative framework that seeks to align beliefs, stimulate action, and promote ecological awareness.

By recognizing the ideological and pragmatic implications of address in eco advertising, we better understand how environmental discourse not only informs but recruits, shapes, and activates its audiences—turning readers into agents of change or, at the very least, into reflective witnesses of environmental urgency. In environmental discourse, modes of address are particularly strategic. Eco-advertisements often navigate between alarmism and empowerment, shame and solidarity, leveraging direct address to engage viewers ethically and emotionally.

Thus, the study of modes of address is essential to understanding audience engagement, discursive manipulation, and the ideological work performed by texts—particularly in areas like ecological communication, where the goal is not just awareness, but behavioral change.

In conclusion, the mode of address is a multidimensional construct, linguistically instantiated through the interplay of grammatical form, discourse function, and sociotechnological embeddedness. A critical linguistic analysis of mode of address thus necessitates an interdisciplinary lens, capable of accounting for how audiences are not only spoken to but also ideologically shaped and socially positioned within a given communicative act and revealing how language functions not just as a medium of information, but as a tool of moral, emotional, and social activation.

The mode of address in printed ecological advertisements is a crucial linguistic choice that shapes the cognitive and emotional experience of the viewer. Whether em-

ploying direct appeals, inclusive framing, imperatives, or abstracted nominalizations, each strategy contributes to different forms of audience alignment, engagement, and potential behavior change. When integrated within a multimodal design, these linguistic forms gain additional semantic depth and persuasive power, highlighting the intricate relationship between language, image, and ecological discourse.

Through this multifaceted lens, the article contributes a comprehensive analytical framework that can be applied in future studies of ecological, persuasive, or multimodal discourse, with potential implications for public communication strategies, environmental advocacy, and media literacy education.

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