Calculating the Relevance of Text to Image in English and Arabic Print Advertisements: A contrastive Study

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1. Introduction

Relevance would seem to be the central principle of the interpretation of advertisements. In the advertisement the text and image convey a range of implications, and it must be assumed that the most likely interpretation is that consistent with the advertiser's desire to reinforce favourable associations with the brand. Advertising, as mentioned in Encyclopedia Britannica (1974: 105), is essentially a form of communication through such diverse media as hand bills, newspapers, magazines, bill boards, letters, radio and television broadcasts and motion pictures. It is a form of paid public announcement intended to promote the sale of a commodity or service, to advance an idea, to gain political support, or to bring about some other effect desired by the advertiser. In other words, advertising is a form of "non –personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services, or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media", (Bovee and Arens, 1982: 10). From the advertiser's perspective, it does serve several concurrent functions, one of which is the marketing functions. Others can be grouped as economic, and social functions (ibid: 12). Evidence of advertising can be found in cultures that existed thousands of years ago, but advertising only become a major industry in the 20th century. Today the industry employs hundreds of thousands of people and intends to promote the sale of a particular product or service.

A contrastive study of the role of relevance in English and Arabic advertisements can be held to find out how the notion of relevance determines the particular kind of meaning that the text and image in an advertisement have and