

An Analysis of Rhetorical Devices Used for Marketing Eco-Friendly Products on Facebook in the United Kingdom

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Article information	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 28 Oct 2025 Last revised: 8 Apr 2026 Accepted: 12 Apr 2026 Available online: 16 Apr 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Advertisements Eco-friendly products Facebook Rhetorical devices</p>	<p><i>Eco-friendly products are designed to reduce harm to the environment. These products utilise advertisements for promotion, where advertisers often employ rhetorical devices to make their messages more compelling to consumers. This study aims to examine the rhetorical devices used in marketing eco-friendly products on Facebook in the UK. A total of 120 Facebook posts, comprising 20 posts from six eco-friendly toiletries brands based in the UK, were selected for this analysis. The study focused on 10 rhetorical devices identified in previous advertising research. The results showed that the imperative mood was the most frequently used device, followed by alliteration, imagery, analogy, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, comparison, and repetition. In contrast, assonance and puns were less commonly found. This study demonstrates the value of rhetorical devices in promoting eco-friendly products on Facebook.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Eco-friendly or green products, aim to minimise harm to the earth throughout their life cycle stages, including production, use, and disposal. These products help reduce pollution by promoting practices such as reuse and recycling (Jain, 2022). In recent years, people have become more interested in sustainability issues. In 2023, the percentages of eco-active and eco-considerate consumers had increased to 22% and 40%, respectively, and 59% of companies began using more eco-friendly materials (60+ Business Sustainability Statistics, 2024). These products not only contribute to environmental conservation by reducing waste and carbon emissions, but they also promote human well-being. They are safer for both health and the environment, and they can also be cost-effective (Ezenobi, 2023).

Like other products, eco-friendly goods require promotion to develop brand image, attract new customers, and retain the loyal ones (Doan, 2017). In the digital era, technology has enabled social media platforms such as Instagram, X, Facebook, and TikTok to serve as major advertising channels alongside traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, and television. This study aims to analyse advertisements for eco-friendly products on Facebook. The platform was selected as the platform for data collection because it has more than 3 billion monthly active users worldwide, representing a substantial share of the global population,

and is one of the largest social networking platforms globally. In addition, millions of advertisers use Facebook to promote their businesses. In the United Kingdom (UK), Facebook users increased from 34.4 million in early 2023 to 37.1 million in early 2024 and 38.3 million in early 2025 (Kemp, 2023, 2024, 2025; McNamee, 2025). This growth suggests that the platform reaches more than half of the UK population, highlighting its strong and increasing potential for advertising engagement.

According to Mooij (2004, as cited in Cui & Zhao, 2014), advertising can be considered as a form of communication intended to persuade people, in which rhetoric plays a vital role. A number of studies have shown that rhetorical devices are used in marketing and product advertising to draw customers' attention (e.g., Doan, 2017; Pho-Klang, 2020; Shah & Saher, 2019). Rhetorical devices are tools that shape writing or speech into a particular pattern, such as structure or sound patterns, in order to persuade readers (Shah & Saher, 2019). As persuasion is the primary goal of marketing rather than merely providing information about the products, it is natural that rhetorical devices are commonly used in advertisements (Leigh, 1994, as cited in Tom & Eves, 1999).

This study aims to examine how advertisements of eco-friendly products use rhetorical devices on Facebook in the UK to communicate their brand messages and attract customers to purchase these products. This study also aims to highlight the usefulness of rhetorical devices in online advertisements for green products. The research question for this study is as follows:

What are the rhetorical devices used in promoting eco-friendly products on Facebook in the UK?

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a theoretical foundation, this section defines rhetorical devices and examines their application in the analysis of advertising discourse.

Advertising discourse

Advertising is a specialised form of communication designed to convey messages from producers to consumers with the intent to inform, persuade, create awareness, or provide reminders (Cook, 2001). Rather than acting merely as a carrier of information, advertising constructs a brand personality or identity that resonates with the consumer's values and needs.

The digital era has profoundly influenced the advertising landscape. Moving away from traditional media, which often relies on one-way broadcasting, businesses are increasingly shifting toward digital channels. This transition is driven by social media's capacity for micro-targeting and constant accessibility (Knoll, 2016). However, in this digital space, brands must compete for the user's limited attention within a fast-paced information environment.

Consequently, advertising on digital platforms has expanded beyond simple persuasion to focus on engagement. For instance, Facebook advertisements are often designed to trigger

immediate reactions such as likes, shares, and comments. This interactivity makes the linguistic and rhetorical choices within the brand messaging even more critical for persuasion.

Because social media platforms are saturated with content, the mere presence of an advertisement is insufficient to ensure consumer engagement. For eco-friendly brands, the challenge is even greater as they must communicate complex ethical and environmental values in a matter of seconds. Therefore, the effectiveness of these digital advertisements depends largely on the strategic use of language. This is where rhetorical devices become essential. A rhetorical device is a linguistic tool that utilizes specific sounds, sentence structures or semantic patterns to elicit a particular response from the audience (Somers, 2019). Through the use of these devices, language can become more vivid, forceful, and persuasive (Chetia, 2015). Taping et al. (2017) further stated that rhetorical devices enable creators to express complex thoughts and opinions effectively through the aesthetic use of the language, serving as essential tools for both written and oral communication.

Rhetorical devices in advertising

Rhetorical elements such as slogans, images and logos are frequently used in advertising (Zulkipli & Ariffin, 2019). These devices are essential in advertising because they help create persuasive messages that connect with the audience (Leigh, 1994, as cited in Tom & Eves, 1999). These techniques enhance the advertisement effectiveness by capturing viewers' attention and making the content more memorable. Furthermore, the strategic use of rhetorical devices can influence consumer emotions and affect the decision-making process (Doan 2017; Dubovičienė & Skorupa 2014; Michalik & Michalska-Suchanek 2016, as cited in Zulkipli & Ariffin, 2019).

Research consistently demonstrates that the choice of rhetorical figures is often influenced by the medium and the product type. In traditional broadcast and print media, studies have highlighted the dominance of repetition, hyperbole, and sound-based techniques. For example, Doan (2017) found that repetition and hyperbole were nearly universal in Vietnamese television ads, while Shah and Saher (2019) revealed that hyperbole, alliteration, and analogy were the most frequently used rhetorical devices for beauty products. Moreover, Dubovičienė and Skorupa (2014) identified alliteration and puns as central to print advertising for luxury brands. These devices function to influence consumer perceptions and create lasting mental associations. Looking into the consumer products, AlKawwaz and Altamimi (2020) analysed fifty American and Iraqi billboard advertisements for products, such as food, drinks, and cars. The results revealed significant similarities between the two cultures in the dominant use of ellipsis and hyperbole. These devices were preferred because they allow passers-by to capture the advertising message quickly within the limited time and space by the billboard medium.

The shift toward social media has introduced more concise and interactive rhetorical strategies. Analysis of digital platforms reveals a preference for devices that facilitate quick engagement and visual impact. Pho-Klang (2020) observed that fashion brands on Facebook and Instagram frequently employ alliteration and imagery alongside non-linguistic elements like emoticons to cater to users who prefer brief, eye-catching texts. This is similar to the study of Rosli and Azman (2024), which examined women's fashion brands and identified eleven types

of figurative language—ranging from rhyme and alliteration to rhetorical questions—that serve to capture rapid user attention.

Similarly, Zulkipli and Ariffin (2019) examined the use of rhetorical devices in the online advertisements of three fast-food chains in Malaysia: KFC, Texas Chicken, and McDonald's. Despite offering similar products, the frequency and variety of rhetorical devices varied significantly. Both Texas Chicken and McDonald's utilized nine out of fourteen identified rhetorical types, with adjectives being the most frequently used device for Texas Chicken, and personification being a key strategy for McDonald's. In contrast, KFC employed only four types, relying most heavily on imperative moods. This difference suggests that each brand creates a distinct image for consumers to perceive, often influenced by their market prominence and history. However, all three brands utilized the Halal logo as a critical rhetorical device to provide assurance and build trust with Muslim consumers.

Ramadhan (2022) examined the use of figurative language in Maybelline New York slogans featured on the brand's official YouTube channel in August, 2017. The study identified hyperbole, simile, and personification as the three most frequently used types of figurative language. The analysis suggests that these rhetorical devices are essential for creating imaginative and memorable advertisements for consumers.

While the existing literature provides significant insights into common consumer sectors, such as fashion, beauty, and food, there is a notable lack of research concerning the rhetorical strategies used for eco-friendly products on social media. As UK consumers increasingly migrate from traditional media to Facebook to engage with green brands, it is vital to understand the linguistic mechanics used to communicate complex environmental values

To address this gap, this study utilises a framework of ten specific rhetorical devices. These were not selected solely due to their prevalence in the aforementioned studies, but because they collectively address the cognitive, emotional, and mnemonic dimensions of social media engagement. By categorizing these devices into functional groups: sound devices (alliteration, assonance), and figurative language (analogy, comparison, hyperbole, imagery, pun, repetition, imperative mood, rhetorical question), this research ensures a holistic analysis of persuasion.

To maintain analytical precision, certain elements found in broader discourse studies, such as adjectives and intertextuality, are excluded or subsumed. Adjectives are analysed as components of imagery due to their role in sensory description, while intertextuality is considered outside the scope of this study to maintain a focus on the internal linguistic structure of the advertisements. This specialized focus allows for a deeper understanding of how eco-friendly messaging is constructed to drive engagement in a competitive digital landscape.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative approach to analyse and describe advertisements for eco-friendly products collected from Facebook. Qualitative research focuses on real-world issues

and provides a deeper insight into them (Moser & Korstjens, 2017, as cited in Tenny et al., 2017). It is often used to generate hypotheses and to enhance the interpretation of quantitative findings.

In this study, rhetorical devices identified in the advertisements were recorded in a table, and their occurrences were counted to determine which devices appeared most frequently were in eco-friendly advertisements. This description step supported the qualitative analysis, which aimed to provide insights into how eco-friendly firms in the UK employ persuasive language to promote their products and values. By examining the rhetorical strategies used in their Facebook posts, the study also explores how eco-friendly brands communicate with their audiences and signal their environmental positioning on social media.

Data collection

The data consisted of advertisements related to eco-friendly products on social media in the UK. The UK was selected because it was ranked among the top ten greenest countries in the world in 2023 (Miller, 2023). This suggested a strong market for green products. Moreover, the advertisements are predominantly in English, which ensures linguistic consistency for the analysis.

To select posts related to eco-friendly products in the UK, the following criteria were employed:

1. The top eco-friendly brands in the UK were identified through the Zero & Zen website, which lists 50 sustainable and eco-friendly UK brands. From this list, only the top 25 brands that have Facebook pages with content in English were selected.
2. The selected Facebook pages had to be active and regularly updated with new posts.
3. The 25 brands were grouped into several product categories, including utensils, laundry products, fashion, baby products, skincare, toiletries, cleaning products, and scented candles.
4. Among these categories, toiletries appeared in six brands, the largest number of which when compared with the other categories, each of which had four or fewer brands. Therefore, the toiletries category was selected for this study.
5. A total of 120 posts were collected, consisting of 20 posts from each of the selected brands. These posts were taken from the most recent updates during the data collection period. The length of the posts varied from a single phrase or sentence to approximately 10–20 sentences, depending on the brand and the post.
6. The text of the Facebook posts, the names of the Facebook pages, and the publication dates were recorded. However, hashtags, comments, and other metadata were excluded.
7. Posts that contained only images without any accompanying text were also excluded, as this study focuses solely on written content.
8. Data collection covered a two-week period, from 1 December to 13 December 2023.

Table 1 presents the brands, their products and a sample of the advertisement of each brand on their Facebook page.

Table 1
The selected eco-friendly brands in the UK

No.	Brands	Products
1.	Soap Blocks	Soap
2.	Moonie	Reusable Personal Care: Sanitary Pad, Haircare, Cleansing Cloth, Toothbrush, Comb, Cotton Pad
3.	Truthpaste	Toothpaste, Mouthwash, Oral Care
4.	Earth Conscious	Deodorant
5.	Bain & Savon	Soap, Shampoo
6.	Wild Sage	Shaving Soap, Soap, Conditioner, Body Oil, Candles

Data analysis

A specific framework of rhetorical devices was established to analyze the collected data, representing the tools most frequently identified in advertising scholarship. These ten devices are categorized into two primary groups: sound devices and figurative languages (semantic and structural) devices. The sound category includes alliteration and assonance, which enhance the rhythmic quality of language to make the messaging more resonant and memorable. Meanwhile, the semantic and structural devices consist of analogy, which serves as a primary category for both metaphor and simile because both functions to explain the unknown through the known, as well as comparison, hyperbole, imagery, imperative mood, pun, repetition, and rhetorical question. Together, these tools leverage creativity and vivid mental imagery to heighten the persuasive impact of the advertisements. Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the rhetorical framework employed in this study.

Table 2
Rhetorical devices used for analysis

No.	Rhetorical Devices	Explanation	Examples
Sound Devices			
1.	Alliteration	Alliteration is a literary device in which the initial consonant sounds of two or more words adjacent or nearby are repeated. It is not concerned with the initial consonant letters and is only concerned with the beginning sound of the consonants (Meliyevna, 2021).	Keep the flag flying (British Airways)
2.	Assonance	Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds regardless of different consonants (Harris, 2017).	Smooth Move (Veet)
Figurative Language			
3.	Analogy	Analogy compares two things by highlighting the similarities between them (Harris, 2017). Analogy can be further categorised into metaphor and simile. Metaphor compares one thing, person or idea with another. In contrast to simile, metaphor claims that one thing is another, rather than saying two things are similar (Harris, 2017). Simile is a comparison of two unrelated objects that share at least one similarity by using “like” or “as”. It can compare a thing that is not familiar with the reader to another thing that is familiar, to make it easier to understand (Harris, 2017; Pho-Klang, 2020).	It gives you wings. (Red Bull) Easy as Dell (Dell)

No.	Rhetorical Devices	Explanation	Examples
4.	Comparison	Comparison is one of the rhetorical devices with which people, or things, or ideas are compared or contrasted (Dubovičienė & Skorupa, 2014).	Probably the best beer in the world (Carlsberg)
5.	Hyperbole	Hyperbole is a rhetorical device that markedly exaggerates a situation for the effect of emphasis (Harris, 1997).	Take You Miles Away in Seconds (Lexus)
6.	Imagery	Imagery is an act of describing something in terms of the physical senses. There are five types of imagery: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile (Pho-Klang, 2020).	Finger Lickin' Good (KFC)
7.	Imperative Mood	Imperative mood is a technique used to suggest something in a natural way. In advertising, this device convinces the customers to purchase products and implants the idea to do something in their minds (Zulkipli & Ariffin, 2019).	Do something memorable (Toyota Aygo)
8.	Pun	A pun is word play that is done by replacing one word with another, different word which is a homophone or homonym (Dubovičienė & Skorupa, 2014).	Have you met life today? (Metropolitan Life/ MetLife)
9.	Repetition	Repetition is a rhetorical device in which particular words are repeated in a phrase or in a sentence in order to highlight a message (Zulkipli & Ariffin, 2019).	It keeps going, and going, and going (Energizer Batteries)
10.	Rhetorical question	A rhetorical question is a type of question for which the answer is obvious, and normally the readers do not need to answer or can answer only "yes" or "no". Unlike hypophora, the question is not answered by the writer (Harris, 1997).	Wanna get away? (Southwest Airlines)

The unit of the analysis for this study was the individual sentence extracted from each post of the six selected Facebook brands; for example, "October layers have landed and we're here for it!" During the coding process, each unit was examined to identify specific rhetorical devices, noting that a single sentence could contain multiple linguistic features. The data were then quantified by calculating the frequency of each device's occurrence to determine the most prevalent strategies used to promote eco-friendly products. This analysis focused specifically on how these devices functioned to convey brand messaging and advance the promotion of green goods.

Following the initial coding by the researcher, 20% of the dataset was independently reviewed by two inter-raters. These experts, selected for their extensive experience in rhetorical research, assessed the coding for inter-rater reliability, thereby enhancing the overall robustness of the findings. If a message contained two rhetorical devices, it was assigned to the category considered most salient in terms of form, based on agreement between the raters.

RESULTS

The findings indicated a high density of persuasive language across the sampled content. Analysis of the 120 posts from the six eco-friendly brands revealed a total of 457 occurrences

across the ten rhetorical categories. Table 3 illustrates the distribution and frequency of these devices as identified in the Facebook posts of the UK-based green brands.

Table 3
Frequency of 10 rhetorical devices in the Facebook advertisements

No.	Rhetorical Devices	Shower Blocks (Soaps)	Moonie (Personal Care)	Truthpaste (Toothpaste and Oral Care)	Earth Conscious (Deodorants)	Bain & Savon (Soaps and Shampoos)	Wild Sage (Soaps, Conditioners, Body Oils, Candles)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Imperative mood	31	18	15	16	1	24	105	22.98
2	Alliteration	19	15	7	35	14	13	103	22.54
3	Imagery	22	10	6	15	10	15	78	17.07
4	Analogy	17	6	8	9	1	8	49	10.72
5	Rhetorical question	11	4	3	8	3	4	33	7.22
6	Hyperbole	15	1	4	6	0	4	30	6.57
7	Comparison	5	2	8	5	2	4	26	5.69
8	Repetition	5	3	2	7	4	4	25	5.47
9	Assonance	0	0	1	2	0	1	4	0.87
10	Pun	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	0.87
Total		128	59	54	104	35	77	457	100

As shown in Table 3, the imperative mood was the most used rhetorical device, accounting for 22.98% of the total occurrences. This was followed by alliteration (22.54%) and imagery (17.07%). In contrast, assonance and puns were the least utilized strategies for promoting eco-friendly toiletries on Facebook, each representing only 0.87% of the data.

Furthermore, the results indicate a high degree of consistency across the six analyzed brands, with all using the same top three devices: imperative mood, alliteration, and imagery. This uniformity suggests that these specific techniques are fundamental to modern advertising discourse. Although this study focuses specifically on eco-friendly products, the frequent use of these rhetorical tools aligns with patterns found in other consumer product sectors, as documented in previous literature

Imperative mood

The imperative mood emerged as the most frequently used rhetorical device across the 120 posts. Among the six brands, this device was the dominant strategy for Shower Blocks (soaps), Moonie (personal care), Truthpaste (oral care), and Wild Sage (soaps and conditioner), while ranking second for Earth Conscious (deodorants). In contrast, it appeared only once in the message for Bain & Savon (soaps and shampoo). In these digital advertisements, the imperative mood is strategically employed to drive consumer engagement either by soliciting direct interaction with the brand's social media page or by encouraging participation in promotions and product giveaways. The following examples illustrate this direct persuasive approach:

1. ***Please don't hesitate to get in touch.*** (Wild Sage: soaps and conditioner)
2. ***We ask you to share your products reviews and purchases across social media.*** (Moonie: personal care)

3. **Like** this post. **Tag** three friends in the comments. (Shower Blocks, soaps)
4. **Just use** the code TIN at checkout. (Earth Conscious, deodorants)

Given the commercial nature of these posts, the imperative mood is frequently employed to prompt consumer purchasing behaviour, as demonstrated in the following examples:

5. **Head to our store**, you won't regret it. (Shower Blocks: soaps)
6. **Tap to link** in bio to shop and learn more about this clever little pad. (Moonie: reusable sanitary pads)
7. **Hit the link** below to get your bottle. (Truthpaste: mouthwash)
8. **Why not try** our multipurpose Baby Balm. (Earth Conscious: deodorants)

Several advertisements appealed to the audience to adopt eco-friendly alternatives by emphasizing the positive environmental impact of their consumption choices.

9. **Try a few different things and replace** plastic-packaged products as you go. (Truthpaste: toothpaste and oral care)
10. **Make the switch** to kinder shower today (Shower Blocks: soaps)
11. **Buy less and buy better**. (Moonie: cotton pads)

Alliteration

The results revealed that alliteration was the second most-often used rhetorical device across dataset. The repetition of consonant sounds serves to capture customers attention **while significantly increasing the mnemonic value of the text**. This strategy is frequently applied not only within advertising texts but also in brand naming and a classic example is Coca-Cola (Skorupa & Dubovičienė, 2015). Although none of the six brands in the present study use alliteration in their brand name, Earth Conscious (deodorants) employs alliteration for its product lines such as, Body Bars, Bare Bars, and Baby Balm to **create a more rhythmic and memorable brand identity**. Other examples of alliteration found in this study include the following:

12. **smelling seriously sexy** (Shower Blocks: soaps)
13. **Fruity, freshy and plastic free** (Shower Blocks: soaps)
14. **Craziness of Christmas** (Moonie: cleansing cloths: combs and gift sets)
15. **Find your favourite B&S products** (Bain & Savon: soap and shampoo)

Imagery

Imagery emerged as another significant element within the advertisements, ranking as the third most prevalent rhetorical device. Notably, in alignment with Pho-Klang's (2020) study on figurative language in fashion-brand social media ads, the results of the present study indicate that visual and tactile imagery were the most frequently identified sub-types among the five primary categories of imagery.

Visual imagery

Visual imagery, which relates to the sense of sight, was strategically employed to both depict specific scenes and describe the physical attributes of the products. Notably, the former function, the construction of a narrative or atmospheric setting, was more prevalent in the dataset. This suggests that eco-friendly brands prioritize creating a lifestyle context rather than merely describing product features. For example:

16. *The sky was **blue** as well!* (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
17. *It's still **mild and sunny** at the moment.* (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
18. *From **ancient oaks to towering redwoods, these beauties stand tall and proud, each with its own unique story to tell.*** (Moonie: personal care)
19. *The **rosemary** that **grows freely*** (Wild Sage: soaps)

Visual imagery used to describe the products is illustrated in the following examples:

20. ***Sprinkled with petals and wrapped with a bow.*** (Bain & Savon: soap and shampoo)
21. ***Freshly designed packing*** (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
22. ***Clever little things*** (Moonie: facial loofah pads)

Tactile imagery

Tactile imagery, pertaining to the sense of touch, emerged as the second most frequent sub-type of imagery within the advertising of eco-friendly toiletries. This rhetorical tool was strategically utilized not only to characterize the physical texture of the products, such as “*a soft exfoliating*” (Wild Sage), but also to depict a sensory transformation in the consumer’s skin. Specifically, brands contrasted the negative tactile sensations of traditional products, such as a “*dry, squeaky feel,*” with the ‘soft’ and ‘moisturizing’ sensations promised by green alternatives (Shower Blocks). This use of tactile imagery allows the reader to visualize a tangible benefit to their personal care routine.

Olfactory imagery

It is natural that olfactory imagery, which pertains to the sense of smell, was frequently utilized, as fragrance serves as a primary determinant in the consumer’s selection of personal care products. Brands leverage these olfactory cues to evoke a sensory experience that aligns with the ‘natural’ and ‘fresh’ identity of eco-friendly goods. The following examples illustrate how these scent-based appeals were constructed in the dataset:

23. ***A sweet smell*** (Wild Sage: candles)
24. *We love **this scent - so fresh!*** (Bain & Savon: shampoo bars)
25. ***A sweet lavender*** (Wild Sage: soaps)

Shower Blocks (soaps) also claimed that one of their soaps had “No scents” to emphasise its natural quality, free from chemicals.

Auditory imagery

Auditory imagery is a type of imagery that appeals to the sense of hearing. It was found in advertisements for eco-friendly toiletries to describe the fizzing sound produced when soaps dissolve in water, as illustrated in a sample below:

26. Bath bomb (Bain & Savon: bath crumbles)

Gustatory imagery

Gustatory imagery refers to the sense of taste. It appeared only once in the dataset, used by Earth Conscious (deodorants) to describe a raw ingredient: chocolate, with the adjective “delicious” used to characterize it.

Analogy

Analogy represents another frequently used rhetorical device within the dataset. As noted by Houssi et al. (2004), the use of analogies in product promotion serves as a vital cognitive bridge, helping consumers, particularly those encountering innovative or ‘green’ alternatives, to grasp unique product benefits through familiar concepts. In the present study, analogies occurred 59 times across the 120 posts, accounting for 10.72% of the total rhetorical device usage. Within this category, metaphors were employed significantly more often than similes, suggesting a preference for direct, symbolic identification over explicit comparison. The following examples illustrate how metaphors were used to redefine these eco-friendly toiletries:

27. *The **power of clay*** (Wild Sage: soaps and conditioner)

28. *It’s **a crime not to visit***. (Truthpaste: toothpaste and oral care)

29. *The **true magic as always comes from our customer reviews***. (Earth Conscious: deodorants)

30. ***You’re a legend***. (Shower Blocks: soaps)

31. ***Eco warriors*** (Moonie: personal care)

As these examples demonstrate, the application of metaphor is both creative and evocative, serving to elevate mundane product features into meaningful narratives. For instance, brand supporters are framed as ‘warriors’ for the planet, the failure to adopt sustainable habits is subtly likened to a moral ‘crime’ against nature, and positive consumer feedback is portrayed as a form of transformative ‘magic.’ By utilizing these metaphorical frameworks, brands can foster a deeper emotional connection with the UK audience.

While metaphors provide a direct symbolic identification, similes were utilized in this study to facilitate explicit comparisons with familiar, real-world objects. An illustrative example of this approach is as follows:

32. *the dry, squeaky feel **like a traditional soap***. (Shower Blocks: soaps)

Rhetorical question

The results revealed that rhetorical questions accounted for 7.22% of the total rhetorical devices identified. Unlike standard inquiries, rhetorical questions do not solicit a direct response from the reader; instead, they serve as a strategic discursive tool. Within the analyzed online advertisements, these questions were employed for three primary purposes. The first was to disseminate product information in a highly engaging and interactive manner. For example:

33. **Did you know** we sell Reusable Period Pads? (Moonie: sanitary pads)
34. **Did you know** the Earth Conscious Range of Deodorants are also Certified Fairtrade? (Earth Conscious: deodorants)

A second purpose is to provoke consumer curiosity or stimulate interest in the brand's ecological mission.

35. **Want to get involved?** (Moonie: personal care)
36. **Looking for a plastic free, eco-friendly alternative to aerosol?** (Wild Sage: shaving soap)

Finally, rhetorical questions were utilized as a persuasive catalyst to remind readers to take direct action.

37. **Do you follow us on Instagram yet?** (Wild Sage: soaps and conditioner)
38. **Have you tried it yet?** (Truthpaste: mouthwash)
39. **Have you made the switch yet?** (Moonie: sanitary pads)

Hyperbole

Hyperbole was found at 6.57%. These rhetorical devices often utilized exaggerated claims to underscore the superior quality or performance of the eco-friendly products. For instance:

40. It is just **an absolute dream**. (Shower Blocks: soaps)
41. **The magic** behind our plastic-free shower gel (Shower Blocks: soaps)
42. This is **the most amazing** natural deodorant. (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
43. A natural soap bar and beeswax candle _ **everything you need** for a long relaxing bath. (Wild Sage: bath set)

In addition, hyperbole was also used to emphasize the brands' commitment to their customers and to environmental responsibility. For instance:

44. **Every BLOCK is made with you and the planet in mind**. (Shower Blocks: soaps)
45. **Every BLOCK is designed to be great for your body and for the planet**. (Shower Blocks: soaps)
46. **Your support is everything**. (Earth Conscious: deodorants)

Repetition

Repetition accounted for 5.47% of the rhetorical devices identified and was used to emphasize important words or ideas. The repeated elements may include nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, or even entire phrases or sentences. These repetitions typically highlight product quality or reinforce brand and product names. The following examples illustrate the use of repetition:

47. *From hair **care** to skin **care**, ...* (Shower Blocks: soaps)
48. *Whilst being **kind to the earth**, it's also important to remember to be **kind to one another**.* (Shower Blocks: soaps)
49. ***Healthy** oral microbiome -> **healthy** mouth -> **healthy** body* (Truthpaste: mouthwash)
50. *The **loss** of beauty is not always a **loss*** (Wild Sage: soaps and conditioner)

Comparison

Comparison accounted for 5.69% of the rhetorical devices identified in advertisements for green products. According to Doan (2017), comparison is a persuasive rhetorical device that can be used to highlight the strengths of the advertised products. In the dataset, advertisers used comparison to contrast their products with competing products or to illustrate different situations in which consumers use or do not use the advertised products. Some of these comparisons were drawn from customer reviews, which brands shared to demonstrate how their products perform in comparison with others. Examples of comparisons between the advertised products and competing products include:

51. *Beeswax burns for **longer than synthetic waxes**.* (Wild Sage: candles)
52. ***The best showers** are totally plastic free.* (Shower Blocks: soaps)
53. *We're pretty sure it is **the freshest mouthwash in history**.* (Truthpaste: mouthwash)
54. *They're just **not as good as your bar!*** (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
55. ***It has the best texture** of any eco toothpaste I've tried.* (Truthpaste: toothpaste)

And the following are examples of comparing situations:

56. *You can keep enjoying your natural soaps **for longer**.* (Wild Sage: soaps)
57. *There is another way to shop which is **kinder to the environment**.* (Truthpaste: toothpaste and oral care)

Earth Conscious (deodorants) also compared two of their products: stick and bar, by using comparison. For instance,

58. *It's **a little more solid than stick**.*
59. *Right now the Grapefruit & Lemon Bare Bar Deodorant is on our website **for the same price as the stick would normally be**.*

Assonance and pun

Assonance and puns were identified as the least frequent rhetorical devices within this study. Assonance, characterized by the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyme and phonological harmony, was utilized by three brands: Truthpaste (oral care), Earth Conscious (deodorants), and Wild Sage (soaps and conditioners). This device serves to enhance the rhythmic quality of the advertisements, making the text more memorable for the audience. The identified instances of assonance are as follows:

60. *smoothes & soothes* - /u:/ (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
61. *October offer* - /ɒ/ (Earth Conscious: deodorants)
62. *Fresh, dreamy and creamy* - /i:/ (Truthpaste: toothpaste)
63. *I find sweet peace* - /i:/ (Wild Sage: soaps and conditioner)

Meanwhile, only two brands, Shower Blocks (soaps) and Earth Conscious (deodorants), utilized puns within their advertisements. This form of wordplay typically involves replacing a term with a phonetically similar word to create a humorous or playful effect. For instance, Shower Blocks (soaps) employed the phrase ‘the sound of these *bad boys*,’ where ‘bad boys’ colloquially substitutes for the rhythmic ‘bubbles’ of the product. Similarly, Earth Conscious (deodorants) utilized ‘*spook-tacular*’ in place of ‘spectacular’ to align the advertisement with a seasonal Halloween theme and engage the audience through thematic humour.

In summary, the analysis reveals a consistent pattern across the dataset: all six brands prioritize the same three rhetorical devices—namely the imperative mood, alliteration, and imagery. This structural consistency suggests that these devices are foundational to the persuasive architecture of advertising discourse for eco-friendly products. Their prominence indicates a strategic reliance on these tools to optimize consumer salience, underscore specific product attributes, and cultivate mnemonic brand associations. Furthermore, this trend aligns with established scholarship, which notes the conventionalized use of such rhetorical strategies across diverse product categories.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that rhetorical devices play a significant role in advertising eco-friendly toiletries products on Facebook. The data set consists of six brands, each carrying multiple products such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, oral care products. These consumer products are used in everyday life for hygienic and cleaning purposes. Consumers tend to express positive perceptions of green products (Morel & Kwakye, 2012; Yoon & Joung, 2019). Therefore, emphasising the environmental friendliness of these products in advertisements would attract consumers by making them feel more responsible towards the environment, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase. The analysis revealed that the imperative mood, alliteration, and imagery are the top three rhetorical devices employed by advertisers to persuade consumers to purchase eco-friendly products. These devices are strategically utilised to create compelling messages that promote sustainability.

The findings also contribute to the understanding of persuasive communication in digital environments. Social media platforms expose users to large volumes of information in a short time, which means advertisements must capture attention quickly. In such environments, rhetorical devices function as cognitive shortcuts that help consumers interpret advertising messages efficiently. The prominence of imperative mood, alliteration, and imagery suggests that advertisers prioritise clarity, memorability, and emotional engagement when promoting eco-friendly products online.

In addition, imperative mood (22.98%) and alliteration (22.54%) appear at almost the same rate in the data. The close frequency between these two devices suggests that advertisers strategically combine different rhetorical techniques to strengthen persuasion. While imperative constructions encourage immediate behavioural responses, sound devices such as alliteration enhance the memorability and aesthetic appeal of advertising messages. Together, these rhetorical strategies help create advertisements that are both persuasive and easy for consumers to recall.

The prominence of imperative forms reflects the interactive nature of social media marketing. On platforms like Facebook, where users are exposed to high volumes of information, the imperative mood functions as a selective attention mechanism designed to quickly orient the audience toward key product details (Zjakic et al., 2017). By aligning with the platform's focus on direct actions, such as clicking links, sharing posts, or leaving comments, this directive language cuts through the digital noise to foster immediate interaction. Ultimately, these imperatives serve a dual purpose: they capture interest in a crowded feed while simultaneously driving the consumer engagement necessary for a successful digital advertisement.

Alliteration, as the second most-often used rhetorical device, enhances the memorability and appeal of the advertisements. In line with previous research, this device has been widely used in advertising, as shown in the study of rhetorical techniques in beauty product advertisements in magazines (Shah & Saher, 2019). By repeating consonant sounds at the beginning of words, advertisers create catchy and engaging phrases that are easy to recall. Examples such as “soft and supple” (Shower Blocks: soaps) and “lasts longer” (Earth Conscious: deodorants) demonstrate how alliteration can make brand messages more appealing. These messages not only capture attention but also reinforce key ideas related to product quality and sustainability. Being safe, sustainable, and long lasting are important qualities of eco-friendly products. This phonetic appeal can make the advertisements more appealing and memorable, increasing the likelihood of consumer retention and action (Vasiloiua, 2009, as cited in Pho-Klang, 2020).

In the context of eco-friendly marketing, sound devices such as alliteration may also simplify sustainability messages. Environmental claims can sometimes appear complex or technical; therefore, advertisers may rely on rhythmic and memorable language patterns to present these ideas in a more engaging and accessible way for consumers.

Imagery, the third most-frequently used device, includes all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. This device helps in conveying the benefits and values of eco-friendly products. The messages related to all senses make it easier for readers to understand the products,

which can evoke emotional responses and connect more deeply with consumers (Kamleitner, 2011). The association between the products and the positive outcomes of using green products can encourage consumers to make eco-friendly choices.

These findings suggest that advertisers prioritise imagery types that correspond directly to consumers' sensory experiences with personal care products. Visual and tactile descriptions help consumers imagine the appearance and texture of the products, while olfactory imagery highlights fragrance-related qualities that are often important in toiletries. By activating these sensory associations, advertisers allow consumers to mentally simulate the experience of using the product, which may strengthen the persuasive effect of the advertisement.

In contrast to what was found in the study of figurative language used in social media advertising captions for clothing brands (Pho-Klang, 2020) and the study of linguistic devices in slogans of random famous brands (Dubovičienė & Skorupa, 2014), assonance and pun were revealed as uncommon rhetorical devices. This suggests that although these two devices may have a greater impact in certain contexts and products such as slogans or advertisements of clothing brands, they are rarely found in marketing of eco-friendly toiletries. One possible explanation is that eco-friendly advertising tends to emphasise clarity and credibility rather than complex wordplay. Advertisers may avoid overly playful language in order to maintain a trustworthy tone when communicating environmental claims.

Overall, the strategic use of these rhetorical devices aims to persuade consumers to embrace eco-friendly products by linking their purchasing choices to broader sustainability goals. The imperative mood drives immediate action, alliteration enhances recall and engagement, and imagery fosters emotional connections. These findings suggest that advertisers are keenly aware of the need to craft persuasive messages to promote their products.

From a practical perspective, marketers promoting sustainable products may benefit from combining direct calls to action with memorable sound patterns and sensory imagery. Such rhetorical strategies can help communicate environmental values while maintaining persuasive appeal in highly competitive social media environments.

In conclusion, the use of rhetorical devices in advertising eco-friendly toiletries is a critical strategy for influencing consumer behaviour. By understanding and using these devices, advertisers can promote eco-friendly products and encourage consumers to make choices that benefit both the environment and society. More broadly, the results of this study suggest that sustainability-oriented advertising does not rely solely on environmental claims but also on carefully crafted rhetorical strategies that make green consumption appear attractive, memorable, and emotionally engaging.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses on only some rhetorical devices identified in previous studies, and additional rhetorical strategies may also appear in eco-friendly advertising. Second, the dataset was limited to Facebook posts collected during a short period in December 2023, which may not fully represent long-term advertising patterns.

Furthermore, the study analysed only textual elements in Facebook posts and did not examine accompanying images or videos, which may also contribute to the persuasive impact of eco-friendly advertisements.

In addition, the study focused specifically on eco-friendly toiletries in the United Kingdom, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other product categories, cultural contexts, or social media platforms. Future research could therefore expand the dataset to include different types of eco-friendly products, multiple advertising platforms, and a broader range of rhetorical devices in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of persuasive strategies used in sustainability marketing.

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