

**Analysis of Language Politeness Principles in *Lifebuoy* Product Advertisements**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the implementation of politeness principles in Lifebuoy product advertisements, focusing on how linguistic politeness contributes to effective and ethical communication. Politeness in language plays a vital role in advertising, as it seeks to attract consumer interest while avoiding offense, ambiguity, or miscommunication. Employing a qualitative descriptive methodology and a discourse analysis approach, this research delves into the strategic use of politeness elements, such as goodwill, message clarity, respect for the audience, and careful word choice, in Lifebuoy advertisements. The analysis highlights how these advertisements align with politeness principles by ensuring relevance, maintaining clarity, and employing persuasive yet respectful and culturally sensitive language. Additionally, the study identifies how these strategies foster consumer trust, reinforce brand credibility, and contribute to a positive product image. By balancing persuasive techniques with ethical communication, Lifebuoy advertisements successfully convey their messages while respecting the audience's values and expectations, offering insights into the broader implications of politeness in advertising. This research underscores the importance of integrating linguistic politeness in marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement and brand perception.

**Keywords:** Language Politeness; Advertising Analysis; Lifebuoy Advertisements

## INTRODUCTION

In modern society, advertisements have become an inescapable element of daily life. As a primary form of communication, advertisements are present across various platforms, including print, broadcast, and digital media. Their omnipresence shapes consumer behavior, often influencing choices subconsciously. Advertisements occupy every aspect of modern life, seizing opportunities to deliver messages regardless of time or context, making them an integral part of contemporary culture.

The benefits of advertising are undeniable, serving both producers and consumers. However, the linguistic aspects of advertisements often go unnoticed. Language, as a critical tool for communication, ensures that messages are conveyed effectively and respectfully between parties. According to Kotler and Keller (2020) in *Marketing Management*, advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication aimed at promoting ideas, goods, or services. Through carefully chosen media, advertisements deliver persuasive messages to targeted audiences, shaping brand awareness and consumer perceptions.

Advertisements play a vital role in building and maintaining brand identity. Kotler and Armstrong (2022) emphasize that effective advertising is not only about conveying information but also about creating emotional connections with the audience. By employing storytelling, cultural relevance, and strategic language use, advertisements aim to resonate deeply with consumers, fostering trust and loyalty. The rise of digital platforms has further transformed advertising, enabling precise audience targeting and real-time feedback, which were previously unavailable through traditional media.

Visual elements in advertising are equally significant, as they convey meaning beyond the text. According to Barthes (2021), visual semiotics in advertising integrates symbols, colors, and compositions to evoke specific interpretations from the audience. For instance, warm colors like red and orange are often associated with energy and passion, while cooler tones like blue signify trust and calmness. The interplay of visual and textual elements creates a cohesive message that appeals to both rational and emotional aspects of consumer decision-making.

In advertising, language evolves to meet contextual demands, ensuring relevance and resonance with the audience. Politeness in language becomes crucial, particularly in competitive markets, where respectful communication can influence consumer preferences. Holmes and Wilson (2020) highlight that politeness serves not only as a linguistic strategy but also as a social mechanism to maintain harmony and build rapport. Effective advertisements balance persuasive language with politeness to appeal to diverse audiences without offending or alienating them.

This study focuses on analyzing the application of politeness principles in Lifebuoy product advertisements aired between 2016 and 2024. Lifebuoy, a well-known

personal care brand, competes in a highly saturated market by emphasizing its commitment to hygiene and health. With the rise of consumer awareness and skepticism, Lifebuoy's advertising strategies aim to differentiate the brand through credible, clear, and culturally sensitive messaging.

Data for this research are drawn from Lifebuoy advertisements accessed through digital platforms such as YouTube. These advertisements are analyzed using a qualitative discourse analysis approach to identify linguistic strategies that adhere to politeness principles. The study explores how Lifebuoy employs politeness to effectively communicate its brand promise while maintaining a positive public image.

This research underscores the importance of integrating politeness in advertising as a means of fostering consumer trust and brand loyalty. By examining Lifebuoy's advertisements, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the role of language in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences in modern advertising. Such insights are valuable for companies aiming to enhance their competitive edge in the global marketplace.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Language politeness is the awareness and respect for the dignity of others in communication, whether in verbal or written forms. In advertising, politeness plays a crucial role in creating effective and respectful interactions with diverse audiences. Recent studies emphasize that politeness is not just a linguistic necessity but also a strategic tool to foster trust and maintain ethical communication in competitive markets.

Leech (2017) emphasizes the importance of politeness principles in communication, particularly the idea of minimizing self-benefit while maximizing benefits for the listener. This principle creates a cooperative and respectful communication environment, essential in advertisements where persuasion must align with respect for the audience. Lakoff (2019) adds a complementary perspective, identifying three critical rules for politeness: formality, hesitancy, and equality. Formality ensures that the speaker avoids commanding or arrogant tones, hesitancy allows the listener to make independent decisions, and equality positions the listener as an equal partner in the interaction. These principles, when applied to advertising, enhance audience engagement and satisfaction.

Fraser (2020) views politeness as a strategic element rather than a rigid rule-based concept. According to Fraser, politeness involves using strategies to ensure that communication is persuasive while remaining non-offensive. This perspective highlights the adaptability of politeness in advertising, where respecting audience preferences and cultural sensitivities becomes crucial. By strategically employing polite language, advertisements can maintain the advertiser's credibility while resonating with the target audience.

Brown and Levinson's (2019) face theory offers another dimension to understanding politeness in advertising. They introduce the concepts of "positive face," which refers to the desire to be appreciated, and "negative face," which pertains to the desire for autonomy. Advertisements that respect these facets effectively appeal to audiences by avoiding communication that threatens their self-esteem or freedom of choice. This theory is particularly relevant in crafting advertising messages that balance persuasion with respect for the audience's individuality.

Sugihartono (2021) explores language politeness in Indonesian television advertisements, identifying several critical aspects. These include using respectful diction, avoiding exaggerated claims, and employing persuasive yet non-coercive language. For example, phrases like "Try it and feel the difference" are more effective and polite than direct commands. Sugihartono emphasizes that such strategies not only enhance the advertiser's credibility but also build trust with consumers, fostering long-term relationships.

Politeness in advertising extends beyond language to include the tone, structure, and overall presentation of the message. Holmes and Wilson (2020) argue that polite advertisements respect the viewer's intelligence and decision-making capacity by avoiding manipulative or overly hyperbolic claims. Instead, advertisements should focus on honest, relatable, and inclusive messaging to ensure ethical communication and enhance brand reputation.

Another critical aspect of politeness in advertising is inclusivity. Sugihartono (2022) highlights the importance of tailoring advertisements to diverse audience groups, such as children, women, and minorities, without resorting to stereotypes or offensive language. Effective advertisements achieve this by focusing on the unique strengths of the product while respecting cultural norms and avoiding derogatory comparisons with competitors.

In summary, politeness in advertising encompasses various strategies, including respectful language, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive messaging. By applying these principles, advertisers can effectively engage audiences, build trust, and enhance positive brand perceptions. Politeness not only ensures ethical communication but also contributes to the long-term success of advertising campaigns in competitive markets.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to describe and analyze the relationship between data and the research problem. The data sources are advertisements for Lifebuoy products, specifically soap and shampoo, accessed

through YouTube. The specific advertisements analyzed include the following links:

1. <https://youtu.be/Oxa2bZQJqLo>
2. <https://youtu.be/cnf9Zac8ZIU>
3. <https://youtu.be/ZyvI3NOnsMo>

The data consist of excerpts of spoken sentences from these advertisements, which are relevant to the study's focus on language politeness principles.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

The research uses the listen-and-note technique as the primary data collection method. This involves closely observing the advertisements to identify relevant data. Key sentences from the advertisements are recorded as preliminary data. These initial observations are further analyzed using Leech's politeness maxims (as described by Kurniawati, 2012). This iterative process ensures the accuracy and relevance of the final dataset. Once the actual data are identified, they are organized systematically for further analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis follows several steps:

1. **Data Reduction.** The data are filtered and categorized based on Leech's politeness maxims, focusing on the principles most relevant to the research.
2. **Data Presentation.** The reduced data are organized and presented in a structured manner to highlight patterns and insights.
3. **Conclusion Drawing.** The organized data are interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions about the application of politeness principles in Lifebuoy advertisements.

This process ensures a comprehensive understanding of how language politeness is employed in the selected advertisements, leading to informed conclusions about their impact and effectiveness.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of Lifebuoy advertisements highlights the application of language politeness principles, particularly empathy and consideration, as articulated in Leech's maxim of wisdom. This principle emphasizes minimizing harm to others while maximizing their benefits. Each excerpt from the advertisements exemplifies these principles, demonstrating how Lifebuoy integrates linguistic politeness into its messaging to convey care and responsibility.

### **Empathy**

Empathy, as a key element of politeness, involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others. According to Holmes and Wilson (2020), empathetic communication fosters trust and strengthens interpersonal bonds by acknowledging the emotions and needs of others. This principle is evident in the following excerpt:

In Excerpt 2, the dialogue between a child and their family highlights empathy. The mother says, “Oh, you cut your hair!” to which the child responds, “This is for Auntie.” The child’s action of cutting their hair as a gesture of solidarity with their aunt, who is battling cancer, exemplifies empathy. By prioritizing the aunt’s emotional well-being, the child minimizes harm (the psychological impact of the illness) and maximizes benefits (offering emotional support). This aligns with Lifebuoy’s brand values of care and compassion, resonating deeply with the audience by connecting the product to meaningful, human-centered values.

### **Consideration**

Consideration, another principle of politeness, involves acting in ways that reduce inconvenience or burden to others. Leech (2017) emphasizes that polite language reflects an awareness of the needs and preferences of conversational partners, fostering harmonious interactions. In Excerpt 1, a mother offers to help her child shower by saying, “Let me help you shower,” to which the child replies, “I’m not a little kid; I can shower myself.” The child’s polite refusal demonstrates consideration by minimizing the mother’s effort and asserting independence. This aligns with the maxim of wisdom, where the child reduces inconvenience to the mother while promoting their self-reliance. Lifebuoy uses this interaction to subtly convey empowerment, suggesting that their products enable individuals to manage their hygiene effectively and independently.

### **Encouragement**

Encouragement is a principle of politeness that fosters positive behavior while maintaining respect and support. According to Fraser (2020), encouragement as a politeness strategy motivates others to act without imposing force or pressure. In Excerpt 3, the dialogue between siblings underscores encouragement. The younger sibling expresses interest in a book, saying, “Your book is cool; can I have it?” The older sibling responds, “Eitss, wash your hands first.” This response promotes healthy behavior by encouraging the younger sibling to wash their hands without sounding authoritarian. The polite reminder minimizes potential harm (spreading germs) and maximizes benefits (instilling good hygiene habits). Lifebuoy connects this interaction with its core message of health and safety, reinforcing its commitment to promoting cleanliness in everyday life.

The findings of this study reveal that Lifebuoy advertisements consistently apply language politeness principles, particularly empathy, consideration, and

encouragement, as articulated in Leech's maxim of wisdom. These principles enhance the effectiveness of Lifebuoy's messaging by ensuring respectful, engaging, and meaningful communication with the audience. By embedding linguistic politeness, Lifebuoy not only promotes its products but also aligns its brand with values of care, health, and empathy.

Empathy, as evident in the child's act of cutting their hair for their aunt in Excerpt 2, reflects Lifebuoy's ability to connect emotionally with its audience. This aligns with Holmes and Wilson's (2020) findings that empathetic communication strengthens trust and emotional bonds. Lifebuoy's emphasis on empathy resonates with societal values, positioning the brand as supportive and compassionate. Similarly, Pranowo (2018) highlights that empathetic language in advertisements fosters audience trust and enhances brand perception, underscoring the effectiveness of this strategy in Lifebuoy's campaigns.

Consideration, seen in the child's polite refusal in Excerpt 1, demonstrates respect and sensitivity toward others, minimizing inconvenience while maximizing personal responsibility. This mirrors findings by Sugihartono (2021), who noted that advertisements that incorporate consideration effectively promote ethical communication and strengthen brand credibility. By illustrating independence and care, Lifebuoy underscores its products' role in empowering users to manage their hygiene confidently.

Encouragement, as demonstrated in Excerpt 3, reflects Lifebuoy's focus on promoting healthy behaviors through positive reinforcement rather than coercion. Fraser (2020) argues that encouragement as a politeness strategy motivates desired actions while maintaining audience autonomy. Lifebuoy's use of polite reminders aligns with this, reinforcing its mission to instill good hygiene practices without imposing pressure.

This study contributes to the literature by showcasing how linguistic politeness principles can enhance the ethical and emotional appeal of advertisements. While prior studies have explored politeness in general communication (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 2019), this research highlights its specific application in advertising, particularly in the context of health and hygiene products. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Lifebuoy's ability to integrate politeness principles seamlessly into its messaging, demonstrating how these strategies resonate with diverse audiences.

However, the study has limitations. First, the analysis focuses on a limited set of Lifebuoy advertisements accessed via YouTube, which may not fully represent the brand's broader advertising strategies across different platforms or regions. Second, the study predominantly examines verbal language, leaving room for further exploration of visual and non-verbal elements that may contribute to politeness. Future research could address these gaps by analyzing a more extensive dataset and

incorporating multimodal analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of politeness in advertisements.

The implications of this research are significant for both academia and industry. For academia, this study expands the understanding of linguistic politeness in advertising, particularly within the health and hygiene sector. It highlights the potential of politeness principles to enhance brand communication and foster emotional connections with the audience. For practitioners, the findings offer insights into crafting advertisements that are not only persuasive but also respectful and ethical. By adopting strategies rooted in politeness, brands can strengthen consumer trust, enhance brand loyalty, and promote positive societal values.

In conclusion, Lifebuoy's integration of linguistic politeness principles into its advertisements exemplifies how brands can leverage empathetic, considerate, and encouraging communication to achieve both commercial and ethical goals. While there are limitations to the study, its findings provide a valuable foundation for future research on the role of politeness in advertising and its broader implications for consumer engagement and brand identity.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Lifebuoy advertisements effectively employ linguistic politeness principles, specifically empathy, consideration, and encouragement, to enhance their messaging and connect meaningfully with audiences. Through the application of Leech's maxim of wisdom, these advertisements minimize harm while maximizing benefits, aligning with Lifebuoy's brand values of care, hygiene, and health. The findings highlight that empathy fosters emotional connections, as seen in gestures of solidarity and care, while consideration ensures respectful and sensitive communication. Encouragement motivates positive behavior, such as hygiene practices, through non-coercive yet persuasive language. These principles not only reinforce Lifebuoy's brand identity but also promote societal values such as compassion, responsibility, and well-being. The study also contributes to the broader understanding of how linguistic politeness enhances the ethical and persuasive impact of advertising. While previous research has explored politeness in communication, this study offers novel insights into its specific application within the advertising context, particularly for health-focused products like Lifebuoy. Despite its contributions, the study has limitations, including a restricted dataset and a focus on verbal language. Future research could explore a wider range of advertisements and incorporate multimodal analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of politeness in advertising. Overall, the integration of politeness principles in Lifebuoy advertisements highlights the importance of respectful and ethical communication in building consumer trust and brand loyalty. These findings provide valuable insights for both academics and practitioners, emphasizing that linguistic politeness is not just a communication strategy but also a vital tool for promoting positive societal and commercial outcomes.

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