



Green by Words: Linguistic Framing of Sustainability Claims in Indian Advertising

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Abstract

Advertising ecosystem in India appears to have reached in an era of consciously going green, as brands across different categories adopting 'green rhetoric' as a strategic tool for advertising. This paper sets out to illustrate that how linguistic framing operates within Indian eco-friendly advertising terrain. The researchers in this paper argues that prudently chosen words construct environmental realities that often diverge substantially from verifiable ecological outcomes. Based on the concepts of linguistic framing theory, semantics, and pragmatics, the study analyses patterns of vague modification, absolute claims, comparative constructions, and emotionally charged language across more than fifty Indian advertising slogans. The analysis reveals that terms such as eco-friendly, natural, and sustainable function as persuasive devices lacking definitional anchoring in Indian regulatory frameworks. The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) 2024 guidelines identify vague environmental terminology as a challenge, with internal assessments suggesting that nearly seventy-nine percent of green claims in Indian advertisements carry misleading elements. The researchers propose a four-category linguistic taxonomy of green advertising tactics and argues for culturally situated reading of such claims, noting that Indian rhetorical traditions and collective environmental values amplify the persuasive reach of certain linguistic patterns. The study contributes the India-specific theoretical framework for critically analysing linguistic framing in green advertising, offering implications for regulatory bodies, communication scholars, and consumer awareness initiatives.

Keywords: linguistic framing, greenwashing, Indian advertising, environmental communication, vague modifiers, ASCI guidelines.

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