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**ENGAGEMENT METADISOURSE MARKERS IN DENTISTRY
TRADE ADVERTISEMENTS: THE IMPACT OF DIRECTIVES
AND READER'S MENTIONS ON PROFESSIONAL
COMMUNICATION**

**МЕТАДИСКУРСИВНІ МАРКЕРИ ЗАЛУЧЕННЯ
В СТОМАТОЛОГІЧНІЙ РЕКЛАМІ:
АНАЛІЗ ДИРЕКТИВ ТА ЗВЕРНЕННЯ ДО АДРЕСАНТА**

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Dental professionals are constantly bombarded with marketing messages from various sources, including video ads, audio ads, print, digital, and social media. Effective advertisements not only promote products but also shape the professional identity and networking opportunities of dentists while influencing consumer expectations.

According to C. Bovée [1, p. 7], advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication that persuades consumers to purchase products or services or adopt ideas. Effective advertising relies on a combination of compelling language and visually engaging elements to capture the audience's attention and persuade them to believe in the message and take the desired action. Using language “to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group, to signal a socially meaningful “role,” or to signal that one is filling a social niche in a distinctively recognizable fashion” [3, p. 161] means performing discourse, which consists of two distinct yet connected components. The first element is the propositional content, while the second refers to the linguistics devices used to enhance the communicative efficiency and effectiveness of the message, and establish a connection between the writer, reader, and the content being discussed, known as metadiscourse. As K. Hyland [4, p. 127] noted, metadiscourse is essentially a “social and communicative engagement between writer and reader”.

Understanding audience awareness is essential for effective communication. As D. Rubin [7] and S. Ede & A. Lunsford [2] have noted, writers must consider their audience's experiences, expectations, and the desired role they want the reader to assume. This awareness is particularly crucial in the context of dental advertisements, and we can presume that engagement markers play a pivotal role in connecting with the target audience, guiding their attention and enhancing their engagement with the content. Among the four main types of engagement markers – such as directives, reader’s mentions, appeals to shared knowledge, and questions based on the classification of K. Hyland and F. Jiang [5], – this study will concentrate specifically on the use of directives and reader’s mentions in the slogans and sub-slogans of dentistry trade advertisements. These markers demonstrate the connection with the addressee, helping the addressor to engage the audience more directly and anticipate their responses.

The material studied involved a collection of 140 printed advertisements featuring cutting-edge dental products, including tools, equipment, materials, and software, gathered from three dental journals issued between 2021 and 2024: *Dentistry Today* (USA), and *The Journal of the American Dental Association*. We scrutinized the slogans and sub-slogans of dentistry trade advertisements to identify directives and reader’s mentions and recorded tokens of each type. The study employed the method of linguistic

observation and description, discourse analysis with an emphasis on social context, genre analysis, and semantic analysis.

Directives, a category of speech acts designed to affect an addressee's actions, which expresses commands, requests, suggestions, and advice, and mainly expressed through modal verbs (e.g., "can" and "must") and imperatives, have been found as the most prevalent type of engagement markers in the slogans and sub-slogans of dentistry trade advertisement. As noted in our previous study [6, p. 189], imperatives are the most common sentence type in the slogans of dentistry trade advertisements, accounting for 83% of all sentences in slogans and sub-slogans. Imperatives directly address the reader, urging immediate action that is crucial in advertising, where persuasive language is used to influence behavior and drive results, e.g.:

Explore the infinite possibilities of digital practice

Enhance your implant surface within 10 seconds!

Meet the True All-in-One Irrigation System

Reader mentions are used to directly engage the readers and bring them into the discourse "normally through second-person pronouns, which identify the reader as someone who shares similar ways of seeing to the writer" [4, p. 131]. The second-person pronouns like "you", "your" in a metadiscourse function are high prevalent found in about 90% of slogans and sub-slogans, and produce direct address when the writer deliberately acknowledges the presence of addressees by calling on them in some way or even making some demand on them, e.g.:

Glidewell.io™ DOES THE WORK – SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

The NXT Hg5™ Amalgam Separator: Good for your practice ... and your community.

Transform your patient's oral health in just 7 seconds a day

Apart from appealing to readers with the second-person pronouns, the first-person pronouns and a direct mention of general addressee "dentists" are also found, though being far less prevalent. The inclusive "we", "our", "us", can actually endow the readers with a sense of shared opinions. The inclusive "we" can be of vital importance in uniting the addressors and the addressees as members of dental community. Generally speaking, the use of inclusive "we" tends to occur in illustrating something that is quite obvious and can be accepted easily by the readers. "We" addresses readers from "a position of dominance, guiding them through an argument and towards a preferred conclusion" [5, p. 34]. It can help build up a bond of collaboration with the readers. Thus, the use of inclusive "we" and emphasizing professional affiliation (e. g. "dentists") through specific terminology can be an effective way in helping maintain the flow of the communication with the readers, for example:

*ASEPTICO: WE POWER DENTISTRY**Henry Schein Dental: We understand dentists because we are dentists**Dental Intelligence: We are dentists who care about your practice.*

Thus, such engagement markers as directives and reader's mentions found in the slogans and sub-slogans of dentistry trade advertisements serve as linguistic tools, which effectively facilitate direct communication between advertisers and dental professionals while enhancing the persuasive power of the message. Reader mentions, primarily represented by second-person pronouns, were found to be the most prevalent engagement marker, closely followed by directives, which are often expressed as imperatives. This study highlights the effectiveness of strategic language use in dental advertising. By focusing on engagement markers, advertisers can not only promote products but also shape professional identity and foster a sense of connection within the dental community.

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