

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS BY INFLUENCERS

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Introduction.

Social media has grown to be a crucial part of modern communication and information sharing in recent decades. It has profoundly changed how people communicate, exchange information, and create meaning in daily life. Real-time multimedia creation, distribution, and consumption are made possible by social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. According to Michael Dewing: "Social media refers to a range of Internet-based and mobile services that allow users to engage in online interactions, create content, and participate in virtual communities."¹¹ New forms of communication that are distinct from traditional media have emerged as a result of these platforms' quick development. Social media, in contrast to traditional communication channels, enables quick feedback, customization, and extensive information sharing. Consequently, it is essential in forming information. As a result, it plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, social trends, and individual behavior.

One of the most significant phenomena associated with social media is the rise of influencers. According to Oxford dictionary influencer is "a person or thing that influences somebody/something, especially a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by recommending it on social media"¹² Influencers, or what Marwick refers to as "micro celebrities," are a new type of job that has emerged as a result of social media's increasing relevance and role in our daily lives.¹³ Khamis et al., however, contend that contemporary "social media

¹¹ Dewing, M. (2010). *Social media: An introduction*. Library of Parliament. P:1

¹² <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/influencer?q=Influencer>

¹³ Marwick, A. E. (2013). *Status update: Celebrity, publicity, and branding in the social media age*. Yale University Press.

influencers” have altered the traditional standards of celebrity. They emphasize “self-branding,” where being personable and genuine is more essential than being famous, rather than being celebrities.¹⁴ Their influence is based not only on the number of followers they have but also on the level of trust and engagement they create with their audience.

Nowadays, advertisements have moved far beyond just showing off what a product can do; they are now designed to sell us a specific version of who we are or who we want to be.¹⁵ When you scroll through your social media feed on apps like Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube, you’ll notice that big brands like Adobe, Prada, and Kate Spade have stopped focusing on technical “specs” and started focusing on our personal feelings, our life goals, and our core values. This shift is largely driven by the rise of influencer culture, where social-first personalities act as a relatable bridge between a massive corporation and the average person. Because we feel like we “know” these influencers, the language they use feels less like a scripted commercial and more like a recommendation from a friend.¹⁶ This article analyzes three major campaigns from 2024 and 2025 to explore how the English language is being reshaped to blur the lines between a traditional advertisement and a personal lifestyle choice. By looking at how these brands use celebrity voices and “identity-driven” words, we can see a clear trend: software is no longer just a tool, but a way to “optimize” our lives, and emotions are no longer just private feelings, but a way to build a brand’s image. Ultimately, this research shows that we are living in a world where it is becoming harder than ever to tell the difference between a paid marketing message and our own real-life experiences.

Methods.

To get a deep look at how these modern ads actually function, I selected three major campaigns that were almost impossible to miss throughout 2024 and 2025. I chose the Steven Bartlett x Adobe “One Better” collaboration, Kate Spade’s “To The Ones Who Carry Us,” and Emma Watson’s “Prada Paradoxe” campaign. My goal wasn't just to glance at the visuals, but to really pull apart the actual language, captions, scripts, and even the “calls to action” used in their social media posts. I wanted to see how these brands use English not just to inform us, but to build a relationship with us.

¹⁴ Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, ‘micro celebrity’ and the rise of social media influencers. *Celebrity studies*, 8(2), 191-208.

¹⁵ Margariti, K., Hatzithomas, L., Boutsouki, C., & Zotos, Y. 2019. A path to our heart: The role of laughter and humor in advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 59(1), 1–15. (The study on how humor lowers consumer defenses).

¹⁶ Williamson, J. 1978. *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars.

I focused my research on three main areas. First, I looked at lexical choices, which is basically the specific vocabulary they chose to repeat. I noticed words like “sustainability,” “friendship,” “authentic,” and “optimization” showing up constantly. I wanted to see how these words trigger specific emotions like the feeling that we need to work harder or the desire to be a better friend. Second, I looked at multimodality. This means I didn’t just read the text; I looked at how the words interacted with the music, the quick-cut editing of TikTok, and the “vibe” of the celebrities involved. For example, I looked at how Adobe used Steven Bartlett’s voice to make a software tutorial feel like a personal mentorship session.

Results.

The “Steven Bartlett x Adobe: One Better” campaign can be interpreted as a modern instance of a social-media-centric advertising discourse that integrates personal branding, platform deployment, and motivational rhetoric into a singular mode of persuasion. The centrality of Steven Bartlett—an emergent public persona whose image as a business mentor and podcast host is utilized as a discourse-resource—is a key feature of the campaign. Instead of merely invoking his “leadership philosophy,” the advertisement embeds it directly into the experience of using Adobe Express, turning software usage into a practice of self-development ideology. Linguistically speaking, this results in a hybrid genre: part advertisement, part motivational talk, and part tutorial.

The ethos- and identification-intensive nature of the advertisement is another important aspect. Bartlett's credibility is established not through assertions of expertise, but through the readily available image of him as a young, successful entrepreneur. This conforms to the tenets of a social-first advertising approach, where authenticity is embodied in personality rather than institutional authority. The advertisement constructs Bartlett not as a distinct marketer, but as an approachable archetype to whom small business owners can aspire. This creates a compressed hierarchy between marketer and audience.

From a multimodal perspective, it is likely that the campaign leverages the synergistic power of text, image, interface, and platform design to produce meaning. Adobe Express transcends mere tool, becoming a semiotic space in which the motivational discourse (“One Better”) is turned into active digital behavior through design, posting, and branding. This represents a broader shift in advertising toward interaction, rather than only broadcast. The slogan is an instance of concise ideological framing—that continuous self-optimization and improvement are the paths to success—that resonates with neoliberal narratives of personal responsibility and productive self-creation.

The role of intertextuality is a crucial one. By drawing upon familiar discourse genres—leadership podcasts, startup origin stories, motivational social media content—the advertisement becomes integrated into established cultural frames, thereby positioning itself as a cultural participant rather than an external advertisement. The slogan “One Better” also draws upon common rhetorical themes in self-help culture, emphasizing incremental gains and personal evolution. The strength of this strategy lies in its ability to mobilize existing beliefs in an audience.

The advertisement builds a participatory discourse environment by casting the small business owner not as a passive recipient, but as an active content producer within the Adobe ecosystem. The commercial thus transcends “selling a product” to “selling a mindset,” in which software use is akin to a self-reinforcing, ongoing project of self-creation. The campaign, therefore, works on two levels: linguistic and ideological, encouraging both software utilization and a worldview wherein self-enhancement and digital engagement are integral to personal and commercial success.

The Kate Spade New York advertisement for their 2025 campaign featuring Charli D’Amelio and Ice Spice is a perfect example of how narratives of emotion and meaning based on identity are constructing English advertising discourse today. Instead of immediately showing the qualities of a product, the advertisement constructs a narrative atmosphere called “To The Ones Who Carry Us”, emphasizing instead our own relationships and the feelings we have with those close to us. This is evidence of the trend in advertising today to move away from explicit promotion and towards a value-driven communication that draws meaning from feelings, experiences and human shared experiences.

One of the clearest aspects of the advertising discourse is its dependence on evoking emotion. Charli D’Amelio and Ice Spice’s presence in the ad signifies more than celebrity endorsements: these two individuals represent connections between groups, bonded through their shared knowledge and understanding of emotions. Instead of highlighting the features of the clothes the audience is meant to view, the advertisement is centered on personal relationships and dependency on each other. These aspects are intended to forge familiarity, intimacy, and close relationship, qualities necessary for convincing advertising today.

Another aspect of the discourse to notice is its narrative component. The advertisement paints a film-like scenario, emphasizing relationships above other concerns, instead of highlighting specific pieces of product information. This narrative serves to associate personal feelings with the brand of Kate Spade New

York rather than with specific physical objects. The particular terms and phrasing used to sell the advertisement: “deep-rooted friendship” and “supportive personal relationships” are devoid of specific, literal descriptions of clothing. These abstract, emotive words imbue the advertisement with an ideological component of meaning that is meant to be understood by the viewer and about what the advertisement is meant to create as an image of consumption.

The interdiscursivity of the advertisement is also apparent. Fashion advertising language is being merged with language from cinematic genres and popular music culture. With a rapper and a social media influencer to represent the brand, the advertisement is also a convergence of a subcultural and a mainstream brand, designed to appeal to Gen Z. Despite this, it is not the quick, ever-changing fashion trends it is drawing upon that is highlighted in the advertisement, but the establishment of an emotive, stable image.

This advertisement discourse exhibits a number of characteristics that are common in modern English advertising language, as well as construction of a meaning beyond the description of a product or a person. While the discourse at first glance seems to state a factual report regarding Emma Watson's professional role in the fragrance campaign, selection of linguistic features and their arrangement shows an underlying function of persuasion with a role to construct celebrity, and brands associated with celebrity as a valuable and desired entities. Discourse of information/promotion is the mode on which this advertisement discourse operates.

The main characteristic of this discourse is celebrity endorsement as the means of discourse. Celebrity such as Emma Watson, the brand and product she is associated with (Prada's fragrance Prada Paradoxe) contribute in constructing credibility and prestige of the product and brand, being present in a discourse that describes an already popular commodity, but positioning a person not as an object of promotion, but as a creator (director and producer), adding value, authentication of the product, authenticity as a key value for contemporary consumers of the commercial sphere, since they are becoming more doubtful and questioning about the advertising message.

Another salient characteristic is an ideological dimension of the discourse. Expressions like sustainability, refillable bottle and multifaceted femininity convey meanings beyond simple descriptions of a product. Sustainability is a marker for ethical consumption of products (environmentally responsible brand), multifaceted femininity highlights modern perspectives towards feminine roles in the society. By constructing the meaning on such lexical choices the discourse builds a normative

and ideological context for a product, framing it as more than just an expensive commodity.

Interdiscursivity is also represented in the discourse. Commercial, advertising discourse is intertwined with production discourse (director, producer), environmental discourse (sustainability) and gender discourse (femininity). Mixture of discourses is typical for the 21st century promotion: marketing discourse is no longer the sole discourse influencing brand building and communication, and product characteristics become relevant on broader contexts and dimensions. This hybrid discourse aims at creating emotionally, ethically and culturally rich message at the same time.

Another aspect is construction of condensed nominal structures and an institutional style, giving the discourse authority and a distinctive brand image. Phrases like 'Prada Paradoxe Radical Essence campaign' refer to complex commercial ventures and projects. Consequently, through construction of celebrity and the brand's identities the advertisement reflects on a modern conception of high-value, ethical and socially and culturally relevant product that belongs to the high end of the market and luxury fashion discourse.

Discussion.

When we look at these results as a whole, it becomes really obvious that modern advertising has shifted its focus away from the physical product and onto something much more abstract: the "vibe" or the identity of the consumer. In the past, an ad might have spent time explaining the technical features of a camera or the ingredients in a perfume, but today, those details are almost invisible. Instead, these brands are using language to sell us a sense of belonging or a path to personal growth.

For instance, in the Steven Bartlett and Adobe collaboration, Adobe Express isn't framed as just a piece of design software or a technical tool. Instead, the discourse turns it into an essential partner in your personal "success story." The language borrows heavily from the world of business coaching and "hustle culture," making the act of using the software feel like a step toward becoming a more productive, self-made entrepreneur. It stops being about "editing a photo" and starts being about "building a brand."

Similarly, with Kate Spade, the focus shifts from the craftsmanship of a handbag to the emotional depth of a "best friend" relationship. By using influencers like Charli D'Amelio and Ice Spice, the ad creates a narrative atmosphere where the product is just a background character in a story about loyalty and shared experiences. Then you have Prada, where the language of

“sustainability” and Emma Watson’s role as a “director” elevates the product from a luxury item to a moral and creative choice.

What’s truly fascinating here is how the language of advertising is “colonizing” or borrowing from the most personal parts of our lives our friendships, our professional ambitions, and even our ethical morals. By using these familiar “human” discourses, corporations are able to build a deep, personal connection with us. They aren’t just selling us things anymore; they are positioning themselves as supportive friends, career mentors, or ethical guides. This shows that the real “product” being sold in 2026 isn’t a bag or a subscription it’s the feeling that we are living a more meaningful, optimized, and connected life.

Conclusion.

Ultimately, these three campaigns prove that modern marketing has moved away from the “hard sell” and toward a strategy of making the consumer the true main character of every brand story. It is no longer enough for a company to exist on the sidelines; instead, brands are now using the English language to weave themselves directly into the fabric of our personal identities. Whether they are tapping into our desire for self-improvement, our need for deep emotional storytelling, or our commitment to making ethical choices, the goal is the same: to make the brand feel like an extension of who we are.

As these advertisements get “smarter,” more conversational, and more “human,” they become increasingly difficult to spot. By using influencers and social media language, they drop the formal tone of the past and speak to us like peers. This makes it more important than ever for us to be critical of the media we consume. We need to recognize when we are being sold a “mindset” like the idea that productivity equals worth, or that a luxury purchase proves our commitment to the planet instead of just a physical product.

This study shows that the way we talk about brands today is actually a mirror held up to our own culture. The shift toward “lifestyle-as-software” and “emotion-as-commodity” reflects exactly what we value as a society in 2026: personal success, human connection, and social responsibility. By analyzing these ads, we aren’t just learning about marketing; we are uncovering the new “digital vocabulary” of our lives, where every click and every purchase becomes a way of telling the world who we think we are.

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