Green advertising in Argentina.
An analysis of environmental claims in TV ads

La publicidad verde en Argentina.
Análisis del uso de apelaciones medioambientales en anuncios televisivos

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ABSTRACT

This article summarizes the results of a content analysis study on green advertising in Argentina. The main objective was to develop a diagnostic study of TV advertisements that use environmental claims for commercial purposes. To do this, we quantitatively analyzed a sample of advertisements classified as "green" to objectively and systematically describe the content of these messages and define patterns that allowed us to establish some trends. The data revealed that the purpose of most of green advertisements are sales rather than to build an image, and that the environment is mostly used as context for the message or as a creative complement. Most advertisers seek to link the environment attributes to their products or services, but they do not communicate real environmental benefits.

Keywords: environment, green advertising, mass media, content analysis.

RESUMEN

Este artículo resume los resultados de una investigación de análisis de contenido sobre la publicidad verde en Argentina, cuyo objetivo principal fue elaborar un estudio diagnóstico de los mensajes publicitarios audiovisuales que utilizan apelaciones medioambientales con fines comerciales. Para ello, se analizó cuantitativamente una muestra de anuncios publicitarios clasificados como "verdes", para describir objetiva y sistemáticamente el contenido de estos mensajes y definir patrones que nos permitieran establecer algunas tendencias. Fue posible observar que la mayoría de los spots verdes tienen una finalidad más de ventas que de creación de imagen, y que el medioambiente se utiliza sobre todo como contexto del mensaje o como complemento del concepto creativo. La mayoría de los anunciantes busca asociar los atributos del medioambiente con sus productos o servicios, pero sin transmitir beneficios medioambientales reales.

Palabras clave: medioambiente, publicidad verde, medios de comunicación, análisis de contenido.

INTRODUCTION

In industrialized economies, companies are facing more and more saturated markets; the increment in offer comes along with a homogenization of products and services offered. In this context, it becomes increasingly difficult to find competitive advantages when looking to optimize the positioning of certain goods or services, since the quality, price and characteristics of the products offered are often similar and possible differences are little perceptible to the consumer. In this scenario of high competitiveness, protecting the environment is a factor of differentiation very valued not only by actual or potential customers, but also by other people that influence the company's activity (Asociación de Usuarios de la Comunicación [AUC], 2008; Vicente, Pando, Aparicio & Aldámiz-Echevarría, 1999).

Due to the attention that media gives to initiatives related to ecology, the protection of the environment, environmental problems and climate change, people are becoming more concerned about the planet, and that awareness has increased the levels of environmental awareness of many consumers (Do Paço & Reis, 2012). In this new culture of sustainability, "green consumerism" arises (Camerero & Martin, 1995, p. 112). This trend has forced companies to worry about their communication and to incorporate elements that relate them or their products to the care and the protection of nature and the environment.

There is evidence that many consumers throughout the world give considerable importance to environmental claims in advertising and are likely to choose one brand over another if they believe that it can contribute to the preservation of the environment. For example, according to the international survey conducted by the consulting firm TNS in 2008, 61% of Argentineans recognizes that environment influences in the car-buying decision, while 67% states that it influences the decision of purchase of food products (p. 12). Also, 42% of the surveyed Argentineans considered that their purchasing decisions, in general, are influenced by companies that promoted themselves as "green" or environmentally friendly (p. 15).

Advertising plays a critical role in communicating this pro-environmental image while harnessing this eco-friendly consciousness among consumers (Iyer & Banerjee, 1993). If beauty sells, advertising uses beauty in its messages; in the same way, if "greenness" sells, advertising will use symbols related to the environment to associate it with their products, which does not mean that the advertised products are indeed greener (Gutiérrez, 2008).

Although the volume of so-called *green advertising* increases every day in Latin America, we can say that the use of environmental claims is a relatively new phenomenon. In this context, this research is designed to analyze the nature of green advertising in Argentina in its two aspects: advertising and the consumer. In the first one, studying the types of claims used in a TV advertisement not only will provide insights to an organization's environmental posturing, but viewed collectively, they may partially reflect the character of environmental advertising within a country and serve as basis for comparison across nations (Carlson, Grove, Kangun & Polonsky, 1996). The second will allow knowing the characteristics of green consumers, their levels of knowledge about the environment and involvement with its care, and their attitude about advertising messages (D'Souza & Taghian, 2005).

This article presents the results of the first stage of this research, in which a diagnostic study of audiovisual advertising messages that use environmental claims in Argentina was carried out.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

GREEN ADVERTISING

Usually, the terms "environmental advertising" or "green advertising" are used to refer to advertisements in which the environment is represented. While it is often thought that this type of advertising has always environmental interests, it is actually not so. In fact, most of the time, when talking about environmental advertising it is to refer to the advertisements of brands and companies that use the representation of the environment with commercial or corporate purposes, and not to the advertising that nonprofit entities make for social and awareness purposes related to the issue, for which such expression should be reserved (Alvarado, 2008).

Thus, it is convenient to make the distinction between actual environmental advertising and that

advertising with environmental claims, which we call green advertising.

We understand that green advertising is basically one that announces a product or brand through environmental claims (Hartman & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2009). In this sense, green advertising is defined as any ad that meets one or more of the following criteria: i) directly or indirectly addresses the relationship between a product/service and the natural environment; ii) promotes a green lifestyle with or without highlighting a product/service, iii) presents a corporate image of environmental responsibility (Banerjee, Gulas & Iyer, 1995, p. 22).

Green advertising has numerous approaches, since an advertiser can affirm that the advertised product is environment-friendly (e.g., by having a recyclable container), that its production process preserves natural resources (e.g. because it uses biodegradable materials or because it saves energy during the process), or that it sponsors pro-environmental programs or organizations (e.g. having a reforestation program) (Chang, 2011).

ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS

The environmental information contained in green advertising allows differentiating basically four types of claims, according to the proposal of Carlson, Grove and Kangun (1993) and Corbett (2006):

1) Nature as backdrop: it tries to sell the product or service using the environment as a backdrop, but not directly alluding to it. It seeks for consumers to associate the "natural" qualities of the environment with the product. In these advertisements, you are not asked to buy something that has an obvious and direct connection with nature, but the qualities and cultural meanings of the natural world are linked to the product, so that the environment blends into the background. Although this intentional but seemingly casual use of the environment in advertising is the most common, is the less studied by researchers (Corbett, 2006, p. 150).

2) Environmental attributes of a product or process: consumers are persuaded to think that there is a less harmfull relationship between the product and the environment than a similar one without those attributes. Advertisements tend to inform about the specific ecological attributes of a product (e.g. it uses recycled paper) or its production

process (e.g. that it does not produce polluting wastes). It seeks that consumers believe that if they buy a certain brand, they are contributing to a greener lifestyle. This type of claims makes the buyer believe he is doing the right thing, but it actually says very little about the true environmental costs of producing or consuming a product. In this category we include the arguments focused on the product and the process-oriented, distinguished by Carlson et al. (1993).

3) Green image: it focuses on the company rather than the product and seeks to associate it with an ecologic cause or a pro-environmental activity for which there is a general public support, so that the company appears as more responsible than others (e.g. carrying out a reforestation campaign). It also includes messages that encourage consumers to join the brand in these campaigns (e.g. for every purchased product a tree will be planted).

4) Environmental advocacy: it promotes attitudes and responsible behavior towards environment and is aimed at raising awareness about a specific environmental problem (energy use, pollution of air and water, animals, etc). This type of advertisements tries to make people change or acquire certain environmentally friendly habits (e.g. encourage to recycle, give practical tips to save water, etc.) and are generally used by public institutions, NGOs and environmental protection agencies, but they can also come from corporations and groups interested in influencing policies and decisions concerning the environment.

According to some authors, such as Carlson and collaborators (1996) and Davis (1993), it is feasible to also separate green advertising claims as substantives (specifics) or associative (vague/ambiguous). Substantive claims are those that present concrete, tangible environmental characteristics and benefits of the product/service supported by objective and factual information. For example, when the company says that has reduced packaging material in a specific percentage in relation to previous packaging.

Associative claims are more intangible than substantives and represent the effort of the company to develop a positive perception through data that go beyond products and processes, since they do not tend

to communicate specific attributes that contribute to the conservation of the environment, but the connection between the advertiser and the positive information on the environment is inferred. These advertisements often contain abstract, vague or ambiguous wording, without factual support, to describe the product's environmental characteristics or benefits (Carlson et al., 1996; Davis, 1993).

METHOD

This stage of the research consisted of elaborating a descriptive exploratory study about audiovisual advertising messages that use environmental claims in Argentina.

The analysis pursued the following specific objectives: i) to identify the types of environmental claims used by companies in television advertisements that promote their products and/or services; ii) to establish the frequency of the different types of claims; iii) to identify areas of activity associated with the different claims; iv) to identify resources (verbal and visual) that represent the environment in advertisements; v) to identify potentially inappropriate practices from the standpoint of environmental conservation and establish its frequency of occurrence.

To carry out the study, we used the quantitative content analysis technique of a sample of advertisements classified as 'green', to describe objectively and systematically the contents of these messages and establish patterns that allow us to make a diagnosis of green advertising in Argentinean television.

SAMPLING

To establish the research's analysis universe, we used the advertisements database InfoAd (www.infoad.com.ar), company dedicated to monitoring the dissemination and advertising investment. This online platform is based on automatic detection technology, to systematize, manage and analyze advertisements issued in Argentina. InfoAd gave the research team free temporary access to the platform to view all ads issued in the months of March, April, May and June 2013 by five national broadcast channels (Canal 7, Canal 9, Canal 13, América, Telefé) and all three of Cordoba (Canal 12, Canal 10 and Teleocho). It can be said, then, that the cor-

pus of analysis coincides with all advertisements broadcasted at national and regional levels during the mentioned time period.

All advertisements broadcasted by the mentioned channels in the period from March 1 to June 30, 2013, were extracted from the database, which added a total of 2056 displayed spots. The information contained in the database allowed working with the classification of industries, sectors, brands and advertisers made by InfoAd. The next step was to identify those advertisements that met the previously established selection guidelines, related to the types of environmental claims pointed as usual in advertising by the literature. This final sample consisted of a total of 172 advertisements, i.e., 8.3% of the corpus of analysis advertisements used some environmental claim. These spots were then analyzed in detail.

CODEBOOK

Advertisements that would be analyzed were selected according to the following guidelines:

- When using the environment as a backdrop, but not directly alluding to it. E.g., products/models located in natural areas (beach, forest, etc.), use of natural elements in the construction of the message (water, leaves, trees, fruits...), presence of anthropomorphic animals.

- When the advertisement text associates the product, its manufacturing, use or consumption with the environment care or preservation. E.g. that it saves energy, that it is biodegradable, that it does not consume natural resources, etc.

- When the advertisement focuses on the company rather than the product and seeks to associate it with an ecologic cause or a pro-environment activity. E.g., the company performs a reforestation campaign.

- When the advertisement promotes attitudes and responsible behavior towards the environment and is aimed at raising awareness about a specific environmental problem. E.g., when promoting containers or paper recycling.

After selecting the advertisements according to the above requirements, we proceeded to complete a sheet of analysis, prepared with variables already used in previous studies on the subject (Banjeree et al., 1995; Ruiz & Conde, 2002; AUC, 2008; López, Andrés del Campo & González, 2008; Leonidou, Leonidou, Pali-

hawadana & Hultman, 2010), and divided into four main general sections:

a) Basic identification data: for each analysis unit we identified the following elements: industry, sector, duration of the advertisement (in seconds), brand, announcer, and title of the spot.

b) Broadcasts: total amount of broadcasts in the period of analysis, quantity of emissions in March, quantity of emissions in April, quantity of emissions in May, quantity of emissions in June.

c) Indicators related to the overall analysis of the announcement: main objective of the message (sales/image), age level to which it is aimed, gender to which it is addressed, main characters, tone of the announcement.

d) Indicators related to the environment: use value/symbolic value, predominantly environmental claim, presence of the environment in the creative strategy of the advertisement (essential/complementary), signs of the environment present in the message (words, images, colors, sound effects), presence of responsible/irresponsible behaviors, level of "greenness" of the advertisement.

CODING AND RELIABILITY

Coding involved three judges, to whom certain amount of advertisements was assigned randomly using InfoAd's category 'Industries' as distribution criteria. Thus, every judge independently envisioned a third part of the industries listed in the database (52 in total), and selected the units of analysis that met the requirements previously established. That same person then analyzed each spot in detail and completed the corresponding sheet.

After the codification process, a new analysis was made over 15% of the randomly selected units (N=26), in order to calculate the reliability of the codification process. Intercoder reliability was computed using the Scott's Pi formula, which showed an average value of .80 (in the 50 variables considered). Intercoder reliability in the basic identification variables and emissions was not counted, since that data was extracted from InfoAd. The reliability of the coding of the rest of the variables showed the values of Scott's Pi as shown in table 1.

The intercoder agreement reached can be considered appropriate for exploratory work such as this, since the values of Scott's Pi are superior to .60 (Igartua, 2006).

The only indicator where the minimum is not reached is the 'Age level to which the advertisement is aimed'. However, when breaking it down we can see that the lack of agreement is only present in the categories of adolescents and youth.

Table 1. Intercoder reliability (Scott's Pi)

General analysis of the advertisements

Message target	.90
Age level to which it is aimed	.58
Gender to which it is aimed	.79
Characters	.88
Advertisement's tone	.84

Thematic indicators

Relationship with the environment	.69
Type of environmental claim	.78
Presence of the environment in the creative strategy	.83
Words related to environment	1
Predominant colors	.60
Sound effects	.90
Responsible behavior	.83
Irresponsible behavior	1
Level of "green" of the ad	.87

Source: own elaboration.

RESULTS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANALYZED ADS

Preliminary analysis of the spots reports that the average duration is 29.02 seconds (N=172) and that the total amount of emissions of these advertisements during the analyzed period is of 29105 (7485 in March, 7311 in April, 6403 in May and 8090 in June).

The 172 identified and analyzed units belong to the industries listed in table 2.

As show by the data, the majority of green spots is sponsored by companies in the private sector (86.3%) facing the 13.7% of advertisements that were sponsored by institutions, authorities, foundations and civil society organizations. Also, most of the advertisers (N=93) belongs to large multinationals that produce a variety of products and that are engaged in different business units, such as Unilever (7.6%), Genomma Labs

Table 2. Distribution of the analyzed ads according to the industry to which they belong

Industry	Frecuency	%
Hygiene articles	21	12,2
Non alcohol beverages	16	9,3
Graphic and audiovisual media	14	8,1
Politics	14	8,1
Telecommunications	12	7
Automotive factories and dealers	10	5,8
Banks and cards	9	5,2
Cleaning	8	4,7
Chemical industry	7	4,1
Alcoholic beverages	7	4,1
Food	7	4,1
Furniture and home stores	6	3,5
Candy	5	2,9
Foundations and civil society organizations	4	2,3
Dairy products	3	1,7
Textile, apparel and accessories	3	1,7
Veterinary	3	1,7
Regulators	3	1,7
Events	2	1,2
Gastronomy	2	1,2
Pharmacy and perfumery	2	1,2
Construction	2	1,2
Combustibles	2	1,2
Religion	2	1,2
Sports	2	1,2
Gaming	1	0,6
Agricultural	1	0,6
Administrators and insurance	1	0,6
Informatics	1	0,6
Water supply	1	0,6
Retail	1	0,6
TOTAL	172	100

Source: own elaboration.

(3.5%), Telefónica (2.9%), Coca Cola (2.9%), Pepsico (2.3%), Nestlé (2.3%), Procter Gamble (1.7%), Johnson & Johnson (1.7%), Santander Bank (1.7%) and General Motors (1.7%).

Other results allow concluding that the majority of the advertisements had as target young people and adults of both genders. Regarding the characters, most of the spots presented human characters, also of both genders. There is a significant proportion (14%) of ads where the main character was represented by an animation, especially antropomorphized animals.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS

Regarding the types of environmental claims, in an overwhelming majority advertisements' only used the environment as a backdrop, but did not allude to it explicitly. These "associative" claims (Carlson et al., 1996) infer a connection between the brand and the environment properties (e.g. clean, pure, natural), but they do not communicate any specific effort of the advertiser to contribute to their conservation. I.e., most of the analyzed advertisements (93.6%) only use the environment as an element of attraction to the message, looking for empathy from consumers to these products.

The rest of claims represent only 6.4% of the analyzed spots. These "substantive" claims (Carlson et al., 1996) present concrete information and reflect an intent to maintain or enhance consumers' perceptions of an organization as environmentally responsible. Within the industries that use this type of claims, non-alcoholic beverages have the most ads.

OBJECTIVES: SALES AND IMAGE

One of the evidences of this research shows that the main goal pursued by green advertisements is sales (63.4%), as it is usual in industries seeking above all advertising impact in the short and medium term, such as hygiene articles, non-alcoholic beverages, graphic media, cleaning, food, candy, etc.

As for advertisements aimed at image, it is notable the totality of political messages and industry factories, as well as automotive distributors, where most of green messages was intended for this purpose.

USE VALUE AND SYMBOLIC VALUE

The results show that there is no big difference between the types of products that use green advertising, according to the categories referred to it by AUC (2008). That is,
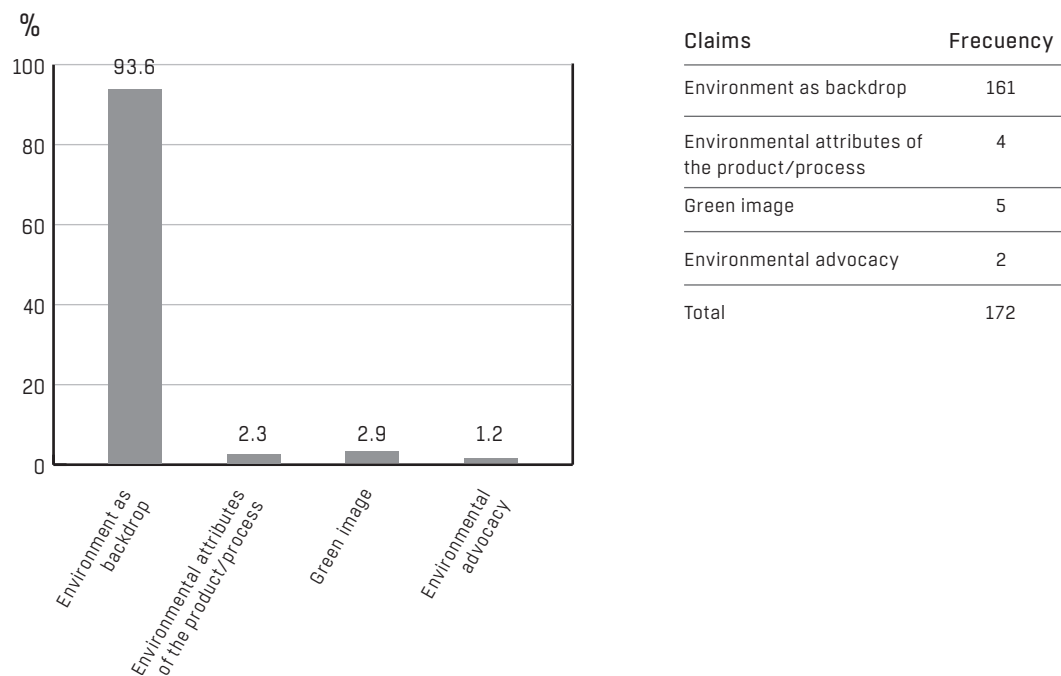
Table 3. General analysis of the advertisements

Análisis general del anuncio

Variable	Category	Frecuency	%
Level of age to which is aimed*	Aimed at children	28	16,30%
	Aimed at adolescents	57	33,10%
	Aimed at young people	131	76,20%
	Aimed at adults	137	79,70%
	Aimed at elders	40	23,30%
	Aimed at the whole family	23	13,40%
Gender	Women	29	16,90%
	Men	13	7,60%
	Both genders	130	75,60%
Main character*	Man	68	39,50%
	Women	61	35,50%
	Children	23	3,40%
	Animal	15	8,70%
	Animated	24	14%
	There are no main characters	43	25%

* non-exclusive categories

Source: own elaboration.

Chart 1. Environmental claims. Percentages and frequencies

Claims	Frecuency
Environment as backdrop	161
Environmental attributes of the product/process	4
Green image	5
Environmental advocacy	2
Total	172

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Main objective of the message

Industry	Main objective of the message	
	Image	Sales
Hygiene articles	18	3
Non alcohol beverages	11	5
Politics	0	14
Graphic and audiovisual media	13	1
Telecommunications	7	5
Automotive factories and dealers	3	7
Banks and cards	7	2
Cleaning	6	2
Alcoholic beverages	4	3
Food	7	0
Chemical industry	7	0
Furniture and home stores	5	1
Candy	5	0
Foundations and civil society organizations	1	3
Regulators	0	3
Veterinary	2	1
Textile, apparel and accessories	3	0
Dairy products	3	0
Sports	0	2
Combustibles	0	2
Religion	0	2
Construction	2	0
Pharmacy and perfumery	2	0
Gastronomy	0	2
Events	0	2
Retail	1	0
Informatics	1	0
Water supply	0	1
Administrators and insurance	0	1
Agricultural	1	0
Gaming	0	1

Source: own elaboration.

these advertisements are used by products related to the environment both by their use value (43.6%) as well as by their symbolic value (56.4%). The first include products that have a motivated relationship with the environment, since their use or consumption have a direct impact on it, as drinks (cans), detergents, cars, fuels, etc. The latter do not have a direct relationship with the environment, but that connection is arbitrary, so the environmental arguments are used rather in a rhetorical form (e.g. telecommunications, banks, etc).

TONE OF THE MESSAGE

Regarding the tone of the advertisement, aware that the shortness of the advertising format requires simplicity and complicates argument, and that it is virtually impossible that an advertisement is devoid of emotional content, three categories of classification have been established. First, it is considered that an advertisement has emotional tone when it is created with the specific aim of provoking certain emotions or leads to the expectation that some satisfactions or dissatisfactions will be obtained (Barthes, 1995). Second, an ad is predominantly rational when it aims to convince with descriptions or explanations that can be contrasted with reality (Barthes, 1995). Finally, the tone of the spots is classified as ethical/moral when there is any statement regarding what is proper, moral, or ethical to do under certain circumstances (Leonidou et al., 2010).

In this sense, results show that most of the advertisements presented an emotional tone (57%), with little reference to the product or service and the audience which aimed at. In addition, taking into account the distinction made above, the products/services that used this type of claim the most are those that have a symbolic relationship with the environment.

On the other hand, 37.2% of the spots were based on informative and logical statements that attempt to demonstrate the real utility to the consumer that can be found in the product or service advertised. The ethical tone (5.8%) predominates in political advertisements and from foundations and civil society organizations.

SIGNS OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE MESSAGE

Advertising is a predominantly symbolic language so in its ads we can find signs that represent the environment.. According to the results, it is possible to say that from the point of view of language, the environment is represented more through the visual than the verbal.

Table 5. Tone of the message and relationship of the product to the environment

Tone	Relationship to the environment		
	Use value	Symbolic value	Total
Emotional	33	65	98
Rational	37	27	64
Ethical/Moral	5	5	10
Total	75	97	172

Source: own elaboration.

As for the verbal representation, there are sporadically some words related to environmental care. The word that most appears is "natural" (4.1%), data consistent with other research of this type (López et al., 2008) and that accounts for the shallowness of the message, since this concept is one of the most broad and ambiguous of the list, given that it is easily associated with nature, but does not provide objective data.

Regarding visual representation, what stand out the most is the use of color and natural elements. The predominant color in ads is green, present in 54.1% of the spots. In terms of images related to the environment, the majority of ads (73.8%) represent natural elements (mostly water, trees, plants, animals), and these elements are mostly insert in scenes showing artificial natural landscapes, such as gardens or plazas (47.7%), and urban landscapes (47.7%).

THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE CREATIVE STRATEGY

Data shows that in the majority of cases (68%) the environment is part of the creative strategy in a complementary way, with an essential presence only in 32% of the cases. This indicates that, for the analyzed brands, it is not so necessary to design creative strategies in which the environment is the central proposal, but to establish indirect connections between their products and the environment.

ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE AND IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIORS

Behaviors toward the environment were identified through two not mutually exclusive categories, i.e. in a same advertisement there could be both responsible and irresponsible behaviors.

The analysis revealed several examples of responsible behavior towards the environment (61%), such as efficient energy use (lights off in daytime indoor scenes), reducing pollution (cycling, waste deposits), respect for animals and natural areas, etc. In some cases there have even been recommendations of recycling plastic bottles. However, we also detected ads where the main characters carry out some environmentally irresponsible behaviors (27.3%), whether it is wasting energy or natural resources (especially water), violating natural areas (cars crossing beaches, rivers, forests), polluting too much, or inciting consumerism.

GREENNESS DEGREE

To determine the degree in which a green ad states explicitly or not the advertiser's attitude to the environment, we used the categorization proposed by Banerjee and his collaborators (1995), slightly adapted. In this sense, in 90.1% of the analyzed advertisements were considered superficial, that is, that they don't have any explicit statements about the product/service relationship with the environment. The 5.8% of the spots was considered moderate, since they presented some general inference about the environmental attributes of the product or the company initiatives. Finally, only 4.1% messages were classified as deep, i.e. that they underlined some practice or specific environmental attribute of the company, product or service.

DISCUSSION

From the above analysis, we have come to certain inferences guided by the objectives that defined this research.

Firstly, we have identified the four types of environmental claims raised by the theoretical framework. The analysis shows that most of green ads broadcasted by Argentinean television uses the environment as backdrop, so brands try to harness the simple association of the environment qualities with the product/service. I.e., the vast majority of green advertisements do not transmit a real environmental benefit of the product or its production process. In this way, and in accordance with the results of similar research carried out in Spain, environment continues to be a background on which it is talked about prod-

ucts, political ideas, slogans, brands and companies (Andrés del Campo & González, 2010).

On the other hand, we have found that environmental speech in the Argentinean audiovisual advertising is dominated by the private sector, not by institutions, authorities or other advertising actors. Therefore, environmental consciousness is being defined by economic agents. In addition, we have seen that the environment is used primarily as a sales incentive, so that it becomes an element of commercial value. These results are consistent with those found by López and his collaborators (2008) and Andrés del Campo y Gonzalez (2010), who claim that companies seek to make the environment compatible with their business objectives.

Regarding the signs used to represent the environment in the ads, we found more visual than verbal ones. Most spots shows natural elements and uses green color which is "typically ecological by its association with the color of vegetation" (Andrés del Campo & González, 2010, p. 16). Also, the analysis shows that the majority of green spots broadcasted by Argentinean television use scenarios that represent artificial landscapes, such as gardens or plazas and urban landscapes. According to these data, we observe that the analyzed green ads seek to highlight those scenarios related to the context in which most of the audience lives (city), in contrast to what happens in Spanish ads, where there is a predominance of natural landscapes over urban ones (López et al., 2008).

Another possible interpretation is that perhaps the advertisers want to avoid nature to be per-ceived as distant and aim to bring it closer to the viewer. In this sense, gardens represent a certain "domestication" of nature and, according to López et al. (2008), it is a practice imported from the Anglo-Saxon lifestyle and converted into desirable through movies, but in reality is an activity which, without the necessary prudence, can become anti-ecological (irrigation, deforestation, use of pesticides, etc).

Finally, it should be noted that while the presence of environmentally responsible behaviors far outstrips the irresponsible, the latter are indeed present in Argentinean green advertising. We believe that the path towards an environmentally responsible advertising requires identifying those potentially inappropriate practices regarding the environmental conservation, as well as recognizing those formulas that can provide the advertising messages a plus in terms of environmental responsibility. In this sense, the present analysis is a starting point to develop lines of research seeking to ensure truthful and responsible use of the environmental claims in advertising messages.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the data presented here are part of the first stage of a broader research project. The content analysis made so far is not enough to establish the persuasive effectiveness of green ads, issue vital to study the perceptions of audiences to which such messages are aimed at. This task belongs to the second stage of the research, which will be designed taking into account the characteristics (claims, execution styles, etc) extracted from this analysis.

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