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The language of persuasion in McDonald's advertising campaigns
during the last 10 years

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study persuasion language used in advertisement based on data collected from audio-visual and multimodal texts. The synchronic nature of this study aims to analyse the change in language over time as well as to focus on the different themes used to sponsor the same product and how they have changed with society over the last 10 years.

Eighteen advertisements were analysed, which in turn were grouped into three major thematic areas:

1. Environmental themes
2. Themes of social interest
3. Food quality and supply

The chosen themes aim to emphasise how the company feels involved in society and the problems it faces. The language of each of them was analysed in detail in search of persuasive language. It can be seen that this is a crucial point in the lexical and linguistic choices of the brand, not only to give prestige to the company's image, but also to demonstrate to its customers, or future customers, that transparency, involvement in sensitive or socially considered issues and quality are at the forefront of McDonald's concerns.

But what is the true purpose of the company? Does it really want to improve the world we live in or simply communicate a different self-image, that is innovative and open to change, in order to grab the complete trust of its customers? This thesis seeks to unravel the subtleties of McDonald's persuasive language, shedding light on the broader implications of its advertising strategies, and probing the company's genuine commitment to societal betterment.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an expression of the self and it has been used since the dawn of time not only to communicate, express needs and desires, but also to persuade, convince and manipulate others to one's own ends. The main theme of this paper is therefore persuasive language and how it is used for different purposes. This thesis aims to analyse the persuasive language used in eighteen McDonald's advertisements over a time period from 2013 to 2023 to see if and how it has changed in the last ten years. All the commercials are taken from the company's YouTube channels, the majority coming from the UK channel, the others from Canadian and American ones. I have chosen to study this type of language not only because of the undoubted interest it can have, but also to see how and if it is necessary, and then used, for the 'survival' of even large companies whose reputation cannot be questioned.

With the advent of new technologies, the face of advertising has also changed, which makes it more complex to define what it is used for. Selling one's product or service is often no longer the primary purpose of companies, and McDonald's is a perfect example of this new type of approach.

Persuasion is based on several factors among them there are: the credibility of the speaker and the information, logic and reason, and the emotions that the person to whom the communication is addressed feels or is intended to be leveraged to achieve the goal. McDonald's commercials, each in their own way, take advantage of all these aspects. The credibility of the brand is undeniable, or it would not be the leader in its field, and the use of emotionally engaging language, images and music is skilfully mixed with the more concrete and realistic data shown in some of the videos.

This might be almost trivial, but it was interesting to discover that, through the choices implemented in the design of each spot, there are different goals in every one of them: in fact, from the analysis accomplished, it is possible to see that there is a layering behind each of the advertisements under discussion here. Each layer 'hides' a different purpose carried out by the company: to sell the product, certainly, but also, and perhaps primarily, to restore the image of a brand that, over the years, has seen dark moments.

To be successful every advertisement must be remembered, or at any rate recognized as familiar. Memorability and selling power come also from the language chosen and it has an influence on them. This seems to be an easy task for a brand like McDonald's: everyone knows its jingle and recognises its golden arches, so it is not surprising that the company has been able, over time, to deviate from this more classic type of marketing by directing its advertisements to different and heterogeneous themes without fear of not being remembered or recognized. With the right strategy, trust mixed with emotion creates loyalty, and this is exactly what companies like McDonald's want to achieve through the use of advertising.

The study will be carried out by analysing the characteristics and presence of persuasive language on the following five aspects:

1. Morphosyntax
2. Style
3. Lexical and grammatical choices
4. Tropes and figurative language
5. Meta-discursive devices

In each of the 18 advertisements under analysis, it is possible to find more than one of the typical characteristics of this type of language.

The advertisements, for ease of analysis, will be divided into three macro categories: *environmental themes*, *themes of social interest*, and *food quality and supply*.

Reading the analysis of the rhetorical devices, it is therefore possible to see how the brand succeeded to enhance the collective imagination about itself and how, through persuasive language, it is “pretending” to promote issues of collective interest, while instead is paving the way for the creation of a new self-image by promoting itself.

CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE AND PERSUASION IN ADVERTISING

In the modern world, everyone is familiar with advertising. That set of means and methods used for the purpose of signalling the existence and making known the characteristics of different products and services, by preparing the messages deemed most suitable for the type of market to which they are addressed. People react to the same advertisement differently and make decisions on how to spend their available resources on consumption related items. Although these choices may seem personal and free, they are often due to other factors, first and foremost to the persuasive language used in advertisement.

The primary purpose of advertising is not just to sell products and services but also to persuade the audience to believe or do something, to act or think in a particular way, to feel part of something and the importance of persuasive language for a successful advertising campaign is therefore evident. Hence, it is not surprising that advertisements nowadays tend to reflect specific types of cultures or refer to particular social values: certain advertisements are widely accepted in a given society while others are treated with utmost dislike and scepticism, tobacco commercials are one example of all. Consequently, creating the right advertisement is a delicate job that mixes a skilful lexical, visual, imaginative choice with the ability to identify and thus satisfy the consumer's need while taking into account cultural, social and psychological factors. It is clear that to use persuasive language to convince the consumer of the desirability of a specific good or service is probably not enough. To achieve persuasive advertising all its components must 'play their part' also by appealing to the consumer's

emotional side and sensitivity by creating an emotional response related to individuals' psychological and social needs.

1.1 LANGUAGE AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

Language is a communication system characterised by written and spoken symbols that are used by people in a given geographical area to communicate and express themselves as a part of a social and cultural group. Language allows people to express not only thoughts and messages, but also feelings, desires and needs in a structured way to convey meaning. In this regard, Trask (1999: 15) points out that "Language is what makes us human and human language is unique."

As we can infer from its name, persuasive language is that type of language whose purpose is to convince. It can be used to create a sense of trust, to convince of the truthfulness of facts and conclusions, to make someone else take certain actions. It is present around us every day: on social media, in newspapers and on billboards. It is for this reason that this type of language is extremely used in promotion, or to put it more simply, in advertising.

Persuasive discourse, especially in the context of genres such as advertisements, often makes use of multiple modes, including images, sounds, music, and sometimes even tastes and smells to communicate in a more immediate way, often appealing to people's emotions or unconscious associations rather than to their reason. Linguist scholar Vijay Bhatia sees promotionalization as one of the most dominant characteristics of professional and media genres nowadays (Bhatia, 2005: 213).

This is, for example, the case of the so called native or branded contents: those are advertising, directly produced and funded by advertisers, that

imitates the style and format of other media content they appear with, not interrupting the users reading or viewing experience. This content disarms the filters people normally put up when they know that a message is trying to persuade them. Its goal is clear: it wants to remain unrecognized within the editorial content, thus not giving the reader the impression of being exposed to an advertisement. And this strategy works very well. Studies have shown that consumers share native advertisements with friends and family more frequently than banner ads¹. It is so well received by consumers because native advertisements offer good content while following the rules of storytelling, adding value to the reader.

Once accepted the fact that people can never be safe from this kind of language, which tends to convince and persuade, it is easy to fall into the thought that there is no longer a 'truth' to believe in.

Some kinds of media messages claim to present information with neutrality and objectivity but even in this messages it is possible to encounter internal and external biases with which 'media producers promote a particular point of view or ideological position by the way they select or express content.' However, the act of promoting some biased information is not necessarily to be labelled as incorrect or dishonest. In some respects, it is an inevitable mechanism since everyone experiences events from their own point of view and this can never be the same for everyone: just because something is biased doesn't make it untrue. Moreover, all humans are prone what psychologists call 'confirmation bias': the tendency to believe things that confirm what they already believe. Confirmation bias is a cognitive phenomenon that reflects our tendency to seek, interpret, and remember

¹<https://medium.com/nativeadvertising/consumers-look-at-native-ads-more-than-display-according-to-new-study-764843bd771d> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

information in a way that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and opinions, while simultaneously discounting or ignoring evidence that contradicts them. This bias is a pervasive aspect of human psychology and can have significant implications in decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships, as it can hinder the objective evaluation of information, and people whose goal it is to persuade or manipulate with media messages are well aware of and good at exploiting this tendency. But they must also be cautious and use persuasive language in such a way as not to make the end user think that the message is designed to achieve a specific purpose, as this would have the opposite effect. In fact, communication scholars Marian Friestad and Peter Wright (1994) have developed what they call the 'persuasion knowledge model', a theory which postulates that the more people recognize that the purpose of the message is to persuade them, the less likely they are to be persuaded by it. This model suggests that consumers possess a reservoir of knowledge related to persuasion techniques and tactics employed by marketers. This knowledge includes an awareness of advertising's intent to persuade and the tactics used to achieve that goal. The model highlights the importance of transparency, credibility, and ethical communication in advertising, as consumers are more likely to respond favourably to persuasive attempts when they perceive them as honest and forthright.

In their book *Network Propaganda*, Yochai Benkler and his colleagues (2018) describe what they call the 'propaganda feedback loop', a media dynamic that begins by rewarding media bias, but soon helps create the

conditions in which fake news² can flourish leading to a self-reinforcing cycle in which propaganda or disinformation is disseminated, amplified, and further entrenched through various media channels and social interactions. In this loop, false or misleading information is initially spread, often strategically, with the aim of influencing public opinion or advancing a particular agenda. With the advent of social media and digital platforms, information can spread rapidly and widely, intensifying the feedback loop. The propaganda feedback loop underscores the power of echo chambers and the challenges in countering false narratives in the modern information landscape, where sensationalism and confirmation bias can fuel the cycle. Many fake news stories make use of the same kinds of persuasive devices and logical fallacies that we find in biased news and propaganda and are characterized by:

1. **Emotion:** fake news headlines usually contain words with strong positive or negative connotations and often relies on emotional language and imagery to evoke strong feelings, such as fear, anger, or sympathy. This emotional manipulation can cloud rational judgment and make readers more susceptible to accepting false information.
2. **Simplicity:** fake news headlines are usually shorter and contain simpler words but they are also characterized by sensationalism. They tend to exaggerate or sensationalize events or claims to grab attention. Sensational headlines and content are designed to

² 'Fake news' consists of intentionally false or misleading content circulated in order to promote a political point of view, sow confusion, or attract 'clicks'. What distinguishes 'fake' news from news that is simply biased or fallacious is that it is intentionally designed to spread false information. (See Jones, R. H., Jaworska, S. & Aslan, E., 2020. *Language and Media*. s.l.:Routledge.)

provoke strong reactions and encourage sharing without critical evaluation.

3. **Lexical makeup:** fake news headlines are characterized by a preponderance of verbs, adjectives, names, or numbers. Adjectives are carefully chosen to manipulate emotional responses, either by exaggerating the positive or negative aspects of a story. Names, especially of individuals or organizations, are strategically inserted to lend credibility or to serve as scapegoats. Numbers are frequently employed to lend an air of precision and authority, even when they may be entirely fabricated.

Having established, therefore, that no message can ever be bias free and that those who use language to persuade or convince are familiar with the deep mechanisms of human behaviour, we can say that no message is truly devoid of persuasive purpose.

The focus of this thesis will be on the type of language used by the advertising medium to achieve its aims. Considering these assumptions, the following questions now arise:

- How is persuasive language characterized?
- What linguistic and semiotic tools are used to persuade people?

All media content makes use of rhetorical devices to convince readers of its 'truthfulness.' Skilled communicators draw on a 'toolkit' of such devices consisting of four basic kinds of tools:

- 1 **Style.** It is used to emphasize membership or proximity to a particular social group. To declare what "kind of person" people are. The colloquial language characterizes an emotive style that appeals to emotions, a more objective style and a more formal language are used instead to appeal to reason and logic. Whatever is the chosen style, however, the messages must be memorable this is why a

range of different media genres use patterns of sound like alliteration, assonance and rhyme to make their message easy to remember and really effective. Style helps to create particular kinds of interpersonal relationships between the speaker and their listeners or readers.

- 2 **Lexical and grammatical choices.** As already pointed out, the choice of vocabulary is an essential factor in this type of communication and must take into account factors such as: who the speaker is, who the audience is, and the context and goal of the utterance. Richard Weaver (1953) distinguishes between two categories the "devil words" and the "god words" referring to a lexicon whose definition often remains ambiguous or vague but which carries great emotional associations as in the case of euphemisms.

Grammatical choices, instead, often involve the use of 'logical connectors such as: 'so', 'because', 'therefore', and 'however' to create contrast or present one event as a plausible cause or result of another event. The use of these connectors does not make sentences necessarily logical but makes them appear so. Another possibility that grammar provides to represent reality or to create a sense of closeness with the listener/reader is the notion of transitivity: it is the relationship between participants in a clause mediated by a process (who is doing what to whom). It has important implications towards to how the events, actions, and people involved are interpreted. The attitude will therefore be different depending on the 'name' that is chosen to describe these. The use of pronouns also constitutes an important grammar rhetorical device, for example engaging the listener/reader by using the pronoun 'you' that helps to personalize the message, as stated by Norman Fairclough (1989), thus creating a sense of intimacy

which, however, is unfortunately artificial, or associating in the pronoun 'us' all those in agreement with the author. Another grammatical device used in persuasive speech is the Modality: it is a lexico-grammatical resource such as modal verbs or hedges that are used to express distance or certainty about what is said or about how obligated others should feel.

- 3 **Tropes and figurative language.** In persuasive speech, the use of tropes and figurative language serves to represent the intensity of an argument with more vigour and expressive force, to create much more compelling messages. This figurative language includes things like metaphors (comparing one thing to another), allegory (using a story to illustrate a point), allusion (making reference to things outside the argument), and analogy (asserting that one situation is similar to another situation).
- 4 **Meta-discursive devices.** They refer to the general presentation of media messages and how they are related to other messages and the communicative environment in which they come to life. Lexical and grammatical choices then take a back seat, leaving room for the three main meta-discursive devices: *agenda setting*, *framing*, and *intertextuality*.

Agenda setting refers to the power that media have to affect public opinion by choosing which topics are worth covering and which can be ignored, this leading to a reshaping of reality more than to a reflection of it.

Framing is the way media producers use to "set" events, often it helps to implicitly activate certain frames of reference in particular audiences (usually related to ideas like race or to 'myths' about certain groups) through the subtle use of certain words or phrases.

Intertextuality is a discursive process whereby fragments of texts, images, sounds, and different elements are combined to produce a

new text and to give a sense of credibility: “no utterance is completely original”. Sometimes, however, intertextuality is used ironically in order to ridicule the source of the borrowed text.

1.2 PERSUASION AND PROPAGANDA

Propaganda and persuasion are just two ways to get a person or a group of people to think or act in a specific manner.

Such forms of communication encompass manifold means ranging from linguistic ones to argumentation and body language, use of symbols and images, suggestions (using more explicit or implicit meanings). This might suggest that the two terms could be used interchangeably. This thought might also be enhanced by the adjunctive difficulty whereby both persuasion and propaganda use the same media: art, television, radio, the internet, etc.

To understand the main differences between those two communication styles, it is therefore necessary to focus on the type of message, the different agents in the communication, and the possible or desirable benefit they can achieve.

Propaganda is a form of careful, organized communication with the intent of the communicator, called a propagandist, to influence a person or group of persons to think or behave differently or to reinforce pre-existing thoughts or behaviours. It can take different forms depending on the degree of reliability of the source. *Black propaganda* is the name of the propaganda based on manipulation or lies and whose source is often concealed. *Grey propaganda* is based on ambiguous sources and information. *White propaganda*, on the other hand, is a propaganda in which both the sources and the truthfulness of the information given are verifiable. It mostly originates from institutions that are able to control the information in various

way. This information control may start with fabricating it, limiting it or releasing it in a very specific moment or interval in order to achieve its purpose. The oftentimes selfish goals of propaganda give it a negative connotation of manipulation, especially in America and in Western Europe due to the propagation of the Nazi and Soviet ideologies. Institutions use it not only to spread specific messages but also to maintain the status quo, to establish new ideologies, but this word have also been used to describe campaign that aim at noble purposes such as: stop discriminating against minorities, eat healthy food, not litter, etc. This is why the only way to understand propaganda is to analyse it inside the goals that the institution is trying to achieve.

Since propaganda is a part of the ideological or educational programmes of institutions or organizations, and its nature is determined by their political, economic, religious or other interests, the flow of information tends to be controlled and organized by the source (the propagandist) and that is directed at masses with the objective of influencing them on some controversial issues, it is possible to say that propaganda largely aims at a monologue. So, as well as history has shown, propaganda was the preserve of the powerful: institutions, corporate entities, governments, etc., but with the development of digital media the ability to use propaganda as the powerful tool it is, is more widely distributed. Its point is not to share information but to make people feel part of something bigger, act in a certain way, socialize people into an ideology.

Persuasion is a form of communication also meant to influence a person or group to change their minds, behaviours or attitudes. To persuade means to convince the other party of one's own case and of the superiority of one's own idea or belief.

Persuasion can also be based on several factors: the credibility of the speaker and the information, logic and reason, and the emotions that the

person to whom the communication is addressed feels or is intended to be leveraged to achieve the goal. It differs from propaganda mainly with respect to communication flow and benefits: the flow of information is free, both parties involved can dialogue and get some benefit from the exchange. At the end of the process the persuadee is free to make a choice, think or act according to the desire of the persuader or not. This is the reason why persuasion has a more positive connotation of fairness and openness than propaganda.

Talking about persuasion in his textbook on social psychology Myers (2005 :247) finally concludes:

Persuasion is neither inherently good nor bad. It is a message's purpose and content that elicits judgements of good or bad. The bad we call 'propaganda'. The good we call 'education'. Education is more factually based and less coercive than propaganda. Yet generally we call it education' when we believe it, 'propaganda' when we don't.

Just as with propaganda even when it comes to persuasion it is difficult to be able to understand and analyse the phenomenon outside the communicative context in which it forms a part. Since persuasion is a dialogical process, it is possible to say that the tools it uses to achieve its goals are the same as any other communication: persuasion is not always the goal of communication, social influence, changing people's minds, etc are essential characteristics of any communication. Every message, every linguistic emission is based on a persuasive intention since individuals talk to and interact with one another to communicate their social realities, their own history that needs to be told with all its different meanings. Clearly depending on the language choices implemented during communication, and the degree of intentionality in the process of persuasion it may have more or less important connotations in the process of persuasion. Persuasive communication can make use of different tools such as: persuading by flattering or by creating nuances of meaning, etc. And that

is what makes it a heterogeneous type of communication. Propaganda and persuasion often coexist and involve several communicative processes.

The relationship between truth, persuasion and propaganda in media messages is complex and close (Jones, Jaworska & Aslan, 2020: 48). Everyone knows that not all media messages are intended to be taken as 'true'. This is the case with movies, TV series and comic books, for example, even if sometimes they are able to perfectly capture deeper truths about human nature, life, relationships, etc. Other genres that are overtly persuasive are advertisements, political speeches, commercials, pamphlets, position papers, and advocacy campaigns from organizations that favour or oppose certain policies. But are people then really that easily influenced? The way people normally judge a message depends mostly on what they think about it, is it right or wrong? Does it confirm the opinion they already had? According to scholars Marian Friestad and Peter Wright (1994), people are not so easily manipulable: they developed a theory called the 'persuasion knowledge model' which assumes that when people recognize a persuasive aim in a message, they are less likely to be persuaded by it.

We have already stated, in the previous chapter, that it is not because a message is biased that this makes it less 'true', and that a 'true' message is not necessarily objective and balanced. But there is a difference between news and persuasive content. In order to establish the truthfulness of a message it is necessary to pay particular attention to the source of it. Of course, this has become increasingly difficult with the advent of new technologies, and especially of social media, because of the way content travels across platforms, are reshared and reshaped several times, etc; social media make all sources seem the same. If it is so difficult to identify a truthful message from one whose sole purpose is to persuade of the

authenticity of the one conveying it, the question might arise: what then is true?

This question introduces the concept of 'post truth era'. According to many in the current historical period it is extremely difficult to determine the truthfulness of what we see, read or hear through the media since it is the very values associated with the idea of truth that are changing. Some propagandists want people to believe that what they assert is the truth, others have the goal of getting people not to believe what anybody says, so that the way for making decisions is no longer the rational evaluation of a message but is replaced by impulses such as fear or loyalty. This is really what people mean by 'post-truth'. A barrage of 'fake news' and bald-faced lies from politicians and other people who should be trustworthy for the purpose of confusing and better manipulating the recipients of their messages.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'post-truth' as: 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping political debate or public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.' This binary opposition between truth and emotions/beliefs doesn't always hold up. Every message is biased in some way but certain genres are more, people even expect them to be biased and highly persuasive so they adjust the way they evaluate these messages accordingly. This is the case of advertisements or political speeches.

It is then possible to recognize a persuasive message? In the past this was much easier. Persuasive discourse appeared in particular places like editorials, advertising on radio and television, had recognizable signs and appeared at specific moments of programming on different channels. Unfortunately, nowadays it becomes more and more difficult to make assumptions about these specificities. Newspapers,

websites, magazines, etc now contains advertorials - an advertisement written in the style of an editorial or news story- or branded contents³.

As cited by R. H. Jones, S. Jaworska & E. Aslan in their book *Language and media* (2020: 50) communication scholar and journalist Michael Serazio in his book *Your Ad Here: The Cool Sell of Guerrilla Marketing* (2013) argues that:

Much advertising today operates through strategies of expanding the space typically seen as reserved for commercial messages and catching audiences 'off-guard' by blending into the background of our everyday lives. Native content has the effect of disarming the 'filters' that we put up when we know a message is trying to persuade us of something.

Sometimes persuasive and biased messages are shared in a way that 'seems true' for particular audiences because they confirm people beliefs and are aligned to their emotions. Comedian Stephen Colbert calls this phenomenon *truthiness*, this is also well-known as *confirmation bias*.

1.3 THE PURPOSES OF ADVERTISING

Significant amounts of money are spent every year on advertising, and it has much more power than one might think. Its goal is to create a desire in consumers, a desire that has probably not existed before just by the way it is presented.

Advertising is always with us, in the labels of a product we are using, in billboards on the street, in all the media we happen to watch, see and hear. Its aim is to promote activities, services or products and to persuade

³ Media content that is directly produced and funded by an advertiser.

potential consumers to buy, but this is not their only function. They can also amuse, inform warn or even worry their audience.

According to some historians⁴, the earliest forms of advertising, as we know it today, appeared at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by taking advantage of a historical and social climate in which they were able to grow and develop: the increase in population in cities, the implantation of transportation networks such as roads and railroads, and the steady growth of information through the dissemination of newspapers. these are just some of the factors that helped the spread of advertising. Advertising is a fast method of communicating with many people at the same time and at a 'low cost' and its commercial power did not go unnoticed. In industrialized cities, so-called advertising agencies began to spring up. Their main task was to place advertisers' contents into the wide range of available media. Their services differentiated and refined over time to reach, in the twentieth century, the standards they still offer today to suit the different needs of advertisers. With the advent of television and mass media, the situation has further changed. These developments took place over many centuries and have produced a complex and highly sophisticated business. Advertisers spend increasing sums of money to promote their products and services. Nowadays many companies do not only spend money on product promotion but also on 'corporate' advertising to improve their own image or maintain a solid and reliable relationship with their audience. Various methods such as the creation of visual displays, sensational messages, discounts and promises are often used to attract the attention of the target groups. Current ads reflect radical changes in

⁴ See: Terence R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: a history*, 1982 ch 1; Sampson, S., *A History of Advertising from the Earliest Times*, Chatto and, Windus, 1875; Sagar Joshi <https://www.q2.com/articles/history-of-advertising> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

technologies and media, social and economic relations, in the sense of personal and group identity Advertising in all its form has become an accepted part of the environment in which people live.

According to G. Leech (1966), a successful advertisement must have four key aspects:

- it must draw attention to itself;
- it must sustain the interest it has attracted;
- it must be remembered, or at any rate recognized as familiar;
- it must prompt the right kind of action.

These factors also have an influence on the language that is used. Leech named these values *attention*, *readability*, *memorability*, and *selling power*. All of them have some linguistics features that need to be present in order to achieve the advertisers' goals like: how to use the language to attract attention, surprise and arouse curiosity using some convention breakers as misspelling, neologisms, metaphors and semantic variations (inappropriate or unorthodox language). how to keep the interest of the target audience using the first or second person, exclamations, simple and personal language, familiar vocabulary, colloquial forms as phrasal verbs instead of a single verb with a more precise description.

Advertising is a planned activity so its objective, the message and the emphasis that should be given to the product/service have to be very clear and so has the target audience.

Audiences are a group of people for whom media messages are intended. First with the advent of television and then with the spread of Internet media companies are increasingly able to target specific kinds of people with their contents in a process known as 'audience segmentation'.

As explained by R. H. Jones, S. Jaworska & E. Aslan in their book *Language and Media* (2020: 36):

Audience segmentation has reached its height in current models of online advertising, in which advertisers are not just able to target 'types' of people based on the kinds of content they like to consume, but are able to target individuals in real time based on what they search for and click on when they are surfing the web. The ways that new technologies have enabled internet companies and advertisers to monitor what consumers are reading or watching has dramatically changed the ways people think about the relationship between content and advertising as well as the way people think about media producers and their audiences.

Over time, this mechanism has created what the internet activist Eli Pariser (2001) calls 'filter bubbles' in which people are only exposed to the contents that make them feel comfortable and have no access to different points of view.

This way of targeting the audience inevitably emphasized a need for language modification. Audience design is the way audience can have an influence on the language: media messages are designed for particular kinds of audience not just on the level of content but also on the level of style. In linguistics it is possible to use this term to refer to the style with which people speak and create messages and the way it contributes to 'constructing' them as certain kinds of people. The language chosen to communicate not only indicates the speaker's position, but communicates to the audience what kind of roles we expect them to take. People have a different role accordingly to the way we speak to them.

To persuade someone successfully of something, trust is essential. With the right strategy, trust mixed with emotion creates loyalty, and this is exactly what companies want to achieve through the use of advertising. Advertisers will be able to persuade the target customers more easily when they have gained their trust. Companies use advertising to reach the stage

called 'brand loyalty' the consumers are not only loyal to a brand, but also have a strong sense of belonging to it.

One perhaps wonders how it is that advertising has this appeal to people, the reasons are varied, but this is also partly due to what W. Labov and J. Waletzky (1967) call the 'canonical model of narrative'. In fact, the model they theorized is often used in short media narratives and although it may not fit all kinds of narratives it is absolutely perfect for advertisements and commercials that use storytelling as their main feature. How the 'story' is told have an impact on the chosen verbal and semiotic resources.

Another characteristic feature in advertising is multimodality. Multimodality refers to the use of more than one mode of communication to create meaning. It is a way, when analysing a message that could be written/spoken or even an image, to understand not only the written meaning of discourse but also other elements that contribute to the meaning. So to describe a message as multimodal it is necessary to take into account modes and media.

Modes refer to the different ways it is possible to use to create meaning, for example the linguistic mode focuses on the choice of words, vocabulary, grammar, structure etc. The visual mode includes the use of images, symbols, videos, and also focuses on visual design features as layout, colours, font type, etc. The aural mode uses music, voice and sound effects as main features, and the gestural mode focuses on communication through movement as in gestures, body language, facial expressions, etc.

Media are the tools through which people interact and communicate with other people and their physical environments. Those are the forms in which different modes become accessible. Modes are influenced by the medium used to carry the message.

Therefore, it is possible to refer to a message as multimodal when several media are used simultaneously to vehiculate a message, one example of multimodality is given by online newspapers that perfectly combine the features of a website with the form of a classical newspaper.

This can be seen especially when we look closely to advertising since it makes use of multiple modes like images, sounds, music, body language etc. This phenomenon is known as 'multimodal persuasion' and it is implemented in most cases with the use of images clearly linked to other modes. Images are particularly effective in influencing people and persuasive discourse is widely reflected when it comes to multimodality. Images communicate in a very immediate way; it is easier to appeal to people's emotions and they are frequently associated with an idea of 'truth' because they represent reality better than a verbal description. However, it should not be forgotten that it is also possible for images to be manipulated, and it is also true that they are always the representation of a personal point of view and never of an objective reality. Photographs are then becoming less and less reliable as well as videos that can be edited to make characters do or say what you want them to do or say.

As pointed out by R. H. Jones, S. Jaworska & E. Aslan (2020: 120):

Persuasive images make meaning by the way the elements of the image are arranged in relation to one another (*ideational meaning*) and the way the image involves the viewer as either an onlooker or a participant (*interpersonal meaning*). They are also created through the interaction of the image and the words that accompany the message, to whom those words are attributed, and to whom they are addressed.

Persuasive effects also could come from design features as logos, fonts, colours. Those are intended to create loyalty and make people feel part of 'something bigger'. At this point, we can only agree that advertising is an inevitable part of everyday life.

CHAPTER 2

MCDONALD'S ADVERTISEMENT: A SYNCHRONIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE

2.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

One of the approaches to the study of language is carried out by the discourse analysis⁵: the study of how language is used in specific situations and how it operates to bring about or reinforce certain 'versions of reality'. Its purpose is to reveal how language can be used to manipulate people and the power that are hidden into specific linguistic structures. The main points of interest of this discipline are:

- what people do with language;
- the analysis is made on longer texts and conversations rather than short sentences or even words;
- how language interacts with other communication modes;
- how societies are organised and their relationship with languages.

Different media have different potential when it comes to manipulating people. Since all human actions are mediated, we can talk of 'mediated discourse analysis' as the best way to study how different kinds of mediational means affect the social actions that people can take – linguistic conventions reinforce language ideologies. Those are a set of beliefs about the effects certain kinds of media are having on people's language.

⁵ See Jones, *Discourse Analysis: A Resource Book for Students*, 2019; Fairclough, Norman, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 2003; Baker, Paul & Ellece, Sibonile, *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis*, 2011.

As stated, although the main purpose of discourse analysis is to study the language used in communication, it is not concerned with language alone. Another important factor is the context in which the communication takes place, between whom and why, in what kind of society and through what medium, how it evolves et what modes have been combined to achieve what goal.

When we talk about context, it includes not only the physical material which carries or relays a text, but also: music, pictures, the paralanguage such as gesture, voice quality, expressions, or size and font choices in a written text, the situation and the relations of objects, people and the co-text that may precede or follow the communicative act. The context also refers to the interpersonal attitudes and beliefs of the participants, the intentions of the senders.

The advertising industry expends enormous efforts and money on creating successful campaigns that take into account all these particularities. Advertising is one of the most controversial of all contemporary discourse types, mostly because it is closely associated with the values of the competitive market economy in which it thrives. The urgency to consume more is fueled by the dissatisfaction and the inadequacy that advertising campaigns make people feel, appealing to greed or ambition, to a status quo. But it is also true that non all the ads are dishonest or manipulative, some are also clever and amusing and have very different goals as informing or fighting for specific matters.

2.2 BRAND LOYALTY

In marketing, the term *brand loyalty* describes a consumer's positive feelings towards a brand, and their dedication to purchasing the brand's products and/or services repeatedly, despite the other alternatives existing

in the market. Advertising induces brand loyalty in consumers who would otherwise purchase the cheapest alternative on the market. This is why firms first invest in advertising, to give a combination of a positive image and exciting experiences, which create good meanings and feelings, ultimately reinforce the position of the brand in the minds and hearts of consumers so that the brand has good equity and tends to be favoured by consumers. With these characteristics, it will be difficult for the consumer to replace the now favoured brand with another one. This phase is called brand loyalty. Eventually the consumer will not only be loyal to the brand but will also have a strong sense of belonging to it, a sense that will become part of their life values and influence their mental attitude.

The case chosen for this thesis is no stranger to this marketing strategy: McDonald's aim is to make people consume its products and, with its mouthwatering ads, succeeded to retain a large clientele who might think can freely choose what they like best, but is actually influenced by several factors, first and foremost the persuasive language the company uses in its commercials.

To this day, the fast-food company is among the most popular, has locations all over the world and its turnover is increasing year by year. But it was not always like this. Only a decade ago, in fact, its brand image had a lot against which it had to defend itself: child obesity, malpractices, were just some of the accusations levelled at the company.

The power of marketing and branding was instrumental in transforming the company into what we all know today. McDonald's has a range of brand cues that are perfectly used: from its iconic jingle to its golden arches it uses a colourful palette and its distinctive look to appeal to people's collective imagination, to provide entertainment, curiosity and impact also by adapting just about every aspect of the business to the customers needs and the society changes, for example by giving the opportunity to eat

healthy food or vegan one and raising awareness about climate changes in its commercials.

2.3 COMPARING ADVERTISEMENTS

The material analysed in this thesis includes some of the commercials designed and broadcast by McDonald's from 2013 to 2023 available on the company's YouTube channel McDonald's UK⁶ and occasionally from the Canadian⁷ and American⁸ corporate channel.

During the selection process, it became clear that the main purpose of the company, in addition to mere advertising for its products and services, was to showcase and reinforce its brand image by creating advertisements that had a strong connection with social and topical issues of public and wide-ranging interest in which anyone could mirror themselves and feel involved.

The sample comprises eighteen advertisements which, for ease of analysis, will be grouped into three macro-categories, even though the boundary between these categories can often be blurred: *environmental themes*, *themes of social interest* and *food quality and supply* with the aim of verifying how persuasive language is used to enhance the collective imagination with regard to a given brand and thus try to understand whether, through this type of language, the company is pretending to promote issues of collective interest, on a surface level, or just to give new lustre to its image by promoting itself, by 'exploiting' the social subjects as

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/@McDonaldsUK> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/@McDonaldsCanada> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/@McDonalds> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

an excuse, a pretext: 'We deal with social aspects, therefore we are responsible social communication agents'.

<u>LIST OF SELECTED ADVERTISEMENTS</u>		
Environmental themes	Themes of social interest	Food quality and supply
What If?' Digital Carbon Tool Food Quality Social McDonald's UK 2013 (Briefly referred to as Ad A)	Happy Readers TV Ad McDonald's UK 2013 (Ad D)	Behind the McDonald's Supply Chain Food Quality Social McDonald's UK 2014 (Ad M)
McDonald's: Scale For Good Climate Action 2018 (Ad B)	Serving the UK: McDonald's at 40 Brand Social McDonald's UK 2015 (Ad E)	How It's Made McDonalds Commercial Burger CANADA 2016 (Ad N)
Change a little, change a lot McDonald's UK 2022 (Ad C)	Women at McDonald's: Charlotte West 2019 (Ad F)	My Dad BBQ Chicken Legend Deluxe TV Ad McDonald's UK 2016 (Ad O)
	McDonald's Happy Meals What We're Made Of 2019 (Ad G)	Follow Our Foodsteps Campaign Reveal Farm Forward Social McDonald's UK 2017 (Ad P)
	At McDonald's, Inclusion starts with Hello Our People McDonald's UK 2020 (Ad H)	McDonald's Food Journey McDonald's 2019 (Ad Q)

	Christmas 2020 Inner Child TV McDonald's UK 2020 (Ad I)	QPC: This is a burger that strongly suggests you take a seat. 2020 (Ad R)
	Helping to keep our teams and customers safe McDonald's UK 2021 (Ad J)	
	The McPlant is coming to the UK 2021 (Ad K)	
	1 in 8 People Have Worked at McDonald's 2023 (Ad L)	

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE IN MCDONALD'S ADVERTISEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, in this chapter, the language used by McDonald's in its advertisements will be analysed in detail. This comprehensive examination will encompass an array of linguistic elements - including words, expressions, and rhetorical figures - all strategically used for persuasive purposes that will then be highlighted in the different advertising campaigns. Those devices are employed to convince consumers not only to buy the brand's products, but also of the brand's good faith and great social and environmental consciousness. By shedding light on the various advertising campaigns, the aim is to unearth the nuanced techniques through which McDonald's endeavours to convince its audience of its ethical and conscientious stance in the marketplace.

The analysis will be carried out in relation to the macro themes already discussed in the previous chapter and with respect to relevant semiotic and linguistic tools. In the appendix it will be possible to read the transcription of the selected commercials from which the linguistic analysis was then derived.

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES

McDonald's has demonstrated a growing commitment to addressing environmental issues and sustainability in recent years. The company recognizes its responsibility as a global fast-food giant to reduce its environmental footprint and contribute positively to the planet. McDonald's aims to source its food and packaging materials from suppliers

who adhere to sustainable and ethical practices. For instance, it has committed to using only sustainably sourced coffee and palm oil, and has set targets to source beef more sustainably⁹. It is also working on waste reduction initiatives, such as recycling and composting programs, and have committed to making all of their packaging from renewable, recycled, or certified sources by 2025¹⁰. McDonald's is also working on reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation and logistics. This includes optimizing delivery routes, using more fuel-efficient vehicles, and exploring alternative transportation options¹¹.

The three advertisements that are part of this thematic group are from 2013, 2018, and 2022, respectively. They were chosen so that it was also possible to define whether and how the language used by McDonald's to talk about environmental issues has changed several years apart. Environmental issues, climate change, and recycling are increasingly topical, and the company, in these commercials, demonstrates how its commitment and actions over the years - from recycling the plastics used in happy meals toys to sustainable livestock farming - can be of great help to the planet. The advertisements also discuss the collaboration between farmers and McDonald's, focusing on sustainable agriculture practices and the use of technology to improve efficiency.

⁹ For more information: <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-purpose-and-impact/food-quality-and-sourcing/responsible-sourcing.html> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰ For more information: <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-purpose-and-impact/our-planet/packaging-toys-and-waste.html> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹ For more information: <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-purpose-and-impact/our-planet/climate-action.html> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

MORPHOSYNTAX:

In the examined advertisements, several phenomena related to morphosyntax emerged. First, it can be seen that they vary in length depending on the message the company wants to send. In the 2013¹² advertisement (ad A), since it is direct speech, we do not notice major alterations in sentence construction, while in the advertisements of 2018¹³ (ad B) and 2022¹⁴ (ad C) we can see how the sentences are constructed almost to create a slogan. They are very short and incisive due to a limited use of verbs as in the following examples: “To source of food responsibly, promote renewable energy and use it efficiently, reduce waste and increase recycling”, “150 million tons of carbon emissions prevented”, “It's all part of building a better McDonald's”, “we're no different so we reuse our cooking oil to make biodiesel that helps fuel our trucks millions of old McCafe cups become greetings cards and those happy meal toys still making kids smile” or “a plan to recycle and reuse even more until you hardly waste anything”.

STYLE:

In the three advertisements examined, the style is direct and colloquial. Direct speech is used to appeal to people's emotions in order to create an interpersonal relationship between the company and its consumers. The 2018¹⁵ advertisement (ad B) presents McDonald's as a proactive

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j98v2Oxpcvw> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0yegWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrljvo_xrrk_ (Last accessed: 15/09/2023). For more information on this campaign see: <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2021/10/07/mcdonald-s-rolls-out-ad-campaign-talk-up-sustainability-goals> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0yegWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

participant in environmental betterment. The phrase "McDonald's is going its part" suggests the company's commitment to its role in making a positive impact.

In the 2013¹⁶ one (ad A) we can see that the text features a combination of both informal and formal language. The opening sentences use informal language, such as "Very difficult to market conditions" and "Increasing their costs climate change." The subsequent portions of the text shift to a more formal tone when discussing research findings and partnership details, as we can see in the statement made by the McDonald's representative of the E-CO2 project in the video: "The research by industry Digital Carbon Tool experts have shown that the lower carbon farms are more profitable so therefore it's very important for farmers to keep track of their carbon footprint we've been working in partnership with McDonald's over the last three years to develop a carbon foot printing tool so it all works by farmers inputting a number of variables into the online system after you put in all of your key efficiency measures the tool will show you your carbon footprint figure you can also answer a hypothetical farm scenario which can demonstrate potential efficiency savings for your farm the tool gives you a clear and instant result which demonstrates the areas that your farm could potentially improve upon". The use of domain-specific vocabulary such as "Carbon footprint," "Efficiency savings," and "Profitability". and numerical data adds specificity and credibility to the text. " These terms communicate specialised knowledge and emphasise the technical aspects of the subject. Finally, in the 2022¹⁷ advertisement (ad C), the title of the campaign is reused almost to the point of making it a slogan - *Change a little, change a*

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j98v2Oxpcvw> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrljvo_xrrk (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

lot - to indicate how change needs everyone and cannot be achieved without everyone feeling a part of it and indispensable to it. This kind of language is chosen not only to indicate the speaker's position, but to communicate the audience's role that changes accordingly to the way we speak to it. For example the repetition of the phrase "We're no different" emphasizes the idea that the speaker is just like the readers, establishing a sense of shared responsibility. The use of parallel structures, such as "Reduce how much they waste," "Recycle and reuse," and "Change a little, change a lot," adds a rhythmic quality to the text and makes it easier to remember. The texts also seem to establish causal relationships between actions and outcomes, such as using cooking oil to make biodiesel, which "Helps fuel our trucks." This logical connection appeals to readers' sense of cause and effect and gives credibility to the advertisement.

LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL CHOICES:

As already stated, persuasive language is characterized by a preponderance of verbs, adjectives and names. It is possible to notice that all the three selected advertisements make a great use of those lexical strategies.

Remembering the two categories cited by Richard Weaver, "devil words" and "god words" we can say that McDonald's makes good use of vocabulary to create the desired emotional association in order to elicit a reaction, a participation of the customer in the chosen topic not only in these three ads but in all of them. For example in the 2018¹⁸ (ad B) and 2022¹⁹ ones (ad C) the text employs positive language throughout to inspire

¹⁸https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0yegWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrljvo_xrrk (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

and motivate readers. Words like "helps," "happy," "smile," and "beginning of a plan" evoke a sense of optimism and enthusiasm and words like "better," "good," "responsibly," "renewable," and "efficiently" convey a sense of progress and improvement. The language of the provided advertisements is persuasive, motivational, and engaging. It combines informal language with inclusive and positive elements to encourage readers to embrace sustainable practices. Through the use of repetition, adjectives, and causal relationships, the text effectively conveys the message that small individual actions can lead to significant positive changes for the environment.

The use of adjectives and adverbs like "better", "challenging", "profitable", "very important", "clear and instant results etc. makes the consumer feel close to the speaker and emotionally invested in what he or she is saying, after all, who wouldn't want to be part of creating a "better future" or a children's playground created from recycled materials?

The same goes for grammatical choices, we can note, for example, the use of modal verbs such as "must" and "can" like in the following examples: "We all must get involved", "Which can demonstrate potential efficiency savings" or "It can have big benefits"- makes the consumer feel almost compelled to believe that that is the only possible and right choice to save the planet and move toward increasingly sustainable agriculture although one can imagine that no matter how sustainable the farm may be, it uses intensive farming and ranching. The other verbs chosen in these three advertising campaigns also aim to convey a sense of urgency and high commitment such as: 'help', 'smile', 'waste', 'face', 'be aware', 'prevent', etc. just to name a few.

The use of pronouns is also a classical strategy used in persuasive language to create closeness and participation and we can find this kind of rhetorical device in every analysed advertisement. They are used to make

the language inclusive, as in the following examples: "Everyone's looking" and "our," creates a sense of unity and encourages readers to see themselves as part of a larger movement toward sustainability.

The use of numerical data, such as in 2018²⁰ advertisement (ad B) "150 million tons of carbon emissions prevented," adds credibility and specificity to the message.

The same advertisement also uses rhetorical devices like rhetorical sentences, for example when it says: "Even by making small changes, it can have big benefits for the long term", to engage the reader's thought process and encourage reflection.

Also the use of connectors like "therefore" and "so" (Ad A) is necessary to indicate logical consequences. For example: "Experts have shown that the lower carbon farms are more profitable, so therefore it's very important for farmers to keep track of their carbon footprint", or in the 2018²¹ one (ad B) "So McDonald's is going its part using our scale for good".

TROPES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

The use of tropes and figurative language serves to represent the intensity of an argument with more vigour and expressive force. It is also useful to create a more compelling message but, it seems that in the advertisements examined here, there is a little use of these devices, but we can cite some of them in the 2022²² advertisement (ad C) in which metaphorical language is used to transform everyday objects into symbols of sustainability. For

²⁰https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0yegWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

²¹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0yegWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

²² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrljvo_xrrk (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

instance, "Old McCafe cups become greetings cards" and "Happy meal toys still making kids smile now they've become playgrounds" elevate these objects from disposable waste to meaningful items with new purposes. The repetition of the phrase "and" at the beginning of successive sentences creates an anaphoric structure that creates a message of continuous action and progress.

In the 2018 one (ad B) the sentence "The impact? 150 million tons of carbon emissions prevented. Equal to 32 million cars off the road or planting 3.8 billion trees" uses hyperbole to emphasize the significant impact of McDonald's sustainability efforts. It exaggerates the effect to make it more impactful. Or in the phrase "Source of food responsibly" uses metonymy, referring to the responsible sourcing of food as a part of McDonald's broader sustainability efforts.

The use of rhetorical devices and figurative language creates a vivid mental image that enhances the advertisements' persuasiveness.

META-DISCURSIVE DEVICES:

Refer to the general presentation of media messages and how they are related to other messages and the communicative environment in which they come to life. Analysing these three examples we can obviously note what choice was made regarding agenda setting: dealing with sensitive issues such as environmental issues casts a positive light on the company,

probably also in light of the criticism it has received not only in an distant past but in far more current times²³.

With regard to framing we can see how it is centred around the concept of collective responsibility and the proactive role that McDonald's is taking to contribute to a more sustainable future setting up the context for why involvement is necessary and illustrating how McDonald's is actively participating in this effort through its actions and initiatives. The first advertisement (ad A) uses in numerous occurrences vocabulary related to the world of agriculture and animal breeding, however, associating it with higher terminology related to the environment and technological developments as in the following examples: "The main challenges facing British and Irish farmers today are remaining profitable despite very difficult to market conditions", "Using modern technology on the farm is really important" or "I can improve the profitability of my farm even by making small changes". While in the second (ad B) and third one (ad C) the world of farming gives way to a far more technical change that refers to the company's efforts to recycle its waste, involving, through the choice of language, in this shift in direction all of its consumers as well such as in the following examples: "Reduce how much they waste" or "A plan to recycle and reuse even more until you hardly waste anything". The framing also provides context for the impact by making easy comparisons: for instance it equates the carbon emissions prevented to "32 million cars off

²³ For more information see "McDonald's rolls out ad campaign to talk up sustainability goals" and "McDonald's Failing to Follow Through on Climate Promises, Critics Say" articles <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2021/10/07/mcdonald-s-rolls-out-ad-campaign-talk-up-sustainability-goals> and <https://www.theenergymix.com/2021/12/17/mcdonalds-failing-to-follow-through-on-climate-promises-critics-say/> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

the road or planting 3.8 billion trees." This comparison makes the impact relatable and vivid.

Concerning intertextuality, no specific sources are cited but it is easy to see the intertextuality of these three advertisements that draw on and connect to shared knowledge and issues such as sustainability, corporate responsibility and positive impact. All three advertisements feature a combination of images, text, and music making them multimodal. In the 2013²⁴ one (ad A) the music is used to accompany interviews with experts and workers. It is upbeat and engaging to give a sense of positivity and joy. It discusses the challenges facing British and Irish farmers, including profitability, increasing costs, climate change, and global demand for beef. This reference connects the text to the broader context of agriculture, where farmers worldwide are grappling with similar issues. It introduces the importance of modern technology on the farm highlighting the integration of technology in agriculture practices as an improvement. The video discusses the importance of tracking a farm's carbon footprint for improved profitability. It connects to environmental sustainability trends and the need to reduce carbon emissions in various industries mentioning the partnership between the E-CO2 project and McDonald's in developing a carbon footprinting tool and underscoring the collaboration between corporations and research institutions for sustainable solutions. In the 2018²⁵ (ad B) the voice over speech is accompanied by a tension-filled music to emotionally engage the audience, while images of families happily eating in the chain's restaurants, cows grazing, and lush forests play on the screen. All of this is intended to give the end consumer the

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j98v2Oxpcvw> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

²⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aQBL_4Vv0Y&list=PLXAab0veqWrgQfs-go4ZO7-EDHWYMd9_d (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

impression that the company is making huge environmental strides and that therefore, by consuming its products, we are all helping to make the planet a better place. The video quantifies McDonald's environmental impact, such as preventing carbon emissions and planting trees. This intertextual reference connects McDonald's actions to global environmental issues and solutions. In the 'Change a little change a lot'²⁶ campaign (ad C) the music is again upbeat and engaging, while the images illustrate what the voice over is telling. The speaker's tone and speed of speech also help to create an interest in the topic that, arguably, might be less vivid in the audience. There is only one other sound that adds to the music and voice in this commercial and that is the laughter of a group of children playing in a playground created from recycled plastic from Happy Meal's toys. Most likely included in it to make the adult viewers smile and take them back to their childhood and happy memories. The ad discusses McDonald's initiatives to reduce waste, such as reusing cooking oil for biodiesel and recycling old products. These intertextual references align with sustainability goals and waste reduction efforts in the food industry

²⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrljvo_xrrk (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

3.2 THEMES OF SOCIAL INTEREST

In the ever-evolving landscape of advertising, certain campaigns stand out not only for their creativity and impact but also for their engagement with crucial societal matters. This macro theme includes nine advertisements that address several socially important issues. They range from the role of women to veganism via inclusion, gender issues, and safety regulations related to the recent pandemic and cover a time period from 2013 to 2023, so they also constitute the most comprehensive sample

McDonald's actively promotes inclusion and diversity within its workforce. The company has embraced a "Better Together" philosophy, emphasizing that diversity is its strength. This commitment is evident in its hiring practices, which aim to create a welcoming environment for employees from diverse backgrounds, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. It has shown support for the LGBTQ+ community through initiatives such as Pride Month celebrations, has promoted equality by ensuring that women too could hold significant roles within the company, including executive positions. McDonald's also encourages education and training programs; it has introduced vegan and vegetarian menu items, addressing to sustainability concerns related to animal agriculture since plant-based food typically have a lower environmental impact than traditional meat products. McDonald's offers flexible working hours and support for working mothers, recognizing the importance of balancing family and career and recognizes its role as a global corporate leader.

These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to fostering positive social change and aligning with evolving societal values²⁷.

This already can be considered a good clue to answer one of the questions we asked in the previous chapter: social issues are the most used by McDonald's to 'raise awareness' among its audience because they speak to a majority of people on such diverse topics that they can be called almost 'universal'. They have a strong evocative power, not only because of the lexical choice made by the brand, but also with respect to what they can represent in the viewer's imagination and their strong emotional input.

MORPHOSYNTAX:

Four of the nine advertisements that are part of this theme use direct speech. Four others, however, are narrated by a voice over. The four dialogic advertisements exhibit similar morphosyntax to the previous advertisements belonging to the first group: sentences tend to be short and verbs few in number and often repeated. On the other hand, as for the advertisements that employ a narrative voice, here too the use of verbs is limited and the sentences are clear and concise in order to emphasize without possibility of error the message that the company wants to send to its consumers as we can see in the following examples from 2013²⁸ (ad D), 2015²⁹ (ad E), 2019³⁰ (ad G) and 2021³¹ (ad K), just to mention a few: "They are such an enormous disadvantage", "Reading is really key", "to give them

²⁷For more information see: <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-purpose-and-impact/jobs-inclusion-and-empowerment/diversity-and-inclusion.html> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j98v2Oxpcvw> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Cl> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

some more knowledge" or "We've measured the contribution", "We inject 1.3 billion", "We are proud to serve millions", "We work hard to make a positive difference", "Options that you will love", "Already 2.5 billion sides served" "It's enough to make any parent smile" or "Give it to me man", "I'm gonna go check out", "It is completely vegan", "Has taken years to perfect", "It basically tastes just like the real thing".

STYLE:

Language is mostly colloquial for all the advertisements, the sense of proximity to the brand, that seems to embody the solution to all the issues addressed in every ads, is thus accentuated. It is interesting to note how, in the 2021³² advertisement (ad J), passive voice, as seen in "We've installed" and "Temperature checks are performed," is used to emphasize actions taken by the organization and present continuous and future tenses such as: "We're performing," "We're providing", "We will ask", "We'll be deep cleaning" are used to indicate ongoing or planned actions that give credibility to the company in a such difficult moment. Formal language, technical terms as: "Contactless payments," or "Additional protective equipment", and procedural language contribute to conveying the seriousness of the safety measures. Also the commercial incorporates repetition for emphasis and clarity, as seen in "Our priority is" and "Thank you for your patience".

The 2015³³ advertisement (ad E), however, uses more formal language based on reason and data collected throughout the country. It analyses in

³² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

a logical way the achievements that the company has made and how its presence has brought enormous benefits to the whole country, basing these reasoning on a large amount of numbers and figures spanning different sectors: work, educational, economic, etc. The use of data thus allows the company to 'justify' its business choices and leaves, in the mind of the consumer, a feeling of fairness and authority, as if to demonstrate, by relying on science, how indispensable McDonald's can be to the welfare of the nation. These include the opening year "1974", the 40-year time frame, the number of communities "1,200", amounts "1.3 billion," "25 billions", quantities "3.8 million liters," "3.000 miles", and percentages "90% of our restaurants". The ad predominantly employs past and present tenses to describe historical actions and ongoing commitments. The past tense as in "welcomed", "created", "spent", "built" describes completed actions, while the present tense "serve", "employ", and "know" highlights ongoing activities. The employment of causal relationships illustrate the outcomes of McDonald's actions. For example, "Over 40 years we have built a world-class UK supply chain built on trust and long-term relationships" demonstrates the beneficial result of sustained and long-term efforts.

In the 2019³⁴ (ad F) and 2020³⁵ (ad H) advertisements, the style used instead aims to accentuate the sense of closeness and interpersonal relationship between the company and the consumer by making "actors" of the ads some of its employees from the 'most fragile' categories such as women, transgenders, deaf or elderly people. The way in which the company decides to deal with these still-too-sensitive topics, is characterized by a light-hearted style and informal language with a first

³⁴https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

person narrative. This creates a personal connection with the audience and allows for a direct expression of feelings, as if their words were really directed at each of us, appealing to universal emotions and feelings primarily the sense of acceptance that we would all like to experience in the workplace making McDonald's THE place to work in. This emotional and informal language can be seen in sentences like: "I was really excited and really happy", "You feel very much at home", and "I can never be thankful enough" or thanks to the use of words such as: "I've learnt a great deal", "Lots of routine stuff," and "To what you're doing".

The 2021³⁶ advertisement (ad K) displays a blend of informal and descriptive language in the introduction of the new product, the McPlant burger, and its components. The use of "gonna" in the sentence "I'm gonna go check out" reflects colloquial spoken language. The testimonial directly addresses the audience to engage and involve them, as seen in the sentence: "Now go and grab yours".

Concerning the 2013³⁷ advertisement (ad D), the speakers are from different backgrounds, including parents, teachers, children, and campaign representatives. This diversity of voices provides a well-rounded view of the topic and creates an engaging and authentic tone. The language used is mostly informal and conversational, with speakers using everyday language and contractions such as: "Don't", "Can't", "They're", etc. and, sometimes, colloquialisms like: "It's very hard", "They give lots of information," and "You never heard before" are employed to give relatability to the advertisement. The repetition of positive sentiments about reading

³⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Ck> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

reinforces the main message of the video: the value of reading for education, imagination, and enjoyment.

We can also note a particularity in the 2023³⁸ advertisement (ad L): the video contains explicit elements of advertising language, with Speaker 1 describing McDonald's as having "The world's most famous fries" and emphasizing the positive impact of working there, such as "The power to make more kids' days than anyone else." These statements aim to create a positive image of the brand.

LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL CHOICES:

In the majority of the advertising analysed in this section we can see the use of emotionally relevant vocabulary that triggers important emotional associations with both positive and negative connotations. For example, in the 2013³⁹ advertisement (ad D) we can find phrases such as, "Very low literacy an enormous disadvantage", "It's very hard for parents" or "It's providing books to millions of children". The same in the 2020⁴⁰ one (ad H) in which repetition of phrases like "It's changed my life," "It just feels like home," and "You cannot go wrong" reinforces the positive impact. And the emotional language such as "nervous," "really nice," "insane impact" enhances the emotional connection between the speakers and the audience. We can notice the same strategy in 2015⁴¹ advertisement (ad E) in which expressions like "world-class", "major impact", "positive difference" and "stone's throw away" utilize intensifiers to emphasize the significance of McDonald's efforts and contributions.

³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

³⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs_ (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

This type of lexical choice is accentuated by the use of adjectives with predominantly positive connotations as in the 2021⁴² (ad K) advertisement in which a celebrity, Mathew Pritchard, is used as a testimonial to advertise the new vegan choice now available in McDonald's restaurants, extolling not only its ethical and highly topical nature but especially the good taste of the product: "It basically tastes just like the real thing...oh lord that is absolutely spot on...oh that flavor is delicious...you cannot go wrong, it's got everything in this burger for you". So a very descriptive language, such as "proper meaty," "absolutely spot on," and "delicious," is used to highlight the qualities and taste of the burger.

In the 2013⁴³ (ad D), 2015⁴⁴ (ad E), 2019⁴⁵ (ad F), 2020⁴⁶ (ad H) and 2021⁴⁷ (ad K) advertisements it is also possible to notice the use of several logical connectors such as: "as", "so", "because", etc. to accentuate a sense of apparent logic that lends greater credibility to the content as in the sentences: "So I don't get bored", "So I read quite a bit", "So that parents have somewhere free and safe to stay", "So it depends on the day" or "Because everyone deserves the same chances", "Because helping keep you and our team safe is our priority", "And discuss them as a family" or "As one of the UK farming's biggest customers".

Another important aspect, with respect to the persuasion message that is analyzed in these advertisements, is the use of short phrases in foreign languages such as in the sentences "Como le puedo ayudar ahoi?" or

⁴² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Cl> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yeqWrqW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Cl> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

“Bonjour”. In fact, in the 2020⁴⁸ (ad H) and 2023⁴⁹ (ad L) advertisements, French and Spanish greeting and welcoming formulas are used probably for the purpose of creating an inclusive and welcoming tone and making each customer feel ‘at home’ whatever is his/her native language.

As for the previous thematic area adjectives and adverbs such as “wonderful”, “really excited and really happy”, “low fat”, “never discriminated”, are employed to enhance the idea that McDonald’s interest in these social issues is not only truthful but also directed toward a struggle against stereotypes and injustices (ad F), (ad H), and (ad G).

In this sample, the modal verb ‘can’ is the most frequently used, both by those talking about their experience in the first person⁵⁰ (ad D, E, F and H) and in the various voice over advertisements in addition to the modal verb ‘would and will’⁵¹ (ad D and J) and several hedges like ‘just’ or ‘a little’⁵² (ad K and H) as in the following sentences: “I can just read it”, “Our customers can expect”, “Anything a man can do I can do” or “My top tips for parents would be to show”, “We will continue to work”, “So we will actively work”, “Things may be a little different”, “We will just ask that you”, and “Just to make sure”.

⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs>;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yeqWrqW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023) and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023) and
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Cl> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023) and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

It is also interesting to note the use of pronouns, especially in the 2015⁵³ advertisement (ad E) in which the pronouns 'we' and its corresponding possessive adjective 'our' are repeated in almost every sentence the voice over has us listen to, as in: "Together our employees and our suppliers", "Our franchisees", "We are proud", "That remain with our people throughout their careers" and in the 2021⁵⁴ one (ad J), in which the pronouns 'we' and 'you' are associated to create an emotional relationship between the company and its customers in times of pandemic as in the sentences: "We're opening little by little", "We're performing temperature checks", "We will just ask that you use contactless payments", or "We're looking out for you".

First-person pronouns like "I" and "me" are used in 2020⁵⁵ advertisement (ad H) to make the stories personal and relatable such as in the following examples: "I just come out as a transgender male and I was really nervous" or "I feel like McDonald's has become one big thigh knit family for us". In this same video the use of superlatives like "Never felt discriminated against," "Insane impact," and "I'm passionate about my work" add intensity to the narratives. The same happens in 2013⁵⁶ advertisement (ad D): "I really like reading", "I do actually like", "I think these books are", "I love the books".

⁵³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=EA8GbqErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

Ultimately we can see how the use of quantifiers, mostly in the 2013⁵⁷ (ad D), 2019⁵⁸ (ad F) and 2020⁵⁹ (ad H) advertisements, such as 'many', 'much', 'lots of' helps to raise the quality of discourse. Some examples are: "You feel very much at home", "Has changed my life so much", "It's taught me so many life lessons", "There are so many more women", "They give lots of information" or "There's lots of routine stuff".

TROPES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

In this macro category the use of tropes and figurative language is less limited than in the advertisements analyzed above. We can indeed notice the use of some phrases and rhetorical devices such as repetition found in the 2013⁶⁰ (ad D), 2021⁶¹ (ad K), and 2023⁶² (ad L) advertisements. They use of expressions such as: "Long term commitment", "Slowly but safely", "Believe it or not", "That work around your life needs more time for your life", and "P for purple, P for plant", or the phrase "One in eight" which is repeated in the text to reinforce the statistic and its significance. These serves as rhetorical devices to emphasize the point in order to create a more compelling message, engage readers and create a sense of unity. Still regarding the 2023⁶³ advertisement (ad L), we can also note the use of the metaphor: "That what you put in here, you get out", to convey the idea that the effort and dedication that one invests in McDonald's can lead to personal growth and skills development.

⁵⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yeqWrqW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁵⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Oms (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

In 2019⁶⁴ advertisement (ad F) we can also notice the use of a parallel structure: "Anything a man can do I can do," used to give to Charlotte's speech emphasis and rhythm.

In the 2015 advertisement (ad E) the voice over employs metaphors related to economics and business, such as "Inject 1.3 billion of value" and "Contribute 40.3 billion to the UK national economy." These metaphors portray McDonald's as a significant economic contributor. The phrase "We have created 1.5 million jobs" personifies McDonald's as an entity capable of creating employment opportunities. This figurative language emphasizes the company's role in job creation. Phrases like "Make a positive difference to local communities" and "Create positive changes" resort to the metaphor of change to express McDonald's commitment to making a beneficial impact on communities.

It is possible to find metaphors also in the 2020⁶⁵ advertisement (ad H). The video explores inclusion with phrases like "I felt like I was part of the team" and "Instant belonging." These metaphors of inclusion and belonging emphasize the welcoming environment at McDonald's. So does the sentence "Diversity is our strength" that employs metaphorical language to convey the idea that diversity enhances the company. It highlights the value of different backgrounds and perspectives.

A special mention should be made in this paragraph to the Christmas 2020⁶⁶ advertisement (ad I). Although it has no text, neither written nor oral, I decided to include it in this thesis since I believe it encompasses all the features conveyed by persuasive language in its images. It will be analyzed

⁶⁴https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJntbYytPz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

more in detail in the section about intertextuality and multimodality, but it can be somehow included in the analysis of rhetorical figures because of its strongly allegorical value. We can also notice the use of metaphors. The central theme of the song is indeed metaphorical: "Forever young." In these two words we can see how youth is being used as a metaphor for vitality, energy, and a desire to live life to the fullest.

META-DISCURSIVE DEVICES:

Just as with the previous category, here too the choices regarding agenda setting are very clear. The topics covered are undeniably of social interest but also constitute 'hot topics' not only for the UK but for much of the Western world. Literacy, economics, the role of women and social inclusion, adolescence and its difficult nuances, the security measures implemented during the pandemic, veganism, and job opportunities are all universal topics that have a strong emotional impact on the public. And the way they are treated in these advertisements does not just highlight injustices and actions taken to change uncomfortable situations, but puts those affected at the forefront who, thanks to McDonald's great efforts, can finally feel part of a large, loving family interested in the common good as it is possible to notice in several of them (ad H, ad F, ad L just to name a few): "A job with hours that work around your life", "System has allowed me to fully participate in all aspect of what the business does", "I've been able to go away from work have my daughter and return to work flexibly", "We get so much support through McDonald's and through our supplier" or "This placement has made me realise that dairy basically is the future for me."

In linguistics, the concept of framing refers to the processes through which people signal 'what's going on' in a communication but it is also about the personal point of view of the person 'constructing the story', or as in this case, the advertisement. There is much to be said with respect to the framing of this category: first of all, the selected advertisements have the

purpose of informing the consumer about what actions, strategies, and measures the company performs socially and economically.

This is particularly clear in the 2015⁶⁷ advertisement (ad E) in which the following sentences are used: “Since we opened our first restaurant in Woolwich 40 years ago we have contributed 40.3 billion to the UK national economy”, “We have created 1.5 million jobs”, “Research shows levels of customer satisfaction are higher in our restaurants that employ mature workers” and “From maths and English to foundation degrees we offer nationally recognized qualifications that remain with our people throughout their careers” and in the 2021⁶⁸ advertisement (ad J): “We'll be running reduced hours with a reduced menu”, “Keep you and our team safe is our priority”, or “We're performing temperature checks every day. And we're providing additional protective equipment, including face coverings. We'll be deep cleaning all restaurants before reopening, and we'll be cleaning equipment and surfaces even more often. We'll also be washing our hands at least every 30 minutes.”

Secondly, we have seen how the lexical choices tend, once again, to glorify all that is good about McDonald's even through the use of foreign languages, interviews, etc. in which the protagonists put their own life experience at the service of the causes in question by recalling how, only with the help of the company, they come to feel included, supported in education and emotional development, economically independent, able to read with their children over a good sandwich, able to be businesswomen, etc. Once again this can be noticed in the dialogical narratives (ad D, ad F,

⁶⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁶⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Oms (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

ad H): “Is really key to a child's development in terms of their ability to learn new words to be able to progress in terms of their own education”, “It is important to encourage them to read, to improve their imagination and to give them some more knowledge”, “I think that anything a man can do I can do”, “She gets to learn a lot more alongside”, “We believe that inclusion starts with a simple Hello!”, “You feel very much at home”, “Has changed my life so much that I can never be thankful enough for what they have done for me”, and “Before working in McDonald's I don't really feel like included in things.”

Here, too, intertextuality is one of the most developed devices. Indeed, the credibility of many of these advertisements derives from multimodality; the co-presence of text, music, and images perfectly crafted to communicate to the audience the messages selected by McDonald's and from the use of intertextual references that connect with broader societal conversations and expectations, aligning McDonald's with various social, cultural, and economic themes such as literacy, gender equality, health, inclusion, and sustainability. These intertextual references serve to shape McDonald's brand image and position within these broader discussions as we can see, for example in the 2013⁶⁹ advertisement (ad D) in which the inclusion of speakers from various backgrounds, such as parents, teachers, and children, creates an intertextual connection with the essential discourse on the importance of literacy and childhood education. The campaign also promotes McDonald's as a contributor to children's education through providing books and aligning with social expectations that companies like McDonald's should engage in social responsibility actions.

⁶⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

The same rationale can also be observed in the 2015⁷⁰ advertisement (ad E) in which by celebrating McDonald's 40th anniversary in the UK its contributions to the economy and society is highlighted. The intertextual connection lies in the tradition of celebrating milestones, which is a common rhetorical strategy used by companies to reflect on their achievements and align themselves with positive social values which connects with broader discussions about employment and corporate social responsibility.

Also in both the 2019⁷¹ commercials (ad F, ad G) we can find intertextual references to different subjects as the growing trend of women entering fields traditionally dominated by men - aligning with discussions of gender equality and women's empowerment - or the ongoing discussions about children's diets and the need for healthier food options. The 2021⁷² advertisements (ad J, ad K) both discuss social topics: the first one deals with the safety measures implemented by McDonald's during the COVID-19 pandemic, connecting the subject with the global health crisis and the need for businesses to adapt to ensure public safety; and the other one aligns with the shift in society toward more sustainable and plant-based diets.

Regarding music, we can divide the numerous advertisements belonging to this thematic group into three subcategories:

⁷⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TcSP2RklbY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

- those accompanied by rhythmic music⁷³
- those accompanied by classical or soft music⁷⁴
- those accompanied by famous songs⁷⁵

In the first subgroup the music is rhythmic and, almost always, full of energy. It is not always cheerful or joyful, but in all cases it is associated with the images flowing on the screen: for example, in the 2015⁷⁶ advertisement (ad E) a sort of dirge is associated with the drawn figures representing streets and scenes of city life.

In the 2019⁷⁷ one (ad G), the red background is associated with the yellow smile typical of the famous children's meal on which animations of healthy food are projected that would make any parent smile, all accompanied by a music that is not only cheerful but similar to bells ringing in celebration. In the 2021⁷⁸ commercial (ad J), the music crescendo accompanies images that we all remember, related to the safety measures taken during the Covid-19 pandemic. The rhythm becomes increasingly faster, and the narrator's voice is joined by a chant that, at times, seems to almost imitate a stadium choir, probably for the purpose of providing strength and optimism in such a dark time.

⁷³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TcSP2RklbY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36CI> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee2NUfLQ5nU;>
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okFwj7dKuHM&list=PLXAab0yegWrgW2kyt0G3WATt_RBcpEm_l&index=1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EA8GbgErOVs_ (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJntbYytPz8_ (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOW2VQVXF2w> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TcSP2RklbY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁷⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dz_zDQ3Ons (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

In the second 2021⁷⁹ advertisement (ad K), on the other hand, the music seems only an accompaniment to the already extremely jovial and lively tone of the testimonial; the images follow each other rapidly, also to the rhythm of the words that seem almost to dance on the screen. Conversely, in the 2023⁸⁰ advertisement (ad L) the music consists almost exclusively of drums and cymbals playing to underscore the images on the screen giving a sense of involvement and welcome.

The 2020⁸¹ Christmas advertisement (ad I), on the other hand, needs a different analysis in my opinion. No text or narrative voice accompanies the storytelling related to this commercial, but despite the absence of a purely linguistic message, the persuasive power of this advertisement is exceptional.

First of all, the music chosen for this video is famous, which is absolutely new in the McDonald's universe. But from the very first seconds we can see that it compensates with its lyrics for the absence of a verbal message. The song chosen is 'Forever young' originally by Alphaville in the decidedly more melodic and acoustic version by Becky Hill⁸², released in November of the same year and immediately selected by the company as the perfect soundtrack for this advertisement (even more astonishing is the fact that, by searching the web, one of the images from the advertisement is associated with the artist's single with very high frequency and all the videos available on YouTube are accompanied by the caption "From the McDonald's Christmas Advert 2020."

⁷⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeLu7Lf36Cl> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhXWtZ0zKtA> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJntbYytPz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2Zpt-puOOg> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

Even if originally the song dealt with the Cold War theme, it is easy to see how the meaning of its lyrics quickly becomes universal. It is about living life to the fullest and making the most of every moment, because it can be taken away without warning. This is particularly clear in some of the lyrics' sentences like "Some are like water, some are like the heat. Some are a melody and some are the beat. Sooner or later, they all will be gone. Why don't they stay young?" or "So many adventures couldn't happen today. So many songs we forgot to play. So many dreams swinging out of the blue. We'll let 'em come true".

A new *carpe diem* that emphasises how lost moments can never return, and this is exactly what McDonald's is appealing to the hearts of its consumers. On the screen a story of ordinary life is unfolded: it is Christmas, a young teenager emotionally and physically increasingly distant from his mother refuses to decorate the house, plays computer games. Although the child who still lives in him would love to participate in this moment of sharing, the boy can no longer afford it, he feels too old now. The same moment is repeated at a Christmas market, the mother is visibly sad and disappointed, she can no longer communicate with her son as she would like, and this is where McDonald's arrives and, like a silent superhero, resolves the situation. When the mother takes the drive-in paper bag to eat a burger, the boy finally smiles, puts something in his pocket and gets out of the car. Once at home it is him, finally back to the joy of childhood, that proposes decorating the Christmas tree and using McDonald's baby carrot to give the reindeer something good to eat. Despite the absence of a narrator's voice, the message is emotionally highly involving and very clear: 'We not only nourish the body but also the heart. With us, you will never be alone and we will help you hold on to important bonds'. Here McDonald's represents what is most sacred about Christmas and family relationships showing that every difficult moment

could be overcome with much love and a little help from the most famous fast-food company.

3.3 FOOD QUALITY AND SUPPLY

In today's world, where fast food has become an integral part of our daily lives, questions about the source and quality of the food that we consume have taken on unprecedented significance. McDonald's places a strong emphasis on sourcing top-quality ingredients, including 100% British and Irish beef for their burgers, free-range eggs, and organic milk sourced from UK dairies. This dedication to using premium ingredients is a clear indication of their commitment to provide an exceptional dining experience. Furthermore, it collaborates with local farmers to promote sustainable farming practices, prioritize traceability in its supply chain, and adhere to global food safety standards. It also engages in partnerships with external organizations to continually enhance food safety measures. The company is fully aware of its responsibility and actively gather and consider customer feedback to fine-tune their menu offerings and ingredient sourcing approaches. Additionally, it values transparent and open communication regarding its food quality and supply chain practices. It frequently shares information about its efforts related to ingredient sourcing and sustainability with the public. McDonald's has formulated comprehensive strategies and initiatives aimed at ensuring the quality, safety, and sustainability of their supply chain, underscoring its unwavering dedication to delivering high-quality products⁸³.

This group of six advertisements delves deeply into a matter of paramount importance: the origins and quality standards of the food served by McDonald's - one of the world's most iconic fast-food chains. As consumers become increasingly discerning and health-conscious, the transparency

⁸³ For more information see: <https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-purpose-and-impact/food-quality-and-sourcing/responsible-sourcing.html> (Last accessed: 05/09/2023)

and integrity of the food supply chain have become subjects of intense scrutiny. These advertisements aim to shed light on McDonald's sourcing practices and the stringent quality control measures in place to assure customers that their dining experience is not only convenient but also safe and wholesome, in order to meet the highest standards of quality and responsibility.

Once again, the boundaries of these thematic groups are extremely fluid as, although we talk about where the food comes from and its quality, topics such as sustainability and inclusion are mentioned here as well. They cover a time period from 2014 to 2020. It has already been discussed how the company has received, in the past, several criticisms with respect to the non-excellence of the meals served, especially from a nutritional point of view. So it may not be surprising how, since the 2010s it has done a huge marketing effort to show all its customers the good faith and effort that it is making to ensure the quality of what it offers.

MORPHOSYNTAX:

Dialogue is hardly ever used in this group of advertisements. Narrative voices, which are present in five out of six ads, are most likely used in order to make consumers believe in the words of the chosen testimonials, be they young women starting their careers as farmers or former sports stars. The sentences are generally of medium length and tend to describe with a large use of adjectives and adverbs what the company is doing to guarantee both the quality of its food and that of the supply chain from which it is sourced. Verbs such as 'comes from', 'to notice' and 'to deserve' are employed to emphasise key concepts and are very present in linguistic

utterances. For example, in the 2014⁸⁴ advertisement (ad M) various verb tenses are used throughout the text such as the present tense "I'm" "love" "like", the past tense "lived" "been" "invited", and future tense "I'm going to bring". In addition, action verbs like "know," "eat," "come," "produced," and "investigate" convey actions and processes.

In the 2016⁸⁵ commercial (ad O) we can also notice that the boy's speech begins with the conditional clause "If I was making my dad a chicken sandwich," to express a hypothetical situation. There is an agreement issue in the conditional clause, where "I" (first person singular) is followed by "was" (past tense of "to be"), which should ideally be "were" for standard subject-verb agreement since "The *subjunctive mood* if I were is used for hypothetical, imaginary, or contrary-to-fact situations and the *indicative mood* if I was refers to an actuality or declarative statement to describe something that already happened in the past". However, this is a common informal usage in some dialects⁸⁶.

In the 2017⁸⁷ advertisement (ad P) we can identify several nominal phrases, such as "New campaign from McDonald's UK," "Tech developers", "Food experts", "Young farmers", "Virtual reality", "UK supply chain", "flagship farms", " and "UK food production". These phrases contain various modifiers and descriptors to provide additional information. The same use can be noticed in the 2020⁸⁸ commercial (ad R) in the following example: "A 100% fresh beef with 2 slices of melted cheese, pickles, onions, ketchup, and mustard."

⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUk> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlGhMaRjISY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸⁶ For more information see: <https://languagetool.org/insights/post/grammar-if-i-was-were/> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁸⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE> (Last accessed: 15/09/23)

⁸⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAar3Xlarz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/23)

STYLE:

The colloquial style seems to be one of the symbols of McDonald's. As we have already seen, it is a source of pride for the company to be able to say that it is inclusive and close to ordinary people, and this pop identity is also emphasised in these commercials. This predominantly emotional style not only brings the audience closer and makes it feel part of something bigger, but also ensures that everyone feels involved in a process of trust with the brand.

For example, in the 2014⁸⁹ advertisement (ad M) the company puts itself at the forefront by using a famous testimonial to involve ordinary people in the discovery process by making a kind of appeal: "I'm looking for people to come quality scouts helping me investigate the supply chain of McDonald's" or "If you want to find out how McDonald's makes its food apply to become a quality scout then please go to whatmakesMcDonald's.co.UK" and "I would love to see you on the farm this summer". A friendly and welcoming introduction as "Hi I'm Phil Vickery," is mixed with several contractions and colloquial language throughout the duration of the speech as we can see in the following sentences: "I love cooking", "I like simple foods" or "I've lived and been around farms my whole life" and "I'm looking for people". The commercial also incorporates marketing elements by inviting the reader to become a "quality scout" and visit a specific website (whatmakesMcDonald's.co.UK). This is almost a call to action, urging the reader to take a specific step.

Another good example of this kind of colloquial and familiar style can be seen in the advertisement 'My dad, BBQ Chicken Legend Deluxe'⁹⁰ (ad O)

⁸⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUK> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlGhMaRjISY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

in which a child uses simple words to describe the perfect sandwich that he would make for his dad. This is precisely the Chicken Legend Deluxe one, which is a legendary sandwich just like his dad is. It is not clear whether the man the child is talking about, and who appears sitting in front of him at the table in the commercial, is a celebrity, but even if he is not, isn't it true that every dad is a hero to his children?

The 2016⁹¹ advertisement (ad N), on the other hand, is the only one that resorts to a dialogic style and is also the only advertisement whose source is not the company's UK channel. It comes from Canada and was included in this study because of some noteworthy aspects. The video begins with a direct address: "Hi, I'm Hope Bagozzi, director of marketing for McDonald's Canada." This personal introduction establishes a connection with the audience. It follows a question-response structure, with a customer addressing a question to the McDonald's marketing director: "Why does your food look different in the advertising and then what's in the store?" this dialogue with the audience is characterized by a decidedly informal style in which Mrs. Bagozzi aims to explain, in a simple and clear manner, 'the secrets' behind the company's sales strategies as we can notice in the following examples: "It's a great question Isabel we get asked that a lot and if you want to come with me I'm gonna take you across the street we're gonna find out a bit more" or "We're actually gonna put the burger that you saw me just by we're gonna put it side-by-side next to a burger that we rocked you in a craft from scratch with our food stylist and our photographer and we're gonna compare what's different about the two". Phrases like "Come with me", "Thank you so much", "That's a great question" and "We

⁹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbh1UAWLOqU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

hope that's answered it for you" convey a friendly and transparent approach.

It is also interesting to note, with respect to style, the repeated use of the American slang word "gonna" by McDonald's Canada marketing director, Mrs. Bagozzi⁹² (see previous examples). The dialogical narrative between speakers provides additional insights into the process, such as the work of the food stylist and the photographer's explanation of adjustments made for the photoshoot.

In the 2017⁹³ advertisement (ad P) the same kind of language aims to appeal to the reader's emotions by emphasizing the celebration of skills, expertise, and talent in the food industry. This adds a positive and inspirational tone to the message as it is possible to see in the following examples: "Celebrating the breakfast skills expertise and talent", "They've brought together tech developers food experts and young farmers likely to use the latest virtual reality and 360 video to transport people behind the scenes", and "We hope to see you along the way".

The 2019⁹⁴ advertisement (ad Q) provides information about McDonald's commitment to making positive changes. It communicates a message of continuous improvement and quality enhancement. The conversational tone of the speaker engages the audience: phrases like "So we're working hard" and "That's what we're made of" create a direct communication between all parties involved. The message is very clear in both 2019⁹⁵ and

⁹² This advertisement is part of a bigger campaign called 'our food, your questions' see <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/about-our-food/our-food-your-questions1.html> for more information (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_Sl3a2VM0UqVWI&index=11 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

2020⁹⁶ advertisements (ad Q, ad R): we care about you, about your health, we are committed to the best quality ever and we do our best to please you. This can be seen in sentences like "No artificial preservatives, flavours or added colours from artificial sources" and "Real, quality ingredients across our menu". The use of "the" in "The quarter pounder with cheese" provides a sense of specificity, as if referring to a well-known and iconic product. The overall tone of the videos is informal and conversational, making it relatable to the viewer.

LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL CHOICES:

Clearly, here too we can see how the use of adjectives and quantifiers is crucial in creating a sense of closeness and trust between the consumer and the company. Words like "Simple foods", "High quality", "Same ingredients", "Proper", "Toasted" 'Really good', "Crisp", "Fresh", "Famous," and "Best-known" (ad M, ad R, ad O) emphasise the quality and care McDonald's takes in its choice of raw materials and in the way they are cooked.

In the 2019⁹⁷ advertisement (ad Q) the sentence "Real, quality ingredients" is very indicative because it encapsulates, in a nominal sentence, the company's entire effort to 'convince' the audience of the veracity of the actions taken to improve both product quality and sustainability. While the use of verbs such as "Celebrating", "Making changes", "It's important to note" and "Helping me investigate" clearly show us that one of the brand's priorities is to make the consumer feel the continuity in the effort to always offer something better. And this without any secrets, and

⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAar3Xlarz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECqSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

precisely because there is nothing to hide the company even goes so far as involving the customer in this research.

In the 2014⁹⁸ advertisement (ad M) adverbs such as "Always" and "Also" modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs to create a stronger connection with the brand.

Some specific terminology related to photography and food styling can be noticed in the 2016⁹⁹ commercial (ad N): the use of technical language in this advertisement, enhancing the sense of professionalism while maintaining an accessible tone.

The use of pronouns is also interesting: the advertisements of 2014¹⁰⁰ (ad M) and 2016¹⁰¹ (ad O) use a the first person narrator, the use of 'I' and the possessive 'My' indicate a strong involvement of the speakers in the cause, as if the responsibility of the company was thus also shared by those who are indirectly involved either as customers or as testimonials. This helps to enhance the credibility of the brand. See the following examples: "I also love cooking I like simple foods" sentence in which simple home cooking, perhaps just 'old-fashioned' cooking is compared to the now-genuine McDonald's, or "My dad's a legend I must the least he deserves". The speakers directly addresses the audience, using phrases like "If you want to find out how McDonald's makes its food" and "please go to whatmakesMcDonald's.co.UK" emphasizing the first-person perspective and conveying a sense of enthusiasm and warmth.

⁹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUk> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

⁹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbh1UAWLQgU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUk> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlGhMaRijSY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

The Canadian advertisement¹⁰² (ad N) is almost the only one to use the pronoun 'we' with the possessive 'our' but this time it does it in a different way. The purpose is not creating a bond by including the audience, here, the use of this grammatical devices help to emphasise the role of the main speaker, her belonging to the company and her desire to shed light on behalf of McDonald's on corporate marketing techniques by answering a question posed by a regular consumer as in the following examples: "We're gonna put it side-by-side next to a burger that we rocked you in a craft from scratch with our food stylist and our photographer and we're gonna compare what's different about the two" or "It's a great question Isabel we get asked that a lot and if you want to come with me I'm gonna take you across the street we're gonna find out a bit more". This subject pronoun is also used in the 2017¹⁰³ commercial (ad P) in the sentence: "We're going on the road," indicating the collective action of the campaign organizers.

In the remaining commercials, on the other hand, the most frequently used pronouns are 'you' and 'we.' In some cases with the purpose of making the customer feel pampered-as in the 2019¹⁰⁴ commercial (ad Q) in which the narrator's voice emphasizes the effort of the company and its employees to serve consumers better and better as in the following examples: "Making changes to serve you better is what we're made of", "We're working hard to make the food you love even better", "Cooked fresh right when you order. When it comes to our food, we're putting you front and center" or to engage ordinary people in new, exhilarating avenues of sharing and discovery that

¹⁰² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbh1UAWLOgU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UlqvWI&index=11 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

often also involve the use of new technologies as in the 2017¹⁰⁵ commercial (ad P): "Have you ever wondered where your food comes from?", "...together tech developers food experts and young farmers likely to use the latest virtual reality and 360 video to transport people behind the scenes for its UK supply chain" or "We're going on the road traveling 2,000 miles over 12 months we hope to see you along the way".

Here too there is a large use of connectors such as 'so', 'and', 'but' and 'when' as we can see in the following examples from the 2014¹⁰⁶, 2017¹⁰⁷, and 2019¹⁰⁸ advertisement (ad M, ad P, ad Q): "So we're working hard to make the food you love even better", "Quarter Pounder burgers cooked fresh right when you order", "And triple the number of burgers and sandwiches since 2016" or "Celebrating the breakfast skills expertise and talent", "It's always been important to me to know where the food that I eat comes from but also how is it produced":

Concerning the modal verb it is possible to see a discreet use of the most commons one as 'can' and 'must' like in the 2020¹⁰⁹ advertisement (ad R): "Can't" (colloquial, short for "cannot") and "Won't" (colloquial, short for "will not") are modal verbs indicating the burger's inability to be contained: "And can't nor won't be contained by a humble sesame seeds bun".

¹⁰⁵https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UIqvWI&index=11 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUK> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰⁷https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UIqvWI&index=11 (Last accessed: 08/09/2023)

¹⁰⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAar3Xlarz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/23)

TROPES AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

In the six advertisements examined here, the use of tropes and figurative language is quite present. In the 2016¹¹⁰ advertisement (ad O) we can see a subtle use of analogy when the child compares the sandwich, minutely described as a legend, to his father. At the end of this commercial the voice over's phrase "And discover the taste of a legend" adds a marketing appeal to the comparison by suggesting that the product embodies legendary taste. In the same advertisement the sentence "Discover the taste of a legend" employs hyperbole by suggesting that trying the limited edition barbecue chicken legend deluxe will allow the audience to experience legendary flavour.

The same happens in the 2014¹¹¹ advertisement (ad M) in which the testimonial creates an analogy between the simple food that he likes to cook and eat and the company's products: "I also love cooking I like simple foods using high quality ingredients and this summer I'm going to bring my love of farming and food together I've been invited behind the scenes of a very famous menu and I'm looking for people to join me and find out how McDonald's makes its food".

In the 2016¹¹² one (ad N), the idiomatic expression "Hot off the presses" is used to emphasize the freshness of the product being advertised. The figurative use of the word 'flagship' in the 2017¹¹³ advertisement (ad P) is intended to draw attention to the effort the company makes in selecting the best farms to purchase its raw materials. The opening question "Have you

¹¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=mlGhMaRjISY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUK> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Pbh1UAWLQgU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_Sl3a2VM0UlqvWI&index=11 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

ever wondered where your food comes from?" is rhetorical, as it does not necessarily expect a direct answer but rather serves to engage the reader's curiosity.

In the 2019¹¹⁴ commercial (ad Q) the repetition of "That's what we're made of" at the end of the text uses anaphora as a rhetorical device to reinforce the idea that McDonald's values are aligned with customer well-being and quality. In the same way the use of a metaphor in the phrase "Making changes to serve you better is what we're made of" conveys that McDonald's is fundamentally dedicated to improving its service and products.

Similarly, the repetition of "This is" at the beginning of each sentence and the figurative use of the phrase 'Take a seat' in the 2020¹¹⁵ advertisement (ad R) create a rhythmic and persuasive effect, reinforcing the identity and qualities of the burger. They are used to invite consumers to savour their sandwich by taking their time to enjoy it as they should being certain about all its good qualities. This commercial also uses metaphors to create a vivid image of the burger. The language used aims to create a vivid and appealing description of the burger using sentences like: "100% fresh beef", "2 slices of melted cheese" and the list of ingredients (pickles, onions, ketchup, and mustard) provide specific details and let the audience imagine the wonder of this sandwich as in the phrases like "It marks its territory" and "Leaving behind a graveyard of napkins" that evoke strong visual and sensory imagery.

¹¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 16/09/2023)

¹¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAar3Xlarz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

META-DISCURSIVE DEVICES:

McDonald's seems to particularly care about its image when it comes to the quality of its ingredients. As we have already seen, scandals and inferences with respect to the brand's nutritional value have not been lacking, which is probably why, over the past decade, the company has made a commitment to include in its agenda setting these kinds of topics related not only to quality but also to respect for and choice of its raw materials.

That is why all advertisements in this macro category, through the use of carefully chosen vocabulary, are designed to emphasize the commitment, care, and quality of what will ultimately be consumed by fast food customers. The linguistic style of the videos aligns with agenda-setting strategies employed in corporate communication and branding. They set an agenda by framing McDonald's as a customer-centric and responsible brand committed to quality, using numerical data, direct customer engagement, and positive associations to shape the reader's perception. The goal is to influence how readers perceive and relate to the McDonald's brand.

The activation of framing, as in the other advertisements analyzed, is not used to refer to a specific myth or race, but rather to a category: those who love McDonald's and its products. They are urged to active participation, to feel part of a community that, in turn, will always be present and ready to answer questions, perplexities, and support its participants. So we can identify elements that are intended to set an agenda or shape the viewer's perception as in the 2016¹¹⁶ advertisement (ad N) in which the marketing

¹¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Pbh1UAWLOgU> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

director answers a specific question posed by a female consumer with a transparency that reveals the company's business strategies. The Canadian advertisement demonstrates several agenda-setting elements in the context of addressing customer concerns and shaping public perception. First of all, the question asked by the Isabel M. sets the agenda for the discussion by addressing to a 'specialist' a common customer concern.

Secondly Mrs. Bagozzi invites the audience to accompany her to a photo studio to witness the process of photographing McDonald's food for advertising. This proposal serves the agenda of demystifying the food preparation and presentation process. Together with her team she provides a detailed explanation of how the food is prepared for advertising and assure the use of the same ingredients as in the restaurant in order to reassure customers of the truthfulness of her words: she shows everyone that the advertised food is made with the same ingredients but may be presented differently. This emphasis on transparency and authenticity serves the agenda of building trust with the audience. For clarity see the following examples: "It's a great question Isabel", "We're gonna find out a bit more", "We're gonna put it side-by-side next to a burger that we rocked you in a craft from scratch with our food stylist and our photographer and we're gonna compare what's different about the two" or "It's important to note that all the ingredients are the exact same ingredients that we use in the restaurant so it's the exact same patties it's the exact same ketchup y and mustard and onions and the exact same bun".

Something similar also happens in the 2014¹¹⁷ ad (ad M), in which the testimonial calls out McDonald's 'army' to, and I quote, "[c]ome quality scouts helping me investigate the supply chain of McDonald's": this call to action sets the agenda for involving the public in the mission to uncover the truth about McDonald's food production. He uses his credibility and personal connection to the topic of food sourcing to build a sense of community with the audience and make people feel involved about this initiative. Vickery emphasizes the importance of knowing where one's food comes from and how it is produced to raise awareness about food sourcing and production methods.

Other examples can be found in the 2016¹¹⁸ and 2020¹¹⁹ commercials (ad O, ad R), in which this emphasis on product details can be seen as an attempt to set an agenda by drawing attention to the burger's ingredients and qualities to convey the idea that the burger is bold, flavourful, and leaves a lasting impression influencing the audience's perception and potentially encouraging people to consider the product positively as it is possible to see in the following sentences: "100% fresh beef with 2 slices of melted cheese, pickles, onions, ketchup. and mustard", "This is a burger that strongly suggests you take a seat" and "This is the quarter pounder with cheese" or from ad O phrases like: "Really good chicken", "Proper bacon", "Crisp lettuce," that emphasize the quality of the ingredients. This descriptive language sets the agenda by framing the sandwiches as

¹¹⁷https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvzA85swMUk&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UIqvWI&index=12 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlGhMaRjISY> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAar3Xlarz8> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

delicious and high-quality. And these are just a few of the numerous examples of persuasive language. This persuasive tone can be seen as strategy to make the customer more receptive to the irresistible desire of trying the iconic burger aligning with the idea that it's suitable for someone as special as, for example the speaker's dad, who is referred to as 'a legend', since in McDonald's popular point of view we are all legends.

In the 2019¹²⁰ commercial (ad Q) the video presents a positive and customer-centric frame by emphasizing McDonald's commitment to "Making changes to serve you better" and making "The food you love even better.". This framing highlights McDonald's dedication to improving its products and services for the benefit of its customers and incorporating values like quality, responsibility, and authenticity it shapes the perception of McDonald's as a responsible and quality-driven brand; for example, it mentions "Sourcing food responsibly," "Real, quality ingredients", and "The absence of artificial components" as important steps in the company's commitments.

In the 2017¹²¹ advertisement (ad P), the speaker introduces a new campaign called 'Follow our footsteps' from McDonald's UK. By highlighting the campaign's existence, the ad sets the agenda for the audience to learn more about this initiative that includes the involvement of various stakeholders like tech developers, food experts, and young farmers and at the same time by informing the reader about the campaign's scope and objectives. With the sentence: "We hope to see you along the way." The audience is called to action, consumers must feel involved, and encouraged to engage with the campaign.

¹²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPECgSN0N_I (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

Intertextuality is also extremely present in this thematic area. The use of music accompanies almost all of the advertisements, except for the two shot in 2016 (ad N, ad O) in which the music is replaced in the first case¹²² with background noises from the street and the editing studio ones, since the advertisement has more similarities to a reportage than to a commercial, precisely for the purpose of giving authenticity to the project. And in the second case¹²³ the music is substituted with 'the voice' of the ingredients. Indeed, onomatopoeic sounds are used to enhance the feeling of authenticity, the sizzle of chicken cutlet, the crunch of freshly picked lettuce, the sound of a freshly baked bun being lightly crushed to release the sauces... All of this adds pathos to the images that scroll across the screen and, of course, makes the mouth water.

There are also references to marketing tactics to engage the audience and provide insights into the advertising and presentation of McDonald's food products. The reference to the 'Barbecue Chicken Legend Deluxe' invokes a sense of exclusivity and a special edition products, a common marketing tactic. This intertextual element plays on the concept of limited-time offers and premium items, enticing the audience to try the product and aims to elevate the perceived value of a product through descriptive language. Mrs. Bagozzi, on the other hand, introduces the idea of comparing a freshly purchased burger with the one used in advertising. This element draws on the common practice of side-by-side comparisons to address customer scepticism about food presentation; also in the same commercial she mentions the 'steam effect' caused by packaging and the strategic

¹²²https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbh1UAWLOqU&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UlqvWI&index=13 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

¹²³https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlGhMaRjISY&list=PLSQXI6ghaV1bQIQmgh_SI3a2VM0UlqvWI&index=15 (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

placement of ingredients for visual appeal. These intertextual references provide insights into the intricacies of food photography and presentation, aligning with customer curiosity about the process.

In the other videos, the music used remains in line with the brand's other ads: a more or less rhythmic jingle accompanies the images. In the first-person ones, the focus remains on the narrator, while in the others we see various images of food, everyday life and moments of intense pleasure and conviviality on the screen, underlining how the company's aim remains to satisfy its customers in all areas. The music in question has a different volume depending on the spots, this in order to give more or less emphasis to the words uttered by the different speakers. Concerning the intertextuality of the messages in these advertisements, we can notice how, for example, Mr. Vickery (ad M) mentions being invited behind the scenes of a "Very famous menu" referring to McDonald's restaurants. This intertextual element contrasts the idyllic farm setting with the fast-food industry, invoking curiosity about the food production process and leverages the use of online platforms and engagement strategies commonly used in marketing campaigns.

In the 2017¹²⁴ commercial (ad P) the speaker mentions McDonald's UK's campaign to support British and Irish farming. This element reflects the corporate social responsibility trend of promoting sustainable and local sourcing, also considering how much, during the last decades, the public is becoming more and more interested in the origin and quality of what they introduce into their bodies. This ad also makes a great use of the incorporation of technology in marketing and storytelling employing "Virtual

¹²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dplx9TaYvE> (Last accessed: 15/09/2023)

reality and 360 video" to transport people behind the scenes of the supply chain.

The importance of the use of natural ingredients aligns with the contemporary trend of highlighting corporate responsibility. With this intertextual reference the numerical comparisons helps to emphasizes McDonald's commitment to sourcing food responsibly and using real, quality ingredients to align with consumer preferences.

The selected advertisements in this thematic group incorporate intertextual references to themes such as food provenance, sustainability, technology in marketing, corporate responsibility, and sensory descriptions commonly employed in food advertising that enrich the texts by connecting them to broader cultural and marketing contexts, making them more engaging and persuasive to the target audience.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to show how persuasive language is used in McDonald's advertisements. The company has invested a lot of money and energy in its campaigns over the last ten years. From the analysis carried out, it can be deduced that, since it is already an extremely well-known brand, the purpose of these investments was not only to bring more and more customers closer to the fast food industry, but above all to give new lustre to its image. By appealing to universal themes with a strong emotional value, McDonald's has sought to involve not only its loyal customers, but also those who, until then, looked at the famous company with scepticism. This is precisely why the selection of advertisements was not only made from a purely linguistic point of view, but also from a more basic emotional one, which is, however, absolutely necessary in order to achieve the set goals.

The study of the rhetorical devices has in fact shown how persuasion passes not only through lexical and grammatical choice, but also through the multimodality and intertextuality of the selected advertising campaigns. They are masterfully created with the purpose of enhancing consumer loyalty, to carry forward a brand image that is not only transparent but also concerned and committed to anti-discrimination, integration of all, respect for production techniques and raw materials, commitment to the development of new technologies and lifelong learning to improve its workers' lives, and to the preservation of the environment and the planet on which we all live.

This might turn out to be a foregone conclusion given that the purpose of any advertisement is to sell its product or service, but it is a perfect example of how it is possible, and absolutely functional, to use all the tools made available by the language of persuasion to create a series of commercials

that highlight the characteristics and values that McDonald's company wants to convey without, however, ever forgetting the feeling of happiness and wateriness that each of us is able to feel just by looking at the wonderful images of the food that it offers.

The colloquial style, the use of different modes combined together, the overabundance of *god words*, the use of words with a strong informal connotation, are all elements that confirm and reinforce the idea of the brand and make anyone who is in front of one of these commercials feel not only emotionally involved, but actually an active part of the change that the company is enacting.

Concerning the language, it can be said that throughout the previous decade McDonald's has upheld a consistent linguistic approach: it does not seem to have undergone any major changes either in the choice of style and tone or in the careful selection of vocabulary and grammatical devices used. However, the company has adeptly modified the subjects that it addresses. While the language remains identifiable, the issues that it confronts have shifted to encompass emerging difficulties, highlighting its commitment to advancing worldwide betterment. Utilising communication strategies and through its communication tactics, McDonald's not only pursues its immediate commercial objectives but also involves itself with broader social concerns. This positions the company as a dedicated participant in the pursuit of positive change.

It is therefore possible to conclude by saying that the analysis of the advertisements reported here confirms how persuasive language can be an endless source of possibilities for all those who have a definite purpose in their marketing campaigns. Since no significant changes were found in the use of vocabulary or in the structure of the advertisements analysed it is possible to assume that the company adapts to the changes of our era more from a thematic than a lexical point of view. Indeed the style and

rhetorical devices seem to be unchanged over time confirming the functionality and consistency of what has been done in the last ten years. Advertising turns out to be the medium in which persuasive language is best conveyed also thanks to its predilection for multimodality and precisely because every message, every linguistic emission is based on a persuasive intention since individuals talk to and interact with one another to communicate their social realities and their own history.

APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTS OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

1. What If?' Digital Carbon Tool | Food Quality | Social | McDonald's UK 2013

Speaker1 (male representative of the E-CO2 project): “The main challenges facing British and Irish farmers today are remaining profitable despite very difficult to market conditions. Some of these challenging conditions facing farmers are there increasing their costs climate change and also the global demand for beef is increasing now more than ever farmers need to keep tabs on their costs and run a more efficient business”

Speaker 2 (male farmer): “I've Sustainable Agriculture been producing beef here at rectory farm for over 20 years I think using modern technology on the farm is really important”

Speaker 3 (male head of agriculture & sourcing McDonald's UK): “Farm food is a long-term commitment to British and Irish farming, it's really important for McDonald's that we have a sustainable agriculture industry in the UK we know it's a challenging time for British and Irish farming. We buy quality products from over 70 and a half thousand British and Irish farmers and we're aware of the challenging facing those farmers to stay efficient and also profitable in their businesses”

Speaker1(male representative of the E-CO2 project): “The research by industry Digital Carbon Tool experts have shown that the lower carbon farms are more profitable so therefore it's very important for farmers to keep track of their carbon footprint we've been working in partnership with McDonald's over the last three years to develop a carbon footprinting tool so it all works by farmers inputting a number of variables into the online

system after you put in all of your key efficiency measures the tool will show you your carbon footprint figure you can also answer a hypothetical farm scenario which can demonstrate potential efficiency savings for your farm the tool gives you a clear and instant result which demonstrates the areas that your farm could potentially improve upon”

Speaker 2 (male farmer): “We've got an awful lot of information that we're taking daily and we need to system to be able to bring all this information together. I've been really impressed with the “what if” tool and by altering the variables it's shown me how I can improve the profitability of my farm even by making small changes it can have big benefits for the long term.”

2. Happy Readers | TV Ad | McDonald's UK

2013

Speaker 1 (representative of the National Literacy Trust): “Something that people have really shocked hear about is the fact that only one in three children have books in the home reading is really key to a child's development in terms of their ability to learn new words to be able to progress in terms of their own education but also in terms of their own social interactions as well”

Speaker 2 (female parent): “Time has really tight for ordinary parents because they don't get home till late”

Speaker 3 (female parent): “ I think it's very hard for parents to find the time to read but it's something you should try and build into your day.”

Speaker 4 (male teacher): “I teach at secondary school and we have children who join us in the year 7 with very very low literacy and they are such an enormous disadvantage to their peers”

Speaker 5 (female): “Most kids don't find it a fun thing to do but when they develop the habit then they find that it's really interesting”

Speaker 6 (female Head of marketing McDonald's): “Happy Regis is a new campaign for McDonald's and it's a long term commitment about getting millions of popular books into the hands of families and children across the UK it's a two-year commitment to really get children loving reading”

Speaker 7 (young girl): “I really like reading because if I'm waiting for something I can just read it so I don't get bored”

Speaker 8 (young boy): “I do actually like space books so I read quite a bit”

Speaker 1 (representative of the National Literacy Trust): “That's really easy for families to sit down together in the restaurant environment and they can look at these information books and pick out bits and pieces and discuss them as a family”

Speaker 9 (young boy): “It tells you different things that you that you never heard before”

Speaker 10 (young boy): “I think these books are quite good they give lots of information”

Speaker 11 (young boy): “It's really interesting, you learn about all kinds of search where you don't know”

Speaker 12 (female): “I think the children will learn a lot about what's going on in the world that they don't from storybooks but I also think payments do as well”

Speaker 13 (female): “Of course it is important to encourage them to reach to improve their imagination and to give them some more knowledge”

Speaker 1 (representative of the National Literacy Trust): “So my top tips for parents would be to show your children that you are in a show that you

enjoy really they forget that you are their number one role model my second tip would be to say read anything read everything because reading is everywhere it doesn't just have to be about big heavy books the third thing is just to enjoy it the gift of reading is one of the greatest things that anyone can have in their lives so this campaign is really fantastic because it's providing books to millions of children and that is a really wonderful thing”

Speaker 14 (young girl): “They're fun entertaining and they help our learning as well at school and at home”

Speaker 15 (young boy): “I love the books”

3. Behind the McDonald's Supply Chain | Food Quality | Social | McDonald's UK 2014

Speaker 1 (England rugby legend and McDonald's quality Scout Leader): “Hi I'm Phil Vickery and welcome to my farm I've lived and been around farms my whole life and it's always been important to me to know where the food that I eat comes from but also how it is produced I also love cooking I like simple foods using high quality ingredients and this summer I'm going to bring my love of farming and food together I've been invited behind the scenes of a very famous menu and I'm looking for people to join me and find out how McDonald's makes its food I'm looking for people to come quality scouts helping me investigate the supply chain of McDonald's and some of their best-known products like sausage and egg McMuffin and of course the Big Mac if you want to find out how McDonald's makes its food and apply to become a quality scout then please go to whatmakesMcDonald's.co.UK and I would love to see you on the farm this summer”

4. Serving the UK: McDonald's at 40 | Brand | Social | McDonald's UK 2015 (no voice, only written text)

“We welcomed our first customers through the doors in 1974 and over the last 40 years we have become part of 1,200 communities across the UK. To mark our 40th anniversary we've measured the contribution we make to our customers, to our people, to our suppliers, to our local communities and to the UK economy. From high street to drive-thru restaurants we inject 1.3 billion of value directly to the UK economy. Our work with our suppliers delivers an additional £ 706 million every year. Together our employees and our suppliers' employees spending contributes a further 499 million. Since we opened our first restaurant in Woolwich 40 years ago we have contributed 40.3 billion to the UK national economy. We are proud to serve millions of customers every day who help us add 2.5 billion to the UK economy each year. We have created 1.5 million jobs over the last 40 years and we keep hiring because we need more great people. In 2013 we supported 130.600 jobs in the UK directly, through our suppliers, and through the earnings of each of our respective employees. Our franchisees, restaurants, managers and suppliers contribute millions to national, regional, and local economies and support thousands of jobs. We are proud to be one of the largest private sector employers of young people in the UK. For just under half of our people their job with McDonald's is their first job. Nearly 8 out of 10 of our employees aged 16 or 17 were previously not in education, employment or training (neet) before joining us. Three quarters of our employees are ages 16-25. From maths and English to foundation degrees we offer nationally recognized qualifications that remain with our people throughout their careers. We are one of the largest providers of apprenticeships in the UK since 2006 we have congratulated 16.600 qualified apprentices. Over 8.000 of our people have achieved a level 3 diploma in shift management. 130 managers have

graduated with a foundation degree qualification accredited by Manchester metropolitan university. We've awarded 55.000 qualifications. One third of people who join us after finishing school at the age of 16 or 17 remain with us for five years or more to pursue a career. 44% of employees who joined us as crew members are now crew trainers, shift assistants or restaurant managers 95% of our restaurant managers started as crew members 8 out of 10 of our employees say flexible working hours are very important in guiding their decision to work at McDonald's. Just under three quarters of our part-time workers are currently in full or part-time education. We employ around 1.000 people aged 60 or over across our business. Research shows levels of customer satisfaction are higher in our restaurants that employ mature workers. Since 1974 we have spent 25 billions with UK based businesses, our supply chain helps to support 13.600 jobs each year, we spend 2 billion each year with UK businesses through our network of suppliers. Over 40 years we have built a world class UK supply chain built on trust and long-term relationships. Our customers can expect free-range eggs, organic milk from UK dairies and we only use whole cuts of 100% British and Irish beef to make our burgers. As one of the UK farming's biggest customers each year we spend 851 million with the food and agricultural sector. More than 17.500 British and Irish farmers produce the majority of our UK menu 162 million goes directly to UK farmers supporting 3.000 jobs. We know that what we do today has a major impact on the world of tomorrow. 90% of our restaurants use renewable electricity. We recycle 3.8 million liters of cooking oil we use each year and turn it into biodiesel to power our delivery fleet. In 1982 we were the first restaurant chain in the UK to introduce litter patrols. Our employees walk almost 3.000 miles a week, 150.000 miles a year collecting litter from the streets. This is an investment of 10 million each year. As a responsible family restaurant we work hard to make a positive difference to local communities. 1.2 million young players have benefited from our football community coaching

programme. More than 25.000 people have achieved coaching qualifications in the last 12 years. RMHC build houses next to hospitals so that parents have somewhere free and safe to stay. That's just a stone's throw away from the children's ward. Over the last 24 years the charity has built: 14 Ronald McDonald houses across the UK helping 7.000 families every year. Just under 50 million has been raised by our customers, franchisees, suppliers and staff through collection boxes and community fundraising in our restaurants. Looking to the future we will continue to work with the communities we are part of to help them prosper because when they prosper we do too. That's what makes us a good neighbor and what helps create positive changes that make a real difference for local people, local families and community leaders. To find out more visit www.mcdonaldsservingtheuk.co.uk"

5. My Dad | BBQ Chicken Legend Deluxe | TV Ad | McDonald's UK 2016

Speaker 1 (male child): "If I was making my dad a chicken sandwich it would have really good chicken in it a proper bacon crisp lettuce cheese and it would be in one of them toasted rolls with barbecue sauce my dad's a legend I must the least he deserves"

Speaker 2 (voice-over): "Get the limited edition barbecue chicken legend deluxe and discover the taste of a legend"

6. How It's Made | McDonalds Commercial Burger | CANADA 2016

Speaker 1 (director of Marketing, McDonald's Canada): "Hi I'm Hope Bagozzi director of marketing for McDonald's Canada I'm here with a question from Isabel M. from Toronto Ontario she asks "why does your food

look different in the advertising and then what's in the store" it's a great question Isabel we get asked that a lot and if you want to come with me I'm gonna take you across the street we're gonna find out a bit more Hello could I please have a quarter pounder with cheese? thank you thank you so much here is my hot and fresh quarter pounder with cheese, this beauty put this one back in the box I'm gonna go over to our photo studio why does your food look different in the advertising and then what's in the store so we're on route now to Watt photo studios what has been our agency doing all of our merchandising creative for probably about seven years what we're gonna do here is we're actually gonna put the burger that you saw me just by we're gonna put it side-by-side next to a burger that we rocked you in a craft from scratch with our food stylist and our photographer and we're gonna compare what's different about the two I've just bought this quarter pounder with cheese that's hot off the presses it can be so maybe we just put that in get a photo of it notice that for comparison."

Speaker 2 (photographer): "So we'll keep the camera the lights and everything the same it'll be a direct comparison at the right side of both burgers"

Speaker 1 (director of Marketing, McDonald's Canada): "Perfect okay I'm gonna do is introduce you now to Noah who's our food stylist well that burger was made in about a minute or so the process we go through on the average shoot takes several hours and here I think it's important to note that all the ingredients baked uses are the exact same ingredients that we use in the restaurant so it's the exact same patties it's the exact same ketchup and mustard and onions and the exact same bun almost ready for you"

Speaker 2 (photographer): "You know we want to be able to show the pickles and the condiments as we build in the store they would naturally,

just line it up straight in line we have to bring it back a little bit to reveal the fact that there's it comes with the pickles and the slivered onions”

Speaker 3 (food stylist): “ Because we're in a one dimensional world in the camera everything is in the back and the picture I don't know what's actually in it this way we can at least tell people you have ketchup you have mustard you have two pieces of cheese and you know what you're getting”

Speaker 1 (director of Marketing, McDonald's Canada): “Perfect onion selection it's like you're a surgeon in there”

Speaker 2 (photographer): “Because we've had to put things forward the bun is sitting crooked so he's just compensating”

Speaker 3 (food stylist): “I'm just melting down the cheese with my palette knife maybe I'll put mustard ketchup actually ketchup mustard ketchup”

Speaker 1 (director of Marketing, McDonald's Canada): “This burger looks pretty good as is I don't think it's gonna need much retouching whatsoever we introduce you to Stuart Murray he's gonna take the side-by-side comparison and do a little finessing of the product. Less amount of retouching that we do to something the less perfect it looks but actually it looks more appetizing and more convincing but just enhancing some color taking out some of the little accidents it might happen in preparation which obviously doesn't show the product in its best possible light here you can definitely see that there's a size difference the box that are saying what just come in keep the sandwiches warm which creates a bit of a steam effect and it does make the button contract a little bit and then the main difference is the fact that we actually took all the ingredients that are normally hidden under the bun and we pulled them to the foreground so that you can see them and those are the main differences so Isabel thank you so much for your question we hope that's answered it for you thanks.”

**7. Follow Our Foodsteps Campaign Reveal | Farm Forward | Social |
McDonald's UK
2017**

Speaker 1 (McDonald's UK progressive female young farmer): "Have you ever wondered where your food comes from? Follow our footsteps is a new campaign from McDonald's UK to champion British and Irish farming they've brought together tech developers food experts and young farmers likely to use the latest virtual reality and 360 video to transport people behind the scenes for its UK supply chain visitors will step into flagship farms factories and a busy restaurant tracing UK food production through the eyes of people who grow source and producer food celebrating the breakfast skills expertise and talent across the industry. We're going on the road traveling 2,000 miles over 12 months we hope to see you along the way"

**8. McDonald's: Scale For Good Climate Action
2018**

Speaker 1 (voice-over): "To create a better future for our planet, we all must get involved. So McDonald's is going its part using our scale for good, to source of food responsibly, promote renewable energy and use it efficiently, reduce waste and increase recycling. The impact? 150 million tons of carbon emissions prevented. Equal to 32 million cars off the road or planting 3.8 billion trees. It's all part of building a better McDonald's."

**9. Women at McDonald's: Charlotte West
2019**

Speaker 1 (progressive Young Farmer): "My name is Charlotte West and I'm a McDonald's Progressive Young Farmer."

When I got the phone call from McDonald's saying that I'd got the job, I was really excited and really happy that I was able to do it, because it gives you so many opportunities in the industry.

I'll be working on this organic dairy farm for the next few months and then we spend a week with McCain and Elveden to find out a bit more about cereals and potato harvesting. And then we'll spend 3 days in a central London restaurant. There are so many more women coming in to agriculture recently. I think that anything a man can do I can do. There's lots of routine stuff to do such as feeding the calves and milking and stuff, so it depends on the day to what you're doing. We get so much support through McDonald's and through our supplier."

Speaker 2 (farm Manager): "Before Charlotte arrived on farm she sat down with her mentor within Arla, between them they came up with a set of learning objectives for her placement here.

So we will actively work to make sure she, she ticks all of those off in her time and hopefully she gets to learn a lot more alongside."

Speaker 1 (progressive Young Farmer): "I've learnt a great deal, so I've learnt all different types of practice within the dairy industry. And being able to work with a supplier in an office environment has also been really good to learn. So for me I definitely want to go and farm. I think this placement has made me realise that dairy basically is the future for me."

10. McDonald's Happy Meals | What We're Made Of

2019

Speaker 1 (voice-over): "What is a McDonald's Happy Meal made of? Balanced, wholesome options that you will love as much as your kids do. With better for you choices like low fat milk, Go-GURT low fat strawberry

yogurt with 25% less sugar, and apple slices. Already 2.5 billion sides served. It's enough to make any parent smile from ear to ear. Balanced, wholesome choices. That's What We're Made of.”

**11. McDonald's Food Journey | McDonald's
2019**

Speaker 1 (voice over): “At McDonald's, making changes to serve you better is what we're made of. So we're working hard to make the food you love even better. That starts with sourcing food responsibly. Real, quality ingredients across our menu. No artificial preservatives, flavors or added colors from artificial sources, and triple the number of burgers and sandwiches since 2016, and Quarter Pounder burgers cooked fresh right when you order. When it comes to our food, we're putting you front and center. That's what we're made of.”

**12. QPC: This is a burger that strongly suggests you take a seat.
2020**

Speaker 1(voice over): “This is a 100% fresh beef with 2 slices of melted cheese, pickles, onions, ketchup. And mustard. This is a burger that strongly suggests you take a seat. It marks its territory leaving behind a graveyard of napkins and can't nor won't be contained by a humble sesame seeds bun. This is the quarter pounder with cheese”

**13. At McDonald's, Inclusion starts with Hello | Our People | McDonald's
UK
2020**

Written text: "at McDonald's we believe that inclusion starts with a simple..."

Several speakers: "Hello, bonjour, hi hola, hello, hello, hello, hello, hi, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello"

Speaker 1 (crew member): "When I started working with Donald's I just come out as a transgender male and I was really nervous that everyone was going to have lots of questions and everything but it just wasn't like that everyone was so on board with everything and nobody said anything it was really nice just to feel included"

Speakers 2 and 3 (crew member and crew trainer, deaf): "Me and Ricky have worked at McDonald's for 2 years now and we love our jobs. That's so true, I feel like McDonald's has become one big thigh knit family for us. Yes!"

Speaker 4 (customer Care, elderly man): "One of the nice things about McDonald's is that there you feel very much at home that's very encouraging"

Speaker 5 (franchisee Consultant): "As part of a same-sex relationship I've never felt discriminated against in my time at work I've been able to go away from work have my daughter and return to work flexibly with absolutely no problems whatsoever"

Speaker 6 (franchisee): "Inclusion for me as an individual has been that a system has allowed me to fully participate in all aspect of what the business does as a franchisee and for me the most important things that the system has given me an equal opportunity to do that"

Speaker 7 (shift Manager): “Working on McDonald's and going up into management has changed my life so much that I can never be thankful enough for what they have done for me”

Speaker 8 (shift Manager): “I'm passionate about my work and I love my kids and with McDonald's flexible hours means I can work and also be with my children”

Speaker 9 (crew member): “Before working in McDonald's I don't really feel like included in things and was always felt like an outsider but now things have changed and I'm able to socialize a lot more and having great management like just helping me through that like really makes a difference”

Speaker 10 (first Assistant): “The impact it's had it's insane I'm more confident I'm a better leader it's taught me so many life lessons as well”

Speaker 11 (crew member): “When I started working for McDonald's I instantly felt welcomed and it was one of those cases where there was just instant belonging I felt like I was part of the team there was just the sense of inclusion with everything I did and everyone I interacted with it was just I get always been there”

Speaker 12 (assistant Manager): It just feels like home”

Speaker 1 (crew member): “I think it's really important to be inclusive because everyone deserves the same chances no matter where you've come from or who you are or what you look like”

Speaker 13 (VP – Digital and IT): “ I think we've really got to value and celebrate our individuality you know there are some brands that really trade on that sense of exclusivity but McDonald's is for everyone so whether you're talking about our customers or our people that diversity is our strength. Better together.”

14. Helping to keep our teams and customers safe | McDonald's UK

2021

Speaker 1 (voice over): “We're on our way back, slowly, but safely, reopening 15 restaurants from 13th May. We're opening little by little, starting with McDelivery only. We'll have fewer people in our kitchens. And we'll be running reduced hours with a reduced menu. Because helping keep you and our team safe is our priority. So here are some of the measures we have put in place. To make it easier for our teams to social distance in restaurants, we've installed additional screens in the kitchen and service areas. We're performing temperature checks every day. And we're providing additional protective equipment, including face coverings. We'll be deep cleaning all restaurants before reopening, and we'll be cleaning equipment and surfaces even more often. We'll also be washing our hands at least every 30 minutes. And providing hand sanitiser for our teams and our delivery partners. And from pick up to drop-off, delivery is now contact-free. In preparation for when we open our Drive-Thru, we've installed screens at Drive-Thru windows, to help keep you and our teams safe. We will just ask that you use contactless payments and keep orders to a maximum of 25 pounds please. Things may be a little different for a while, but our priority is making sure we're looking out for you, our teams, and our partners. Thank you for your patience.”

15. The McPlant is coming to the UK

2021

Speaker 1 (Mathew Pritchard, Welsh professional skateboarder, stunt performer, celebrity chef, and triathlon athlete): “It's the countdown to our first McPlant: five, four, give it to me man, three, two, one...I'm here at McDonald's HQ and I'm gonna go check out one of their new burgers. I'm here with Lindsay please tell me about the new McPlant burger

Speaker 2 (Food Development Assistant): “So we have a vegan bun, a mustard ketchup a vegan sandwich sauce onion pickle lettuce tomato vegan cheese and then we have a plant protein patty which is co-developed with beyond meat. Ohhhh I love beyond meat. So we have dedicated equipment that we cook it on and different tongs the whole process has been worked through just to make sure that it is completely vegan”

Speaker 1 (Mathew Pritchard, Welsh professional skateboarder, stunt performer, celebrity chef, and triathlon athlete): “P for purple, P for plant and P for Pritchard all the Ps. This is the vegan cheese which has taken years to perfect it's made of pea protein and it basically tastes just like the real thing it's absolutely delicious the time has come the excitement is real we're about to taste the McPlant burger as you can see this looks just perfect and I'm about to tuck in to my first McPlant burger... oh lord that is absolutely spot on oh that flavor is delicious look at that patty it's proper meaty so for all vegans, for all meat eaters you cannot go wrong it's got everything in this burger for you and it's plant-based from top to the very bottom now go and grab yours get stuck in and start dribbling and enjoying it just like myself oh that flavor is proper delicious”

16. Change a little, change a lot | McDonald's UK

2022

Speaker 1 (voice over): “Everyone's looking for little changes to reduce how much they waste we're no different so we reuse our cooking oil to make biodiesel that helps fuel our trucks millions of old McCafe cups become greetings cards and those happy meal toys still making kids smile now they've become playgrounds and this is just the beginning of a plan to

recycle and reuse even more until you hardly waste anything at all which just goes to show when you change a little you change a lot”

17.1 in 8 People Have Worked at McDonald's

2023

Speaker 1 (voice over): “Believe it or not 1 in 8 people have worked at McDonald’s”

Speaker 2 (female employee): “Hi, welcome to McDonald’s”

Speaker 3 (female employee): “Como le puedo ayudar ahoi?”.

Speaker 1 (voice over): “All entrusted with the world's most famous fries day one with the power to make more kids days than anyone else. Who's seen a person's running late meal.”

Speaker 4 (male customer): “Have a great day”

Speaker 1 (voice over): “Celebration meal, pregame meal and post game meal. And know that no matter how long you've been here, no two days at McDonald's are the same. One in eight also know that a job with hours that work around your life needs more time for your life.”

Speaker 5 (female teacher): “Who can tell me about the book?”

Speaker 1 (voice over): “That what you put in here, you get out. And the communication, flexibility, and precision you learn here are skills you'll always have that you can grow from here or keep growing here where you start stays with you. And one in eight start at McDonald's.”

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3. Behind the McDonald's Supply Chain | Food Quality | Social | McDonald's UK 2014

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4. Serving the UK: McDonald's at 40 | Brand | Social | McDonald's UK 2015

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13. At McDonald's, Inclusion starts with Hello | Our People | McDonald's UK 2020

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14. Christmas 2020 | Inner Child | #ReindeerReady | TV | McDonald's UK

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15. Helping to keep our teams and customers safe |
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17. Change a little, change a lot | McDonald's UK 2022

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18. 1 in 8 People Have Worked at McDonald's 2023

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