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QUESTION 1: PERSUASIVE PROSE

Everyday we as the public are bombarded with advertisements, sometimes without even noticing. Whether or not they appeal to us, depends on whether what they offering fulfils our needs. In this advertisement of "Flu Shots on Sale." (<http://healthblog.ncpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/flu-graphic-larger.jpg>) taken from National Centre for Policy Analysis (NCPA, 2010. <http://healthblog.ncpa.org/flu-shots-on-sale>) this type of text falls under the genre of non-fiction persuasive prose, and is an advertisement. The writer is using this advertisement to inform the reader of their product and other services. The writer also claims and infers through the use of language and visual features that their product will protect the whole family which is needed as a matter of urgency because of their special price offer. In my essay, I will critically analyse the advertisement and show how the writer uses persuasive text and picture to achieve

Non-fiction persuasive prose 'is a broad term used for this genre' (Levey *et al* 2013:18). I would argue that the text is persuasive text because it is aimed at 'persuading the audience to achieve something using a variety of techniques' (Levey *et al* 2013:19). One such technique used, is capturing the attention of the audience, the advertisement achieves this through the picture it portrays. The advertisement uses the picture of a family, against a contrasting background of white, orange and black, this is very eye catching. The family looks happy and healthy, which I suggest is an inference on the writer's part. Through the picture, the writer is inferring that when you get your flu shot you will be healthy and happy just like the family in the picture. Another technique used is the use of 'stimulating the desire to buy' and the writer achieves this by using words such as 'Now Available' and 'SPECIAL OFFER' this would require the reader to act either immediately or in the near future as the offer expires by 'December 1<sup>st</sup>' (Levey *et al* 2013:19). Another technique that is used is 'establishing a relationship' (Levey *et al* 2013:19), the writer does this by using personal pronouns such as 'you' and 'our'.

When looking at the advertisement you are immediately drawn to the big bold letters of 'Flu Shots Available' on the back drop of an orange banner, this is at the heart of what the advertisement is about. Including the fact that the shots are offered at a reduced rate for a limited period of time '\$19.99 Flu Shots SPECIAL OFFER Expires December 1<sup>st</sup>'. Secondary to this would be the other services they offer 'Treatment for Common Illness – Cough, Cold, Fever, Ear Infection' and the availability of the Doctor's with their long trading hours 'Mon – Fri: 8am – 8pm', 'Sat – Sun: 8am – 5pm'.

The advertisement uses a family picture and though it is a stereotypical picture of a family, it shows who its target audience is with a strong focus on mothers as they are typically the ones who usually ensure that the family is taken care of. The family income range would be the middle to upper income earners as the family consists of five members in the picture. The use of informal language 'you're' and colloquial language 'Lab' also shows that the writer kept the advert to 'everyday conversational language' (Saylor, 2014: <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/K12ELA7-7.2.2-PersuasiveTechniquesHandout-BY-SA1.pdf>), this creates a friendly tone and comes across as if the writer is on 'the same wave length as them' (Saylor, 2014: <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/K12ELA7-7.2.2-PersuasiveTechniquesHandout-BY-SA1.pdf>). The picture is positioned to the side and still

attracts the readers eye. The white background gives a sense of cleanliness which is usually associated with a doctor's rooms or a hospital. Through the use of association between the picture and ourselves, the assumption would be that my family too would also be healthy and happy with the use of the 'Flu Shot'. It is through this that the writer has validated their claim that the flu shot will help 'Keep the Whole Family Healthy'. This picture captures a healthy happy family, which when looking at it could very well assure you that this family fall out of the danger or risk area thanks to the 'Flu Shot'.

The intent of the advertisement is two fold. Its primary objective is to inform the reader that they have stock available of the flu shots 'Flu Shots Available' and the way they have worded it also implies that it was out of stock for some period of time. Including the fact that it is at a reduced price for a limited period of time '\$19.99 Flu Shots SPECIAL OFFER Expires December 1<sup>st</sup>', which according to Linda Gorman in an article written on the web page of National Centre for Policy Analysis (NCPA. 2010. <http://healthblog.ncpa.org/flu-shots-on-sale/>), this is actually a saving of \$5 in the advertisements target area. The advertisements secondary aim is to make the reader aware of the other services they have on offer 'On-Site X-Ray & Lab Work', Sports Physicals' which all require no appointments 'Walk-Ins Welcome' and that they trade at extended hours 'Mon – Fri: 8am – 8pm', ' Sat – Sun: 8am – 5pm. Through the use of phrases like 'Urgent Care When You Need It' and the symbol of the 'Caduceus' (Prikash, J. 2015: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4439707/>) the writer creates a feeling of security and assurance so that even in the event of an emergency you would know where to go. With the use of capital letters for most words through out the advertisement, it helps to give emphasis to those words 'Keep the Whole Family Healthy!', 'On-Site Prescriptions' and using exclamation marks the writer creates a sense of urgency. The writer further uses the words 'risk' and 'goal' which creates a tone of seriousness and focus.

Whilst you may argue that the flu vaccine is not a necessity, it should be noted that statistics show on the CDC web page that for the US the mortality rate is number of deaths per 100, 000 population 1:4 during the flu season (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. May 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/flu.htm>). Using these statistics as a back drop the advertisement positions itself well in creating an urgency to avoid death or illness to you or the rest of your family through the use of the sentence 'When one family member is sick, the whole family is at risk'. I contend that the use of words such as 'Urgent' and 'our goal' the writer tries to elicit an emotional response from the reader 'such language is intentionally used to stimulate strong emotional reactions that manipulate the readers response' (Yokohoma International School. The Learning Hub. 2014. <http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/schneerw/files/2014/08/Glossaryofpersuasivetechiniques-vhmcqd.pdf>)

Looking at the syntax structure of the advertisement, I would argue that the writer has used simple language, with short sentences to ensure that the advertisement can be read quickly. The use of bullets to advertise their other services also makes it easy for reading and memory short and to the point. The use of the 'ampersand' symbol (English Oxford Living Dictionaries. n.d. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/origin-of-ampersand>), '&' in 'Flu Shots & Travels Vaccines', 'On-Site X-Ray & Lab Work' further making the tone of the text very laid back. The writer starts off the advert with big bold letters 'Flu Shots Now Available!' and moves on to an even bigger and bolder font size with 'Keep the whole Family Healthy!', from here on the writing gets smaller, this shows the level of importance

and emphasis that is placed on each area. The words 'SPECIAL OFFER' are written in capital letters for added emphasis. Noticeably, the writer has also written their business name 'Doctors Express' and 'Urgent Care When You need It' in a medium size font but in a different colour. This allows it to stand out from the rest of the wording. Through the use of the telephone number '303-220-9168' and their web page address '[www.DoctorsExpress.com](http://www.DoctorsExpress.com)' they have managed to extend themselves and their service, so that if one is not available there is always another avenue to contact them or request more information. The writer has made the advert sound very inclusive, which 'creates a sense of responsibility' (Saylor. 2014. <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/K12ELA7-7.2.2-PersuasiveTechniquesHandout-BY-SA1.pdf>) in the use of words such as 'our' and 'you', including the fact that you can be covered 'whether you're at school, at home or at work' The use of 'When one family member is sick, the whole family is at risk' is a generalised statement. This 'appeals to our general sense of what is true' and allows the writer to sound 'authoritative' (Yokohoma International School, The Learning Hub. 2014. <http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/schneerw/files/2014/08/Glossaryofpersuasivetechiniques-vhmcqd.pdf>) The writer is relying on its emotional appeal through the fear of falling sick to also ensure that they reach their target audience 'When one family member is sick, the whole family is at risk'.

In conclusion I would argue that through the use of all these elements of language its devices and visuals, the writer has successfully persuaded the reader to buy their product as a matter of urgency.

## Resources

*Centres for Disease Control and Prevention*. May 2017. Viewed 4 August 2017 from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/flu.htm>.

*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*. n.d. Viewed 7 August 2017 from: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/origin-of-ampersand>

Levey, D. Ndlangamandla, C. Donaldson, E. Makoe, P. van Niekerk, *et al.* 2013. *Only Study Guide for ENG2602. Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style and Poetics*. Pretoria. University of South Africa. Pages 18-30.

*National Centre for Policy Analysis*. Gorman, L. December 2010. Viewed 4 August 2017 from [NCPA. 2010. "Flu Shots on Sale." http://healthblog.ncpa.org/flu-shots-on-sale](http://healthblog.ncpa.org/flu-shots-on-sale)

*Saylor*. 2014. Viewed 6 August 2017 from <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/K12ELA7-7.2.2-PersuasiveTechniquesHandout-BY-SA1.pdf>

*US National Library of Medicine*: Prakash, M. Johnny, J. 2016. Viewed 6 August 2017 from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4439707/>

*Yokohoma International School, The Learning Hub*. 2014. Viewed 7 August 2017 from: <http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/schneerw/files/2014/08/Glossaryofpersuasivetechiniques-vhmcqd.pdf>





