



VNU Journal of Foreign Studies

Journal homepage: <https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/>



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE: PRAGMATIC IMPLICATURE IN APPLE IPHONE'S SLOGANS

Pham Thi Thu Hien*

Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, No. 32 Nguyen Van Linh Street, Xuan Hoa Ward, Phu Tho Province, Vietnam

Received 16 July 2025

Revised 18 January 2026; Accepted 19 June 2026

Abstract: This study explored the use of implicature in English - language slogans to promote Apple's iPhone over the period from 2017 to 2023. The study aimed to identify the linguistic forms used in these slogans, analyze the types of implicatures conveyed and how the brand used implicature in its slogans. A qualitative, descriptive approach was employed in the light of Yule's (1996) pragmatic framework and Warriner's (1982) taxonomy of linguistic forms to analyze 16 slogans. The findings indicated that the slogans were primarily in the form of noun phrases, declarative sentences, and imperatives, each contributing to distinct pragmatic effects. In fact, Apple regularly made use of conventional implicatures to suggest elegance and innovation. The study enhances the understanding of how language, especially implicatures, functions as a persuasive tool in advertising and offers implications for linguistics, education, marketing, and brand communication.

Keywords: Apple iPhone's slogans, pragmatics, implicatures, linguistic forms, advertising language

* Corresponding author.

Email address: phamthithuhien@hpu2.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5575>

NHIỀU HƠN NHỮNG GÌ BẠN THẤY: HÀM Ý NGỮ DỤNG TRONG CÁC KHẨU HIỆU QUẢNG CÁO ĐIỆN THOẠI IPHONE CỦA APPLE

Phạm Thị Thu Hiền

Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội 2, Số 32 Nguyễn Văn Linh, Phường Xuân Hòa, Phú Thọ, Việt Nam

Nhận bài ngày 16 tháng 7 năm 2025

Chỉnh sửa ngày 18 tháng 01 năm 2026; Chấp nhận đăng ngày 19 tháng 6 năm 2026

Tóm tắt: Bài viết này nghiên cứu việc sử dụng hàm ý trong các khẩu hiệu tiếng Anh nhằm quảng bá điện thoại iPhone của Apple trong giai đoạn từ năm 2017 đến năm 2023. Mục tiêu của nghiên cứu là xác định các hình thức ngôn ngữ được sử dụng trong các khẩu hiệu, phân tích các loại hàm ý được truyền tải và cách thương hiệu vận dụng hàm ý trong thông điệp quảng cáo. Phương pháp định tính mang tính mô tả được áp dụng dựa trên khung ngữ dụng học của Yule (1996) và hệ thống phân loại hình thức ngôn ngữ của Warriner (1982) để phân tích 16 khẩu hiệu. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng các khẩu hiệu chủ yếu ở dạng cụm danh từ, câu trần thuật và câu mệnh lệnh, mỗi dạng đều tạo ra những hiệu ứng ngữ dụng riêng biệt. Thực tế, Apple thường xuyên sử dụng các hàm ý quy ước để gợi lên sự tinh tế và đổi mới. Nghiên cứu góp phần làm rõ cách ngôn ngữ, đặc biệt là hàm ý, hoạt động như một công cụ thuyết phục trong quảng cáo và đưa ra những gợi ý hữu ích cho các lĩnh vực ngôn ngữ học, giáo dục, marketing và truyền thông thương hiệu.

Từ khóa: khẩu hiệu quảng cáo iPhone, ngữ dụng học, hàm ý, hình thức ngôn ngữ, ngôn ngữ quảng cáo

1. Introduction

The incorporation of visual factors in advertising has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in growingly competitive industries like the smartphone market. One of the main tools employed by brands to build and reinforce their image is the slogan - a short, memorable phrase that encapsulates the brand's core values, identity, and vision. Slogans play an important role in creating and reinforcing brand identity by communicating key brand associations in a concise and memorable form (Kohli et al., 2007). In this way, slogans serve three purposes: aiding recall, connecting the product to the brand, and conveying key sales messages. These short, memorable phrases not only convey the core values of the brand but also play as a sign of technological innovation. Using implicatures in slogans can communicate deeper and more subtle messages, influencing consumer perceptions and shaping their understanding of the brand (Cook, 2001; Goddard, 2002). As a result, slogans become a powerful means for brand recognition and shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors. One of the leading brands in the smartphone industry is Apple, which has adopted distinct marketing strategies to establish and maintain strong brand images. Apple's "Think Different" slogan reflects a brand philosophy focused on innovation, individuality, and creativity that has helped the brand cultivate a loyal premium consumer base (Nguyen, 2021).

The motivation for this research topic stemmed from a deep interest in understanding how language, especially in the form of slogans, acts as both a surface recognition tool and a subtle means of showing underlying ideological and emotional messages about brands, devoting to brand differentiation and consumer engagement (Myers, 1994; Leech, 1996).

Additionally, this research paper aimed to contribute to the broader field of marketing and linguistics by examining how implicit communication shapes brand perceptions and consumer decision-making. The findings provided practical implications for marketers and advertisers in creating persuasive slogans in harmony with brand identity and consumer expectations. The topic also contributed to research in education and teaching content such as pragmatics and applied linguistics. Furthermore, from a linguistic perspective, slogans in advertising are a typical example of implicit language, where the meaning is not expressed directly through words but also contains indirect messages in a subtle and strategic way.

This study aimed to analyze the linguistic structure of 16 selected slogans of Apple over 7 years to illuminate their hidden meanings, and showcase how the brand uses a pragmatic approach to boost its identity and market position. The research paper contributed to clarifying how language is flexibly used and has an impact on consumer perception and behavior, thereby it tried to find out answers for the following research questions:

1. *What linguistic forms are used in smartphone slogans?*
2. *What are the implicature meanings conveyed in smartphone slogans?*

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. An Overview of Pragmatics

The current paper relied on the pragmatic aspect of analyzing the English slogans of mobile phone companies. There are several definitions of linguistics related to pragmatics.

Morris (1938) argued that pragmatics was the study of the relationship between signs and their decoders. Following this view, Levinson (1983) defined pragmatics as the study of the ability to use language to link utterances to appropriate contexts, thereby emphasizing the role of the situation in communication. In the same year, Leech (1983) described pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to utterances, and then he added that this field was concerned with the relationship between speakers and hearers. In addition, Thomas (1995) distinguished two types of meaning in pragmatics, including utterance meaning and utterance force meaning. The way listeners understand the content of a conversation depends closely on the context of the utterance.

According to Yule (1996), there are four aspects of pragmatics definition: (1) *Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning*. The study is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader); (2) *Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning*. This study involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context influences what is said; (3) *Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said*. This type of study explores how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated; (4) *Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance*. This aspect relates to how close or distant the listener is, speakers determine how much needs to be said.

Crystal (2008) extended this view by viewing pragmatics as the study of the factors that influence language choices in social interactions and the impact of these choices on others. Mey (2001) approved this view by asserting that pragmatics was associated with the conditions of language use determined by social context. Together, these definitions emphasized the essential role of pragmatics in understanding how meaning is shaped by linguistic, social, and situational elements.

From the above definitions, it can be understood that pragmatics is a study related to the meaning of an utterance under different contexts.

2.2. Definitions of Implicature

Grice (1975) first introduced implicature as part of Cooperative Principle, defining it as what the speaker communicates beyond what is explicitly stated. For example, if someone asks, “Did you like the movie?” and the answer is, “Oh, the popcorn was good,” the listener infers that the speaker did not like the movie, even though this was not explicitly stated. Levinson (1983) referred to implicature as meanings that arose not from the ordinary meanings of words but from the principles of language use. He emphasized that implicature was more related to how language was used in interaction than to the fixed meanings of individual words.

Similarly, Horn (2006) stressed that implicature was separate from the meaning of the sentence and was inferred by the hearer in the context. This suggests that communication relies not only on what is said but also on what is understood through context and shared reasoning. Yule (1996, p. 40) defined implicature as an additional communicated meaning understood through shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. This means that implicature is often dependent on cultural and situational context, as the speaker assumes that the hearer can interpret meanings that are not stated. Grice (1983) introduced the concept of implicature in the context of communication, distinguishing between what is directly stated and implied meanings that the hearer must infer based on the “maxims” of cooperative communication.

2.2.1. Classifications of Implicature

Yule (1996) categorized implicatures into two types: conversational implicatures and conventional implicatures. Conversational implicatures appear in the communication process and are based on conversational maxims. This type is divided into generalized, particularized, and scalar implicatures. Generalized conversational implicatures are those that do not require a specific context to understand their meaning; in most situations, they are inferred. Moreover, particularized conversational implicatures rely on context to understand the meaning of the utterance. Scalar implicatures are a type of generalized implicature that involves a scale of values. Conventional implicatures do not depend on context or maxims but are derived from the conventional meanings of specific words or structures. Moreover, these implicatures are constant in any context.

According to Grice (1975), implicature is divided into two types in which conversational implicature occurs when the speaker implies something indirectly and the hearer infers the meaning based on the context. This type follows Grice’s Cooperative Principle, which consists of four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. For example, if someone asks, “Have you finished your homework?” and the answer is, “I watched Netflix all night,” the implication is that the person did not finish the homework. This meaning is not explicitly stated but is inferred based on the assumption that people provide relevant answers. Conversational implicature can be generalized, where the implied meaning is clear without additional context, or particularized, where the meaning depends on the specific situation. Unlike conversational implicatures, conventional implicatures do not rely on context or cooperative rules but are instead attached to specific words or phrases. These implicatures remain constant regardless of the situation. Words such as “but”, “even”, “yet”, and “therefore” often carry conventional implicatures. For example, in the sentence “She is poor but happy”, the word “but” implies a contrast, suggesting that poverty and happiness are unexpected together. Similarly, the phrase “He has not arrived yet” implies that he is expected to arrive soon. These meanings are understood automatically by language speakers and do not depend on situational context or inference.

2.2.2. Linguistic Forms

Warriner (1982) classified linguistic forms into three main structural levels: phrases, clauses, and sentences. When analyzing English slogans (in this case, slogans for electronic products), the researcher considered how each slogan fits into one of these structural types. Here is a brief explanation of each form as commonly understood in Warriner's approach:

Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that functions as a single element of a sentence (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) but does not contain both a subject and a predicate. In slogans, phrases can be short, catchy phrases that convey a memorable message, such as "Connecting people" or "Simply the best."

Table 1

Kind of Phrases, Definitions, and Examples

Types of phrases	Definitions	Examples
Noun Phrase	A group of words that functions as a noun	"The beautiful sunset over the ocean"
Verb Phrase	Consists of the main verb and auxiliary verb or modifier.	"Making new friends"
Prepositional Phrase	Phrases that begin with prepositions and add meaning to sentences	"On the table"
Infinitive Phrase	Verb phrases starting with "to" + infinitive.	"To learn new skills is important." (Act as the subject in a sentence)
Adjective Phrase	An adjective - centered phrase, which may be accompanied by a modifying adverb or prepositional phrase.	"Very intelligent"
Adverb Phrase	A group of words centered on an adverb, modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.	"Quickly"
Gerund Phrase	Start with a verb ending in "-ing", which acts as a noun in a sentence.	"Swimming in the ocean is fun."
Participial Phrase	Begin with a present participle (-ing) or past participle (-ed), which acts as an adjective modifying the noun.	"The book written by Shakespeare is famous." ("written by Shakespeare" modifies "the book")

Clause

A clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a predicate. Clauses can be independent (can stand alone as a complete sentence) or dependent (require additional information to form a complete idea). Some slogans can be structured as clauses that convey a specific action or statement, for example, "We inspire innovation", which has a subject ("We") and a verb ("Inspire").

Table 1

Kind of Clauses, Definitions, and Examples

Type of clauses	Definitions	Examples
Independent Clause	Can stand alone as a complete sentence	"She enjoys reading books."
Dependent Clause	Cannot stand alone, needs a main clause to complete the meaning.	"Because he was tired, he went to bed early." ("Because he was tired" is a dependent clause).

Sentence

A sentence is a larger grammatical unit that usually contains at least one independent clause and expresses a complete thought. In the context of a slogan, a sentence can be used for a more direct statement or command, such as "Experience the future today". Although many slogans are short, they can still form complete sentences if they have a subject and a predicate that stand alone.

Table 3

Classification of Sentences

Classification of Sentences	Definitions	Examples
Declarative Sentence	Used to provide information or express opinions.	"She enjoys reading books."
Interrogative Sentence	A sentence used to ask for information or confirm something.	"Where are you going?"
Imperative Sentence	Used to give orders, requests, instructions or advice.	"Please be quiet."
Exclamatory Sentence	Used to express strong emotions such as surprise, joy, anger, and disappointment.	"What a nice dress!"

Although Warriner (1982) is primarily known as a grammar and composition reference rather than a specialized framework in pragmatics or advertising discourse, its classification of grammatical structures provides a useful descriptive basis for identifying linguistic forms in slogans. In this study, Warriner's framework was not employed as a pragmatic theory but as a structural tool for categorizing basic grammatical units, such as phrases and sentence types, which constitute the formal surface of slogans.

Specifically, Warriner's taxonomy was applied to classify slogans into grammatical categories including noun phrases, adjective phrases, declarative sentences, imperative sentences, and other structural patterns. This structural classification served as a preliminary analytical step, enabling the systematic identification of linguistic forms before their pragmatic interpretation. By distinguishing grammatical forms at the syntactic level, the study established a clear foundation for subsequent analysis of implicatures within Yule's (1996) pragmatic framework.

Among the prominent scholars, Randolph Quirk and his co-authors, in their *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985), proposed a systematic, comprehensive, and functionally oriented classification of linguistic forms. According to Quirk et al. (1985), linguistic forms are defined as observable linguistic units that possess distinct structural features and contribute to the construction of meaning in a sentence or utterance. These forms range from individual word classes to more complex syntactic units such as phrases, clauses, and sentence patterns. Each form serves a specific grammatical function and operates within a hierarchical structure.

Word classes (Part of speech)

Quirk et al. (1985) retained the traditional classification with eight main groups: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. However, the authors also provided a more detailed analysis of the morphology and syntactic function of each word class.

Table 4*Kind of Word, Definitions and Examples*

Types of words	Definitions	Examples
Nouns	Denote abstract entities or concepts	"Table, chair"
Pronouns	Replace nouns	"He, she"
Verbs	Denote actions, states, or events	"Run"
Adjectives	Modify nouns	"Excited"
Adverbs	Modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs	"Very"
Prepositions	Denote temporal, spatial, or logical relationships.	"on"
Conjunctions	Connect words, phrases, or clauses.	"and"
Interjections	Express emotions or reactions	"oh"

Phrases

Phrases are groups of words arranged around a central element (the main word) and functioning as individual units in a sentence. Quirk and his colleagues identified five main types of phrases:

Table 5*Kind of Phrases, Definitions and Examples*

Types of phrases	Definitions	Examples
Noun Phrase	A noun phrase has a noun or pronoun as its head, often accompanied by determiners, modifiers, or complements.	"The beautiful garden"
Verb Phrase	A verb phrase has a verb as its head and may include auxiliary verbs, objects, or complements.	"Has been running"
Adjective Phrase	An adjective phrase centers around an adjective, possibly modified by adverbs or complemented by clauses.	"Very high"
Adverbs Phrase	An adverb phrase is built around an adverb and may include other modifying adverbs.	"Quite fast"
Prepositional Phrase	A prepositional phrase starts with a preposition followed by a noun phrase (its object).	"In the morning"

Clauses

A clause is a grammatical unit consisting of a subject and a predicate.

Table 6*Kind of clauses, Definitions and Examples*

Types of clauses	Definitions	Examples
Main (Independent) Clauses	Can stand alone as complete sentences	"She is reading."
Subordinate (Dependent) Clauses	Function as parts of a sentence	"because she was tired"
Noun Clauses	Serve as noun equivalents	"What you said surprised me."
Relative Clauses	Modify nouns	"The man who called me is a teacher."
Adverbial Clauses	Modify verbs or the entire sentence	"If it rains, we'll cancel the trip."

Sentence patterns

An additional and special feature of Quirk's grammar is the classification of sentence

patterns which describe the possible structures of clauses in English. Each sentence pattern defines the organization of information and the role of each syntactic element, thereby helping learners understand how form combines with function to create complete meaning.

Table 7

Kind of Sentence Patterns, Definitions and Examples

Types of sentence patterns	Definitions	Examples
SV (Subject + Verb)	This is the simplest sentence pattern, where the verb is intransitive, and no further element is needed to complete the clause.	"Birds fly."
SVO (Subject + Verb + Object)	The verb here is transitive, requiring a direct object to complete the meaning.	"She writes poems."
SVC (Subject + Verb + Complement)	A linking verb connects the subject to a subject complement, which gives more information about the subject.	"They are happy."
SVA (Subject + Verb + Adverbial)	This pattern includes an adverbial that specifies place, time, or manner. The verb is typically intransitive.	"He is at work."
SVOO (Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object)	The verb takes two objects: an indirect object (usually a person) and a direct object (usually a thing).	"She gave me a book."
SVOC (Subject + Verb + Object + Complement)	The object is followed by an object complement that provides additional information or a new identity for the object.	"They elected him president."
SVOA (Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial)	This pattern ends with an adverbial that describes the circumstances of the action performed on the object.	"She put the keys on the table."

2.3. Theories of Advertising and Slogan

2.3.1. An Overview of Advertising

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018, p. 454), advertising is defined as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor". This definition highlights the key aspects of advertising, such as its paid nature, non-personal communication, and the presence of a sponsor who conveys the message to a wide audience.

Similarly, Belch and Belch (2008) described advertising as "any form of communication designed to persuade or influence consumers to take a specific action, usually the purchase of a product or support of a cause". This perspective emphasizes the persuasive function of advertising, suggesting that it is not just about informing people but also shaping consumer behavior and decision-making.

The importance of advertising goes beyond selling products; it plays a vital role in positioning brands, attracting customers, and competing in the marketplace. According to Arens (2011), advertising serves as a tool for businesses to communicate value propositions, differentiate their products, and build long-term relationships with consumers. This suggests that advertising is not just about transactions but also about creating brand loyalty and emotional connections with customers.

In addition, advertising has social and cultural implications. According to Shimp and

Andrews (2013), advertising can shape public perceptions, influence lifestyle trends, and reflect social values. For example, advertising often uses emotional appeals, celebrity endorsements, and storytelling techniques to create a lasting impact on the audience.

2.3.2. Slogan

A slogan is a short, memorable phrase used in marketing and branding to convey messages, values, or benefits of a company's products. According to Dass et al. (2014), slogans are short, memorable phrases used in advertisements to help shape brand identity and positioning. This definition emphasizes the brevity, memorability, and persuasive power of slogans, designed to attract audiences and strengthen brand recognition.

Likewise, Kohli et al. (2007) defined a slogan as "a verbal logo that contributes to brand recognition and recall by systematically associating a specific message with a company or product." This emphasizes the role of slogans in branding, as they enhance brand recall and differentiation in competitive markets. For example, Nike's "Just Do It" slogan is instantly recognizable and conveys motivation and determination, consistent with the brand's identity.

The meaning of a slogan goes beyond words; it is a marketing tool that influences consumers' perceptions and decision-making. As Tagg (2012) explained that effective slogans used rhetorical devices such as alliteration, rhyme, and metaphor to make them more appealing and compelling. Furthermore, they often reflected cultural and emotional appeal, making them suitable for specific target audiences.

In advertising, slogans play an important role in reinforcing the brand message and creating an emotional connection with consumers. For example, McDonald's slogan "I'm Lovin' It" not only promotes the brand but also elicits a positive emotional response associated with pleasure and satisfaction. This emotional branding strategy makes slogans a powerful element of marketing campaigns.

2.3.3. An Overview of Apple Inc.

Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology corporation, founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne, and headquartered in Cupertino, California. The corporation was originally named Apple Computer, Inc., before officially changing its name to Apple Inc. in early 2007. Starting out as a computer company, Apple has grown into one of the leading names in the global technology industry. Known for its innovation and excellent design, Apple is currently at the top of the list of the largest technology corporations in the world.

Apple has built a unique marketing strategy, focusing on providing value instead of competing on price. The company focuses on creating differentiation by improving product quality, ensuring that each product not only meets but exceeds customer expectations. Apple also focuses on the real-life experience of users, organizing free product experience programs to collect feedback and improve products. Apple rarely applies discount programs, instead emphasizing the special value of the product, helping the brand maintain a luxurious and classy image. In addition, Apple invests heavily in retail stores (Apple Stores) to provide personalized experiences and direct support services.

Apple targets technology-loving, creative, and middle-to-upper-class customers, especially those who consider Apple products a lifestyle symbol. The company's goal is not only to sell devices but also to build a loyal user community that values innovation and quality. With a commitment to security, sustainable design, and reducing environmental impact (such

as using recycled materials), Apple continues to maintain its leading position, competing strongly with rivals such as Samsung in the global technology race.

Apple iPhone's slogans are notable for their use of minimal yet impactful language, reflecting key linguistic features such as brevity, metaphor, emotional appeal, and stylistic creativity. Rather than explicitly describing technical specifications, Apple often relies on implicature to suggest indirect meaning, consistent with Grice's Cooperative Principle.

2.3.4. Cultural Influences on Smartphone Brands

Apple is heavily influenced by Western individualistic culture, especially in the US, where consumers value uniqueness, class, and technological innovation. In addition, Apple advocates building a global brand with core values of innovation, simplicity, and creativity, but with gentle adjustments to suit different cultures. Apple conveys brand values through images, advertising content, and flexible user experiences according to local cultures. Apple does not rely too much on celebrities or temporary trends, but aims to build a consistent, globally iconic brand identity. This adaptation helps Apple maintain a global image while remaining relevant to diverse cultural values, thereby strengthening the loyalty of high-end customers.

3. Methodology

The research followed a qualitative linguistic analysis, grounded in pragmatics. The data sources in qualitative research included sentences or utterances, actions, written texts, images, and statistics. The selection of 16 Apple iPhone slogans from 2017 to 2023 was guided by purposive sampling. This period was chosen because it represented a significant phase of technological innovation and brand repositioning in Apple's smartphone development, marked by major product launches such as the iPhone X, the introduction of 5G technology, and the transition to new materials and design concepts. The slogans were collected from their official websites on Google based on three criteria: (1) official use in Apple's global marketing campaigns, (2) representativeness of different iPhone models, and (3) linguistic distinctiveness in terms of form and meaning. These criteria ensured that the data set reflected both continuity and variation in Apple's slogan strategies, making it suitable for pragmatic and stylistic analysis.

Although the corpus of 16 slogans was relatively limited, it was selected through purposive sampling to ensure representativeness across different product generations and marketing phases. Nevertheless, the study acknowledged that pragmatic interpretation, particularly implicature analysis, involved a degree of subjectivity, as meanings are inferred rather than explicitly stated. While the application of established theoretical frameworks helps constrain interpretive bias, the findings should be understood as analytically grounded rather than exhaustive. Recognizing these limitations contributed to methodological transparency and suggests directions for future research.

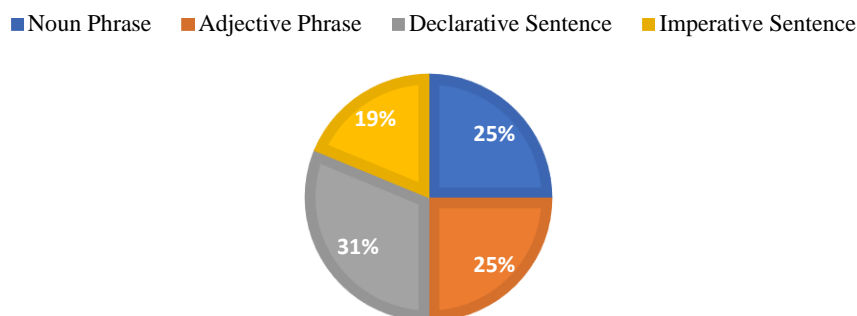
In addition, the qualitative research method was suitable for the research topic because it allowed the researcher to explore the depth of language, hidden meanings, and how messages were conveyed in specific cultural and social contexts. Therefore, the researcher shed light on the hidden meanings and strategies used in the slogans.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Linguistic Forms in Smartphone Slogans

Figure 1

Occurrence of Linguistic Forms Used by Apple's Slogans



Based on Warriner's theory (1982), slogans are classified according to the following forms: nouns, adjectives, imperatives, declaratives, etc.

Apple (iPhone) used a variety of forms: nouns (25%), adjectives (25%), declaratives (31.25%), and imperatives (18.75%). The language tended to be minimalist and sophisticated, emphasizing luxury and symbolism. A linguistic analysis of Apple iPhone's slogans from 2017 to 2023, as depicted in Figure 1, revealed a strategic distribution of linguistic forms: noun phrases (25%), imperatives (19%), adjective phrases (25%), and declaratives (31%).

In 2017, Apple launched the iPhone 8 and 8 Plus with the slogan "A New Generation of iPhone" (noun phrase), signaling incremental improvements in design and performance, such as a glass back and wireless charging. The phrase positioned the iPhone as a progressive evolution, appealing to loyal customers seeking reliability. That same year, the iPhone X's "Say hello to the future" (imperative sentence) marked a bold shift with the introduction of Face ID and the removal of the home button. The command invited consumers to embrace a transformational vision, mirroring the futuristic narrative of Apple's 10th anniversary iPhone campaign.

In 2018, the iPhone XR's "Brilliant. In every way" (adjective phrase) targeted a broader audience with its vibrant colors and affordable price point. The adjective phrase, combined with a prepositional modifier, conveyed universal appeal and versatility, fitting the campaign's focus on inclusivity in a time of smartphone saturation that demanded differentiation. Meanwhile, the iPhone XS and XS Max's "Welcome to the big screens" (command) highlighted the larger screens, inviting consumers to experience immersion. This command reflected the era's trend toward larger screens. These early slogans showed that Apple balanced descriptive noun phrases to maintain continuity and imperatives to engage strongly, reflecting a dual strategy to retain loyalists while attracting new users.

The 2019 iPhone 11's "Just the right amount of everything" (noun phrase) positioned it as a balanced option with improved camera and performance at a competitive price. The simplicity of the noun phrase reassured consumers looking for value without complexity. In contrast, the iPhone 11 Pro and Pro Max's "And then there was Pro" (declarative sentence) introduced a premium tier with an exclusive story. The declarative form evoked a narrative tone, fitting with the campaign's focus on pro features like a triple-camera system, targeting creators amid the rise of content creation platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

In 2020, the iPhone SE (2nd generation)'s "Lots to love. Less to spend" (declarative sentences) emphasized affordability during a global pandemic, as budget-conscious consumers prioritized value. The rhythmic quality of this discrete noun phrase made it memorable. The iPhone 12's "Blast past" introduced 5G connectivity with a sense of speed and urgency, reflecting the campaign's focus on next-generation networks as telecoms rolled out 5G infrastructure. The iPhone 12 Pro and Pro Max's "It's a leap year" (declarative sentence) highlighted the advancements in LiDAR and the A14 Bionic. These slogans showed Apple adapting to the economic and technological landscape, using noun phrases to create associations and imperatives/declarations to create cutting-edge appeal.

The 2021 iPhone 13's "Your new superpower" (noun phrase) framed its movie mode and battery life as empowering tools, resonating with consumers escaping pandemic restrictions and seeking self-expression. The possessive tone of this noun phrase ("Your") fostered intimacy, by emphasizing personal initiative. The iPhone 13 Pro and Pro Max's "Oh. So. Pro" (adjective phrase) used a fragmented conversational structure to highlight the ProMotion display and macro photography. Its exclamatory tone captured the excitement, matching the campaign's focus on professional creativity during the boom in short - form video content. The 2022 iPhone SE (3rd generation)'s "Love the power. Love the price" (imperative) reiterated affordability with A15 Bionic performance, using parallel imperatives to appeal to consumers who value value in an inflationary economy.

The iPhone 14's "Big and Bigger" (adjective) emphasized the larger screen and new Plus models, using a concise comparative structure to stand out in a crowded market. Its simplicity was highlighted by focusing on tangible benefits. The iPhone 14 Pro and Pro Max's "Pro. Beyond" (adjective) introduced Dynamic Island and a 48MP camera in a minimalist, aspirational tone. This fragmented structure reflected Apple's confidence in its premium positioning in a time of technological maturity when incremental improvements required bold framing to maintain consumer interest.

In 2023, the iPhone 15's "Newphoria" (noun) created a term that combines "new" and "euphoria", capturing the excitement of adopting USB-C and refined design. The emotional resonance of this noun fit well with a campaign targeting a younger audience that embraces a digital lifestyle. "Titanium. So strong. So light. So Pro" (declarative) for the iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Max highlighted the titanium frame with a rhythmic, descriptive structure. It focused on material innovation, reflecting the campaign's emphasis on durability and premium aesthetics at a time when consumers value longevity amid economic concerns.

The 31% proportion of declarative sentences reflected Apple's strategy of asserting authority through storytelling, especially in 2019–2020, when economic and technological changes required confident messaging. Noun phrases (25%), like "Newphoria", ensured brand consistency and cultural relevance, growing with trends like emotional marketing in 2023. Adjective phrases (25%), peaking in 2018–2022, addressed visual and experiential needs, while imperatives (19%), less frequently, drove action during disruptions like 5G adoption. Apple's linguistic balance - utilizing declarative sentences to power stories, noun phrases and adjectives to remember, and imperatives to engage - demonstrated its ability to match consumer expectations and outperform competitors to maintain market dominance through strategic messaging. Over time, Apple's slogans balanced continuity with innovation, maintaining its market dominance by strategically aligning its language with consumer expectations and industry dynamics.

4.2. Implicatures

Based on Yule's (1996) theory, the types of implicatures analyzed included: conventional, generalized, particularized, and scalar.

Apple made extensive use of particularized and scalar implicatures, frequently combining metaphorical expressions with relatively low- and mid-frequency lexical items to construct an image of elegance and technological sophistication. Corpus analysis of 16 Apple iPhone slogans showed that 12 slogans (75%) contained particularized implicatures, while 9 slogans (56.25%) exhibited scalar implicatures. Metaphorical language appeared in 10 slogans (62.5%), indicating that figurative meaning was a central persuasive strategy. Moreover, ambiguity was a prominent feature of Apple's slogans. Approximately 11 out of 16 slogans (68.75%) provided minimal explicit information or employed vague and stylistically marked expressions, suggesting deliberate violations of the conversational maxims of Quantity and Manner.

Of 68 content words in the corpus, 47.1% were high-frequency items, whereas 35.3% and 17.6% belonged to mid- and low-frequency categories respectively. The relatively high proportion of mid- and low-frequency lexical items suggested a strategic lexical choice aimed at evoking refinement and premium brand identity. Together, these findings demonstrated that Apple's slogan discourse relied not only on creativity but also on systematic pragmatic and lexical strategies.

2017: iPhone 8/8 Plus – "A new generation of iPhone" & iPhone X – "Say hello to the future"

In 2017, Apple celebrated the 10th anniversary of the iPhone, marking a blend of legacy and innovation. The slogan "A new generation of iPhone" was a generalized implicature, implying that the iPhone 8/8 Plus significantly improved on the iPhone 7/7 Plus in terms of design and performance, without mentioning details such as wireless charging or a new chip. This violated the Quantity maxim, as it did not offer enough detail, prompting consumers to rely on the brand image and Apple's advertising. This slogan reflected Apple's marketing philosophy: simplicity and elegance, which aligned with the Western culture that values subtlety and simplicity in communication. The slogan "Say hello to the future" for the iPhone X, in contrast, conveyed a particularized implicature, indicating revolutionary changes like Face ID and OLED displays. However, it was somewhat vague and violated the Manner maxim, as the message was not immediately clear. This slogan carried strong symbolic meaning, calling users to join a technological revolution, a concept that resonated particularly well with Western markets, where exploring and embracing new technology has always been a cultural priority.

2018: iPhone XR – "Brilliant. In every way." & iPhone XS/XS Max – "Welcome to the big screens."

In 2018, Apple expanded its lineup with the more affordable iPhone XR and the premium iPhone XS/XS Max. The slogan "Brilliant. In every way." for the iPhone XR featured a generalized implicature, highlighting overall excellence without diving into specific features like the A12 chip or color options. Apple's marketing campaign focused on the large screen experience, targeting customers who love watching videos and playing games. This was a violation of the Quantity maxim, as it provided insufficient information, but was in line with Apple's strategy, where simplicity and quality were key selling points. Meanwhile, the slogan "Welcome to the big screens" for the iPhone XS/XS Max carried a scalar implicature, emphasizing the larger screens as a standout feature. The message was straightforward and did

not violate the conversational maxims, effectively appealing to consumers who wanted an immersive entertainment or productivity experience. It was suitable well with Western culture, where mobile content consumption, including movies, games, and work, was becoming increasingly popular.

2019: iPhone 11 – "Just the right amount of everything." & iPhone 11 Pro/Pro Max – "And then there was Pro."

In 2019, Apple continued its segmentation strategy with the iPhone 11 for the mass market and the iPhone 11 Pro/Pro Max for premium users. The iPhone 11, with its dual camera, A13 Bionic chip, long battery life, and youthful colors, was positioned as the ideal product for the majority of users. The slogan "Just the right amount of everything" for the iPhone 11 conveyed a generalized implicature, suggesting a perfect balance between features and value without providing specifics. This violated the Quantity maxim, but was consistent with Apple's minimalist approach, which aligned with Western cultural values of simplicity and efficiency in technology. On the other hand, the slogan "And then there was Pro" for the iPhone 11 Pro/Pro Max featured a particularized implicature, asserting superior features compared to regular models. It lacked specific details and could be seen as violating the Manner maxim, prompting consumers to seek more information through events or Apple ads, although it effectively targeted the premium market, where consumers were not just purchasing a phone but also a symbol of success and creativity. This approach resonated well with Western consumers, where professional success and individual achievement were highly valued.

2020: iPhone SE 2 – "Lots to love. Less to spend." & iPhone 12 – "Blast past." & iPhone 12 Pro/Pro Max – "It's a leap year."

In 2020, amidst the COVID - 19 pandemic, Apple introduced new strategies to meet consumer needs. The slogan "Lots to love. Less to spend." for the iPhone SE 2 carried a scalar implicature, indicating a balance between value and performance without getting into specifics. This was a notable shift in Apple's strategy as they sought to appeal to more price - conscious markets, especially in developing countries like India and Vietnam. The slogan adhered to the Quantity maxim, highlighting affordability and quality. The slogan "Blast past" for the iPhone 12 conveyed a particularized implicature, emphasizing speed and innovation, particularly with 5G and the A14 chip. However, it was somewhat vague and could be seen as violating the Manner maxim, as "Blast past" was not entirely clear on how the technology outperformed others. This was well-suited to Western culture, where innovation and speed were highly valued, especially in advanced tech markets. For the iPhone 12 Pro, the slogan "It's a leap year" carried a particularized implicature, signaling a major leap in the Pro model's performance and design. However, the slogan was vague and violated the Manner maxim, leaving consumers to search for more information. Nonetheless, it fit Apple's strategy of appealing to a premium market, particularly professionals and creatives, who valued high-end quality and design. This fit with the Western preference for premium, sophisticated products.

2021: iPhone 13 – "Your new superpower." & iPhone 13 Pro – "Oh. So. Pro."

In 2021, Apple continued to promote innovation with the iPhone 13 series. The slogan "Your new superpower" for the iPhone 13 carried a generalized implicature, suggesting strength and advanced capabilities without specifying features. However, it violated the Quantity maxim by not providing enough detail. This slogan also reflected the Western culture of empowerment, where products often symbolize individual power and success, resonating with consumers who sought to enhance their personal and professional lives with technology. The slogan "Oh. So. Pro." for the iPhone 13 Pro carried a particularized implicature, emphasizing the professional-level features of

the Pro model. However, the slogan was still somewhat vague, violating the Manner maxim. It reflected Apple's marketing strategy targeting professional users, particularly those in creative industries, where a product is not just a tool but a representation of personal achievement and expertise. This slogan fit well with Western values of professionalism and creativity.

2022: iPhone SE 3 – "Love the power. Love the price." & iPhone 14 – "Big and bigger." & iPhone 14 Pro – "Pro. Beyond."

In 2022, Apple focused on value, entertainment, and premium products. The slogan "Love the power. Love the price." for the iPhone SE 3 featured a scalar implicature, signaling a combination of value and performance. This strategy appealed to markets where consumers sought a balance between quality and cost, particularly in emerging markets like India and Vietnam. The slogan "Big and bigger" for the iPhone 14 carried a scalar implicature, focusing on the larger screen size. This appealed to the growing demand for mobile content consumption, particularly in Western and Asian markets, where mobile video streaming, gaming, and work were becoming increasingly important. The slogan "Pro. Beyond." for the iPhone 14 Pro carried a particularized implicature, indicating superior performance and design. The slogan, while effective, lacked clarity and could be seen as violating the Manner maxim. It reflected Apple's strategy to target high-end users who valued both performance and luxury, consistent with Western cultural preferences for sophistication and quality in premium products.

2023: iPhone 15 – "Newphoria." & iPhone 15 Pro – "Titanium. So strong. So light. So Pro."

For the iPhone 15, the slogan "Newphoria" combined "new" and "euphoria," offering a particularized implicature, suggesting excitement and the thrill of new technology. However, it was somewhat unclear and could violate the Manner maxim. It fit Apple's strategy of generating excitement and anticipation, especially in Western markets where new technology was always highly anticipated. The slogan "Titanium. So strong. So light. So Pro." for the iPhone 15 Pro conveyed a conventional implicature, emphasizing the durability and lightness of the titanium material. It was clear and did not violate the conversational maxims, aligning with Apple's premium image. This slogan appealed to professional users who valued both strength and lightness in their devices, appropriate for Western culture's preference for high-quality, professional products.

Apple's slogan strategy from 2017–2023 not only reflected a sophisticated use of implicature but also demonstrated the brand's flexibility in addressing global cultural demands. Apple effectively balanced technology and emotion in its messaging, appealing to a wide range of consumers across Western and emerging markets. The simplicity of Apple's slogans was central to its success, delivering messages that resonated deeply with consumers while maintaining the brand's premium image. This approach ensured Apple maintained its leadership in the global tech industry.

5. Conclusions

This study was conducted with the aim of finding out the use of implicature in smartphone slogans of Apple in the period from 2017 to 2023. By analyzing the slogans based on the theory of Warriner (1982) and Yule (1996), it answered two main research questions: "(1) What linguistic forms are used in smartphone slogans?" and "(2) What are implicature meanings conveyed in smartphone slogans?"

To answer research question 1, "What linguistic forms are used in smartphone

slogans?", the researcher analyzed and classified the linguistic forms of 16 slogans from the brand. Based on Warriner's framework (1982), the results showed that there were many linguistic forms used, the most common of which were declarative sentences, imperative sentences, noun phrases, and adjective phrases. Declarative sentences were used to assert or state qualities, helping brands create clear, authoritative messages about their products. Imperative sentences were often used to create calls to action, urging consumers to participate or purchase a product. Noun phrases, on the other hand, condensed complex ideas into short, memorable terms, in line with the minimalist trend of modern marketing. Adjective phrases were often used to describe products in a way that evoked positive emotions and appeals to consumers' feelings of quality and desirability. These forms, often brief, allowed readers and consumers to interpret the slogans in a variety of ways. The combination of these linguistic forms allowed Apple to express sophistication and minimalism.

For the second question, "What are the implicature meanings conveyed in smartphone slogans?", the implicature meaning was analyzed using Yule's pragmatic approach. The slogans expressed various implicatures, categorized into conventional, generalized, particularized, and scalar implicature. Conventional implicature was used in slogans to convey established meanings that are widely understood, such as highlighting product quality or reliability. Generalized implicature provided open-ended interpretations, making the slogans flexible and adaptable to a wide audience. Apple used generalized implicature to suggest concepts like innovation, youthfulness, and creativity, without specifying a particular user or scenario. Scalar implicature, which involves the use of gradable terms, was also present, particularly in Apple's slogans, where terms such as "better," "best," or "advanced" subtly suggested superiority over competitors.

The use of implicature in smartphone slogans was closely tied to the brand's marketing strategy, as it helped to reinforce and communicate their unique brand identity. Apple employed minimalistic language and sophisticated implicature, particularly scalar and conventional, to position itself as a premium brand associated with quality, exclusivity, and simplicity. This approach resonated with consumers who prioritize elegance, high design, and cutting-edge technology. Apple tended to use minimalist, sophisticated, and abstract language aimed at customers who prioritize minimalism and fashion.

6. Implications

These findings have important implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study enriches the understanding of linguistic forms and implicatures in advertising by demonstrating how noun phrases, adjective phrases, and imperatives serve as vehicles for conveying complex meanings in concise formats, in line with the frameworks of Warriner (1982) and Yule (1996). In addition, the study highlights the strategic use of indirection in the creation of meaning, especially in persuasive and condensed forms such as slogans.

6.1. For Education

From an educational perspective, the findings suggest several concrete applications in language teaching:

- Curriculum design: Teachers can incorporate advertising slogans into pragmatics and semantics courses to illustrate implicature, metaphor, and persuasive discourse in authentic contexts.
- Classroom activities: Students can be asked to analyse implicatures in slogans, rewrite

slogans with different pragmatic effects, or compare explicit and implicit meanings.

6.2. For Marketers and Brand Strategists

The findings provide practical guidance on how implicature can be systematically employed to improve slogan effectiveness:

- Use noun phrases to create strong brand identities;
- Use adjective phrases to evoke emotional or evaluative meanings;
- Use imperatives to prompt action and engagement;
- Employ metaphorical implicature to suggest values such as luxury, innovation, or reliability.

7. Limitations

Although the study achieved its main objectives, some limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study was limited to 16 slogans from only Apple brand from 2017 to 2023, thus limiting the generalizability to other phone brands, such as Xiaomi, Vivo, Samsung or other time frames. In addition, the study focused on Yule's pragmatics approach, which may not fully capture the cultural and contextual factors in discovering the implicature of slogans. Furthermore, the study analyzed English slogans; thus, in non-English markets, the translation or implicature may vary. Third, the study focused only on textual slogans, excluding external factors (e.g., advertising campaigns, voice-overs) that often accompany slogans and influence the perception of implicatures. These limitations suggest caution in applying the findings globally and highlight areas for further exploration.

References

- Arens, W. F., Weigold, M. F., & Arens, C. (2011). *Contemporary advertising and integrated marketing communications* (13th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL23944282M/Contemporary_advertising_and_integrated_marketing_communications
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press. https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_2271128_6/component/file_2271430/content
- Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2008). *Advertising and promotion: An integrated marketing communications perspective* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. https://openlibrary.org/works/OL2698051W/Advertising_and_promotion?edition=key%3A/books/OL32772534MLiu
- Cook, G. (2001). *The discourse of advertising* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203978153>
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (6th ed.). Blackwell Publishing. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781444302776>
- Dass, M., Kohli, C., Kumar, P., & Thomas, S. (2014). A study of the antecedents of slogan liking. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(12), 2504–2511. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.05.004>
- Goddard, A. (2002). *The language of advertising* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://books.google.com.vn/books/about/The_Language_of_Advertising.html?id=yhaoQgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Speech acts* (pp. 41–58). D. Reidel Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004368811_003
- Horn, L. R., & Ward, G. (Eds.). (2006). *The handbook of pragmatics*. Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756959>
- Kohli, C., Leuthesser, L., & Suri, R. (2007). Got slogan? Guidelines for creating effective slogans. *Business Horizons*, 50(5), 415–422. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2007.05.002>

- Leech, G. N. (1966). *English in advertising: A linguistic study of advertising in Great Britain*. Longmans. https://books.google.com.vn/books/about/English_in_Advertising.html?id=pLjzo7EZZb8C&redir_esc=y
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813313>
- Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishers. <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6793603M/Pragmatics>
- Morris, C. W. (1938). *Foundations of the theory of signs*. University of Chicago Press. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24041773M/Foundations_of_the_theory_of_signs
- Myers, G. (1994). *Words in ads*. Edward Arnold. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL1235276M/Words_in_ads
- Navee Asia. (n.d.). *An Analysis of Samsung's Marketing Strategy*. <https://www.navee.asia/kb/chien-luoc-marketing-cua-samsung/>
- Nguyen, H. (2021, October 26). *Phân tích chiến lược Marketing của Apple – “Ông lớn” ngành công nghệ*. [An analysis of Apple's marketing strategy: The tech industry giant]. MISA AMIS. <https://amis.misa.vn/28427/chien-luoc-marketing-cua-apple/>
- 7SAT. (2019, August 13). *Smartphone và chiến lược xây dựng thương hiệu bằng KOLs* [Smartphones and brand-building strategies using KOLs]. *Advertising Vietnam*. <https://advertisingvietnam.com/article/smartphone-va-chien-luoc-xay-dung-thuong-hieu-bang-kols-p12864>
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173438>
- Shimp, T. A., & Andrews, J. C. (2013). *Advertising, promotion, and other aspects of integrated marketing communications* (9th ed.). South-Western Cengage Learning. <https://www.cengage.com/c/ebook-advertising-promotion-and-other-aspects-of-integrated-marketing-communications-9e-shimp-andrews/9781285634647>
- Thomas, J. A. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Longman. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315842011>
- Warriner, J. E. (1982). *English grammar and composition*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. https://books.google.com.vn/books/about/English_Grammar_and_Composition.html?id=nDISAQAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press. https://www.academia.edu/60254109/Yule_George_Pragmatics

APPENDIX

List of Apple iPhone's Slogans

1. iPhone 8 and 8 Plus (2017): "A new generation of iPhone."
2. iPhone X (2017): "Say hello to the future."
3. iPhone XR (2018): "Brilliant in every way."
4. iPhone XS - XS Max (2018): "Welcome to the big screens."
5. iPhone 11 (2019) "Just the right amount of everything."
6. iPhone 11 Pro and 11 Pro Max (2019): "And then there was Pro."
7. iPhone SE Gen 2 (2020): "Lots to love. Less to spend."
8. iPhone (2020): "Blast past."
9. iPhone 12 Pro - 12 Pro Max (2020): "It's a leap year."
10. iPhone 13 (2021): "Your new superpower."
11. iPhone 13 Pro - 13 Pro Max (2021): "Oh. So. Pro"
12. iPhone SE Gen 3 (2022): "Love the per. Love the price."
13. iPhone 14 (2022): "Big and bigger."
14. iPhone 14 Pro and 14 P Max (2022): "Pro. Beyond"
15. iPhone 15 (2023): "Newphoria."
16. iPhone 15 Pro and 15 Pro Max (2023): "Titanium. So strong. So light. So Pro."