

# Doublespeak On Shiseido Ads On Social Media Instagram

Melinda Dirgandini

{melinda\_dir@yahoo.com}

Universitas Kristen Maranatha, Jl. Surya Sumantri no 65 Bandung 40164

**Abstract.** This study will analyze doublespeak in advertisements for Shiseido beauty products using Japanese on Instagram social media. The doublespeak theory used is Lutz's theory. Four categories of doublespeak commonly found in advertisements are weasel words, parity claim, up to claim and unfinished words. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The data in this study were taken from the Instagram @shiseido\_japan page. There are 25 datas collected. In the 25 data I analyzed, some ad data had more than one type of doublespeak in one ad. After I analyzed 25 data on the use of doublespeak on the Shiseido cosmetic tagline on Instagram, I can conclude as follows. Unfinished word, 12 data is a doublespeak type often used in Shiseido advertisements. Then weasel words contains 10 data. Furthermore, the parity claim as much as 7 data. And up to claim as much as 3 data

**Keywords:** doublespeak, advertising, Instagram

## 1 Introduction

Along with technological development, internet access limits distance and time. The ease with which people access the internet and social media is used by product and service providers to promote their products on social media. Like Instagram.

Instagram is one of the social media that is not only used by online shops to promote their products but also now many large companies are also using this social media to market their products. Instagram is a social media that users use to share photos and videos. Instagram features that are currently increasingly diverse are used as advertising media. Product owners are getting more creative in marketing their wares to attract the attention of Instagram users.

The ad competition encourages creativity and innovation in communication using words that advertisers compose to attract the interest of ad readers. The creativity and innovation of these words attracted the author's attention to conduct research related to doublespeak used in Shiseido beauty product advertisements using Japanese on Instagram social media.

Shiseido is the fourth largest beauty product brand in the world. In Japan, it is number one. In 1872, Shiseido was a pharmaceutical company that later became a cosmetics company. Shiseido products are made from natural ingredients. Shiseido means praising the virtues of nature that nurture new life. (Nihonshi Yuumei Jinbutsu Jiten, 2008). Japan's most significant

cosmetic company does not only have one or two products, but a lot of them range from perfumes, skin and hair care products and cosmetics. The cosmetics are also diverse, such as Aqua Label, Uno, Integrate, Cle de Peau Beaute, Elixir Superior, Maquillage, and Benefice.



Fig. 1. 顔のパーツで一番大事なのは？

What is the most important part of your face?

It is an advertisement that offers aesthetic medicine to get a thin face. In the tagline written on the ad photo, there is an incomplete sentence "on the face, what is important is?". Doublespeak tends to convey a message, but the meaning is still unclear or not as conveyed. [8] calls the pun on the unfinished ad words. Instagram readers/consumers are expected to assume the tagline's meaning.

## 2 THEORY AND METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Doublespeak can be a euphemism and intentional ambiguity. [8] defines *doublespeak* as "language that pretends to communicate but does not." Doublespeak is a language that makes the bad seem good; the negatives seem positive; the unpleasant seem attractive or tolerable. Doublespeak is also a language that avoids, shifts, or disclaims responsibility; language that is different from its true meaning or hides its true meaning.

In advertising, doublespeak can be used to make something out of nothing into existence, which is the primary job of an advertiser. In other words, doublespeak in advertising has one main job: to place the product in the best possible way so that customers will be attracted to buy it. Furthermore, although it is primarily intended to be misleading, in the world of advertising, doublespeak will be considered a "creative license" [8]. The following are four types of doublespeak in advertising: weasel words, parity claim, up-to-claim, and unfinished words [14].

### 1. Weasel Word

An expression to describe horrendous news but it turns out that after further study it is not possible anything. In Indonesian figuratively, it is called 'pepesan kosong'. Weasel words are a strategy used by communication experts to influence people in the fields of politics, advertising, law, and so on. Included in this category of weasel words are anecdotal

statements. Anecdotal statements do not refer to animal stories that are often humorous but instead connote a 'misleading statement'. In language discourse often with the opening sentence "Says, people". "People say" this leaf herb can cure cancer or "medical experts say electromagnetic waves from cellphones can cause brain cancer". Because it starts with "the word people" of course the listener cannot check or verify who the person in question is and how valid the research is.



Fig. 2. やっぱりポーテは素晴らしい — 効果絶大の話

Beauty is just wonderful - a story with a great effect

Shiseido product advertisements that string words on product photos uploaded on Instagram that "beauty is something extraordinary". Plus an explanation in the caption based on the testimony of a woman in her 20s who managed to experience changes in her facial skin in a short time after using the product. Even though there are testimonials, consumers cannot confirm the truth of the efficacy of the cream in accordance with the tagline in the ad.

## 2. Parity Claim

A parity claim is that a product or service is the same as another product or competitor's product without claiming that it is the best of the best. To claim the product objectively, the marketer must have evidence to support the claim. In order to be said to have an advantage among the advertised products, the words "better" (better) and "best" are often used. According to [12] the word "better" in a parity claim means "best," and "best" means "equal to." Thus, if all brands of goods are the same, these goods should have the same sound quality. So "best" means that the product is as good as the other best products in its group.



**Fig. 3.** 片目30秒で仕上がるのに、手抜き感がなく自然に大きな目もとを叶えてくれるアイシャドウ朝の忙しい時間に、テクニックなしで簡単にグラデーションが出来るのでオススメです。全部で5色あるので自分に合った色を見つけてくださいね！

Eye shadow makes your eyes big naturally, even though it only takes 30 seconds for one eye. Recommended because you can easily make gradients without technique during rush hour in the morning.

There are five colors in all, so feel free to find one that suits you!

In the advertisement, Shiseido claims that the mascara they produce only takes 30 seconds to use for one eye so that the eye looks big. Claims can plunge consumers because if consumers are not experts in applying eye shadow, it is impossible only to take 30 seconds.

### 3. Up to Claim

Ads claiming discounts. This discount is usually highlighted on the bulletin board in the discount writing and the highest discount number. While 'up to' is written very small. For example, 'Discount up to 70%', so if you are not observant, consumers will understand it as 'Discount 70%'. At the same time, the real meaning of up to discount means that not all products are subject to the same discount amount. However, there are lower, with 70% as the upper limit.



**Fig. 4.** 楽天winter sale

Max 50% OFF  
COUPON 配布中

Ads on Instagram. Winter sale, written a maximum discount of 50%. However, it seems that "terms and conditions apply" because the tagline says that the discount coupon will be issued soon. It means the discount is only for those who have the coupon. Including up to claim is offering free product samples with terms and conditions apply.

#### 4. Unfinished Words

Unfinished words are sentences that are not complete or incomplete. In unfinished words, certain syntactic functions are lost, leading to the ambiguity of meaning. The expression of ambiguity is one of the concepts of a communication strategy, which can be defined as a situation interpreted to have more than one intended meaning, resulting in ambiguity, uncertainty, and uncertainty. Japanese society tends to avoid expressing something openly in social interactions. They generally still adhere to the principle conveyed straightforwardly and openly to the interlocutor, which is considered impolite because it seems the speech partner does not know the topic being discussed [4].



Fig. 5. 4色グラデで奥行きのある目もとに  
4-color gradation for deep eyes

In the Shiseido mascara advertisement, the unfinished words occur in the predicate of the main sentence which disappears. The imperfection of the sentence in the sentence above can lead to ambiguity of meaning. Manufacturers of these products hope that consumers as readers can interpret the intended meaning of the advertisement for themselves.

The purpose of this study is to find out what doublespeak categories are contained in Shiseido cosmetic advertisements on Instagram social media. The data in this study were taken from the Instagram @shiseido\_japan page. There are 25 datas collected. The method used in this research is the descriptive analysis method. The words on the Shiseido ad data from Instagram were then recorded. Furthermore, the ad data is analyzed based on the type of doublespeak. In one Shiseido ad, sometimes there is more than one type of doublespeak. From the results of the analysis then, conclusions are drawn.

## 4 Findings and Discussion



Fig. 6. あなたの肌に、保湿体力を。

Moisturizing strength for your skin.

In the caption, this cream product will moisturize the skin so that it produces moist skin with a striking luster. It is also mentioned that by using these products, the skin will look beautiful every day. By using this Shiseido product cream, in addition to protecting the skin from the adverse effects of the environment, can also enhance facial makeup.

In data 1 there are several doublespeak. It starts with the writing in the uploaded photo. The writing is written in white because the color of the uploaded photo is red. Unfinished words is **あなたの肌に、保湿体力を**. In this sentence the syntactic function of the predicate disappears. The expression of ambiguity is one of the concepts of communication strategy. In the ad data, producers expect consumers to interpret the meaning of the words in the ad for themselves.

Weasel words is also found in data 1. In the advertisement, Shiseido claims that its moisturizing products can make the skin moist and shiny. The appearance of the skin will be beautiful every day. In addition, Shiseido claims that these products can make makeup perfect.



Fig. 7.

SHISEIDOスペシャルライブ配信

SHISEIDO最高峰シリーズの体験セット登場

SHISEIDO special live streaming

SHISEIDO highest peak series trial set appeared

The writing on the upload of photo data 2 uses black with a white photo base so that it can be read clearly. In this series of words, Shiseido wants to introduce the latest series of cosmetic products which are claimed to be the best. The use of a parity claim claims the latest series is the best superior product among the previous Shiseido series. The ad is expected to encourage Shiseido consumers to try their newest product.

Weasel words, which are a strategy used by communication experts to influence people, are in the caption of data ads 2. It says "the best skin in my history" is the opinion of a consumer who has tried Shiseido's Future Solution LX series and got satisfactory results.



Fig. 8. たるみ目袋に新体験若わかしさを手に入れる

Get a new experience youthfulness for sagging eye bags

Data 3 is an advertisement for Shiseido products to treat sagging eye bags with age. This shiseido product is not an eye bag treatment product, but a product to reduce eye bags on the results of facial makeup. This product is used after finishing make-up. This will result in youthful-looking make-up. Weasel words from data 3 advertisement, written on photo upload. "Get a new experience of youth, in tackling sagging eye bags". Shiseido claims that this product can reduce the appearance of sagging eye bags, resulting in youthful-looking makeup results.



Fig. 9. みなぎる美しさで、新しい年へ

To the new year with overflowing beauty

Shiseido launched a limited edition floral new year collection with the theme "Beauty Begins at the Beginning of the Year". The advertisement on data 4 was uploaded on the first day of 2021. Products with limited packages consist of serum, perfection moisturizer, gel lipstick, and cushion compact case.

There are unfinished words in the data. みなぎる美しさで、新しい年へ “towards the new year full of beauty”. Lost predicate syntax function. However, the meaning to be conveyed can still be understood.

In the caption it is written that the product package is a limited edition that was marketed at the beginning of the year, 新しい年の始まりを予感させる咲き誇る花の限定パッケージのニューイヤーコレクションを本日発売 “The New Year Collection, a limited package of blooming flowers that foreshadows the beginning of the new year, will be released today” is a weasel word used by producers so that consumers immediately buy the product package before run out.





Fig. 10. 乾燥ダメージにも揺らがない、強い美しさを

Strong beauty that does not waver even with dry damage

In data 10, there are unfinished words, namely 乾燥ダメージにも揺らがない、強い美しさを. The particle marker *wo* which is not followed by the predicate of the sentence in the form of a verb, makes the sentence unfinished.

Even though the sentence is not finished, it can be understood the meaning that the advertiser wants to convey. That is, by using these products, beauty will be maintained, not making facial skin dry. Advertisers use weasel words in the ad. The words used by producers encourage consumers to use these cream products because they will maintain strong facial beauty, avoiding damage due to dryness on the face.



Fig. 11. ベストセラー美容液を体感しませんか？

Want to feel the best-selling serum?

In data 11 advertisements for moisturizing serum from Shiseido. The ad uses the word (best seller) to state that the serum is the best-selling serum. Parity claim is used in the advertisement so that consumers are interested in trying it.

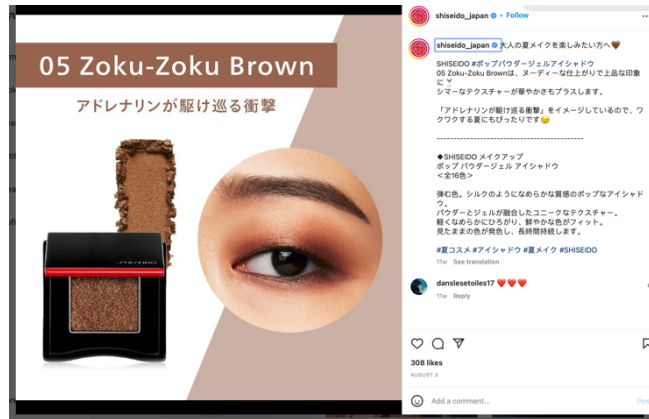


Fig. 12.

アドレナリンが駆け巡る衝撃

Adrenaline rush

大人の夏メイクを楽しみたい方へ

SHISEIDO #ポップパウダージェルアイシャドウ

05 Zoku-Zoku Brownは、ヌーディーな仕上がりで上品な印象に🍷

シマーなテクスチャーが華やかさもプラスします。

「アドレナリンが駆け巡る衝撃」をイメージしているので、ワクワクする夏にもびった

Fruit turns into strengthFor those who want to enjoy adult summer makeup

SHISEIDO #pop powder gel eyeshadow

05 Zoku-Zoku Brown gives an elegant impression with a nude finish🍷

The shimmery texture adds a touch of glamour.

It is perfect for the exciting summer as it is based on the image of "adrenaline rushing shock".

Japan is a country with 4 seasons, each season will affect the daily life of Japanese people. Not only the Japanese cuisine menu is adjusted to the season. However, cosmetics are also adjusted to the season. Like the words in the data 12 advertisement. Manufacturers say that powder gel eyeshadow products that are launched in the summer will give an elegant and glamorous impression. So that it will stimulate adrenaline in every user. The weasel word used by advertisers tries to convince consumers to look optimal by using Shiseido's brown eyeshadow.



Fig. 13. 季節の変わり目にもゆるぎない美しさを育むアルティミュン  
 Altimune nurtures unwavering beauty even at the turn of the seasons

Ultimune is Shiseido's newest product in the form of a concentrate with absorption power exceeding serum formulated to maximize and maintain the ability of Langerhans cells to protect the skin. The use of words related to seasons to attract consumers is used again in data 13. Weasel words using the words, "Ultimune nurtures unwavering beauty even at the turn of the seasons." Claiming that using this Ultimune maintains the skin's beauty even though the seasons change.



Fig. 14. 美容液は分子の時代へ  
 Beauty liquid to the age of molecules

In data 14, there are unfinished words. The predicate function disappears. However, it can be understood if the predicate is a moving verb because of the particle e (〜). Incomplete sentences or clauses can cause ambiguity. Nevertheless, tolerance to ambiguity is considered one of the characteristics of Japanese culture. Japanese society tends to avoid expressing something directly in social interactions.



Fig. 15. 秋の化粧品デー

autumn cosmetics day

ポイント10%還元

10% reduction in points

ベストコスメ17賞受賞の保湿クリーム

Moisturizing cream that won 17 best cosmetics awards

Doublespeak up to claim is found in data 15. In the advertisement, it is said that customers who buy Shiseido products will get 10% points. Additional terms and conditions apply. In data 15, there is also a parity claim that states that the moisturizing cream has won 17 best cosmetic awards. 人気2大アイテムが今だけ限定セットに is unfinished word. Particles in Japanese sentences are not common at the end of sentences

Table 1. Data

No	Data	Product	Word	Type of doublespeak
1	あなたの肌に、保湿体力を。	Moisturizer	保湿体力を Moisturizing strength	Unfinished word

	Moisturizing strength for your skin.		体力 Strength	parity claim
2	SHISEIDOスペシャルライブ配信 SHISEIDO最高峰シリーズの体験セット登場 SHISEIDO special live streaming SHISEIDO highest peak series trial set appeared	Product series	最高峰 highest	Parity claim
3	たるみ目袋に新体験若わかしさを手に入れる Get a new experience youthfulness for sagging eye bags	antiaging eye cream	たるみ目袋 sagging eye bags	Parity claim
4	みなぎる美しさで、新しい年へ To the new year with overflowing beauty 新しい年の始まりを予感させる咲き誇る花の限定パッケージのニューイヤークレクションを本日発売 “The New Year Collection, a limited package of blooming flowers that foreshadows the beginning of the new year, will be released today”	Product series	新しい年へ To the new year  限定パッケージ a limited package	Unfinished word   Weasel word
5	乾燥ダメージにも揺らがない、強い美しさを Strong beauty that does not waver even with dry damage	Moisturizer	強い美しさを strong beauty  乾燥ダメージにも揺らがない、強い美しさを Strong beauty that does not waver even with dry damage	unfinished words  weasel words
6	ベストセラー美容液を体感しませんか？	Serum	ベストセラー	Parity claim

	Want to feel the best-seller serum?		best-seller	
7	アドレナリンが駆け巡る衝撃 Adrenaline rush	Eye shadow	アドレナリンが駆け巡る衝撃 adrenaline rushing	Weasel word
8	季節の変わり目にもゆるぎない美しさを育むアルティミューン Ultimune nurtures unwavering beauty even at the turn of the seasons	Serum	美しさを育むアルティミューン Ultimune nurtures	Weasel words
9	美容夜は分子の時代へ Beauty night to the age of molecules	Night cream	分子の時代へ	unfinished words
10	秋の化粧品デー autumn cosmetics day ポイント10%還元 10% reduction in points ベストコスメ17賞受賞の保湿クリーム Received 17 best cosmetics awards	Product series	ポイント10%還元 10% reduction in points ベストコスメ17賞受賞 Received 17 best cosmetics awards 今だけ限定セットに Limited set for now	up to claim parity claim unfinished word
11	みなぎる美しさで、新しい年へ To the new year with overflowing beauty	Moisturizer	新しい年へ To the new year	unfinished word
12	5000名様にサンプルプレゼント中 Tersedia sampel gratis untuk 5000 orang	Moisturizer	5000名様にサンプルプレゼント Sample present for 5000 people	up to claim
13	ホリデーコレクションより、SHISEIDOからの贈り物第2弾 大人美容液（50mL）と、特製サイズのモイスチャライザー（30g）のキットが当たる！	Serum	ホリデーコレクションより、SHISEIDOから The second gift from SHISEIDO	up to claim

	The second gift from SHISEIDO from the Holiday Collection			
	Win a kit of the popular Ultimune serum (50mL) and a special size moisturizer (30g)!			
14	Shiseido の中に潜む「日本の美」とは  What is the “beauty of Japan” hidden in Shiseido?	Moisturizer	「日本の美」とは “beauty of Japan”	Unfinished word
15	ベストコスメ3選  3 best cosmetics	Product series	ベストコスメ  best cosmetics	parity claim
16	「うつくしい」は、いのちの話。  "Beautiful" is a story of life.	Product series	「うつくしい」は、いのちの話。  "Beautiful" is a story of life.	Weasel words
17	Shiseidoとならば、子供達の幸せな未来のために、持続可能世界と生活を残していると信じています。  With Shiseido, we believe in leaving a sustainable world and life for our children's happy future.	Product series	Shiseidoとならば、子供達の幸せな未来  With Shiseido our children's happy future	Weasel words
18	SHISEIDOの微粒子ガードスプレー新機能  SHISEIDO particle guard spray new feature  花粉の肌と髪への付着を抑制  Suppresses adhesion of pollen to skin and hair	spray serum	花粉の肌と髪への付着を抑制  Suppresses adhesion of pollen to skin and hair	Weasel words
19	SHISEIDOが26年かけた、美白美容夜の答え。  SHISEIDO's answer to whitening beauty night after 26 years.  これからは、あなたらしさを活かすSAKURAブライト肌へ	Moisturizer	SAKURAブライト肌へ  To SAKURA bright skin  SHISEIDOが26年かけた、美白美容夜の答え	Unfinished word  Weasel words

	From now on, to SAKURA bright skin that makes the most of your personality		SHISEIDO's answer to whitening beauty night after 26 years	
20	圧倒的“幸福感美肌”の秘密は？  What is the secret of overwhelming “happiness beautiful skin”?	Powder	幸福感美肌”の秘密は？  “happiness beautiful skin”?	Unfinished word
21	明るく、生き生きした健やかな印象の肌へ  For bright, lively and healthy-looking skin	Product series	健やかな印象の肌へ  healthy-looking skin  明るく、生き生きした健やか  For bright, lively and healthy-looking skin	Unfinished word  Weasel words
22	ファンデの上からも使えて、メイク直しにも  It can also be used over foundation, and can also be used to touch up makeup.	Foundation	メイク直しにも  to touch up makeup	Unfinished word
23	ビューティーは無限大、あなたに綺麗に魔法をかける美スペシャリスト  Beauty is infinite, a beauty specialist who casts magic on you beautifully	Product series	ビューティーは無限大  Beauty is infinite	Weasel words
24	資生堂の研究者が、技術力や研究の成果を交えて美容に関するさまざまな「？」を徹底解説！ 太陽と汗が味方になる、紫外線対策の新常識って？  A Shiseido researcher thoroughly explains various "?"  What is the new common sense of UV protection, where the sun and sweat become allies?	Sunscreen	資生堂の研究者が、技術力や研究の成果  A Shiseido researcher thoroughly explains	parity claim
25	軽くなめらかにひろがり、鮮やかな色がフィット。見たま	Powder	長時間持続	Weasel words



---

まの色が発色し、長時間持  
続。

for a long time

It spreads lightly and  
smoothly, and vivid colors  
fit. The color you see is  
developed and lasts for a  
long time.

---

#### 4 Conclusion

In the 25 data I analyzed, some ad data had more than one type of doublespeak in one ad. After I analyzed 25 data on the use of doublespeak on the Shiseido cosmetic tagline on Instagram, I can conclude as follows. Unfinished word, 12 data is a doublespeak type often used in Shiseido advertisements. The character of Japanese society tends to avoid revealing something openly. Japanese society is a group society that holds the concept of harmony. To maintain the relationship between each other, not only speech that disturbs the self-image of the interlocutor but also speech that has good intentions is expressed indirectly.

Then the parity claim contains 7 data. In the doublespeak parity claim, the word bestseller (ベスト・セラー), highest 最高 often appears. Furthermore, weasel words as much as 10 data. Advertisers use weasel words to trick consumers into buying the advertised product because what is said is not really what it is. Next up, to claim as much as 3 data. The words used to express up to claim the promise of a discount. In addition, providing product samples for a certain number of people within a limited period is also a strategy to attract consumers.

## Reference

- [1] Blundel, R. *Effective Business Communication: Principles and Practice for the Information Age*. Singapore: Prentice Hall. (1998).
- [2] Cook, G. *The discourse of Advertising*. London: Routledge Corbett, E. P. (1971). *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. (2nd edn.), Oxford: University Press, New York. (2001).
- [3] Davies, J. *Educating Students in a Media-Saturated Culture*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic. (1996).
- [4] Davies, Roger J. & Ikeno, Osamu. *Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture*. Tokyo, (2011)
- [5] Fox, R. F. *Images across Cultures: Exploring Advertising in the Diverse Classroom in Language Teaching*. (2002).
- [6] Goatly, A. *Critical Reading and Writing: An Introductory Coursebook*. London: Routledge. (2000).
- [7] Leis, W., Kline, S., Jhally, S., dan Botellrill, J. *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in Mediated Market Place*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Routledge. (2006).
- [8] Lutz, W. *Doublespeak: From "revenue enhancement" to "terminal living": How government, business, advertisers, and others use language to deceive you*. New York: Harper & Row. (1989).
- [9] Phillips, Barbara J., and McQuarrie, Edward F. *Beyond Visual Metaphor: A New Typology of Visual Rhetoric in Advertising*. London: Sage Publications. (2004).
- [10] PHP Kenkyusho, Nihonshi Yuumei Jinbutsu Jiten. (2008)
- [11] Stella, J. & Adam, S. *Tropes in Advertising: A Web-Based Empirical Study*. <http://ausweb.scu.edu.au/aw05/papers/refereed/stella/paper.html> (2005).
- [12] Schrank, J. *The Language of Advertising Claims*. <http://home.olemiss.edu/~egjbp/comp/ad-claims.html> . (1996).
- [13] Shie, Jian-Shiung *Master Tropes in English Magazine Advertisements: A Semiotic Topic-Vehicle Approach*. Taiwan Journal of Linguistics Vol. 3.1, 33-64, (2005)
- [14] Tanto, Trisnowati. *Awareness and Appreciation of Advertising Language*. Journal of Language and Literature Vol. 19 No. 1 – April 2019 .
- [15] Van Dijk, T. *Discourse as structure and process*. London: Sage Publications. (1997).