

Linguistic strategies of food advertising. An overview

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Abstract

To achieve the major objectives of food promotion, several, specific promotional methods can be used to communicate with consumers for a particular product. The combination of these methods constitutes the promotion mix for that product. The four elements of the promotion mix are food advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion. For some food products, the companies use all elements, instead for others, they use only two or three elements. The advertising is a source of pictures, signs, symbols and linguistic buildings that send persuasive messages about a food product and creates overtones and influences the behavior by stimulating emotions of the existing and potential consumers. The strategies of advertising are: visual strategies (image, signifier and signified), verbal and written strategies (linguistic characteristics). This study shows some linguistic strategies (figurative language, sound techniques) of advertising and emphasizes their powerful influence over food consumer and their behavior in a positive way.

Keywords: Food, Consumer, Advertising, Figurative Language, Sound Techniques

1. Introduction

Advertising is one of the most powerful communication tools used by marketers to communicate their message to both existing and potential customers [1 - 2]. The main aim of advertising is to transmit a message that is easy to understand and memorize and to hold potential buyer's attention and to influence his beliefs [2 - 5]. An important instrument to surprise and to draw the attention of potential buyer is use an attractive and persuasive language that propel advertising to the desired height. A written advertisement is composed of the following elements: headline, body copy, slogan, illustrations and colours, trademark, and brand name. Food slogans - a way of advertising food products - are simple and memorable phrases that are designed to capture the essence of a product and to efficiently relay the essential message a company wants its audience to remember. Along with other advertising elements (text, image, logo *etc.*), an advertising slogan helps develop a recognisable image for a product [6 - 7].

As components of an advertising text, many food slogans make use a variety of figures of speech and sound techniques which make both slogans and advertising messages memorable and emotionally coloured [2, 8]. The advertisers manipulate their language to suit their aims which are to inform, communicate and persuade. The general objective of this paper is consulting a database required to provide up-to-date relevant information on use of some linguistic strategies of food advertising. It is examined some figures of speech and sound techniques and their powerful to influence the food consumer and their behavior in a positive way.

2. Figurative Language

Figurative language of food slogans includes apostrophe, metaphor, metonymy, paradox, parallelism, personification, pun, and simile (Table 1) [2 - 3, 8 - 13].

Apostrophe in which a thing, a place, an abstract quality, an idea, a dead or absent person, is addressed as if present and capable of understanding [2, 14].

Metaphor contributes to the aesthetics of the message and emphasizes the main idea, describing one object in terms of another, usually by means of implicit comparison [2]. The metaphors suggest the right kind of emotive associations for the product [2, 8]. The advertisers frequently use the metaphors with words or visually with pictures; the use of metaphors in advertising is likely to evoke some type of emotion out of an audience and make the message memorable, which is the outcome in a successful ad campaign [3]. The metaphor uses words (in the form of an image, story, or a tangible object) to represent a less tangible thing or some intangible quality or idea [3]. The metaphorical sense in advertising is achieved not only by text, but also by visual elements, sound, and context [3]. Usage of polysemantic words helps to create complex metaphorical image, which appeals to human's emotional experience and subconscious [3]. Thus the copywriters through their advertisement sell not only the product, but also abstract concepts like attractiveness, happiness [3]. Two examples of food slogans are *It gives you wings* (Red Bull) and *Open Happiness* (Coca-Cola). The Red Bull's slogan implies that the consumption of the beverage will give the consumer physical strength, while the Coca-Cola slogan associates a bottle of coke with happy and carefree leisure time of a person who consumes this beverage [2, 8].

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or a thing is substituted for the thing itself, *i.e.* a word or a phrase is substituted for another that is closely related to the original one [15]. Metonymy is commonly found in advertisements where the product is associated with some person or surroundings [2].

Paradox, an apparently self-contradictory (even absurd) statement which, on closer inspection, is found to contain a truth reconciling the conflicting opposites [16].

Parallelism constitutes an effective technique of memorizing particular statements, a method that is especially valuable in advertising [3]. It is useful since the commercials' primary aim is the persuasion of the consumer, which can be most easily achieved when a slogan is repeated and hence memorized by the consumer [3].

The parallelism can be explained as a succession of two or more syntactic identical constructions (words, sentences, phrases) that are connected with or without a conjunction [3].

Personification means the impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction, the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects [3,8]. Advertisements can often use personifications when advertised products are endowed with human qualities to make it more dramatic, interesting, more attractive, and familiar to the potential customer [8]. This is done so that the customer can better relate to the advertised personified products and memorize the slogan or the advertisement [2]. Personification caters to more trust and affection in potential customers and therefore arouses more desire for the purchase [3].

Pun involves a play on words and operates on a level of language manipulations and intended deviations in order to achieve a humorous effect [2, 17]. In the most general of terms, a pun is a form of speech play in which a word or phrase unexpectedly and simultaneously combines two unrelated meanings; it is one of the figures of speech most often used in advertising [3]. Puns may be used in three different ways, such as: using a word equivocally, using a word more than once in different senses and using words similar in sound but different in meaning [3]. Example: *Coke refreshes you like no other can. Can* has two meanings. One is to be able to do something and other is a closed metal container in which foods or drinks are preserved and sold. The two different meanings of *can* give rise to two different interpretations of this advertisement: Coke refreshes you like no other drinks can do. Coke refreshes you like no other can-packed drinks can do [3].

Simile is a figure of speech whereby one thing is likened to another, in such a way as to clarify and enhance an image [8, 14]. Simile presents an explicit comparison and is instantly made recognizable by the use of words such as like, as, than or verb such as resembles [3, 8]. It is used to emphasize some positive characteristics of the advertised food product and/or highlight and strengthen the emotional representation of a certain aspect in an imaginative way [8].

Table 1. Figurative Language Examples [2 - 3, 8, 16]

Figures of speech	Slogans
Apostrophe	<i>Hot'n juicy</i> (Dave's cheeseburgers), <i>Bring out the best Hellmann's real mayonnaise</i> (Hellmann's mayonnaise), <i>Finger lickin' good</i> (KFC), <i>I'm lovin' it</i> (MacDonald's)
Metaphor	<i>Bounty - the taste of paradise</i> (Bounty candy bar), <i>Open Happiness</i> (Coca-Cola), <i>It gives you wings</i> (Red Bull), <i>Absolut attraction</i> (Absolut vodka)
Metonymy	<i>Nothing is lighter than zero</i> (Diet Sprite)
Paradox	<i>You had two options in Siberia chilled or chilled</i> (Stolichnaya), <i>Stop staring at me like I'm some piece of meat Big Mac</i> (McDonald's)
Parallelism	<i>Fresh up with seven-up</i> (Seven-up); <i>100% Natural, 100% Delicious</i>
Personification	<i>Coffee it keeps us busy until the tequila arrives</i> (Coffee & Tequila aficionado), <i>Stop staring at me like I'm some piece of meat Big Mac</i> (McDonald's), <i>Optimism wakes up with Nescafé</i> (Neskafe)
Pun	<i>Absolut attraction</i> (Absolut vodka), <i>If you want to impress someone, put him on your Black list</i> (Johnnie Walker Black Whiskey), <i>Get Rich quick</i> (Kenco Really Rich Coffee), <i>Do me a Quaver</i> (Quavers Snacks), <i>You had two options in Siberia chilled or chilled</i> (Stolichnaya)
Simile	<i>Nobody can do it like McDonald's can</i> (McDonald), <i>Stop staring at me like I'm some piece of meat Big Mac</i> (McDonald's)

3.Sound techniques

Among the sound techniques most often used in food advertising slogans there are: alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, rhythm, repetition and onomatopoeia (Table 2) [2, 5, 8].

Alliteration is a dominant sound technique identified in the body of the food slogans [2]. In slogans alliteration with its similarity in sound often plays against dissimilarity in meaning and makes the listener more aware of the contrast [2]. The vivid example of alliteration that was incorporated into the brand name itself is Coca-Cola [8]. The repetition of the first consonant sounds of the words makes the information conveyed attractive to receiver [8]. Assonance consists of the repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually close together, to achieve a particular effect of euphony [8, 14]. Sometimes assonance is referred to as vocalic rhyme [8]. Assonance is rare in advertising slogans and is hard to identify [8].

Consonance is defined as the close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after different vowels [2, 14]. Alliteration, assonance and consonance are meant to be attention-grabbing [2]. These sound techniques make a piece of writing memorable and provide the slogans with the strong beating rhythm [2].

Rhyme is one of the dominant sound techniques in food advertising slogans and makes the slogans and headlines appear striking and easier to remember [2, 8]. It should be noted that rhyme refers to the way the word is pronounced, not spelled [2, 8]. Rhyme is most probably the best sound technique used for the introduction of the brand name [8]. If the name of the brand is not used in the slogan, the slogan is likely to lose its identity because similar products can use the same ad slogan with a simple change of the product name [8]. Rhyme also allows better memorization of the slogan, as it resonates in one's mind [2].

Rhythm is the movement or sense of movement communicated by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables and by the duration of the syllables [8]. The variation of stressed and unstressed syllables attracts the attention of the potential customers [8]. Rhythm is perceived on a subconscious level without noticing it thus making slogans a memorable, repeatable sentence [13]. Repetition is an essential unifying element in nearly all poetry and much prose [14]. It may consist of sounds, particular syllables and words, phrases, stanzas, metrical patterns, ideas, allusions and shapes [14]. The repetition is used to appeal to the emotions of the audience in order to persuade, inspire, motivate and encourage them [2]. Regularity of rhythm contributes to the attraction of rhythm in slogans [8]. The scientists are unable to explain the phenomenon of an attraction of rhythm and repetition [8].

Another sound technique is onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is based on the formation and use of words to imitate sounds [14]. It is a figure of speech in which the sound reflects the sense [14]. As a rule it is deliberately used to achieve a special effect [14]. One example of onomatopoeia is *Wasssssup* (Budweiser), in which the prolonged *s* sound reminds of the sound typical of carbonated drinks when the bottle is being opened [8]. Onomatopoeia makes the idea of the advertisement more interesting, expressive and effects the readers' senses [2, 8].

