



The Stylistic Analysis of the Magazine Advertisement

----Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar

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Abstract

This paper gives an overall analysis of the advertisement of “Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar” from the aspects of linguistic description (graphological style markers, lexical style markers, syntactic style markers, grammatical style markers, and semantic style markers), textual analysis (the layout and the paragraph development, cohesive devices) and contextual analysis (medium of communication and role-relationship) by the application of modern linguistic theory and stylistic analysis pattern in order to find out the general stylistic characteristics of commercial advertisements. This paper can help readers better understand and appreciate the language of English advertisements.

Keywords: Stylistics advertisement, Linguistic description, Textual analysis, Contextual analysis

1. Introduction

Since this is a Stylistic Analysis of the Magazine Advertisement, two respects should be made clear: stylistic analysis and advertisement.

Stylistic analysis is a normal part of both linguistic and literary studies. Stylistic analysis in linguistics refers to the identification of patterns of usage in speech and writing. In linguistics the purpose of a close analysis is to identify and classify the elements of language being used. In literary studies the purpose is usually an adjunct to understanding, exegesis, and interpretation. In both cases, an extremely detailed and scrupulous attention is paid to the text. It is practiced as a part of understanding the possible meanings in a text. Stylistic analysis is generally concerned with the uniqueness of a text; that is, what it is that is peculiar to the uses of language in a literary text for delivering the message. This naturally involves comparisons of the language of the text with that used in conventional types of discourse. (Qian, 2006 & Wang, 2001)

It is also generally assumed that the process of stylistic analysis will reveal the good qualities of the writing. In stylistic analysis, the numerical recurrence of certain stylistic features is used to make judgments about the nature and the quality of the writing. Stylistic analysis purports to be fairly scientific. A hypothesis is stated and then proved. It is a useful discipline, which encourages logical thought and can be transferred to many other areas of academic studies (Wang, 2001).

With the development of globalization and industrialization, more and more goods are produced in the world day by day; as a result, advertisement plays an important role in selling products. It is an art of language using various kinds of devices. The advertisements have achieved amazing effects on persuading consumers to buy the products. At the same time, it has also formed its special style and the language used in the advertisements is different from other styles. Its function is to “attract attention, arouse interest, stimulate desire, create conviction and get action.” It is a kind of loaded language with persuasive power. Magazines and newspapers are the daily materials for people to read. No matter where people are----on the buses or subways or during the break time or after meal----, they can get whatever information they want in the magazines and newspapers. So magazines and newspapers have become one of the most effective ways of providing information, and the advertisements in magazines and newspapers can achieve good effects, they are novel-designed, concise and colorful which are full of aesthetics and can be fast read in order to attract people’s attention as much as possible, and arouse readers’ strong purchasing desire and persuade them to buy the products. This paper intends to analysis one of the magazine advertisements from the aspects of Linguistic Description, textual Analysis and Contextual Analysis, aiming at finding out its stylistic characters.

2. Linguistic Description

Linguistic Description refers to the exploration and classification of linguistic features of a given text and the linguistic features are reflected by style markers which are linguistic items that only appear, or most or least frequent in a text, representing a particular variety or literary genre (Dong, 2006). The analysis of stylistics in this level aims at providing a methodology of analysis which includes four aspects: graphology, lexicology, syntax, grammar and semantics. The detailed analysis will lead to more accurate understandings of the language in order to let the readers better understand this variety.

2.1 Graphological Style Markers

Graphological arrangement in advertisements plays a very important role in drawing people's attention, making it outstanding among other product advertisements. In this advertisement of "Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar", it uses larger, capital and bold letters in the headline in order to draw people's attention and make them curious about what this advertisement mainly says and thus leads the readers to go on reading unconsciously and arouse their curiosity and desire to know more about this product and finally reaches its goal to persuade the readers to buy it. And at the same time, there is an italic word "your" in the headline, which makes it more conspicuous among those big words and be distinguished from other words. This italic word contains its special meaning. It makes the headline more like the face-to-face conversation and the advertiser speaks to the readers in a tender tone, making the advertisement more reliable and the readers are more likely to go on reading in a happy and curious mood.

At the same time, the advertisement uses smaller-than-headline-and- larger-than-body-copy letters for the subtitle. This subtitle is well-designed and attractive. It provides more information about the product and furthermore shows the advantages of the products and makes the headline more believable. Compared with the headline and the subtitle, the letters in the body are the smallest. It shows sharp graphological contrast, making this advertisement eye-catching, clear and in good order.

There are four paragraphs in this advertisement, differentiating from other advertisements which have one paragraph or even one sentence. The sentences in each paragraph are no more than two. The paragraphs are very short.

Insert Table 1 Here

Short sentences in short paragraphs make it easy for readers to understand and remember.

2.2 Lexical Style Markers

Most words used in this advertisement are of Anglo-Saxon origin. There are 85 words in all (the website is calculated as three words divided by the dots) and seven of them are hard words (words which have at least three syllables, not including inflections or compounding (Qian, 2006)), occupying 8.2% of the total words.

Example: Hard words

satisfy, chocolate, Granola, vitamins, minerals, varieties, advantage

(The percentage of hard words in the passage (Qian, 2006) = (C (total number of hard words) ÷ A (total number of words) × 100)

Since "Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar" is a brand of chocolate bar, these hard words such as "satisfy, chocolate, Granola, vitamins, minerals" make this kind of chocolate bar more attractive and nutritious without the fear of getting fat.

Another feature at the lexical level is that this advertisement widely uses the affirmative and commendatory words such as "high", "hunger-satisfying", "great", "great-tasting" and "best". The purpose of showing these words is to impress the potential customer the quality of the product and make them form a positive image of the product in their mind and win their trust to the product and finally arouse their desire to buy it.

Thirdly, personal pronouns "we", "our", "you", "yourself" and "you" are repeatedly used.

Examples:

"Achieving *your* goal is easier with the excellent nutrition and delicious taste of Atkins.

"Ready to improve *your* figure?"

"Start with *our* figures."

"*We* know that losing weight is never easy, but there is no need to deprive *yourself* or feel hungry."

"*You* can enjoy an Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar"

This use of personal pronouns obviously sounds like face-to-face talk, making the conversation warmer, more friendly and trustable in tone, and finally strengthens the appeal to the readers. Reading the advertisement, the readers may probably be persuaded and stimulated and finally agree with what the advertisement says with strong desire for

purchasing.

Finally, in order to achieve the aim of “soft sell”, frequent use of adjectives is also one of the lexical features of the advertisements. Some of them are even evaluative adjectives of comparative or superlative degrees and premodification are also frequently used in this advertisement, which are also the features of most advertisements, giving the readers the feeling of exaggeration.

Insert Table 2 Here

Insert Table 3 Here

2.3 Syntactic Style Markers

In this advertisement, there are only five sentences in all. Among the five sentences, one of them is compound and complex sentence; one is complex sentence; one is compound sentence and the other two are simple sentences. Different from other advertisements which mainly contain simple sentences, the use of complex sentence and compound sentence have its special function. The complex sentence and compound sentence can better show the logical relationship in this advertisement, which gives detail of the product and provides more information as much as possible for the limitation of the space.

The longest sentence that contains 29 words appears in the second paragraph which also forms the whole paragraph. The function of this longest sentence is to give detailed information of the product with the use of exact figures of the ingredients in the chocolate bar, making the chocolate bar more trustable and attractive with little sugar and without the fear of getting fat. This echoes with the headline “Ready to improve your figure? Start with our figures.” The other sentences serve as convincing sentences, providing related information of the product. The shortest sentence occurs in the last paragraph, which also forms the whole paragraph that contains the website of the company. Its function is to conclude the advertisement and provides more information on its website.

The average sentence length in a passage = A (total number of words) ÷ B (total number of sentences). So in this advertisement the average sentence length is 17, which is 0.6 point lower than the average sentence length in English 17.6 words per sentence (Leech & Short, 1981). Sentence length is usually regarded as one of the linguistic markers measuring the degree of formality: the greater the sentence length, the more formal the language. So comparatively speaking, from the respect of sentence length, the language used in the advertisement is a little bit less formal.

Insert Table 4 Here

Furthermore, commanding sentence, interrogative sentence and elliptical sentence are also used in this advertisement. The first sentence in the headline is an elliptical and interrogative sentence. The subject of the sentence is understood. The complete sentence is “Are you ready to improve your figure?” The ellipsis in the headline sounds more cordial, easy-going and friendly, just like an intimate friend or mother asks tenderly, and at the same time, the interrogation arouses people’s attention and makes them think more. The other sentence in the headline and the last sentence in the advertisement are commanding sentences. It is a kind of persuasion and makes it easier for others to accept. It is novel, concise, outstanding, eye-catching and distinct; at the same time, it has achieved its function of inspiration and persuasion. So the special structure of the headline attracts more consumers’ attention and makes it easier for the readers to focus their attention and arouse their curiosity and desire.

Generally speaking, the negative sentences are seldom used in the advertisements; however, in this advertisement, the negative words occur twice.

Example: sentence containing negative words

“We know that losing weight is *never* easy, but there is *no* need to deprive yourself or feel hungry.”

These negative words are not used to deny the product but to show a contrast with the product. It shows how hard it is to lose weight and how horrible to go on a diet and feel hunger. So by comparing with this, it illustrates how good the chocolate bar is without the need to go on a diet, and at the same time, it can provide nutrition instead of fat and calorie; as a result, it highlights the uniqueness of the chocolate bar and its outstanding quality.

2.4 Grammatical Style Markers

The present tense is commonly used in the advertisements. The use of present tense tends to indicate the good quality of the products and its long-lasting and ever-lasting effect. At the same time, it makes the advertisement easier to understand without transferring from other kinds of tenses.

The fog index, which is a way used to measure the degree of accessibility, can better illustrate the accessibility of this advertisement. According to Qian Yuan (2006), the formula is as follows: Fog Index = $0.4(L+H)$

Here, L represents the average sentence length in a passage. H represents the percentage of “hard” words in the passage. The fog index of this advertisement is 10.08. According to Qian Yuan (2006), “An easily accessible text will have a fog

index of about 10". The fog index of this advertisement is a little bit higher than 10, which indicates that it is easy to understand.

2.5 Semantic Style Markers

Rhetorical devices are part of semantic style markers. The use of rhetorical devices is quite common, for the rhetorical devices make the advertisement more vivid and the language more beautiful and finally add aesthetic appreciation to the advertisement.

In this advertisement, pun is used as the rhetorical device. In the headline, there occur two words of "figure". From the form, it makes the headline neat and more attractive, though the two "figure" have their different meaning, but the clever use of "figure" is novel and arouses people's attention to go on reading.

At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a big trade mark of the chocolate bar with a big bold capital letter "A". The letter here has two meanings. On the one hand, it stands for the first letter of the name of the chocolate bar "Atkins"; on the other hand, it also contains the meaning of "number one", indicating Atkins is the best one among other chocolate bars and it is the consumers' best choice to choose Atkins.

3. The Textual Analysis of the Advertisement

A text is any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length that forms a unified whole. The analysis of the text is to analyze the textual factors which present the meaning of the whole passage and how the passage is combined by the use of cohesive devices. In the analysis of the advertisement, we mainly focus on the textual analysis of the layout, the paragraph development and the use of the cohesive devices.

3.1 The Layout and the Paragraph Development

Atkins is a brand of chocolate bar and this advertisement belongs to the consumer advertisement category. This advertisement not only aims to give detailed information of the special chocolate bar, but also aims to attract readers' attention and arouse their desire for purchase, so it involves two basic advertisement methods "hard sell" and "soft sell".

The headline contains two sentences. The first sentence uses an interrogative sentence, just like a face-to-face talk and indirectly tells the readers that the product deals with some "figure" problem, so it achieves amazing effect on persuading the consumers to go on reading, for the "figure" problem may be commonly concerned by people, especially the ladies who want to lose weight and have beautiful figures without going on a diet. The italic word "*your*" is also a good hint for them to believe that this product is especially for them and can really deal with their problems. So the second sentence in the headline, which is in a commanding tone, really helps persuade the consumers to trust the product and find more information in the following paragraphs. The subtitle further gives more information about the product which contains "the excellent nutrition and delicious taste" and also provide a hint that "achieving your goal is easier", so these words make the product more trustable by forming an image in the consumers' mind: a nutritious and delicious chocolate bar with the possible realization of slim figure and it is easy to achieve by eating "Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar".

The visual symbols are used in this advertisement. The big picture of the product occupies one third of the space and gives a clear image of the product. The authentic color makes the chocolate bar inviting and delicious, and the tin of the shake with the remarks on the surface "Chocolate Delight Shake" attracts the chocolate lovers to have a try.

The body consists of four paragraphs. The first paragraph tells the truth that losing weight is not an easy task which needs painstaking effort to "deprive yourself or feel hunger" and the reason why Atkins adds "hunger-satisfy protein". The second and third paragraph mainly tell the reason why people can safely enjoy the chocolate bar without the fear of getting fat, for it contains many nutrition and low sugar. It gives detailed information and the exact figures to support its idea. By the exact figures, people can be easily persuaded by the low calorie and high nutrition chocolate and finally purchase it. The last paragraph contains only one sentence which is a commanding sentence. It provides the website of Atkins company, which makes the chocolate bar more trustable with the guarantee of a legal company as well as detailed information about this product to make them feel safer by having this product and provides more choices for consumers to choose other products which fit them.

Supplementary items are often widely used in advertisements. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a trade mark of the product, which occupies almost one fifth space of the advertisement. That makes it more obvious and attractive and gives impression to the readers to remember the trade mark and get familiar with it in latter days. The trade mark is specially designed, which contains a big letter A, meaning the first letter of the trade mark as well as the meaning of number one, meaning that Atkins is the consumers' best choice.

3.2 Cohesive Devices

The coherence of the text can be achieved by the use of cohesive devices. There are quite a lot use of additive logical connector "and", "but", and "or". Some of them are used in the middle part of the sentences, but some of them are used

at the beginning of the sentences.

Example: logical connectors

And there are 21 great-tasting varieties of Atkins Advantage bars and shakes--- *and* that's the best figure of all.

Although it is not common or even wrong from the grammatical aspect to use logical connector at the beginning of the sentences, it makes the sentences connect to each other and the structure more logical, and as a result, makes the advertisement more persuasive and trustable.

4. Contextual Factors Analysis

In order to get a thorough understanding of the text, the contextual analysis is necessary, for the context is the place where the text occurs. And the contextual factors can determine the style. The contextual factors involving in this advertisement include following factors:

4.1 Medium of Communication

The advertisement of Atkins transmits messages not only from the written language but also from the visual medium. It uses graphological devices to provide information; the picture and the trade mark of the product also provide visual information to the readers. At the same time, enlarged, capital and bold letters are also developed in this advertisement to form an attractive and vivid image of the product.

4.2 Role-relationship

The role-relationship between the addresser and the addressee in this advertisement is "producer to consumer". It uses loaded and persuasive language to arouse people's desire and curiosity to the product and the informative and hortatory language with exact figures as well as use of affirmative adjectives gives the consumers a positive and clear image of the product. The interrogative tone in the headline sounds warm and friendly, which closely connects the producer with the consumers. It achieves good effects on persuading them to buy the product in a friendly tone.

5. Conclusion

This advertisement "Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar" adopts many devices in linguistic, textual and contextual aspects. It uses well-organized language, exact figures, eye-catching and bright pictures and affirmative adjectives to describe the good quality of the product. By the use of these devices, the producer can better communicate with the consumers and make the product more popular among the consumers in order to achieve the goal of ever-lasting purchase and popularity among the consumers.

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Table 1. Sentence Number in Paragraphs

Paragraph number	Sentences number
No.1	2
No. 2	1
No. 3	1
No. 4	1

Table 2. Comparative and Superlative Degrees of Adjectives

Comparative degree	Achieving your goal is <i>easier</i> with the excellent nutrition and delicious taste of Atkins.
Superlative degree	-and that's the <i>best</i> figure of all.

Table 3. Premodifications in the Advertisement

1.	Achieving your goal is easier with the <i>excellent</i> nutrition and <i>delicious</i> taste of Atkins.
2.	That's why Atkins products are high in <i>hunger-satisfying</i> protein and taste <i>great</i> .
3.	And there are 21 <i>great-tasting</i> varieties of Atkins Advantage bars and shakes.

Table 4. Average Sentence Length

Total words	85
Total sentence	5
average sentence length	17

Appendix. The Advertisement of Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar

Ready to improve *your* figure? Start with our figures.

Achieving your goals is easier
with the excellent nutrition and delicious taste of Atkins.



We know that losing weight is never easy, but there's no need to deprive yourself or feel hungry. That's why Atkins products are high in hunger-satisfying protein and taste great.

You can enjoy an Atkins Chocolate Chip Granola Bar, featuring 6 grams of fiber, 17 grams of protein, 19 vitamins and minerals – and with only 1 gram of sugars.

And there are 21 great-tasting varieties of Atkins Advantage bars and shakes – and that's the best figure of all.

Find out more at www.Atkins.com

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