AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE STYLES USED IN REVLON’S WRITTEN ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are (1) to find out the linguistic features used in Revlon advertisements, (2) to describe the persuasion techniques of language style used in Revlon advertisements, and (3) to find out the most dominant linguistic feature used in Revlon advertisements. This research was conducted by using qualitative and discourse analysis method. The researcher used 31 Revlon advertisements. The research data were collected by choosing the clauses or phrases from Revlon Cosmetics which showed some linguistic features and persuasion techniques. Research findings showed that (1) there were two linguistic features used in Revlon advertisements. They were lexical feature and syntactic feature. (2) the persuasion techniques that used in Revlon were pioneering stage, competitive stage and retentive stage. (3) the most dominant linguistic feature used in lexical feature was simple vocabulary which occurred 58.82% while in syntactic feature was incomplete sentence which occurred 30.43%.

Keywords: language style, linguistic feature, persuasion technique, Revlon

Introduction

Language has many functions in our daily life and one of the biggest functions is to communicate with each other. To communicate means to transfer ideas from one person to others. People use language as a tool to deliver their feelings, thoughts, ideas or opinions. If they do not have a tool to communicate, people’ activities and interactions will be stagnant. They always use language whenever and wherever they are talking, writing, listening and reading. Language also has a function which is to persuade an addressee to do something that speaker wants. Trimmer and Nancy (1984), persuasion is a verbal of communication which makes people having a certain judgment or changes their previous judgment to accept a new one which they do not believe before. People convince others to change their point of view.

Advertisement becomes an effective way to introduce and advertise a product of company or an event to the people. Advertisement is also one of many tools that can help the companies for selling what it offers to the society.
(White, 1988). The advertising companies make the advertisement by written or spoken forms. Written forms can be found in brochures, pamphlets, billboards, and etc. Whereas the spoken one can be found in commercial breaks.

Written advertisement is a type of advertising which occurs in newspaper, magazines, or other medias in which a product that can be presented as a desirable for the readers to buy (Goddard, 2002). Nowadays, language style has purpose to persuade the readers especially women. Besides, women become the target of beauty product companies. Therefore, the researcher chooses Revlon as the object of the research because Revlon is one of the most popular cosmetic products among Indonesian women and girls. It can be seen in a survey based on Beautynesia which takes a role as the biggest beauty media in Indonesia. It says that Revlon becomes one of the most well-known beauty products in Indonesia since most of women choose Revlon as their beauty products. The researcher wants to know how the advertisements work to persuade the consumers to buy and use the products. Besides, this research aims to know the language style which is used in Revlon written advertisement.

**Theoretical Review**

1. Advertisement

   Bovee and Arens (1986) define that advertisement as the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services, or ideas by identifies sponsors through various media. Meanwhile, Arens (2006) adds advertisement is about persuasive information of products (goods, services, and ideas) which usually paid by company, organization, or institution. Even though the communication process in advertisements is different from oral communication but basically is derived from basic human communication process.

2. Language Style of Advertisement

   Grey (2008) proposes a theory of language style used in advertisement. He differentiates the linguistics features of advertisement into two parts, namely lexical features and syntactic features.

   a. Lexical Features

   Lexical feature is a study of all the words in language which has a meaning and grammatical function. The goal of using lexical features in an advertisement is to make the advertisement more unique. The lexical features are discussed as follows:

   1) Hyperbole

   Hyperbole is a figurative language which is used to exaggerate something in exaggerating manner. When people are expressing their feeling or opinion they often use excessive words or sentences. This means that the purpose of using hyperbole is to affect people as well as to emphasize the meaning.

   2) Neologism

   Grey (2008) states that a neologism is created by joining several words to create entirely new word. Neologism consists of two or more combined
words to make a new word. It means that it may be impact to the consumers.

3) Weasel Word
Grey (2008) defines that weasel word suggests a meaning without actually being specific. The advertisers usually want to make the consumers curious about the products.

4) Familiar Language
The use of familiar language can give the feeling that the consumers are involved in the advertisement itself. Grey (2008) states that a familiar language is the use of second person pronouns to address the audiences and give a friendly attitude.

5) Simple Vocabulary
In an advertisement, the advertisers have to choose the most simple and clearest vocabulary. It aims to attract the consumers and can make them easily understand what the advertisement means.

6) Repetition
Based on the Grey's (2008) theory, repetition has three types. They are alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm. First, alliteration is the repetition in the initial consonant sound of a word to produce rhythmical and musical effect. Second, rhyme is a pattern of identity of sound between words extending from the end to the last fully accented vowel. Third, rhythm is a pattern produced by varying the stressed and unstressed syllables of the words.

7) Euphemism
Euphemism is a comforting or evasive expression that takes place of one that is taboo, offensive, or too direct. Euphemism is used to replace an unpleasant word or to make an indirect effect of that word is should not be said in an advertisement.

8) Humor
Grey (2008) defines that humor is a quality in something which makes it funny. Humor can be verbal or visual but the aim of humor is to show the product positively.

9) Potency
According to Grey (2008), potential words are those which are able to give new value, novelty, or immediately. Potential words can influence the audience.

b. Syntactic Features
Grey (2008) identifies that syntactical features of advertisement based on the emergence of similar grammatical structure in form of phrase. In other word, it can be said that syntactic features deal with categories of words having the same grammatical. Based on the Grey’s theory, the simplicity of advertising words can be seen from the syntactic features of advertisement.

1) Short Sentence
Consumers usually like to take a look at an advertisement in short time or just in a glance. Therefore, a short sentence can give a clear impact to the consumers when they hear or see utterances from the advertisement.

2) Long Noun Phrase
Based on Grey’s (2008), the advertisement product uses a long noun phrase to catch the audiences’ attention. Long noun phrase is a group of words which is used to describe the product. It is more efficient than a group of adjectives. A long noun phrase describes the advertised products in three or more words or two or more independent phrases to impress the audiences.

3) Ambiguity
Since this research deals with advertisement, there will be a phrase or a sentence that have more than one cognitive meaning. It calls an ambiguous phrase or sentence. The use of ambiguity is usually to direct the costumers’ curiosity to seek more information.

4) Use of Imperative
According to Grey (2008), an imperative is used to make an order. The goal of imperative is to make costumers act or to do something such as buy or use the advertised product. For instance is the phrase grab it now. It shows not literally to grab the advertisement product; however the advertisement suggests the audience to buy the advertised product.

5) Simple and Colloquial Language
Colloquial expressions do not bear the meaning they normally have (Grey, 2008). This kind of language is only used in formal expressions, namely, it ain’t half good. The usage of ain’t looks very informal and the word ain’t indicates the presence of simple and colloquial language.

6) Present Tense
Based on the Grey’s (2008) explanation, a present tense implies a universal timelessness. It is because a present tense gives condition as if in the audience can see and hear the advertisement.

7) Syntactic Parallelism
Leech (1972) defines that syntactic parallelism is a repetition of formal patterns of two or more similar ideas in similar structure forms, e.g., stay dry, stay happy which is the word happy is repeated to make the sentence more interesting because of the similar pattern.

8) Association
Grey (2008) describes that advertisements should associate the positive side of the advertised product with something else. It is often indicated by the words like and as. For example, fresh as a mountain stream. Even though words fresh and mountain stream are different things but the freshness is associated with a mountain stream.

9) Incomplete Sentence
Grey (2008) states that incomplete sentence is one of the linguistics feature of advertisements. The purpose of using incomplete sentence is making the costumers to catch the main point of the advertisement. For instance, there is a slogan from Nivea Skin Care.

3. Persuasion Techniques in Advertisement
According to Kleppner (1986), the classification of persuasive techniques is divided into marketing situation and human characteristics. There are three
persuasion techniques. Those are pioneering stage, competitive stage, and retentive stage. We can see those as follows:

a. Pioneering Stage
Pioneering stage technique is used to introduce a new variant product which has been released in the market Kleppner (1986). This technique is used by advertisers to convince the costumers that their products have good quality and it can satisfy the costumers. The advertisers also show their products to the consumers and they can find their needs by using the products. It also can be said that this technique aims to convince the consumers about their new variant product which can fulfill consumers’ need instead of their previous in market.

b. Competitive Stage
Many advertisements compete with others’ products. The advertising companies want people interested with this product. The advertisers also should be able to get the consumers’ interests by providing the uniqueness of their products. Kleppner (1986) says that the purpose of competitive stage is to communicate the products’ position of differentiate it to consumers. It means that the advertisers tell their products’ position in the market to the consumers and also tell their superiority of their products from others.

c. Retentive Stage
Retentive is known as a reminder to the consumers about the product which still exists in the market. Retentive stage is used to maintain the existence of the advertised product in the market. Most of advertisers use this technique when the advertised product has been marketeted for long time. They remind the consumers that their product still exists.

Research Method
The type of this study is qualitative and discourse analysis method since it was committed to investigating of what a language is used for. Wallen (2002) state that qualitative research is all kind of studies which investigate the quality of relationship, activities, situations, or materials. This research also associated with discourse analysis method since it analyzed about how the language is used in daily life by considering the important of the context. Based on Brown and Yule (1983) discourse analysis method is commited to an investigation of what language is used for. The research data are collected by choosing the clauses or phrases from Revlon Cosmetics which show some linguistics features and persuasion techniques.

Finding
Research findings showed that there are two linguistic features used in Revlon advertisements. They are lexical feature and syntactic feature. From the total 31 advertisements, in lexical features there are 17 phrases of hyperbole, 2 phrases of neologism, 2 phrases of weasel word, 1 phrase of familiar language, 30 phrases of simple vocabulary, 1 phrase of repetition, and 1 phrase of potency feature. Meanwhile, in syntactic feature, there are 6 sentences of short sentence,
7 long noun phrases, 3 phrases using imperative, 13 phrases of present tense, 3 phrases of syntactic paralellism, and 14 phrases of incomplete sentence. (2) the persuasion techniques that uses in Revlon are pioneering stage, competitive stage and retentive stage. (3) the most dominant linguistic feature uses in lexical feature is simple vocabulary which occured 58.82% while in syntactic feature is incomplete sentence which occured 30.43%.

Discussion
The discussions are presented in order of (1) the linguistic features used in Revlon advertisements, (2) the persuasion techniques used in Revlon advertisements and (3) the most dominant of linguistic features and persuasion techniques used in Revlon advertisements.

1. The linguistic features used in Revlon Advertisements
   a. Lexical Feature of Hyperbole
      “new for eye, new for face, new for collection”
      “fresh and shine”

      The word “new” indicates for the use of hyperbole. It means that the advertisers want to emphasize that they have a new variant of Revlon. Next, the phrase that can be indicated as hyperbole is “fresh and shine”. The word “fresh” shows an exaggeration since by using that word; the advertiser wants to attract consumers that they will find a fresh sensation of using the product.

   b. Lexical Feature of Neologism
      “Get multiple longwearing looks”
      “Longwearing brow pencil with precise tip blending brush”

      The word “longwearing” is actually the combination of the adjective “long” and the noun “wearing”. This product suggests that the brow pencil is very long lasting. It also can make consumers curious about the product because it is used uncommon word. The word itself can be common when they are used many times.

   c. Lexical Feature of Weasel Word
      “Look bolder, Last Longer”
      “It improves skin”

      From the first phrase, the word “bolder” and “longer” as well as in the word “improves” can be categorized as weasel word. Those words cannot give the specific information and do not say how much the products can be long or improve. This can affect people to find out more about the product. In addition, consumers are interested and they want to know more about the advantages of using Revlon.
d. Syntactic feature of Short Sentence

| “Love is on” |
| “Desire is on” |

From Revlon’s taglines above; it can be identified as short sentences where the sentences have subject, predicate and complement. Thus, by using this feature, the advertiser wants to persuade the consumers in an effective way and they can grab consumers’ attention easily.

e. Syntactic Feature of Long Noun Phrase

| “New Revlon super lustrous lipstick” |

Based on Grey’s theory, the noun phrase above can be categorized as a long noun phrase feature. It explains the noun which is indicates in word “lipstick”. The phrase itself describes the product which can make the consumers’ lips look beautiful. By using that phrase, the consumers feel that the product has many special qualities compare to other similar products.

f. Syntactic Feature of Present Tense

| “This color is mine. Go get your own” |
| “It improves skin” |

Those sentences above indicate as present tense since the word “go and get” has function as instruction in simple present tense. Furthermore, the word “is” as a simple present tense. The sentence which can be a simple present is “It improves skin”. The suffix –s is used to indicate 3rd person. Therefore, by using simple present tense, the advertiser wants to give consumers a sense for seeing and feeling it in real life.

2. The Persuasion Techniques Used in Revlon Advertisements

a. Pioneering Stage

| “New Revlon super lustrous lipstick, opulent shine” |
| “Instantly fuller looking lips” |
| “Lips that shine with killer color” |

Those sentences above can be categorized as pioneering stage. The word “new” indicates as a new product that has been released. Besides, the word new can make the consumers more curious about the product. In Revlon advertisements, the sentences in “Instantly fuller looking lips” and “Lips that shine with killer color” also indicate as pioneering stage. Based on the sentences above, the advertiser wants to show that the products have something special compare to others.

b. Retentive Stage

| “Love is on” |
The existance of Revlon can be seen in Revlon’s tagline “Love is on”. This sentence is the characteristics of Revlon products. When the tagline apperas, the consumers know that is Revlon so the advertisers do not put too much information since the product already marketed.

c. Competitive Stage

“Look bolder, Look Longer”
“non stop eyelashes!”
“feathery soft”

The sentence “look bolder, look longer”. This sentence indirectly wants to show to the consumers that this product is better than other cosmetics products. Another purpose of competitive stage is the advertiser should be able to give the consumers about the uniqueness of its products. It can be found in sentences “non stop eyelashes!” and “feathery soft”. From those sentences above, Revlon wants to show the uniqueness of the product which is a mascara.

Conclusion

Based on the research analysis, for the lexical features, the researcher finds 7 parts; hyperbole, neologism, weasel word, familiar language, simple vocabulary, repetition, and potency. It is similiar to lexical feature, Revlon’s advertisements do not have all the syntactic features. She only finds 6 parts of syntactic features; short sentence, long noun phrase, use of imperative, present tense, syntactic parallelism, and incomplete sentence. Meanwhile, the persuasion techniques which used in Revlon’s advertisements are pioneering stage, competitive stage, and retentive stage. Then, the most dominant of linguistic feature in this research are lexical features was simple vocabulary and incomplete sentence was the most dominant of syntactic which used in Revlon’s written advertisements.

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