
The Relevance Of Graphological Markers Of Some Print Advertisements In Warri Metropolis

By

OMEKEH AJIROGHENE

*College of Education,
Warri- Delta State*

And

MARTHA UMUKORO

*College of Education,
Warri- Delta State*

Abstract

The paper discusses the relevance of graphological markers to print advertisement with emphasis on billboards in Warri main town. A brief introduction of the term advertisement was done followed by an explanation of the terms graphology and stylistics. The writers discussed how graphological markers in an advert help to project and persuade consumers about a particular product thereby patronising it. Four adverts were used as the case study; and in them graphological markers such as capitalization, font-face, punctuation, colour display, and layout were discovered and analysed. It was discovered that these markers are major marks with which the attention of consumers could be caught and persuaded.

Advertisement and promotion are fundamental part of the society and the economic system. Advertisement cuts across newspapers, magazines, television, billboards, banners, shops, handbills, neon-signs etc. in this modern society. As insidious as they are, many people do not pay ample attention to them; even though their essence is to communicate the existence of certain products to the consumers. Nevertheless, marketers tend to impose them on consumers hence advert comes ones way even when you did not ask for it. This explains the observation of Belch and Belch (2001:vi) that “consumers are finding it increasingly difficult to avoid the efforts of marketers, who are constantly searching for new ways to communicate with them”. In trying to search for new ways to promote their product, they tend to stylistically employ some markers to put their message across. Thus, this study looks at graphological markers in some print adverts and how these markers help in projecting their message.

Graphology as The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2006:960) describes it “is the study of handwriting to analyse a person’s character” It went on to say that the word originated from Greek ‘*graphe*’ which means ‘writing’ and ‘*logos*’ which also means ‘discourse’. Thus, the word graphology means the discourse of writing. According to Leech (1969:39), “graphology is the whole writing system: punctuation and paragraph as well as spelling”. In other words, where a discourse or a print deviates from norm or convention of writing in areas such as capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, font-face, etc graphological deviation has occurred. Leech and Short (1981:131) made mention of graphological variation which they say is “a relatively minor and superficial part of style, concerning such matters as spelling, capitalization and paragraphing”. Nevertheless, such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms have been given the special name of foregrounding which invokes the analogy of a figure seen against a background (Leech 1969:59). Graphology therefore spans a very broad range of the entire writing system and these features of deviation present some meaning hence the stylistic relevance in this study.

Basically, graphology is an aspect of stylistics. The term stylistics refers to “the (linguistic) study of style” and has “implicitly or explicitly the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function” (Leech and Short 1981:11). Furthermore, Ayeomoni (2009:5)’s opinion about literary stylistics is that “it deals with relating linguistic features to context in order to make the meaning as explicit as possible, the linguistic structure of a text is analysed..... in order to understand the structure of a text and the relation between them and their meaning”. Hence, an ideal stylistic analysis as observed by Banjo (1982:6) should “proceed from analysis to synthesis and then to the effectiveness of the use of language in the text to an examination of the way in which linguistic devices are used to build up and reference the meaning of the text”. However, a study of this nature goes beyond the description of linguistic features to identify and explain the motivation for the choice of these linguistic characteristics, in order to interpret their communicative value in the text. These graphological features signify meaning hence their stylistic significance in this study of advert texts. In this paper, the graphological features such as capitalization, font-face, colours, punctuation, layout, spelling and paragraphing will be looked at as well as their stylistic relevance to the advert.

Brief Review of Some Related Literature

In this aspect of the study, a review of some related studies to this paper is presented. A brief review is done on style, advertisement and graphological deviations. According to Spencer and Gregory (1964:69-70), “stylistic studies are primarily concerned with the examination of written language. It might be thought therefore that phonology has little to contribute..... when studying style we are usually faced with written texts, graphic substances”. Their view about stylistic is that graphic materials

are more relevant to stylistic analysis than phonic materials even though some phonic deviations could be found in some cases. Thus, the stylistic choices or patterns vis-à-vis language enhance the marketability of the product, services and ideas being advertised. Written language involves graphological markers and as Cook (1992:23) puts it, they are “carried by marks on a prepared surface such as paper or painted metal, by points of light on screen, or by three dimensional letters such as those used in neon signs ” Crystal and Davy (1969:16-17), are of the opinion that the study of written or printed shapes has hardly been developed even when it has become obvious through linguistic analysis that isolated sounds and shapes may have a definite aesthetic appeal, may be interpreted as reflecting aspects of reality or conveying a meaning residing wholly in the intrinsic properties of the spoken or written physical event. They went further to say that matters such as the choice of type-size or colour in a text are essentially non-linguistic, but they may have clear linguistic implications, perhaps relating to the semantic structure of the utterance as in advertising. Basically, their postulation lays emphasis on the persuasive relevance of graphological markers in print adverts as these markers place very important highlight on the lexical items.

Advertising is all about communication that is geared towards creating awareness of a certain good or service. Hence, Oyakhire and Omenogor (2009:42) explained that “no manufacturer or producer of goods will finish his or her goods and assume that the consumer will purchase them without creating in them the awareness of the product” They went further to explain that “advertisements are designed to catch a person’s attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the readers thinking about the advertisement after they have gone past it” (43). In other words, it is not enough for a manufacturer to produce goods and services; but the more important aspect is getting the public awareness which is what advert is about. Consequently, advertising is seen as a specialized form of communication because it performs marketing and information functions (Oheneme and Okwilagüe 2009:2).

Advertising as Kpolugbo (2010:9) puts it “provides the style analyst with a rich source of text, and at the same time provides students with access to prominent and persuasive use of language in context”. In other words, the role of persuasion performed by adverts through the writer’s choice of style cannot be overemphasised,. Hence, this paper looks at the graphological relevance of some print advertisements that adopt markers such as capitalization, font face, colours, punctuations, layout, spelling and paragraphing. This is to show how linguistic forms could stylistically project the persuasion intended in the adverts. As such, the analysis will lay emphasis on the markers mentioned above.

Capitalization and Font-Face

Conventionally, capital letters are used for headings, subheadings and the beginning of a sentence. It is also used for proper nouns and titles. But if it is used outside this, it becomes deviation which could result from the writers' style. But in billboard advertisements, it is used to emphasise important words thus making the reader to focus on them.

Advert 1

DONOSULF

SULPHUR OINTMENT U.S.P

For Skin Infections
MARKETED BY

Tetee Pharmaceutical and Chemicals Ltd

..... Promotes Your Beauty

This advert is about a beauty care product named sulphur ointment. The trademark is **DONOSULF**. Looking at the font-face, the trade name is written in capital letters, extra large and extra bold prints. The boldness of the font-face is for captivation. In other words, one cannot easily miss it out when you come across it. It therefore suggests that there could be other sulphur ointments in the market, but your attention is being drawn to this more important one –**DONOSULF**. In other words, do not go for any other one but **DONOSULF**. Just after the trade name is the product name written in capitals but not as bold as the trade name- **SULPHUR OINTMENT U.S.P**. Put together, this could also suggest the newness of the product in the market. At the left hand side is the marketers' name and it is written in small letters. This character size tells us that it is not as significant as the brand name.

Advert 2

D V C C

The Wonderful Experience

Extex Industries Limited

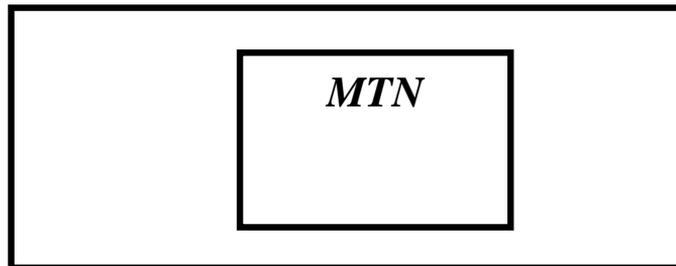
The brand name for this advert is **DVCC**. It is written in a very bold and capitalized font-size which makes it super-ordinate. The boldness and the capitalization of the font emphasised that the main thing being advertised is the brand name **DVCC**. Again, though the producer of this product is also written in capital and bold font, the size cannot be compared to that of the brand name which indicates that there could be other products in the market but **DVCC** is the perfect and wonderful one to give you the desired experience. The slogan '**The wonderful experience**' is written in the lower case but highlighted which shows not much importance is given to it but you need to know that the product has something wonderful to offer.

Colour

Typically, colours depict aesthetic value in billboard advertisements. In other words, beauty is enhanced with the use of colours; thus giving the advert a captivating and persuasive appearance. It could therefore be said that bright colours are attention catching.

Advert 3

Share the joy!



This advert which is one of the GSM networks in Nigeria has a brand name *MTN* written in italics with bold white and yellow colours against a blue background. It has a slogan '**share the joy**' which is written in black colour and all these are against a yellow background. The 'T' in the brand name *MTN* is written in yellow colour thus displaying the traditional yellow colour of *MTN*. These different colours in the brand name written in capital letters, italics and superimposed in the yellow colour indicate that the emphasis is on the brand name. The colour combination is so captivating that from a distance consumers could easily fall for it. This is the power of persuasion.

Punctuation

As Enighe and Afangideh (2001:102) put it, "punctuation is a device which helps in modifying our writing thereby giving support and helping us to communicate

effectively when we write without being misconstrued". Traditionally, various punctuations exist such as the full-stop, exclamation mark, ellipsis, comma etc. For instance, in advert 1, there is the use of ellipsis in the slogan '...*promotes your beauty*' which indicates there is an omission of a word or group of words that is considered not very important to the advert except the above which attest to the efficacy of the product. Sometimes, it is used to economise space in the billboard. It may also be used in order for the readers to imagine what could have been omitted.

Additionally, the slogan in advert 3 '*Share the joy!*' has an exclamation mark at the end of it. The importance of the exclamation mark is to place emphasis on the slogan thus telling the consumers how imperative the product could be.

Layout

Advert 4

FEEL it with

DELIRIOUS Gel
DELIRIOUS Gel
DELIRIOUS Gel

This product is a body cream used to smoothen to remove blemishes and maintain a smooth skin. In this advert, only one clause is displayed across the billboard. The brand name is capitalized and displayed in three different lines or written on top of each other repeatedly '**DELIRIOUS Gel**'. You can see **DELIRIOUS** which indicates emphasis and the repetition of it in a row arrangement makes it very outstanding and captivating that it cannot escape anyone who comes across it. So, the deliberate repetition is to draw the attention of consumers to the product.

Conclusion

What we did in this paper is to examine an aspect of stylistics which is graphological markers of billboards advertisements in Warri metropolis. It is revealed that the features discovered such as capitalization, font-face, colour distinction, punctuation etc are employed deliberately to give attention to the product in question. It is also discovered that the copywriters use capitalization, font-face, and colours more often than other graphological markers in advertisement. All these are employed to persuade consumers on the brand of product they should go for.

References

Ayeomoni, M. (2009). *Language and Deterministic Ideology in William Blakes Peotry: A Case Study of 'Columbus'* (ed). Mowarin M. Abraka Humanities Review. Ibadan: Abraka Press.

The Relevance Of Graphological Markers Of Some Print Advertisements In Warri Metropolis
Omekeh Ajiroghene and Martha Umukoro

- Banjo, A. (1982). "*The Linguistic Factor in African Literature*". A Keynote address. (A Paper Presented at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan).
- Belch, George E. & Michael A. Belch. (2001). *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*. (5th ed) Boston: McGraw Hill Irwin.
- Cook, Guy. (1992). *The Discourse of Advertising*. London: Longman.
- Crystal, D. & Derek Davy. *Investigating English Style*. London: Longman.
- Enighe, Jenno-Mary & Afangideh, Maria Emman. (2001). *A Guide to Basic English*. Jos: Lecaps.
- Kpolugbo, S. N. (2010). *The Graphological Significance of Nigerian Print Advertisements*". Unpublished
- Leech, Geoffrey N. (1969). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. London: Longman.
- Leech, Geoffrey N. & Michael Short. (1981). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to Fictional Prose*. London: Longman.
- Spencer, John, & Michael Gregory. (1964) "*An Approach to the Study of Style*" *Linguistics and Style*. (Ed). N.E Enkvist et al. London: Longman.
- Oheneme M.H. & Okwilagie A. O. (2009) "*A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of Some Selected Bill Board Advertisement in Ibadan Metropolis*" in *Natecep Journal of English and Communication Studies*. Vol.5. Kaduna: Cross Point.
- Oyakhire F. F. O. & Omenogor H. D. (2009) "*Language of Advertisement: A Graphological Analysis of Billboards Advertisements in Warri Metropolis*" in *NATECEP Journal of English and Communication Studies*. Vol.5. Kaduna: Cross Point.
- The Oxford Dictionary of Current English. 3rd ed. 2001.