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AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL COHESIVE DEVICES IN FUNCTIONAL FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

Phân tích các phương tiện liên kết từ vựng trong quảng cáo thực phẩm chức năng trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt

THESIS SUMMARY

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

1. **Rationale for the study**

Reasons for choosing functional food advertisements (FFAs) for analysis

Functional foods are an emerging field in food science due to their increasing popularity with health-conscious consumers. With its easy use, ability to support good health with nutrients and improve the immune system, functional food is winning the hearts of more and more consumers. As a matter of fact, functional foods seem to be sort of new to a large number of Vietnamese people. There exist different ideas, even contrary ideas on this new kind of product. The idea of investigating this kind of product to have a better understanding on it comes deeply to my mind.

Advertisements are so available around us that we cannot help taking notice of them. They are informative and keep us in touch with the world. We can see them in newspapers, magazines, radios, televisions, or public places. It is the fact that they play a remarkably important role in the socio-economy of any country. For this reason, I decide to involve myself in the field of advertising.

Reasons for investigating lexical cohesive devices

It is noticeable that many researches on cohesive devices and particularly on lexical cohesive devices have been carried out in many discourses and genres. Also, many studies of advertising discourse have focused on the language used in advertisements. However, none has been done to functional food advertisements.

2. Aims of the study

The study serves four main aims:

- to give a brief overview on discourse and discourse analysis with the two related aspects: cohesion and coherence.

- to give a general understanding of the notion "*functional food*" and the language of advertising.

- to investigate and describe the employment of lexical cohesive devices in this type of advertisement to work out their cohesive functions in particular, their roles in general in the creation of successful advertisements.

- to make a comparative analysis of lexical cohesion between English and Vietnamese FFAs.

3. Research questions of the study

In order to achieve the aims stated above, the study is meant to find out the answers to 4 following research questions:

- What are the lexical cohesive devices used in English FFAs and Vietnamese ones?

- What are the frequencies of occurrence of these lexical cohesive devices?

- How do lexical cohesive devices contribute to the success of a functional food advertisement?

- What are the similarities and differences in the employment of lexical cohesive devices between English samples and Vietnamese ones?

4. Significance of the study

This study contributes to verify the correctness and significance related to linguistic theories in discourse analysis by working on a certain kind of discourse (Functional Food Advertisements). Together with some previous studies on discourse analysis of advertising, the study covers another research on another type of advertising - Functional Food Advertisements. It can be a useful analysis to understand the role and contribution of lexical cohesive devices to successful FFAs.

Especially, this study is of great importance to me; it reflects my interest and concern about advertisement genre, this study is a valuable assertion on my effort to sort out the kinds of magazine and collect the advertisement samples. More importantly, thanks to this study, I could create a worthy opportunity for myself to have a true and deep understanding on a new and blooming kind of product in the world in general, in Vietnam in particular, then it is my hope that this study can contribute to raising people's awareness of functional foods and FFAs.

Last but not least, this study can be a foundation for further studies on analysis of Function Food advertising in the light of other linguistic branches such as pragmatics, semantics.

5. Scope of the study

Due to the limited time and knowledge, it is not my ambition to have a comprehensive analysis of FFAs. I merely focus on the lexical cohesive devices in the advertisements for only one kind of products namely FFAs. The investigation on one of two main aspects of cohesion, grammatical one, is beyond of the scope of this study, and this issue should be left for further study.

The samples include 10 English FFAs and Vietnamese ones with equivalent number for the purpose of contrastive analysis. All the data collected will be analyzed to explore their contribution to the creation of the cohesive and coherent text with precision, unambiguity, and tightness.

6. Methodology

Description of data:

Subjects for this study are advertisements of functional foods, a large number of which can be found on televisions, on newspapers, on the internet, and so on. However, this study focuses on samples of advertisements taken out from some magazines in both English and Vietnamese because magazines are one of written discourses in which the author can find it easier to explore lexical cohesive devices and their role and contribution to the effective advertisements. Moreover, FFAs are not frequently found in newspapers. That is the reason why the genre *"magazines"* is chosen as the source to collect the data for the study.

Specifically, 10 English samples of FFAs are collected from some favorite and famous magazines including *Women's Weekly, Female,* and *Glamour*. Among a variety of magazines in Vietnamese, *Tiếp thị và gia đình,Phụ nữ, Thế giới phụ nữ,* and *Truyền hình* are also chosen as the source of data. In these, 10 advertisements for functional foods are picked up. These magazines are chosen for data collection because of their common characteristics. Firstly, all of these magazines have the section *"advertisements"* which are popular among customers who are able to afford to buy such kinds of products as functional foods. Secondly, the target markets of all these magazines are mainly the women who can be reached by their care of their health and beauty. Lastly, these female customers are clearly more eligible than male ones.

All 10 samples in English language are for the products originated from English-speaking countries, whereas 8 samples in Vietnamese language are for products produced in Vietnam, the three other ones in Thailand, Sweden and China. For these, Vietnamese copywriters / advertisers either create advertisements for them or translate original advertisements into Vietnamese ones.

Methods of the study:

- Deductive method: this is a study from discourse analysis approach, focusing on lexical cohesion, thus descriptions and interpretations undeniably base on the works of a few prominent authors and their contributions to related fields such as discourse analysis, cohesion. Besides, a framework about the functional food products and language of advertising is set up in order to find out the defining characteristics of functional foods and FFAs.

- Inductive method: As introduced in the previous part, the study is aimed to explore the types of lexical cohesive devices used in FFAs .Consequently; I will arrive at generalizations of explanations and form questions for further research.

- Qualitative and quantitative methods: Qualitative method helps the study approach the advertising samples, then find out general features of these advertisements. After the

qualitative analysis, the data is also quantitatively analyzed. This quantitative is exploited most of the time to search for what the lexical cohesive devices are used.

- Descriptive method: In the investigation of data, the descriptive method is employed to give a detailed description of data in terms lexical cohesion. It is through this process that the significance level of each lexical cohesive device to the advertisements is specified.

7. Design of the study

Within the scope mentioned above, the thesis is structured as follows:

Part A: INTRODUCTION

This part introduces the rationale, aims, methods, scope, significance, and the design of the study.

Part B: DEVELOPMENT

This part consists of three chapters:

Chapter 1: Theoretical Background & Review of Related Literature which covers some theoretical knowledge on discourse analysis in general, on cohesive devices in particular.

Chapter 2: An overview on Functional Foods & Functional Food Advertisements. This chapter deals firstly with the defining characteristics of FFs (Functional Foods) and then with advertising discourse together with general descriptions of FFAs.

Chapter 3: An analysis of lexical cohesive devices in English and Vietnamese FFAs. The third chapter in Part B, also the main one of the study, focused on the analysis of the lexical cohesive devices employed..

Part C: CONCLUSION: Firstly, I attempt to present recapitulation with some major findings. Finally, some limitations and suggestions are mentioned.

PART B: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1: **Theoretical Background & Review of Related Literature**

This chapter aims at dealing with theoretical framework of the study. The chapter begins with a brief view on discourse and discourse analysis. In this part, some important concepts in discourse analysis will be looked at, such as discourse and text, spoken and written discourse, and context in discourse analysis. Then, the study investigates the notion *"cohesion"* which will be broken into the concept of cohesion, cohesion and coherence, and classification of cohesion. The writer of this study takes the view of Halliday and Hasan as the theoretical framework.

1.1. Discourse and discourse analysis

1.1.1. The concept of discourse

There are different ways of understanding and defining "*discourse*". A number of definitions of discourse have been offered. It is a fact that the term *"discourse"* is very ambiguous. This notion should be investigated along with the notion *"text.*

1.1.2. Spoken and Written Discourse

DA (Discourse Analysis) is not only concerned with the description and analysis of spoken interaction. It is clear that we daily consume hundreds of written and printed words: newspapers, letters, emails, instructions, notices, leaflets, billboards, and advertisements. We -the readers- of course, expect them to be coherent, meaningful communications in which the words and/ or sentences are linked to one another. From that point, discourse analysts are equally interested in written interaction. Therefore, the term *DA* could be used to cover the study both spoken and written discourse

1.1.3. Discourse Analysis

DA is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used.

1.1.4. Context in Discourse Analysis

Halliday & Hasan (1989:12) suggest a three-component model of context: field (of discourse), tenor (of discourse), and mode (of discourse). The mode of context can be represented as follows:

a. Field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place.

b. Tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses, and roles. It is the tenor that relays the relationship between the addressee and the addresser.

c. Mode of discourse refers to what part the language is playing, what is it that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation.

1.2. Cohesion

1.2.1.The concept of cohesion

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976:7), cohesion refers to the "*non-structural text-forming relations*". They state that *"the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define the text*".

1.2.2. Classification of cohesion

Lexical Cohesion	
Reiteration	Same word/ repetition
	Synonym/ near synonym
	Super-ordinates
	General words
Collocation	Noun + Noun
	Verb + Noun
	Adjective + Noun
	Verb + Verb
	Adverb + Verb
	Adverb + Adjective
	Adjective + Preposition
	Verb + Preposition
	Preposition + Noun

Table 1: Types of lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan,1976:288, 1976:303-304)

Chapter 2: An overview of Functional Food and Functional Food Advertisements

In the previous chapter, we have mentioned the theoretical background of the study with some key information on discourse and discourse analysis. In order to complete the theoretical picture of this minor thesis, it is necessary to take into account also a brief understanding on the controversial notion *"Functional Foods"* (FFs) in general and *"Functional Food Advertisements"* (FFAs) in particular.

2.1. The notion of Functional Food

The term *"functional foods"* was first introduced in Japan in the mid-1980s and refers to processed foods containing ingredients that aid specific bodily functions in addition to being nhutritious. Clearly, most foods are functional in some way. What makes a *"functional food"*, however, is its potential ability to positively affect health.

2.2. Functional Food Advertisements

In the previous part, I attempted to examine the notion *"functional food"*. In this part, I shall first have a brief look at the notion "advertising" with the functions, strategies, and languages investigated. Then, Functional Food Advertisements will be taken into consideration in terms of the context and the structure.

Chapter 3: An analysis of lexical cohesive devices in FFAs

In the previous chapter, we have discussed some prominent features of FFs as well as FFAs. This chapter deals with the use of lexical cohesive devices in FFAs in English and Vietnamese. The analysis process is mainly based on the linguistic views of Halliday & Hasan.

3.1. An overview of Lexical Cohesive Devices in English and Vietnamese FFAs

Understanding comprehensively the uses and the functions of the lexical cohesive devices will help the writer create effectively cohesive and coherent texts. Functional food advertisements are no exception. As mentioned in the theoretical background of the language of advertising, FFAs also take advantage of the strengths of "*block language*", particularly; words and phrases are frequently used instead of clauses and sentences. However, those single words and phrases are not separate from one another. They cohere together tightly to partly create the stable structure of each FFAs.

Within the limit of the minor thesis, I only focus on investigating lexical cohesive devices which have a great contribution to effective and coherent texts in FFAs.

After looking through all 20 FFAs (both in English and Vietnamese) selected and careful investigating the written discourse of those data, I can present an overall picture of the occurrence of lexical cohesive devices in Table 2 below:

Table 2: The frequency of occurrence of lexical cohesive devices

in English and Vietnamese FFAs

Types of lexical cohesive devices	Frequency of occurrence in English FFAs (%)	Frequency of occurrence in Vietnamese FFAs (%)
Repetition	35.9%	29.6%
Synonyms	5.1%	3.4%
Near- synonyms	3.7%	10.5%
Super-ordinates	4.6%	6.6 %
General words	2%	2.5%
Collocation	48.7%	47.4%

Part C: CONCLUSION

1. Finding summary

The study gives an overall look into the lexical cohesive devices used in some English and Vietnamese FFAs. The lexical cohesive devices are employed to create cohesion and coherence of the discourse

Though I spend such a long time studying 20 samples of FFAs, it is not enough to investigate all the interesting elements of this kind of advertisements. The analysis of the data reveals many worth-considered results. The findings from the data analysis show that the two kinds of discourse, English FFAs and Vietnamese ones have both similarities and differences in terms of the features of FFAs and in terms of the employment of lexical cohesive devices. However, it is noteworthy that the similarities seem to be much more than the differences because of the some reasons; firstly, some FFAs originally in English are translated into Vietnamese ones, secondly, Vietnamese writers are fully aware of the language of advertising as well as the writing style of English writers, and then they can imitate their ways.

Similarities in the use of lexical cohesive devices between Vietnamese and English FFAs

+ In terms of the features of written functional food advertisements chosen:

- All of the advertisements studied share the same way of structuring, that is, they consist of three parts: Headline, Body Copy, and Tagline. These parts relate to one another by cohesive devices.

- They also share the same limited length. Actually, all of them are written in one-page length. One- page space is enough for the writer to combine the text with the image to create an effective advertisement.

- As far as the language of advertising concerned, both of English and Vietnamese FFAs obtain the typical language of advertising - the block language - which is very brief, informative and persuasive. One prominent feature of the language of FFAs is that it should be clear and easy to understand. This is because the target market of these kinds of advertisements is the whole population of that society.

- The lines of functional food products advertised are so diversified. It can be a product to help people gain or lose weight, a product to help bones stronger, or one to help skin smoother. However, all of these products can be grouped into two main kinds: one aims at people's health and the other aims at people's well-being or beauty.

+ In terms of the employment of lexical cohesive devices, the corpus reveals many interesting results in 2 aspects: reiteration and collocation.

Findings about collocation:

• As far as collocation concerned, both English and Vietnamese FFAs see the highest proportion of collocation employed.

• In all advertising samples, it is probably easy to understand why chains of lexical collocation occur so often. The lexical chains efficiently bring about the cohesion for the whole discourse as readers can be involved in a smooth running of vocabulary.

- Of 8 subtypes of grammatical collocation chosen to analyze in this study, Adj + N pattern is the most frequently- used.

- It can be clearly seen from both kinds of data that the part of speech Noun collocates with itself or another part of speech to create a large number of Noun- collocations which account for up to four fifth in the whole pool of collocation.

- Both English and Vietnamese FFAs exploit the verb *"help"* repeatedly. This verb collocates with another following verb to create V + V collocation. This pattern seems to become typical among functional food advertisements.

Findings about reiteration:

- In every advertisement chosen, it is easy to find out a lot of collocation, repetition, synonyms and near-synonyms. However, two other kinds of lexical cohesive devices including super-ordinates and general words may be not easily noticed. As mentioned earlier, *"general words"* is the least common type in both English and Vietnamese FFAs.

- In the use of repetition, it is found that both English and Vietnamese copywriters are in favor of noun repetition. This can be explained by the gender of the discourse. It is clearly seen that repetition is really a useful device in creating accuracy in a text in general and in FFAs in particular.

Differences in the use of lexical cohesive devices between Vietnamese and English FFAs

Apart from the common things shared by both kinds of data above, it is worthwhile to mention here few differences between them:

- Grammatical and lexical collocations in Vietnamese FFAs are employed at the comparatively similar rate whereas English writers show preference to grammatical collocation.

- Vietnamese advertisers seem to be in more favor of using adjectives to combine with other parts of speech to create grammatical collocation than English ones.

In summary, this study partly has all 4 aims or objectives in Introduction part reached, with the hope that it can stretch a theoretical understanding on discourse and discourse analysis, as well as a brief introduction on FFs and FFAs. Mainly, cohesive relations (in terms of lexical cohesive devices) of FFAs are investigated. The corpus reveals many interesting results as mentioned above.

3. Limitation of the study

The various types of lexical cohesion mentioned cannot complete picture of cohesive functions in general. Like any study, there exist some limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample population of FFAs was not really large and various to allow many generalizations

about the use of lexical cohesive devices. Secondly, the study could only focus on one type of cohesion- the lexical one - without taking the grammatical cohesion into consideration, which evidently results in a shortcoming in the overall comprehension of cohesion in English. Lastly, all the lexical cohesive devices are reflected through examples. However, some examples have not been analyzed yet on an account of the shortage of length of this study.

4. Suggestions for further study

As mentioned earlier in the scope part, this thesis is only a partial investigation into lexical cohesive devices occurred in a group of FFAs in both English and Vietnamese. Therefore, there are many aspects uncovered. It is the hope of the study that further studies on the following areas should be investigated:

- Grammatical cohesion used in English and Vietnamese FFAs.

- Grammatical and lexical cohesion in other genres.

- A study on FFAs in the lights of other approach (e.g. the pragmatics)

- A study on non-linguistic features of FFAs.

- A study on translating English FFAs into Vietnamese FFAs.

- A contrastive analysis of FFAs in English and Vietnamese (in the light of pragmatics)

- Investigation into advertisements of other kinds of functional products.

Due to the constraints in time, the framework of a minor M.A thesis as well as limited knowledge of the author, mistakes are inevitable. I wish to have valuable comments from my instructor.