

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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NGUYỄN THỊ DIỆU HẢO

**LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF
RECREATION ACTIVITIES ADVERTISEMENTS
IN ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE**

Field: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Supervisor: **Nguyễn Thị Quỳnh Hoa, Ph.D.**

Examiner 1: Assoc.Prof.Dr. Phan Văn Hòa

Examiner 2: Assoc.Prof.Dr. Trần Văn Phước

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- The College of Foreign Languages Library, The University of Danang
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Language is an important means of communication and thinking. Language informs, persuades, queries, expresses emotions and allows transmission of ideas. Thanks to language, people can communicate with each other, compose many artful plays, masterpieces or they can use language for their own purposes in advertising and marketing.

Advertisement has become a crucial part in our life because it is the leading method used to promote products to customers. As society evolves, the advertising industry orients itself accordingly. Via mass media, newspapers, magazines, Television, advertising arts and culture have been highly developed to capture the attention of potential customers on the market. Useful advertisement tools are used to reach people to appeal to them with products and services. In recent years, many kinds of recreation have been developed to meet customers' requirements. Particularly, children, adolescents, family and women are now the targets of intense and specialized recreation and advertising efforts. Many techniques, channels are used to advertise as well as attract these potential and targeted customers.

Therefore, understanding the needs of recreation activities advertisements to our life, the researcher made a decision to carry out a study entitled "Linguistic features of recreation activities advertisements in English versus Vietnamese". It is hoped that through the use of discourse analysis approach, the genre of biography can be comprehensively investigated.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The aim of the research is to examine linguistic features of English Recreation Activities Advertisements (ERAds) versus Vietnamese Recreation Activities Advertisements (VRAds) in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices.

1.2.2. Objectives

The study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Investigating syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices in English Recreation Activities Advertisements (ERAds) versus Vietnamese Activities Recreation Advertisements (VRAds).

- Analyzing and comparing the similarities and differences between ERAds and VRAds in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices

Suggesting some implications for Vietnamese learners of English and for those who find recreation advertisements interesting

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the syntactic features and speech acts of ERAds and VRAds?

2. What are the stylistic devices employed in ERAds and VRAds?

3. What are the similarities and differences between ERAds and VRAds in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In the scope of my thesis, I have no ambition to cover all aspects of the language of advertising. Instead, I mainly focus on the

syntactic features, the speech acts and the stylistic devices of ERAds and VRAds. Sounds in these recreation activities advertisements are out of the scope of the study.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of five main chapters:

- Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION
- Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
- Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
- Chapter 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
- Chapter 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Up to now, there have been a lot of studies and researches investigating recreation activities and advertisement.

- “*Advertising language*” by Tanaka [57] analyzes linguistic devices used in advertisements as well as metaphors, relevance theory as a framework to provide a compelling analysis of the language of advertising.

- “*Discourse of advertising*” by Cook [35] analyzes advertising as discourse, examines the advertisements textual and contextual features in a bottom-up approach that allow identifying their interaction and combinations..

- In “*advertising language*”, Delin [39] also describes the different media available to advertisers, the different goals that adverts can have, and the different approaches to persuasion that can be used in advertising.

- In Vietnam, a number of linguists and researchers have approached advertising and advertising language to analyze the linguistic usage and cultural impacts in the works such as: “*Kỹ Thuật Quảng Cáo*” by Huỳnh Văn Tòng [5], “*Ngôn Ngữ Quảng Cáo*” by Lưu Trọng Tuấn [6] and “*Ngôn Ngữ Quảng cáo dưới ánh sáng của lý thuyết giao tiếp*” by Mai Xuân Huy [4]

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Advertisements and Language of Advertisements

a. Advertisement

According to Cook [35], advertisement means “*clearly identifiable, paid for communications in the media, which aims to persuade, inform or sell.*”. In today's world, advertisement uses every possible media to get its message through such as print (newspapers, magazines, journals, etc), radio, press, internet, direct selling, mailers, contests, sponsorships, posters, clothes, events, etc.

b. Language of advertisements

According to Goddard [47], “*advertising language has such typical characteristics as legality, theoretical, factual foundation, national characteristic, popularity, vividness and multi-stylistics*”. That is the reason why in order to attract customers with clear advertisement messages, the language should be clear, meaningful, distinctive, persuasive.

c. Types of Advertising

Nowadays, various kinds of advertising have been used to attract potential customers with different needs. Virtually any media can be used for advertising purpose. The advertising media includes various mediums like billboards, radio, cinema, internet, magazines, newspaper, etc.

2.2.2. Recreation Activities and Recreation Activities Advertisements

a. Recreation

Yukic [63] introduces the definition of recreation as an act or experience that each person can have during his or her leisure time.

In this sense, Yukic [63] pointed that the act or experience of recreation is “*selected by the individual during his leisure time, to meet a personal want or desire, primarily for his own satisfaction.*”

b. Recreation Activities

Recreational activities are actions that are performed solely for the enjoyment, pleasure and amusement of individuals. Recreational activities are fun, mentally or physically engaging activities that people usually plan to do during their time off from work or school. Some examples of recreational activities include bowling, swimming, kite flying, bird watching, surfing, dancing, playing cards and watching movies.

c. Recreation Activities Advertisements

Recreation activities advertisements refer to all ads which are published through various media or in various forms to provide as well as attract customers with full information about price, services, organization, programs and so on for helping customers choose the way to relax. Cook [35] stated that “*There are many ads in which pictures and music are the essence of the communication: creating mood, imparting information, persuading*”. Therefore, recreation advertisements must be informative, reliable and persuasive.

2.2.3. Syntax and Syntactic Features

Syntax is the study of the structural rules of language and the bodies of rules themselves. Chomsky [34] stated that: “*syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages*”.

a. The Passive Voice

Quirk et al [53] stated that “*the purely definition of the passive, viz that the clause contains the construction be (or get) + -ed participle*”. For example: This violin *was made* by my father; or we *are encouraged* to go on with the project.

b. Conditional sentences

The form of conditionals is different from other structures in English because they have two clauses: a main clause and a subordinate clause. Quirk et al [53] stated that conditional sentences express the dependence of one set of circumstances (i.e., the result clause) on another (i.e., the "if" clause). In addition, the ordering of the two clauses can be reversed in most cases.

c. The imperative sentences

According to Quirk et al [53] “*Imperative sentences are used for a wide range of illocutionary acts*” because illocutionary depends on the relation as well as on the benefits of the action between the speakers and the hearers.

2.2.4. Speech Acts

a. Theory of Speech Acts

Talking about speech acts, we cannot help mentioning about pragmatics because it is the study of speaker’s meaning; it deals more with the interpretation of what people mean by their utterances than what the utterances actually mean by themselves. Besides, Yule [62] points out that pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said. This refers to the investigation of what is unsaid.

Austin [30] stated, “*speech acts are speakers’ utterances which convey meaning and make listeners do specific things*”.

Speech acts are determined by the context where multiple factors affect the speakers' utterances.

b. Types of Speech Act

According to Yule [62], there are five types of general functions of speech acts: Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, Declaratives.

2.5. Stylistic Devices

a. Theory of Stylistic Devices

According to Jefferies and McIntyre [41], “*stylistics has a firm place within linguistics, providing theories of language and interpretation which complement context-free theories generated within other areas of language study*”.

b. Functions of Stylistic Devices (Rhetoric)

There are many types of stylistic devices such as irony, metaphor, rhetorical questions, personification, repetition, simile, hyperbole,

In the scope of study, I mainly focus on the stylistic devices such as: repetition, personification, simile and hyperbole.

2.3. SUMMARY

This chapter presents an overview of the important related studies of advertisements, advertising language, recreation activities, recreation activities advertisements, as well as the theories preliminaries in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices. As for the examining of syntactic features, sentences types will be examined. Instances of speech acts and stylistic devices in recreation activities advertisements in English versus Vietnamese will be mainly focused in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

With the aim of achieving the set goal, several methods such as the qualitative and quantitative methods were simultaneously employed.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS

- Descriptive method: the collected data will be carefully described to find out the features of discourse analysis on Recreation Activities Advertisements

- Analatical method: extends the descriptive approach to suggest or explain why or how linguistic features in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices effect on Recreation Activities Advertisements

- Contrastive method: is used to compare the discourse in English versus Vietnamese to find out the similarities and differences in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices.

- Discourse analysis method: analyzes the communication with through language within a social setting because a study of communication can be divided into four elements (sender, message code, receiver and channel), or a set of signs with syntactical organization and semantic relationships.

- Data analysis method: organizes and presents collected data in a clear and systematic way, so that the analysis can result in valid and accurate conclusions.

3.3. SAMPLING

In Vietnamese:

Table 3.1. Length of Vietnamese recreation activities advertisements

50 – 150 words	150 – 350 words	350 – 500 words
22 samples	60 samples	18 samples

In English:

Table 3.2. Length of English recreation activities advertisements

50 – 150 words	150 – 350 words	350 – 500 words
15 samples	60 samples	25 samples

The table shows that majority of the samples is from 150 to 350 words. Therefore, 60 ERAds and 60 VRAds from 150 to 350 words from prestigious websites in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom were selected.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

The data for the recreation activities research are collected from the official websites of Vietnam and English speaking countries namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected will be mainly analyzed on the basis of the following points:

- Firstly, the sample must be an advertisement of recreation activities
- Secondly, the sample must be taken from an official websites of Vietnam and English-speaking countries namely the United States of America, Australia and the United Kingdom
- Thirdly, the sample must be in the form of a written text

- Finally, based on the collected data, a comparison will be carried out to distinguish the differences and similarities between two languages.

3.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

- Reading the previous studies to choose the topic and discussing with the supervisor to orientate the problems relating to the thesis.

- Going to the library to read books.

- Choosing and classifying the suitable data.

- Analyzing the advertisements to find out the features of each group and compare the differences and similarities between ERAds and VRAds.

3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF RECREATION
ACTIVITIES ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH VERSUS
VIETNAMESE**

4.1.1. The passive voice

According to Quirk et al. [53], the passive voice is used to show interest in the person or object that experiences an action rather than the person or object that performs the action. In other words, the thing or person in the passive form becomes the subject of the sentence. Besides, the passive voice allows writers to highlight the most important participants or events within sentences by placing them at the beginning of the sentence. In ERAds and VRAds, the passive voice is used not only to emphasize the activities' features, but it also offers an impression that the readers will be able to fully experience that activities that they are involved in.

In English

Table 4.1. Frequency of the passive voice in ERAds

The Passive Voice	ERAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Hilighting the activities' features	32	47.8
Highlighting the benefits for the customers	35	52.2
Total	67	100

In Vietnamese

Table 4.2. Frequency of the passive voice in VRAds

The Passive Voice	VRAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Hilighting the activities' features	23	67.6
Highlighting the benefits for the customers	11	32.4
Total	34	100

4.1.2. Imperative Sentences

Table 4.3. Distribution of affirmative imperative and negative imperative sentences in ERAds

Imperative sentences	ERAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Affirmative Imperative	130	91.5
Negative Imperative	12	8.5
Total	142	100

Table 4.4. Distribution of affirmative imperative and negative imperative sentences in VRAds

Imperative sentences	VRAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Affirmative Imperative	50	86.2
Negative Imperative	8	13.8
Total	58	100

4.1.3. Conditional Sentences

In English

Table 4.5. Distribution of conditional sentences' purposes in ERAds

Conditional sentences	ERAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Giving offers to customers	16	59.3
Giving guidance and warning to customers	11	40.7
Total	27	100

In Vietnamese

Table 4.6. Distribution of conditional sentences' purposes in VRAds

Conditional sentences	VRAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Giving offers to customers	9	47.4
Giving guidance and warning to customers	10	52.6
Total	19	100

In summary, the tables below show the distribution of sentences types in **ERAds** and **VRAds**

In English*Table 4.7. Distribution of sentences types in ERAds*

Sentences Types	ERAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
The Passive Voice (P.A)	67	28.4
The Imperative Sentences (I.S)	142	60.2
The Conditional Sentences (C.S)	27	11.4
Total	236	100

In Vietnamese*Table 4.8. Distribution of sentences types in VRAds*

Sentences Types	VRAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
The Passive Voice (P.A)	34	30.6
The Imperative Sentences (I.S)	58	52.3
The Conditional Sentences (C.S)	19	17.1
Total	111	100

4.2. SPEECH ACTS OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE

4.2.1 Commissives

Yule [62] stated that “*speakers use commissives to commit themselves to some future action*”. Commissives are expressed as the promises, threats, refusals or pledges. Besides, commissives can be in a form of offering and promising. In ERAds and VRAds, the advertisers use commissives to show their promises, offers or commitments to the customers when they choose any kinds of activities.

a. Expressing advertisers’ direct commitments to the values or qualities of ERAds and VRAds

b. Expressing activities’ indirect commitments to the values or qualities of ERAds and VRAds

In English

Table 4.9. Distribution of Commissives in ERAds

Commissives	ERAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Expressing the advertiser’s direct commitments	18	38.3
Expressing the activities’s indirect commitments	29	61.7
Total	47	100

In Vietnamese

Table 4.10. Distribution of Commissives in VRAds

Commissives	VRAds	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Expressing the advertiser's direct commitments	0	0
Expressing the activities's indirect commitments	18	100
Total	18	100

4.2.2. Directives

Searle [54] treats interrogatives as a kind of directives because interrogatives is “*said to be that the speaker does not know the answer*” and “*the use of interrogatives in exam settings is a counterexample to this and the severity condition, which is that the speaker wants to know the answer*”.

Interrogatives are considered in ERAds and VRAds as a kind of speech acts which is used to raise the curiosity of the customers, consequently, it helps the advertisements be more noticeable towards the customers. In ERAds and VRAds, this kind of speech act is mainly used to create the greater effects on customers' decisions.

Table 4.11. Frequency of the speech acts in ERAds and VRAds

Speech Acts	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Commissives	47	57.3	18	43.9
Directives (Interrogatives)	35	42.7	23	56.1
Total	82	100	41	100

4.3. STYLISTIC DEVICES OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE

4.3.1. Repetition

Repetition is an expressive means of language used when the speaker is under the stress of strong emotion. It shows the state of mind of the speaker. In ERAds and VRAds, it is found that repetition is used as a mean to bring the specific qualities of the advertisements

4.3.2. Personification

Personification connects readers with the object that is personified. Personification can make descriptions of non-human entities more vivid, or can help readers understand, sympathize with, or react emotionally to non-human characters. Sharing the idea about personification, Cuddon [37] says that: *“Personification is the impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction; the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects. Personification is inherent in many languages through the use of gender”*.

4.3.3. Simile

According to Cuddon [37], simile is *“a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, in such a way as to clarify and enhance an image”*.. In English, simile is recognized by the use of the words *“like”* or *“as”*; or by comparative sentences.

4.3.4. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. It may maybe use to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression. According to Cuddon [37]), hyperbole is *“a figure of speech which contains an exaggeration for emphasis”* In

ERAds and VRAds, hyperbole is used to get the attention from the readers. Here are some examples to illustrate this

Table 4.12. Frequency of repetition, personification, simile and hyperbole in ERAds and VRAds

Stylistic Devices	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrence	Rate (%)	Occurrence	Rate (%)
Repetition	137	59.1	145	63.3
Personification	9	3.9	13	5.7
Simile	30	12.9	24	10.5
Hyperbole	56	24.1	47	20.5
Total	232	100	229	100

4.4. REMARKS ON DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RECREATION ACTIVITIES ADVERTISEMENTS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

4.4.1. Syntactic features

As for the similarities in terms of syntactic features, I can see that passive voice, conditional sentences and imperatives in ERAds and VRAds show all of their functions in the advertisements

4.4.2. Speech Acts

By promising, offering, VRAds and ERAds both make the customers feel comfortably before choosing their favorite activities. As for interrogatives, using questions before giving more information about the activities, the advertisers successfully give the information which can meet the requirements of the customers. However, the difference between ERAds and VRAds is that we can

see the clearly that the occurrence speech acts in ERAds is higher than that in VRAds.

4.4.3. Stylistic Devices

It is believed that stylistic devices are one of the most important ways used in ERAds and VRAds to attract the customers. The reason is the figurative words or expressions in stylistic devices can bring the imaginative images to the customers, which can make them think positively about the activities. In the table, it is clear to see that personification has the lowest rate in both ERAds and VRAds, which accounts for 3.9% in ERAds and 5.7% in VRAds. Although ERAds has a lower rate than the VRAds in repetition, which takes up to 63.3%, the rate of simile and hyperbole in ERAds is higher than those in VRAds, which are at 10.5% and 20.5% respectively.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

I find that the analysis of the syntactic structures of English and Vietnamese recreation activities advertisements is applied. With respect to such the syntactic features, there are some similarities to the two languages. Firstly, the passive voice is considered to be very important because it focuses on enabling readers to get clear information about recreation' features as well as understand clearly the benefits they can get from each activity. Secondly, in two languages, while if - clause used to raise the customers' needs or the chances for the customers to try the activities, the main clause is the advertisers' persuasion for them. Thirdly, with respect to imperatives sentences, the advertisers would like to give offers, guidance or warning to the customers to make them understand clearly the advertisements. In syntactic features, the rate of all sentences types in ERAds is higher than those in VRAds

With regards to speech acts, I find the similarities and differences in recreation activities advertisements in English and Vietnamese. For similarities, the speech acts including *interrogatives* and *commissives* are used to express the illocutionary acts of the advertisers. Firstly, with the interrogatives, the advertisers not only want to make the customers curious about the activities, but they also indirectly show their purpose in asking or requesting the customers to try their activities. Besides, the commissives with the purpose of offering and promising, the customers can feel secured because they

can enjoy the games or activities without having fears. Like syntactic features, the rate of speech acts in ERAds is higher than in VRAds.

As for stylistic devices, both ERAds and VRAds share the similar purpose of using *repetition*, *personification*, *simile* and *hyperbole*. Basically, with the figurative words as well as expressions, the advertisers intentionally use them to make the language of advertisements become impressive and attractive. However, when comparing the frequency of stylistic devices used in VRAds and ERAds, we can see some differences. ERAds has higher rate in simile and hyperbole, in contrast, VRAds has higher rate in repetition and personification.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

On carrying out this research, I do hope this thesis will make some contribution to not only teachers and learners of English but also for those who are interested in the kind of recreation advertising. Moreover, the study will be a good result for those who work in the field of advertising.

Firstly, the findings of the study will probably be a useful reference resource for anyone who is keen on studying recreation activities advertisements. In reality, a lot of researches on advertising, the language of advertising have been done in general, but the studies on language in recreation activities advertisements are still very few. Therefore, this research hopefully will benefit students majoring the English language or language researchers when they conduct in the field of research on the language related to recreation activities advertisements.

Secondly, the linguistic features in terms of syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices in recreation activities

advertisements in English and Vietnamese as well as the similarities and differences between them will contribute to the teaching and learning English for specific purposes, especially English for recreation activities advertisements. Moreover, when teaching students in recreation activities advertisement field, the teachers of English should pay more attention to vocabulary, speech acts, as well as stylistics devices in English recreation activities advertisements so that students can have an exact and deep understanding. Similarly, for those who are interested in this kind of advertising, this thesis can provide them useful information and knowledge of this field.

Last but not least, recreation activities advertisements are important means to convey the message from the advertisers to the customers to persuade them to use the activities. In order to have good achievements, one of the important ways is to make the advertisements clear, authentic, attract to catch the customer's interest as well as attention.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

It is clear that the syntactic features, speech acts and stylistic devices are broad fields with many rules, structures and usages. However, due to the shortage of time, linguistic knowledge, reference resources and the restriction of data, the thesis only examine the some sentences types of syntactic features, the interrogatives and the commissives of the speech acts or some stylistic devices such as repetition, personification, simile and hyperbole in English and Vietnamese recreation activities advertisements.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As regards further investigations into recreation activities advertisements, I would like to offer some suggestions for further research:

1. An Investigation into lexico-semantic features of recreation activities advertisements in English versus Vietnamese
2. A Study on persuasion strategies used in recreation activities advertisements in English versus Vietnamese