

Want a Coke?

Shengyong Wu

University of Pittsburgh Bradford

Author Note

This paper was prepared for English 101, Rhetoric analysis, taught by Professor
Lang.

Want a coke?

Soda is a major consumption to many people, thus companies are using interesting advertisements to attract the consumers. An interesting advertisement on Youtube for Coca-Cola published by Coca-Cola on June 12, 2013, showing a cartoon polar bear in lab illustrating the refreshing feeling when drinking Coca-Cola as a word: *AHH*. Combining a clear main thesis, a lively use of language, an impressive visual expression, the advertisement is pretty successful for a well-known product.

The video begins with a vending machine selling a bottle of Coke, and a cartoon polar bear grabs it and says about what would neurons in brain suggest when they detected a sip of Coke, and then indicates that a sip of Coca-Cola feels like snowflakes. After that he launched a rocket, or the vending machine, into the space, saying that's how Coke is meant to taste like. In the end, the polar bear addressed that the feeling would be concluded in a simple word: *ahh*.

By setting the background of the advertisement in a lab with a cartoon polar bear as narrator, the video is generally targeting to non-specific audience, and gives everyone an impression of the relaxing and refreshing feeling by drinking Coca-Cola. The language and visual setup is well balanced in this advertisement: visual elements catch the attention and deliver impression, and words offer the explanation and draw the conclusion. The key elements in this video are the cartoon polar bear, the illustration made by the bear, and the conclusive word: *ahh*.

As an advertisement for a soft drink, the video uses a generally casual tone to lead the audience to imagine the refreshing drinking experience, it also uses a cartoon bear in a lab to do the demonstration. A cartoon polar bear is an informal approach,

indicating that the beverage is made for leisure and relaxation; on the other hand, the lab is commonly interpreted as official and scientific, showing that the relaxation would be “technically” guaranteed. Another advantage for using a cartoon polar bear as a demonstrator is that the character shows barely if any suggestion on social status, which means the target audience of this advertisement is covering the majority. Since Coca-cola, the product being introduced, has a market targeted to general public, the advertisement gives a good aiming to the target market of the product.

The video uses simile for lively and specific explanations to its main thesis. As the video indicates, a sip of Coca-Cola is like snowflakes, and the neuron activity triggered by a sip of Coca-Cola is like tigers doing all kinds of activities. This part is not demonstrating a serious scientific approach when explaining the neuron activity and the feeling of taking a sip of Coke, but it is lively with all kinds of compares and interpretations, which is an advantage to catch the attention of audience, as well as to deliver a strong impression to the consumer.

The word *ahh* is the charged word for this advertisement. It first appears in the middle of the video after the introduction to neuron activity, working as a demonstration of the refreshing feeling of drinking a sip of Coke. The word is also used when the video is concluded, describing the “complicated” experience of drinking Coke. By focusing on this word, the advertisement concentrates the attention of its audience, and thus gives a deep impression to the people.

As a video, the Coca-Cola advertisement contains various elements that catches the attention of its audience. The brand Coca-Cola appears in the first few seconds, shown by a vending machine selling a bottle of Coca-Cola. Then a cartoon polar bear

gives a slideshow presentation, explaining how neurons are activated and how they work like by giving several elements for imagination. After that, the visual background switches to a lab, in which the polar bear does all the illustration of how Coca-Cola drinks like, including similes of snowflakes, and a rocket, or the vending machine, launched into the space. These elements, together with the symbolic red color, are attractive to the audience by setting up a casual and refreshing atmosphere, as well as labeling the advertisement as for Coca-Cola.

Additionally, the cartoon character also presents the video in a casual way. Cartoon character is a special attraction to children or teenagers as well, which could lead to a boost on the sales to children or teenagers. As mentioned above, the character does not really implying social status. That is an advantage for the medium of cartoon as well.

Not only does the advertisement seems scientific by using a lab background, it does have scientific approaches to attract its audience as well. Most advertisements, including this one, “use higher-order conditioning to get customers to associate their products with an inherently enjoyable stimulus” (Lilienfeld, Lynn, Namy, and Woolf, 2009, p. 157) to increase the power of suggestion. In this advertisement, the feeling of a sip of Coke is linked with snowflakes, rocket to the space, etc. These stimulus would make the audience automatically hold an enjoyable interpretation towards the products, and then encouraged to buy them.

Despite the encouragement made by the advertisement, people would buy Coca-Cola just because of its good taste. Indeed, Coca-Cola has a pleasant “mouthfeel”, or, “the unique combination of textures and chemical interactions that affect how the flavor

is perceived” (Schlosser, 2010, p. 535). People would perceive the taste of Coca-Cola as a combination of sweet, sour, fizzy, clear, chilling, etc. All in all, the “mouthfeel” of Coke is described as refreshing and relaxing, or, “in one simple word, *ahh*” (Coca-Cola, 2013).

References

- Coca-Cola. (2013). *What is the AHH Effect?* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GG_dxefhqjM
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., Namy, L. L., & Woolf, N. J. (2009). *Psychology: A Framework for Everyday Thinking*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Schlosser, E. (2010). Why McDonald’s Fries Taste So Good. In C. G. Latterell (Ed.), *Remix: Reading and Composing Culture* (2nd ed., pp. 526-537). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.