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厦门大学

硕 士 学 位 论 文

不同诉求方式下广告语言的说服策略研究

A Study of Persuasive Strategies in Advertising Language
Based on Different Mode of Advertising Appeals

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Abstract

Along with the public media renewing in the commercial economy, advertisements, with the help of various mediums, such as broadcasting, television, Internet, magazine, newspaper, etc., have already pervasively penetrated into each corner of the society. An excellent advertisement can not only bring profit to the enterprise, but also popularize the culture in one country. The study of Advertising English which is wildly applied is of great significance, practicality and reality, whether to the enterprises or the consumers.

The advertising language is a kind of application form of the language persuasion function. For the difference of the products and the complexity of consumers' psychology, the advertising persuasion needs the strategy art. Based on the qualitative analysis of the data, the research is both data-driven and theory-driven. This article uses Aristotle's persuasive appeals theory (mainly focusing on logos and pathos) to analyze the advertising language from the viewpoint of appeals. Advertising appeals is aimed to tell the target audience through the ways of language and image, in order to achieve the expected response to the advertising itself. Taking rational, emotional and the combined appeal strategies as the target for analysis, we are intended to study the persuasive strategies cooperated with these three kinds of strategies, and to explore the appealing function of the English advertising language, that is, to show the different embodiments of the language persuasion function in the rational and emotional appeals. It will convey the contents of the advertisement to the target audience, and cause them interest in it and have a desire to buy it, and finally take action. Advertising completes its discourse function by the way of persuasion strategy, in order to achieve the desired response and maximum communicative effectiveness that the advertisers want. I hope the essay can provide some suggestions to the design and development of the advertising language.

Key Words: advertising language; persuasive strategies; advertising appeals; rational appeal; emotional appeal

摘 要

随着大众传媒工具的日益更新，广告在世界范围的商品经济狂潮中借助广播、电视、互联网、杂志、报纸等各种媒介，已经无孔不入地渗透到整个社会的每个角落。优秀的广告可以为企业带来丰厚的利润回报，也可以成为文化传播的有效途径。因此，研究广告语言尤其是应用广泛的广告英语无论是对于企业还是消费者来讲都具有重要的意义，并且带有很强的实践性和现实性。

广告语言是语言劝说功能的一种运用形式。由于如今商品千差万别，消费者的心理也复杂多变，这都使广告劝说从整体上应有策略艺术。本研究运用亚里士多德的修辞三诉求(本文主要涉及的是理性诉求和情感诉求)理论，从诉求的角度分析广告，对广告话语中所隐含的劝服功能进行归纳。广告诉求是通过语言、形象等向目标受众诉说，以求达到广告所期待的反应。本论文把理性说服策略，感性说服策略以及情理结合策略作为分析对象，旨在研究三种说服策略在广告中的运用，进而揭示广告英语的诉求功能，即语言劝说功能在感性和理性诉求广告中的不同体现。采取了理论阐述和事例分析相结合的方式加以说明和论证。研究指出：通过对诉求方式差异的分析，将广告所要传递的内容引导给目标受众，使他们发生兴趣，产生欲望，最后采取行动。广告以此说服策略完成其话语的劝服功能，以求得广告主所期望的反应和最大的沟通效果。希望这些研究可以对广告语言的设计和发展提供更广泛的参考。

关键词： 广告语言 说服策略 诉求方式 理性诉求 感性诉求

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Chapter One   Introduction

1.1 The Rationale of the Research

Advertisement is one of the most popular forms of communication in modern society, appearing in various forms and functioning through multiple channels. Some are delivered in a relative traditional way of printed media like: newspaper; posts; book covers; leaflets; some others are published via a more fashionable audio-visual media like television; radio; internet, etc. A piece of good and influencing advertisement is rich in philosophical inspiration or artistic taste. Advertisement can also be a very important social activity, and it can spread ideas, promote culture and educate people. It plays a vital role in shaping modern people's attitude and belief in the present world.

All of the advertisements' aim is to persuade the customers to purchase the products or to propagate a kind of belief. In order to convince the public, it's necessary to do some descriptions with clear aims, that is, appeal. It is generally divided into two broad categories: emotional appeal and rational appeal. Different appeals have different advertising effectiveness and influence the audience's mental processing differently. The strategies of the appeal determine the success of the advertisement communication. The effect of the communication can be efficiently improved if some proper strategies are involved. While meeting the audience' self value and psychological demand, those strategies can also provide countless business opportunities and added value, then inspire the consumers' consecutive consumption.

This thesis tries to explore the persuasiveness and effectiveness of advertising language in light of rhetorical appeals, which includes the following issue: how advertising appeals are applied in advertising to attain the persuasive function. This research expounds the above issue by analyzing the samples from daily English advertisements. Besides, Aristotle's persuasive appeals theory is adopted to further illustrate the strategies in English advertising language.

1.2 The Significance of the Research

As it is said by Mark Twain that many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising, advertisements have played an indispensable role in every part of our life. Wherever you go, advertisements are always in sight. When we turn on a TV or a radio, we can see or hear advertisements. The most inconceivable thing is that some TV or radio always broadcasts advertisement from time to time. When we walk on the street, we can see lots of advertisements on the wall, billboard or buildings. Whenever we take a bus or subway, we are sure to be faced with advertisements. Even when we read newspapers or magazines, we are confronted with advertisements. Nowadays advertisements have become the main source of information of what we are going to purchase. They serve an important role in recognizing the goods, increasing the notability, and setting up the goods image.

The famous advertisement master Ogilvy said, "Advertising is no more and no less than a reasonably efficient way to sell." (1983:28) from which we can assume that the utmost goal of advertising is persuasion. Advertising can be successful with words alone but rarely can an advertisement accomplish its goal without words. Language applied in the communication of advertisements has a clear purpose of persuasion which results in a common practice of strategies in ads.

Due to the important role that advertisements play in the market and the increasing development of the international exchanges, it is meaningful to carry out a research on how the advertisers enhance persuasive power in advertising language by applying various persuasive strategies. This strategy orientation may cast some new light on the theoretical study of advertisement and may enrich the theory of strategies. The study is also expected to help the target audience to appreciate the art of advertising language and better reader/consumers' general understanding of advertisements, thus regulates their behavior in sales promotions.

1.3 Research Methodology

This thesis is based on data analysis and logical reasoning, hence it is mainly qualitative. The qualitative analysis discusses the advertising language from the perspective of rhetorical study. It is theory-driven and data-based at the same time. Apart from the author's own observations, previous findings and significant literature will be unavoidably referred to.

The advertisement data are collected from daily newspapers, magazines, and the Internet, from which people are most frequently exposed to obtaining information and influence. Samples employed in this paper most are quite popular and well-accepted, which concerns different products and aspects in life.

1.4 Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction of the research, in which the rationale of the research and the significance of the study are presented respectively. Chapter two goes over the previous literature works on the field of advertising language and persuasion. Chapter three introduces the theoretical foundation of the present research: Aristotle's Persuasive Appeals Theory and AIDMA Theory. The two theories contribute to the tentative research on English advertising language. Chapter four is the key part of the thesis. It focuses on the application of persuasive strategies based on different advertising appeals in English advertising language. Chapter five is the concluding section of the research work which presents the finding of the study and points out its limitations as well.

Chapter Two   Literature Review

2.1 A Review of the Study of Advertising Language

Nowadays with the development of the society, advertising has played an important role in modern economic and our social life. National economy needs advertisements for its development; enterprises need advertisements for inter-enterprise competition, market occupation and sale promotion; people in general need advertisements for help in choosing commodities and for the enrichment of spiritual life. Advertisements are everywhere and they become a part of people's life. As an indispensable part of advertisements, advertising language is naturally what advertisers concern most so as to catch audience's eyes and then persuade them to buy the products. The term "advertising language" is often used to describe a register which is connected with sales promotion although the question of whether or not there is such a discrete, specialized genre has not been confirmed by linguistic research(范亚刚，2000: 9). Because of the important role advertisements play in the present society, many scholars have been conducting researches on advertising language from different aspects, such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, semiotics, stylistics and so on.

2.1.1 Overseas Studies on Advertising Language

Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) analyzed advertising language from sociolinguistic perspective. In their *The Language of Advertising* (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985), they not only paid attention to the explicit messages in advertising but also explored the hidden social motivations implied in advertising. They say: "Advertising ... does not try to tell us that we need its products as such, but rather that the products can help us obtain something else which we do feel that we need." (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985: 29) The authors hold that the promises in advertising are usually better than the circumstances in the real world, which is where persuasion lies. They claim that "advertising doesn't simply reflect the real world as we experience it: the world

portrayed in advertisements is more on a day-dream level, which implies a dissatisfaction with real world expressed through imaginary representations of the future as it might be a Utopia." (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985: 122). They consider how advertisements single out specific audiences for their address. *The language of advertising* is not a book that simply presents the results of an analysis of modern advertising. It seeks throughout to equip the reader with the techniques for his or her own examination of advertising ideology and of the social functions of advertising today. Such function is one of persuasion rather that of factual information.

When we mention the linguistic study of advertising language, there are two major books that we can not ignore-Geoffrey N. Leech's *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain* (1966) and Guy Cook's *The Discourse of Advertising* (1992), which are excellent and offer very detailed analysis on advertising language. In his book *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain* (1966), Leech provides us with a detailed analysis of the linguistic devices employed by advertisers from a strictly linguistic point of view. Instead of simply giving his impression, Professor Leech explores into the characteristics of advertising language using a quantitative methodology. For instance, through data analysis he produces the following results: three percent of all the words he examined are occurrences of the second person pronoun, one in five of all independent clauses are imperative and the passive voice is very rare in his consumer advertising samples (Leech, 1966: 8). Leech provides a thorough overview from the point of view of a practicing linguist of how language is used in advertising. However, Leech has neglected to examine the motivations behind the linguistic devices used by advertisers, and touched little about the cultural, economic or social backgrounds and consequences of advertising.

Guy Cook is another linguist who has found the importance of context in advertising and just given some specific description of linguistic devices used in detailed context and the influence of some pictures and sounds used in advertisement. In 1992, Guy Cook published his book *The Discourse of Advertising*. He claims that "an analysis of linguistic deviation and patterning reveals no difference between

advertising and literary discourse, an analysis in terms of goals and plans reveals fundamental differences" (Cook, 1992: 70). He provides a framework for the analysis of advertisements as a discursive genre. Concepts from discourse analysis, semiotics, stylistics, and linguistics are applied to examine the textual and contextual features of ads in a bottom-up approach that allows identifying their interactions and combinations. He points out that a piece of advertisement is an interaction of elements including participants, paralanguage, function, substance, pictures, music, other discourse, a society, a situation and other ads. In the analysis process, he always tries to see language in relation to other elements, bearing in mind that one change in any element usually entails a change in the whole discourse.

Semiotics, the scientific study of signs and messages, is widely accepted to be one of the most important approaches to advertising discourses. The semiotic approach to advertising is mainly based on the assumption that communication is achieved by encoding and decoding a message. Barthes is one of the most distinguished scholars who have analyzed the language of advertising from such a perspective. His *Rhetoric of the Image* (1984b) is claimed by Dyer to be a major work on semiotics and to be its application to the analysis of an advertising message. (Dyer, 1982: 224) In advertising messages Barthes studies the interrelationships between the image and the advertising message and claims that there are three kinds of message: the linguistic message, the coded iconic message, and the noncoded iconic message. Barthes argues that there exist two levels of interpretation of the linguistic message, namely, denotational and connotational. (Barthes, 1984b: 32-51).

Another semiotician-Judith Williamson (1983) has also made great contributions to advertising studies. She believes that advertising messages are not fully encoded and that interpreting advertisements takes more than just decoding. Williamson is aware that in a successful communication the audience must involve in carrying out a task of processing, and there is a gap between the message which is obtained by decoding and the message which the audience actually recovers. She argues that the gap is filled by the audience's knowledge. According to Williamson (1983:100), the assumption of pre-existing bodies of knowledge allows the reference system to work.