

A Study on the Adaptation Model of Pragmatic Presuppositions in Food Advertisements

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Abstract: Advertising is an art of language and a strategic communicative behavior. Based on Verschueren's language adaptation theory, this paper selects advertising slogans on the Internet and TV as the corpus and points out the selection and use of pragmatic presuppositions in food advertising slogans. Specifically, it mainly focus on the specific application of food presets in advertising slogans from the three aspects of context adaptation theory: the physical world, the social world and the psychological world, aiming at the promotion of advertising texts. The study found that most food advertising slogans take psychological and cultural adaptation guidance to strongly guide potential consumers, highlighting the functions and brand advantages of specific products and achieving the purpose of guiding people to consume.

Key words: pragmatic presupposition; adaptation theory; advertising slogan

I. Introduction

As a bridge of communication between advertisers and consumers, food advertising slogans are used to express the information of the product incisively and vividly in a limited number of words. Adaptation theory provides a new theoretical framework for the in-depth study of advertising language phenomenon. Verschueren believes that it is necessary to adapt to the language context and the communicative context to achieve the purpose of communication^[1]. Advertising is a communicative behavior whose ultimate purpose is to attract attention, interest and purchase. Therefore, it is crucial for advertising language to achieve consumer purpose. Based on this, this paper discusses the specific application of food presuppositions in advertising slogans based on the theory of contextual adaptation, aiming at providing some pragmatic strategies for the production and development of advertising slogans in the future.

II. A Review of Advertising Language Research

In recent years, with the gradual generalization of the applied research of adaptation theory, some scholars have shifted their focus to the study of the adaptation of advertising slogans^[2]. It is mainly divided into two branches: one is the translation research of advertising language. According to Verschueren's theory of language adaptation, Wang Jiaoyan pointed out that adaptation theory is instructive in the selection and application of English commercial advertising translation strategies^[3]. With the deepening of the research, some scholars have begun to explore the dynamic adaptation strategy in the translation of advertising

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slogans from the relationship between language, culture and context^[4]. In addition, along with the unreasonable phenomenon in advertising translation, Li Xueyi conducted an exploration from the perspective of contextual adaptation theory^[5]. The second is empirical research of advertising language based on the theory of context adaptation. Wu Xinli and Zhou Qiaohong pointed out that advertisers ought to choose rational or perceptual appeals in the production process of automobile advertising slogans to adapt to the psychological world of consumers so as to achieve the purpose of advertising^[6]. Moreover, with the increasing prominence of environmental problems, Lv Yan discussed the adaptability of rhetoric in environmental public service advertisements from the perspective of the environment, aiming to enhance people's environmental awareness through the promotion of advertisements^[7]. There are also many scholars who analyze and study the adaptability of advertising language from commercial advertisements such as television and e-commerce platforms, aiming to promote product promotion^[8].

Combined with previous research, most domestic researchers focus more on the translation strategy and operation mechanism of advertising language, and pay less attention to the empirical research of advertising language. Most of the existing empirical studies analyze advertising language from a macro perspective, and there are few studies on a specific category of advertising language such as clothes, houses, and food. Therefore, in order to further enrich the research field of advertising language from the perspective of adaptation theory, this paper focuses on the study of food advertising language from the adaptation relationship of communicative context elements (psychological, social and physical), aiming at people's better understanding and appreciation for advertising language, grasp the rules of creating advertising discourse. At the same time, it will provide certain pragmatic and strategic guidance for the propaganda and persuasion functions of advertising discourse, so as to more effectively realize the commercial and social effects of advertising.

III. Linguistic Adaptation Theory and Food Advertising Slogans

A. An overview of language adaptation theory

Adaptation theory was proposed by Verschueren. language use is a process of making choices about language at different levels of consciousness for internal or external reasons^[1]. In other words, language use is not only a constant selection of language forms, but also is also a process of constantly choosing strategies to use. Due to the characteristics of variability, negotiation and compliance of language, users can make various choices in the process of communication. According to the adaptation theory, the adaptation of language should be described and explained from four aspects, namely, the adaptation of contextual relations, the adaptation of language structure, the dynamics of adaptation and the degree of awareness of the adaptation process. Verschueren believes that in language use, language selection must be adapted to linguistic context and communicative context, so that the communication can be carried out smoothly and the communicative purpose can be achieved^[1]. Linguistic context refers to context, including intra-text cohesion, inter-text constraints and linear sequences. The communicative context includes factors such as language users, the mental world, the social world and the physical world.

B. Theoretical framework of the pragmatic presupposition of the adaptation model in food advertising slogans

In food advertising, food manufacturers often adopt strategies to adapt to the cognition, emotion and culture of the advertising audience, so as to better adapt to the psychology of consumers and achieve the purpose of publicity and communication. Therefore, based on Verschueren's language adaptation theory, this paper attempts to build a pragmatic adaptation model in food advertising slogans in order to intuitively point out how advertisers choose pragmatic strategies in food advertising slogans. This adaptation model is constructed from the advertiser's point of view and studies the communicative behavior of the advertiser. Advertisers enter into communication with certain communicative intentions (advertising purposes). In order to achieve their advertising purposes, advertisers need to choose language and communication strategies. Among the many communicative strategies to choose from, pragmatic presupposition is a very powerful strategy, so advertisers may choose pragmatic presupposition to realize the communicative context (including the physical world, social world and psychological world), so as to finally achieve its communicative purpose. In the whole dynamic adaptation process, advertisers must obey various pragmatic rules in order to obtain the pre-set meaning for a specific pragmatic. Once the advertiser successfully completes this dynamic adaptation process, specific advertising slogans with pragmatic presuppositions will appear. If these advertising slogans appear and are understood by the advertising audience, the advertiser's communication purpose has been achieved, and thus successful communication has been achieved.

Based on the analysis of the above theoretical framework, the author believes that adaptation context theory has certain applicability in food discourse. Therefore, the author will explain the application of adaptation theory in food advertising from the aspects of physical context, social context and psychological world context in adaptation context theory.

IV. The Pragmatic strategy of Adapting Food Advertising Slogans

A. Adapting to the physical world

Physical context refers to the referential relationship between time and space, including specific subject, object, time, space, topic and other factor^[9]. There is no doubt that food advertising language must exist in a certain time and space category. The time and space of our speech and behavior in the physical world are constantly changing, and advertising language must be adjusted accordingly according to the changing time and space factors.

In food advertising slogans, time, as a relative concept, can demonstrate the value of the product or brand to convince potential consumers, which drive consumers to buy through the time dimension that indicates a long history and high sales. In addition, advertising manufacturers use the concept of space to highlight the source of origin, adapting to the spatial context of consumers seeking products with pure quality of origin, which is more conducive to stimulating consumption. For example:

Example(1) No gifts are accepted for this year's festival, but only Melatonin—Melatonin advertisements

As a well-known melatonin advertising slogan, it has occupied a special position in the health care product market since its

inception. Advertisers cleverly use the temporal vagueness “this year” to adapt to the spatiotemporal nature of the physical world. “This year” does not ostensibly refer to the year in which the ad was aired, nor does it refer to a specific year, establishing a broad time period. On the one hand, advertising manufacturers presume that Melatonin is the first choice for sending elders during the Chinese New Year, and it conforms to the physical world where consumers choose Melatonin to send to elders in the changing time dimension. On the whole, this advertisement uses the time vague term “this year” to conform to people’s psychological space, and invisibly expands the audience group and time range of the advertisement, and naturally achieves the purpose of selling the product.

Example (2) “Tang court wine, prosperous Jiannanchun” --- Jiannanchun’s advertising slogan

In this slogan, Jiannanchun’s slogan spans time and space to the Tang Dynasty, presupposing that the brand of Jiannanchun has a long-standing wine culture and contains the traditional essence of the brand. Advertisers cleverly use the time concepts of “Tang Dynasty” and “Prosperous Age” to show the main line of “Tang Dynasty - Today’s Prosperous Age - Jiannanchun”, especially highlighting the span of time and space, giving people the feeling of a long history, presupposing and conform to consumers’ pursuit of a long-established and traditional brand, so as to promote consumers’ trust in this product and stimulate consumption.

B. Adapting to the social world

The choice of language is a dynamic choice based on context, and the condition for language choice is to clarify the social dimension of its use^[10]. The social world refers to various social factors that affect language communication activities. It includes not only the public institutions of social occasions, but also the tacit communication norms of the public. For the design of advertising slogans, in the face of social interaction with consumers, it is necessary not only to conform to social norms, but also to adapt to the cultural background of the advertising audience in order to successfully promote products and achieve the purpose of successful sales^[11].

C. Conforming to social norms

The use of language presets in food advertisements is also better conform to various norms of the social world^[12]. Food advertising language is a kind of verbal communication, and it is also constrained by social norms. Therefore, the appropriateness and standardization of language in food advertisements is particularly important. The politeness principle is the most basic principle in social norms. In order to make the verbal communication go smoothly, both parties must first consider whether it conforms to the politeness principle when choosing a communicative language. Food advertising language should also adhere to the above guidelines.

Example (3) We do not produce water, we are only porters of nature. - Nongfu Spring Mineral Water.

This slogan conforms to the principle of humility in social norms. The producer compares himself with “porters” and uses

the appellation “we” to make a promise to consumers from the perspective of businesses, and to the health of consumers. It not only shortens the distance between producers and consumers, but also allows consumers to feel the pure and natural nature of this mineral water, with no added ingredients. It is precisely by conforming to the principle of humility in social norms, conforming to consumers pursuit of pure and natural products, so that consumers can focus on the features and advantages of products, and win people’s favor and enthusiasm.

D. Adapting to social culture

Culture is the synthesis of the interaction of language and thinking. Language can not only express cultural patterns, customs and lifestyles, but also reflect the worldview of a particular culture^[13]. Therefore, the advertising language should conform to the social and cultural factors of the advertising audience. For example:

Example (4) A lot of luck, a lot of satisfaction. (Fumanduo instant noodles advertisement)

Example (5) Prosperity in body, prosperity, wealth, wealth, prosperity, luck, prosperity, I will be prosperous, I will be prosperous. (Want Want Gift Pack)

In the above food slogans, advertisers subtly preset some beautiful visions, dreams or beliefs that people have agreed upon. Combining these beliefs, in the advertising slogan, by adapting to people’s way of thinking, values, etc., such as adapting to the audience’s auspiciousness, pursuing the social and cultural psychology of prosperity, good luck, wealth and prosperity. It integrates into social and cultural concepts and helps consumers to strengthen their beliefs, so as to achieve the purpose of publicizing and selling products.

For example, In Example (4), people’s love for traditional Chinese festivals is presupposed, and Chinese red is used as food packaging, which conforms to people’s sustenance that red symbolizes good luck and prosperous. In addition, the word “wang” is equivalent to buying good luck, which will make the body prosperous, wealthy, and more prosperous in the future. The above examples all show that advertisers achieve the purpose of selling promotional products by conforming to the psychology of consumer’s social culture.

E. Adapting to the psychological world

Mental world refers to the psychological and emotional factors of communication participants, including motivation, belief, character, intention, desire, etc^[14]. In the process of language communication, both parties must understand and feel each other while transmitting information, so as to achieve real communication. Therefore, as a communicative activity, the use of advertising slogans needs to fully consider the psychological feelings of the other party in the preset communication, that is, consumers, in order to obtain their sense of identity and achieve the purpose of promoting products.

Example (5) More than 100 million cans are selected by mothers a year. Fresh raw milk is made and easy to absorb, which is more suitable for Chinese babies.

This slogan first presupposes the mother's pursuit of safe, healthy and nutritious milk powder, which conforms to the mother's psychological feeling of caring for the baby, and also conforms to the consumer's pursuit of food health and safety. Healthy ingredients not only indicate the raw materials of the product, but also conform to the psychological demands of consumers, and are more trusted by consumers.

Example (6) Getting you is the happiness of my life (the slogan of Dove Chocolate)

The slogan subtly presupposes young men and women's yearning for a beautiful love and complies with the emotional needs of consumers. Advertisers skillfully combine consumers' emotional needs with their own products to establish resonance with consumers, thereby gaining consumers' recognition and further achieving the purpose of promoting and selling products.

Example (7) The price of the commoners, the enjoyment of the nobles. (Lou Lan wine).

Commodity prices affect consumers' consumption behavior. Promotional methods and marketing methods such as low prices, promotions, and discounts can not only make businesses profitable, but also meet consumers' psychological needs of pursuing high-quality and low-cost products and stimulate purchasing behavior. In the slogan of Loulan wine, it not only presupposes that such wines have high-end quality and establishes the brand effect of creating luxury and aristocracy, but also presupposes the price of civilians, which invisibly expands the scope of the audience and subtly conforms to the pursuit of consumers. The psychological needs of being economical and enjoying high-end quality life will ultimately stimulate consumers' purchasing behavior and achieve the purpose of selling products^[15].

V. Conclusion

Based on Verschueren's adaptation theory, this paper focuses on exploring the adaptation mechanism of food advertising slogans from the elements of communicative context, employing the three levels of psychological context, social context, and physical context. The study found that in food advertising slogans, advertising makers mostly use psychological and social and cultural contexts to strongly pre-orient potential consumers, presupposing people's needs and expectations for products, and highlighting the benefits of specific products. This research hopes that people can not only better understand and appreciate the advertising language, but also identify some "deception" methods in the advertising language to make rational consumption. In addition, in the contemporary fierce commodity competition, it is hoped that advertisers can give full play to relevant pragmatic strategies in order to maximize the persuasive function of advertising, and enhance the publicity and persuasion functions of modern advertising discourse, so as to more effectively realize the commercialization of advertising and social effects.

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