

Multimodal Theories Used in Advertisement Application

Yixuan Fang^{1,a}

¹38-3 Hongfatianqinwan, Nanyanghu Street, Yuhong District, Shenyang, Liaoning, China

^achunchenxiao@cas-harbour.org

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Abstract. Metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but a mode of thinking and cognitive mechanism. As a way of thinking, it is not only reflected in static modes such as text, but also in heterogeneous modes such as images and sounds. In this rapid development of the information age, human life is full with multimodal state symbols. Multimodal discourses are increasingly favored by people. In this article, the author will use cognitive and pragmatic research perspective to construct a persuasive model of multimodal presentation of metaphor in advertisement application, aiming to explore a way to achieve good effects with consideration of human cognition, emotional experience and cultural context. The author will also analyze several examples of advertising to introduce the multimodal advertising models.

1. Introduction

The development of multimodal theories started in 1996 when Kress & Van Leeuwen established a multimodal analysis framework for social semiotics, and systematically and comprehensively expounded the grammar of visual design for the first time, examining the way images convey meanings. Since then a large number of examples and analysis of three-dimensional stereoscopic forms such as sculptures have been cited. In 2004, Halloran's book "Multimodal Discourse Analysis" brought together cutting-edge research on multimodal texts and discourses generated by two or more symbolic communication models. At present, the research on multimodal discourse analysis is mainly in the teaching fields with limited practice and application in other fields.

In the information era, the influence of media is expanding to almost all areas of human social life. Due to the influence of media function and media form particularity, advertising language gradually formed its own unique vocabulary application standard, syntactic structure and rhetorical style, and an interpersonal communication process with a unique language style and diversified language expression. The audiences could understand the information conveyed by the advertisement in the process of decoding these diversified symbols which will result in a variety of functional effects. It can be seen that the application of multimodal analysis will make certain contributions to the development of effective advertisements.

2. The philosophy of multimodal analysis applied in advertisement

This article proposes a multimodal perspective on advertising language research, expanding the advertising language ontology and applied research to the wide-angle perspective of new media multimodality, surpassing the previous research paradigm of multimodal equality and comparative analysis. Based on multimodal analysis of the supplement and enhancement functions and reasons of advertising language, this paper will fully describe and contrast the advertising language of different industries, different periods, different categories and different communication effects, and will explore the characteristics and laws of speech, vocabulary, syntax, discourse and pragmatics of multimodal advertising. With combined knowledge of related disciplines such as pragmatics, communication, statistics, sociology and consumer psychology, the author will analyze and summarize the characteristics and social effects of multimodal advertising language, thus construct a multimodal advertising language analysis model. The multimodal advertising language analysis model could be applied to the creative practice and effect analysis of advertising language, which provides a new and operative analysis mode for multimodal advertising language research.

3. Research significance and contents

With the development of society, communication methods have undergone many changes. The method of information spreading are no longer limited to one discourse. Advertisements with multiple languages and symbols are more attractive, and could resonate with audiences more easily. The analysis of advertising with one discourse of traditional simple language texts can no longer meet the public's demand for advertisement interpretation. In commercial communication, there are only two types of terminal forms for information dissemination: one type is based on symbols of words and languages which means the communication is completed by voice and writing; the other type is based on non-verbal symbols, which means the communication relies on images, colors, actions etc. to convey information. Non-verbal symbols now play important roles in communication. As the most effective and economical communication symbol, language still plays a most important role in advertising, although the research boom of multimodal metaphor is more prominent in analyzing non-verbal modes such as images and sounds.

Before the advent of the information age, many commercial advertisements used advertising words to promote products or services. The advertising words used various rhetorical figures, which were often neat and structured, and the content was novel, unique and inspiring. When enter the Internet age, the diversity of the media, the status of images, animation, sound and other advertising means become to be valued by the advertisers. When it comes to recent commercial advertisements, the advertisement creator uses both language and non-verbal symbols in the advertisement to clarify the intention of the advertisement. After all, the language is the most familiar communication tool, and the language is the most direct signal for brain to process. Although image may make the advertisement more vivid, people may have the feeling of "separating" in understanding if there is no language output. Therefore, this article will make a preliminary summary of the functions of both language and non-verbal symbols in commercial advertisements.

4. Research methods

In multimodal analysis theory, modality refers to the way and medium used for communication, including symbolic systems such as technology, image color, and music. Multimodal language is a language that combines multiple communication methods. The multimodal communication method mainly refers to the analysis of various modalities by analyzing various symbol resources such as sound, symbols, images, and colors.

It seems to be dispensable, because in some advertisements, we can also understand its theme without language. However, one advertisement with only images and no text is often included in a series of commercial advertisements. Language cannot be separated from a whole commercial advertisement system because from the perspective of human cognitive memory, people tend to remember the advertising words more easily. When it comes to an image, even though the image is reproduced and depicted in the brain, it cannot be called out as clear and fast as language does when the memory output is needed. For example, when were asked Nike's advertisement, people might recall the slogan "Just do it" right away. However, when were asked what exact image in the TV ads that impress you most, most people will think over it for a while, and give quite different feedback. The primary step of advertising is to attract attention. After this, it need to be remembered by people so that buying action can be taken later. The image is easy to attract attention, but it is difficult to be clearly remembered. Language just makes up for this defect of image. Therefore, the combination of images and language can achieve the best publicity. What kind of combination of language and images should be used to make people feel refreshed and then remember deeply? The author will analyze through popular advertisements in the next part.

5. The multimodal analysis of Youlemei Milk Tea advertisement

In this paper, the author will take the advertisement of a Chinese milk tea brand "Youlemei" as the first example. The author will describe the advertising picture as following:

In front of the university campus building, under the snowy sky, Jay Chou wore a beige trench coat and a white scarf with Youlemei milk tea in his hand. A group of students walked out of the teaching building happily and walked in front of a girl. The girl wore a red and gray coat and a white hat. In soothing piano music, they sat back to back under the statue with Youlemei milk tea in their hands, starting a gentle and romantic conversation.

The girl: What do you like about me?

Jay Chou: I like your elegance, joy, and loveliness.

The girl: You are talking about Youlemei milk tea.

Jay Chou: You are my “Youlemei”.

At the end of the picture, the two cups of Youlemei milk tea went close together.

Youlemei’s milk tea target consumers are female college students. Jay Chou's handsome appearance and outstanding musical talent have always been admired and sought after by young girls. Jay Chou endorsement Youlemei can give full play to the unique brand connotation of Youlemei which is easy, stylish and happy. From a visual point of view, the white snow, white scarf and white hat in the picture symbolize the pure love between college students. The girl’s gentle and elegant lady image and color of the costumes bring a beautiful and fresh feeling to the audience, especially young men and women. Jay Chou’s words “I like your elegance, joy, and loveliness” is the best interpretation of the three words in the brand name “You” “Le” “Mei”. At the same time, the background music is the main theme of Jay Chou’s popular romantic movie “Dandelion's Promise”, which enhances the audience’s feeling of love and romance. Finally, the whole picture was combined with two cups of milk tea, which further highlight the warmth and romance of the advertising theme.

Youlemei Advertising focuses on conveying priceless emotions of the brand through various forms of information dissemination, and insists on creating a romantic and warm brand image. Among them, the multimodal elements are used ingeniously to convey information to consumer step by step: milk tea is not only an instant beverage, but also a medium to promote love and express emotion. Therefore, milk tea becomes a symbol of emotional care. This is very attractive for teenagers, middle or high school students who are pursuing romantic love. As Jay Chou as the endorsement of the emotional advertisement of Youlemei Milk Tea, the consumption of Youlemei Milk Tea increases among these consumer groups. The advertisement of Youlemei becomes a successful example of multimodal advertising maximizing the promotion and publicity effects.

6. The multimodal analysis of Coca-Cola advertisements

David Ogilvy, the world-famous “father of advanced advertising”, once pointed out that “We firmly believe that every advertisement must be seen as a contribution to the complex symbol of the brand image and a long-term investment in brand reputation”. We will analyze this through the following Coca-Cola advertisements.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

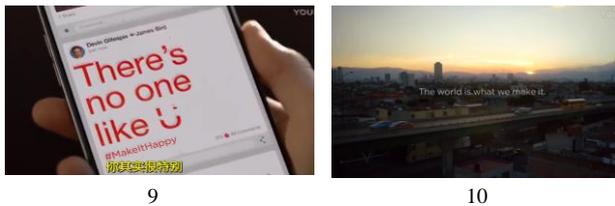


Fig. 1 Multimodal advertisement of Coca-Cola 1

In Figure 1, we can clearly see that the advertisement uses the familiar element, cyber violence and negative energy, as the starting shown in lens 1. Then, the picture of the advertisement quickly switched to the network information transmission center. At this time, the staff sprayed the Coca-Cola carried by them to the adjacent host because of their negligence, as shown in the lenses 2 and 3. Then, with the change of light and shadow, the image of the Coca-Cola, the key symbol of the advertisement, was converted into a network signal and transmitted in the line. Positive optimism replaced the negative pessimism, as shown from Lens 4 to 9. After the Coca-Cola logo appeared on the screen, pessimistic network information became positive energy, and the unpleasant quarrel turned into harmonious communication. Finally, the lens 10 ended the advertisement with the sentence “When you are kind to the world, you will be treated kindly”, to convey goodness and love.

In this advertisement, the idea of using network cable to deliver beverages is not theoretically consistent with most people’s perceptions. Therefore, we must use the corresponding context to encourage viewers to get rid of the constraints of traditional thinking. While beverages and signals both have certain fluidity and transitivity, this creative connection could make it easily be remembered by audiences.



Fig. 2 Multimodal advertisement of Coca-Cola 2

Besides sound and language, action is also an important factor in multimodal metaphors. We could see this through Multimodal advertisement of Coca-Cola 2. The overall context of the multimodal advertisement 2 is very clear. In this advertisement, Coca-Cola, which is the symbol of love and energy, is passed hand by hand. In this advertisement, there is no word used in the whole process, the purpose is conveyed to the audience through people’s actions. The transmission of cola itself is a kind of helping and caring others. The cola sold from the small store salesperson, after several twists and turns, finally returned to himself. This is essentially the idea of “helping yourself by helping others” and “passing love to others and getting love back from others”.

7. Conclusion

Although the cognitive linguistics community has certain research on multimodal metaphors, there has not been an article devoted to the study the functions and expression characteristics. The significance of this paper is to summarize the functions and characteristics of multimodal metaphors for commercial advertising. The functions and characteristics of multimodal metaphors are systematically researched and summarized. With further data collection and analysis, a more comprehensive modal could be built for commercial advertisers to follow in order to get the best

publicity and achieve most effective effects.

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