

Pragmalinguistic Aspects of Chinese Advertising Text

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Abstract. In this article the author is researching pragmalinguistic feature of Chinese advertising texts, analyses different types of speech acts, that are used in advertising texts, also gives the examples of speech influence methods in advertising. The analysis allow to pick out certain features of advertising texts in Chinese with relation to pragmalinguistics.

1. Pragmalinguistics features of Chinese advertising text

Text has become the main object of the linguistics research for the previous ten years. It is the form of communication, the reality phenomenon and the way of reality reflection, which is based on the elements of language system. So, language is visible when text has a form.

Text is the result of people's mental activity, it is involved in all the spheres of social life. "Being the result of thinking and speaking, text originates in the process of reality learning, in the process of communicating" [1]

The linguists are interested in learning text, as they try to explain that the text is not only the way of communication, but also is the instrument, that we use to speak about important things, or to make the companion to change his or her actions, or to assess something. Language is able to influence peoples' minds, that's why text is created.

Advertising is the main element of market economy today and plays an important role in its development. Mass media advertising is one of the most effective instruments in attracting clients to a product. It gives clients the information about products or services, it convinces clients to buy them, and creates a positive image for a company. That is why the advertising text research still is being relevant. [5]

The following scientists and teachers has studied pragmalinguistic aspects in advertisement text – Arutyunova N.D., Izmailova M.A., Stepanov V.N. Pragmalinguistic aspects of Chinese advertisement text has been reviewed in E.M. Girnyak's and Lin Yuntang's works.

The attempt of pragmalinguistic analysing advertising the texts in Chinese and revealing their features is presented in this article.

The Chinese language has built up the Chinese spirit. The Chinese have been isolated from the rest of the countries by it's language. It has created great distinctions between China and the rest of the world. Some of the scientists believe, that "The Chinese people think specific- symbolically, but the people of the other countries think abstract conceptually".

There is a linguistic idea, that language is not only for communication but also is for joint activity. Language is the method of influencing. The influence function is the basic one, language manipulation

plays the main role in the texts, where motivation strategies are used. One of these texts is advertisement text.

“The advertising text – is the text, that has some advertising information. There are several distinguishing features of it. Firstly, it contains the information about a physical person or a juristic person, goods, ideas, initiations. Secondly, it is used for a uncertain number of persons. In the first, it is to raise and maintain interest to physical juristic persons, goods, ideas, initiations. In the fourth, it promotes selling goods, ideas and initiations realizing” [12]. So, the advertising texts are the unique material for researching the question of language mechanisms work and communication strategies in conditions of speech interaction [15].

The advertising text is certain communication process, that involves participants, language, message, reaction to the message. Advertiser models potential buyer’s behavior change. That’s why one of the main functions of advertisement is influence one.

The advertising language must inform and convince, that is it’s communication function. It must correspond to literary language norms, be specific, comprehensible, laconic etc. This kind of texts are characterized by it’s singularity.

Advertising does not only create image, but also appeal to critical thinking of a recipient, make him believe that he should buy this product. Advertisement creators use facts, for example, numbers, that make text more visual, more objective, more evidential. The use of terms is another rational argument.

Advertisement creates attractive image of goods, it tries to keep the audience. Goods can take leading place in the market with the help of advertisement. Speech influence methods are perceived by audience very good. The advertisement creators always refresh advertisement texts, trying to keep the idea, brand, slogan, but not to bore the audience with sameness. It is necessary to know, that to make a good first impression is very important, as the audience has little time to think over advertisement text. The influence must be immediate.

The advertising text must be for mass, and has the greatest influence, for the purpose of corresponding to the pragmatic approach demands. Pragmatic ideas are brightly expressed in the advertising texts, as the advertisement makers try to achieve certain goals, creating tastes and life way of the audience. The main purpose is to make the audience buy the advertising product. That’s why the basic pragmatic functions are influence and incentive.

But it should be noted, it is pretty hard to realize the pragmatic functions in the advertising texts, as there is no feedback. It is not so simple to state the influence to the audience.

The interest of linguists to text researching problem can be explained by the fact that language is not only the way of communication, but it is also the instrument that helps us to tell about important things, to motivate people to change their attitude and to assess something. Language influences people’s minds. That’s for text is created, that’s determined by it’s pragmatic aspect.

Pragmatics studies language as the way of communication in different situations. It is interested in the aim of communication and whether the aim is achieved or not.

The term “pragma” became one of the semiotics aspects (the study of sign process). It was created in the thirties of twenty century by American philosopher Charles W. Morris. He divided the semiotics into semantics, syntax and pragmatics. Semantics studies the relationship between signs and what they stand for. Syntax studies the relationships between signs. Pragmatics the ways in which context contributes to meaning.

Pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics, being under the influence of John Austin’s theory of speech acts, it appeared in the sixties of twenty century. Pragmalinguistics also studies the problems of relationships between speaker and listener during communication.

There is no certain definition of “pragmatics” among scientists. N.A. Arutiunova has defined it as “the subfield of semiotics and linguistics, which studies linguistic signs and their functioning in speech” [3]. U.S. Stepanov defines it as a system of methods and instruments, that are used to achieve goals, “to a better influence to listeners, to convince him, to agitate etc.” [18]. T.A. Van Dijk says that pragmatics is “empiric field of knowledge, that consists of conventional language rules and their mass demonstration when utterance can be interpreted differently” [7].

In spite of the difference between the definitions, they all run from the Charles Morris' theory, that explains the connection between a sign and its interpreter. A person is the main conception of pragmalinguistics, which studies the communication conditions, when signs are used.

The object of pragmatics study can be speech act, a word or text, the research subject is a communicant, that has certain demographic, psychological, national and cultural features. The subject is pragmalinguistic aspect of certain text, that is being researched.

The basic of pragmalinguistics in advertising texts is theory of speech acts. [1][7]

An important step of pragmalinguistic development is speech acts theory, its creators are an American philosopher John Searle and British philosopher John Austin.

"Speech act is a minimal unit of speech communication, in the result of which communicative aims of a speaker are achieved, and influence the listener. [3] The concept "speech act" is equal to the term "utterance", which has a sender, an addressee, object, communicative and influence functions.

Speech act has a subject, an object, method, result, success, as it is one kind of activity. A speaker is a subject, making a speech and influencing the listener. Utterance also is the method to gain an aim. If the aim is achieved, the result is successful. Otherwise unachieved aim means that communication failed.

2. Illocution types of Chinese advertising text

John Austin distinguishes three aspects of indirect speech acts: locution, illocution, perlocution [14].

Locution act – is speaking and pronouncing. We make phonetic act, while pronouncing sounds. We understand sound combinations, that correspond to grammar rules, while spelling words (phatic act). We understand content and meaning of words and correlate with the reality. (predication act).

Illocution act can be characterized by its intention and purpose. It has become the object of contemporary pragmatic study. Illocution act is expressed by a question, an answer, an appeal, a motivation or by an informative message.

Perlocution act reflects influence on audience. The result of speech influence can be similar to the purpose, that a speaker has set, or not.

Illocution functions are a group of certain features, that are connected to successful speech act criterias, "the conditions that should be followed for the speech act to be appropriate. For example, Sberbank's advertisement is motivating to get a loan under 12 percent a year.

John Searle has divided the illocution acts into five classes: [17]

1. Representatives (assertives) – are statement utterances. According to this class, a speaker has his own opinion, a listener has enough communicative experience to understand the message. The representatives not only inform a listener, but help to influence on audience thoughts and feelings. The representatives can be compared with the verbs "to boast", "to complain", "to conclude".

2. Directives are the utterances, that are orientated on audience, to motivate to actions. A speaker has a certain aim, that will motivate a listener to change his or her actions. Directive verbs can be compared with the following ones "to ask", "to command", "to request", "to advise", "to blame".

3. Commissives are commitment utterances. The listener guarantees to fulfil a promise. Commissive speech acts can be compared with the verbs "to promise", "to guarantee", "to swear".

4. Expressives are the acts that expresses psychological state of a speaker as reaction to the reality (compliment, regret, repentance, joy etc.). The expressives can be compared with the verbs "to regret", "to sorry", "to thank", "greet", "sympathize".

5. Declaratives are speech acts, the result of which are actions that are ordered. Speaking is establishing facts. For example, "retire", "state martial law", "you are fired" etc.

There are speech acts that can make "mixed" types, which have different illocution acts features.

As its said, pragmalinguistics is based on speech act theory. T.A. Van Dijk defines speech act as "illocution act, action, that takes place when a conscious individual acts to change the surrounding world" [7]. In this work we have used the principles of speech act theory to analyze pragmalinguistic features of advertising texts.

According to this theory there are five types of Chinese advertising texts:

1. Representative (informing texts)
2. Commissive (promise)
3. Expressive (emotionally coloured)
4. Directive (motivation texts)
5. Interrogative (information request)

The utterance that is based on facts and their interpreting is called representative. It expresses conviction as a psychological state. [6] Modal words (当然), intensifying adverbs (超, 更快), adverbs (最, 真, 确实), conjunctions (越...越), lexical units (唯一, 无限, 永久, 特别, 诚实, 真实).

Table 1. Representatives

Type of advertisement text	Text
Statement	我的精神真是早上的一杯汤-My energy is a cup of soup in the morning.
Discription	转寄快抵到日本, DHL 更快/ 我们更了解日本- Quick transportation by special flight from Japan, DHLmore quickly. We learn more about Japan.
Direction	这里, 连结世界的机遇 - Here is the World's opportunities connected.

In the advertisement of the TV “Full HD 1080P 动态液晶电视-超精细 全高清 – (Full HD 1080 P motion LC television)” the illocution purpose of the text is give information about advertised product, that is expressed by enumerating products characteristics, using such adjectives as 动态 – «motion», 超精细 – «LC», 高清 – «HD». These lexical units are used to demonstrate characteristics of LC televisions, that attracts potential buyers.

Affirmative character of the soup advertising text “我的精神真是早上的一杯汤 (My energy is a cup of soup in the morning)” is created by appealing to the personal pronoun “我 (my)”.

转寄快抵到日本, DHL 更快/ 我们更了解日本(Quick transportation by special flight from Japan, DHLmore quickly). The influence of this advertising text is expressed by using the adverb 更 twice. The adverb 更 intensifies the degree of characteristics, by that means creates the comparison. Besides, the adjective 快 is repeated twice here too. The word 快 in this text creates the image of the company, the company that delivers mail all over the world and in minimum terms.

The sentence “ 这里, 连结世界的机遇 (Here is the World's opportunities connected)” contains direct instruction, by means of the adverb 这里(here), the main purpose of which is to indicate reference point relative to the speaker.

The directives are represented by motivation acts of different types: suggestion, advice, appeal, request, requirement etc. [6] The purpose is to make clients doing something that is said. The imperative mood is mostly used here.

Table 2. Directives.

Type of advertisement text	Text
appeal	快! 为肌肤补水! – Quickly! Apply some water on your skin!
recommendation	吃川崎火锅 -口爽,心爽, 天天爽-Taste Hot Pot with Kawasaki sauce, light taste, easy heart, easy day
announcement	开创四核世代! 全新四核英特尔服务器处理器! The four nuclear processor era has started!

“快! 为肌肤补水! (Quickly! Apply some water on your skin)”, the appeal in this example is expressed by using exclamatory and stimulating sentences, the basic function of which is to influence on the recipient.

“联想推荐个人用怙特用正版 (Windows XP –Lenovo recommends to use license version of Windows X)” is the computers advertisement. The illocution purpose of the text is to recommend the product, it is represented with the help of the verb 推荐(to advise, to recommend), that offers a customer service.

“开创四核世代! 全新四核英特尔服务器处理器! (The four nuclear processor era has started!)” is the Japanese sauce advertisement. The illocution purpose is tendency to advise a customer to buy this very product. The advice is expressed by the verb 吃 and the product characteristics, that are colored by the epithets 口爽 (light taste), 心爽 (easy heart), 天天爽 (easy day). They are used to convince a customer to take the advice.

“开创四核世代! 全新四核英特尔服务器处理器! (The four nuclear processor era has started!)”, the illocution purpose of this text is to advertise the product. This purpose is achieved by means of the set phrase 开创四核世代 (The four nuclear processor era has started!).

Commissives are the acts, the main purpose of which is to make the speaker keep the certain line of behavior. [6] The Commissives in advertisement texts are represented by promise, quality guarantee, usefulness, safety of the advertised products.

For example, 30 分钟奇效 , 医治各种感冒症状 – It start to work in 30 minutes, it treats any kind of flu symptoms.

Expressives are the emotional, figurative components of advertised products.

“开放的哈尔滨欢迎您! – Prospering Harbin greets You!”, the word 欢迎 (to greet) expresses the act of greeting.

“MOTO 迎春新时尚 (MOTO is meeting the Spring and new tendency)”. Here the illocution purpose is to congratulate or to give presents, and it is realized by the phrase 迎春 (to meet Spring).

“迎春建行-服务送真情, 真情祝福 (Meet the Spring together with the Construction Bank of China – sincere service, sincere wish happiness)”. To motivate customer’s good attitude to the bank is the illocution purpose of this example. It is realized with the help of the phrase 迎春(meet the spring), 真情(sincere), 祝福(wish happiness), these three lexical units are emotionally coloured.

Table 3. Expressives.

Type of advertisement text	Text
Greeting	开放的哈尔滨欢迎您! ! – Prospering Harbin greets You!
Congratulation	MOTO 迎春新时尚- MOTO is meeting the Spring and new tendency
Wish	迎春建行-服务送真情, 真情祝福 –Meet the Spring together with the Construction Bank of China– sincere service, sincere wish happiness.
Invitation	Rotimon开业了! 来自新加坡香侬面包! Rotimon is working now! Fragrant bread from Singapore.

“Rotimon开业了! 来自新加坡香侬面包! Rotimon is working now! Fragrant bread from Singapore.” is invitation act, it offers a customer to buy, that is here expressed by exclamatory sentences.

Interrogatives are the speech acts that inquires some information, mostly are used in question forms. Interrogative sentence is a structural unit of a language. It can be expressed by any types of utterance. Interrogative sentences can be used in advertising texts in direct and indirect meanings.

Advertisement informs consumers about different products that are in the market now. It is not only to inform but also to convince consumers to buy this or that product. Successful combination of the advertisement idea and methods of speech influence allows to affect on consumers better.

3. The basic methods of speech influence in Chinese advertising text

1. Phraseological units “chenyu” – idioms. The use of idioms in advertisement texts is relevant, as phraseological units are better to perceive. Advertisement texts that have idioms find a direct way to people’s minds, so that there is no need to interpret text message, but use these idioms that are memorized automatically. Phraseological units add some idiomaticity to advertisement texts, that’s why the texts are syntactical simple and semantic overloaded. [2]

For example, 时尚之步 山水温州 – The scenery of Wenzhou is the way to trendy life.

2. Metaphor. Metaphors are used to express concepts that don’t have sensual and visible features: light weight, fragrance, taste, alcohol strength, quality, use etc.

For example, 皮革天地, 迷人世界 – The world of leather that fascinates the Universe.

3. Epithet – a word that defines an object, and underlines it’s typical characteristics. Epithets helps to create an image of an object. [4]

For example, 简单, 聪明, 能干! – Light, clever, capable!

4. Personification, for example, 让汽车成为一个小家! – Let the car be your home!

5. Homophones are the words that have similar pronunciation.

For example, 三羊, 三羊, 给您吉祥! Three sheep, three sheep will bring you happiness!

Table 4. Speech influence methods in Chinese advertising texts.

Advertising text	Types of speech act	Speech influence method
娃哈哈牛奶你今天喝了没?? Wahaha milk, have you drunk it today?	Interrogative	Rhetorical question
一毛不拔 It is impossible to pull out a hair	Representative	Phraseological unit
走中国路，乘一汽奥迪！ – It is better to travel around China by AUDI!	Representative	Exclamatory sentence
新状元学习机会做题的学习机！ 搜学王 an education on-line game for new Zhuang Yuan is able to accomplish any task! Is able to find the Kind of education!	Representative	Metaphor 状元
«康师傅»方便面 – 好吃看得 – Kang shifu Instant noodle is obviously tasty	Representative	Epithet 好吃
可口可乐 – 喝可口可乐吧！ Coca-cola, drink it!	Directive	Exclamatory sentence
简单，聪明，能干！ – Easy, clever, capable	Representative	Epithet 简单，聪明，能干
M&M 牛奶巧克力 – 只落在口，不落在手！ – Milk chocolate M&M melts in the mouth and not in the hands.	Representative	Metaphor 只落在口 and 不落在手
有路必有丰田车！ – where here is a road there is TOYOTA.	Representative	An exclamation sentence

Thus while researching, we have analyzed about one hundred advertising texts in Chinese and found out that the greatest amount of illocution utterances in Chinese advertising texts are the repre-

sentatives (sixty texts, it is about sixty percent).the representatives creates the information field of the text, they give the most exact information about a product. Less popular are the commissives and interrogatives, they take about four percent and two percent of the texts. The rear use of the commissive speech acts can be explained by the idea that the commissives don't guarantee that customers will need this product. The rear use of the interrogatives is explained by the idea that customers want to get information about a product through detailed outline, but not through questions.

In conclusion it should be noted language means, that appeals to emotions, are widely used in Chinese advertising texts. The most frequent of them are epithets and metaphors, as they influence on customers better. Besides using metaphors in advertising texts is the best way of implicit influence. Less productive methods are comparison and personification.

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