

PRESUPPOSITION IN ADVERTISING LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

It can be denied that advertising has now played an important role in our modern life. In the ancient time, people knew how to announce their production by many ways. They went on foot, by horse for miles to bring their products to other places in order to serve their own purpose, purchasing products or advertising product. Time goes by, however, along with the development of new technology especially the media, advertising is now representing its own mark every corner of the world. We can see advertisement on TV, on buses, airplane even on the trees around the town we live. We can listen to their advertising on the radio, and every time we access to the Internet, the first thing we see is advertisement. Advertisers use every mean to design persuasive advertisements to draw people's attention and persuade them to buy the advertised products. In fact, advertising executives try visual content and design such as attractive patterns with photos and colors to make great impact on the consumer. However, a language makes people to recognize and remember advertised products. Advertising language is persuasive language. In addition, presupposition has a certain importance in this kind of language because it helps advertisers make indirect claim or assertions about products. This essay will present presupposition phenomenon in English advertisements slogans. Some kinds of presuppositions and their effect in advertising language will be discussed. The first section of the paper will discuss what presupposition phenomenon in language is. Then it will present semantic and pragmatic presupposition in advertising language. Concretely, existential, factice, lexical and structural presupposition and pragmatic presuppositions will be argued through analyzing advertising slogans selected from Internet and everyday life. To limit the essay, the first pages will be the study of the essay.

Keyword: Pragmatics, Presupposition, Advertising

1. INTRODUCTION

It can be denied that advertising has now played an important role in our modern life. In the ancient time, people knew how to announce their production by many ways. They went on foot, by horse for miles to bring their products to other places in order to serve their own purpose, purchasing products or advertising product. Time goes by, however, along with the development of new technology especially the media, advertising is now representing its own mark every corner of the world. We can see advertisement on TV, on buses, airplane even on the trees around the town we live. We can listen to their advertising on the radio, and every time we access to the Internet, the first thing we see is advertisement. Advertisers use every mean to design persuasive advertisements to draw people's attention and persuade them to buy the advertised products. In fact, advertising executives try visual content and design such as attractive patterns with photos and

colors to make great impact on the consumer. However, a language makes people to recognize and remember advertised products. Advertising language is persuasive language. In addition, presupposition has a certain importance in this kind of language because it helps advertisers make indirect claim or assertions about products.

This essay will present presupposition phenomenon in English advertisements slogans. Some kinds of presuppositions and their effect in advertising language will be discussed. The first section of the paper will discuss what presupposition phenomenon in language is. Then it will present semantic and pragmatic presupposition in advertising language. Concretely, existential, factice, lexical and structural presupposition and pragmatic presuppositions will be argued through analyzing advertising slogans selected from Internet and everyday life. To limit the essay, the first pages will be the study of the essay.

2. RESULT

2.1 Presupposition

According to George Yule, “a presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers, not sentence, have presuppositions”

(George Yule 1996: 25) This is the basic for the speaker to convey his or her intention to the listeners because the speaker believes that the listener can understand what she or he wants to express. The most significant feature of presupposition is the way we use language shortly, but still convey our meaning. When we communicate, presupposition can help us save time, word, but still bring us the communication effect. In addition to this, our utterance is more persuasive and satisfactory.

2.2 Presupposition in advertising language.

The purpose of advertisement is to persuade people to buy products. So advertising language, by many different ways and strategies, is a kind of persuasive language that convinces the consumers to buy and use the products.

Language used in advertising slogan is usually sort or concise but high of persuasion impression, and memorable. Therefore, the use of presupposition in advertising language is very important and effective to persuade consumers. Meanwhile, according to the commercial rules, advertisers are not allowed to imitate and defame other products directly or indirectly. However, advertisers, by using presupposition in their advertisements still make their good significant to the consumers. Definitely, presupposition has played an important role in advertising language.

2.3 Pragmatic presuppositions.

Pragmatic presuppositions are ‘the felicity conditions that would need to obtain for it to be appropriate to say’ something (Peter Grundy 2000:121). In fact, they are background knowledge or belief, which relates to the utterance, that is assumed or taken for granted by both the speaker and the addressee so that the utterance is appropriate in a specific context. This means that pragmatic presuppositions are context-bound and cancelable or defensible where they are inconsistent with the speaker and hearer’s knowledge about the world. Therefore,

pragmatic presupposition is one that is highly sensitive to the context.

Advertisers use pragmatic presuppositions in advertising language because of this feature of sensitiveness to the contexts. In a very short advertising slogan “*LG- Life is good*”, the advertiser presupposes pragmatically that the customers know that this slogan advertises Korean electronic company’s products, such as television, washing machine, air conditioning, cell phone; and that everyone knows that these products are so popular and adored or loved by consumers. Our life would be better if we have some household machines made by LG. Advertiser intelligently uses acronym for their advertisement, and emphasizes that our life needs these things to be better. Therefore, the popularity of the products is not asserted directly, but is pragmatically presupposed by the advertiser.

Advertisers usually give advertisement of high impressive and persuasive devices to make the consumers consider, believe in the quality of the product and finally select them. They, advertisers, deeply study customers’ emotion, attitude and behavior so that they are able to give an outstanding slogan that can not be forgotten in consumers’ mind. In addition to this, advertisers also base on the study of users’ psychology, and give a very way to influence customers’ feeling, thoughts and action. Let us take an example about an advertisement of a product- Honda wave @, motorbike, costs only 10.990.000 VND. Consumer would think that the price is less than 11.000.000VND in spite of the fact that the difference is only 10.000VND.

Advertisers try to persuade the customers’ emotion by giving out the strong point of their products, that is the good, which consumers are using, is the best, and there is no other choice for the customers than using their products. In the slogan of British Council: “where the best become better” the advertiser emphasizes that when you learn at British Council, you will receive the best learning environment that nowhere else is handling. People always reach to everything that is good for their life. Perhaps, the slogan of British Council succeeds in making a pragmatic presupposition.

The following table list some more advertising slogans in which the advertiser give the main

advantage or profit of the advertised products to convince the users.

Table 1: Advertising slogans with pragmatic presupposition triggered by giving the main advantage of the products

Number	Advertising slogans	Companies
1	LG- Life is good	LG company
2	Where the best become better	British Council
3	Leading innovation	Toshiba companny
4	Every time, everywhere	Mobile phone- Vietnam
5	Bitis' care your feet	Vietnamese Bitis'
6	Connecting people	Nokia
7	Like silk	Sunsilk- shampoo
8	Always hear, always understand	Prudential
9	Always low prices	Wal-Mart
10	Where science is leading	Imperial College, London

To make a clear distinction between one and another product, advertisers usually draw users' attention by giving the difference between the two products of the same kind, of course they have to follow the commercial law. The following example is one of these: "neat like Sony". Here the advertiser presupposes that there is no other TV

set is better than Sony. And that the way people choose Sony is the best way to satisfy their need. There are so many kinds of Television selling in the market, but Sony makes a big difference among them. Generally, the advertisers are very deliberate when they use this comparison.

Table 2: advertising slogans with pragmatic presupposition triggered by giving distinctions between one product and others

No	Advertising slogans	Companies
1	Neat like Sony	Sony
2	What a difference Lea & Perrins makes	Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce
3	Nothing delights you like Sunny Delight	Sunny Delight
4	Nothing acts faster than Anadin	Anadin drug brand
5	100% Squeezed Sunshine	Tropicana
6	The beer that made Milwaukee jealous	Mexican Brewery

The more advertisers use simple way, the more they make consumers remember their product easily. Here is an example of a famous slogan: "Lavie mineral, vital for life". We all know that we can not live without water, and the advertises

remind the customers of the necessity of the water in our life. The slogan is very simple, but it carries a literary meaning. Therefore, the advertisers want the consumers to try this kind of mineral water when they meet.

Table 3: Advertising slogans with pragmatic presupposition triggered by simple, direct and concise statement

Number	Advertising slogans	companies
1	Lavie mineral, vital for life	Lavie mineral water
2	'The World's Networking Company'	AT&T

3	'New Thinking.New ThinkPad/Think Centre'	Lenovo ThinkPad/Think Centre
4	'Merrill Lynch is Bullish on America'	Merrill Lynch
5	'It's a Sony'	Sony
6	Fujitsu Siemens. We make sure	Fujitsu Siemens Computer
7	Tiger beer	Tiger beer company
8	Conestoga. Connect life and learning	Conestoga, Ontario, Canada
9	PediaSure. Be sure	PediaSure bottled nutrition for kids
10	Dempster's. Nourish yourself	Dempster's bread range, Canada

On the other hand, the advertisers usually use the repetition in their advertisement to draw the consumers' attention. This kind of advertisement

often makes curiosity on the customers and gives them a chance to discover.

Table 4: Advertising slogans with pragmatic presupposition triggered by mnemonic devices

Number	Advertising slogans	companies
repetition		
1	Mr. Clean, Mr.Clean, the magic picker upper	Mr.Clean
2	Keep going and going andgoing	Energizer Batteries
3	Real Kids. Real Meals. Real Smiles	Kid Cuisine
4	They're tasty tasty very very tasty /They're very tasty	Kellogg's Bran Flakes
5	Pizza! Pizza	Little Caesars
Rhyme		
6	Beanz Meanz Heinz	Heinz Baked Beans
7	Easy, breezy,beautiful CoverGirl	CoverGirl
8	Skippy Dipping	Skippy Peanut Butter
9	Leggo my Eggo	Eggo waffles
10	Nothin'says lovin'like somethin'from the oven	Pillsbury
alliteration		
11	Gee! No, GTE	GTE

Beside mnemonic devices, the advertisers also use some short, interesting slogans that make an impression on the consumers. Those kinds of

slogans are usually easy to remember because the words within the slogan are short and quite interesting.

Table 5: Advertising slogans with pragmatic presupposition triggered by witty statements

Number	Advertising slogans	companies
1	Hello Moto	Motorola
2	Hello Hardee's!/Hardee's the taste that bring you back again	Hardee's
3	HelloTosh, gotta Toshiba?	Toshiba
4	Eat great, even late	Wendy
5	Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is!	Alka-Seltzer

2.4 Semantic presupposition

Semantic presupposition is ‘conventional way of understanding triggered by use of a definite description’ (Peter Grundy 2000:121). Peter Grundy (2000:121) explains this more that whenever a proper name or definite description is used, the existence of some referent that matches the description is presupposed.

Semantic presuppositions are embedded in lexical items and structures. Due to this feature, semantic presupposition can be classified into the following types: existential presupposition, factive presupposition, lexical presupposition, structural presupposition. These are also often-used in advertising language.

Being the consumers, they always expect to have the best selection or decision with the least afford. Having known the consumers’ expectations, the advertisers often use existential presupposition to serve their choice and wish. The advertisers often direct the consumers’ attention toward the quality or important information of the product in their advertisement. Here is an example of an advertisement: “Your potential, our passion”. This is an advertisement of Microsoft Company. The advertisement supposes that Microsoft will serve you everything you can think of, and that is the mission of Microsoft to do so. Microsoft will save your demand as long as you think it true. The following table lists some more existential presuppositions

2.4.1 Existential presupposition

Table 6: Advertising slogans using existential presupposition

Number	Advertising Slogans	Companies
1	America loves burgers, and we’re America’s Burger King.	Burger King
2	Your choice down at Wendy’s, where quality is our recipe.	Wendy’s
3	Fill your cup to the rim with Brim.	Brim
4	Sasko. Makes your baking better tasting.	Sasko
5	Put your money on the Favorit.	Skoda Favorit model
6	Take your lashes to Luxurious Length.	Revlon/ Luxurious Lengths
7	Dress your lips in Armani.	Giorgio Armani/ ArmaniSilk lipstick
8	Barclays. Fluent in finance.It’s our business to know your business.	Barclays bank
9	Janssen-Cilag.Your partner in integrated heath care.	Janssen-Cilag, reseach-based pharmaceutical company
10	Earth Grains. Discover a Heathier Slice of Life	Earth Grains breads
11	Your Potential. Our Passion	Microsoft

2.4.2 Factive presupposition.

Factive presupposition is ‘the use of particular expression is taken to presuppose the truth of the information that is stated after it’ (George Yule 1996:28).It is triggered by both lexical items (factive verbs: realize, know, regret, odd/ sorry/ proud/ indifferent/ glad/ sad), stressed constituents and syntactics

In advertisement, the advertisers often give facture information about the product. They persuade consumer to buy their products of true

information, as they are advertising. In addition to this, consumers would have changed their attitude about the product they are going to buy. Take an example: “What you want is what you get” This is an advertisement for Mc Donalds’s fast food.The phrase *what you want* and *what you get* trigger the presupposition that you want something and you get something. The advertiser conveys directly the information that you will get things you want with Mc Donald’s fast food in a subtle way.

Some other advertising slogan using factive presupposition are listed in the following table.

Table 8: Advertising slogans using factive presupposition

Number	Advertising Slogans	Companies
1	It is The Internet that log onto you	SBC
2	Networks that go the distance	3 Com
3	What you want is what you get.	Mc Donalds's fast food
4	Everything we know is everything you taste	Ernest & Julio Gallo wines
5	I 've got good news. I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance by switching to GEICO	GEICO-
6	It's BEER. Hooray beer	Red Stripe Jamaican
7	Tuborg. BEer YOURSELF	Tuborg brand
8	An IDEA can change your life	IDEA (Indian mobile services provider)
9	America spells cheese, K-R-A-F-T	Kraft
10	PLAY BEYOND	Play Station 3

2.4.3 Lexical presupposition

Lexical presupposition is one in which 'the speaker's use of a particular expression is taken to presuppose another (unstated) concept.' (George Yule 1996:28). It is usually triggered by the change of state verbs (begin, continue, stop, arrive, come, enter, go, leave), implicative verbs (manage, avoid, remember, forget, happen, intend), expressions of repetition (again, another time, anymore, come back, repeat, restore, return) and comparisons. For example, in an utterance "he used to smoke". The speaker presupposes that now he does not smoke. In advertising language, the advertisers

often use no real comparison as a lexical presupposition trigger. The advertiser, in reality, usually unqualified comparisons to advertise their products without defaming other products. For example, in an advertisement for the Sunsilk shampoo: "try once, like once". The advertisers presuppose that you had better use Sunsilk because you may use many kinds of shampoo in your everyday life, but Sunsilk makes a big difference among those you had used before. You can find some more advertising slogans with lexical presuppositions in which no real comparison used as the presupposition trigger in the table below.

Table 8: Advertising slogans using lexical presupposition

Number	Advertising Slogans	Companies
1	A better beer deserves a better can	Heineken beer
2	Try one, like once	Sunsilk shampoo
3	A better way to shop for health & beauty	Drugstore.com
4	Nothing acts fater than Anadin	Anadin drug brand
5	GlaxoSmithKline. Do more, feel better, live longer.	GlaxoSmithKline copany
6	More defined. More conditioned. More beautiful lashes.	Estee Lauder/more than mascara.
7	Everything is Easier on a Mac	Apple computer
8	No battery is stronger longer	Duracell Batteries
9	Higher standards, lower prices	Meijer Tesco
10	Heineken refreshes the parts other beers can not reach.	Heineken beer.

2.4.4 Structural presupposition

Structural presupposition is also used in advertising language. ‘ In this case, certain sentence structures have been analyzed as conventionally and regularly presupposing that part of structure is already assumed to be true.’ (George Yule 1996:28). *Wh*-question, embedded *wh*-questions, temporal clause usually hold structural presupposition. In the question “Where did you go”? The speaker presupposes that you

went somewhere. In the following example, the advertisers want to tell you the effect of Tide, a kind of washing powder, when you use. “How surprising when you use Tide”. The advertisers presuppose that Tide will take the dirt on you clothes away, and make your clothes whiter and brighter. Tide is a good kind of washing powder you should use for your clothes.

Some more advertising slogan with structural presuppositions are listed in the table below.

Table 9: Advertising slogans using structural presupposition

Number	Advertising Slogans	Companies
1	Just what you ‘ve been looking for	Arbor Mist, US wine brand
2	Range Rover. It’s how the smooth take the rough.	Range Rover car
3	How surprising when you use Tide	Tide- washing powder
4	Where there’s life, there’s bud.	Budweiser Beer
5	When you see the three-ring-sign, ask the man for Ballantine	Ballantine’s Beer
6	Think what we can do for you .	Bank of Amarica
7	when your money is safe everything is too.	Dexia Bank, Belgium.
8	Sun Trust. How can we help you ?	Sun Trust bank, Atlanta, Georgia.
9	Always besides you whenever you are	Vinaphone
10	We know how you love seafood.	Red Lobster.

3. CONCLUSION

As we can see in this paper, presuppositions play an important role in advertising language. The purpose of the advertisement is to persuade the consumers to buy and use the products. Therefore, the language using in advertisement needs to be short, impressive and memorable.

There is the fact that before the advertisements bring out a slogan, they often give assumption about the need, emotion behavior and attitude of the consumers. For these reasons, they choose a suitable and persuasive language to draw the consumers’ attention about the product they are advertising. To assert the existence of a product and its popularity, the advertiser often uses the existential presupposition. To convince the users to believe in the quality of the advertised products, the advertiser usually gives information about the products through the factive presupposition. So the information they give will affect the consumers, and direct them to choose the advertised products.

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