

# Presupposition and entailment in advertisement essay



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This paper discusses the relationship between advertising language, advertising addresser and advertising addressee in terms of presupposition and entailment and analyzes the strategies based on eleven theory.

Key words: presupposition entailment advertisement Co- operative Principle

Introduction Advertising plays a very important part nowadays in acquiring a good reputation for the product and its sales.

Modern manufactures pay much attention on advertisement, regarding it as a very essential way to persuade the consumers to buy their products. Since the birth of modern advertisement 100 years ago, many scholars and experts have attempted to study advertising language from different angles. Some scholars study it from the angles of communication, economics and psychology and others study it from the angle of pragmatics.

Inspired by them, this paper is intended to make an approach to the presupposition and entailment in advertisement so that it is expected to provide a broader point of view to study advertising language.

In advertisement, presupposition could be roughly divided into four types: belief presupposition, fictive presupposition, behavior presupposition and state presupposition. Each kind of presupposition has its own influence on the effectiveness of advertisement and on encouraging consumers to buy the product.

Co- operative Principle, which is also called as Grice's Principle, is often violated deliberately by advertisers in advertisements in order to pass the image of products more successfully to the consumers. The important effect

of presupposition and entailment in advertising language is going to gain more and more attention from the advertisers and the manufactures. 1.

Presupposition In advertisement 1.

1 The definition of presupposition A presupposition is a relation between propositions by which a presupposes b. If, for a to have a truth-value, b must be true.

A presupposition is background belief, relating to an utterance, which must be mutually known or assumed by the speaker. It will remain a necessary assumption whether the utterance is placed in the form of an assertion, denial, or question, and can generally be associated with a specific lexical item or grammatical feature (presupposition trigger) in the utterance. 1. 2

Presupposition in advertisement and its effectiveness There are two basic types of presuppositions: semantic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition.

The presupposition of advertisements belongs to pragmatic presupposition. Presupposition is a common inference phenomenon in advertising language. Presupposition is the known common sense between the both sides in language communication, or is the information which can be inferred according to context after words. So it is often contained in the meaning of a sentence and generally is not shown literally. In order for advertising language to communicate more information and be full of agitation, advertisements designers often use pragmatic presupposition.

From the social psychology, we can classify the pragmatic presupposition in advertising language as belief presupposition, fictive presupposition, <https://assignbuster.com/presupposition-and-entailment-in-advertisement-essay/>

behavior presupposition, state presupposition. Pragmatic presupposition can not only make advertising language succinct and interesting, but also can enlarge the amount of information in advertisement. Furthermore pragmatic presupposition can adequately help advertisement designers to achieve their anticipating goals according to marketing requirements. The study of some simple knowledge of advertisement can help us to understand advertisement.

Especially the study of the relationship between advertisement and receptors can help us to grasp the function and characteristics of advertisement.

And these points govern the very important roles of pragmatic presupposition in advertisement. 1. 2. 1 Belief presupposition in advertisement and its effectiveness In order to sell goods or services, the advertisers usually adopts some strategy to influence the exiting belief of the consumers by shattering their existing belief. The belief of consumer affects his attitudes toward the world and the things in it.

When he believes something is bad, his attitude toward it is one of distaste.

When he believes something is good, his attitude is one of approval. What the advertising tries to do is to produce some influences on consumers in order to change their attitudes. From above discussion about beliefs and attitudes, it is clearly known that beliefs are the basis of attitudes, which are coming from beliefs. In other words, a consumer's attitudes are greatly influenced by his beliefs of life, world outline and value Judgment and so on.

Therefore, in order to sell goods or services, the advertiser usually shakes or changes the beliefs of consumers by imposing some new beliefs or value judgment is accepted by society, it will produce a lasting influence not only on the individual consumer but also on the whole culture of the society. The pragmatic presupposition in advertisements which is utilized to influence the existing beliefs to influence the consumers' attitudes is called belief presupposition.

For example: Left turns only. This is an ad for NASA Pathfinder.

It is common sense that when driving there may be left turns only. Thus the reader's attention is drawn to the body text to find how come it is so.

As the body text says you'll be surprised at how his simple rule can change a road trip forever. Hidden lakes will be uncovered, tourist buses will vanish, passenger seating, independent rear suspensions and navigation system is built for such an adventure. Thus the reader believes with the navigation system, the adventure of such kind can be possible.

It has its appeal based on the effort of shaking people's deep-rooted points of view. 1.

2. 2 Fictive Presupposition in advertisement and its effectiveness Fictive presupposition, which is one of the standard examples of presupposition phenomenon, is realized differently by adopting different presupposition triggers, both lexical and syntactical. Just as the proverb goes, " Facts speak louder than words. " In order to influence or change the attitudes and/or the

behaviors of an individual or a group of people, it is very accessory to present some hard facts to them.

From the psychological perspective, their attitudes will be affected very subtly and will be geared towards the facts presented to them, so their action will perhaps be activated. It is self-evident that this way of presenting information is fairly beneficial both to the advertising agency and to the producer or manufacturer etc. Taken from the text of Apple Computer, the following example involves obviously a typical fictive presupposition which is used to express a proposition: “ I used to think it was my fault that Windows didn’t work properly.

The way of presenting proposition “ Windows didn’t work properly. ” through the structure “ it is fault that” is evidently presupposition. 1.

2. 3 Behavior Presupposition in advertisement and its effectiveness Behavior presupposition is what people do in response to stimulus and the eternal manifestation of their attitudes. Nowadays, advertising can also play a very important role in the process of colonization by shaking people’s beliefs and change their behaviors.

Behavior presupposition often occurs in the advertisements to be suggestive of some behaviors of the consumers’ present needs; and others are so undesirable that the nonusers are willing to give them up, yet they have no other choice but to accept them under the present conditions if they do not use the advertised products.

The advertisements below are to illustrate the effectiveness of this kind of presupposition: Brighten your smile this summer with Crest Weather-strips(Toothpaste, from Reader's Digest, March, 2005).

This advertisement presupposes that you did not brighten your smile with Crest Weather-strips before this summer. Obviously, the potential consumers have the following behavior needs: they want to brighten their smile in summer. However, the former toothpastes cannot satisfy the needs. By presupposing the dissatisfying behavior, the advertisement introduces a new product Crest Weather-strips that can change or eliminate the unfavorable behaviors.

Such strategy can easily meet the consumers' psychological needs and wants.

Thus this advertisement succeeds in fulfilling the persuasive function of advertising by the use of such kind of presupposition. From the above analysis we know that the purpose of the use of behavior presupposition is to persuade the consumers to take action to buy the advertised products or services by catering to the psychology of hem and making it more acceptable to them. 1.

2. 4 State Presupposition in advertisement and its effectiveness State presuppositions are those that presuppose some states of emotions or feelings of the people involved.

State presuppositions try to impart such kind of information to the consumers that the advertised products and services can call for the

pleasant feelings and eradicate the unpleasant ones for consumers are in the past unpleasant states for not using the advertised products or services.

Make your skin feel like butter: Lola complete with sheer butter significantly improves extra-body skin. Complete body washes (Lola, from people, February 7, 2005) A lot of information is conveyed through the employment of state presupposition.

State presupposition reminds the readers of the unpleasant states of the past in a subtle way. In this way, deep impression will be left on the minds of the readers and the purpose of the advertisement will be accomplished accordingly. It is easy to notice that state presupposition works by influencing the subconscious mind of consumers by showing them the change of the state of emotions/feelings. 2. Entailment in advertisement 2.

1 The definition of entailment Entailment is the converse of the relation of logical consequence.

In pragmatics, all sentences have a number of entailment— other sentences are automatically true, if the original sentence is true. Entailment is the relation between propositions one of which necessarily follows from the other: e. G. ‘ Mary is running entails, among other things, ‘ Mary is not standing still’. 2.

2 Entailment against Co- operative Principle in advertisement It has been noticed that in everyday conversation, there is a distinction between what a person’s words literally mean and what a person intends to mean, that is, people do not usually say things directly but tend to imply them.



To explain the apparent divergence between the logical devices and their language counterparts, Paul Grice delivers the theory of the conversational implicature in the William James lectures in 1967; later the main concepts of these lectures are carried out in 1975 and 1978. Grice's theory attempts to explain "how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning", which has a great influence on the development of The cooperative principle is specified into four specified into four maxims. Grice's cooperative principle is specified into four maxims. Quantity: 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of exchange).

2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. Quality:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence Relation: Be relevant Manner: 1.

Avoid obscurity of expression 2. Avoid ambiguity 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) 4. Be orderly Although the Cooperative Principle and its maxims are expressed in the imperative, it is meant to describe rather than to prescribe what actually happens in conversation.

Nagging conveyed through conversations and the way the implicature is achieved. Grice holds that "When we speak, we generally have something like the cooperative principle and its maxims in our mind to guide us, though sub-consciously, or even unconsciously". Grice thinks of the standard types of conversational practice not merely as something that all or most do in fact follow but as something that it is reasonable for us to follow, that we should not abandon. The observance of cooperative principle and its maxims can be

thought of as a sort of “quasi-contract” with parallels outside the realm of discourse.

Although it is assumed that speakers and listeners involved in a conversation are generally cooperating with each other, it is observed that people do violate these maxims in conversations.

Grice is fully aware of this and he devotes the next half of his 1975 paper to discuss the violations of the cooperative principle. For Grice, an interlocutor may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways: 1. He may quietly and instantaneously violate a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead. 2.

He may opt out from the operation both of the maxim and of the cooperative principle; he may say or indicate that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. 3.

He may be faced by a clash: He may be unable, for example, to fulfill the first maxim of Quantity without violating the second maxim of quality. 4. He may flout a maxim; that is, the speaker is able to fulfill the maxim but he may blatantly fail to fulfill it. This situation is one that characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature (Grice, 2002: 30).

Grice later adds a fifth category of the non-observance-infringing a maxim: A speaker who, with no intention of generating an implicature and with no intention of deceiving, fails to observe a maxim. In other words, the non-observance stems from imperfect linguistic performance rather than from any desire on the part of the speakers to generate a conversational implicature

(Thomas, 1995: 74). The one that characteristically gives rise to conversational implicature is the flouting of the maxims and it is actually the very category that Grice directs his attention to.

So, the thesis will attach the major importance to the flouting of the cooperative principle maxims. Advertisement is assumed to be a type of conversation, in which the advertiser is the speaker, the consumer is the hearer, the medium of communication is language, and the communication begins when the consumer pays attention to the advertisement.

Therefore the cooperative principle that governs human conversations as a whole also guides advertising language. The advertisers often violate the cooperative principle when advertising in order to get consumers' attention.

2.

### 1 Entailment against Quality Maxim in advertisement and its effectiveness

The maxim of quality claims that one should not say what he believes to be false and anything lacking adequate evidence. Advertising is a kind of language art as well as a very strategic communication behavior. Advertising English attaches much attention on the beauty of language. In order to achieve the purpose of propagating products, received by surprise effect, advertisers use various rhetoric means to add literary flavor on the colloquial tone of the majority of advertising.

Here are some examples violate Quality Maxim in advertisement: Look at the following public service advertisement: If people keep telling you to quit smoking cigarettes, don't listen-? they're probably trying to trick you living longer. It is a known truth, smoking is harmful to health, but once expressed <https://assignbuster.com/presupposition-and-entailment-in-advertisement-essay/>

by irony, people would feel understanding of the advertisement 's true intention: one can not live long unless giving up smoking for it is beneficial to one's health.

Another example: "tattoo, see you everyday. In violation of the maxim of quality, the advertisement uses anthropomorphic rhetoric, assimilating the cosmetics "Dab" to adult "Dumb". The surface meaning of the advertisement is to see friends, colleagues or family members every day, but its the implied meaning is that one had better use "Dumb" brand cosmetics daily if he intends to make his skin smooth and moist, just like seeing friends, colleagues, or family "Dumb" every day. The advertising language pulls such a close distance to consumers that they feel warm, friendly and highly infectious. 2. 2.

Entailment against Quantity Maxim in advertisement and its effectiveness  
The maxim of quantity makes your contribution sufficiently informative for the current purposes of the conversation. Do not make your contribution more informative than is necessary and shouldn't make you contributions more or less informative than is required. However, many advertisements deviate from the maxims of quantity so as to drive readers to pay more attention to their productions. Here are some examples violate Quantity Maxim in advertisement: The advertisement: "Saturday Night on Sunday Morning".

Readers will feel confused with the advertisement when reading it, which attracts people to figure out what does it mean. "Saturday Night on Sunday Morning" is an advertisement of video recorder. The advertising language

means actually that: time and tide wait for no man. You should treasure your every beautiful moment and record it down. This unique kind of advertising language enough to gain the attention who is watching the advertisement on TV.

2. 2. 3 Entailment against Relevance Maxim in advertisement and its effectiveness Doubtless, the maxim of eleven makes sure that whatever you say is relevant to the conversation at hand.

Numerous advertisements intentionally violate the maxim of relevance, so that they draw readers grope for their inner relevance through two unrelated discourses. In addition, it takes more time for readers to comprehend, which impresses readers and fascinates readers to acquaint of their own accord.

It includes two sides. One is under the same condition, the more situation effect, the closer relation they are; the other is under the same condition, the less efforts to handle, the more relevant they are. For example, a Nikkei advertisement:” Just do it. Literally, the advertisement is unrelated with its production, let alone other relative message.

However, only we think twice can we realize it expresses a spirit; another advertisement about London underground:” Less bread. Nor. There is no doubt that readers find it difficult figuring out what’s the relations between bread and J ( TTL Jam). Nonetheless, through the certain environment, readers naturally reckon that the slang of bread stands for money and J stands for traffic Jam.

The implicit meaning is less money and no traffic jam. . 2. Entailment against Clarity Maxim in advertisement and its effectiveness The maxim of clarity is different from other maxims in that it relates not to what is said, but rather, to how what is said is to be said. Do not make your contribution obscure, ambiguous or difficult to understand.

It should try to avoid obscurity and ambiguity when trying to pass a message. They should also try to be brief, and the last requirement is to be orderly. This maxim requires that the conveyed meaning in various advertisements? Its main expression forms include pun, nonce word and repetition.

First and foremost, the usage of pun creates humor with wisdom and unique. Advertising designers grasp the characteristic of production and language techniques to express double meaning and strengthen the effect of advertisement, as well as talk consumers into purchasing goods. For example, the advertisement from a duty-free shop in Heathers airport: “Hyperventilate.

Buy-? buy! “. It use the verb” benignity’s of “ bye”, which means persuade visitors into buying goods without imposing them on taxation before they leave there; Furthermore, nonce word always is abundant in the image of novelty, lively description and reaction.

For example: the advertisement” We know ghastly how to sell eggs”. In virtually, the meaning of the nonce word “ exactly’ which is similar to “ exactly’ is the meaning of “ exactly’. Obviously, that nonce word “ ghastly’ binds egg reflect this is egg product.

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The implied meaning is that it does not be perfect but egg tasty. Conclusion  
In order to attract and persuade more consumers to buy products  
advertising on TV or Newspaper, advertising language must be fresh and  
remarkable. To use appropriate presupposition and entailment will make a  
perfect advertisement even ore perfect.