英语广告的人际意义研究

A Study of Interpersonal Meaning in English Advertising

余樟亚 ◎ 著

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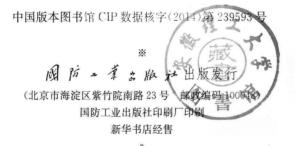
余樟亚　著

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内 容 简 介

本书共五章，主要以韩礼德的系统功能语言学为理论框架，结合话语分析的相关理论，对广告语篇在情态系统中体现的人际意义进行系统分析，分别从语气、情态、现在时、祈使句结构、人称代词等五个语法层面及语言特征入手，探讨了它们如何在英语商业广告中实现其人际意义，论证了实现人际意义的渠道的多样性、丰富性与复杂性。本研究紧密结合英语教学实际，有助于提高学生的英语阅读与写作能力。

本书适合高等院校英语专业教师、研究生及从事商务英语、广告设计等相关专业的人士阅读参考。

(本书如有印装错误，我社负责调换)

Preface

Advertising is a kind of concentrated, integrated and commercial language. As a kind of applied language, advertisement forms its own special stylistic language features. Its language features and social functions have been studied and focused effectively; however, the research of interpersonal meaning in advertising discourse is comparatively rare. Mainly based on Halliday's systemic-functional grammar, incorporating the theories of discourse analysis, the author does an empirical analysis by using a statistical method; five elements are mentioned in the analysis of selected English commercial ads at random. They are *mood*, *modality*, *tense*, *imperative structures* and *personal pronouns*, especially the use of the second-person "you". And it proves the multiple means to realize interpersonal meaning and the richness and the complexity of interpersonal meaning in advertising discourse.

Through the study, we could find that the advertiser uses different kinds of mood adjuncts, modal auxiliaries to claim different degrees of certainty and uncertainty so as to make the advertisement convincing as well as revealing;

using present tense to turn to the reader intermittently and to make implicit evaluations along the way; using multiple means to realize the imperativeness in advertisements; the advertiser addresses the reader as "you" or uses "you" in advertising textual world to create the pull for the reader to get into the real situation.

The book consists of five chapters as follows: Chapter 1 is the introduction part; Chapter 2 gives a description of advertising language, and it is argued that advertisement is a kind of purposive and goal-directed discourse; Chapter 3 presents a literature review on the theories dealing with the main aspects in interpersonal meaning of language and Halliday's context theory; Chapter 4 is the body part of the book. In this part, it first gives a brief literature review on these linguistic properties and then demonstrates their functions respectively by concrete data analysis and examples; Chapter 5 is the conclusion part of whole book.

The findings of this book give some suggestions on how to utilize advertising to enhance the competitive power of the commodity, show insight into how the systemic functional grammar can be used in various sorts of practical writings, and facilitate teaching of advanced reading and writing by acquainting students with insights about the relationship between grammar and discourse meaning (especially interpersonal meaning), enabling them to perceive the potentially complex relationship between the writer and the reader.

Limitations exist in every research, and this one is no exception. Firstly, commercial ads in the corpus are limited, for the ads are all in their written form and broadcasting and TV commercial ads etc. are not included in this study; secondly, a contrastive study of the interpersonal meaning of English and Chinese advertising discourse is believed to be rewarding and meaningful since it may reveal the rooted cultural difference between different countries. In further research, we could broaden our range of possible applications to education in a wider sense than language learning. On the other hand, in the vein of functional linguistics, interpersonal meaning as a system needs to be studied in text and textual patterning along the delicacy scale.

Here I want to express my sincere appreciation to the people who have contributed either directly or indirectly to this book. And the author hopes all the readers to point out the mistakes and correction within.

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Yu Zhangya

（余樟亚）

Shanghai University of Electric Power

（上海电力学院）

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Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

The Systemic-Functional Grammar is now nearly known to all linguistic learners and Michael Halliday is no doubt the contributor. He was a professor of Sydney University from the mid of twentieth century. But we cannot forget this linguist also had his supervisor and it was him who firstly had the idea of this concept and gave Halliday the inspiration. His name is Firth. However, if Halliday didn't develop this theory and made it more systematic, we will no longer have this "Systemic-Functional Grammar". Firth just had the basic idea and it was Halliday who developed it and give it the current famous name.

Compared with other language types, advertising language is obviously different, and this is because in advertising language, there are three important variables of the context of situation: field, tenor and mode. Since systemic functional grammar as well as the discourse analysis is the theory basis of this book, the advertising language can be

1

analyzed in another way. According to SFG, there are three metafunctions, among which advertising language carries the interpersonal metafunction most. Correspondingly, tenor which shows the relationship between the writers and readers has a close relationship with the interpersonal metafunction. That is to say tenor is the most important among the three mentioned above.

Then, another question comes up—what determines tenor? A complete ad interaction is necessarily made up of three elements: commodity/service, consumer and advertiser. So, these elements determine tenor, and then, those three variables of the context of situation—field, tenor and mode jointly determine the choice of meaning potential which is then a realization of a "higher" behavior potential.

In this book, the author adapts functional grammar's approach to the discourse analysis to analyze the interpersonal meaning. In the functional grammar, mood and modality is mainly talked about while in discourse analysis, various means such as tense, imperative structures and personal pronouns, etc. are analyzed together.

The advertisers can find some tips to carry interpersonal meaning in the ads, and in this way, they can attract more customers than others. Teachers can also find something useful, such as a new method to teach advanced reading and

2

writing. Students' awareness of the relationship between grammar and interpersonal meaning can really help them understand the complicated relationship between the writer and the reader. Through the specific study, the author hopes to build a bridge between systemic functional linguistics and practical writings.

1.1 A brief introduction to systemic-functional linguistics

Systemic-functional approaches does not only related to the choices people can make but also the function of it. In this case, it can be clearer that in linguistics, when people use language, the criterion of "right" or "wrong" cannot be the single one, but how to use it more appropriate is the purpose. Halliday himself says that the purpose of framing systemic-functional grammar is to offer a theoretical framework for discourse analysis (Halliday, 1994). Language is defined by Halliday (1973) as "meaning potential", that is, as sets of options, or alternatives, in meaning, which are available to the speaker-hearer. In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday classifies three basic meanings of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings on the basis of their different functions (Halliday, 2000).

Ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning play their won part in language. The first one helps show the inside world of speakers, and it is the way people express themselves. Interpersonal meaning concerned more about the relationship between the writer (speaker) and the reader (listener). It also carries their opinions to others, for example, the formality and solidarity as well as other aspects are included. When a person starts to care about how to express the same information in different ways, he cares about the textual meaning. According to Halliday, an ordinary sentence can carry all the three at the same time. Sometimes, people name these three meanings "three metafunctions". From this, it isn't difficult to notice language carries lots of functions at the same time or in other words, it is multifunctional.

In using language, how the speaker or writer express their information to others shows their reaction to the context, which he is in. This context can cover a lot including the information around. The study on Systemic-Functional Grammar started from 70s of the 20th century in China and about ten years later, it was very popular, during which time, researchers published lots of works including research papers as well as books. In this regard, special mention should be made of Professor Hu Zhuanglin. The book *A*

Survey of Systemic-Functional Grammar (1989) written by him comprehensively introduces Systemic-Functional Grammar, and it was the first time in China. *On the Cohesion and Coherence of Texts* (1994) is another book from Professor Hu Zhuanglin. In this book, he explores two important concepts in the SFG in detail. There are also other good works in this area in China which should be paid attention to, such as *Reflections on Systemic-Functional Linguistics* (2001) written by Zhu Yongshen and Yan Shiqing as well as lots of papers published in the core magazines of foreign language.

There have been lots of researchers studying the interaction which must be realized by the interpersonal meaning in written language. This indeed shows the essentiality of interpersonal meaning. Interaction may be said to be coordinated if the agents involved have identical intermediate or final results and goals (Teun, Van, & Walter, 1982). If there is a sender and a receiver, then there should be some kind of interaction between the two in order for the message to be conveyed properly (Sultan, 1996). In interactions, there are some agents each one of which has the action of himself (or herself). In other words, they all have their own aims in order to realize the ideal endings. Agents use various communicative strategies according to the genders, and they also choose the strategies in terms of their ages or the social

class, as well. And subsequently, these communicative strategies influence ongoing social relationships (Gudykunst, 1986). Since the interaction has close relationship with interpersonal meaning, they may have some same factors. Thomas, as quoted by Cheepen (1988), believed that "interactions are central to the way in which the discourse is developed". This also shows the key position of the interpersonal meaning in language.

1.2 The method and data

When expressing oneself, people may choose different styles, but they all carry the interpersonal meaning. In this book, the author adapts functional grammar's approach to the discourse analysis to analyze the interpersonal meaning. In the functional grammar, mood and modality is mainly talked about while in discourse analysis, various means such as tense, imperative structures and personal pronouns, etc. are analyzed together. Thirty commercial ads which were chosen from English magazines and related Chinese books are used as the example in this book; the magazines like *Newsweek*, *Newstimes*, *US News* and *World Report* are all included. Meanwhile, most of the ads are about products and services. They cover various areas, such as daily supplies,

insurance, financial service and so on. Furthermore, in order to give a better analysis of these ads and help readers understand them more easily, when analyzing the data, the author also uses several statistical methods.

1.3 Brief structure and arrangement of the book

The book consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introduction part; it offers the author's purpose of the research, gives the rough information on systemic-functional approach, and illustrates the arrangement of this book.

Chapter 2 gives a description of advertising language, the previous study of advertising and the significance of studying the interpersonal meaning in English commercial advertising discourse. It is argued that advertisement is a kind of purposive and goal-directed discourse.

Chapter 3 presents a literature review on the theories dealing with the main aspects in interpersonal meaning of language and Halliday's context theory. It points out that the way to study interpersonal meaning of a discourse can be multiple.

Chapter 4 is the body part of the book. The author expounds the realization of the interpersonal meaning through