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语言语用理论及应用研究

STUDIES ON PRAGMATIC THEORIES AND

THEIR APPLICATIONS

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内 容 提 要

语言是人类区别于动物的重要特征，甚至是关键特征，是人类本质的重要外在形式。研究其机制必将加深对人类本质的了解。而语用学就是以语言使用和语言理解为研究对象的学问，它反映人们使用和理解语言的客观规律，是一个动态的知识体系。语用学这门学科本身就早已表明它是与语言应用有关的一门学问；而语言应用问题，必然关系到人们心理上的认知，关系到社会和文化，关系到人与人之间在不同场合下的交往、协商与顺应。本书探讨了语用学中的预设、模糊限制语、会话合作原则及礼貌原则等重要理论及其在现实中的运用，并对礼貌用语和法庭辩论中的模糊限制语等语言现象进行了英汉对比分析。其中重点讨论了语用预设、大学生中文辩论赛中的应用及模糊限制语在英汉法庭辩论中的应用。本书在最后一章进一步结合英语教学探讨了大学生的英语语用能力与其英语学习动机之间的关系。本书的研究侧重于语言理论的应用，有助于人们理解现实生活中的语言现象及隐藏于其后的语言本质，是充分运用我们丰富的汉语资源去研究具有中国特色的语用现象的一次大胆尝试。

序 言

自从格莱斯提出会话含义议题以来，联系思维文化等语境的语用研究也日益活跃起来。语用学是语言学的一个新兴领域，其作为独立学科的地位直到 20 世纪 70 年代才得以确立。语用学又是一个“疯涨”的学科，经过数十年的发展已形成相当可观的规模。国内自 20 世纪 80 年代以来，不断有文章介绍语用学。有关语用学的教材、专著、论文，在我国陆续出版。语用学的迅猛发展与其自身的学科特点有着深刻的联系。致力于探讨语言使用和理解规律的语用学给人们一种熟悉感、亲切感，因而也容易成为人们乐于研究的对象。

20 世纪 80 年代，我国学者评价了列文森 (Levinson, 1983)、利奇 (Leech, 1983) 等学者在语用学方面的研究成果。继而又引进了维索尔伦 (Verschueren, 1999)、梅依 (May, 1993) 等学者的著作。他们系统地介绍了语用学理论，对某些原则也作了具体的描写，其理论性较强。国内学者如何兆熊(2000)，姜望琪(2001)，何自然、冉永平(2002) 等也相继介绍并扩展了国外的语用学理论研究；何自然、陈新仁(2004) 还探讨了语用学与翻译及外语教学的关系。

以上学者的论著为本书提供了重要的理论基础。本书力图致力于分专题深入研究语用理论及其应用并侧重于应用研究，通过对大量的第一手英汉语料的语用分析，揭示了真实语料背后所蕴藏的语用规律及英汉语言中语用现象的异同。

乔姆斯基 (Chomsky, 1977, 转引自 Radford, 1981) 曾经指出，能力 (competence) 包括语法能力和语用能力。后者使语言使用者可以利用一些非语言信息 (如背景知识、信念等) 去使用

和理解语言。国内学者何自然、冉永平(2002) 认为，借鉴国外同行已经取得的研究成果来研究我们自己的语用现象，可以避免不必要的理论重复；同时也可以使我们的语用研究与国际同步。我们应大力提倡占有第一手材料，要充分运用我们丰富的汉语资源去研究具有中国特色的语用现象。本书正是在这个方面的一次大胆尝试和探索。它对语言研究者和爱好者有着一定的学术参考价值与实用价值，对语言教学、人际交流、跨文化交际等也颇具指导意义。

刘露莹

2008 年 6 月

Chapter One A Study of the Functions of Pragmatic Presupposition in Advertising Language

广告是经济全球化和信息时代的一个重要的社会现象。国家经济、企业发展、市场开发、对外贸易和人们日常生活无一不和广告密切相关。从根本上说，广告语言属于劝导说服性的语言。因此，广告撰写人尽可能地采用一切语言及非语言的技巧来实现广告宣传的目的。作为语言学，特别是语用学中的一个重要话题，预设现象由于其自身的特点经常被广告撰写人用来增强广告的说服效果。

本章通过回顾预设研究的历史背景及理论背景，用定性研究的方法，对广告语言中的语用预设进行了尝试性的分析。作者主要从预设与广告的语言形式、预设与广告的语篇、预设与广告的信息及预设与广告的市场策略等四个宏观层面来分析语用预设广告语言中的功能。研究发现，预设广告中具有诸多积极的功能。这些功能包括语言功能和语用功能。

其中语言功能有：

1. 语用预设可以使广告语言简洁和多样化；
2. 语用预设具有对广告语篇的组织功能，在广告语篇的衔接和连贯方面起着重要的作用。

其语用功能有：

1. 语用预设可以提高和增加广告信息的质和量；
2. 语用预设还可以被广告制作者运用到市场策略中，因为它具有导向功能、隐藏功能、自我保护功能、委婉功能、幽默功能和人际功能。换言之，语用预设从以上四个不同的角度服务于广告，在实现广告的最终目的方面起着不可替代的作用。

本章的研究将会对预设广告中的应用产生一定的理论和实践的指导作用，即从实践上帮助广告撰写人有效地运用预设这一策略，使广告语言的设计更科学、更具魅力，最终帮助广告实现其目的。从理论上本章的研究能加深对预设的认识和理解，并丰富广告语言的研究。

Advertising is an important social phenomenon in the global-economic time and information age. They are closely connected with social economy, enterprise development, market exploitation, foreign trade and people's daily life. The language of advertising is basically persuasive. Therefore, all possible means, linguistic or non-linguistic, have been adopted by advertisers to serve the purpose of advertising. As a very important topic in linguistics, especially in pragmatics, presupposition is frequently employed in order to enhance the effects of persuasion in advertisements because of its own special properties and characteristics.

This chapter gives a tentative analysis of pragmatic presupposition in advertising language by referring to the historical background and theoretical background of the study of presupposition. Due to the complex relations between presupposition and advertising language, the author adopts a qualitative method to expound and analyze the functions that pragmatic presupposition has in advertising language from four macroscopic angles: presupposition and the form of advertising language, presupposition and the discourse of

advertising, presupposition and the information of advertising, presupposition and the market strategies of advertising. The study shows that pragmatic presupposition is closely connected with these four aspects and has both linguistic and pragmatic functions, which are presented as following:

- 1) Pragmatic presupposition leads to the brevity and diversity of advertising language.
- 2) Pragmatic presupposition perfects the macrostructure and contributes to the coherence of advertising discourse.
- 3) Pragmatic presupposition enriches the advertisement information and enhances the quality of advertisement information communication.
- 4) Pragmatic presupposition serves the implementation of the market strategies of advertising in that it has leading function, concealment function, self-protection and euphemism functions and that it can make the advertising language humorous and shorten the distance between advertisers and the advertisement recipients.

Presupposition is an important component of the overall message in advertising and plays an irreplaceable part in fulfilling the ultimate purposes of advertising.

The study in this chapter is implicational both practically and theoretically. Practically, this study can give theoretical guidance to the applying of presupposition in advertising language and help advertisers create more scientific and attractive designing of advertisements in order to achieve their final goal of persuading the potential consumers to buy the products or services advertised. Theoretically, it might shed light on the significance of presupposition, and enrich the understanding of presupposition and the study of

advertising language.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Importance of Advertising

Advertising is ubiquitous in our lives. It has become part of everyday life and we are all exposed to various kinds of advertisements—on radio and television, in newspapers and magazines, on city streets and buses, and even on computer screens and mobile phones. In today's age of mass production and fierce competition for markets, advertising has also become an essential means for advertisers to make their products or services publicly known and ultimately to move consumers to buy and keep buying their goods or services. It is self-evident that advertisements play a very important role in modern society. National economy needs advertisements for its development. Enterprises need advertisements for inter-enterprise competition, market occupation and sale promotion. People generally need advertisements for help in choosing commodities and for the enrichment of spiritual life. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that our life is more or less influenced and even changed by so much advertising around us in modern societies.

Advertising takes many forms, but in most of them language is of crucial importance. Whether one examines advertising as a means of communications, as an influence to sales, as a pattern of marketing, or as a currently fast-developing industry, he is unlikely to ignore the effectiveness and persuasiveness in its language use. Admittedly, visual content and design in advertising have a very great impact on

consumers, but it is language that helps people to identify a product and remember it. Therefore, the choice of language to convey specific messages with the intention of influencing people is vitally important. Clever advertisers will not fail to consider the power and strategies of the language they employ.

1.1.2 Research Issue and Significance of the Study

Because of the important role advertisements play in nowadays society, a lot of scholars (Leech, 1966; Vestergaard & Schroder, 1985; Huang Guowen, 2002, etc.) have been making studies on advertising language from different aspects in order to find out the features of advertising language and to get insight into both producing and understanding advertisements. Among these studies, pragmatics is one of the perspective from which some scholars (Peccei, 1999; Goddard, 1998; Chen Xinren, 1998, etc.) conduct their research into the advertising language.

Pragmatics is the “study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms” (Yule, 1996:4) and it is “the study of relation of signs to interpreters” (Levinson, 1983:1). This definition can be interpreted as that pragmatics concerns not only about language users’ intended meaning, their assumptions, their purposes and goals, and the kinds of actions that they are performing when they are speaking, but also the way in which people understand the language. Coincidentally, advertising is an activity involving both the attempts, the strategies of the advertisers and the ways in which the advertisement recipients interpret and understand the advertisement. The feasibility of applying theories of pragmatics to the analysis of advertising language is also determined by the characteristics of

advertising language. According to Pateman, advertisements are “rarely identified in isolation and retrospectively but rather they are identified in a context where they have anticipated” (qtd in Tanaka, 1994:7-8). Linguistic knowledge alone, as a result, is far from enough for readers to successfully interpret an advertisement. They should at the same time have knowledge about the physical and social contexts of the advertisement, such as the advertiser’s intention and the product advertised, because it is necessary to their interpretation of what the advertiser means by a given utterance. Therefore, studying the advertising language from the angle of pragmatics is an appropriate choice. And one of the pragmatic notions—presupposition is chosen as the entering point to the studies of advertising language by some scholars (Peccei, 1999; Goddard, 1998; Chen Xinren, 1998; Guo Fuhui, 2001).

However, at the present time, presupposition as a very familiar phenomenon in advertisements has not aroused enough attention from people, not to speak of its important roles in advertisements. As far as I know, there have not been many academic works devoting entirely in the analysis of presupposition phenomena in advertising language though there might be some sparing a few pages to touch upon them (Peccei, 1999; Goddard, 1998; Chen Xinren, 1998; Guo Fuhui, 2001). Therefore, this study will give an analysis of presuppositional phenomena and the functions of pragmatic presupposition in advertising language. The author hopes that this study can give theoretical guidance to the applying and understanding of presupposition in advertising language, and throw some light on both presupposition and advertising language. She also hopes that it can help advertisers create better designing of advertisements in order to

achieve their final goal of persuading the potential consumers to buy the products or services advertised.

1.1.3 Research Method and Data Source

As this study is to analyze the presuppositional phenomena in advertising language, a qualitative analysis will be adopted in order to find out the functions of pragmatic presupposition in advertising language.

In analyzing presupposition, similarities of languages are much more than their peculiarities, which makes the research of this phenomenon more universally significant (Xu Shenghuan, 1993). “Even in language of quite different families, the linguistic items that give rise to presuppositions seem to be precisely parallel, in [sic] so far as the syntax and semantics of particular languages allow”(Levinson, 1983:216). Therefore, the materials to be analyzed in this chapter include advertisements in Chinese as well as in English, from a variety of sources, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, published books on advertising and so on. The author thinks the variety of sources will guarantee the authenticity of raw materials.

1.1.4 Layout and Scope of the Study

This chapter consists of four sections. Section One serves as the introduction to the whole chapter. Section Two is the literature review, which is divided into two parts. The first part presents a brief review of the researches on presupposition, which includes an introduction to the history of the studies in presupposition, some definitions of presupposition, presupposition triggers and some properties and functions of pragmatic presupposition. The second part introduces

some basic ideas about advertising and the linguistic principles of advertising language. It also discusses the purpose and functions of advertising. Then it gives a brief review of the previous studies on advertising language, which is the basis of and contributes to the present study. Section Three analyzes the functions of pragmatic presupposition in advertising language from four macroscopic angles: presupposition and advertising language, presupposition and advertising discourse, presupposition and advertisement information, presupposition and the market strategies of advertising. Section Four is the conclusion of the study. Pragmatic presupposition contributes to the effectiveness and persuasiveness of advertising language and can help advertisements to reach their final goal of persuading the potential consumers to buy the products or services advertised.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Pragmatic Presupposition

Presupposition is a very important concept in pragmatics. It connects closely with people's daily communication. “At any stage in a well-run conversation, a certain amount is presupposed.” (Lewis, 1991:416). This may account for why “there is more literature on presupposition than on almost any other topic in pragmatics (excepting perhaps speech acts)” (Levinson, 1983:167). Due to a long tradition of philosophical interest, a vast literature on presupposition has been produced. Scholars approached this topic from different angles and derived all kinds of theories concerning it.

1.2.1.1 Brief review of the history of the studies on presupposition

The notion of presupposition enters contemporary philosophy and linguistics from the work of the logician and philosopher Frege (1990), who was the first in recent times to wrestle with such problems like the nature of reference and referring expressions and to sketch a theory of presupposition. For him, the condition under which declarative sentences make a statement (bearing a truth value) was that each of their referring expressions should succeed in referring to an appropriate object or objects. In “On Sense and Nominatum” (Frege, 1990), he asserts that:

1) A proper name expresses its sense and designates its nominatum. (p.193)

2) When something is asserted then the presupposition taken for granted is that the employed proper names, simple or compound, have nominata. (p.197)

3) That the name “*Kepler*” designates something is rather the presupposition of the assertion “*Kepler died in misery*” as well as of its denial. (p.197)

4) It is certain that whoever seriously regards the sentence *Odysseus deeply asleep was disembarked at Ithaca* either as true or false also attributes to the name *Odysseus* a nominatum. (p.193)

From the above-cited assertions, we can represent Frege’s ideas concerning presupposition as follows (Levinson, 1983:170):

1) Referring phrases carry presupposition to the effect that they do in fact refer

2) A sentence and its negative counterpart share the same set of presuppositions

3) In order for an assertion or a sentence to be either true or false, its presuppositions must be true or satisfied

Although Frege was aware of the fact that in appreciating a work of art we can be “fascinated by the euphony of the language and also by the sense of the sentences and by the images and emotions evoked” (Frege, 1990: 194), his focus was in the truth-value of sentences. As he put it, it is the striving for truth that urges us to penetrate beyond the sense to the nominatum. Due to its senses, a sentence possessing proper names lacking nominata can be meaningful and understandable, but cannot be judged as true or false.

However, Russell, writing in 1905, opposed Frege’s views by proposing a well-known theory of descriptions (Russell, 1990). He has a two-value logic that is different from that of Frege. He assumes that a sentence has two possible truth-values relative to the given situation—it can be true or it can be not true. He holds that definite descriptions like *the so & so*, occurring in natural languages as subjects, are not logical subjects in logical form, but correspond to conjunctions of propositions. So the sentence *The F is G* should be decomposed into the conjunction of the following three assertions (Levinson, 1983:171):

There is some entity X, such that:

1) X has property F

2) There is no other entity Y which is distinct from X and has property F

3) X has property G

Thus, anyone who assert the sentence “The king of France is wise” would be asserting at the same time that (Levinson, 1983:171):

1) There is a king of France

2) There is no one else who is king of France

3) He is wise (He refers to the entity that has the property of being the king of France.)

In the case that assertion 1) *There is a king of France* is proven to be false, the whole sentence *The king of France is wise* is simply false, not as Frege suggests that it has senses but no truth-values. Thus, in Russell's view, if one of the propositions in conjunctions of propositions is false then the whole utterance with conjunctions of propositions is false.

Russell's point of view remains largely unchallenged until Strawson (1990) proposes a quite different approach. He argues that in using referring expressions, the speaker merely presupposes the existence of *the so* & so person or thing without any kind of assertions involved. If the person or thing does not exist, there is "presupposition failure" and the statement is neither true nor false. In other words, he gives a 3-value logic to a proposition including referring expressions, in which he believes besides "true" and "false", there is a third possibility to the proposition. Strawson (1990) also enlarges the scope of presuppositional phenomena. Besides definite descriptions and proper names, qualification noun phrases, some other parts of an utterance like temporal clauses and change-of-state words are included. One important contribution he makes is to distinguish sentences from uses of sentences to make statements. Sentences are neither true nor false; only statements are. So he defines presupposition as follows (Strawson, 1952:175):

A statement *A* presupposes a statement *B* if *B* is a precondition of the truth or falsity of *A*.

Strawson's replacement of "sentence" by "statement" can be

considered a big step forward. "Statement", as a time-space notion, for the first time, overtly takes contextual factors into consideration. Since Strawson, the discussion on presupposition has been connected with context.

Strawson's theory of presupposition pushes the study of presupposition into a new stage and makes it less imperfect. And the original philosophical studies on presupposition cause great responses in linguistic field. Some important linguists in this field are: Keenan (1971), Kinpasky & Kinpasky (1971), Lakoff (1971), Katz (1972), Karttunen (1973), Stalnaker (1974), Leech (1974), Kemponson (1975), Wilson (1975), Lyons (1977), Prince (1977), Sakock (1977), Wilson & Sperber (1979), Gazdar (1979), Karttunen & Perters (1975, 1979) and Atlas & Levinson (1981). Their understandings and definitions of presupposition are different, which can be mainly divided into two categories: semantic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition (Levinson, 1983:168-225).

In the 1960s and 1970s, with the development of semantics, presupposition phenomenon gradually drew the attention of the semanticists who studied it as a kind of semantic relation. Semantic presupposition is a relation between two propositions and has to do with truth-value assignments. It is defined as "a relation between something that is actually said (or could be said) and something else that has to be the case in order for the thing said to make any sense at all" (Fasold, 2000: 166). Another definition given by Strawson (1952) is that "A statement *S* presupposes a statement *S'* if and only of the truth of *S'* is a necessary condition for the truth or falsity of *S*". One of the features of presupposition is known as consistence under negation. To understand this feature better, two related concepts—

entailment and assertion, both concern about relationship between two propositions and the difference between presupposition and each of them are discussed by some scholars such as He Zhaoxiong (2000: 278-281) and He Ziran (1988:103) as follows:

“X presupposes Y” means if X is true, then Y is true; if Y is true, X can be either true or false; if Y is false then X makes no point—one cannot tell whether X is true or false; if X is false, Y is still true. In the following examples: (1) presupposes (2).

(1) The king of France is bald. (X)

(2) There exists a present king of France. (Y)

Entailment is defined as “something that logically follows from what is asserted in the utterance” (Yule, 1996:25). X entails Y means if X is true, then Y must be true. If X is false, Y can be either true or false, If Y is false, X must be false. Example: (3) entails example (4) (He Ziran, 1988:102).

(3) That person is a bachelor. (X)

(4) That person is a man. (Y)

The discrepancy between presupposition and assertion can be illustrated by the following example (He Ziran, 1988:103).

(5) Today he was late for class again. (A)

Apparently the statement involves the presupposition “he had ever been late for class” and the assertion “today he was late for class”. It’s the presupposition “he had ever been late for class” that makes the assertion “today he was late for class again” make sense. Without such a presupposition the statement would be abrupt and nonsensical. If we negate the statement (5), it will be “today he wasn’t late for class again”, and we can see the presupposition is still true while the assertion is no longer tenable. Therefore we can tell a

presupposition from an assertion according to the following pairs of propositions in which we use B and C to stand for presupposition and assertion respectively:

If A is true, then B is true.

If A is false, then B is true.

Hence B is a presupposition of the statement A.

If A is true, then C is true.

If A is false, then C is false.

Hence C is an assertion of the statement A.

In addition, according to Leech (1983:287), presupposition is that part of the content of an utterance which is treated as if it is familiar, and assertion is that part which is treated as if unfamiliar, new, or informative. And as the conversation progresses, its “context” progresses, in the sense that new elements are added to the pool of knowledge that can be taken for granted. the assertion of one proposition can become the presupposition of the next.

1.2.1.2 Pragmatic presupposition

Semantic presupposition that deals with truth or false conditionals is “a semantic relation holding between sentences or propositions” (Stalnaker, 1991: 471). However, such a “truth-conditional” definition fails to explain some language phenomena. Let’s look at the following example:

(6) Mary does not regret having invited John, because in fact he did not invite him.

There is a contradiction in the sentence. The second half of the sentence states that “Mary did not invite John”, whereas the first part presupposes that “Mary invited John”. Although the two facts clash, the seemingly contradictory sentence strikes us as normal and

consistent from communication point of view. The example shows that presuppositional phenomena require a pragmatic rather than a pure logic or semantic account. Then since 1970s, many studies on presupposition from pragmatic aspect have been made, which lead to varieties of definitions on pragmatic presupposition, some of which are the following. Presupposition is “the set of conditions that have to be satisfied in order for the intended speech act to be appropriate in the circumstances, or to be felicitous”. It is “the speakers assumptions (belief) about the speech context”, “shared background information” and “inferences about what is assumed to be true in the utterance rather than directly asserted to be true” (Peccei, 1999:19). Yule (1996:25) defines presupposition as something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Stalnaker (1991:473) also holds that “it is persons rather than sentences, propositions or speech act that have or make presuppositions”. In his eyes, all the facts can be stated and explained directly in terms of the underlying notion of speaker presupposition, without introducing an intermediate notion of presupposition as a relation holding between sentences (or statements) and propositions.

Linguists define pragmatic presupposition with different focuses and in different diction. However, they agree on one point, that is, pragmatic presupposition is closely connected with the speaker whereas semantic presupposition is associated with the sentence or the propositions of the sentence. In brief, from the pragmatic perspective, speakers have presuppositions; from the semantic perspective, presupposition is part of the meaning of the sentence itself.

From the above discussion, we can see that the understanding

and definitions of presupposition are different, but they can be mainly divided into two categories: semantic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition (Levinson, 1983). In other words, there are some different ideas as to whether presupposition belongs to semantic field or pragmatic field. However, it is almost impossible to put a clear cut between semantic and pragmatic account of presupposition. Presupposition is “rather the result of complex interactions between semantics and pragmatics”, and “to model such interactions we need to know considerably more about both the structure of semantic representations and the pragmatic principles that interact with them” (Levinson, 1983:225). Levinson also concludes that “presupposition remains still partially understood, and an important ground for the study of how semantics and pragmatics interact” (1983:225). Therefore, although the author of this work regards it as a pragmatic phenomenon, she holds that pragmatic presupposition still connects closely with semantics. She thinks that the semantic features of presupposition serves its pragmatic functions and does not take the semantic features of presupposition as something distinctly separated from the pragmatic features, but takes them as the component parts of the pragmatic features that serve advertisements.

1.2.1.3 Presupposition-triggers

In the analysis of how speakers' assumptions are typically expressed, presuppositions seem to be associated with the use of a large number of words, phrases and structures (Yule, 1996:27). These linguistic forms are considered as indicators of potential presuppositions, which can only become actual presuppositions in contexts with speakers, and are generally called presupposition-triggers. It is generally acknowledged that presupposition-triggers are

capable of successfully communicating something without explicitly asserting it. Karttunen (qtd in Levinson, 1983:181) has collected thirty-one kinds of such triggers, and Levinson (1983) proposed a list of thirteen, which is reproduced below (the examples provide positive and negative versions separated by ‘/’ to allow the reader to check the inferences; the presupposition-triggers themselves are italicized; the symbol >> stands for ‘presupposes’) (Levinson, 1983:181-184).

1) *Definite descriptions*

John saw/didn't see *the man with two heads*

>>There exists a man with two heads

2) *Factive verbs*

Martha *regrets/doesn't regret* drinking John's home brew

>>Martha drank John's home brew

some further factive predicates: *realize; be aware that; be sorry that; be proud that; be indifferent that; be glad that; be sad that*

3) *Implicative verbs*

John *managed/didn't manage* to open the door

>>John tried to open the door

some further implicative predicates: *forget; avoid*

4) *Change of state verbs*

John *stopped/didn't stop* beating his wife

>>John had been beating his wife

some further change of state verbs: *begin; continue; start; finish; carry on; cease; take; leave; enter; come; go; arrive; etc.*

5) *Iteratives*

The flying saucer came/didn't come *again*

>>The flying saucer came before

further iteratives: *anymore; return; to come back; restore; repeat;*

for the nth time

6) *Verbs of judging*

Agatha *accused/didn't accuse* Ian of plagiarism

>> (Agatha thinks) plagiarism is bad

Ian *criticized/didn't criticize* Agatha for running away

>> (Ian thinks) Agatha run away

7) *Temporal clauses*

Before Strawson was even born, Frege noticed/didn't notice

>> Strawson was born

further temporal clause constructors: *while; since; after; during;*

whenever; as

8) *Cleft sentences*

It was/wasn't Henry that kissed Rosie

>>Someone kissed Rosie

What John lost/didn't lose was his wallet

>>John lost something

9) *Implicit clefts with stressed constituents*

Linguistics was/wasn't invented by CHOMSKY!

>>Someone invented linguistics

10) *Comparison and contrasts*

Comparisons and contrasts may be marked by stress, by particles like *too, back, in return*, or by comparative constructions

Jimmy is/isn't *as unpredictably gauche as Billy*

>>Billy is unpredictably gauche

11) *Non-restrictive relative clauses*

The Proto-Harrappans, *who flourished 2800-2650 B.C.*, were/were not great temple builders

>> The Proto-Harrappans flourished 2800-2650 B.C.

12) *Counterfactual conditionals*

If Hannibal had only had twelve more elephants, the Romance languages would/would not this day exist

>> Hannibal didn't have twelve more elephants

13) *Questions*

Yes/no questions will generally have vacuous presuppositions, being the disjunction of their possible answers. Alternative questions presuppose the disjunction of their answers, but non-vacuously. WH-questions introduce the presuppositions obtained by replacing the WH-word by the appropriate existentially quantified variable.

Is there a professor of linguistics at MIT?

>> Either there is a professor of linguistics at MIT or there isn't

Is Newcastle in England or is it in Australia?

>> Newcastle is in England or Newcastle is in Australia

Who is the professor of linguistics at MIT?

>> Someone is the professor of linguistics at MIT

“The above list contains perhaps the core of the phenomena that are generally considered presuppositional”(Levinson, 1983:184). Linguists have called all the linguistic forms of potential presuppositions “presupposition-triggers”. It sounds like presuppositions are triggered to come forth by these linguistic forms, in other words, by language itself. Yet, as mentioned above, presupposition is something that the speaker assumes to be true, presupposition-triggers, as a result, should be understood as indicators of potential presuppositions or a linguistic means to express the speaker's presuppositions.

1.2.1.4 Properties of pragmatic presupposition

Concerning the properties of presupposition, scholars (Levinson, 1983; Green, 1976) have various viewpoints. According to Levinson

(1983), defeasibility and projection problem of presupposition are two basic properties of presupposition.

Defeasibility refers to one peculiar thing about presuppositions that they are liable to evaporate in certain context, or in circumstances where contrary assumptions are made.

The projection problem indicates that the presupposition of a simple sentence will either continue to be true or be cancelled when that simple sentence becomes part of a more complex sentence.

These two characteristics are the main challenges in the field of presupposition study. In order to address these two problems, various models and frames have been constructed but complete satisfaction is hard to reach. However, the purpose of this study is to study presuppositional phenomena in advertising language and its functions, these two problems will not be discussed here. Rather, some general properties of presupposition related to them will be selectively presented in the following part.

1. *Implicitness*

According to Green (1996:76), “a presupposition is semantic material which is taken for granted, that is, entailed (semantic approach) or assumed (pragmatic approach) and not asserted in a declarative sentence, questioned in a question, or ordered in an imperative”. A person who uttered one of the declarative sentences in (7) would be understood as taking for granted that “Mr. Brown was late for class”, rather than asserting it. So objecting to the presupposition by simply denying it with (8) is not likely to meet with success. In contrast, the main assertion of the utterance is easily denied, as in (9).

(7) a. The students regret that Mr. Brown was late for class.

b. When Mr. Brown was late for class, the students demanded an apology.

c. If Mr. Brown had not been late for class, the students could have done their work.

(8) No, he wasn't.

(9) No, they don't/didn't/wouldn't.

(Green, 1996:76)

2. *Consistence under negation*

The presupposition associated with a word or construction is constant when the clause containing that word or construction is negated or questioned. The presupposition "Mr. Brown was late," linked to the factive verb, adverbial clause, or counterfactual conditional construction in examples (7) is equally present in the negated and interrogative sentences in (10a-c)(Green, 1996:76).

(10) a. The students do not regret that Mr. Brown was late for class.

b. Did the students demand an apology when Mr. Brown was late for the class?

c. If Mr. Brown had not been late for class, the students would not have done their work.

3. *Undeniability*

Presuppositions cannot be denied without evident self-contradiction, as shown in (11), although they can be suspended, as illustrated in (12)(Green, 1996:77).

(11) Jack's children are bright, but Jack has no children.

(12) I'm sure Jack's children are bright, if he has children.

4. *Relation to an assumed world*

In all of the examples discussed here, it has been taken for granted that the relevant world is the real world (as presumed to be mutually known). However, certain world-creating verbs and constructions can define other worlds as relevant for the evaluation of presupposition-involving constructions (Green, 1996:77). For example, in (13) and (14), it is the world defined by a dream and a condition, respectively, where the relevant presuppositions must hold.

(13) I dreamed that the earth was flat, and that a lot of people were glad when Columbus fell off the edge (Green, 1996:77).

(14) If Richard and Debra get married, their children will be beautiful (Green, 1996:78).

In these two examples, the world-defining propositions provide a necessary or sufficient condition and a supporting context for the presuppositions "Columbus fell off the edge" and "their children".

There are still other properties that characterize presupposition beside the above-mentioned, notably unidirectionality, subjectivity and latency (Chen Xinren, 1998). By unidirectionality it is meant that a presupposition is assumed unilaterally by the speaker before he makes an utterance, in other words, a presupposition is known only to the speaker before it is communicated. Thus it is not contradictory to the concept of "mutual knowledge", which "is not always given; indeed, only through conversations are we able to build up this knowledge, to supplement it, if necessary" (Mey, 1993:206). The notion "subjectivity" indicates that pragmatic presuppositions are speaker's subjective propositions, and, as a result, not inevitably true. And because of the subjective beliefs and attitudes of the speaker, a presupposition can be cancelled in certain contexts (He Ziran, 1988:72). Presuppositions are sometimes latent. Assumed by the

speaker and being subjective, they are not always explicit to the hearer.

So far we have discussed the properties of presupposition. These properties of presupposition will be proven to be able to serve the objectives of advertising language in the following section.

1.2.1.5 Previous studies on the functions of pragmatic presupposition and their limitations

As a pragmatic phenomenon, presupposition surely has its own functions. But there are not many scholars who have conducted research on this aspect. Seuren (2000) only mentions that the function of presupposition is “saving time and energy in linguistic communication” (2000:280). Zhang Keding (1995), Yang Shiqiao (1999), Zhu Yongsheng and Miao Xingwei (2000) discuss the discourse functions of pragmatic presupposition. They hold the view that pragmatic presupposition plays an important part in discourse organization and discourse coherence. Wei Zaijiang (2002) states that pragmatic presupposition has the functions of economy, persuasion, information focus protrusion and discourse organization. From the above mentioned we could see that the most frequently discussed function of pragmatic presupposition is the discourse function. Wei Zajian mentions some of the functions of pragmatic presupposition, but he does not discuss the functions of presupposition comprehensively. Therefore, in the next section, on the basis of the studies of these scholars, the author will analyze the functions of pragmatic presupposition in advertising language in order to find out some other functions of pragmatic presupposition as well as the functions already discussed by them.

1.2.2 Advertising Language

1.2.2.1 Basic ideas about advertising

Advertising

Advertising belongs to the modern industrial world and doesn't flourish before industrialization and the creation of concentrated urban markets. As an important ingredient of market economy, advertising has attracted many sights from all walks of life. That's why it seems “advertising” is a word difficult to define. The origin of the word “advertising” is a Latin word “*adverture*”, which means to draw attention from the public to something. During the medieval times, the word turns to “advertise”, which means to inform somebody something and catch his attention. It is not until the end of 17th century that with the development of commerce the word “advertising” becomes popular. The definitions of “advertising” are many and varied. Among them, one of the both widely quoted and latest definitions is put forward by O'Guinn, C.T., Allen, T. C. & Semenik, J. R. (1998:6) as “advertising is a paid, mass-mediated attempt to persuade”.

Another definition of advertising made by American Marketing Association (AMA) is commonly accepted by public recently. It defines advertising as “the non-personal communication usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media” (Zhao Jing, 1992:1). Several aspects of this definition should be noticed. Firstly, “paid” reflects the fact that the space or time for advertising generally must be bought. Secondly, the “non-personal” indicates that advertising involves certain people of the public, but there is no opportunity for

immediate feedback from the information recipients—the advertisement receivers. Thirdly, “communication” has been defined as the passing of information, the exchange of ideas, or as the process of establishing a kind of commonness or oneness of thought between a sender and a receiver. Fourthly, “media” refer to the channels like magazines, newspapers, TV, radios, etc. that can make the information reach the information recipients.

Advertising language

Advertising language has been proved to play a vital role in advertising communication and it is an integral part of almost every attempt to persuade. From the angle of the message vehicle, the language of advertising is regarded as a language of finely engineered, ruthlessly purposeful messages, intending to trigger a special response from the consumers. Vestegaard and Schroder say, “The wording of advertisements is, in most cases, carefully crafted to meet particular ends. Sometimes it is intended to inform, but more often, and more importantly, to persuade and influence” (1985: Editor’s Preface). In sum, advertising language is the language used in advertisements which is a vehicle of elaborately-planned messages loaded with persuasive intentions for sales promotion or other purposes.

Advertising, in a broad sense, can be classified into commercial advertising and non-commercial advertising. In this study, the author will choose to analyze commercial advertisements because they are of the most frequent type, the type on which most money is spent, and the type that affects people most deeply.

Advertisements, especially print advertisements, usually consists of verbal and non-verbal parts. The key elements in the verbal part are headline, body copy and slogan. A headline serves as the first

attention-catcher by stressing the customers’ benefits, arousing curiosity, asking questions, issuing commands, etc. The body of an advertisement will provide further and detailed rational facts as well as emotional reasons to retain interest, stimulate desire and persuade the customers into buying. With one or two shortest but not least effective sentences or phrases, slogan often makes its appearance in the last line of an advertisement to make the audience know the manufacturer and to leave them a good impression by concentrating on the responsibility and intention of the manufacturer.

1.2.2.2 Purpose and functions of advertising

From the definition of advertising we have mentioned above, we can learn the purpose and the main functions of advertising. The ultimate purpose of advertising is to persuade consumers to buy a certain product or service. The main functions of advertising at least include conveying information and persuasion. More specifically, the basic functions of advertising are to present some information about goods, services or ideas to the public, and to influence and persuade people to make choices and at last take some actions, especially to purchase the products.

However, these two functions are not of equal importance. As Tanaka (1994) points out, “information is subordinated to persuasion” (Tanaka, 1994:36). Advertisers present information not for improving consumers’ knowledge of the world, but for selling them products. They do so just for convincing the consumers that the products they are advertising will meet their needs and enhance their lives, or that the particular products advertised has some qualities that will make it superior to other similar products. So we can say that persuasiveness is the most important function of advertising, and the other functions

are taken for the purpose of exerting the persuasive effect at its best. That is why advertising is described as the most pervasive form of persuasion in the world.

In order to achieve this intended function, the language in an advertisement must be able to “attract attention, arouse interest, stimulate desire, create conviction and get action” (Vestegaard & Schroder, 1985:49), which is described as the process of persuasion and regarded as the five requirements in advertisements.

The first thing an advertisement tries to do is to grab its audience’s attention and make sure that it is noticed. This is one of the keys to make a successful advertisement in modern commodity society, since the purpose for a potential consumer to read a magazine or a newspaper is to read its editorial material, not advertisements, and in the meantime, plenty of advertisements in the publication are competing for the audience’s attention. It is the advertiser who tries to make his advertisement reach the audience’s mind, not the audience who tries to reach the advertisement’s meaning.

Of course, it is not sufficient to grab the audience’s attention for a short time. Once the audience’s attention has been captured, the advertisement must hold the audience’s attention and convince him that the subject of this particular advertisement is of interest to him.

By attracting and holding the audience’s attention, a successful advertisement should develop the audience’s desire to buy the advertised product and convince him that the commodity satisfies some need, or provides a need which he has not felt before. In addition, it is not enough that the prospective customer comes to feel a need for the product in general. The advertisement must convince him that the product advertised is better than other competitive

products. If the advertisement is successful, it would stimulate a desire in the audience to buy the advertised product.

Finally, the audience will take action and buy the advertised product. Although the process from being attracted to being persuaded might happen in a few minutes while the prospective consumer is considering the advertisements, his final decision to buy may take place sometime later, even a few years later. The more successful the advertisement is, the more possible the potential customer will be convinced to buy the advertised product.

From the above discussion we may see that, no matter how many requirements there are in an advertisement, the purpose is the same—to persuade the prospective consumers to buy the product. In order to achieve this purpose, the language of advertising must be persuasive. All effective advertisements bear the characteristic.

In summary, advertisements are of a very practical type of writing with high commercial value. The ultimate purpose of advertisements is to promote sales, and all advertisements contain at least two main functions: to inform and to persuade, of which informative function is subordinate to persuasive function.

1.2.2.3 Linguistic principles of advertising language

Advertisements fulfill their purpose and functions mainly through the use of language. Therefore, the use of language in advertisements is of crucial importance. There are some basic principles governing the qualities of advertisements. They are the “KISS” principle, novelty principle and readability principles.

The “KISS” principle is carefully observed in advertising. It refers to “Keep It Short and Sweet”. Short, because of the limited