

Language Memes Analysis in Business Advertisements

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Abstract: Advertisements often rely on language memes to share information with commercial and cultural value, effectively grabbing consumers' attention and boosting product or service sales. These memes, known for their replicability, adaptability, and memorability, play a key role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. With the spread of business advertisements, the information of advertisements are more easily acceptable and rememberable. This not only strengthens customers' loyalty but also effectively promotes consumption and elevates the core value of the brand. In conclusion, the strategic use of language memes in business advertising serves as a powerful tool for building brand identity and fostering long-term consumer relationships.

1. Introduction

The theory of language memes, a key area in linguistics, offers a new way to understand the link between language and popular culture. This is especially relevant in online chats and social media interactions. Business advertising is more than just a way to promote products. It also spreads cultural and social values.

Studying language memes in business advertising helps us better appreciate the artistry of ad language. It also improves ad effectiveness, sparks creativity, and makes ads more appealing and memorable for customers. By looking at how business advertising impacts consumers, this study highlights its benefits. It also explores how ads influence consumer behavior, revealing the motivations and psychological mechanisms behind their actions. This offers fresh ideas for innovating and enhancing the quality of business advertising.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Memes

Memetics, a theory based on Darwinian evolution, explains the laws of cultural evolution. It seeks to interpret the universal connections between things and the evolutionary patterns of cultural inheritance from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The core concept in memetics is the “meme”, a term coined by Richard Dawkins (1976)[1]. The term “meme” is derived from the Greek word meaning “that which is imitated” and is modeled after the word “gene”. In Chinese, “meme” emphasizes its nature as a phenomenon of imitation, similar to genes. While genes propagate through biological inheritance, memes spread through imitation and are considered the basic units

of culture.

As a fundamental unit of culture, memes rely on language as one of their primary carriers. Memes facilitate the development of language, while language, in turn, enables the replication and transmission of memes. This demonstrates the close relationship between memes and language. From the perspective of memetics, language memes reveal the patterns of discourse dissemination and language propagation. Furthermore, language itself can be seen as a meme, manifesting at various levels, including characters, words, sentences, and even entire texts. In natural language, memes are primarily reflected in three aspects: education and knowledge transmission, the use of language itself, and communication through information exchange. Language memes represent the application of meme theory in linguistics, studying how language spreads through imitation and replication among populations.

2.2 Business Advertising

The English word “advertise” originates from the Latin word “advertere” meaning “to draw attention”. Over time, particularly during the Middle Ages, the term evolved into “advertise” signifying “to inform someone about something and attract their attention”. By the late 17th century, “advertising” came to mean “the dissemination of commercial information”. According to Merriam-Webster, advertising is defined as “the act or practice of promoting products, services, or needs to the public through paid announcements in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards, etc.” Additionally, advertising can be described as a paid, non-personal form of communication conducted by businesses, non-profit organizations, or individuals through various mass media. These entities aim to inform or persuade specific audiences while being identified in the message[2].

In business advertising, language memes are key to shaping how consumers see brands and how effective marketing campaigns are. By studying language memes, we can understand how advertising language impacts consumer behavior through copying and sharing. These memes are easy to spread and remember, making them powerful tools for quickly reaching and connecting with audiences. Future research should focus on how digital platforms change the way advertising memes spread and their long-term effects on consumer behavior.

3. Common Types of Language Memes in Business Advertising

Language memes are widely used in business advertising, and their Transmission modes can be divided into Genotype Meme Transmission and Phenotype Meme Transmission. These two modes of communication realize the reproduction and dissemination of information through different mechanisms in advertising, thus affecting consumers' cognition and behavior. Each type has distinct characteristics and applications in advertising.

3.1 The Genotype Meme Transmission

He Ziran (2005) introduced the concept of Genotype Meme Transmission, which refers to the phenomenon where memes conveying the same information may appear in identical or varied forms during replication and dissemination, yet their core content remains consistent[3]. This mode of transmission emphasizes the accuracy and consistency of information, often applied to famous quotes, brand slogans, and advertising taglines.

Intel’s global slogan “Intel Inside” perfectly demonstrates the “Identical Information is Transmitted Directly”. The company has used this exact phrase worldwide for decades without any localization or translation. This approach ensures the brand message remains completely unchanged

across all markets and cultures. By consistently using the same simple English phrase everywhere, Intel achieves instant brand recognition. The slogan directly communicates its core message--that Intel technology powers computers. There's no need for interpretation or cultural adaptation. This strategy minimizes information distortion during global transmission. The success of "Intel Inside" proves the effectiveness of identical information transmission. The unchanged message has helped build strong, consistent brand awareness worldwide. It shows how maintaining complete message uniformity can be more powerful than localized adaptations in global marketing.

3.2 The Phenotype Meme Transmission

He Ziran (2005) proposed that the Phenotype Meme Transmission refers to the use of a unified form of expression to convey different contents as needed[3]. During the process of information transmission, variations occur, creating new forms of expression through homophony, association, and other methods to achieve innovative dissemination. This mode of transmission emphasizes the flexibility and creativity of language, and to a certain extent, it captures consumers' attention and enhances the memorability of advertisements. During the Spring Festival, Dove chocolates are highly popular because the name "Dove" phonetically resembles "getting fortune" in Chinese. By connecting this with the festive season, Dove conveyed good fortune. This homophonic association not only increased the advertisement's relatability but also boosted the brand's visibility.

Similarly, McDonald's slogan "I'm Lovin' It", launched in 2003, became a core part of its global branding. The word "Lovin" sounds similar to "Loving" but is more colloquial and approachable. Through this homophonic association, McDonald's not only made the ad more engaging but also successfully linked the brand to positive emotional experiences, enhancing its appeal.

Maybelline: "Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline." The slogan cleverly uses the homophony between "Maybe" (meaning "perhaps") and "Maybelline" (the brand name). To begin with "Maybe she's born with it" suggests natural beauty. Besides, "Maybe it's Maybelline" hints that makeup enhances beauty and emphasizes the effectiveness of Maybelline products. It not only highlights the product's effectiveness but also conveys a light-hearted and humorous atmosphere. This captures consumers' attention and strengthens the brand's position in the beauty market.

4. Characteristics of Language Memes in Business Advertisements

Language memes, as a core part of communication, are vital in advertising due to their simplicity, uniqueness, and attractiveness. These characteristics enable easy replication, widespread dissemination, and strong emotional bonds between brands and consumers. I will show examples of this in different advertisements.

4.1 Briefness

Briefness is one of the core features of language memes. It delivers information through short, powerful expressions that are easy to remember and transmit. Here are several classic advertising slogan examples. By using brief language, these slogans effectively communicate the core values of their brands and have achieved widespread recognition and memorability among consumers:

Nike: "Just do it". It is the classic example of the briefness of language memes. Since its launch in 1988. "Just do it", with just three simple words, is not only easy to understand but also to remember. Besides, the briefness of the slogan shows a powerful expression that inspires consumers to chase dreams and push their limits. It also conveys a positive spirit that encourages people not be hesitate and to bravely pursue their goals. Through the brief slogan, Nike has successfully established its brand image, and it will also maintain its strong influence in the global market.

The FedEx slogan “The World On Time” also exemplifies the characteristic of briefness in language memes in business advertising. Its short phrasing is easy to remember and spread. The phrase “On Time” directly communicates FedEx's core service advantage—punctuality. What's more, “The World” emphasizes FedEx's global delivery network. The slogan expresses FedEx's global coverage, and it offers worldwide delivery services. Being brief and impactful, it builds consumer trust and gains FedEx's reputation as a delivery provider. The slogan enhances brand awareness and boosts market competitiveness.

Puma's slogan “Forever Faster” is brief and clear, consisting of only two words. According to PUMA's official website, PUMA is relentlessly pushing sports and culture forward by creating the fastest products for the world's fastest athletes. Since 1948, PUMA has drawn strength and credibility from its heritage in sports. Named after the fast and agile puma animal. The brand's core value of speed and agility is directly conveyed through “Forever Faster”. This slogan has successfully positioned Puma as the fastest sports brand globally. It has not only strengthened the brand's core competitiveness but also left a deep impression on consumers. The concise and powerful slogan has helped Puma build trust and reinforce its image as a leading global sports brand.

In summary, these slogans use brief language to capture consumers' attention. While conveying core information, their brevity and ease of sharing make them widely recognized among consumers. This simplicity not only reduces the cognitive effort required by consumers but also enhances the efficiency of slogan dissemination. As a result, it gives brands a significant competitive edge in the market.

4.2 Uniqueness

Before analyzing the language memes' feature of uniqueness in advertisements, we should learn the USP theory (Unique Selling Proposition). Developed by Rosser Reeves in the 1950s, this theory emphasizes the importance of showcasing the uniqueness or appeal of the product. In the vast business advertisements, the uniqueness of slogans is a key factor that helps brands stand out. A distinctive slogan not only grabs consumers' attention quickly but also creates strong brand recognition in a competitive market. Here are several classic examples that demonstrate how unique slogans successfully attract consumers:

Pinduoduo: “300 million people are using it”. This slogan uses the specific figure “300 million people” to display Pinduoduo's massive user base visually. Concrete data not only enhances the credibility and persuasiveness of the ad but also provides strong market validation for the brand. At the same time, the phrase “300 million people are using it” conveys a popular consumer trend, suggesting that Pinduoduo has become the go-to shopping platform for the masses. This approach cleverly taps into consumers' herd mentality—the tendency to follow the choices of the majority, believing that widely accepted products are more trustworthy. This psychological effect not only attracts new users effectively but also strengthens the brand loyalty of existing users, thus consolidating Pinduoduo's competitive advantage in the e-commerce market.

Besides, the mention of “300 million people” implies Pinduoduo's extensive reach and user diversity, showing its ability to meet the needs of users across different regions and income levels. This broad market penetration further reinforces Pinduoduo's brand positioning as an “inclusive” e-commerce platform, helping it stand out in the highly competitive e-commerce industry.

What's more. Mars, Inc.: “Melts in Your Mouth, not in Your Hand.” It is also a perfect example of this feature. Rosser Reeves, the slogan's creator, noticed that M&M's had a sugar coating. This coating kept the chocolate from melting quickly in the heat. Unlike other chocolates in the U.S. market, M&M's stayed solid, making it unique.

Reeves transformed this advantage into a concise and memorable slogan. Compared to other chocolate brands, the slogan effectively conveyed M&M's core selling point: this chocolate would not leave residue on consumers' hands while maintaining a pleasant taste. The slogan was simple, memorable, and easy to spread. Mars spread this message through extensive TV advertisements and even created two humorous jokes related to the product. This lighthearted marketing strategy and repeated advertising model deepened consumers' memory and made the brand message more impactful.

In summary, by identifying and strategically promoting a product's unique proposition, companies can effectively attract consumers, strengthen their competitive advantage, and differentiate themselves in the market. Also, effective slogans use creative wording to catch attention and build a strong brand identity. This helps brands stand out in competitive markets. The uniqueness of advertising not only enhances slogan memorability and communication efficiency but also strengthens a brand's market position.

4.3 Attractiveness

Attractiveness plays a crucial role in advertising communication. It determines whether an advertisement can capture consumers' attention in an information-saturated environment and directly influences their perception of the brand, emotional connection, and purchase intent. Here are several classic examples that demonstrate how ad attractiveness achieves its communication effects through different approaches:

HUAWEI: "Triple fold, no matter how folded, there is always a face." This slogan directly highlights Huawei's innovative technology—"Triple fold" a forward-looking selling point in the current smartphone market. For tech enthusiasts and trend-seeking consumers, this technological innovation is inherently appealing, as it represents a breakthrough in industry technology and meets the expectations for high-end tech products. At the same time, the word "face" cleverly uses a Chinese pun: on one hand, it literally means "a screen" emphasizing the practicality of the foldable screen technology; on the other hand, "face" in Chinese culture implies "decent", suggesting that using this phone can enhance the user's social image and sense of identity. This use of wordplay not only highlights the product's functionality but also caters to consumers' desire for social value and self-expression.

By combining innovative technology, clever language, and consumer psychology to attract different groups of people. For tech lovers, it shows Huawei's leadership in foldable screen technology. For those who care about social image, the word "face" (decent) meets their need for identity and prestige. This appeal makes the slogan more effective and strengthens Huawei's position in the high-end smartphone market.

Disney: "The Happiest Place on Earth". It is also a suitable example of this feature. The slogan directly appeals to people's desire for happiness and joy. By calling itself the "happiest place", Disney establishes an emotional connection with consumers. Everyone wants to feel happy, and this slogan makes people think of Disney as the perfect place to experience joy. The simplicity and memorability of the slogan contribute to its rapid spread. Disneyland is not only a place for fun but also a world of fairy tales and dreams. With the slogan "The Happiest Place on Earth", Disney has connected its brand to values like happiness, dreams, and family. This connection makes the brand even more appealing. This association naturally links Disney with feelings of joy and happiness in people's minds. Disney's emotional value fosters both brand affinity and customer loyalty. By setting its brand positioning in "happiness" through the slogan of "The Happiest Place on Earth", Disney has received a vast devoted fan base, a strong competitive position in the global entertainment industry, and maintained a stable consumer demographic.

In summary, advertisement attractiveness relies on creative content and expression, but it also needs to connect with consumer needs, emotions, and cultural context. By making ads more appealing, brands can stand out in a competitive market, gain more attention, and achieve better communication results and market success.

5. The Application of Language Memes in Business Advertising

5.1 Brand Recognition and Positioning

Brand recognition and positioning are key parts of brand marketing. They define a brand's unique place in the market and directly shape how consumers see and stay loyal to the brand. Brand positioning is the foundation of brand strategy, and accurate positioning is essential for building a strong brand. Brand recognition, on the other hand, uses elements like the brand name, logo, colors, and packaging to communicate the brand's core value, creating a distinct image in consumers' minds. For example:

De Beers: “A Diamond is Forever”. As we all know, diamond, the hardest natural material on Earth, embodies the essence of eternity. Since 1947, De Beers has consistently used the slogan “A Diamond is Forever” without any changes. It effectively communicates the brand's core value. Diamonds, formed billions of years ago deep within the Earth's crust, perfectly align with the concept of “forever”. By linking the diamond's enduring nature to the timelessness of love, De Beers has infused its products with emotional significance beyond their material value. In 1999, Advertising Age hailed this slogan as the “Slogan of the Century”, a testament to its profound impact.

On the other hand, the slogan has successfully established diamonds as a cultural symbol. Through decades of consistent messaging, “A Diamond is Forever” has transcended its role as a brand tagline to become a cultural icon, representing not only eternal love but also a promise that spans generations. This emotional connection has cemented De Beers' unique position in the jewelry industry, elevating its brand value far beyond the physical products.

In summary, brand recognition and positioning are key in advertising. Using clear language, emotional connections, and visuals, brands can stand out and influence how consumers see and act. This boosts the brand's market impact and cultural value. Language memes help brands reach more people and create stronger emotional ties, maximizing their value.

5.2 Information Dissemination

Information dissemination plays a critical role in commercial advertising. It determines whether brand messages effectively reach the target audience and directly influences brand impact and consumer behavior. With the rise of social media and digital technology, the methods and efficiency of information dissemination have significantly changed.

For example, Wang Lao Ji's slogan “Afraid of getting heaty? Drink Wang Lao Ji” clearly communicates the product's function and usage scenario. This allows consumers to quickly understand and remember the product's core value. Such efficient information dissemination not only boosts brand awareness but also provides consumers with a clear basis for decision-making.

Besides, BMW: “The Ultimate Driving Machine.” This slogan makes consumers feel the high performance and high quality of BMW cars, and also helps BMW establish a unique brand image in the luxury car market. With the widespread use of this slogan, it has become an important symbol of the BMW brand. It not only makes consumers look forward to BMW cars but also helps BMW occupy a high-end position in the car market.

In short, information sharing is key in advertising. Clear messages, emotional appeals, visuals,

and catchy phrases help ads reach the right people and shape how they think and act. This boosts a brand's influence and cultural value. In the future, using big data and interactive media for personalized ads will make targeting more accurate and effective.

5.3 Cultural Adaptation and Global Marketing

According to Sun (2024), cultural adaptability is one of the key factors for business success in global markets. By deeply understanding consumer behavior in different cultural contexts, companies can develop more targeted marketing strategies. Cultural adaptation refers to brands adjusting their marketing strategies and advertising content based on local culture, language, and consumer habits when entering new markets. This ensures that brand messages are effectively communicated and resonate with consumers. Global marketing, on the other hand, emphasizes maintaining brand consistency worldwide while making localized adjustments to meet the needs of different markets. Here are specific examples that illustrate the role of cultural adaptation and global marketing in commercial advertising.

Coca-Cola's "Open Happiness" slogan is a great example of it. The slogan is simple, conveys positive emotions, and is easy to remember. In different markets around the world, Coca-Cola has localized its translation and adapted it to local cultures. This helps the company build a deep emotional connection with consumers. It not only retains the positive emotions of the original advertising slogan, but also conforms to consumers' pursuit of happiness. Coca-Cola has successfully spread its brand message worldwide by using clear language, localized translations, and emotional connections. Besides, Coca-Cola will also remix different countries' cultures into its business advertising. For example, in the Chinese New Year, Coca-Cola will promote traditional packaging with Chinese elements and also with advertisements showing family reunions. It would allow consumers to feel happy while enjoying Coca-Cola. During the Brazilian Carnival, Coca-Cola releases advertisements full of carnival colors, combining the local love for football and carnival culture to convey joy and passion.

In short, cultural adaptation and global marketing are key in advertising. By understanding local culture and consumer behavior, brands can stay globally consistent while tailoring messages for local markets. As global markets grow, balancing global and local strategies will be crucial for success. Using language memes helps brands reach more people and create lasting impressions, boosting brand value

6. Conclusion

The characteristics of language memes—briefness, uniqueness, and attractiveness—further underscore their utility in business advertising. Their concise and memorable nature ensures rapid dissemination, while their uniqueness helps brands stand out in a crowded marketplace. The inherent attractiveness of language memes, often achieved through humor, emotion, or cultural resonance, enhances their ability to engage consumers and foster brand loyalty.

The application of language memes in brand recognition and positioning, information dissemination, and cultural adaptation demonstrates their versatility and effectiveness. For instance, brands like IKEA and Nike have successfully leveraged language memes to create strong brand identities and emotional connections with consumers. Moreover, the ability of language memes to adapt to different cultural contexts ensures their relevance in global marketing strategies, enabling brands to maintain consistency while resonating with local audiences.

Ultimately, the strategic use of language memes in business advertising not only enhances brand visibility but also drives consumer engagement and loyalty. As the advertising landscape continues to evolve, understanding and harnessing the power of language memes will remain crucial for

brands seeking to establish a lasting impact in the minds of their audiences. Future research could further explore the dynamic interplay between language memes and emerging digital platforms, offering new insights into their evolving role in global marketing.

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