

Oral Communication in Advertising Copy: Reviews and Implication

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Abstract: *There is a natural contradictory tendency in consumers towards advertising. They tend to ignore or actively avoid the messages conveyed through advertisements. However, when the proposed messages in advertisements are communicated in oral form, they may be able to bypass consumers' mental barriers and work effectively. The origin of texts is inseparable from oral language, which has been an essential tool of communication since ancient times. In the current age of "secondary orality" where media platforms are highly developed, oral expression is still critical. For example, in the process of advertising, when text information is transformed into oral expression especially with certain rhythms, rhymes or a fixed mode, consumers are more likely to precisely understand the message. For the brands, they can produce advertisements that not only correspond to their core values but also better create a friendly image. However, oral communication in advertising also has its limitations for regionality and variability.*

Keywords: *Oral Communication; Advertising; Advertising Copy; Branding*

1. Introduction

No matter what type of advertisements they are, they all try to make consumers remember their information. However, in this age of rapid development of the Internet, the amount of information stored in various media far exceeds the amount that people can withstand. As a result, people's attention is distracted, and the ability to remember a single information is reduced. The effect of advertising will be weakened due to the huge information flow. Analyzing the classic and effective advertisements such as "just do it." of Nike, it is not difficult to find that these advertising copies have obvious colloquial features, which is one of the reasons they can achieve ideal communication effects.

Whether it is the mass communication and interpersonal communication of advertising information, or the process of establishing contacts between advertisers and consumers, oral communication is of great value.

2. Importance of Oral Language for Literal Language

2.1. Origins of Oral Language and Literal Language

Oral language has a much earlier origin than the literal one, and it became the carrier of information much earlier too. Whether it is the ancient Chinese lecture or the philosophical debates in ancient Greece, they all belong to oral communication. Oral language had already appeared in the early stage of human history. Nevertheless, one of the most prominent features of it is "evanescence": "When I pronounce the word 'permanence', by the time I get to the '-pence', the 'perma-' is gone, and has to be gone." [1] Therefore, the ideas from the communicators, if not recorded simultaneously, would be hard to sustain, hence not being able to reproduce. To some extent, it is based on this feature that oral communication has brought into the development of written language.

In the early stage of written language, one important function of written language is to help the widespread of ideas and the inheritance of cultures. Written language records the information expressed in oral form, allowing it to pass on from generation to generation. For example, the Chinese classic Analects of Confucius recorded the quotations of Confucius, the founder of the Confucian School in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. The Confucian ethics he promoted had broad and far-reaching effects on Chinese society. In the long time after its birth, written language has played an important role as the carrier of oral information by preserving and reproducing it.

2.2. Speech Sound as an Important Attribute of Language

When reading a text, people never "see" the text through looking at the shape, color and structure of it like appreciating paintings. Instead, they "read" the pronunciation of the text. After learning to read, people's first reaction is not to observe the shape of the character, but to silently read the pronunciation in their minds. All these are because words are inseparable from oral language since its birth. As the carrier of information, literal symbols includes almost all the essential factors of oral language information especially the pronunciation. While the oral language information is reproduced, pronunciation is one of the keys to people's understanding of text.

2.3. An Age of "Secondary Orality"

American scholar Walter J.Ong divides oral culture into "primary orality"—"a culture totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print" and "secondary orality"—"consequent upon and dependent upon writing and print"^[1]. Nowadays, people are living in a digital information age, in which primary orality has almost disappeared. Instead, modern society has almost completely become the age of secondary orality. The wide spread of oral language are inseparable from the modern medias.Everyone can record what he or she says and spread it on the Internet.

In modern society, although most people can read, oral language is still an important part in people's communication of information. Daily communication such as academic reports and advertising can't function without oral language. Even the written language people encounter every day cannot exist without oral language. Without the pronunciation, nobody can spell the words and the text just become a bunch of meaningless things. Therefore, oral communication still plays an important role in modern society which seems to be full of written languages.

3. Value Analysis of Oral Communication in Advertising Copy

Oral language plays an important role in literature. In advertising, advertising copy often has two ways of communicating: propagate with its own text symbol attributes and propagate through oral communication by conversing the literal symbols to phonetic symbols. These two forms of communication often appear simultaneously and complement each other. In the process of communication, the advertising copy, transformed into phonetic symbols, is often more favored by consumers.

3.1. Accurate Identification of Advertising Information

One of the most important functions of advertising is to convey information, and advertising copy is one of carriers of information. If the information contained in the advertising copy can be quickly identified and understood by consumers, it will be more effective. Consumers' attention paid in advertising is limited and they will actively avoid advertisements. Therefore, making the advertising information more noticeable and comprehensible in a short time is of great importance.

Oral language has been one of the most frequently used methods of communication since ancient times, and it is also the most familiar way of expression for a long time. Therefore, oral language will bring less strangeness to people so that they can quickly and accurately identify the information conveyed by advertising. When oral language is utilized, people's first instinct is not to think it is an advertisement if they do not look at the frame. To an extent, this will reduce people's resistance to advertising. For example, the slogan of Colgate "Good teeth, good health" is very concise and clear. Four simple words are enough to convey accurate information. Words based on daily oral expression enable consumers to accurately and quickly obtain information at the first sight when they see words or hear the voice of advertising dubbing. The core messages of advertising are easy to be known by consumers without deep thinking.

3.2. Effective Intercommunication of Audiences

For advertising, the intercommunication of audiences is more important than mass communication. Intercommunication is a propagation that audiences prefer to actively spread the information and mass communication is a propagation that audiences prefer to passively receive the information. Nowadays the amount of information people can access is huge. In fact, the effect of advertising in the mass

communication becomes weak because advertising will easily be submerged in the ocean of information so the scope of communication will become more and more limited. Therefore, intercommunication has become a more persuasive way of communication, and it is also a more important part in the advertising process of products and brands.

Intercommunication can, to a certain extent, weaken the mental resistance that advertising will bring to consumers. At the same time, it can also spread quickly and widely among the target consumer groups based on interpersonal networks in a comprehensive way. In this process, the visual factors such as advertising frame no longer completely have the original effect in most cases. Instead, the oral expression of advertising copy does. That's why in this kind of communication, people are more likely to directly repeat the advertising copy and the oral one can strengthen its effect.

When interpersonal communication takes place, auditory attributes of the information is the key to accurate understanding. Oral communication has long been a kind of information transmission, and its language symbols are easier to be recognized and understood. Therefore, the colloquial advertising copy information can effectively lead to the progressively increased publicity.

3.3. The Construction of Friendly Image of the Brand

Oral language is a kind of language that people frequently use especially in most of the informal occasions. Therefore, comparing with written language, oral language naturally is more friendly and more approachable. If the advertising copy is colloquial, then the product and the brand can invisibly create their image of friendliness. Friendly image means shorter psychological distance, which is one of the keys to successful advertising. Most daily goods produced by most brands are targeted towards general public instead of the elites. Therefore, it would be a good premise of drawing their attention by making the products feel not aloof and unaffordable. When consumer especially general public feel friendly in advertising, at least they will not think the product is aloof and unaffordable, which is a premise of drawing their attention.

3.4. Great Emotional Communication Effect

Human oral expression based on text records is not simply spelling. People will have tone, flow and emotion in oral expression. "In oral speech, a word must have one or another intonation or tone of voice such as lively, excited, quiet, incensed or resigned nature. It is impossible to speak a word orally without any intonation."^[1] The tone of voice often directly determines the emotion of this sentence. For example, in the Chinese news broadcast, the host's tone should avoid excessive rise or fall to better represent their own objectivity and impartiality.

Emotion is very important in advertising. From the perspective of psychology and cognitive science, people will pay attention to something with strong emotion and be affected by that. In memory formation, they will have long-term memory of the emotional things. In advertising copy, emotion mainly come from the meaning behind the words, the phonetic factors and the way of speaking when the written symbols are converted into phonetic symbols. For example, the Chinese advertising slogan of Dove Chocolate is "dove, enjoy silkiness." In each version, although the people who make oral expression are different, they all will slow down their speed, use breathing and try to make the sound softer, which is more in line with the feeling of "enjoying silkiness" in the advertising slogan then convey a soft and gentle emotion to consumers. It is true that consumers may experience the same artistic conception when they directly read the advertising copy without hearing the dubbing, but this experience requires literacy. Contrarily, because most people are born with the ability to feel emotions, emotions will be more easily felt by consumers in oral form, which helps achieve better advertising effect.

Emotion is also one of the sources of artistry in the oral communication of advertising. The most obvious example is the artistry of professional advertising dubbing staff. Advertising dubbing is not only a part of oral communication, but also a form of broadcasting and hosting art. Zhang Song, the leading character in China's broadcasting and hosting, once said: "Broadcasting and hosting is a kind of re-creation. It is not a simple pronounce according to words, but a process and creation that endows the manuscript with sound."^[2] Advertising dubbing is the artistic processing carried out by the advertising dubbing staff. It is a " 'secondary creation' that converts the text symbols of advertising words into sound symbols."^[3] Based on the core appeal of advertising and the dubbing staffs' own understandings of advertising copy, the dubbing staffs cleverly use various internal and external skills in the art of broadcasting and hosting, control various factors of their own voice, and use their own voice as the

media to build an illusory "emotional world" that can lead consumers into. Usually, advertising dubbers have received professional voice training, so it will be easier for them to achieve better oral communication effects through the artistic design of their oral expression.

4. Analysis of the Presentation Formats of Oral Communication in Advertising Copy

4.1. Rhyme and Sense of Rhythm

Instead of "seeing", consumers are reading it silently when they meet an advertising copy. When people feel the rhyme and rhythm from speeches based on voice, from cognitive perspective, it means that it will be easier for the brain to process information and to save and reproduce memory materials. Sometimes, the rhythm also brings some emotions. For example, in the advertising copy of Guinness "My Godness, my Guinness", the pronunciation of "-ness" and the word "my" make the rhyme, which is catchy and easy to remember. In the meantime, when people read it, the simple but strong rhythm will invisibly convey the feeling of excited.

4.2. Fixed Pattern

Oral expression has its fixed pattern and ways of expression. For example, the beginning of most stories is "once upon a time". This sentence has become a set form for most storytelling and writing. From the perspective of memory and reproduction, the emergence of fixed pattern is to help oral communicators to remember and reproduce the content without any written records especially in ancient time. For example, when people carefully read Homeric epic, an oral literary work in ancient Greece, it is not difficult to find that many forms of its expressions are similar. There are lots of similarities in the description of characters or of scenes, all of which are to help the disseminators remember a large amount of content when it needs to be repeated.

In this process, the disseminator, like the assembly worker, installs fixed components into the model. The assembly method of components is flexible, but the fixed components will not be changed, despite their spread from one generation to another. When these well-known fixed expression patterns are applied to the advertising copy, they will be spread on the basis that people have already been heard or remembered, which makes it easier for consumer to remember and spread the advertising information. For example, there was an advertising copy of Gu'an industrial area in China: "I love 50 kilometers south of Tiananmen Square of Beijing". "I love Tiananmen Square of Beijing." is a fixed pattern of Chinese oral expression which originated from a famous Chinese song. For consumers, they have already had the impression and memory of the fixed pattern, which not only makes it much easier for them to remember the copy, but also achieves ideal effect in the intercommunication of audiences because of its familiarity.

5. Limitations of Oral Communication in Advertising Communication

5.1. The limitation of The Regionalism of Oral Communication

"An era has its oral communication characteristics, and a nation has its oral communication patterns." [4] Oral Language is strongly regional since its birth. The habits of oral expression such as word choice and the form of oral language such as fixed expression of each region are different because of different natural environment, cultural environment and history. In China, a country that has a large territory and 56 ethnic groups, each region has its own dialect.

If regional expressions can be used in advertising copy, it may multiply the effect when the copy is spread in corresponding region. Natives will be more familiar with the advertising content and feel friendly just like taking to another native, which will make it easier for them to understand the core information and make the psychological distance between consumers and brand closer. However, this kind of advertising can only be used in corresponding region, or it may make consumers feel strange and they need to spend more time to understand the meaning of text, which will reduce the effect. That's why it is often difficult to achieve desired effect in the international communication of oral advertising copy. Differences of language using are so obvious that even after a careful and professional translation, it will inevitably weaken the effectiveness of oral copy.

5.2. The limitation of The Variability of Oral Communication

Oral expression is not static, which will be changed because of the development of social culture. The meaning of some oral expression may be different with its original intention. For example, in China recently "Are you OK?" is not only a simple and friendly query, but also an oral expression which have ironic meaning: "Your words and deeds are incomprehensible." If such situation happens in advertising, it may fail to correctly convey the original intention to consumers. However, if advertisers can appropriately use the deviation, it may achieve unexpected effects. People may think the advertisement is interesting then share it to their friends and even re-create the advertisement and the product will gain a lot of attention. But it's still not a completely safe and effective method in advertising for its possible deviation of meanings.

6. Conclusion

When it comes to words, it is hard to separate it from its phonetic properties. Just as on that, people can't separate oral communication from advertising copy. In the process of advertising creation, advertising planner manage to make the advertisement bypass natural contradictory tendency of consumers, and advertising copywriters try to create more effective advertising copy. Oral communication closely relates to mass communication and intercommunication, being interdependent with words. Therefore, oral communication certainly plays an important part in each stage in the process of advertising.

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