A Study on English Pun in Advertising Language and Its Usage

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Abstract: English advertising language is an indispensable way for international enterprises to carry out marketing promotion. The use of English puns in originality of advertisement also skillfully makes English advertising language closer to consumers' language habits and their psychological and cultural cognition with the help of English grammar, vocabulary, idiom, slang and other related background knowledge. At the same time, the use of English puns can also make advertising language full of humanistic artistry, can convey a wealth of meanings in simple sentences, and create good conditions for ultimately improving the market competitiveness of products.

1. Introduction

Because English is the most widely used language, English advertising language, as a commercial language, has become an indispensable form of application in the marketing promotion of the enterprises. Moreover, English advertising language has the characteristics of simple and clear sentence pattern, rich and diverse language expression, the content of language can be understood easily, profound extend connotation and so on. In particular, the application of puns in English advertisement has become a one of the commonly used ways of expression in the advertisement by lots of famous brands and large companies, and many cases have become classics in advertising. Therefore, under the accelerating trend of economic globalization, the use the art of pun in English advertising language is a powerful measure for the enterprises to get international fame, which requires advertising planners to master the creation skills of pun in accordance with English culture, and then, to create the advertisement according to the cultural background and psychological cognition of local consumers of the target market and promote the brand to sale the products in the target market.

2. Interpretation of the concept of English pun.

The so-called pun means that in a certain language environment, by using the polysemous words or homophones, so as to make the sentence have dual meaning and realize the rhetorical technique that can imply some other profound meanings. In English, we call this rhetoric technique "pun". This kind of rhetoric technique can dexterously use those polysemous words or homophones to express some profound meanings in a seemingly ordinary sentence rather than the literal meanings, so as to make the language lively and humorous.

The use of puns in English advertising language is very common. By means of the effective combination of puns and advertising pictures, it can increase the interest of the advertisement, make the audience get a deep impression of the advertisement by thinking the meaningful puns in the advertisement, so that the product or brand can be borne in mind by the audience. Most English advertisements combine the meaning of product name and the function of product to design the pun context, which not only accords with the reading habit of the English audience, but also inspires them to associate the product with its function. By the interesting association, the audience can easily remember the functional characteristics of the product, the brand recognition of the product can be improved, and the product can get a high popularity in the fierce market competition by its competitive advantage of advertising communication in the market. For example, in the advertising slogan "Give your hair a touch of Spring", "Spring" is the product name of shampoo. The

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advertisement express the praise that----Spring shampoo can make your hair as bright as spring, as vigorous as spring. This slogan is concise and rich in content, and achieves the propagation effect of achieving two things at one stroke [1].

The rational use of English puns in advertising can use the least number of words to achieve the best advertising results; in this condition, the using of puns in the crucial point, it can effectively attract the attention of the audience, stimulate their interest in enjoying the advertisement, so that the audience can deeply remember the information of the advertisement, the aim of the advertisement that to give the audience good impression of the product or brand can be achieved, which is helpful for the product in the advertisement to be the first choice of the audience in the fierce market competition.

3. An analysis of the influence of puns in English advertisement

To judge a advertisement is good or bad, the criterion is not only that it can urge consumers to buy products, but also that audience can not forget the advertisement as an art that can bring some fun to life. Therefore, the proper use of puns in English advertisement can achieve great economic and social benefits. Its positive influences on society is manifested in the following aspects:

3.1 The use of English puns in public service advertisements can easily stimulate the spirit of universal fraternity in the world.

The use of English puns in public service advertisement can realize the communication of cultural in different countries and nations, and easily make all the people of the world to reach a consensus by the simple but meaningful advertising language, so as to promoted the development of the human civilization. For example, “Labor makes peasant pleasant”, it uses a similar pronunciation pun to advocate the most simple truth ---- labor is the most glorious thing.

3.2 The use of English pun can increase the interest and readability of advertisement

According to the research of consumer behavioral psychology, when the consumers face a wide variety of goods in show windows, the average time they make a decision to buy which one is 13 seconds[2]. These 13 seconds are based on the product impression that enterprises usually use advertising to give consumers. Therefore, the use of English pun in advertising language is conducive to deeply root the impression of the products in the hearts of the consumers. For example, Sharp computer has a advertisement with the sentence “From Sharp minds, come sharp products”, which makes use of the pun ---- “Sharp”. It can not only appear the brand of the product ---- Sharp twice in the advertisement and let the consumers remember the brand deeply, but also highlight the characteristics of Sharp computer ---- “smart and intelligent”.

3.3 The design of English puns can meet the consumers’ psychology of hunt for novelty.

Today's society is a information society where advertisements are full of all aspects of life. How to stand out in the advertising competition and seize the first place in the market is very crucial. So, it is very important to understand the psychology of the consumers, to use the combination of proper English words to design the effect of puns, to arouse the consumers’ curiosity in the process of advertising, so as to attract attention of the consumers and achieve the purpose of publicity. For example, the slogan in the advertisement of Larger Beer ---- “Which lager can claim to be truly German? This can”. The former “can” means “be able to” and the latter “can” means “ a metal or plastic container for holding or carrying liquids “. This echo of the former and the latter vividly shows the confident brand image and the character of the Larger Beer ---- high-capacity[3].

3.4 The use of English pun can improve the aesthetic taste of consumers and lead the fashion.

The advertising language with English pun has the artistic beauty, it can lead the fashion trend, and finally promotes the consumption. Because the polysemy of English puns can bring aesthetic value and artistic value, so that consumers can enjoy the endless aftertaste in a simple advertising language, and admire the unique design of the advertising language. Most classic advertisements

are that use English puns, such as the advertising slogan ---- “Every Kid should have an Apple after school”, which literally encourages children to eat an apple after school. In fact, it means that children should have an Apple electronic device to study after class. The Apple slogan, which not only wishes children to grow up healthily, but also helps bring the products closer to the parents and their children, and enhances the reputation of the Apple brand.

4. An explanation of puns in English Advertising language

4.1 Meaning pun

Meaning pun refers to the use of the characteristics of English words that one word often has some different meangings to produce special language puns in a specific context. According to English vocabulary, grammar and language habits, it can be divided into polysemy pun and homonym pun.

In English, polysemy refer the words that have some extended meanings that are derived from the basic, common meanings. The reasons for the origin of polysemy are the transforming use of the POS(parts of speech) of words, the special professional meanings of the words in different social fields, and the extended meanings that are brought about by the use of some rhetoric techniques. When polysemy is used to the advertising language for creating pun in English, it can implies some extended meanings to the audience, and make the advertisement have another kind of interpretation other than the literal meaning, so that the audience can enjoy the different meaning of the sentence and have a deep impression of the advertisement.

Homonym refer to English words that have the same pronunciation in English, but are polysemous. This is a common method of designing puns in English advertising language, which fascinates the audience by the two interpretations of English sentence and inspire their interests in reading. For example, the slogan of the London Underground ---- “Less bread, no jam (London Transport) “ ---- skillfully make use of the homonyms of “bread” and “jam”. Bread has not only the meaning of a type of food, but also the meaning of money; and jam has not only the meaning of a kind of thick sweet substance but also the difficult traffic situation, so the literal meaning of the slogan can be interpreted as “London subway suns effectively and efficiently, regardless of wind or rain”, which imply the true meaning of the advertisement in the literal meaning.

4.2 Pronunciation pun

Pronunciation pun refers to using the words that have some or similar pronunciation together in English sentence to form semantic relativity. The method of expression will make the advertising language humorous, and the specific application method of it can be divided into the same pronunciation pun and similar pronunciation pun.

Some pronunciation pun refers to a sentence contains two or more words with the same pronunciation but different meanings in advertising language, forming a pun form which is catchy and metrical. For example, the hotel advertising language ---- “suite dreams, sweet deal” is to use the two words ---- “suite” and “sweet”, which have some pronunciation but different meaning, to design the pun effect.

Similar pronunciation pun means to design pun effect by the similar pronunciation of the words. For instance, a spectacles store named OIC, which has the similar pronunciation with “oh, I see”. This similar pronunciation pun can stimulate the curiosity of the audience, and make the advertising language interesting.

5. Analysis of the need to master knowledge in the use of puns in English Advertising language

5.1 It is need to master a wealth of English vocabulary

The more English vocabulary we master, the more we can understand the different meanings of the same English sentence and realize the skillful application of pun in English advertising creative thinking. According to the survey, in average, a well-educated oral English user masters about

20000 words, and if a person want to be accomplished in English advertising language, he or she should master more vocabulary than this. The creation of advertising language is a process of brainstorm, which needs a large number of words as a reserve, needs to repeatedly draft, modify and refine the sentences in the advertisement until getting the satisfaction of the enterprise. This procedure of creating a satisfied advertisement is a process of combining the inspiration of the language and the brand connotation together.

5.2 It is need to master as many idioms as possible

The creation of English puns in advertising language only comes from the language, it must be closely tied with the English culture, so that the advertising language, which is accord with the language context of the consumers, can be easily integrate into the psychological cognition of the consumers. Therefore, advertising planners should deeply study the regional characteristics of the use of English in the target market, especially master the local English idioms and slang. Only the advertising creation, which originates from life and is higher than life, can make the advertisement full of vitality. To design the perfect puns based on English idioms and slang, there are two advantages. First, it can integrate the puns into the advertising language according to the characteristics of English words, grammars and syntactical structure, and the advertising language also will be authentic; Second, it can avoid the factors that are not in line with consumers' emotional cognition by using the idioms and slang, so as to effectively align the emotional characteristics of advertising language with the local customs and social culture, promote the rapid and effective dissemination of the advertising language, and achieve a positive advertising effect.

6. Conclusion

Moreover, in the creative use of the puns, the advertisement planners also need to take into account the political, economic and cultural background of the English-speaking countries where the advertisement will be put on the market. Because in different countries and regions, although the local languages of these places are all English, but there are still some local features in English. it is necessary to use the puns in English advertising language according to the local English culture and other local conditions. The advertising language can not touch the contents of nationalities, religious beliefs, national image and cultural taboo. It is necessary to combine some professional knowledge such as psychology, advertising, communication and so on, so that the puns in English advertising language can be far more down to earth, can be in accord with the consumers' cultural cognition, so that the products involve to advertising language can quickly integrate into the local market and seize the first opportunity of the market by using puns in advertising language to catch the attention of the consumers.

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