Abstract

This academic exercise adopts a pragmatic approach in an attempt to examine the Chinese language used in advertising. Grice's (1975) linguistic theory of conversational implicatures is chosen as the theoretical framework to analyze implied meanings in advertisements.

Most studies of Chinese advertising language focus on stylistic analysis, rather than content of the language itself. As advertisers usually mean more than what they actually say, it is important to uncover their intended meanings.

This dissertation therefore focuses on the conversational implicatures found in advertisements. The data consist of local Chinese printed advertisements from Oct 1998 to Jan 1999.

Chapter One deals with the aims and scope of this study. Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework and illustrates the drawing of conversational implicatures in advertisements. Chapter Three examines why advertisers choose to convey their messages indirectly and how consumers respond to the implicatures. Chapter Four investigates the relationship between conversational implicatures and rhetoric devices like metaphors and puns. Chapter Five, the concluding chapter, gives the findings of this dissertation.

The findings of this academic exercise reveal that many implicatures in advertisements can only be uncovered in a pragmatic manner. Furthermore, the presence of rhetoric devices can help consumers to discover implicatures.