

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENTS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

A part of the study of language use is the study of language used in advertisement. It is of great interest since advertising language has a certain feature, which is persuasive in nature. The writer was interested in conducting a research concerning the language of advertising and analyzed it by using a pragmatic approach. The aim of the study is to find out how persuasive goals of the advertisements are expressed through the language. The analysis focuses on the illocutionary act and the application of cooperative principles in English advertisements. This paper consists of the theoretical background of pragmatics and the pragmatic analysis on English advertisements. The results of the research shows that: (1) the English advertisement persuades customers by providing information in the form of a report which implies an offer of products of goods or services; (2) the advertising texts studied in the discussion contains the kinds of illocutionary act and the cooperative principles; (3) the illocution power in the words of the English advertisement has the kinds of direct illocution and indirect illocution; and (4) the obedience and deviation of the cooperative principles occur in the advertising to propagate the products and services advertised.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatic, Advertising, Illocutionary Act, Cooperative Principles, Utterance

INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is a kind of text, usually with some figurative language, intended to persuade readers to conduct a certain behavior or to buy and use certain products or services. Different from other types of language, the language of advertisement is usually business language type, which functions to convince consumers so that they do what the advertiser wants. So, understanding the meaning of advertisement text means understanding the sentence meaning and the advertiser meaning. The sentence meaning is what is expressed by a sentence and advertiser meaning is what is meant by the speaker.

To study the speaker meaning in a text, we can use *speech acts* theory, that is the concept about *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary acts*. The text has an hidden power able to flatter the reader. Grice (1975) states that a speech can be understood by the reader clearly if the speech matched with four maxims, that are the maxim of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The illocutionary act is the speech act used to state something or to do something. So, the writer is interested to analyze about the *illocutionary act* and the deviation of cooperative principles which occurs in English advertisements. Based on the background above, this study purposes to examine further how persuasive goals of the

advertisements are expressed through the language.

THEORITICAL BACKGROUD

Pragmatics

Leech in Oka (1993) explains that pragmatics is a science that studies the advertiser meaning connected with the situation. Leech also explains that pragmatics is connected with grammar and language utilization is connected with the certain social situation. The pragmatics connected with grammar is called *pragmalinguistics*, and that connected with certain social situation is called *sociopragmatic*.

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that the study of pragmatic refers to the utterance expressed by the speaker connected with the contexts. The utterance in pragmatic is divided into two, *performantive utterance*, the simultaneous utterance in an act, and *constative utterance*, the utterance used to state something. The performantive utterance contains true value or false value.

The pragmatic study of advertisement always involves text analysis because advertisement is a kind of text. A text is a complete communication which has the elements of sender, receiver, and message bound with the certain aim, so the analysis used is text analysis. The text analysis conducted by using pragmatic approach is called pragmatic analyses (Wijana, 1996 : 13).

Types of Speech Acts

a) Locutionary Act

Searle said that locutionary act is the act of saying something (1969: 23). For example, in the utterance "I have just made some coffee", the speaker informs that the speaker has just finished doing an act of making some coffee. So the locutionary concept is a concept which connects with the sentence proposition. Parker states that the locutionary act is a speech act easiest known because it is not necessary to relate with the utterance context.

b) Illocutionary Act

The illocutionary is the speech act to state something, simultaneously it can be used to do something (Leech, 1993 : 16). For example, the utterance: "Would you like a cup of tea?" is the kind of illocutionary act, indirect offer. The illocutionary act consists of two kinds, direct and indirect illocutions. For example, the utterance: "Can you pass the salt?" means that the sentence has a direct enquiry meaning, even if stated indirectly it still contains the meaning of request. To know whether an utterance used is to state a direct or indirect act it must be decided that the utterance is in this context.

Hurford and Heasley states that the way to decide a reader does the direct or indirect illocution act, it can use the rule as follows, "where the direct illocution of an utterance is deliberately infelicitous, the indirect illocution is an act to which the bearer's attention is drawn by mentioning one of its felicity conditions" (1983: 262). The illocution speech act is very difficult to identify because it has to consider

who are the speaker and the reader, when and where this speech act become the illocutionary act. It is the central part to understand the speech act (Wijana, 1996 : 19).

c) **Perlocutionary Act**

Hurford and Heasley state that the perlocutionary act (or just simply the perlocution) carried out by a speaker making an utterance is the act of causing a certain effect on the hearer and others (1983: 243). The speech act done by the speaker to cause an effect to the reader with saying something is called the perlocutionary act (Wijana, 1996: 19-20). This action is called the act of affecting someone. For example, “there is an ant in your left ear” can be concluded that the utterance said by the speaker has perlocution power to give an effect to the hearer, to form reactions, such as panic, anxiety, screaming and also simultaneous effort to chase away the ant from his ear. The utterance "Would you like a cup of coffee?" according to Hurford and Heasley (1983: 274) analysis, contains the illocutionary act of the offering, the perlocutionary act is causing the hearer to think the speaker is more generous simultaneous than he thought.

If treated equally, the mass media publish several forms of advertisement. One of them is the advertisement texts in the form of news. Wijana said that the text of advertisement is a persuasive text which contains the illocution and perlocution powers (Wijana, 1996: 21).

The Cooperative Principles

Wijana states that in the natural communication it can be assured that a speaker tends to articulate his utterance when he tries to communicate something to his hearer and expects his hearer to be able to understand what is being communicated (1996 : 45). So, the speaker always tries in such a way that his utterance will be relevant with the context, clear and easy to understand, solid and concise, and always straight forward. For example, somebody will use the utterance "help!" and "can you help me ?" in different situations and necessities.

Grice (1975) states that in the arrangement to do the cooperative principles, a speaker has to obey the four conversational maxims as follows.

a) **Maxim of Quantity**

Leech states that the maxim of quantity is making your contribution as informative as is required (1993: 11). For examples :

- (a) My neighbor is pregnant
- (b) My woman neighbor is pregnant.

In utterance (a), beside its being concise, it does not make deviation from the fact. Everybody knows that only women can be pregnant. So, the element "woman" in utterance (b) is plentiful. The word "pregnant" in (b) propagated the utterance. The presence of "woman" in (b) does not necessarily explain the things that is clear. This case is contrary to the maxim of quantity.

b) **Maxim of Quality**

Different from maxim of quantity which hooks the contribution amount, the maxim of

quality is related with the contribution quality of speaker in the conversation. The maxim of quality contains the advice so that the speaker gives the right contribution and say the real thing.

"Make your contribution one is true, specifically: (i) do not say what you believe to false (ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence (Levinson, 1983:101).

For examples :

- (a) Saya *makan sate ayam atau kambing* – Ayam berkepala kambing
- (b) Smoking damages your health for sure

The utterance in (a) is a deviation of the maxim of quality because there is an aim to make a joke, even though the utterance (b) has an understanding that the speaker made the statement by the meaning to make pressure that smoking disturbs the healthy. This case is based on the medical proof known by large social life. So, utterance (b) fulfills the maxim of quality.

c) **The Maxim of Relevance**

The maxim of relevance obliges every speaker to give a contribution of relevance with the problem being told. To make it clear, pay attention to the example given by Levinson (1983 - 102) as follows

A: Can you tell me the time ?

B: Well, the milkman has come

The dialogue above is a conversation between someone and his friend. The answer of B is not relevant with A's question, but this way can be understood based on the assumption that the utterance of B is relevant. B answered A's question

indirectly, that is with the utterance "well, the milkman has come". B pronounces it because B thinks that A knows the milkman tradition who always come at the time A known. The conclusion is A understands indirectly the answer of B because B's answer can be understood by A, so B's answer matches with the maxim of relevance.

d) **Maxim of Manner**

The maxim of manner obliges every speaker to tell something logically, indistinctly and not plentifully. Grice gives examples of the utterance which does not obey the maxim of manner (1975: 55) as follows

- (a) Miss X produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with score of sweet home.

compared to:

- (b) Miss X sang home sweet home.

Utterance (a) does not match with the maxim of manner because the utterance contains the plentiful expression in using words and it expresses something indirectly, compared to utterance (b) which matches with the maxim of manner because it is simple, direct and not plentiful in using words.

Advertising

The definition of advertisement is different from advertising. Shortly, it can be explained here that advertising refers to the process of producing advertisement, while advertisement itself is a final result of the long process of advertising. Brovee and Arens states that advertising is the non personal communication, the aim of

information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services and ideas by identified sponsor through various media (1989 : 5).

A news is aimed at informing something. The utterance form is locutionary act to give information to the reader. So, the news text is informative. A kind of text which is not merely providing information but offering goods or services is called the text of advertisement.

If we pay careful attention to the spread of advertisement text in the mass media, as Wijana (1996) says, the texts of advertisement are usually expressed in the form of news or report which implies an offer of products and (or) services. So, if we study the text further, both the illocution and perlocution power are very big.

Dyer states how the language is important in an advertisement, as follows: " Advertising language is of course loaded language. Its primary aim is to attract our attention and dispose us favorably towards the product or service an offer. Advertiser use language quite distinctively: there are certainly advantages in making bizarre and controversial statements in usual ways as well as communication with people using simple straight forward language" (Dyer. 1996: 139).

Based on Dyer's opinion above, the function of advertisement is attracting the reader's attention and imagination by using the normal language. The language often used in an advertisement is figurative, imperative and persuasive languages. The figurative language is a language which uses words to touch the

feeling and to influence the reader and sometimes with breaking the rule of grammar. The imperative language contains the elements of direct instruction. The persuasive nature of language of advertisement is used to flatter the readers so that they become interested in buying and using the products that the advertiser offers.

Advertising Language

The main function of advertising language is to offer products to consumers, so by using the language in the advertisement the advertiser tries to persuade buyers of the goods or services they produce. Therefore, the advertiser will try to delve the potency of language as effectively as possible to reach the meaning. The excavation of advertising language is not considered important in what to say but inclined in the direction of how to say (Kasali, 1992: 20). Thus, the creative strategy in advertising is a step to organize how the advertising action is to be expressed.

To arrive at the aim of message, an advertising text demands that the advertising organizers use the interesting, short and complete languages. Besides, the sentences should contain persuasive meaning, and the meaning should be communicative. In other words, the text of advertising should have hidden power that can flatter the readers. So, advertising texts should contain not only a locutionary act (informative), but also illocutionary act (to do something), perlocutionary act and obedience of the cooperative principles.

The Types of Advertising

In his book *Advertising*, Jenkins (1985: 5) distinguishes advertising in some types: consumer advertising - advertising which is purposed to promote consumer goods, consumer durable, and consumer service or consumer goods.

The goods which we can find in the shops include food drink, candies, etc. (a) Consumer durable, the goods which are more permanent and expensive such as clothes, furniture, vehicle, etc; (b) consumer service, the services such as hotel, travel bureau; (c) Industrial advertising, advertising which is purposed to promote sale about instrument or service that used by industry, such as machine, consultation and contractor; (d) trade advertising, advertising which is purposed to distinct, contractor, and retailer. The aim is to inform them about its available goods that will resale both established or new.; (e) retail advertising, advertising which is mediate the trader (producer) and consumer. The purpose is selling goods which there is only in the advertising or stock there; (f) financial advertising, advertising which is related to banking savings, insurance and investment. The purpose is offering for loan as savings, insurance, cooperation, or financial account; (g) recruitment advertising, advertising which is purposed to recruit new employees in a certain instance including the personal of police and the third of another armed forces; (g) direct mail advertising, advertising used to post service as the media. It ps usually used by insurance companies by way of sending insurance coupon to potential consumer.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Illocutionary Act and Deviation of Cooperative Principles : a Case Study

In this discussion, the writer only discusses the illocutionary act and the deviation of cooperative principles, that are the maxims of quantity, quality relevancy and manner. The illocutionary act is not only to inform something but also to do something. The writer will analyze some illocutionary act in the advertisement samples found as follows :

Case 1

"Cancer strikes every country in the world. The frequency of the most common types of cancer varies in different countries of the world. But whatever the site, whatever the country, the earlier the diagnosis the greater possibility for successful treatment. For further information, contact your local organization or write to international union against cancer 3 rue du Conceal General IZOS Geneva Switzerland" (Newsweek-, October: 2000).

The text above has a theme "Cancer strikes in every country in the world". It consists of five sentences. The sentences are as follows: a) Cancer strikes every country in the world. b) The frequency of the most common types of cancer varies in different countries of the world. c) But whatever the site, whatever the country, the earlier the diagnosis the greater the possibility for successful treatment. d) For further information, contact your local cancer organization. e) Write to international union against cancer 3 rue du Conceal General IZOS Geneva-Switzerland.

If we look further the text, it is not merely news or report. It actually advertises something by providing, in the first place, information about something and then inviting readers to do something. Sentence (a) is a declarative sentence informing about cancer. The direct illocutionary act of the sentence is to assert that cancer strikes every country in the world. In doing the asserted act, the advertiser do not obey the felicity condition, that is, in fact, almost all of the society know that cancer strikes all countries in the world as could be seen from the news in mass media. So the advertising sentence (a) is not matching with infelicitous condition. Therefore the direct illocutionary act in the sentence above intentionally made invalid. So the illocutionary act of the sentence is not asserted, but giving warning to the readers directly. The alert is also signaled by performative verb "strike" which means "against". The verb strike indirectly means to give warning. Sentence (a) contains the indirect illocutionary act to warn and has representative and directive power, The sentence does not fulfill the maxim of quantity either because the advertiser only informs that cancer struck every country in the world. The sentence will match with the maxim of quantity if the information in the sentence is a matter of fact and it can be proven because, in fact, today cancer spreads in all of the world. This sentence also matches with the maxim of relevance, the advertiser wants to warn the reader to be careful, matching with the theme of advertising above and the maxim of manner. So the reader will understand it as an information and warning from the advertiser.

In sentence (b) "the frequency of the most common types of cancer varies in different countries of the world" is a declarative sentence containing direct illocutionary act asserting to the readers about the kinds of cancer. The sentence above do not contain an indirect illocution because the proportion matching with fact, that some kinds of cancer is obviously various in every country in the world. From the side of advertiser contribution, the sentence matches with the previous sentence, but it is not matching with the maxim of quantity because the information given is incomplete, that is it does not mention the kinds of cancer danger for health. The deviation of the maxim of quantity can be seen here because the advertiser does not want the readers to refer to the information from the advertisement but to look for the addition information to the advertiser. From the side of the maxim of quality, the information in the sentence is matching with that maxim, and from the side of advertiser's contribution the sentence matches with the previous sentence, that is given the addition information, So, sentence (b) is relevant.

In sentence (c) "whatever the site, whatever the country, the earlier the diagnosis the greater the possibility for successful treatment, grammatically" is a comparative design: the + comparative +NP, the + comparative + NP. The direct illocution of the sentence is matching with the design of comparison sentence, asserting that the earlier inspection to cancer opportune cure bigger wherever the place and the country. In the normal life everyone almost knows the way. The

advertiser of course knows it and intentionally makes the direct illocution of the sentence, infelicity. So the illocutionary act meant is the warning act about the danger of cancer if not treated sooner. The sentence also has the assertive power, to suggest the readers (especially the cancer patients) to take medicine as soon as possible. The sentence is matching with the maxim of quantity because the advertiser informs and suggests the readers to inspect themselves as soon as possible if attacked by cancer. The advertiser, in announcing the sentence, actually believes that it is no match with the maxim of quantity if the information given is invalid. But if it is valid, it matches with the maxim of quantity. In term of the maxim of relevance, the sentence matches with the maxim of relevance because the advertiser knows that in fact only a few of the society get aware of cancer. So, from the maxim of manner, the sentence does not talk rubbish but direct to what the advertiser's meaning.

In sentence (d), "For further information, contact your local cancer organization", belongs to the kinds of imperative sentence. The imperative sentence means to command the speech partner or the readers want to get information completely about cancer to make contact and write the international union against cancer. This way is marked trough "contact" and writing verb without starting with Subject, which is command form. The direct illocution of the sentence is directive (command) and simultaneously obey the maxim of quantity because the advertiser informs address which can be reached by the readers in case

they need further information about cancer. The sentence also obeys the maxim of relevance, in that it matches with the topic of cancer. In terms of the maxim of manner, the sentence component is clear.

The conclusion of the meaning of the text above if looked at carefully is that sentences (a), (b), (c) and (d) are connected with one another. Therefore, the advertisement above matches with the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner; and in terms of illocution power, sentence (a) and (d) both have directive powers, sentences (b) and (c) have assertive powers. The text above does not only contain information but also contain persuasive power, in which the advertiser tries to make sure that the readers inspect their health as soon as possible so as to avoid suffering from cancer.

Case 2:

"The Asian Wall Street Journal has always provided the first and last world markets. Now with the new networking section your journal is also a step a head of the future. In every issue, networking explains how technology is changing business and examines the trend shopping management; marketing and business strategies. If it's coming, it's covered. Don't miss it" (Newsweek, October: 2000).

The advertising reading above consist of five sentences as follows: a) The Asian Wall Street Journal has always provided the first and last world markets. b) Now with the new networking section your journal is also a step a head of the future. c) In every issue, networking explains how technology is changing business

and examines the trend shopping management, marketing and business strategies. d) If it's coming, it's covered. e) Don't miss it.

In sentence (a) "The Asian wall Street Journal has always provided the first and last word markets" is a form of declarative sentence. The direct illocution act of the sentence is assertion that the Asian wall Street Journal always supplies the information about the world of business and the world market. The advertiser uses the sentence not only to inform the contents of the newspaper but also to mean something behind the sentence because the sentence belongs to infelicity. The infelicity of sentence above is because the readers of the Asian wall Street Journal commonly is the business executors, high and middle class with high education and the business orientation not only local but international. So it can be concluded that they knew if the Asian wall street Journal is a newspaper for business.

Sentence (a) contains the advertiser's meaning, to flatter the readers with the use of asserted act. The contribution given by the advertiser in the sentence does not correspond with the maxim of quantity, that is the number of the information announced does not fulfill the readers' need and does not correspond with the maxim of quality either because the advertiser announces something new. Therefore, the readers will not be able to directly understand that the advertiser does not only inform the business and world market but also offers the readers to subscribe to the newspaper.

In sentence (b) " Now with the new networking section your journal is also a step a head of the future" is a declarative sentence which has a direct illocution act to assert that the Asian Wall Street Journal today use the new networking.

In sentence (c) "In every issue, networking explains how technology is changing business and examines the trend shopping management, marketing and business strategies" is the same as the previous sentences, containing a direct illocution act to assert how a technology changes a business and to examines the management and strategy of the business.

Sentence (b) and (c) are additional contribution stated by the advertiser to explain the first sentence. So this sentences match with the maxim of quantity because the contribution given is needed by the readers, in which it provides information related with the networking of the newspaper, the Asian Wall Street journal, and needed by the business executors all over the world. This sentence also matches with the maxim of relevance because the information given in sentence (a) is closely connected with sentences (b) and (c), and sentence (b) and (c) are similarly connected with the networking technology owned by the Asian Wall Street Journal newspaper to support the quickness and accuracy of the information.

In sentence (d) "If it's coming, it's covered" forms a supposition sentence to say something will happen if the requirements are fulfilled. The advertiser uses the sentence to do asserted act. Besides,

the indirect illocution is the promise act. The act can be inferred from the infelicity of the sentence, so the advertiser says something does not happen yet today. But, in fact, the Asian Wall Street Journal has been published for years, Therefore, the advertiser intentionally makes the direct illocution act infelicity. The illocution act meant by the speaker is not assertive but the promise act. If looked from the contribution, this sentence contradicts with the maxim of quantity because the information is explained in the previous sentence, and with the maxim of relevance because it does not have relation with the previous sentence. Therefore, the sentence is believed to be ineffective. The advertiser intentionally creates sentence (d) to persuade the readers to always read the Asian Wall Street Journal. The sentence contains the direct illocution to recommend the readers not to read the journal.

In conclusion, the text of advertising above does not only contain informative meaning but also persuasive meaning to invite the readers to subscribe to the newspaper. The persuasive meaning can be seen from the indirect illocution act of sentence (a) and from the description of the superabundance product announced in sentences (a), (b), and (c). By describing the superabundance owned by the Asian Wall Street Journal and by using the pressure expression "don't miss it", the advertiser tries to influence the readers not to forgot to read the Asian Wall Street Journal.

Generally, the advertising text above matches with the maxim of quantity and quality. Although there

are sentences which oppose the maxim of quantity, such as sentence (d), the sentence is intentionally made by the advertiser with the aim to capture additional belief of the readers about the Asian Wall Street Journal.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions above, the English advertisements try to achieve their persuasive goals by providing information in the form of news or report and then offering products of goods and (or) services that they advertise. The advertising texts analyzed in this study contain use of some kinds of illocutionary act and deviation as well as obedience of the cooperative principles. The illocution power of the words in the English advertisements is in the form of direct illocution and indirect illocution. The obedience and deviation of the cooperative principles which occur in the advertisement are intentionally created by the advertiser to propagate the products and (or) services being advertised.

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