

Multimodal Pragmatic Construction of Female Identity - the Case of Loreal Short Video on Femvertising

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Abstract:

Femvertising short video is a typical dynamic multimodal discourse, which shapes women's pragmatic identity through the combination of visual, auditory and linguistic multiple semiotic resources. The pragmatic identity is shaped in dynamic communication, and its identity construction reflects dynamic constructiveness and communicative nature. Through the shaping of pragmatic identity, the purpose of communication is achieved, i.e., to give voice to women, to de-marginalize women, etc., and to promote the development of women's discourse system.

Keywords:

Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Femvertising, Pragmatic Identity

1. Introduction

Femvertising is an emerging concept in 2015, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Global Development Issues 2015-2030) and governmental organizations of various countries have paid special attention to the topic of women's rights, covering core topics such as women's health, education, employment and so on. Driven by the goals, countries have taken corresponding measures to give voice to women and promote the development of women's discourse, and short videos for femvertising are one of the emerging ways of femvertising. Women's identity is dynamically constructed through multiple symbolic resources such as images, sounds and languages. Short videos of femvertising are typical multimodal dynamic discourse, whose dynamism is reflected in the change of space and time, presenting images in continuous time and generating images on the screen space.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Pragmatic identity

From a sociological point of view, [1] identity is a sociological concept have individual and group attributes. Such as a person's age, gender, origin, etc., or position or status in a certain social relationship, or the role played in society, reflecting the

division of social roles in a particular society. [2] Chen Xinren (2018) defines identity as contextualized. That is, identity is constructed in dynamic choice, which is the self-identity choice and representation of human subject consciousness. In normal communication, people can dynamically choose pragmatic identity according to communication participants, places, and communication purposes. Meanwhile, from the perspective of social constructivist view, identity is constructed through discourse, identity is the result of the interaction between communicating parties, and identity is the result of the choice in a specific context to serve a specific communicative purpose [3-11]. Thus, discursive identities are constructed in a dynamic construct, and at the same time, discursive identities can be used as a communicative device to achieve a particular communicative purpose.

2.2. Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis Framework

Multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of using non-verbal symbols, such as auditory, visual, and tactile, and other sensory resources and verbal symbols for communication. L'Oreal Femvertising Short Video belongs to multimodal dynamic short video.

According to the needs of the research, this study mainly adopts the framework of multimodal discourse analysis of Chen Xinren and Qian Yonghong (2011), which argues that the multimodal letter dimensions of discourse analysis can be mainly divided into three levels: situational factors, communicator factors, and mediator factors, of which situational factors includes modalities such as weather, place, and noise; and the dimensions of the level of communicator factors include the communicator's facial expression, eyes, tone of voice, volume, body language and other modalities; the media factor level includes modalities such as font, font size, graphics, images, colors and other modalities. According to the needs of the research object, a multimodal discourse analysis framework was established for L'Oreal women, and then each modality was assigned a code.

This corpus is derived from L'Oreal's "Lesson of Worth" series of femvertising videos on Youtube, a total of 15 short videos, the main content of which mainly focuses on advocating women's values and empowering women through the construction of women's identities.

3. Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the L'Oreal

3.1. Non-verbal modality analysis

Nonverbal modality is an important means of conveying meaning, including tone of voice, eyes, expressions, body movements and discourse style. Based on the results of the ELAN annotated corpus, it was found that the frequency of the use of nonverbal modality is higher than that of verbal modality. Among them, the use of discourse modality indicates that the speaker's expression is monologue, which further recognizes women's value and provokes women's thinking through declarative and questioning tones. The use of serious expressions indicates that the speaker is serious. The speaker conveys information by looking directly at the listener. The use of gestures reinforces that the discourse conveys meaning. The use of graphics adds publicity.

3.2. Verbal modality analysis

Verbal modality is the main media device, including the use of rhythmic features, discourse markers and epithets; pure language is the main mode of expression for communication, and accompanying language interacts with linguistic modality, acting as a linguistic table of great ebb and flow, pause and prolongation, logic and pointing. In Loreal's short video on women's empowerment, the use of descending tones and stopping and prolonging suggests that the speaker's tone is soothing and storytelling. The extensive use of extended markers suggests that the speaker is constantly explaining to the listener through interpretation and repetition to the point where the listener is able to understand.

3.3. Interaction between verbal and non-verbal modalities

[12] Zhang Delu, "the main reason why human beings use multimodality in communication is because "one modality is not enough to express the meaning of the communicator clearly, and thus the other is used to reinforce, supplement, regulate, and synergize, so as to achieve the purpose of expressing the meaning more adequately, or as adequately as possible, so that the hearer can understand the discourse". A number of cases of female empowerment short videos are selected to analyze the synergistic relationship embodied in pragmatic identity construction between multimodal means of expression with the help of the above analytical framework.

For example, in Loreal's advertisement video for women (Lesson of Self Worth), the relationship between verbal and non-verbal is reinforced in this video. While expressing "You are worth it", the speaker synergizes with eye gaze, smile, declarative tone and intonation to make the listener perceive his/her worth more vividly. Secondly, in expressing "I am worth it", the speaker uses gestures and self-proclaimed discourse markers to form a reinforcing relationship, which emphasizes the speaker's concern for himself and his own identity and status. There are also three kinds of relationships between these modalities, such as synergy, connection and intersection.

The non-reinforcing relationship in the complementary relationship denotes the absence of two or more modalities, i.e., there is no dominant construct and multiple constructs complement each other. This relation is a coordination relation, which means that the different means of expression work together to express the speaker's overall meaning, and is not complete without one. For example, in a short video in Loreal, the speaker uses the voice-over "She is really skinny", which cannot be clearly expressed by words alone, but combined with facial expressions and eyes, it can be shown that the sentence is evaluating and discriminating against women, and the interviewee's expression and eyes show that she does not care about other people's evaluation and discussion. The interviewee's expression and eyes show that she doesn't care about other people's comments and remarks.

4. The Pragmatic Identity Construction of Femvertising Videos

4.1. Pragmatic identity as a female value guide

[13] "Identity as stance designs the attitude or tendency that an individual shows on a specific topic; identity as personality emphasizes the uniqueness of an individual, i.e., identity construction is achieved by presenting the unique self to others".

In the short videos on femvertising represented by L'Oreal, take the "Lesson of worth" series of short videos as an example, L'Oreal's multimodal discourse practice on Youtube is dedicated to advocating women's value and highlighting the image of women's value. From the perspective of a female value guide, the identity emphasizes "I'm still worth it in the face of prejudice". From the perspective of multimodal construction strategy, the linguistic level uses "I am worth it", "You are worth it", "I have value I have value" combined with the extensive use of "I", "We" and "You" and descending tones that emphasize self-identity representations, from the point of view of discourse identity, the speaker is not only a "good" speaker, but also a "good" speaker. When the speaker says this sentence, the speaker is emphasizing the value of women as an individual and as a group. When the speaker is engaged in the construction of female value guidance, she narrates the listener's identity at the same time as her identity self-representation.

4.2. Pragmatic identity as a female storyteller

In L'Oreal's female toiletries brand, the discourse tends to emphasize the sense of belonging and recognition of female identity, so as to construct the female storyteller identity. [14] Chen Xinren (2020) suggests that "Identity as belonging, i.e., the membership that an individual has by belonging to a group, organization, or community, etc." This membership may originate from social structures or may be constructed temporarily, and the sense of belonging to this identity can also be seen as a construction of group identity. In the L'Oreal Femvertising Short Video, the content of the video is mainly based on the identity of the female storyteller, and the speaker narrates her own experience of being subjected to sexist treatment. By narrating her own story, the speaker does not only construct her own personal identity as a female storyteller, but the protagonist of the story is no longer the narrator herself, but also any individual of the women's group. By drawing the attention and empathy of women with similar experiences, she constructs a female identity as a sense of belonging and identity.

5. Conclusions

To summarize, in L'Oreal's short videos for female empowerment, the frequency of the use of eyes, tone of voice and body movements is higher in the non-verbal modality, and in the verbal modality, the frequency of the use of rhyming features and address is the highest. Through the analysis, it is found that the construction of women's discourse identity is realized through multimodal discourse practice, and women's identity tends to be "value guide" and "female storyteller". By shaping women's identity and promoting the development of L'Oreal's female discourse system, the empowerment of women does not only remove the public's stereotypes of women, but also awakens women's own consciousness and focuses on their own values, thus moving women's group consciousness from marginalization to centrality.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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