

A Pragmatic Study of Persuasive Strategies in Selected Names of Shops

دراسة تداولية لاستراتيجيات الإقناع في أسماء مختارة من المحلات التجارية

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Abstract

Shop names are the first thing that can draw customers attention. Shop names have been investigated in different fields. However, no other study has investigated persuasive strategies in shop names, especially from a pragmatic perspective, so the present study attempts to fill this gap and aims to uncover the main strategies used in shop names for persuasion. To achieve the aim of this study, an eclectic model of analysis is adopted for analysing the data. The model comprises Lucas's (2009) persuasive appeals and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. In association with the aim, the study hypothesises that ethos and pathos are employed in shop names as persuasive strategies; off-record and bald-on-record politeness strategies are utilised in shop names for persuasion. The current study is limited to shop names written in English selected from the centre of Kerbala city. The qualitative and quantitative results of the analysis show that pathos has a high level of occurrence in shop names, while ethos rarely occurs. Similarly, off-records are used with a higher frequency than bald on record.

المستخلص:

أسماء المتاجر هي أول ما يمكن ان يلفت انتباه العملاء. تمت دراسة أسماء المتاجر في مجالات مختلفة. ومع ذلك، لم تقم أي دراسة أخرى بدراسة استراتيجيات الإقناع في أسماء المحلات التجارية، وخاصة من المنظور الاجتماعي التداولي، لذا تحاول الدراسة الحالية سد هذه الفجوة وتهدف إلى الكشف عن الاستراتيجيات الرئيسية المستخدمة في أسماء المحلات التجارية للإقناع. ولتحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة تم اعتماد نموذج تحليلي منتخب لتحليل البيانات. يشتمل النموذج على نداءات لوكاس (2009) المقنعة واستراتيجيات التأدب لبراون وليفسون (1987). بالتركيز على الهدف، تفترض الدراسة أن العاطفة و الاخلاقيات توظف في أسماء المتاجر كاستراتيجيات مقنعة وكذلك يتم استخدام استراتيجيات التأدب غير المباشرة والمباشرة في أسماء المتاجر للإقناع. تقتصر الدراسة الحالية على أسماء المحلات التجارية المكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية والتي تم اختيارها من وسط مدينة كربلاء. تظهر نتائج التحليل النوعية والكمية أن العاطفة تظهر بمستوى عالي في أسماء المتاجر، بينما نادرًا ما تظهر الأخلاقيات. وبالمثل، يتم استخدام استراتيجيات غير مباشرة بمستوى عالٍ من التكرار مقارنة بالمباشرة.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shop owners utilise language in naming shops to persuade customers and attract them. Persuasion is defined as "human communication that is designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes" (Simons, 1976,p.21).

Pragmatics focuses on the relationship between signs and language users who understand the signs (Morris,1938). According to Hadiyanti (2020, as cited in Alkhaldi et al.,2023), signs are typically used to promote a business, tell potential customers about it and transmit information about it. Politeness and persuasion are linked ideas. The idea that politeness is the linguistic representation of social bonds implies understanding that social relationships cannot exist without communication being inside and through them. Considering that persuasion is a communication phenomenon like any other, it follows that a speaker will always be relating to others

while attempting to persuade them (Carl & Duck, 2004; Duck, 1998). In order for the persuasive process to take place, specific strategies are used. These can involve presenting information, feelings, or logic to alter a person's perception of a certain product. The use of these strategies in the names of shops needs to be investigated and identified.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics According to Levinson, studying language from a practical perspective entails attempting to clarify the linguistic form's aspects by designating nonlinguistic forces and causes (Levinson, 1983). Although Yule (1996) asserts that it entails comprehending the fundamental meaning of the words being presented, as well as how what is said will be understood (Yule,1996). The speaker's intended meaning can be determined by recognising the speaker's identity and the spoken utterance's context (Birner, 2012).

2.2 Persuasion

The ability to influence other people's attitudes, ideas, or behaviours is known as persuasion (Reardon, 1981). Persuasion is an interactive process between the persuadee and the persuader, according to O'Donnell and Kable (1982). They describe persuasion as a continuous, complex, and interactive process in which the connection between the sender and the receiver is mediated by verbal, nonverbal, and symbols. The goal of a persuader is to convince someone to alter their behaviour or attitude (O'Donnell& Kable,1982).

Instead of producers, Fotheringham (1966) concentrates on receivers. According to his definition, the persuasive act is the process of generating effects in

readers or listeners that are relevant to the source's stated objectives and come about as a result of a process in which messages play a significant role in determining those effects (Fotheringham,1966).

A persuasive act that arises from any situation with the power of persuasion is known as a perlocutionary effect. According to a recent study, "persuasion is an act by itself that can be gained through the use of other acts beside the verb to persuade"(Jibreen &Al-Janabi, 2018, p. 35). Additionally, the use of various speech acts combined with rhetoric leads to a persuasive outcome (Alkhirbash, 2016).

Perlocutionary acts are those impacts that words have on listeners that go beyond the listener's comprehension of the utterance, according to Searle. Cases of perlocutionary acts include, for example, persuading, frightening, annoying, and funny situations(Searle etal., 1980). Furthermore, words can persuade or affect the "unintentional overhearer" and convince them to take action. Because persuasion is indirect, it is possible to create misleading components and persuade others about a specific subject(Birner ,2013,p.18).

2.3 Persuasion and Rhetoric

According to Aristotle, using rhetorical devices in language should lead to persuasion. He considers both artistic and non-artistic proofs to be valid forms of persuasion(Herrick,2013). The organisation of the persuasive discourse, the selection of the evidence, the manner in which it is delivered, as well as the linguistic choices, are all represented by artistic proof. In contrast, inartistic proof consists of factors that are out of the speaker's control, such as the setting, the amount of time allotted, and the speaker's physical attributes (Larson, 2010). According to Aristotle's definition of rhetoric in his book *Rhetoric*, it is "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Mey,2009, p.864).

Every form of language has the potential to be persuasive. In this particular context, persuasion might be defined more broadly to include any language use that aims to reinforce an audience's preexisting views or to alter its way of thinking or acting. However, the persuasive process also involves audiences of various kinds, including actual and inferred, visible and invisible, interlocutors, and bystanders. (Virtanen&Halmari,2005). The new rhetorical theory centers on discourse as action rather than the formal or artistic aspects of a spoken or written text. Writing and speaking are evaluated according to their ability to persuade, entertain, inform, convince, enlighten, and inspire people. The traditional distinction between dialectic and rhetoric is challenged by the new rhetoric, which views rhetoric as relating to all forms of discourse, including public, professional, academic, and philosophical ones. As a result, audience considerations are seen to be relevant to all kinds of discourse(Enos,1996).

2.4 Lucas' Persuasive Appeals

According to Stephan Lucas (2009), there are three rhetorical appeals that are important for persuasion: ethos, logos, and pathos. These are in line with Aristotle's views on rhetoric and persuasion. In order to make writing or speaking more powerful and convincing, he describes the key elements, variables, and tactics for every appeal (Lucas,2009).

(i) Ethos: (Appeal to Values/Trust)

The audience's values and the author's credibility or character are the two aspects of ethical appeals (Gagich&Zickel,2018). "The audience's perception of whether a speaker is qualified to speak on a given topic"(Lucas, 2009, p. 353)is the definition of credibility. Character and competence are the two fundamental variables

that have an impact on it. Competence is the audience's perception of the speaker's experience, authenticity, and intelligence on a subject; character is how the audience views the speaker's reputation, dependability, and physical attraction. (Lucas, 2009).

(ii) Pathos: (Appeal to Emotions)

The pathos appeal, which speakers and writers use to address and arouse the emotions and feelings of their audience, is what Lucas (2009) refers to as appealing to people's emotions. He goes on to discuss strategies for arousing people's feelings, such as speaking with honesty and conviction, discussing and creating vivid examples, and employing expressive language that is rich with emotions (Lucas, 2009).

(iii) Logos: (Appeal to Logic)

According to Lucas (2009), Aristotle identified a speaker's logical appeal as the logos appeal. Reasoning and evidence are the two main components of logos. As a result, he distinguishes causal and analogical reasoning as the two main categories of reasoning that comprise logical appeal.

2.4 Brown and Levinson's(1987) Politeness Strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), each person has two distinct faces or wants: positive and negative. The need for acceptance, respect, approval, and appreciation from others is a positive face, on the other hand, the desire for unrestricted freedom to act is a negative face. In order to preserve the listener's face, politeness strategies can be used to keep someone from feeling awkward or humiliated. Four primary categories can be used to categorise the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987): bald-on-record, positive, negative, and off-record politeness strategies.

(i) bald on record

The bald-on-record strategy is a straightforward approach to expressing things in an obvious, simple, unambiguous, and direct manner without minimization of the imposition. The following are instances of bald-on-record strategies: extreme urgency; speaking as though extreme efficiency is required; task-oriented; having little or no desire to keep someone's face intact; alerting; welcoming; offering; and making requests (Brown and Levinson ,1987).

(ii) Positive politeness

Constructive politeness is the second tactic, which is typically employed in social settings where individuals belong to the same social circle or in groups of friends. By displaying intimacy and a strong desire to follow the speech (minimise Face threatening act), it usually seeks to minimise the gap between them, in other words, this strategy aims to minimise the audience's risk. The following are instances of positive politeness strategies: Pay attention; observe the hearer; exaggerate; show more interest in the hearer; utilise an in-group identification marker; seek agreement; avoid disagreement; establish common ground, make a joke, and imply cooperation between the speaker and the hearer; imply or declare that the speaker is aware of and cares about the hearer's desires; offer; promise; be optimistic; engage both speaker and hearer in the activity; give or ask for reasons; presuppose or declare reciprocity; and satisfy the hearer's desires by giving a gift to them (Brown and Levinson ,1987).

(iii) Negative politeness

Negative politeness, which is more concentrated and specific, is the foundation of respectful behaviour. The following are instances of negative politeness strategies: question, hedge, be pessimistic, minimise the imposition, and give deference; apologies; impersonalize the speaker and hearer; state the Face threatening acts as a

general rule; nominalize; and be conventionally indirect (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

(iv) Off-record

The off-record strategy, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), reduces the speaker's possibility of being imposed and uses indirect language. Furthermore, one of the primary non-recording strategies and its subcategories consist of: hints, Exaggerate, association clues, presumption, understatement, overstatement, use of tautologies, contradictions, irony, metaphors, and rhetorical questions, as listed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The other main strategy is called unclear or unsure, and its subcategories include incomplete, ambiguous, vague, and over-generalize.

3. Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and quantitative approach. Projects that integrate quantitative and qualitative methodologies are referred to as mixed methods research (Leavy, 2017). In qualitative research, there is no numerical representation for the data given (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Interpretation is highly valued in qualitative methods and data analysis, even though there are numerous interpretations that can be made (Cohen et al., 2007). The quantitative technique is a top-down strategy that requires evaluation with the aim of focusing on objectivity and statistical explanation (Fallon, 2016, as cited in Leavy, 2017).

Qualitative analysis in the current study is based on particular classifications, such as persuasive appeals and politeness strategies, while a quantitative section provides statistics in terms of frequencies and percentages to support the findings of the analysis. The data was selected randomly from a variety of areas within the centre of Karbala City. These regions were picked due to their central locations, which attract a lot of tourists and promote business. There were just 20 shop names in the

sample. These shops vary in terms of the products and services they offer, including clothes shops, phone shopping centres, restaurants, cafes, medical centres, shoe shops, and others. The selection of monolingual English shop names is due to English globalisation in recent years and also because this research is introduced in English. The researcher has utilised various methods to get the required data for these shop names. Specifically, the researcher's smartphone camera, social media sites like Facebook Pages, and websites like Google Search Engine were used to gather shop names.

4. Data Analysis and discussion

The analysis of monolingual English shop names in terms of persuasive strategies and politeness strategies used for persuasion depends on two models. These are Lucas's (2009) model of persuasive appeals and Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies. The following examples illustrate the analysis of monolingual English names that were ordered by a number.

1) Italian decor

Persuasive strategies

Ethos: It appeals to credibility by using the name of a foreign country that is famous for its high-quality products.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: It gives hints, making the readers infer that the products have high quality.

2) Dr.Ameer Alassady

Persuasive strategies

Ethos: It appeals to credibility by presenting the postgraduate academic degree (Dr.) before the name of the person.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: it gives hints, which leaves readers with the impression that this individual, who holds a degree from a medical institution, is the one who provides the service.

3) Lava cafe

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: it appeals to customers' emotions, making them imagine an atmosphere of superiority and high energy.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: There is an overstatement in describing the shop using the word (lava) to give the readers hints that the products can create an atmosphere of high energy and superiority.

4) Love life, love Miniso

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: It appeals to customers' sense of love .

Ethos: It appeals to credibility using a famous global brand name (Miniso).

Politeness strategies

Bald on record: It expresses one literal meaning in a direct way to influence the reader's desires and invite them to engage in love with the shop's brand.

5) Top man

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: It appeals to customers' sense of prestige.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: It gives hints, making the readers infer that the products are suitable for men in high positions.

6) Crown furniture

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: the name taps into customers' emotions, triggering feelings of luxury and elevated social status associated with the word "crown".

Politeness Strategy

Off-record: It delicately employs an off-record politeness strategy by subtly hinting at the exceptional value and grandeur of the furniture without explicitly stating it.

7) Eat and go

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: It appeals to customers' sense of hunger, evoking their desire to eat food.

Politeness strategies

Bald on record: It gives literal meaning in a direct manner to attract customers to visit this restaurant.

8) Plus one

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: It appeals to customers' sense of anticipation for the additional value that is offered in the shop.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: It gives a vague implication that the shop offers additional benefits without explicitly stating it, allowing the readers to interpret what that is according to their expectations.

9) Outdoor community

Persuasive strategies

Pathos: It appeals to customers' emotions, evoking their feelings of inclusivity and the desire to be a part of a community that shares similar interests and passions.

Politeness strategies

Off-record: It gives ambiguity by using an incomplete statement, which allows the reader to infer the intended meaning, which may be that the products offered are suitable for outdoor activities or that the shop opened for potential customers from the community who have similar interests in the products despite their different backgrounds.

10) Violet**Persuasive strategies**

Pathos: It appeals to customers' sense of femininity and grace associated with this colour (Violet).

Politeness strategies

Off-record: It gives hints and allows the reader to infer that the products are suitable for women's tastes.

4.1 Findings and Discussion Related to Persuasive Strategies

The analysis of shop names in terms of persuasive strategies used shows the following results:

Table 1***Frequencies and Percentages of Persuasive Strategies***

Persuasive strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Pathos	17	85%
Ethos	3	15%

The results showed that the most common appeal used for persuasion was pathos, which comprised 85% of the data. It was employed to evoke customers' emotions or imaginations. For instance, name 3 formed pathos by appealing to

customers' sense of superiority and high energy associated with the word "lava." In contrast, the use of ethos was rarely noticed in shop names, which comprised only 15% of the data. Ethos appeared in the names 1, 2, and 4. To illustrate, ethos was recognised in 1 and 4 by stating the name of the country or brand that has a good reputation in terms of quality and credibility, while in 2, ethos was formed by mentioning the professional degree of the person who provides services.

From the previously mentioned discussion, pathos was noticed as the main appeal used to persuade potential customers. This may be justified in two ways. On the one hand, pathos works as a means of connecting certain positive atmospheres or feelings with the goods to make them desirable. On the other hand, emotions and desires can have more effect than logic on the customer's buying decisions. In this regard, certain emotions or appeals frequently appeared during the analysis of persuasive strategies as a demonstration of pathos. These include comfort, beauty, uniqueness, high quality, modernity, and human senses. In regard to ethos, the low rate of its occurrence might be related to the shop owners' beliefs that customers have little trust in marketing propaganda.

4.2 Findings and Discussion Related to Politeness Strategies

The analysis of shop names in terms of politeness strategies used shows the following results:

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Politeness strategies

Politeness strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Off- record	18	90%

Bald on record	2	10%
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Off-record was the main politeness strategy that the shop owners relied upon in persuasion, which encompassed 90% of the data. For instance, name 8 gives hints that customers may gain an additional thing when purchasing something from the shop without explicitly stating what it is, leaving the interpretation to customers. In contrast, baldness on record was rarely noticed. To illustrate, Bald on-record appeared in the name 4, 7, through means of conveying one literal meaning in a direct way in an attempt to affect customers' decisions.

From the above discussion, one can notice that off-record was the strategy that shop owners mostly used to influence potential customers. This can be justified as the shop owners prefer to get themselves out and leave customers to make inferences to understand what is meant as a strategy to avoid carrying out face-threatening acts. Regarding baldness on record, it was used as a way to have the maximum effect on customers' decisions. The low level of its occurrence may be related to shop owners preference to avoid awkwardness and discomfort.

4. Conclusions

After discussing the finding of the data analysis, several conclusions can be drawn. These can be illustrated as follows:

1. Pathos and ethos are employed in shop names as persuasive strategies. The former works on linking certain emotions with products or services, while the latter enhances credibility. Pathos is used as the main strategy, while ethos occurs with low frequency since customers may be more affected by emotion than logic.
2. Most shop names contain strong emotional words and use figurative or implicit language. They function as catchy terms that attract customers' attention and trigger their desires.

3. Politeness strategies are used in shop names for persuasion. Among these are off-record and bald on record. In this regard, off-record is the most common strategy that shop owners depend upon in persuading potential readers, while bald on record is rarely used since shop owners prefer to avoid imposition and promote the goods or services indirectly.

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Appendix: Names of Shops

- 1.Italian decor
18. Pizza house
19. Silvaro
20. Moonlight
- 2.Dr.Ameer Alassady
- 3.Lava cafe
4. Love life, love Miniso
5. Top man
6. Crown furniture
7. Eat and go
8. Plus one
9. Outdoor community
10. Classy store
12. Bilal phone
13. Max home
14. Magic stick
15. Shadow fashion
16. New look
17. Food time
18. Pizza house
19. Silvaro
20. Moonlight