

Persuasion in the English Language

Wassamill Watcharakaweesilp¹

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้ถูกนำเสนอเพื่อให้ข้อมูลในการทำความเข้าใจเรื่องของการโน้มน้าวใจและการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อโน้มน้าวในมุมมองทางด้านภาษาผู้เขียนบทความมุ่งอธิบายความสำคัญของการโน้มน้าวใจ นอกจากนี้ ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการโน้มน้าวใจที่ปรากฏให้เห็นใน 1. บทสนทนา 2. จดหมายธุรกิจ 3. สุนทรพจน์ ทางการเมือง 4. งานโฆษณา และ 5. สุภาษิตคำพังเพย ถูกนำมาพิจารณาเพื่อให้ข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมว่า การพูดและการเขียนเพื่อโน้มน้าวใจนั้น มีคุณลักษณะพิเศษเฉพาะทางด้านภาษา ที่จะทำให้ผู้สอนและผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเข้าใจถึงพลังอำนาจของการโน้มน้าวซึ่งจะเป็นพื้นฐานของการวิเคราะห์และหลักแนวคิดต่างๆ ในแง่มุมของภาษาอังกฤษศึกษา

คำสำคัญ: การโน้มน้าวใจ

Abstract

This article is presented to cast light on persuasion and how English is used to persuade in terms of language perspectives. The writer aims to illustrate the importance of persuasion. Apart from this, the persuasive English shown in 1) conversations, 2) business letters, 3) political speeches, 4) advertisements,

¹ Assistant Professor. Section Language Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University

and 5) proverbs is taken into account to provide further information that persuasive speaking and writing has its own linguistic characteristics leading us, as English language instructors and learners, to have an insight into the power of persuasion based on an analysis and concepts of English language studies.

Keyword: Persuasion

1. Introduction

Language and communication do relate to each other to a great extent to effectively and efficiently communicate. In some areas, language and communication skills cannot be separated. In other words, there is an interface between language and communication skills. One of the humans' major communication strategies is the process of persuading someone to do or believe something. To persuasively communicate with other people, persuasive communicators must possess and further develop both language and communicative skills to their fullest potential.

In daily life, people from all walks of life need to persuade at work. Persuasive writers like marketers or market communicators need to take into account the context of a text's production and reception as texts aim at a mass market when producing a persuasive text.

Sale representatives and politicians as persuasive speakers must be able to foster their communicative skills as well as acquire their language skills to convey the persuasive messages or deliver political speeches to the audiences professionally.

Unlike politicians and market communicators, instructors and learners of the English language need to investigate, examine and analyze how English is used to persuade. In particular, when researching, various linguistics instruments are inevitably employed to diversely clarify the impact of the use of language in persuasive English.

Hence, it is highly recommended that enhancing the persuasive skills is indispensable and understanding the impact of persuasion through language dimensions is academically valuable for English language studies.

2. Previous research and relevant studies on persuasion in the English language

Research studies on persuasive language is mainly based on discourse analysis and contrastive rhetoric frameworks which often involved the concept of politeness. There are a number of studies on persuasive business correspondence which includes studies of letters of sales promotions, request, and invitation. Thus, persuasive correspondence was selected for review in this article as it is the most researched sub-genre of business correspondence.

Bhatia (1993) introduces a textual analysis of the structure of sales promotion letters using a genre-analytical approach to business texts. He develops a move analysis of sales promotion letter following Swales' (1990) so-called *move-step analysis* of the introductory section in academic articles. Similar to Swales' analysis in which the rhetorical pattern of the introductory section in academic articles is identified through moves and steps. He identifies the rhetorical pattern of moves in sales promotion letter. He proposes that sales promotion letters have seven moves: 1) Establishing credentials; 2) Introducing the offer; 3) Offering incentives; 4) Enclosing documents; 5) Soliciting response; 6) Using pressure tactics; 7) Ending politely. His data consist of a number of letters written in English from Singaporean companies and Western multinationals. Although only one language is involved, his analysis refers to at least two cultures; namely Singapore and the West. In this study Bhatia (1993) states that sales promotion letters belong to the "promotional genre" as do job application letters. He then compares *product* and *self-advertising* through sales promotion letters and job application letters, and suggests that both types of letters share the same rhetorical pattern of moves.

Zhu (2001) studies persuasive strategies in English and Chinese letters of invitation to trade fairs. She points out that letters of invitation to trade fairs sent to prospective attendees are prevalent in both English and Chinese business practice. She describes the communicative purposes of English letters as follows: 1) to invite the reader to attend the Expo, and encourage further contact; 2) to attract the reader's attention; 3) to give positive appraisal of the Expo; 4) to persuade the reader to attend the Expo; 5) to achieve a positive image.

Chakorn (2002) has also conducted a contrastive analysis of authentic letters of request written in English by Thai speakers (TH) and native English speakers (NT or non-Thai). Her corpus consists of 80 letters of request (38 TH and 42 NT). She examines, compares and contrasts the rhetorical structure, functions and linguistic realizations as well as persuasive and politeness strategies used by Thai speakers and native English speakers. The quantitative analysis involves the lengths of the TH and the NT letter in relation to their distribution and positions of requests. The qualitative analysis focuses on the use of politeness strategies, which can also be considered as request strategies, and the use of rhetorical appeals, which can be perceived as persuasive strategies. The analysis of politeness is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of face and politeness in face-threatening acts (FTA). Her study compares various types of positive and negative politeness strategies used in the TH and NT letters of request. The examination of rhetorical appeals is based on the Aristorian concept of persuasive rhetoric.

Based on the relevant studies mentioned above, writing in such professional genres as letters, resumes, and job applications should be analyzed in the aspect of different language and cultural background.

Following the concept of persuading and advertising, Oates, Blades and Gunter (2002) analyze children and television advertising: when do they understand persuasive intent? Children's response to television advertising is investigated.

Children aged between six and ten years are tested for their recall, recognition and understanding of novel television advertisements. Children are able to recognize scenes from the advertisements after one exposure but recall of the brand names is poor for the younger children, even after three exposures. Recall for the advertising content increase by age and number of exposures. None of the six-year-olds and only a quarter of the eight-year-olds and a third of the ten-year-olds discuss advertising in terms of persuasion. Therefore, although children remember television advertisements, their purpose is not fully understood, even by many ten-year-olds.

Compared with what Oates, Blades and Gunter (2002) present, Agrawal and Maheswaran (2003) examine the Effects of Self Construal and Commitment on Persuasion. They state that advertising appeals that are consistent with consumers' chronically accessible (chronic) self-construal as well as appeals that are consistent with the temporarily accessible (latent) self-construal are both persuasive. In two studies, they identify brand commitment as a moderating variable that determines the effectiveness of appeals consistent with the consumers' chronic or latent self-construal.

Bosmans and Baumgartner (2005) investigate how extraneous or incidental emotions influence product evaluations as a function of consumers' salient goals. By manipulating specific emotions that correspond closely to two basic categories of human goals (achievement vs. protection), they extend affect-as-information theory and show that product judgments are a function not simply of the valence of extraneous emotions but also of the correspondence between specific emotions and salient goals. According to Bosmans and Baumgartner (2005), when consumers' achievement goals are salient, achievement-related emotions (cheerfulness and dejection) are more informative for evaluations than protection-related emotions (quiescence and agitation); the opposite is true when consumers' protection goals are salient.

Luna and A. Peracchio (2005), conduct a research study on advertising to Bilingual Consumers: The Impact of Code Switching on Persuasion. Building on a sociolinguistic framework, their research explores the impact of code-switching on the persuasiveness of marketing messages. Code-switching refers to mixing languages within a sentence, a common practice among bilingual consumers. They investigate how responses to different types of code-switched messages can provide insight into bilingual consumers' persuasion processes.

It is clear that these four studies on persuading and advertising mainly focus on the importance of persuasion for advertisements and marketing. However, the research findings of Luna and A. Peracchio (2005) indicate the different aspects of study as they have diverse data and research methodologies by studying the impact of code switching on persuasion based on a sociolinguistic framework.

From the review of the previous research studies, it should be noted that most studies cited above have contributed to the development in terms of language and persuasion. Hence, the study of *Persuasion in the English Language* in this paper is based on the conceptual framework of language perspectives, specifically the linguistic framework.

3. Persuasion in the English Language

In this part, the writer aims to present and examine the language aspects of the following: 1) Persuasion in conversations; 2) Persuasive English in letters for communication at work; 3) Persuasive language in political speeches; 4) Persuasive language in advertisements; 5) Using proverbs and idioms in English, to show the significance of persuasion in the English language in several aspects.

3.1 Persuasion in conversations

Example 1:

This short extract is taken from a conversation between two young women, Beth and Sue, discussing a possible visit to a nightclub called ‘Shindig’.

Beth: Sue what are you doing Saturday, (3), do you want to come to Shindig?
Sue: Oh I’m going to clubbing on Thursday.
Beth: Just crush me why don’t you (.) who with (.) WHO with?
Sue: Ben.
Beth: Well, can’t he come to Shindig?
Sue: Think he’s going away next week (3) I haven’t got enough money to
god he’s never here.

(cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 44)

To facilitate in understanding the conversation, these transcription conversations are explained as follows: 1. (.) means a brief pause; 2. (3) indicates pauses in seconds; 3. Capital letters indicates words given extra emphasis; Underlining indicates both speaking at the same time. Based on the conversation above, the following questions might be further discussed: 1) What is the purpose of the conversation? 2) What is the relationship between the two women? 3) What is the influence of the relationship on the conversation?

Beard (2007) provides explanation and analyzes this conversation as follows:

Beth is trying, but failing, to persuade her friend Sue to go clubbing with her. The key point to remember here is that the women are friends and whatever the result of Beth’s attempt at persuasion, they intend to remind so. This means that Beth’s attempts at persuasion are going to be carefully managed, and so are Sue’s rejections of the request. Beth begins with two approaches to her main task—to persuade Beth to go out with her. The first is indirect, *Sue what are you doing Saturday*, attempting to see if there is room for a more specific request, but the 3-seconds silence means that Sue is not replying and so Beth has to ask a more direct question. Sue’s reply on the surface might seem strange, but in fact it makes perfect sense within the context of their conversation. In saying that she is going out on Thursday, she is avoiding a simple *no* to the question, and hoping that Beth will be attuned to the **pragmatics** of the conversation; that is, to both what Sue has said and what meaning was implied.

Sue is saying that going out on Thursday is enough for one week. Beth, though, is safe enough in her confidence in the friendship to challenge Sue again, although presumably with a certain irony in her voice. When Sue says she is going to go with Ben, Beth makes another attempt at persuading Sue, by opting for an alternative plan: the three of them can go together. Sue's continuing reasons/excuses for saying *no* mean that Beth gives up and she changes the topic, which is why they both speak at the same time (cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p.44).

It should be clear that the brief example of conversation above is informal and unplanned. Beth and Sue are not consciously planning their task here, but are drawing on their experience of the social talk which has surrounded them since infancy. In particular, they are using social tactics that they have acquired through many similar conversations in all sorts of social contexts (Beard, 2007).

Example 2:

Interviewer:	What did you learn from your last job?
Job candidate:	I learned to sell machines, and I improved my computer skills.
Interviewer:	Do you have any special skills?
Job candidate:	I'm good at languages. I speak Japanese very well.
Interviewer:	What do you want to do in the future ... in ten years' time?
Job candidate:	Well, I plan to be head of a large marketing department.

(Adapted from Cotton, Falvey, & Kent, 2004, p.153)

From the situation of job interview above, the words *learned*, *improved*, and *plan* can be understood as *Action Verbs*. According to Bovee, Thill & Schatzman (2003), action verbs are dynamic verbs that show the performance of an action. In terms of job interview, the use of these action verbs can increase your strengths as well as persuade the potential employers to take notice of your accomplishments and skills.

In conclusion, successful relationships with others require skills in persuasiveness. In order to do that, you need to understand the person you are trying to persuade. In our day to day dealings, whether it is dealing with colleagues

at work, or convincing our friends, we need to be persuasive. In other words, if you want to have success in moving the conversations forward, you need to have good skills in persuasive conversations. As illustrated in example 1, some strategies, such as suggesting, offering an alternative plan, and citing logical reasons can help you get other people to do what we want them to do. In terms of persuading, we should be rational before we do or say something. Like the situation of job interview, the interviewers like to feel certain with their goals. If the job candidate as the persuader cannot convey the messages apparently and show the competence, the job recruiter as the persuadee may not have trust or confidence in him or her. To establish your credibility, using action verbs as one of the linguistic tools in English can enhance your persuasive skills to showcase your ability and previous achievements.

3.2 Persuasive English in Letters for Communication at Work

In this part, sales letters and application letters are mainly selected to analyze the persuasive features and language styles used in these two types of letters.

3.2.1 Sales Letter

According to Supaneg (2004), sales letters are letters that aim to persuade the reader to act in certain ways i.e. to donate the charities, to subscribe to magazines, and to buy products or services. Sales letters must attract attention, create interest, convince the reader, and generate calls for direct favorable action. The language used in sales letters should be vivid, clear, direct, and meaningful. The following extract is an example of persuasive language in a sales letter:

Have you ever been concerned with your health, beauty, and psychological condition? We are quite certain that every woman naturally desires to be healthy, attractive and happy. Why don't you allow your resolution to come true? Come and see us at Fountain of Youth Health Club. We have all the essentials for you to reach your goal.

(Adapted from Supaneg, 2004, p. 201)

From the extract above, it can be concluded that rhetorical questions can indicate persuasiveness. To produce the persuasive language in a sales letter, you need to begin your letter with attractive and interesting questions. As customers tend to glance through a sales letter without much attention, this will be the most important part to draw the attention of the readers in the tactfully persuasive way.

3.2.2 Application Letter

The application letters written in English may consist of the following examples of persuasive language used by the job candidates to establish their credentials:

- 1) I believe I would be an *asset* to your company.
- 2) I would welcome the chance to work as part of a small dynamic team where I could make a *significant contribution* while developing my skills yet further.
- 3) In addition to my *expertise* in ..., I also have *extensive experience* in ...
- 4) I am a *highly motivated*, *well travelled*, and *creative* graduate with *particular design experience* in a *large* company.

(Adapted from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005)

The words in italic from the examples above can be described as the *powerful words* which the job candidates employ to build their image. All these words have appeal to emotion and persuasive power. Most successful people have mastered the art of image building. They use words that create a mental image and therefore can be easily remembered and retained.

To sum up, when analyzing persuasive English in letters for communication at work, the language characteristics, for example, *The Rhetorical Questions* in sales letters, and *The Powerful Words* in application letters should be discussed. The main aim of a sales letter, as mentioned earlier, is to convince the reader and generate calls for direct favorable action. In doing so, the opening of a sales letter must be attention-getting since the question raised at the beginning may interest the reader and hold his or her attention to the end.

Powerful words, such as extensive experience or a significant contribution in the application letters can also help the job applicants create a mental image and appealing language to attract and persuade the prospective employer.

Apart from persuasive English in conversations and business letters, English is used to persuade in many areas of our lives, both in public and private. Two major public areas are politics and advertising.

3.3 Persuasive Language in Political Speeches

In influencing others to change, Hogan (2005) mentions the two terms, *conscious mind and unconscious mind*. The unconscious mind deals with now. The conscious mind deals with the future. The unconscious is rigid. The conscious mind is flexible. The unconscious mind is sensitive to negative information. The conscious mind is sensitive to positive information. The unconscious is a pattern director. The conscious is an after-the-fact checker. The unconscious mind is multisystem. The conscious mind is single system.

Because the brain develops these two substantially distinct minds, it is important to realize that both minds have typical behaviors and those behaviors are often at odds with each other. The conscious mind may want to be accurate whereas the unconscious mind wants to feel good (Hogan, 2005, p. 5).

Based on the statements above, the following are examples of political speeches that successful politicians often use to influence other people.

Example 1, George Bush (2004) delivers his speech for America as follows:

If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen, so long as I'm your president.

The next four years we will continue to strengthen our homeland defenses. We will strengthen our intelligent-gathering services. We will reform our military. The military will be an all-volunteer army.

We will continue to stay on the offense. We will fight the terrorists around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll continue to build our alliances. I'll never turn over America's national security needs to leaders of other countries, as we continue to build those alliances.

And we'll continue to spread freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that the free Iraq is in this nation's interest. I believe a free Afghanistan is in this nation's interest.

And I believe both a free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will serve as a powerful example for millions who plead in silence for liberty in the broader Middle East.

We've done a lot of hard work together over the last three and a half years. We've been challenged, and we've risen to those challenges. We've climbed the mighty mountain. I see the valley below, and it's a valley of peace.

By being steadfast and resolute and strong, by keeping our world, by supporting our troops, we can achieve the peace we all want.

I appreciate your listening tonight. I ask for your vote. And may God continue to bless our great land.

(cited in Maybin, Mercer and Hewings, 2007, pp. 59–60)

Example 2: John Howard gave his campaign and policy speech for an election in Australia in 2004.

I start by thanking the Victorian Division again for the very dedicated way in which it has set about preparing for the upcoming federal election. WE face a great challenge. Winning for the fourth time is always hard. There is always temptation to think when things are going well that the nation essentially is on autopilot and it doesn't really matter who is in charge, it will keep going well. Of course nothing could be further from the truth. And we'll face in this state, as we will around the nation, we will face a very big fight when the election is held. But the value of the strength of this division will once again be something that will be important if we are to achieve ultimate victory. I'm impressed with the quality of the candidate chosen and the sense of commitment and zeal of the division at an organizational level.

The stakes are very high. If we lose federally, there won't be a Liberal Government anywhere in Australia for the first time probably since the Party was formed in 1944. So we do carry a very heavy responsibility. But more importantly even than the responsibility we carry for the future of our party, will be the implications that that will have for the future of our nation.

And over the past two weeks in federal parliament, we have seen open up a very clear division on something that is very important, not only to the way in which the world responds to the modern and horrible threat of terrorism, but also very important to the reputation and standing of our country around the world. Australians have

always seen through until their responsibilities have been fully discharged. We may as a nation have differed and quarreled about whether we should have made the original commitment in Iraq, but I do not believe the great majority of Australians believe that at the present crucial, difficult time in the wake of the bombings Madrid, in the wake of a resurgent concern about terrorism around the world, I believe that the majority of Australians want us to go the distance and finish the job in Iraq—not separate ourselves from our allies in the United States and elsewhere.

This is not a time to be seen to be dividing the free world. Rather it is the time for nations and countries of goodwill and commitment to stand together in a united fashion. And I say that out of a sense of deep conviction. I say that in the face of an Opposition Leader who out of opportunism and populism invented a policy on a radio programme. You don't make good policy in answer to radio interviewers. You don't make good policy in the full morning flush of having read a couple of good opinion polls in a newspaper. You make policy over the long term out of consideration for what is in the best interests of our country. And it is not in the best interests of our country to cut and run from Iraq. It is the best interests of our country and in the best traditions of our country to finish the job and to see it through until the circumstances have arisen where out of proper regard for the security of Iraq and proper regard for the interests of our allies and proper regard for sending a united, unambiguous message to terrorists that we will not have our policy dictated by threats of violence and the actuality of violence in other countries. We will make our policy according to what we believe in the long-term interest of the Australian people.

(cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, pp. 53–54)

Various linguistic aspects from the examples of political speeches can be analyzed as follows:

1. The Significance of Pronouns

Beard (2007) points out that the use of pronouns in political speeches is significant.

There is obviously much more happening in the text quoted above in terms of its persuasive purpose, but it provides good introduction to one of the significant features of political rhetoric—choice of pronouns. Personal pronouns are at their most common in talk, helping to provide cohesion to the overall speech and, significantly, giving agency to actions; that is, saying who is doing something.

(cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 52)

When politician make speeches, they have two sets of pronouns. They can talk in the first person singular using *I/me/myself/mine*, or they can talk in the first person plural using *we/us/ourselves/ours*. With the latter, there are several potential meanings.

The first person plural forms when used by, for example, a government minister, can have a range of references such as:

- I plus one other (i.e. we= minister + prime minister)
- I plus a group (i.e. we= minister + government and / or political party)
- I plus the whole country (i.e. we= minister + citizens of the country)
- I plus the rest of humanity (i.e. we= minister + people everywhere).

(cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 52).

According to Beard (2007), Howard uses a number of variations. He frequently says ‘I’, often in combination with the word *believe*. When he says ‘We’ it is possible to see that sometimes this refers to himself and his ministers, sometimes to his party, sometimes to his nation as a whole. *So we do carry a very heavy responsibility* would appear to be himself and his ministers. *We will face a very big fight* is probably the party. WE may clearly refer to the whole nation.

However, the use of pronouns can cause ambiguity as follows: *I believe that the majority of Australians want us to go the distance*. This reference could be read as being specific to the party, but could refer to the nation. According to Beard (2007), this ambiguity is not damaging to the persuasive force-connecting *Party and State* can do the party a lot of good in electoral terms.

You don't make policy in answer to radio interviewers, for instance, is a further use of pronouns. Howard refers to his opponent (not by name but by title). The YOU here is not a reference to his audience but to the all-embracing anyone in general (cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 54).

In reality, politicians very often use a mixture of singular and plural pronouns, but if we analyze which one they use, can give considerable insight into what they are saying and how they want to be viewed.

2. Metaphor and Euphemism

Beard (2007) points out that metaphor and euphemism are used in Howard's speech:

The predominant metaphor of the Howard speech is 'election as war or battle' which has further resonance as he is also referring to Australia's participation in the war in Iraq taking place at that time. It is in the context of this metaphor that the use of euphemism such as cut and run and finishing the job need to be evaluated: Howard is 'fighting' an election campaign and Australia is fighting a war. The party workers in Victoria and the electorate in the country are being urged to support Howard's fight. If you reject him and his party, you are also voting for Australia to cut and run from its international responsibilities.

(cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, pp. 51-52)

3. Contrasts

Example:

This is not a time to be seen to be dividing the free world. Rather it is the time for nations and countries of goodwill and commitment to stand together in a united fashion (Howard, 2004).

Beard (2007) mentions that one of the strongest ways for a politician to accentuate the value of their own party's approach is comparing it to that of their opponents. In the example above, Howard implicitly links dividing the free world with opposition party and contrasts it with the positively evaluated trait of standing together that he is advocating. Notice that he also implies that Australia is one of the countries that can be positively evaluated as showing goodwill and commitment (cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 56).

4. Repetition

The example of repetition can be viewed from these three sentences:

1) *Australians have never cut and run;* 2) *Australians have always finished the job;* 3) *Australians have always seen through until their responsibilities have been fully discharged.* In this regard, repetition can be seen as one of the persuasive strategies. Repetition strategy can increase the effectiveness of your message. Repetition can have a positive effect on someone's reception of and agreement with a persuasive argument. In speeches or other spoken arguments that are highly emotional in nature, frequent repetition of key emotional phrases can be effective (Beard, 2007).

5. Reference to Country and National Characteristics

Beard (2007) emphasizes that John Howard puts forward a strong picture of the Australians character that leaves little space for dissenting views: *Australians have never cut and run. Australians have always finished the job. Australians have always seen through until their responsibilities have been fully discharged.* This is designed to make his audience feel good about their qualities without pausing to think whether it is a justified claim. Therefore, a picture that Australians would be likely to recognize and support is created.

Politicians try to identify with what they perceive as the positive characteristics which their electorates believe to be typical of their nation (cited in Maybin, Mercer and Hewings 2007, p. 55).

6. Collocations

Norman Fairclough (2000) examines the uses of the word 'new', 'modernise/ modernisation' and 'reform'. He looks at the collocates, which words commonly co-occur with these words and what persuasive message they are signaling.

‘New’ occurs 609 times in 53 speeches of Tony Blair’s between 1997 and 1999 (for comparison, ‘modern’ occurs 89 times, ‘modernise/modernisation’ 87 times, and ‘reform’ 143 times). The most frequent collocations are *New Labour* (72 instances) and *New Deal* (70 instances). The sense of political renewal conveyed by *New Labour* is also evident in references to a *New Politics* (4 instances) and a *New Centre and Centre-Left* (2 instances). Political renewal is linked to national renewal in the slogan *New Labour, New Britain*, first used in the 1994 Labour Party Conference. *New Britain* is quite frequent (15 examples), ‘new’ is also applied (7 times) to other international entities that Britain belongs to (e.g. ‘New Europe’, ‘New Commonwealth’), and even the world (6 instances, e.g. the ‘new world we are helping to bring into being’). Political and national renewal are linked to the ‘new times’ we live in—34 instances, including also ‘new era and new millennium’. And there is a striking number of expressions (41 instances in all) for ‘new ways of working’ in government (that phrase occurs 8 times), ‘new ways’ 15 times, and ‘new approaches’ 11 times) and new relationships associated with them (‘new partnership(s)’ occurs 13 times). Another prominent set of meanings relates to ideas and attitudes (36 instances in all, including ‘new ideas’ (7 instances) ‘new confidence’ (4 instances), ‘new sense of hope (or purpose, or urgency)’ (5 instances), and there are 20 expressions referring to ‘new opportunities’ or ‘new challenges’). Many ‘new’ Government initiatives are referred to (57 instance in all), such as the ‘new active Community Unit’, or a new National College for School Leadership’, though unlike the ‘New Deal’ the adjective ‘new’ is not part of the title (cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 73).

According to Macmillan Collocations Dictionary (2010), collocation is so important because it is a central feature of language, and whether you are speaking or writing—it is just as important as grammar. Besides, collocation contributes meaning. Most common words in English have more than one meaning, and we use the surrounding context to indicate (or work out) which meaning is intended. Collocation plays a big part in this process.

To conclude, learning the language of persuasion in political speeches in English is recommended to English language learners to familiarize themselves with the specific language features. Additionally, to study the power of the persuasive language in political speeches, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: 1) the Significance of Pronouns; 2) Metaphor and Euphemism; 3) Contrasts; 4) Repetition; 5) Reference to Country and National Characteristics; and 6) Collocations.

3.4 Persuasive Language in Advertisements

Persuasive ads tell me one thing at a time. They do not try to cram too much into one exposure. They make a point and drive it home (Lakhani, 2005, p.185).

There are many ways to persuade customers to buy your products or services, or to follow your suggestion or act in a certain way. Such methods are to run an advertisement on television, on radio, in printed materials. All of these methods aim to accomplish the same purpose, that is, to convince prospective customers to act as you would like them to do. Persuasive advertising depends on the emotional idea that our lives are in some way imperfect. We lack something or need something. If we buy the product being advertised, our lives will be better. Therefore, advertisements function is to distinguish the product from another functionally similar one.

Beard (2007) gives a very good comment on analyzing a persuasive text. The context of persuasion should be considered as the following: 1) Who is writing or speaking the text? 2) What is the text about? 3) What is the purpose? 4) What kind of text is being produced? 5) What audience is the text addressing? 6) What does the text mean to various possible readers? (cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings 2007, pp. 43-44).

The following are examples of persuasive language in advertisements:

Example 1:

The Open University in the UK uses four variants to the core phrase Open as to:

Open as to people
Open as to methods
Open as to ideas
Open as to places

(Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007, p. 47)

From example 1, the word 'open' is not only used to refer to the naming sense. What can the word 'open' mean to the readers? Presumably, it is also used to suggest that the organization is open-minded. The first letter of the word 'Open', namely the letter 'O' is persuasively presented in the big format to convince and imply that this university is really open to all aspects of studies. Four key words *people, methods, ideas, add places* are used to probably indicate the following: 1) All people gain access to opportunities to study here; 2) all methods of studying will be accepted; 3) various ideas are welcome; 4) All students from everywhere will have an equal opportunity to study.

Additionally, Lakhani (2005) suggests that persuading electronically or through technologies should rely on using metaphor and active verbs. This can grab the attention of your audience. The use of picture words and action words can describe what you want your audience to do. The more involved you can get them in the picture, the more persuaded they will be at the end of the day (Lakhani, 2005, p. 201).

Example 2:

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY-AN EXPENSIVE TALKING SHOP

NO POWER to create jobs
NO POWER to improve healthcare
NO POWER to improve our schools
NO POWER to make our streets safer
NO POWER to upgrade the A1

What an Assembly will do:

PAY BIG SALARIES TO POLITICIANS. In Scotland each gets 49,315, in Wales each get 43,283 and in London each gets 45,000-AND add-on the cost of their pensions and expenses.

PUT UP COUNCIL TAX. We will have to pay. BUILD ITSELF A NEW PALACE. The new Scottish Parliament cost 431 MILLION (the politicians said it would cost 43 million).

Who benefits?

- Politicians
- Spin doctors
- Cronies

Who loses out?

YOU
THE TAXPAYER

POLITICIANS TALK-WE PAY

YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY “NO”

VOTE NO

For more details call FREEPHONE 0800 107 0304

(Adapted from Maybin, Mercer, & Hewings 2007, p.63)

From example 2, Beard (2007) emphasizes that it is possible to find plenty of persuasive techniques on political posters. There are presentational features, such as: 1) the use of bullet points, 2) different font sizes, 3) boxes, etc.

These presentational features not only attempt to catch the eye of the reader, they also allow the producers of the text to organize what they want to say. This involves the following in sequence from top to bottom: 1) an introductory statement, 2) what the assembly will not do (i.e. have an impact on positive things), 3) what it will do (i.e. waste money), 4) two boxes which rhetorically ask who will gain (politicians or them) and who will lose (the taxpayer or us), 5) two summarizing statements. (cited in Maybin, Mercer, & Hewings 2007, p. 64).

Bovee, Thill, & Schatzman (2003) place emphasis on the aspect of *Denotation and Connotation*. The *Denotation* is literal of which meaning is explicit and specific. The connotative meaning is the implicit and associative meaning which includes all the associations and feelings evoked by the words. From the statement **YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY “NO”**, the word ‘chance’, for instance, may mean in many ways based on the perception and interpretation of the readers. The word ‘chance’ in the sentence only can literally mean that the

voter have a chance to say 'NO' and vote 'NO' against politicians. But in terms of persuading, more hidden meanings of the word 'chance' can be simultaneously found such as *If you say 'NO' and vote 'NO', you will have a greater CHANCE to reform the society, CHANCE to end this problem, or CHANCE to help other people.*

According to Beard (2004), one aspect of literary study which can be useful when looking at written advertisements is the idea of the *narrator* and *narrative point of view*.

The voice which is speaking the text can be called the *narrator* and the created reader who hears the text can be called the *ideal reader*, a reader who both understand and agrees with the message that is being put forward; so in a sense there are four levels of voices. In the example, the ideal reader is joined with the narrator in the collective *WE-We pay*. The narrator also addresses the ideal reader directly, saying *you have a chance... .* If you find the notion of ideal reader difficult, then consider that, although the text assumes the reader agrees with everything being said, the actual readers of the text did not necessarily do so—they could always vote yes instead.

(Cited in Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007: p. 64)

Narrative voices in advertising is important because the way in which advertisements have narrators who speak texts, and ideal readers who agree with what they are being told, can make a significant contribution to the emotional impact of an advertisement.

Example 3:

**The new whitening revolution
Pure Vitamin C + Melanin-Block
In just one step!**

Dark spots and skin pigmentation, a growing concern by many Asian women, are mainly caused by constant exposure to harsh UV rays resulting in overactive melanin production in the epidermis.

With this in mind, L'Oréal Skincare Laboratories has successfully formulated the latest breakthrough in whitening skincare treatment. White Perfect Double Action Concentrated Whitening Essence effectively targets pigmentation both the skin surface and in the epidermis.

**THE UNIQUE DOUBLE CHAMBERS
MELANN+BLOCK+LACTIS ACID+DERMOLISS CHAMBER**

Melanin-Block acts directly on melanogenesis and effectively reduces melanin production by -53%.

Efficient exfoliating agents: Lactic acid and Dermoliss gently exfoliate away melanin-filled dark dead cells to recover skin tone evenness, radiance and greater transparency.

**PURE VITAMIN C
CHAMBER**

Pure Vitamin C has natural properties that aggressively target brown spots and illuminate skin. In its pure form, Vitamin C is very fragile and become denatured easily, losing most of its properties. In this sophisticated isolation chamber, Vitamin CG remains untainted and will transform into pure Vitamin C upon contact.

DERMO-EXPERTISE. FROM RESEARCH TO BEAUTY.

(Adapted from Maybin, Mercer & Hewings, 2007: p. 70)

In connection with advertising English and persuasive advertising, the use of *intensifying adverbs* as one of the linguistic aspects from example 3 can be examined. According to McCarthy & O'Dell (2005), there are lots of other ways of saying *very* or *very much*. For example, we can use such as *highly*, *utterly*, *deeply*. These alternatives collocate strongly with specific words, and other combinations often sound unnatural. In example 3, the use of intensifying adverbs can be found as follows: *mainly caused by*, *effectively reduces*, *gently exfoliate*, and *aggressively target*. From these examples, intensifying adverbs refer to the combination between an adverb and an adjective to make the combined adjective more powerful and sound stronger, resulting in the creation of persuasive language in advertising English.

Bovee, Thill & Schatzman (2003) carry out an analysis of *Functional Words* and *Content Words*. Words can be divided into two main categories; *Functional Words* express relationships and have only one unchanging meaning in any given context. They include conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and pronouns. *Content Words* are multidimensional and therefore subject to various interpretations. They include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These words carry the meaning of a sentence. Both functional words and content words are necessary, but your effectiveness as a communicator depends largely on your ability to choose the right content words for your message.

The following sentence from example 3 contains many effective content words to persuade customers to be aware of the problem mentioned and finally buy the product:

Dark spots and skin pigmentation, a **growing concern** by many Asian women, are mainly caused by **constant exposure** to **harsh UV rays** resulting in **overactive melanin production** in the epidermis.

Besides, the noun phrase *Dark Dead Cells* from the example can be one aspect of the persuasive language to be lastly discussed in this part. The words ‘dark’ and ‘dead’ sharing the same initial letter of which sound is pronounced exactly the same are used and grouped together to modify the word *cells*. In terms of persuasion, the cells are depicted as so dark and so dead that any Asian woman who is reading this commercial advertisement may concern about her face and irresistibly purchase the product. So, creating charming words by putting words having the first letter in common or consisting of similar sounds together can also enhance and foster the persuasive and powerful language.

To summarize, language has a powerful influence over people and their behaviour. This is especially true in the fields of marketing and advertising. The choice of language to convey specific messages with the intention of influencing

people is important. Visual content and design in advertising have a very great impact on the consumer, but it is language that helps people to identify a product and remember it. The English language is known for its extensive vocabulary. The target audience is likely to put its own meaning into certain words. Different people sometimes interpret language in different ways. Therefore, such linguistic features as *denotation and connotation*, *functional words and content words*, and *the use of intensifying adverbs* are presented in this part to illustrate how persuasive language in advertisements is created.

3.5 Using Proverbs and Idioms in English to Persuade

In this final part, persuasive proverbs and idioms in the English language will be mentioned and illustrated which roles they have for persuading. In fact, there are many reasons to use proverbs and idioms to persuade people. For one thing, proverbs and idioms are powerfully persuasive. In addition, they can cause us to believe the truth of something. Finally, they can provide arguments, factual statements, and empirical evidences.

The following examples are proverbs and idioms in English which have persuasive meanings:

- 1) *No pain, no gain*: It is used for saying that you have to work hard if you want to achieve something.
- 2) *Clothes make the man or Fine feathers make fine birds*: These two proverbs mean that people will judge you according to the way you dress.
- 3) Hold your head high / Hold up your head: To be proud of or not feel ashamed about something that you have done (Oxford Dictionary, 2005, p. 717).
- 4) Stand on your own (two) feet: To be dependent and able to take care of yourself (Oxford Dictionary, 2005, p. 603)

As the word ‘persuasive’ means *capable of convincing and having the power to induce action or belief*, the persuasive proverbs and idioms mentioned above consequently have their function and capability to convince or to get other people to do what you want them to do.

In short, the use of English proverbs and idioms is one successful way to indirectly persuade other people. In terms of persuading, the use of persuasive proverbs and idioms can cause other people to believe the truth of something or to take actions if their meanings are related to strong arguments and empirical facts.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As an academic and a researcher for English language teaching, you are supposed to analyze and examine the aspects of language use and language phenomenon to understand *how English is used to persuade*. At present, English curriculums offer such courses as *English for Public Speaking, How to deliver a Speech in English, and so on*. In this regard, English studies and persuasion inevitably relate to each other. In terms of the research recommendations and pedagogical implications, the linguistics characteristics presented in this article can be discussed as follows:

1) Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions can be understood as one of the persuasive language devices. Some examples of rhetorical questions are as follows: *What better way is there for children to learn about water safety? Who can deny the advantages of such a choice? Do you want the best for your children?* Discussing rhetorical questions in class is recommended. Learners of English should be taught how to form such rhetorical questions in class to enhance the skills in persuasiveness for speaking and writing.

2) The action verbs

Action verbs are verbs that show the performance of an action. In terms of persuasion, they can be described as powerful words. To persuade, we have to consider the emotive power of the words we use to make a decision about what to communicate and what to withhold. Teaching action verbs in English class can

foster the learners' skills to speak and write persuasively. This means that the learners should be taught to appropriately use and select powerful words.

3) *The significance of pronouns*

The pronouns in English like "I" or "We" should be emphasized by instructors of English to make the learners aware of the significance of pronouns in relation to the different meaning, the intention of use, and the specific use of suitable words, especially when giving a speech in the public. For example, if the speaker wants to encourage people at large, the following things should be considered: a) Which pronoun can make the audience feel better? b) Which pronoun can be best used to persuade them to take actions?

4) *Metaphor, Euphemism, Contrasts, and Repetition*

These four terms can be grouped together as persuasive devices. If someone uses metaphor, he or she uses a word in a way that is slightly different from its basic meaning. Learners of English should study metaphor when persuading. For instance, the word 'light' may be associated with happiness. In contrast, the word 'darkness' in English may be associated with unhappiness and negative feelings. So, studying metaphor in English is crucial for persuasive communication.

Euphemism is an indirect word or phrase that is often used to refer to something embarrassing or sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is. When considering this definition, it is clear that this linguistic device enables the persuasive speaker to avoid using inappropriate words and replace them by euphemistic words.

To indirectly appeal to the audience for action, differentiating and contrasting good and bad points have a great impact on a request for people to do or behave in a particular way. This is because rational opinion will make it possible to find out what are those differences. As an English learner, showing

persuasive language based on *contrast* can lead him or her to be recognized as a successful language learner.

In stimulating the emotions of the audience, repetition can be one successful persuasion strategy by stressing the word repeatedly. As mentioned in part 4, the Australian politician employs this strategy to repeat the word to make his speech powerful: 1) *Australians have never cut and run*; 2) *Australians have always finished the job*. From the examples, one way to develop the skills of learners, especially in L2-context is that we can use such sentences as a learning pattern to have learners practice and learn similar patterns. In this regard, when considering the situation of Thai learners, they may give a speech for Thailand by beginning all the sentences with the same word, namely Thailand, and repeat it many times.

5) *Collocations*

It cannot be denied that collocations play a vital role for persuasive speaking and writing. When persuading, we need to be rational and express our strong arguments. In doing so, using collocations is the way to persuasively communicate as collocations enable us to show our strong arguments. Some collocations can create powerful language: *I entirely agree with you on the question of nuclear waste*. From this example, we can see that the word *agree* collocates with the word *entirely* to make the word stronger and more emotional. Hence, as English language learners, we should understand the principles of the proper use of collocations and know how to use them in the persuasive way.

6) *Denotation and connotation and the use of content words*

As mentioned in the third part of this article, the *denotation* is literal of which meaning is explicit and specific. The *connotative meaning* is the implicit and associative meaning which includes all the associations and feelings evoked by the words. It can lead to various interpretations as most content words contain both connotative and denotative meanings. This should be the ability of the persuader to choose the right content word.

English language learners should place an emphasis on these two terms to study the explicit and implicit meaning of words when conveying the persuasive messages. To offer an activity in class, teachers can show a picture of a red rose, for instance, and let learners think of the connotation. One possible answer can be that it is a symbol of passion and love – this is what the rose represents.

7) *The use of intensifying adverbs*

The intensifying adverbs are used to intensify the human feeling, the meaning, and the emotional content. Intensifiers often suggest to the other person what to feel. These several examples of Intensifiers should be discussed and further studied to examine the degree of feeling and emotion of the audience based on the qualitative data: a) *That is a bit interesting*; b) *That is quite interesting*; c) *That is very interesting*; d) *That is very, very interesting*; e) *That is extremely interesting*. It should be noted that the word *quite* and *a bit* show the reducing intensity whereas the word *extremely* indicates the extreme response. This process of study is apparently related to the persuasion.

8) *The use of proverbs and idioms*

Proverbs and idioms can directly and indirectly indicate the real intention and the hidden meanings that persuasive writers and speakers aim to express. When persuading, speaking in the public, or delivering a speech, both proverbs and idioms are part of them. Proverbs and idioms can be associated with the picture language. It is said that, a picture is worth a thousand words. As a result, proverbs and idioms should be inevitably used as a persuasive linguistic tool. Proverbs and idioms should be taught in the English classroom to foster the persuasion skills of learners. The instructors of English should emphasize persuasive proverbs and idioms. It is also worth conducting a research study on this topic or comparing the persuasive proverbs and idioms in English with the ones in Thai.

Apart from the linguistic aspects discussed in this article, there are other aspects related to persuasive English that the writer does not focus on and mention. One of them is the use of compound words. Some examples of these compounds which have become part of the Advertising English are: *top-quality*, *economy-size*, *chocolate-flavoured*, *feather-light*, and *longer-lasting*. This aspect is also suggested for further studies.

Persuasion in its various linguistic forms enters our life daily. Politician and the news media attempt to change or confirm our belief. Persuasion reaches us via a large number of genres. With the globalization of business and professional communication, various studies on language and persuasion based on cultural and cross-cultural business discourse have been conducted to understand the power and strategies of business transactions through persuasive language. Additionally, as persuasive texts represent aspects of the society from which they emerge, cultural dimensions can be a vital role to fully understand the real intention of the produced texts. In other words, how we read a text mainly depends upon its own cultural cues and context.

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