

Network Marketing Within the Commercial Discourse System: Linguistic Strategies and Mechanisms of Pragmatic Influence

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Abstract: In the discourse of network marketing, central roles are played by key lexemes with positive connotations, such as "freedom," "financial independence," "personal growth," and "opportunity." Within this communicative environment, the seller positions themselves not as a salesperson, but as a "business consultant" or "mentor." This strategy of linguistic masking serves to reduce the customer's natural defensive reaction toward making a purchase. The texts frequently employ inclusive speech formulas, such as "You deserve this" or "Change your life," which are specifically designed to foster engagement and involve the addressee in the interaction process.

Keywords: Network marketing, online, commercial discourse, digital communication, theoretical foundations, functional features.

Introduction: In contemporary linguistics, the discourse of Multi-Level Marketing (MLM) represents one of the most sophisticated forms of manipulative and motivational communication. This discourse fundamentally diverges from traditional commercial interactions through its specific linguistic architecture and psychological influence mechanisms. Rather than merely promoting a product, MLM discourse serves as a specialized communicative system designed to sell the concept of a "successful lifestyle" and recruit new participants. Its theoretical foundation is built upon strategies of persuasion and euphemization—the systematic replacement of negative or neutral concepts with highly positive, aspirational terminology. Furthermore, the complexity of MLM discourse lies in its multimodal integration, where verbal structures are reinforced by non-verbal semiotic codes. In this communicative environment, linguistic choices are meticulously calibrated to construct a "parallel reality" where financial risk is reframed as "investment in self-growth," and the traditional employer-employee hierarchy is masked by the terminology of

"partnership" and "mentorship." This semantic shift is not merely stylistic; it is a pragmatic tool used to dismantle the recipient's cognitive resistance.

A critical feature of this discourse is the asymmetry of the communicative act. While the speaker (the recruiter) presents the interaction as a collaborative dialogue, the underlying intent remains strictly instrumental—the expansion of a hierarchical structure. Consequently, MLM communication utilizes what scholars term "emotive contagion," leveraging high-frequency positive lexemes to trigger an affective response that overrides logical analysis.

METHOD

The necessity of investigating MLM discourse within the framework of linguopragmatics arises from the rapid digitalization of commercial interactions. In the digital era, these manipulative strategies have migrated to social media platforms and automated systems (chatbots), where they undergo further transformation. This research aims to:

1. Deconstruct the lexical-semantic field of

"success" within Uzbek and international MLM texts.

2. Analyze the role of illocutionary acts, specifically focusing on how "directives" (commands to join or buy) are disguised as "commissives" (promises of future wealth).

3. Evaluate the impact of digital mediation on the effectiveness of motivational skripts and algorithmic communication.

By synthesizing these elements, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of the linguistic markers that define MLM discourse as a distinct, high-impact variant of contemporary commercial communication.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of MLM discourse occupies a significant place in discourse analysis and linguopragmatics. As V.I. Karasik posits, the category of "persuasion" is the cornerstone of institutional communication, particularly in commercial texts where the goal is to align the interlocutor's will with the speaker's objective [1]. P. Charaudeau further explores this by highlighting "intimization" strategies—the creation of an artificial sense of personal closeness to bypass the receiver's critical filters [2].

In the context of Uzbek linguistics, Sh. Safarov emphasizes that the effectiveness of such discourse depends on the speaker's strategic linguistic selection [3]. A. Kuchiboev adds that the pragmatic power of commercial texts resides in their implicit layers, where words like "partnership" or "mentor" carry heavy motivational and manipulative loads far beyond their dictionary definitions [4].

The effectiveness of network marketing discourse is deeply rooted in the speaker's ability to navigate the complex relationship between linguistic form and pragmatic intent. In the context of Uzbek linguistics,

Professor Sh. Safarov emphasizes that the success of any communicative act—particularly within the commercial sphere—is fundamentally determined by the speaker's strategic linguistic selection [3]. This suggests that in MLM (Multi-Level Marketing) interactions, the choice of a specific lexeme is never accidental; rather, it is a deliberate act of "verbal maneuvering" designed to align the interlocutor's cognitive state with the speaker's commercial goals.

Expanding on this pragmatic foundation, A. Kuchiboev posits that the true "pragmatic power" of commercial texts does not lie in their surface-level, denotative meanings, but within their implicit layers and subtextual nuances [4]. In MLM discourse, high-value concepts such as "partnership" (hamkorlik) or "mentor" (ustoz) are utilized as persuasive triggers.

While their dictionary definitions imply mutual benefit and guidance, within the pragmatic framework of network marketing, these terms carry heavy motivational and manipulative loads. For instance:

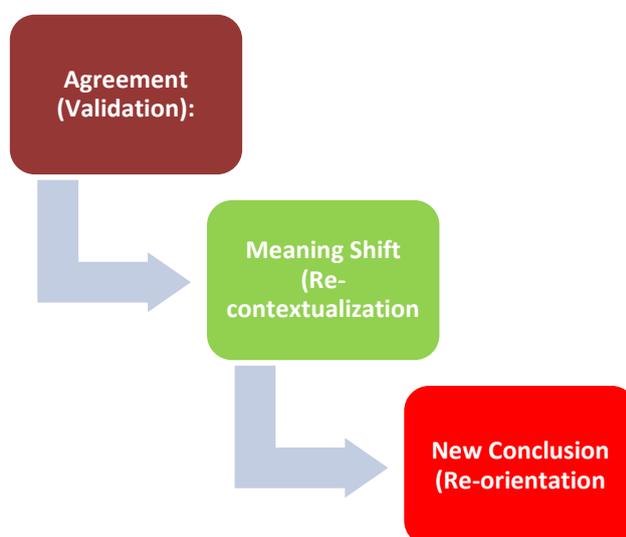
1. The term "Partnership" is strategically employed to dissolve the hierarchical boundary between "seller" and "buyer," creating a false sense of horizontal equality.

2. The term "Mentor" transforms a commercial recruiter into a spiritual or professional guide, thereby increasing the level of trust and reducing the listener's natural skepticism.

Consequently, as Kuchiboev argues, the pragmatic impact is achieved not by what is said explicitly, but by the associative auroras these words create in the mind of the addressee, effectively turning language into a tool for social and psychological engineering.

RESULTS

In the discourse of network marketing, the reframing strategy operates through a structured three-stage process:



1. Agreement (Validation): At this initial stage, the speaker does not contradict the customer's objection. Instead, they use linguistic markers of agreement (e.g., "You are right," "I understand your concern") to neutralize the listener's defensive barrier and establish a common communicative ground.

2. Meaning Shift (Re-contextualization): This is the core of the strategy, where the speaker shifts the semantic focus of the objection. By using metaphors or analogous reasoning, the "negative" concept is moved into a different conceptual field (e.g., shifting "Price" to "Investment" or "Selling" to "Recommendation").

3. New Conclusion (Re-orientation): In the final stage, based on the shifted meaning, a new pragmatic conclusion is drawn. The speaker uses directive or rhetorical speech acts to lead the customer to a logical decision that aligns with the network's goals (e.g., "Therefore, this is not a cost, but the first step toward your freedom").

Linguistic Strategies and Conceptual Framework

Central to MLM discourse are "anchor lexemes" with potent positive connotations: freedom, financial independence, personal growth, and opportunity. A key strategy is linguistic masking, where the seller assumes the role of a "business consultant" or "mentor." This role-play minimizes the customer's natural defensive reaction. Common inclusive formulas like "You deserve this" or "Change your life" are not mere suggestions but directive speech acts intended to foster collective identification.

Furthermore, the discourse employs a unique corporate jargon (status, diamond director, bonus points), which creates a sense of an "exclusive elite." The pervasive use of the collective "We" serves to dissolve individual critical thinking, subordinating it to the "network will." The strategic deployment of "anchor lexemes" functions as a cognitively-priming mechanism, pre-setting the interlocutor's mind to receive subsequent information through a filter of optimism. Terms like financial independence or lifestyle freedom act as ideological polysemes—words that are intentionally vague yet universally attractive, allowing the listener to project their own personal desires onto the speaker's generic promises.

1. The Pragmatics of Role-Masking

Linguistic masking extends beyond the simple assumption of a "mentor" persona; it involves a sophisticated re-categorization of the communicative event. By framing a sales pitch as a "coaching session" or a "strategy meeting," the speaker successfully shifts the discourse from a transactional domain (buying and selling) to an educational/transformational domain. In

this framework, the use of mitigation strategies—such as "I'm not here to sell you anything, I'm here to share an opportunity"—serves to neutralize the listener's psychological reactance. This is a classic example of a disguised directive, where the ultimate goal of recruitment is hidden beneath the illocutionary force of an offer of assistance.

2. Discourse of Exclusivity and Group Identity

The corporate jargon of MLM (e.g., Double Diamond, Executive President) functions as a socio-linguistic boundary marker. It creates a distinct "in-group" vs. "out-group" dichotomy. For the uninitiated, these titles represent a path to social elevation; for the members, they reinforce a hierarchical identity that demands linguistic and behavioral conformity. The pervasive use of the collective "We" is complemented by the deictic shift, where "Your goals" are subtly merged into "Our mission." This linguistic fusion effectively dissolves the individual's boundary, making any criticism of the network feel like self-criticism.

3. Strategic Euphemization and Reframing

A pivotal conceptual framework in this discourse is the systematic reframing of negative variables. In MLM texts, "failure" is linguistically re-encoded as a "learning curve," and "rejection" is presented as a "stepping stone to success." This ensures that the participant remains within the communicative circuit, regardless of objective outcomes. By controlling the lexicon of success and failure, the discourse creates a closed semantic loop where the only possible linguistic outcome for the participant is continued persistence or "growth."

Pragmatic Analysis of Communicative Scripts and Reframing

The success of MLM discourse often relies on "reframing"—the linguistic reinterpretation of a customer's objections. Below is an analysis of typical communicative scripts:

1. Redefining the Model: When faced with the "pyramid scheme" objection, the speaker shifts the focus from the structure to the merit: "A pyramid is a traditional civil service where only the top wins; here, your results depend on your effort." This is a strategy of re-interpretation.

2. Time as Investment: The objection of "no time" is flipped using paradoxical logic: "You must start this business precisely so that you will have time. Are you selling your time or investing it?" This moves the concept of time from "expenditure" to "asset."

3. Value vs. Price: High prices are justified by shifting the focus from the monetary cost to the ontological essence of the product: "You are not buying

shampoo; you are buying health. How much do you value your health?" This rhetorical question utilizes a "guilt-trigger" to neutralize price sensitivity.

4. Euphemization of Sales: To avoid the negative associations of "selling," the discourse uses the term "recommendation": "We don't sell; we simply recommend what we love, just like a good movie." This is a classic example of linguistic euphemization.

Linguocultural Specifics in the Uzbek Context

In the Uzbek communicative environment, MLM discourse integrates seamlessly with national values and religious-ethical concepts. Terms like "halol rizq" (lawful sustenance), "baraka" (blessings), and "Insha'Allah" serve as "trust keys." These units increase the perceived reliability of the transaction, transforming a commercial deal into a "moral alliance." The use of "success stories" of "ordinary people" (e.g., "An ordinary housewife earning 10 million") utilizes antithesis (poverty vs. wealth) to break the listener's skepticism through the "If they can do it, so can you" logic.

CONCLUSION

The pragmatic nature of network marketing discourse transcends simple economic exchange. It is a carefully engineered linguistic construct that targets psychological triggers through precise word selection. By transforming the "consumer" into a "partner" and "price" into "investment," MLM discourse effectively reconfigures the listener's worldview. The integration of global marketing strategies with local linguocultural markers creates a powerful persuasive mechanism that defines the modern landscape of commercial speech in Uzbekistan.

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