

“The Linguistic Analysis of Advertising Slogans”

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Abstract – The work provides the analysis of language of advertising from linguistic point of view and specifies linguistic means used in advertising texts. The work brings knowledge about the use of linguistic devices in print advertising. By analytical method, author found out the use rate of individual linguistic means used in advertising slogans, even in relation to product specialization.

Key words: advertising, advertising slogan, language of advertising, communication, linguistic means.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising has become the part and parcel of present-day life. From everywhere around us, advertisements of diverse types attack our privacy. In spite of it, there is an attractive power, which is able to manipulate the consumer; an invisible voice of advertisement advocates, encourages, asks, announces and deeply embeds into peoples' minds.

In last decades, the market glut of advertising caused the increased intention and interest in linguistic aspect of advertising. Advertising has become a science. People began to describe, analyze the linguistic means and evaluate the language trying to find out the principles, create new kinds of relationship between elements of language and improve the techniques, with the aim to be unique and maximize the effect at full blast.

Who might be interested in advertising language? Advertising texts are of great value for the analyses from linguistic, sociologist, sociolinguistic, psychological, ethnologic and last but not least marketing point of view. Linguists are interested in language of advertising because they want to know how particular language works in this type of discourse, which linguistic means are used here and how advertising language is changing in the course time. Sociologists may be interested in the fact, how advertising influences the values, attitudes and behaviour of the society. On the other hand, sociolinguists may study the effects of any aspect of society on the way language is used in advertising in the course of time. Psychologists may try to examine the effect of the advertising on human mind and motivation to fulfill material and social needs. Ethnology may find in this field a good evidence of how the culture of the nation has been developing. And marketing experts and advertising agencies are interested in the

language of advertising to find the tricks how to make advertising more effective.

English advertising exploits from the high adaptability of the English language. English enables the creators of advertisements to use word puns, figurative language, and to mix individual styles and types of texts. Advertising unifies language, pictures, music; it contains information, invokes emotions and imaginations, it can capture all five senses and, besides it, it has social and practical aim. As a genre, it seems very diversified. There is often an interference of styles and registers; therefore, it is often very difficult to classify advertising stylistically. In the diploma thesis, we will show various aspects and forms of advertising discourse.

Advertising is an inevitable part of our modern capitalist consumer society whose outstanding feature is its competitive fight. "...advertising is not some external curiosity which we examine, from which we are separate and superior, but something of which we are part, and which is part of us..." (Cook 1996: 182). It is everywhere around us: in newspapers, in magazines, on billboards along the streets, on television, in radio, in means of public transport and any place the sponsor pays to distribute their message. The effects of the advertising influence us whether we like it or not.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

"Advertising, generally speaking, is the promotion of goods, services, companies and ideas, usually performed by an identified sponsor.

1. "The activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print,

broadcast, or electronic media.

2. The business of designing and writing advertisements.

3. Advertisements considered as a group: *This paper takes no advertising.* Advertisement is a concrete manifestation of advertising; “a paid public announcement appearing in the media.”

Slogan is “a word or phrase that is easy to remember, used for example by a political party or in advertising to attract people’s attention or to suggest an idea quickly.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2001).

The concept of slogan is used among authors of books about advertising in various ways. Advertising layout is divided into several parts: headline, body copy (the main part of the advertising message, often divided into subheads), signature line (a mention of a brand-name, often accompanied by a price-tag, slogan or trade-mark) and standing details (e.g. the address of the firm). In this understanding, slogan is not identified with headline and vice versa and the term is used in narrow sense. However, Greg Myers (Myers 1997) uses the term ‘slogan’ in larger sense - for any catchy phrase, what a headline definitely is. In many cases, the boundaries between slogan and headline disappear. For that reason, we will accept the second idea and will use the term ‘slogan’ in broader sense.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

With the form of advertising, we could meet in the marketplaces, where the sellers used to shout and extol their products. In the course of time, people more and more tried to differentiate their products and began to find out new ways of presenting. They started to accentuate the visual aspect of the advertisement. With the expansion of colour printing and colourful posters the streets began to revel in colours. These posters were ancestors to our modern billboards.

As the economy and the trade were expanding during the 19th century, the need for advertising grew. Gradually, advertising transformed into a modern, more scientific and sophisticated conception. New visual techniques have been launched. Not only the content of the message is important, but also the form. The creativity of copywriters, who are finding new ways, leads to the richness of various forms of advertising.

The information communicated by the advertisement is not discussing everything about the product. It is incomplete because there is no space enough to describe the product into details. The information only contains what the

producer thinks the consumer needs to know. It always contains the name of the product and usually the information how it can benefit the customer.

Angela Goddard emphasizes the idea of narrator and narratees. She says that the writer is the person who constructs the text in reality (in advertising texts, the real writers are the copywriters and artists who work in an advertising agency’s creative department), while the narrator is the storyteller within the text. Copywriters can construct all sorts of different narrators to convey to us the message, for example, a female writer can construct a male narrator, or an adult writer can construct a child narrator: “ ‘She’s got more than me, mum.’ ”

Narratees are, on the other hand, people who appear to being addressed. In fact, in advertising communication a narratee is not a certain person, but at least a target group, or a whole public. In most cases of advertising, we use verbal language for express ideas often accompanied by a picture or symbol, music, some kind of computer animation or video related to the verbal text.

Verbal language is concerned with words; it is not a synonym for oral or spoken language. Non-verbal (wordless) message can be sent or received “through any sensory channel - visual perception, sound, smell, touch, taste; through gesture, body language or posture, facial expressions and eye gaze; object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture; symbols and infographics; prosodic features of speech such as intonation and stress and other paralinguistic features of speech such as voice quality, emotion and speaking style” Text is a structured unit consisting of smaller units. It is “a stretch of language which makes coherent sense in the context of its units. It may be spoken or written; it may be as long as a book or as short as a cry for help.”

Advertising, if we mean the verbal one, is a type of text. We can find advertising texts in printed materials or, in spoken form, broadcasted by radio or TV. In printed advertising, the text may serve only for catching the reader’s attention, provide information about the product or serve as an anchorage (the link between the image and its context; some guidance to the reader) for the image. Leech in his book (Leech 1972) writes, that the language of advertising belongs to so called ‘loaded language’. Wikipedia defines it as “the writing or speech, which implies an accusation of demagoguery or of pandering to the audience.” Leech says that loaded language has the aim to change the will, opinions, or attitudes of its audience. He claims that advertising differs from other types of loaded language (such as political journalism and religious oratory) in having a very precise material goal – changing the mental disposition to reach the desired kind of behavior – buying a

particular kind of product.

To persuade people to buy the product is the main purpose of the advertising. Among such great competition, the producer wants to demonstrate the uniqueness of his product. He wants to differentiate it from the rest. He is trying to find new techniques of advertisement. Also, the advertisement texts must be more attractive and more unexpected. They must catch the attention of the audience and then identify the product. Copywriters create uncommon, surprising, interesting texts with catchy slogans or phrases. The reader or listener must give it some thought and the result is manipulation with him in order to buy the product. Leech sets following principles of advertising texts: Attention value, Readability (by means of simple, personal, and colloquial style), Memorability (most important in the process of advertising is to remember the name of the product) and Selling power (Leech 1972). The last principle is crucial. David Ogilvy (Ogilvy 1985) in his book says: "I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative'. I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product*."

HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

1. What is the percentage of slogans containing ellipsis?
2. What is the percentage of slogans containing phrasal verb?
3. What is the percentage of slogans containing parallelism?
4. On the basis of observation of the research sample, we suppose, that the most widely used sentence type is the imperative sentence type and the second most widely used is the declarative sentence type.
5. On the basis of Leech's ideas (p. 30 of this work) we suppose, that the most widely used auxiliary verbs are 'can' and 'will'.
6. On the basis of observation of the research sample, we suppose, that the majority of verbs is finite.
7. On the basis of Leech's ideas (p. 30 of this work) we suppose, that the majority of finite verbs is in present simple form (due of timelessness of present tense) and the second are future forms of verbs (due to promise something).
8. On the basis of observation of the research sample, we suppose, that the majority of slogans are of third person omniscient narrator.
9. Because of the fact, that advertisements usually describe qualities that can be measured in degrees, we suppose that the majority of adjectives are gradable.
10. On the basis of observation of the research sample, we suppose, that after basic form of adjectives (majority) the second most widely used form is comparative form.

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