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A STUDY ON THE LINGUISTIC MEANS USED IN ADVERTISEMENT

A Study on the Linguistic Means Used In Advertisement

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Abstract – Advertising traces its history back to ancient times. First forms of advertising messages were transferred by word of mouth, however, in the ruins of Pompeii commercial messages and election campaign displays have been found. Egyptians used Papyrus to create sales messages and wall posters, while in Greece and Rome lost-and-found advertising on papyrus was common. Wall or rock painting for commercial advertising is another manifestation of an ancient media advertising form, which is present to this day in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America.

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 colorful posters the streets began to revel in colors. These posters were ancestors to our modern billboards.

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INTRODUCTION

First we wrote out the advertising slogans and collected the research material. Once completed the list of slogans, we made a linguistic analysis of them and determined the linguistic means used in each of them. We made an overall observation and stated questions and hypotheses. Then we produced a table of attributes for exact enumeration of linguistic means.

Each linguistic expression has its literal meaning. Literal meaning **denotes** what it means according to common or dictionary usage (or more exactly, what "the reader is most likely to assign to a word or phrase if he or she knows nothing about the context in which it is to be used." The same linguistic expression, however, may have also its figurative meaning. It **connotes** additional layers of meaning and evokes associations; for example, the word 'professional' has connotations of skill and excellence. It is not possible to give an exhaustive account of the connotations of the expression, because connotative meanings, which have been evoked in an individual, depend on people's entire previous experiences and on conventions of community. Therefore, the connotations of the same expression will differ slightly from person to person. Furthermore, the same denotations can have different connotations in different context. Vestergaard and Schroder believe that in advertising language, the most frequent word for 'acquisition of product' is 'get', and not 'buy', because 'buy' has some unpleasant connotations, like 'money' and the parting with it.

For people, associations are very powerful, so the advertisers pay attention to this aspect of language. They play with colors, because colors may have various positive or negative connotations: innocence / snow / ice / race, and others for white; passion / blood / stop signal /fire for red; etc. They must be careful about the target group, because each culture may have different connotations to the same expressions: in Chinese and Indian tradition, white is the color of mourning, death, and ghosts. In India, white also stands for peace and purity. Red colour in Eastern European countries may have slightly negative connotation in relation to the identification of communism with "socialist" red.

A **trope** is "a word or phrase that is used in a way that is different from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental image or effect." It is a figurative expression. In this part, we give a list of most important tropes used in advertising language: personification, simile, hyperbole, metaphor and metonymy. In relation to semantic aspect of language, we define also antithesis, polysemy, and homonymy.

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.

A collocation is "a combination of words in a language, that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance." Collocations are used in advertisements, however often without any deviation or play on words and for the reader it is often imperceptible. We offer here an example of and advertisement with the use of deviated collocation:

"Do you believe in *love at first touch*?"

The original collocation sounds 'love at first sight', but this advertisement emphasizes a "sleek stainless steel body" of a mobile phone.

Advertising texts take advantage of using made-up or adapted words and expressions in order to support the creative aspect of advertisement and its attraction. In the text, of course, occur words formed by affixation, compounding, conversion, shortening, blending, and back-formation and by other ways of creating new words.

The readers even needn't notice such words, because they sound familiar and ordinary to them. However, if a new word is 'deviated' (it is accommodated somehow to the context of the advertising text), it becomes striking and interesting for the reader. Let us introduce you a few examples: We can find new words and phrases formed by **compounding**. Very striking feature of advertising language is a variety of "lexical units, where each unit is consisting of two or more bases (roots)" (Kvetko 2001) They are called compound words. A compound word may be characterized by its inseparability (it cannot be interrupted by another word), semantic unity, morphological and syntactic functioning and certain phonetically and graphic features.

Examples of compounds are: breakfast, hard-working, double-click, within, fine-tune, airship, world-wide, etc. Compounds may be of two types: coordinative (south-west) and subordinative. Subordinative compounds are divided into 1.

Germanic type = determinant + determinatum e.g. highway and French type = determinatum + determinant e.g. snow-white.

The creativity of copywriters goes beyond the normal frequency of compounds used in other types of discourse. Because of the intentions to render in best possible way the product, various compounds are used and created e.g. good-as-homemade, Jus-Rol, pain-relieving, state-of-the-art, hand-crafted, head-to-toe, one-of-a-kind, platinum-inlayed, all-new, front-facing, touch-sensitive, built-in.

The aim of advertising is to be catchy and easy to remember. One of the devices how copywriters can reach it is to use prosodic features – intonation, rhythm and lexical stress - because they have a great emotional and mnemonic effect. Even the scientists cannot explain why has rhythm and repetition so powerful attraction on human mind. Some suggest that it recalls the regular sound of the mother's heartbeat in the womb or other compare it to the dances of ritual magic that they have an enhancing effect on neuronal circuits in the brain (Newman 1986).

Copywriters often use language with rhythmical arrangement. The listener or reader need not notice it and he perceives it only subconsciously. The result is, that the text is memorable and linguistically neat. If the rhythm has some regularity, it is called metre. "Metre is a pattern composed of rhythm groups (feet) consisting of similar or identical patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. (…) Metrical scheme may easily pass unnoticed.)" (Leech 1972. English poetry has various types of metrical feet. Among the most important belong **an iamb** (an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable), **a trochee** (a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one), **a dactyl** (a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables), **a spondee** (consisting of two stressed syllables), **a pyrrhic** (two unstressed syllables), and **an anapest** (two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one).

THE AIMS OF RESEARCH

The aim of practical research analysis is to determine the use rate of linguistic means used in advertising slogans, even in relation to product specialization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

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 behaviour – 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.*"

We may identify the advertising as a type of discourse, because "it can tell us a good deal about our own society and our own psychology (…) Discourse is text and context together." (Cook 1996). We could analyze the whole discourse of advertising, it means "the interaction of all elements that participate in advertising discourse: participants, function, substance, pictures, music, a society, paralanguage, language, a situation, other advertising and other discourse." Although such analysis would be complete, it would be very difficult to elaborate it in such limited space. For that reason, in this work we will analyze the language of advertising from the linguistic, especially phonological, lexical and morphological, syntactic and semantic point of view. We will provide examples and describe the most commonly used linguistic devices and figures of speech in advertising printed text.

According to Geoffrey Leech (Leech 1972), most frequent and important type of the advertising is "**'commercial consumer advertising'**: advertising directed towards a mass audience with the aim of promoting sales of a commercial product or service. It is the kind which uses most money, professional skill, and advertising space in this country." ('this country', here: Great Britain). Example: "Plump it up. New volume boost liquid lip colour. Paints lips with a high shine lacquer finish. Feel the tingling sensation as formula begins to work."

Another type of commercial advertising is **'prestige advertising'**. Here the name and the positive image of the company are advertised rather than a product or a service. Example: "The America's Cup: the oldest and most coveted trophy in the world of sailing. Its organizers have entrusted once again the vital timing of the races to Omega, a company whose experience in watch-making and sports timekeeping dates back over 150 years…to the very origins of the America's Cup itself."

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

1. 20 % of all slogans (54/270) contains ellipsis, it means that on average a fifth of slogans uses ellipsis.

2. 7 % of all slogans (18/270) contains phrasal verb, it means that on average a fifteenth of slogans uses phrasal verb.

3. 11 % of all slogans (29/270) contains parallelism, it means that on average a ninth of slogans uses parallelism.

4. Our assumption was not correct. The most widely used sentence type is not the imperative one, as we supposed, but the declarative one (120/227). The second are imperatives (85/227), then interrogatives (22/227). There were 130 noun phrases in research sample. Exclamative sentences did not occur in the sample, although exclamations occurred.

CONCLUSION

In the theoretical part, we approached advertising as a type of communication between producer and consumer of the product. We analyzed and described basic principles of advertising printed texts. The theoretical part of the diploma thesis provided an analysis of language of advertising and served as a basis for the research part. To be able to make analysis of slogans in such extent, we had to include all the aspects of language – from phonological to semantic aspect.

We observed that the informal style of advertising language predominates over the formal style. We found the formal style of writing only in scientific and business types of magazines. In scientific magazines, there occurred advertisements for a specific group of people – scientists, doctors, physicists; the vocabulary was technical and incomprehensible for common people. The linguistic means were the same in all types of magazines.

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