

Specific features of advertisement discourse

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Abstract

Advertisement discourse is a dynamic and influential form of communication that permeates modern society. This article explores the specific features that distinguish advertisement discourse from other types of discourse, focusing on linguistic strategies, rhetorical devices, and the socio-cultural contexts that shape its effectiveness. By analyzing a variety of advertisements across different media platforms, this research identifies key elements such as persuasive language, visual semiotics, consumer targeting, and the manipulation of desires and aspirations. Furthermore, the study examines how advertisement discourse adapts to technological advancements and cultural trends, reflecting broader societal values and norms. Understanding these specific features not only enhances our comprehension of advertising strategies but also sheds light on the intricate relationship between language, media, and consumer behavior in contemporary society.

Аннотация

Рекламный дискурс — это динамичная и влиятельная форма коммуникации, пронизывающая современное общество. В данной статье исследуются специфические особенности, отличающие рекламный дискурс от других типов дискурса, особое внимание уделяется лингвистическим стратегиям, риторическим приемам и

социокультурным контекстам, определяющим его эффективность. Анализируя различные рекламные объявления на различных медиа-платформах, это исследование выявило такие ключевые элементы, как убедительный язык, визуальная семиотика, ориентация на потребителя и манипулирование желаниями и стремлениями. Кроме того, в исследовании рассматривается, как рекламный дискурс адаптируется к технологическим достижениям и культурным тенденциям, отражая более широкие социальные ценности и нормы. Понимание этих особенностей не только расширяет наше понимание рекламных стратегий, но и проливает свет на сложные взаимоотношения между языком, средствами массовой информации и поведением потребителей в современном обществе.

Annotatsiya

Reklama nutqi zamonaviy jamiyatga kirib boradigan dinamik va ta'sirchan muloqot shaklidir. Ushbu maqola reklama nutqini boshqa nutq turlaridan ajratib turuvchi o'ziga xos xususiyatlarni o'rganib, uning samaradorligini shakllantiruvchi lingvistik strategiyalar, ritorik vositalar va ijtimoiy-madaniy kontekstlarga e'tibor qaratadi. Turli media platformalardagi turli xil reklamalarni tahlil qilib, ushbu tadqiqot ishonarli til, vizual semiotika, iste'molchini nishonga olish, istak va intilishlarni manipulyatsiya qilish kabi asosiy elementlarni aniqlaydi. Bundan tashqari, tadqiqot reklama nutqining kengroq ijtimoiy qadriyatlar va me'yorlarni aks ettiruvchi texnologik taraqqiyot va madaniy tendentsiyalarga qanday moslashishini o'rganadi. Ushbu o'ziga xos xususiyatlarni tushunish nafaqat reklama strategiyalarini tushunishimizni kuchaytiradi, balki zamonaviy jamiyatda til, ommaviy axborot vositalari va iste'molchi xatti-harakatlari o'rtasidagi murakkab munosabatlarni ham yoritadi.

Advertisement has become an undetached part of today's life. Everywhere around we can see different types of advertisement which attract our attention, and usually, manipulates the consumer encouraging them to obtain the product. The present paragraph of this paper is going to discuss the issues concerned the notions of advertising, its history, advertisement and its components, writing style of advertisement text and features of this style. It would be appropriate to start with defining the notion of advertisement.

There are many definitions of advertisement given by different scholars, dictionaries, etc. According to the definition given by American Marketing Association, advertisement is a non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media. Encyclopedia Britannica gives another definition: advertising is a form of communication intended to promote the sale of a product or service, to influence public opinion, to gain political support, to advance a particular cause, or to elicit some other response desired by the advertiser (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1980:103). Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines advertisement as "a picture, short film, song, etc. which tries to persuade people to buy a product or service ". According to Wikipedia free encyclopedia, "advertising is a form of marketing communication used to encourage, persuade, or manipulate an audience to take or continue to take some action." Although the definitions differ from each other, they represent similar idea that advertisement serves to persuade its intended audience to obtain the promoted product or service.

The origin of advertisement traces back to the ancient times. The first forms of advertisement messages were sent by word of mouth, although the samples of commercial messages and election campaigns were found in the ruins of Pompeii. Egyptians made sales messages and

wall poster on papyrus whereas Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome also used papyrus to make lost and found ads. Several forms of advertisement existed decades of centuries ago even though there was not any means of media. The modern advertisement is assumed to be designed by T. J. Barrat for his creative advertisement of Pears Soap in 1890s. The advertisement industry has been developing continuously since 19th century.

As mentioned by many scholars, advertisement is a means of communication. Communication, on its turn, involves language that is the object of study in linguistics. In last decades, advertisement text has become an interesting issue for discussion. It started being analyzed from different points of view such as linguistics, sociology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics etc. from linguistic approach it is interesting to know how a certain language works in this discourse and what distinctive features it possesses. In addition, linguists analyze the linguistic means used in this type of discourse let alone the changes in advertisement language over the time.

Advertisement consists of several components including advertiser, a certain amount of money paid, advertising information and advertising media.

Advertiser is a businessperson or a company who want to promote their product. Various kinds of businesses and most entrepreneurs spend lots of money on advertising since it is one of the inevitable components of their success. Advertisers might often carry some researches in order to investigate consumers' motivation, their perception of brand names and new inventions, the level of their satisfaction with the purchased product and etc. this information is an important factor in choosing the right style of advertising and to select the language features which make it more persuasive and effective.

Different types of media are used to deliver advertisement to its potential audience. This is another main component in advertising industry and it includes television, radio internet, newspapers, magazines, journals, billboards, fliers and direct mail. Shi Aiwei¹ in his work “Advertisement as a Writing Style” gives the following classification of advertising media:

“1) newspapers, magazines (include consumer magazines, business publications, farm publications, professional journals)

2) television, radio, direct mail, outdoor media (signs, posters, painted bulletins, electric displays, fliers)

3) transit media (car cards, outside displays, station posters)

4) miscellaneous (dealer displays, theatre-screen advertising, specialties, directories)”. While advertisement may also be delivered by signs, colors, or pictures, the present passage will focus on the analysis of advertisement in words or text.

The advertisement information is the most essential component which aims at certain target market or consumers. An effective advertising aims at not only “what to say” but also “how to say”. Advertisement information is presented through language. Therefore, this component of advertising is the subject of analysis in linguistics. Researches and investigations the object of which was advertisement text vividly show that most of the successful ads have their unique style. The lack of this uniqueness in the writing style of advertisement or poor and inadequate style may become the reason of its failure and even the loss of expected profit.

As Shi Aiwei states, “just as a poetic writing style is unique, so the style of advertisement has its own particular character...” Besides, an advertising pioneer William Bernbach makes it obvious how the language

¹ Shi Aiwei, a professor at Xinzhou Teachers University, Shanxi, China

is important in the modern world of advertisement in his two quotes: “The truth isn’t the truth until people believe you, and they can’t believe you if they don’t know what you are saying, and they can’t know what you are saying if they don’t listen to you, and they won’t listen to you if you are not interesting unless you say things imaginatively, originally, freshly” and “ Whereas the writer is concerned with what he puts into his writings, the communicator is concerned with what the reader gets out of it. He therefore becomes a student of *how* people read or listen.”

K. H. Leetaru (2001) continues Bernbach’s ideas stating that “Commercial verbiage is designed to entice the reader to “read on”, to explore the product or service being offered in greater detail. Linguistic components such as H.P. Grice’s Cooperative Principle, grammatical constructs, jargon, and semantic length are all critical to this process.” According to the author, these components assist the advertiser to catch the reader’s attention which is the most important task.

The Cooperative Principle, introduced by H.P. Grice in 1967, has a great role in selecting the vocabulary and grammatical constructions. Grice outlines four maxims of conversation in this Cooperative Principles: The maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quantity requires that the utterance contains no less and no more information than necessary. The Maxim of Quality requires the communicator to make their utterance true without giving false information and without saying anything they have no proof for. The Maxim of Relation entails the information to be relevant to the situation and the Maxim of Manner deals with the problem of “how to speak” urging the speaker to express themselves clearly, to avoid ambiguous expressions and to be brief and organized. Current researches show that advertisers aimed at promotion of their products and

services often violate the Cooperative Principle. Our observation shows similar results which will be further exemplified.

However, earlier than these principles the language use in modern advertising has been transformed into a highly-developed discipline as a result of the scientific research supported by Claude Hopkins in the 1920s. “Every linguistic element of an advertisement’s text is now chosen based on intricate psycholinguistic models of human language processing”. (K.H.Leetaru, 2001) Therefore, it is not surprising to say that modern advertising language has its own features which create writing style of advertisement.

There are several principles and features which identify the peculiarities of advertisement text. The paramount principle in this list is “the KISS principle – Keep it Short and Sweet” (Guo, 1992). This expression means that advertisement is required to be short and absolutely accurate. The following examples give clear illustrations to this statement: “Nokia – Connecting People”, “Chaos. German Style.”. “Fresh up with seven-up!”

Let us consider peculiar features of advertisement.

The analysis of linguistic material shows that the categories of clarity, comparative and superlative constructions, neologisms, repetition and non-sophistication are the main features of modern advertisement style.

According to Aiwei, advertisement should contain clear expressions and the words with concrete meaning rather than abstract ones. Keeping in mind the clarity provides with direct approach to the consumers instead of leading them to ambiguity.

Comparative and superlative constructions are of big importance in creating effective advertisement slogan. As a rule, consumers often choose a product by comparing it to other similar ones. Ad slogan of this

certain product creates better impression when it contains comparative adjectives. Similarly, the effect of superiority is noticed in advertisements which include superlative adjectives. It is not a secret that people are more likely to choose the best product among several identical ones. Obviously, superlative structures in the text of advertisement affect their choice. This tactics of the use of superlative constructions is called the tactics of autoidealization and in this case we can speak of the violation of the Grice's maxim of quality. Superlative constructions are aimed at focusing the audience on the uniqueness of the advertised product, service, etc. This way advertisers neglect and ignore the similar products in the market, highlighting the importance of the advertised one, which is not always unique and worthy. In this case we witness violation of the maxim of quality. For example: *Vick's Ny Quil. Multi-symptom cold/flu relief. **The best sleep** you ever get with a cold ...medicine.* Sleep while one is sick does not only depend on the medicine, there are also other factors determining the quality of sleep.

Another example: *Zantex - 3. **The first and only Non-Ephedra Diet Pill** with a kick. Rapid weight loss. Incredible energy.* In this example we also see how the maxim of quality is violated. It is known that there are a lot of different means aimed at weight loss in the world and Zantex -3 is not the only and the first.

Another tactics that is widely used by copywriters is implied comparison. Implied comparison is a good tactics that violates the maxim of quantity. Let us consider the following example:

*Where is **the beef**? WENDY'S RESTAURANTS.*

The usage of the definite article in the advertisement is on purpose, the effect of the definite article is based on the grammatical rule according to which when the function of the definite article is to highlight the uniqueness of the object described. So, the ad has the

following meaning: *Where is **the real beef**?* But there is no any explanation why a real beef can be found only at Wendy's restaurants, so it is obvious that the maxim of quantity is violated. The information provided is not enough.

Neologisms are frequently met within advertisement text. It is the feature which helps advertisement to look fresh and new. The main component of neologisms which attract consumers is its novelty. In fact, new things are always interesting for people and people are always eager to have interesting things. For example, the advertisement of the insect killer the advertiser made two new compound words by coining an adjective and a noun or an adjective and a participle:

“New super-shelltox, the hardest –hitting insect killer ever”

“Shelltox” is the name of the product. Adding the word super to it emphasizes the quality of the product. Another new compound “hardest – hitting” connotes extra power of the product. Neologisms also speak about the creativity of the advertisers and this is one of the effective techniques of capturing the attention. The use of such words as “Awesome” meaning “awesome”, “provodkative” meaning “provocative” are the vivid examples of showing the creativity.

Repetition makes advertisement memorable. It is often used to emphasize or reinforce the meaning of a word within the ad text. Aiwei classifies two cases of repetition: when the same words are repeated and when the words of the same semantic field are repeated. In most situations this technique may be useful and effective. For example, in the advertisement **“Born ironed. Stays ironed. It's Decton – perma Iron”** the repetition of the word “iron” serves to make it memorable. In the following example the repetition is used to emphasize the meaning of the word: **“Champion, the winning beer, the beer for winners”**. The

repeated words “winning” and “winner” serves to highlight the certainty of winning.

Non-sophistication of advertisement style means avoiding technical terms so that it would be understandable for majority of consumers rather than to the specialists only. Technical terms may mislead the consumer or they may just ignore the advertisement because of misunderstanding. Consequently, the product loses its potential consumers. Therefore, it is advisable for advertiser to avoid such terms and make their advertisement non-sophisticated even if their product is the sophisticated one. The use of the technical word “sync.” in “**The simple way to keep everything in sync.**” causes misunderstanding for some potential consumers. “Sync.” is a shortened form of synchronization, i.e. an application which helps to copy all the data from a mobile phone to a computer. However, those who didn’t use this application or who don’t have mobile phones and just planning to have one might miss the main idea of the advert and the product loses its potential buyer.

Stylistic means allow the advertiser to attract reader’s attention and to persuade that the knowledge and background of the copywriter is rather reliable, for he knows different effective strategies to make others buy, so that a potential buyer will feel that he has a business with serious people. For example: *"Einstein's Theory of Relativity: give strangers the same price you give relatives" - Einstein-Moomjy Carpets.*

Although advertising has developed since recent centuries as a big business, it has existed since the ancient times. Evidently, it has now acquired rather modern, industrial form. There are lots of other features of advertisement text which make it effective, understandable and memorable. The most important is that number of techniques is used to attract consumers which results in expected profit from the product sell.

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