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Linguistic Means of Conveying Persuasion in the Advertising Discourse of the Danube Region

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Abstract: Persuasion should be understood as verbal and nonverbal influence on the human psyche, which is perceived without critical evaluation, but changes its psychoemotional and physiological state. Persuasive influence is carried out during the interaction of the persuader (subject of persuasion) and the suserend (object of persuasion), and the success of such interaction depends on both their personal qualities and situational factors. The analysis of the phenomenon of persuasion allowed us to present the definition of persuasive discourse as a purposeful communicative action in order to influence the subconscious of the addressee to change one's psychoemotional and physiological state, which is a set of process and result and includes both extra-linguistic and linguistic components. Persuasion is an integral part of both everyday communication and professional discourse. It is widely used in such a communicative sphere as advertising discourse. Mass media are a powerful source of influence on the subconscious of a large audience, and persuasive technologies are usually used here for advertising purposes. In order to influence the addressee, specialists in the field of advertising use not only individual linguistic techniques to enhance persuasive influence (emotionally-coloured lexical units, tropes, repetitions, enumerations, parcelling, rhyme, paronymic attraction), but also ready-made persuasive texts in which the object of advertising is encoded.

Keywords: persuasion; addressee; advertising discourse; subconscious

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1. Problem Statement

Modern purposeful influence on the subconscious and personal attitudes, the ability and necessity to analyze, predict and correct human behaviour have become the subject of research by scientists in various fields of science – Psychology, Medicine, Psychoanalysis, Psychotherapy, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Sociology, Political Science, etc.

2. Critical Overview

Modern linguistics is characterized by an increased interest in people and human relationships. Special attention is paid to the rational side of communicative activity, in particular argumentation. Along with the rational approach, there is another sphere of communicative activity related to the sphere of psychoemotional influence on the individual, which is realized in the act of persuasion.

The difficulty of studying persuasive discourse lies in the fact that it is necessary to take into account its influence on the subconscious of the addressee, while the methods of modern linguistics are mainly focused on the study of language factors mediated by consciousness. However, recently there have been thorough scientific works that study the linguistic aspect of persuasion (Bancroft, 2009; Chomsky, 2000, p. 78). Researchers pay special attention to the use of persuasive technologies in the media (Moss & Keen, 2001, p. 115). Despite the fact that there are more and more works devoted to the study of linguistic aspects of persuasion, they are not complex in nature and focus only on certain aspects of persuasion. In addition, numerous questions are still ignored by researchers.

3. Purpose of Investigation

The aim of the study is to identify the characteristics of English persuasive advertising discourse of the Danube Region.

4. Research Course

The life of a modern person is largely connected with the mass media and, in particular, with advertising, which affects a person regardless of his desire.

Advertising goes beyond the economic sphere and becomes a phenomenon of human culture. As Covino W. A. noted, advertising can draw conclusions about the ideals of the nation (Covino, 2007, p. 95). For modern civilization, advertising begins to perform a function that previously belonged to art. This can be confirmed by the fact that the resources of popular expressions are not on the basis of fiction texts, but commercials, for example: *Obey your third! Ask for more! Paradisal enjoyment!* and others.

One of the significant differences between advertising information and non-advertising information is the promotion of commercial purposes. Its task is to attract attention to the object of advertising, actualization and retention of the object in the minds of addressees, demonstration of its advantages, formation of interest in it, popularization of the name (brand), creation of a tendency to choose this object, motivation to act.

Most researchers consider an ad as a kind of communication act – there are participants, the means of contact, the code/language, the message of information and the reaction to it.

It is obvious that language manipulation within such a multidimensional semiotic phenomenon as advertising, which inextricably combines nonverbal and verbal signs, can only be described as a set of certain units, constructs that are introduced into the advertising text to implement its general target instruction (O'Connor & Seymour, 2015, p. 164).

The quality of advertising messages is largely determined by the correct choice of communication strategies in specific pragmatic conditions. Influence is carried out using various communicative tactics: influence on consciousness by building rational argumentation (persuasion) or through the emotional sphere, as well as influence on the subconscious (suggestion).

When creating a priority attitude to a product, advertising specialists often rely on the effect of persuasion. They are constantly forced to overcome inattentive attitude to advertising, “avoiding” advertising information, lack of interest in it, prejudice and distrust of the addressee.

Unfavorable factors also include the lack of direct contact of communicants, the impact on the addressee of competing advertising messages and other information flows that provoke cognitive dissonance. These are just some of the reasons that explain the need to use persuasion for the effectiveness of an advertising message.

Almost all researchers dealing with the problems of psychology and Linguistics of advertising. They emphasize the fact of using persuasion, but only a few study ways to implement it. Thus, Bancroft W. considers persuasion to be an integral component of the argumentative influence underlying advertising (Bancroft, 2009, p. 105). Moss D., Keen E. equate an advertising message with a persuasive text and claim that it is possible to construct effective and high-quality advertising messages by studying the latent components of speech (Moss & Keen, 2001, p. 112). Studying the structure of an advertising message, some scientists conclude that many advertising texts are built on the model of hypnotic texts and include three structural elements: rapport, trance induction, and trance recycling. The mechanism of influence of such texts is carried out through a set of language tools (phonetic, lexical, morphological and syntactic), advertising composition, video sequence, etc. (Mumbi & Clair, 2011, p. 190).

Persuasion is impossible without trusting the source of influence. In advertising discourse, persuasion is largely based on trust in the media, but experts try to enhance this effect in various ways. Therefore, the character of advertising is usually characterized by courage, confidence, optimism and expressed charm – these qualities can indicate belonging to the highest strata of society. At the same time, images of famous people who use the object of advertising are often “exploited”. The authors of advertising texts believe that through this object, the consumer fulfills one’s desire to get closer to a “star”. For example: *Pete Sampras, grand slam legend. Movado chronograph. Stainless steel and black rubber. Silver dial. Sapphire crystal. Swiss made. Water resistant* (The New Yorker, Nov. 11, 2023). Attracting famous tennis player Pete Sampras to advertising can encourage not only his fans to choose this brand of watch, but also those for whom the opportunity to increase their own social status is an important factor when buying.

The most effective way is to attract “stars” known to the addressee to advertising, since they inspire more trust. For example, model Cindy Crawford advertises REVLON Cosmetics, singers Britney Spears and Shakira take an active part in the PEPSI advertising campaign. But, according to Covino W. A, this technique does not always work, since consumers tend to think that celebrities are filmed in advertising only for the sake of high fees (Covino, 2007, p. 99). That is why the image of a simple ordinary person is increasingly attracted to advertising. For example, representatives of various professions are involved in advertising for the Lincoln Financial Group: *I worked hard to be a better DOCTOR. I worked hard to be a better BUSINESSWOMAN. I worked hard to build a better PRACTICE. How can I make*

sure my MONEY works hard, so I can spend more time just being a better PERSON? (TIME, Feb. 12, 2024). A person who has earned money by hard work is unlikely to believe the “star”, but, unfortunately, “ordinary” people who act as consultants, as a rule, also have nothing to do with the object of advertising.

Sometimes unknown brands use the names of more well-known ones. For example, advertising for *Calgon* chemical products (for washing machines) uses links to the *Ariel* and *Tide* brands.

Trust in the advertising object can be caused by deliberately highlighting certain product characteristics. The assimilation of such a message is characterized by spontaneity and spontaneity, and the suggestive influence, as a result, is quite effective, as, for example, in such a text: *Give them love, compassion, sheet metal and steel. Vehicle skid control, heated leather-trimmed seats, antilock breakers, new VVT-i engine, front-seat side air bags, video entertainment system. Now with over 30 improvements. TOYOTA Sienna did better overall in the insurance institute crash test than any other minivan. Ever* (TIME, Feb. 19, 2024). Such an ad is quite atypical for advertising cars, which, as a rule, focus on the technical characteristics. This text appeals to the buyer’s hierarchical value system and highlights such characteristics as safety, quality and comfort. This ad is accompanied by a photo of a newborn baby sleeping in the palm of an adult’s hand. This is what should remind the potential buyer (usually a family person) of their children and associate the object of advertising with the maximum security that the image of the palm implies.

Imagination is an integral part of persuasion. That is why the use of lexical units with specific content that is easy to imagine in advertising significantly increases the effect of persuasion: *Deep blue sea (for just the 10 of you), soft sandy beach (for just the 10 of you), sun, moon, stars (for just the 10 of you)...* (TIME, Feb. 12, 2024). Conversely, abstract concepts dramatically reduce persuasive power.

Another language tactic is to appeal to the imagination, the consumer’s dream in order to introduce the idea in an unusual form and move to a less rational and critical sphere. At the same time, the addressee’s compliance is significantly increased and very strong arguments are not needed to convince him. A striking example is an advertising series, where only the brand appears against the background of ambiguous videos: *MARTINI...*

The widespread use of metaphors in advertising messages is due to the desire for conciseness and expressiveness at the same time. It shows the emotional assessment, imagery, and vivid characteristics contained in the advertising text. For example:

Feed the Lion to the kids (Lion eggs) (Take a Break, Aug. 30, 2023); *There's a crown for every achievement* (Rolex) (Newsweek, Jul. 14, 2023); *The marriage of fruit and ice* (Starburst fruitice) (Bliss, September, 2023).

Metaphorical processes occurring in the language of an advertising message are projected and affect the individual's perception of the world. Metaphor captures what is not captured by logic; it reproduces an intuitive sense of similarity, which plays a huge role in a person's practical thinking and behaviour.

So, the metaphor in advertising is used not just as a figure of speech, advertising communication itself is metaphorical in its essence. One of the components of the advertising image – image-representation – is a detailed metaphor that not only affects the consciousness and subconscious of the recipient, sometimes linking things that do not fit together at all, but also replaces the object of advertising with a fixed idea of it. In fact, this is no longer a language or advertising metaphor, but a story built according to the laws of myth (Rieke; Sillars & Peterson, 2004, p. 30).

Other tropes can be woven into the metaphorical fabric of the advertising text: comparisons, hyperbole, epithets. Part of the metaphor can be built on the principle of antithesis, semantic opposition, for example: *Trousers as tough as your kids* (Take a Break, Aug. 30, 2023).

The convergence of tropes and stylistic figures in one context, the use of emotionally colored words, and the metaphorical nature of the context create a powerful influential field in a relatively small advertising text.

Allusion is one of the most effective advertising techniques, which consists in using fragments of culture known to the audience with a connotation associated with a certain emotion. These are usually the names of movies, works of art, lines from popular songs, poems, jokes, aphorisms, and geographical names. For example: *It's what made Robin Hood so cool. There is something special about a person who gives. And when you give to the United Way, over 90 percent of your donation goes directly to providing your community with a ready workforce, healthier citizens and more opportunities for kids. And that's a pretty cool thing to do. Give more. Get more. United Way. It's what we do together* (The New Yorker, Nov. 11, 2023). The image of the hero of legends Robin Hood is associated with justice, generosity and great support of the masses. That is why a person who responds to this message will feel like a folk character even with a small donation amount.

From the point of view of persuasive influence, repetition is particularly important – one of the main principles of presenting speech material in advertising. Using

repetitions of various types (phonetic, morphological, syntactic) – in a broad context, parallelism is used to achieve multi-layered construction of advertising texts. The name of the advertising object, brand, and keywords are repeated in the advertising text to better remember the product and organize the rhythm. Lexical repetition correlates with syntactic repetition, and frame constructions traditionally used in advertising add not only completeness, cyclicity, and expressiveness to the idea, but also suggestive power.

A striking example of the effective use of repetition is a series of advertisements by the internet service provider Internet Orange. The first ad is based on epiphora: *International networks, regional networks, local networks. One network connects them all. However complex your business life might be, Orange keeps all your worlds connected* (Newsweek, July 14, 2023). The ad that appears in the next issue is based on anaphora: *Networks carrying goods, networks carrying ideas, networks carrying profits. One network connects them all. However complex your business life might be, Orange keeps all your worlds connected* (Newsweek, July 21, 2023). The systematic appearance of such ads in the print press will ensure memorization and provide advantages over other Internet service providers if necessary to use such services.

A large number of simple sentences in advertising, often of a nominative nature, parcel, enumeration, repetition, anaphoric constructions create and maintain a special rhythm – *staccato*, characteristic of the advertising genre: *Cross roads. Cross borders. Cross town. Cross country. The new all wheel drive Volvo Cross Country. To your body it's a luxury car. To the elements it's a SUV. To your peace of mind, it's a Volvo. Dedicated to helping you arrive at that warm and cozy place all warm and cozy. Adventures in luxury. Volvo for life* (TIME, Feb. 12, 2024).

The imperative mood as one of the means of implementing a suggestion in advertising in its direct forms is used when addressing a young audience. The imperative carries a challenge, a charge, a call and is focused on the forms of communication accepted in this environment without ceremony, for example: *Take what you want!* (sportswear Sprandi); *Ask for more!* (Pepsi-Cola).

When addressing an adult audience, the verb *let* is widely used, which is perceived as a tip or invitation: *Let's talk!* (AVON), *Let's make things better!* (Philips).

Interrogative forms are used in indirect speech tactics as a means of lateral presentation of information. Information is stored in the subconscious, without causing objections from the client. In order to attract attention, interrogative

sentences are used even in headings: *Why don't you come over for one?* (Nescafe) (Bliss, September, 2023). Often the question sounds rhetorical and is a pathetic expressive statement, for example: *Are you fun enough... for Fanta Island?* (Bliss, September, 2023). The third way to use questions is to outline a problem, the key to solving which, as it turns out, is the object of advertising: *How do you get Sleeping Beauty up for breakfast?* (Take a Break, Aug. 9, 2023).

Degrees of comparison of adjectives and adverbs are used to emphasize the quality of an object: *Same beans only faster* (That's Life! Aug. 16, 2023). To prevent unnecessary pathos when creating advertising text, experts try to avoid the highest degree of comparison. Lexical superlatives are used for this purpose: *Excellence comes as standard* (Bosch) (Daily Express. Saturday, Dec. 8-14, 2023); *Only Remy. Excellence always celebrated* (TIME, Dec. 30, 2023 – Jan. 6, 2024). It is noteworthy to use the highest degree to characterize a potential buyer, and not the object of advertising: *For the most luscious lips in the world* (Max Factor Gold) (ELLE, July, 2023). Such an ad is unlikely to cause critical evaluation on the part of the addressee, and the object of advertising will be perceived as an addition to its exceptional personal qualities.

Game techniques used in advertising are aimed at emotions and logical comprehension, which simultaneously entertains the addressee, promotes memorization and sets him up for involuntary perception. Ways to achieve a game effect are very diverse, but the most common are rhymes – *Two games in one – double the fun!* (Take a Break, Aug. 30, 2023); *Put a rush on your brush* (GO, March, 2024) and paronymic attraction – *Maybe she's born with it. Maybe it's Maybelline* (Bliss, September, 2023); *Heading for a headache? Head for Hedex!* (That's Life! Aug. 16, 2023).

In some cases, specialists in the field of advertising are not limited to using certain linguistic tools to improve the effectiveness of an advertising message, but use ready-made persuasive texts: *Relax. Lay back and imagine this – your skin caressed by cool blue rejuvenating Dead Sea mud... or the juice of fresh, ripe strawberries... or the rich moisturising of double thick cream. Everything is possible when you learn how to say "Montagne Jeunesse"* (ELLE, July, 2023). The above ad is a vivid example of a persuasive text, in which the name of the company is suggested against the background of relaxation formulas.

One of the most powerful means of persuasion is speech dynamics. The acoustic spectrum of speech is very complex. Experts believe that it contains information

about the most elusive processes of consciousness and unconscious activity. **The main signs of speech dynamics that can enhance the persuasive influence of speech are the softness and strength of the voice, the pace of speech, the richness of intonation characteristics, pauses, and the use of the surprise effect. Well-thought-out speech dynamics can add credibility to any message, increase the power of suggestion.** If the speech dynamics of the advertising message is supported by appropriate facial expressions and gestures, then this also helps to increase the power of persuasion. Facial expressions and gestures, if they are adequate to the situation, are perceived as emotional involvement, interest, which, in most cases, contributes to the formation of a positive attitude and trust.

5. Concluding Remarks

The conducted research allows to formulate the following conclusions. All of the above language tools can be used when creating the text of an advertising message, but only experienced editors can achieve the desired result. Poor use of persuasion in advertising can lead not only to the failure of the advertising campaign, but also to a negative impact on the psyche of the addressee. Unfortunately, modern advertising performs rather neurosogenic functions, rather than protective or psychotherapeutic ones. Therefore, advertising texts must be tested for psychological safety for the consumer.

6. Further Research

The prospect of research is to analyze the main communication strategies and tactics of the addressee of persuasive influence.

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