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**COGNITIVE AND RHETORICAL FORMS OF PERSUASION IN
ARMY RECRUITING POSTERS**

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Abstract

The development of social media incorporates potentially rich implications for pragmatic and communicative influence through texts of advertising. The article discusses methods of influencing the addressee in army recruiting posters. The article demonstrates the specifics of the language in army recruiting posters as a social phenomenon, the improvements in speech communication technologies in this area, linking the speech component of the creolized advertising text with its other parts, as well as with cognitive processes such as pragmatic goals of the author, interpretation of the message by the addressee, and semantic conclusion. The relationship of cognitive and rhetorical aspects of studying army recruiting posters texts of military service allows to demonstrate the close relationship of expressive speech and communicative function of interpretation. Rhetorical techniques in the acting text are considered as ways of expressing directed thoughts. Neo-rhetoric approach is meant to find out methods of effective persuasive means for contract-specific advertising services in army recruiting posters. Some principles of the linguistic description and analysis of slogans in army recruiting posters within the cognitive-rhetorical approach, determines the relevance of the study. Thematic elements and schematic structures of advertising texts, linguistic phenomena, and lexical, word-formative, morphological and syntactic levels of text micro-organization were analyzed in the frames of the article.

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Keywords: Advertising, communicative function, military discourse, neo-rhetoric aspect, persuasion, recruiting



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1. Introduction

The formation of a new social reality, situational changes in public and socio-political spheres lead to change in the functioning of state institutions discourses. This brought forth new communicative strategies and tactics in the process of their implementation and – the new rhetoric given the significant changes which occur in the nature of political, societal institutions (the Army). “In institutional texts the discourse linguistic units are dependent on a number of factors, determining their specific value and common sense” (Pronicheva, 2019, p. 167).

Discursive changes are clearly observed first and for most, in relation to state institutions that have a prominent role in the functioning of the society, such as the institution of the army. A new strategy for the pursuit of energetic style of leadership can change approaches to speech communication. Institutional texts corpus is characterized by a thematic focus around certain events. On this basis, as part of military discourse stands out persuasive (advertising) discourse, based on statements and texts with one purpose: to encourage the addressee to commit a certain act, namely join the ranks of contract military service. This permanent recruitment drive (unlike seasonal) is characterized by active discursive activities, such as creating a text in which the sender seeks to influence the recipient to achieve the desired effect.

2. Problem Statement

Discourse studies are characterized by the interdisciplinary approach. When considering the impact of texts in the framework of the discourse, neo-rhetoric aspect is certainly important, as it studies language as a social phenomenon. The purpose of neo-rhetorics can be determined as the search for the best forms, algorithms, communicative conditions, in a variety of situations.

Language learning as a social phenomenon and the role of language in the society functioning, the impact of social processes on language has a long scientific tradition. Consequently, the interest in acting (ad) texts is explained by both extralinguistic circumstances (changes in socio-political situation, rapid computerization), and a stable interest in problems of text pragmatics in the use of linguistic units in the actual process of communication (Rodgers, 2017). Linguistic pragmatics is interpreted as a scientific field in which the study of “language elements, focused on verbal interaction” (Paducheva, 2019, p. 223). Linguistically oriented discourse analysis is also relevant while studying institutional discourses (Hart & Fuoli, 2020) defined as an integral part of public relations, shaping these relations.

The works of Russian and foreign researchers (Chudinov & Solopova, 2015; Gibbs, 2015, 2020), characterized by the analysis of frames, concepts, and metaphorical schemes, reveal – a cognitive approach in the study of institutional discourse. Cognitive rhetoric is a relatively new field of cognitive stylistics in academic literature (Abdel-Raheem, 2020; Culpeper & Gillings, 2019; Riemer, 2019). This is a rapidly expanding inter-disciplinary field that merges (cognitive) linguistics, rhetoric of narratology and cognitive science. The methodology of content analysis allows for quantitative characteristics of the text at the level of phrases and words reveal a special part of the content plan that helps to understand the characteristics of thinking and interpretation of texts by the author and the addressee.

3. Research Questions

This present study was based on the premise that texts of army recruiting posters are considered in a social context. Thematic elements and schematic structures of texts, linguistic phenomena, and lexical, word-formative, morphological and syntactic levels of text micro-organization were interpreted. The following research questions guided this exploration:

3.1. What algorithm should be developed for describing texts of army recruiting posters?

3.2. How can ways of verbal implementation and updating the meanings of linguistic means in posters be considered?

3.3. How can identified trends in the meanings of language units involved in the formation of the persuasion be interpreted?

4. Purpose of the Study

This research examines the poster texts within the military discourse. The need for research, to develop certain principles of linguistic description and analysis of army recruiting posters within the cognitive-rhetorical approach, determines the relevance of the study.

4.1. Algorithm of the study

To develop an algorithm which can be a combination of cognitive-linguistic rhetorical analysis of text forms we are focused on became a purpose of our research. An adequate understanding of the pragmatic potential of army recruiting posters will contribute to the development of optimal communication strategies. Texts are considered to be a result of verbal interaction between the participants of communication within institutional army discourse. Each social sphere, which forms its discourse, incorporates a system of genres: “social-cultural categories that surpass the boundaries of media and shape our narrative expectations” (Tseng, 2017, p. 227). “The basis of various ways of organizing an advertising text for military purposes is not only appeal to the unconscious, the introduction of certain scenarios or attitudes, but also the persuasion, reasoning, estimation, the implication of important information, a higher degree of informational content of the text, which is directly opposite to advertising of other genres where you can find examples of pseudo-argumentation, low information content, substitution of concepts” (Pankova, 2018, p. 58).

A genre can be defined as a specific use of language, which is part of a particular social practice. The texts that form the genre can be categorized and can determine, influence new texts. The campaign texts, which include texts of army recruiting posters, are intended to have an effect within specific situations with a clear purpose, and due to their specificity are of interest to description and analysis of their structure and content to highlight the traditional and dynamic features.

4.2. Distinctive characteristics

Based on several distinctive characteristics (e.g., the large format, predominance of visual imagery over verbal), these texts belong to the poster genre. In the psycholinguistics a specific term is used for research of advertising text types – “creolized text” which demonstrates a stronger communicative impact.

Effectiveness of communication stems from a number of requirements, such as the ability to cease attention, its compositional clarity, comprehensibility, brevity, and legibility.

Modern communication involves the processes of combining verbal information with visual information. In communications, there is a concept of “mythodesign”, i.e. “the anticipation, management and satisfaction of customer needs through communications” (Ulyanovsky, 2015). There is a qualitative transformation at the text level as the basic unit of communication. Due to the combination of verbal and non-verbal components, an advertising poster becomes the most effective tool of persuasion.

It appears to be legitimate application of pragmatic ideas for the study of characteristics of advertising, since the main purpose of advertising communication is the impact to the recipient, i.e. perlocutionary effect. Pragmatic goal of advertising is the need to prompt the recipient to respond through actions or to change opinions on the subject of advertising. Rhetorical approach suggests the appeal to the emotional part of our personality. It is necessary to put a special stress on not only understanding army discourse as simply reflecting institutional reality but taking into account individual’s dreams and aspirations. Analysis and description of army recruiting poster (specifically, its verbal component), involves a series of sequential steps.

5. Research Methods

A rhetorically-cognitive approach involves a description of circumstances of the implementation of speech interactions linked to such processes as the interpretation of utterances, pragmatic goals of the author, communicative aspirations, predicted/unpredictable semantic conclusions. Cognitive techniques enable to highlight the mental, cognitive patterns that underlie a poster text within the army discourse. Studying these models will reveal the peculiarities of thinking of the author (the sender of the text) and the audience in a certain period, predicting the reaction of the addressee and build effective communication strategies, minimize communication failures and unpredictable reactions of the addressee. Rhetorical techniques in the acting text are primarily ways of expressing directed thoughts. Neo-rhetoric approach will make it possible to find out methods of effective persuasive means for contract-specific advertising services.

An algorithm of actions can be represented in the form of “analytical cards” with 4 positions that are essentially criteria specified characteristics of texts.

1. Characteristics of the communicative situation, which includes the following aspects: the topic, the conditions of communication, social/communicative roles, type of communication coordination. Topic is an important structurally substantial component, associated primarily with purposes and tasks, without which it is impossible to interpret the text. Terms of communication are the main components of communicative situation. Social roles of participants are considered as indicator characterizing the author and the addressee as carriers of certain statuses, which is an indispensable reflection in text production and its perception. Communicative coordination characterizes communication as a cooperative act or a conflict, equality or discrepancy in social status, status-oriented or person-oriented communication.

2. The linguistic aspect includes: characteristics of the form of the speech (monologue, dialogue), characteristics of the dialogue, depending on goal-setting, specificity of composition and semantics; description of belonging to a functional-semantic types of speech (for monologic texts). Functional-

semantic types of speech: narration, description, reasoning – characterize monologic text that is generated by the author through a model of speech acts that give rise the corresponding speech form. The choice of speech forms is determined by the communicative intent.

3. Language design reveals the lexical and grammatical features.

4. The pragmatic aspect of the analysis gives the opportunity to consider discursive characteristics of the text, the norms and the specifics of building texts.

5.1. Textual characteristics

A wide range of textual characteristics (linguistic, sociocultural, pragmatic) should be included in text analysis. The described framework was used in analyzing texts of army recruiting posters. Several examples are listed below:

- A worthy choice for a Russian patriot, a professional defender of his homeland!
- Months spent in playing Counter Strike? The armed Forces offer a better option! We are all real! Service contract.
- To defend the Mother-land! Cool as a recruit.
- Do you want to become a professional? Come to us! Superior in every way!

6. Findings

The analysis suggests that social advertising represent positivity through a variety of linguistic means. Communicative and pragmatic purpose is defined as a way to ensure the secure and effective processes of linguistic and extra linguistic means organization based on the cognitive component. The analysis of slogans allowed to identify lexical, grammatical and stylistic features that contribute to the realization of pragmatic potential. Among the lexical means, there is a number of adjectives with the attitudinal semantic meaning providing positive connotation (monetary, real, proper, stable, professional, etc.), determining semantic relations in the text. The obvious role of adjectives in shaping the axiological structure of the text is predominant. Using adjectives with high evaluation semantics denotes **the** benefits of choosing contract service and its moral, material incentives: rewards for gallant and effective performance of duties, special conditions, pre-emptive right, free education, comfortable accommodations, service housing. Adjectives are used effectively to create the prospects for a successful future soldier – a contract recruit. The analysis demonstrates the use of dominant verbs in the imperative mood and imperative structures characteristic of the army as an institution with a rigid hierarchical organization: fight, that's your choice, make your choice, take your place in line, your ticket to the future, come to us, etc.

Not only do the texts convey to the addressee the information about existing opportunities (informative aspect), but also create an opinion about what is being reported to, affects the recipient (pragmatic aspect): “Your choice! Your ticket to the future.” Making an appeal to background knowledge is implemented by the use of precedent phenomena or by quoting famous people. The idea of “presenting national service as the last line of defence in any future war became **a** key trope of newspaper advertising, which portrayed civilians (‘fearless women’ and ‘real men’) as the backbone of the nation’s defences” was

exploited in advertising campaigns of the 20th century (Maartens, 2015). Different types of material incentives can prevail over patriotic necessity.

Language develops as form of thought, a social tool and the reflection of the world culture, the study of associative and semantic aspects role of words as perceived by the author and the addressee of the text. The existence of associative relationships is in the very nature of a text, as any text is an object of culture, for a medium for recognition and transformation of reality. Russian posters involve opportunities of professional development/personal growth which are a part of compatible process: New profession, new conditions of service, the new size of the allowance. A psycholinguistic study of the text suggests the initial plan, the core of meaning to highlight key words in the text, concisely transmitting the main content statements and information of the text to the nuclear formula in source proposals. Future research might focus on exploration “how individual, group, and organizational structural elements influence creative development, as well as the effect of new media” (West et al., 2019). There is a description of the verbal component of army recruiting service below (Table 01).

Table 1. Sample descriptions of the verbal component of army recruiting service

Parameters	Comment
1. Feature the situation of communication	The slogan used to advertise contract service in the army
1.1. The theme	Contract service in the army
1.2. Conditions of Mediated communication	Distant. Sender and the recipient
1.3. Communication (roles of participants)	Addressor, addressee
1.4. Social roles	Equal communication
1.5. The type of communicative coordination	Sender relies on cooperative communication; decision making on professional choices and social status
2. Linguistic aspect	
2.1. Monologue / Dialogic text	Monologic text, call
2.2. Functional (semantic types of speech)	Description (advantages, benefits offered military) Two slogans: 1) words of General of the army V.F. Margelov; 2) recipient encouragement to a conscious action; 3) information about allowances, extra payments and social safeguards.
2.3. Composition and semantics	
3. Language design	
3.1. Lexical features	In text-based verbs and constructions in the imperative fight, step. Used you-communication, a friendly call, involving the communication of with like-minded people (your choice). Material and social incentives.
3.2. Grammar features	The text is built on verbs of imperfective aspect in the imperative mood, underscoring the mandatory nature of the text, encouraging to make a conscious action.
4. The pragmatic aspect	
4.1. Discursive features	Text intentions: 1) new volunteers recruiting; 2) a call to action; 3) declarative; 4) a patriotic purpose; 5) benefits. Texts not only convey information about existing opportunities (informative aspect), but also try to affect the addressee (the pragmatic aspect).

7. Conclusion

An advertising poster, being a multifaceted phenomenon, required a variety of integrative research approaches: from the standpoint of functional stylistics and cognitive-rhetoric approach. A poster as a special complex of communicative and pragmatic means ensures the successful implementation of the message aimed at reaching a special target audience. It is a system of verbal and visual signs interpreted by the recipient and forming system of representations (meanings), included in the system of other signs acting in combination and forming a complex communicative unit – an advertising message. The construction of texts of slogans corresponds to the following intentions: providing information about the high patriotic objectives set on contract service and material gains that accompany this choice; the mission of preserving peace, stability; attracting new supporters. The context of situations represented in social army recruiting posters is a vital element in message interpretation and the implicit information contained in it. This form of discourse is culturally specific, thus forming new discourse patterns and defining the choice of linguistic means.

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