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MODERN RUSSIAN ADVERTISING DISCOURSE: SEMIOTICS, MENTALITY, MANIPULATION

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Abstract

The advertising discourse reveals both the features of originality and ethnocultural specificity of the worldview and the results of the influence of modern globalization processes. The formation of the Russian advertising discourse and its further development is largely determined by the historical and cultural factors of the global civilization process. In various periods of the socio-economic development of Russia, the domestic advertising discourse in all its diversity seemed to be “embedded” in the cultural and civilization matrix of the global advertising and information semiosis which significantly affected (and still affects) the semiotic and verbal nature of its formation. The article reveals the modifications of modern advertising discourse on all the levels of its formation under the circumstances of expanding globalization. In modern Russian advertising semiosis thus all aspects of social and civilizational evolution are presented: taking into account ethno-cultural specifics, the ability to psychologically and mentally correctly use linguistic, semiotic, manipulative and suggestive, cultural and many other factors of the national life of another ethnic group, another consumer country. Further research into the specifics of Russian advertising discourse will allow to determine all the mental-cognitive, semiotic, verbal, and ethno-cultural parameters of the advertising picture of the world of the 21st century.

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1. Introduction

The formation of the Russian advertising discourse and its further development was largely determined by the historical and cultural factors of the global civilization process. In various periods of the socio-economic development of Russia, the domestic advertising discourse in all its diversity seemed to be “embedded” in the cultural and civilization matrix of the global advertising and information semiosis which significantly affected (and still affects) the semiotic and verbal nature of its formation (Chandler, 2018; Katermina, 2018a).

The basis of the modern Russian social advertising picture of the world is formed by commercial advertising which constitutes the largest part of the entire advertising array and in the most pure form implements the communicative-marketing goal of advertising communication – drawing the audience’s attention to a product, creating or maintaining interest in it and its promotion on the market. Other types of advertising (social, political and state), according to their denotation and class of advertising objects are quite specific forms of advertising communication and therefore the interpretative limits of the concept of “advertising” can be shifted to one side or the other. In modern Russian advertising discourse the actualization of a different, alien cultural reality in addition to its direct function — the designation of a factor relating to the production of a product, its sphere of use, etc. — is capable of performing other functions. The cultural background is more often correlated with the idea of someone else’s not as foreign but as the best attractive, most desirable, able to improve life.

2. Problem Statement

The study of contemporary Russian advertising discourse is based on the fundamental principles of cognitivism, historicism, anthropocentrism, text-centrism and functionalism. The modern period of sociocultural and political-economic development of the world community is distinguished by the highest level of integration in many areas: in economics, finance, culture, media, Internet communications, commerce, advertising business, etc. In these processes, compliance balance lies between the two poles of such interrelated ethno-forming and ethno-preserving factors as 1) language, mentality, traditions, culture, spirituality, moral principle and 2) globalization, market, capitalism, innovation and etc. In a market economy the main measure of success in which space is money, profit (Protestant ethics), where beauty is not only a factor in achieving success but also in a certain sense a market commodity, and the market is filled with artifacts that provide beauty in all forms – it’s very difficult to combine these two such opposites in the advertising product.

3. Research Questions

The role of advertising in modern life of Russian society is so great that today it is necessary to recognize the existence in the media space of a unique hyper-structure – the socially-advertising picture of the world (SAPM) since there is no longer any aspect of social life that would not become an object of multi-aspect advertising.

The semiotic space of a Russian advertising text is characterized by the presence of a system of pragmatic means giving it a specific mode, for example the use of individual short phrases and whole

paragraphs containing colloquial vocabulary; frequent use of imperative verbs; the use of metaphors that produces mental images; a lot of emotionally coloured utterances, words, emotions and expressives; the presence of occasionalisms and neologisms reflecting the evolutionary aspect of the national language as a whole; the use of humor, pun, paradox and grotesque; methods of “shock” informational impact when potential disasters without goods are contrasted with apparent well-being, provided that they are purchased (Astafurova & Olyanich, 2017; Katermina, 2017b).

4. Purpose of the Study

The study of contemporary Russian advertising discourse is aimed at identifying those ethnocultural factors and mental-semiotic mechanisms of its representation which under conditions of increasing globalization undergo certain mental-cognitive modifications at all levels of discursive formation.

5. Research Methods

The main method is the descriptive method; methods of observation and comparison were also used; interpretation method; textual; contextual; modelling method; cognitive analysis; conceptual analysis.

6. Findings

The whole history of the development and development of advertising in Russia and in the world, the verbal semiotic specifics of the advertising text, its archetypical basis indicate that advertising in a broad sense is a special sociocultural phenomenon reflecting the historical and cultural aspects of the development of society and civilization as a whole. When creating one or another advertising text (product), specific language means and methods of their functional arrangement and combination are used. Semantic and emotional perception of individual words and expressions in the situation of a contact of an advertising proposal with a consumer has certain features (Arnold, 2002; Ostrovskaya & Khachmafova, 2016; Zheltukhina, Klushina, Ponomarenko, Vasilkova, & Dzyubenko, 2017a; Zheltukhina, Slyshkin, Muzykant, Ponomarenko, & Masalimova, 2017b).

Internal representation of time is reflected in human speech through the use of temporary grammar structures. In the Russian language time markers are verbs and verb attribute forms are participles and verbal adverbs. Psychologist Bandler (2001) taking into account the importance of the time aspect proposed the technology of “instant psychotherapy” which is based on the use of temporal grammatical constructions of the language in the dynamics of solving personal problem situations. The main elements of this technology are used in advertising messages. During the contact of advertising with the consumer it allows you to move the recipient to the user's position as a product, initiate the decision to purchase the product immediately (Bandler, 2001).

Various communicative means of natural language as well as means of other semiotic systems and codes are adapted to the fulfilment of various tasks of effective influence in the sphere of advertising discourse. The effectiveness of the advertising message is largely determined by the nature of the

interaction of its verbal and non-verbal components. Under conditions of mass communication, confidence in nonverbal information is much higher than in verbal information. One of the special methods of such coordination is the visualization of the verbal metaphor used in the title or slogan.

It is obvious that the advertising message has its own internal space in which its “action” takes place that is the plot develops and there are characters. Advertising objects are the most frequently encountered references of advertising images. Symbolic, detailed and realistic are the main parameters of the situation. Interpretation by the addressee of the advertising message depends on the usage of signs in direct or figurative meaning. Many of the signs on the basis of which the advertising message is built are used in a figurative sense and the use of metaphors greatly enhances the effect of the impact on the recipient of an advertising message.

The advertising message operates at the level of generalization and conceptualization of individual objects and their characteristics that is why in one way or another there is an allegory in it. The necessary meaning of an allegory is created by using metaphor and metonymy. These techniques are especially effective if the referent is an abstract concept. Metaphor is based on the similarity or similarity of the advertising image and referent while in reality the one depicted and the image have no physical connection. Metaphors possess traits of both a symbol and an icon. The link between the referent and the advertising text is carried out at the level of non-physical, associative properties’ correlation. Metaphors perform the function of iconic signs when they are used to designate images of objects with similar characteristics (Zheltukhina, 2015).

If it is necessary to achieve the expected, necessary interpretation and decryption of the advertising message from the addressee, it is advisable to use non-verbal signs. For example, to convey the metaphor of “time flies” advertisers use an image of a clock face or an hourglass; the allegory of nobility and power is transmitted through the image of a lion. As a rule, such signs are easily and accurately interpreted by the recipient since they are widely known to modern consumers of the advertising product as units of cultural code. By acting on the consciousness of the recipient indirectly metaphor is capable of causing the effect of “internal illumination” and create cause-and-effect vectors of behaviour; metaphors in this case stimulate the associative thinking of the recipient.

Domestic advertising discourse is included in the global advertising business which in the context of globalization determined the exchange of goods with all countries and the creation of a kind of global market for goods and services which immediately affected the semiotic and mental space of Russian culture as a whole. The realities, stereotypes, traditions, methods and mechanisms of Western advertising production, Western advertising as a socio-suggestive process were transferred to the Russian advertising “ground” causing innovative trends in the formation and presentation of Western goods in Russian advertising (Fanyan, 2012; Gulinov et al., 2018; Vulfovich, 2016).

The key semiotic marker of advertising discourse is a slogan which is an advertising motto expressing the very essence of a commercial offer. If it is successful, it is firmly associated in the mind of the consumer with the products for which “Welcome to the country of Marlboro!” is invented. The slogan necessarily contains a certain emotive charge, it directly or indirectly encourages the purchase: “The new generation chooses Pepsi!”.

Of a particular importance for advertising semiotics are archetypes which are the cultural basis of the advertising text of any type. Archetypes are actively used by leading research and advertising agencies around the world. Conformity of brand identity to a certain archetype is recognized as a key component of the success of the campaigns of world-class politicians and cultural figures. Understanding archetypes gives marketers another tool to increase branding efficiency. The exact choice and configuration of the archetype allows the maximum impact on the target segment and through all the channels of consumer perception. Researchers note that advertising is most effective for customers if the message corresponds to the archetype that dominates or arises in their minds regarding the product of a company. Eight basic archetypes are allocated, each of them corresponds to a certain style of human behaviour which must be considered when creating a specific advertising product.

The idea of using archetypes is to offer the consumer the benefits that he is really interested in and do it in his (consumer) “language”, in his terms and expressions. In advertising discourse, the archetypes of the sovereign, warrior, hero, child, aesthete, keeper, thinker, sage, philosopher, wanderer, seeker, friend are most relevant. All these archetypes actualize different values and determine, by virtue of this, different consumer behaviour. The effective use of archetypes in commercials (two competing brands, Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola) are based on different archetypes representing different values.

Coca-Cola is promoting its product as a drink for the family, a drink for the holiday. Pepsi is advertised under the slogan “Take everything from life!” In this case, a collision occurs with two completely different archetypes ideally suited for each of the drinks. Pepsi has become a popular drink for young people which combined the archetypes of “Searcher” and “Hero”. This is the nature of people who are constantly ready for something new, striving to succeed in everything. The basic principle of the life of such people is getting maximum pleasure. Coca is designed for people with the archetypes of the Glorious Guy, the Child, and the Friend. For such types of character the main thing is a warm relationship within the family and a feeling of a good holiday. That is why before every Christmas the Coca-Cola TV commercial invariably appears to the catchy tune “Holiday Comes to Us”.

The space-time continuum in advertising discourse can be experienced as an objective (physical) phenomenon, as well as subjective (biological and socio-psychological). As a phenomenon, physical space and time are used in advertising text quite often when it comes to a particular hour time, time of day, year, specific dates, periods, etc. (Pantene Pro-vi shampoo: “In winter, your hair needs special protection”). As a biological phenomenon, space and time are interpreted as the rhythms of human life, daily and calendar, biographical which are limited to birth and death (advertising hairspray “Taft”: “You never know when the day will end”). As a socio-psychological reality, space and time are expressed in an advertising text as a person’s personal experiences, depending on their age characteristics, gender, emotional sphere, personal and situational perception and can be given at various scales: situationally as direct perception and subjective experience of space and short time intervals that are incommensurable with the duration of human life in general – perceptual time, functional time, time of action, reflection, creativity, etc. (Maggi soup: “Time to eat”; chocolate “Twix”: “Time to pause”); biographically as phenomena associated with age, one or another stage of life, with stages of biography (Lada car: “The road to life ...”), and historically as phenomena, through the prism of which the past and future are comprehended (Dirol chewing gum) : “Ancient times”). Time and space are represented in advertising as

images of objective givenness existing independently of consciousness (tariff plan from Beeline: “In winter and until the beginning of spring, a new offer is valid ...”); perceptual, i.e. given in sensory experience (Mars Max chocolate bar: “The weekend will last forever”), or conceptual, presented as a mental construct (“Avon”: “The future is in your hands”). At the same time, it should be emphasized that these images are always thought intentionally, i.e. through subjective reflection (Yezhov, 2018).

So, the advertising discourse covers the most diverse cultural sign systems. These are housing, clothing, food, decorations, diseases, recreation, sports, medicines, perfumes, cars, etiquette, toys, products for children, men, women, etc. Advertising also enriches the language and consciousness with the names of new brands, companies, products and services. At the same time, materials related to advertising of printed materials, for example, books, magazines, newspapers, etc. should be singled out as a separate group. Their peculiarity is that such advertising can have a social and moral impact on a potential consumer. The language of advertising in the semiotic aspect has recently become one of the most important objects of linguistic study because its role and functional orientation in the era of total globalization have led to a kind of expansion of the semantics and pragmatics of market-media discourses at all levels of social reality. It is the language of advertising that became the unifying factor that “connected” into a single communicative whole representatives of the most diverse public consumer groups (Lipiridi, 2015; Vulfovich, 2016; Zheltukhina et al., 2017a, 2017b).

For each element of communication, especially advertising a certain function is fixed: 1) the descriptive function of communication is focused on communication and is leading in the overwhelming number of communications. 2) the emotional (or expressive) function concentrates around the sender of the message, and its purpose is to convey its attitude towards the message or addressee; 3) the conative function is directed at the recipient of the message, that is, its goal is the recipient's specific reaction. 4) the phatic (that is, contact) function is aimed at maintaining contact between the participants of communication, determining the establishment, maintenance and termination of communication. 5) the metalinguistic function is focused on the code, that is, on what instructions should the interpreted statement be understood: 6) the reference function focuses on the context, that is, on the circumstances that created the communication: 7) the poetic (aesthetic) function is responsible for the ethical and aesthetic quality of the message, the form, style and method of transmitting relevant content.

However today we should note the trend when in modern advertising texts there are often violations of the language norm: unjustified hyperbolicity of assessment, inappropriate clericalism, jargon and also violation of the laws of logic, lexical compatibility, violation of grammatical, spelling, punctuation and stylistic norms, unjustified use of youth slang and profanity as well as an overabundance of terms in advertising consumer goods and services for a mass audience.

Violation of linguistic norms in advertising texts can be either a special technique of a language game which is used consciously, or a consequence of non-mastery of the norms of the modern Russian literary language. Advertising texts containing unjustified deviations from the norms always cause a sharply negative assessment of the consumer and entail a communicative failure. In the language of advertising texts, occasionalization plays a special role since advertising placed in the context of the media performs a “dual” sociopragmatic function: it informs consumers about a product or service and simultaneously increases the social importance of the media itself since advertising in this case is strongly

associated in consciousness of a reader or a listener with this particular magazine, newspaper, TV program, etc. According to our observations, a lot of occasionalisms function in the advertising and political press, especially in advertising articles on a particular politician and (or) candidate for a high state or municipal position (PR factor). Occasional derivation in advertising discourse representing the realization of the gaming potential of a language can be interpreted as a creative cognitive act that reveals the implicit mechanisms and capabilities of the language system. In the processes of occasional derivation new knowledge about the world is created and modified, latent and peripheral senses are updated which in a complex enhances the impact on representatives of different target audiences prompting a closer look at the advertised product and ultimately acquire it (Katermina, 2015; Katermina, 2017a).

The mentally significant for Russian consumers theme of motivation of the breadth of the Russian soul by the boundless Russian open spaces becomes an object of reflection and a structure-forming component in the texts of Russian culture, in the texts of popular culture as well as in different types and genres of advertising discourse. While promoting new products and services on the Russian market advertisers today are forced to reckon with the mental-semiotic specifics of Russian culture and language. For example, the Swedish furniture corporation IKEA released in 2013-2014 detailed advertising catalogs in the title of which the words used are the key signs of Russian culture: “New LIFE at Home” and “Waking up LOVE”. As it is known, the main postulate of Orthodox ethics – “God is Love” – in the historical perspective determined the formation of a number of key linguocultural concepts in the Russian concept sphere, such as “Soul”, “Love”, “Life”, etc. (Buyanova, 2014a; Buyanova, 2014b; Buyanova 2015). In such processes there is a kind of adaptation of Western advertisers to the cultural and mental values of Russian society which allows them to covertly manipulate their consciousness and eventually increase the sales index of their products.

7. Conclusion

In modern Russian advertising semiosis thus all aspects of social and civilizational evolution are presented: taking into account ethno-cultural specifics, the ability to psychologically and mentally correctly use language, semiotic, manipulative, suggestive, consumer, gender, cultural and many other factors of the national life of another ethnic group, another consumer country. Further research into the specifics of Russian advertising discourse will allow to determine all the mental-cognitive, semiotic-verbal, globalization and ethno-cultural parameters of the advertising picture of the world of the 21st century (Olyanitch, Khachmafova, Ostrovskaya, & Makerova, 2017; Tameryan et al., 2018).

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