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INTERTEXTUAL TOOLS IN PUBLIC STATE ANNOUNCEMENTS
DISCOURSE RELATED TO CHILDHOOD ISSUES

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Abstract

The paper focuses on intertextuality tools applied within the framework of public state announcements' (PSAs) discourse related to childhood issues. Despite the high interest of researchers to the problem of intertextual interaction, the question of intertextual mechanism of advertising (PSAs included) has not been covered to the full extent, though the dynamic character of advertising provides scholars with ample material for research. Innovation of the research presented is determined by the authors' attempt to study modern intertextuality tools used in PSA discourse. Their main objectives include the development of a system of values in the collective consciousness, adjustment of value priorities and orienting points, and the transfer of socially-approved behavioural patterns. That is why the PSAs related to childhood issues need effective and non-stereotypical representation of their objects — social maladies and values. The authors pay a special attention to the typology and functions of intertextuality tools applied in PSA texts. The authors identify attractive and persuasive functions of intertextual references as the most important ones which are implemented regularly in PSAs connected with childhood issues. Aesthetic, entertaining and delimitating functions are researched as secondary ones. The suggested classifications are accompanied with examples of Russian and foreign PSAs. The main topics covered by the PSAs under research include child abuse, educational issues, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

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1. Introduction

Intertextuality is now one of the most popular and challenging areas of humanities' knowledge. This concept falls in line with our modern epoch, because today's media landscape has become more of a mosaic nature consisting of different quotes and references. Intertextuality is the key feature of the modern cognitive system characterized by the perception of text as a definite self-developing phenomenon with a plurality of meanings being its immanent component. This fact makes intertextual interaction a constant subject of interest for linguists (Bogatyrev, 2016; Lunkova, 2011; Malahovskaya, 2007; Bazerman, 2004; Duff, 2004; Hylan, 2005; etc.).

Analysis of recent research dealing with intertextuality as texts' interaction theory shows that there are two intertextuality patterns – broad (radical) intertextuality and narrow intertextuality (Chernyavskaya, 2009, p. 180). According to the patterns mentioned, scholars understand intertextuality, on one hand, as a global phenomenon, when it becomes a universal feature of any text, (any text is intertext). On the other hand, intertextuality is seen as a specific feature of separate texts, in other words, it is an actualized intertextuality. All the above considered intertextuality as characterized by the texts' openness, which reveals their dialogic interactions. Global intertextuality is inapplicable for linguistic analysis, because it is hard to distinguish intertextuality from non-intertextuality; thus, in this research intertextuality is understood as an interaction of texts that activates intertextual signals urging the recipient to look for the links between the texts in question. Very often this intertextual disposition is created by the text's author deliberately, although it can be a result of the recipient's cognitive activity based on his or her language experience.

2. Problem Statement

Advertising is an integral part of our lives, which can influence public and individual conscience dramatically. Ter-Minasova points out that “advertising is a special register of business activities, it [advertising] has a right to be striking, unusual; the advertiser may use any tools – linguistic and visual – to make the advertisement fulfil its functions, to make it work” (Ter-Minasova, 2008, p. 229).

The aim of advertising is to reflect different forms of social life, its norms, values, and opinions; nonetheless, the advertiser must include the text created into a definite cultural-semiotic space. Therefore, research interested in advertising as an area of intertextuality's actualization can be explained by the fact that advertising discourse “appeals to nuclear elements of national-cultural space, and highlights the general culture and cultural memory of society”; also “cultural and language competences of modern native Russian speakers allow advertising texts' creators to perform “precedent” operations of different intellectual and mental complicatedness together with diverse ethic and psychological targeting” (Alekseyeva, 2009, p. 210).

A relatively stable part of basic discourses played out in advertising includes ancient, biblical, folklore, and classic texts being part of the cognitive base of an average language entity representative, together with important historical and cultural facts; they all become a source for implied and explicit references (Bobrovskaya, 2015, p. 43). Although, when the recipient is immersed into his or her own ethnic-cultural environment, the advertisement becomes associated with the recipient's past, because “it rests on

allusions connected with established artefacts of the spiritual and material culture of his or her nation” (Ezhova, 2009, p. 242).

Public state announcement (PSA) is a special type of communication; its main aim is not only to attract people’s attention to different social issues, but also to form a system of values in collective consciousness, and adjust value orientations and priorities. An author of a PSA is facing a problem of “laconic and expressive presentation of an idea, value, behavioural model, information on an important social issue, thus getting people motivated to commit positive actions” (Chernysheva, 2012, p. 4). To complete this task it proves useful to turn to intertextuality sources.

3. Research Questions

This research focuses on intertextual tools used in PSAs that are related to the issues of childhood, such as education, child health, child abuse, etc. The main research questions are as follows:

- What intertextual tools does a PSAs’ author use when appealing to the issues of childhood and social problems connected with children?
- What are the main sources of intertextual components of PSAs concerned with childhood issues?
- What are the functions of intertextual tools used in PSAs related to the childhood issues?

What aspects stipulate the implementation of different intertextual tools in the PSAs researched?

4. Purpose of the Study

One of a PSA author’s main tasks is to increase the persuasive potential of the message transferred and to elevate the “trust level” of the PSA’s recipient. By references to different trustworthy sources (references to research, specialists’ opinions, famous people, paroemiological fund, etc.) the author wants to convince the recipient of the faithfulness of the information transferred, and to neutralize any critical perception of this information (persuasive function). Therefore, the main purpose of the research is to define the mechanisms used by PSA authors to convince the recipient, along with the main functions of any intertextual tools used.

5. Research Methods

To attain the purpose of the research the authors employed the following research methods:

- Method of intertextual analysis, used to define interrelations of texts and to analyse formal and semantic transformation, both of text units, and whole texts.
- Method of complex linguistic description, which includes the observation, colligation, and classification of linguistic material.
- Method of contextual analysis.

6. Findings

In this section of the research, we would like to present our findings and illustrate them with examples from Russian and foreign PSAs related to childhood issues. Most of these PSAs include visual components, which will be described in parenthesis. All findings are arranged in accordance with the defined sources of intertextuality and are accompanied with analysis of intertextual tools’ functions.

6.1. Statistical data and calculations

Authors of PSAs related to childhood issues often use statistical data, because people usually trust information expressed in figures; it influences them very effectively. Often these figures are presented as some universal truth, which is very difficult to be belied. By trusting figures the person also puts trust into information that is coming along. Quite often statistical information is used to “threaten” people in order to prevent an advancement of social maladies and bad habits. To increase the persuasion potential these figures are usually accompanied with emotional slogans or questions.

E.g. *According to the Russian Health Protection Agency 60,000 of alcoholics out of 2 million are children under 14.*

Authors usually use round figures without references to the source of information (according to research, as claimed by, etc.). As a result, intertextual disposition based upon the information presented is created by the recipients themselves, because figures and statistical information are understood as outcomes of professional analytical activities.

6.2. References to paroemiological fund

Paroemias used in PSAs usually play a persuasive role connected with the trustworthiness and cultural importance of such precedent texts. Moreover, proverbs and sayings are characterized by a very wide referential potential, which allows the authors to use such intertextual inclusions in different discourses. Very often a PSA’s author refers to texts containing “national wisdom”, which are thematically connected with the social issue in question. Paroemias are used in PSAs in their canonical form (form and meaning stay the same), but sometimes they are transformed. In this case, some components of these precedent statements are substituted by new ones, which transfer the main meaning. Paroemias include not only proverbs and sayings, but also aphorisms that have lost their authorship.

To increase the persuasive effect, such references can be accompanied by statistical data, emoticons, strikethrough font, hashtags, etc.

E.g. *Children are the flowers of life* (typical Russian set expression used when talking about children). *According to statistics, 8% of women stay afetal after abortions. Now, 7 million Russian women cannot experience the joys of motherhood.*

E.g. *Movement is pain* (transformed Russian saying “Movement is life”). *This girl does not have a childhood. Only pain.*

6.3. References to famous people’s sayings

The other widespread tool of persuasion used in PSAs related to the problems of children is referring to authorities (famous people, athletes, celebrities, etc.).

Quite often, these references have an attribution and xenomarkers, though sometimes there is no intertextual disposition.

E.g. *You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. #Russiawithoutviolence.*

Sometimes a quote can be used along with the photo of the person quoted, or it can be accompanied by a thematically related illustration.

Recently, PSAs' authors have turned to authorities more familiar to their target audiences. For example, in 2010, Russian publishing house "Eksmo" decided to appeal to teenagers through their referential leaders – footballers. As a result, they organized a campaign to promote reading among youngsters. Professional football players that took part in this project made their own slogans about sport and reading.

E.g. *To read books is as important as to read the game* (Sergey Ignashevich).

Foreign PSA creators also refer to famous individuals including Stephen Fry, The Beatles, Magic Johnson, etc.

6.4. Reference to precedent text

One more way to increase the persuasive potential of a PSA is to use references to some precedent statements connected with a well-known text or precedent situation. Along with the function of persuasion, this intertextual tool allows PSA creators to draw the recipients' attention towards the social issue in question.

E.g. *Beware of vicious parents* (visual component – a sign usually used in Russia to warn people of a dog's presence, though instead of the dog there is a picture of a belt).

One of the creative techniques used in PSA messages is the transformation of the precedent statement's context aiming at the effective transfer of the message to the recipients.

E.g. *Just do it* (visual component – a child, sewing a NIKE sneaker).

6.5. Reference to works of art and literature

Usage of references to works of art and literature can be explained by the attractiveness of such intertextual components; a well-known text in a new context works as some kind of eye-stopper, inevitably attracting the recipients' attention. Besides, in the process of PSA perception, the recipient, especially in the case of unmarked intertextuality, gets involved in an intellectual game that helps the recipient to memorize this PSA. There is one more important thing: the inclusion of artistic and fictional elements increases a PSA's aesthetic potential that brings this piece of advertising to a new level of persuasion efficiency.

PSA texts addressing problems of childhood usually include references which can be recognized easily by the target audience. That is why advertisers usually refer to the heroes of well-known fables and tales. For example, in the UNICEF posters created to promote reading, computers are "dressed up" in the costumes of very popular characters of children fiction (Red Riding Hood, Harry Potter, etc.).

Another reading promotion campaign, which took place in Brazil, showed Red Riding Hood, Pinocchio, and the three Little Pigs dressed as vagabonds. PSAs' authors urged their recipients not to throw away old books, because there will always be people, who may enjoy reading them.

We have mentioned a similar campaign initiated by the Russian Publishing House "Eksmo", which refers to the recipients' "cultural memory". In this case, there is a mixture of different intertextual tools, because references to the famous fictional characters are combined with references to famous people:

E.g. *Love to couch with "Madame Bovary"* (visual element - famous Russian journalist Artemy Troitsky in a sleeping gown with a pillow under his arm); *Yesterday, I woke up with arms round "Three*

Sisters” (visual element - famous Russian radio and TV host Anton Komolov looking embarrassed), etc. Quite often, PSA authors refer to famous TV-shows, films and TV-series.

7. Conclusion

PSA persuasion means and technologies have been constantly developing and improving. The specificity of the PSA discourse related to childhood issues urges advertisers to find new ideas and approaches to transfer the message, increase its persuasive potential, its appeal, and motivation efficiency. We believe that by using intertextual tools, PSA authors achieve several aims. The most important of them are the attraction of attention (attractive function) and persuasion (persuasive function). Minor functions include the aesthetic function (intertextual indices are understood as sources of advertising creativity), entertaining function (in the process of a PSA decoding the recipient gets involved in a sort of intellectual game resulting in his or her intellectual satisfaction, when the advertiser’s riddle is solved), and delimitative function (choosing an intertextual tool in accordance with the target recipients’ specificity, addressing a peculiar referential group, members of which are able to recognize an intertextual reference and understand the author’s intention)

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