

Peculiarities of Advertising Information Representation in the English-Language Mass Media Discourse

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Abstract

The relevance of the study is driven by the role of advertising as a genre of mass media discourse in the formation of collective and individual conceptual and linguistic pictures of the world, the conceptual system of the subject of interpretation of the world around him, human consciousness, structuring, formation and transformation of knowledge about the world, and interpretation of knowledge. The research material was modern English-language advertising messages on the English-language Internet. The analysis of the practical material has shown that although the analyzed advertising messages do not directly indicate the evaluation of a product or commodity, it is still implicitly traced: some advertising messages advertise high-quality, new products, while others contain an appeal. It is concluded that the linguistic interpretation of advertising messages is represented by three types: selective, classifying, and evaluative. When interpreting an advertising message, a person, as a representative of a certain society, chooses in his or her mind those units of knowledge about an object of the surrounding world that he or she possesses. In other words, selective conceptualization takes place, which means that the selective function of interpretation is realized. The classifying type of linguistic interpretation implies an appeal to certain emotions and feelings of the subject of interpretation, as well as the division of goods into categories (tasty, useful, high-quality, new), which is evident in advertising messages. It has been proven that the implicit evaluation of goods and services as objects of interpretation indicates the evaluative type of linguistic interpretation.

Keywords: journalistic style, mass media discourse, advertising information, information technology, advertising, advertising message, Internet, social networks

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the issues of advertising, advertising messages, texts, and advertising discourse, in general, have been the subject of numerous studies. It is hard to imagine a modern society without advertising. Representing a certain type of social interaction, advertising covers almost all spheres of life in modern society, related to various types of human activity. Advertising text and advertising discourse are studied from the standpoint of sociolinguistics, linguoculturology, psycholinguistics, and media linguistics. In addition to informing the audience about objects and events, advertising serves as a tool for attracting and retaining the audience's attention, exerting a certain influence (using various strategies and tactics), namely, language influence and inducing any actions. Such influence involves shaping the general emotional background or mood of the recipient. Emotions are the most profound categorization factors that determine the general contours of the conceptual image of the world built by the mind. The study aims to examine and identify the ways of linguistic interpretation of advertising messages from the standpoint of the cognitive approach (Iatsyshyn, A., Iatsyshyn, A., Kovach, V., Zinovieva, I., Artemchuk, V., Popov, O., Turevych, A. 2020). Moreover, it is equally important to identify the main cognitive mechanisms of interpretation. To realize the research goal, the method of linguistic cognitive analysis is applied. It involves the study of collective knowledge, enshrined in language units, and individual knowledge, gained as a result of personal experience, in interaction with the world around us. Such experience allows a person to construct and format the cognitive content of a message in different ways (Shytyk, L., & Akimova, A. 2020). The research material was based on advertising messages on the Internet, which were selected through a continuous sample.

2. Methods

The analytical material was analyzed using general scientific methods: descriptive analytical, deductive, inductive, and comparison methods. The following methods were used to analyze the linguistic material: descriptive, continuous sampling, dictionary definitions, contextual and component analysis.

The descriptive analytical method was used to describe and summarize the characteristics of the advertising information representation in the English-language mass media discourse. The deductive method was used to test the hypotheses derived from the literature review and previous studies. The inductive method was used to generate new insights and knowledge from the data. The comparison method was used to compare the similarities and differences between different types of advertising information. The descriptive method for linguistic analysis was used to analyze the language features of the advertising information, including lexical, syntactic, and semantic aspects. The continuous sampling method was used to collect a representative sample of the advertising information from the corpus. The dictionary definition method was used to clarify the meanings of key terms used in the advertising information. The contextual analysis method was used to analyze the meaning of the advertising information in its broader social and cultural context. The component analysis method was used to identify the key components of the advertising information, such as slogans, images, and messages. The discourse analysis method was used to analyze the language use and social practices in the advertising discourse. The semiotic analysis method was used to analyze the visual and nonverbal aspects of the advertising information, such as images and symbols. The cognitive analysis method was used to analyze the mental processes and cognitive strategies involved in the interpretation and production of the advertising information. Overall, the combination of these analytical methods provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the advertising information representation in the English-language mass media discourse.

3. Theoretical Background

The second half of the twentieth century is characterized by increased attention of linguists to the study of mass media discourse. At the same time, there are two main directions of discourse research: communicative (Schirm, 2013), (Alexieva, 2004, 2005), (Blom, JP., & Gumperz, J., 1972), (Angelova, V., 2008), (Sobur, 2006), (Li, 2018), (Silverblatt, 2001) and activity (Boyd-Barret. O., 1977), (Ch. Wang, 2017), (Corner, J., 1996), (Fairclough N, 1995), (Hahn, Fred E, 2002), (Kasanga, 2019), (Xiaqing, 2017). Representatives of the first direction study how language interacts with extralinguistic factors. Representatives of the activity-based approach view discourse as a social construction of reality and a form of knowledge manifestation. Language is a means of realizing human activity. The concept of discourse is mainly associated with manifestations of communication in society (communicative discourse) and communication (visual discourse). In addition, discourse is associated with the manifestation of rules of communication, ways of presenting, and realizing the pragmatic goal of speakers. In many sources, discourse is perceived as a manifestation of cultural communication. Despite ethnocultural peculiarities, intercultural discourse is distinguished in communication. Social, age and gender characteristics of communication participants are also identified with types of discourse. In such cases, we speak, in particular, of political discourse and feminist discourse. In foreign linguistics, there is a concept of discourse systems. They are compared to a type of thinking, behavior, and communication. In this case, discourse systems can refer to large groups of people. Discourse systems usually encompass broader communication systems in which members of a particular community participate. As a genre of mass media discourse, advertising messages construct media space and create their model of virtual reality (Leshchenko, M. P., Kolomiets, A. M., Iatsyshyn, A. V., Kovalenko, V. V., Dakal, A. V., & Radchenko, O. O. 2021). Advertising acts as a trigger in shaping the perception and interpretation of the world and serves as a mechanism for modeling the values of mass culture. Advertising creates a certain cognitive state in the audience, evokes a certain response, and constructs/corrects intentions. Advertising has an informational and emotional impact on people, resulting in the formation of a certain perception of themselves and society. Moreover, it influences the formation of collective and individual behavioral patterns that reflect the most important features of human perception and comprehension of the world. Mass media discourse is defined as an event-based speech formation. It is, in fact, a social activity in which the main role is played by cognitive formations that focus on various aspects of the inner world of a linguistic personality. The formation of any discourse is centered around some generalized knowledge. As a result, a certain semantic context is created, which includes information about the subject, object, communicative situation, events and their specific circumstances, and the assessment of the event.

As one of the genres of mass media or mass information discourse, advertising helps to systematize information and makes it accessible to human cognitive activity. On the one hand, it facilitates the process of interpreting information, and on the other hand, it refracts the interpretation, shifting the modus operandi of our perception of reality. This is due to the author's subjective attitude to the advertised object or event. The interpretation of events is considered to be both the process and the result of subjective interpretation and assumes a certain degree of freedom of interpretation of meaning. The limits of interpretation are determined by the laws of semantic correspondence and ideological factors.

Thus, on the one hand, language is one of the tools of the cognitive process for people. On the other hand, language has social significance, as it affects the interpersonal relationships of those who speak it. Any language code has an indexical character, as it indicates a set of rights and obligations that are important in the process of communication. With the help of words, a person forms his or her ideas about subjects, objects, events, and their basic properties. Moreover, words help to establish the meaning of the corresponding linguistic expressions. Knowledge and meanings are encoded in language, as all knowledge is transmitted primarily in linguistic form (Nida E, 1975), (Fisher, B. Aubrey. 1986), (McClure, E., 1998).

Interpretation is based on two basic cognitive processes: conceptualization and categorization of the world. People structure and interpret the same events in their minds in different ways, modeling situations that can be called cumulative knowledge. When cognizing the world, a person chooses the object of conceptualization, categorization, and the linguistic means of its representation. Talking about categorization, scientists emphasize that it is a product of human experience and imagination, perception, motor activity and culture, and, at the same time, metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery. It is worth noting that personal experience is a combination of collective and

individual knowledge about an event or object. Interpretation is a complex concept in both its broad and narrow senses. In the broad sense, interpretation is interpreted as any mental operation aimed at obtaining new knowledge at the collective level. In the narrow sense, interpretation is understood as a linguistic cognitive activity of a single individual. The result of this activity is the representation of his subjective understanding of the object and events, and their characteristics (Crystal, 1996), (Eco, 1976), (Fauconnier G, 1999).

Human consciousness is a certain structure or system of knowledge and ideas about the world around us, consisting of interconnected elements (quanta) of knowledge. For the efficient and well-coordinated operation of any system, including the cognitive one, the structuring of knowledge is a prerequisite. An unstructured consciousness cannot successfully function and assimilate incoming information, and cannot recognize, interpret and correlate new information with existing knowledge. In a linguistic situation, we adjust our consciousness to perceive incoming information. Moreover, every time we correlate new information with existing knowledge. In other words, new knowledge is formed, structured, and schematized in the human mind, and old knowledge is transformed. Therefore, interpretation is always an interaction between collective and individual knowledge. Interpretation of the world (and therefore of all events and objects existing in the world) is considered from the point of view of cognitive linguistics as a process and result of a person's subjective understanding and explanation of the world and himself/herself in this world. It also means both the process and the result of the subjective representation of the world, taking into account the collective and individual experience of interaction with the world. Depending on the vector of interaction between a language sign and the external world and the human conceptual system, there are two main types of interpretation: primary (interaction between a language sign and the external world) and secondary (aimed at the interaction between a language sign and the human conceptual system). Thus, the object of linguistic interpretation is either the world itself (primary interpretation) or knowledge about the world (secondary interpretation), verbalized by linguistic units (Bolton, 2006), (McArthur, 1996). In the first case, the interpretation aims to reflect the diversity of objects and events and the peculiarities of their perception by a person as a representative of a certain society. In the second case, it is the interpretation (interpretation) of existing knowledge to clarify, classify or evaluate an event by the individual conceptual system of a particular person. In this case, both primary and secondary linguistic interpretations can be of both general and individual natures. The result of the general primary interpretation is the categorization of objects and events at the basic level. The general secondary interpretation is manifested in the subjective interpretation of knowledge about the world, in the assessment of these events and objects, taking into account collective values, assessments, and norms. Private primary interpretation is associated with the differentiation of events. Private secondary interpretation focuses on a person's subjective assessment of an object or event, its characteristics, and properties in terms of personal norms, evaluation scales, and values (Featherstone, 1991), (Bonvillain, N., 1997).

Along with the general and individual interpretation, there are selective, classifying, and evaluative interpretations, which, in turn, realize the functions of selection, classification, and evaluation. The selective function is the choice of conceptualization and representation of the world in the mind of a person as a representative of a certain social group (national/professional). It is reflected in the structure of the linguistic picture of the world of a person as a subject of interpretation, considering the collective norms, assessments, and values accepted within a particular culture. It is worth considering the basic postulate of cognitive linguistics, which states that in the process of cognition of the world around us and ourselves in this world, a person perceives the world (the process of conceptualization) and classifies objects according to their characteristics (the process of categorization). Furthermore, an individual interprets knowledge (the process of interpretation) following the existing knowledge about these objects or events, thus forming the personal conceptual system. Thus, for successful understanding in the process of communication, it is necessary to establish correspondences between conceptual entities (elements of conceptual systems) in the minds of the speaker and the listener. Such correspondences are achieved through the use of certain language units and structures that form the necessary meanings. Very often, people use words and expressions without taking into account all their meanings but resorting to the use of operational concepts and conceptual features. As G. Fauconnier notes, language is only the tip of the cognitive iceberg, and we make up the rest ourselves. When interpreting and constructing meaning in our way, we rely on existing collective and individual knowledge (Fauconnier G, 1999).

The main function of cognitive mechanisms is to transform the original meaning and form a new one. The formation of meaning is based on certain cognitive mechanisms: filtering, focusing, norms orientation, ideals, stereotypes, and collective values, as well as various ways of secondary representation of the original conceptual content. Such mechanisms are called conceptual derivation since the formation of a new meaning occurs as a result of one or another way of interpreting the original verbalized knowledge. The cognitive mechanisms of secondary representation of knowledge include conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, conceptual integration, linguistic interference, implication, etc.

Given the above theoretical positions, one can say that advertising messages are examples of general secondary language interpretation and collective knowledge about objects and events in the world around us.

3. Results and Discussion

Advertising, like many other social spheres, reflects all social changes. The pandemic, during which the majority of the population was forced to work online, has led to a new requirement for online advertising: Zoom aesthetic. This ad is an example of a common secondary linguistic interpretation. Firstly, it is focused on the collective knowledge of people as representatives of a certain social group; secondly, it is associated with secondary conceptualization and categorization. The first knowledge about the Zoom platform was the understanding of it as a specialized program that allows for online meetings and conferences. Thus, the expression Zoom aesthetic demonstrates the development of secondary linguistic interpretation and is based on linguistic interference, since the interpretation requires the involvement

of additional knowledge, namely aesthetic, beautiful, and presentable appearance. As a result of secondary conceptualization and categorization, primary knowledge is reconstructed and new knowledge is formed:

1) Internet advertising is pleasant to look at. It implies adherence to certain principles of drawing attention to a particular advertisement. It is known that during the pandemic, many commercials were gloomy, and the creators of the ads decided to apply a new approach.

Let us consider the following example of advertising, which is also related to work on the Zoom platform: Groom the Zoom. Who said Zoom could be beautiful? According to the dictionary definition, the verb to groom means

- 1) to clean the animal, often by brushing its fur,
- 2) to make the surface smoother, flatter, or harder so it is easier to ski on.

This phrase is an example of metaphorical interpretation, as the conceptual metaphor "groom the zoom" acts as a cognitive mechanism, meaning preliminary preparation and configuration of the Zoom platform for work. When interpreting the chosen advertising message, a person chooses certain units of knowledge about the platform and its properties in his or her mind, i.e., appeals to his or her primary knowledge. Here, linguistic interpretation realizes a selective function, i.e. we can talk about a selective type of interpretation. Based on their primary knowledge, representatives of a given society (people who work with this platform) form new knowledge about the peculiarities of working with the platform (how it can be used/customized). In other words, there is a secondary linguistic interpretation and the formation of a collective conceptual system and linguistic worldview.

Another example of metaphorical interpretation is the advertising message Keep your eyes on the new - an advertisement for an Audi car. It is assumed that two cognitive mechanisms are used in this example. The first mechanism that contributes to the construction of meaning is the conceptual metaphor: keep your eyes on it. The second mechanism is the name of the company Audi, without which the interpretation could not be quite correct, since such an advertising message could be applied to any product that is expected to appear on the market.

A similar example is the advertising campaign of the famous Starbucks coffee shop: Starbucks, Every name's a story. At first glance, the conceptual metaphor (name's a story) and the name of the Starbucks company also serve as a cognitive mechanism here, emphasizing its focus on each customer. It means that every name written on a coffee cup is a story from the life of a certain person. Thus, the linguistic interpretation of this advertising message is based on three cognitive mechanisms: conceptual metaphor, linguistic interference, and company name.

The use of the conceptual metaphor "blow your mind away" and the name of Burger King to develop a secondary interpretation is also observed in Burger King advertising: It'll blow your mind away (Burger King). In this example, the cognitive mechanism of linguistic interpretation is metaphorical interpretation, in particular, the classifying type of metaphorical interpretation. It involves the use of metaphors to denote feelings and emotions.

The basis of linguistic interpretation in the example "Burger King: Moldy Whopper. The beauty of no artificial preservatives" is the conceptual metaphor "the beauty of no artificial preservatives". Without this metaphor there is cognitive dissonance - why is a moldy hamburger advertised? However, the use of a conceptual metaphor contributes to the formation of the correct meaning, it is a kind of interpretation vector; it defines the product as a quality product without artificial preservatives. So, just like in the previous example, the cognitive mechanism is the classifying type of metaphorical interpretation.

As a cognitive mechanism for constructing meaning and interpretation, the following example of an advertisement for the British hardware store chain B&Q uses conceptual metonymy: "You don't buy a life - you build one. You can do it". It is assumed that the conceptual metonymy is based on the principle: the specificity of the company (the company's function) is a call to a certain way of life, namely, hardware stores call for building your life yourself.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the practical material shows that even though the analyzed advertising messages do not explicitly refer to the evaluation of a product or commodity, it is implicitly traced. Some advertisements promote high-quality, new products, while others contain an appeal. Thus, it can be concluded that three types represent the linguistic interpretation of advertising messages: selective, classifying, and evaluative. When interpreting an advertising message, a person as a representative of a certain society chooses in his/her mind those units of knowledge about the object of the surrounding world that he/she possesses. That is, selective conceptualization takes place, and thus the selective function of interpretation is realized. The classifying type of linguistic interpretation implies an appeal to certain emotions and feelings of the subject of interpretation. It also often contains the division of goods into categories (tasty, healthy, high-quality, new), which is seen in advertising messages. The implicit evaluation of goods and services as objects of interpretation indicates the evaluative type of language interpretation.

Thus, the linguistic interpretation of advertising messages as a human cognitive activity can be manifested in three main types: selective, classifying, and evaluative. The following cognitive mechanisms serve as the cognitive basis of linguistic interpretation: conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, interference, and the use of the company name as a cognitive context. The cognitive mechanisms of linguistic interpretation include conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, interference, and the use of the company name as a cognitive context. Additionally, advertising messages in English-language mass media discourse use rhetorical devices, persuasive language, and

emotional appeals to capture the audience's attention and persuade them to take action.

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