

MASS MEDIA TESTS: SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECT (BASED ON ADVERTISING TEXTS)

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the social and cultural aspects of mass media texts. The ways and the principles of this research are defined. The study concludes that the social nature of advertising communication enables it to reflect all the nuances of life of society and to form an expedient paradigm of human relations in the context of various social and cultural phenomena of reality.

Keywords: advertising discourse; social phenomenon; way of life; paradigm of the human relations; development of language and society.

Traditionally advertizing is considered as a way to impact on mass consciousness which can influence the motivation of audience behavior. Researchers of an advertising discourse note that “ambitious self-demonstration and aspiration to subordinate all new spheres of the manifestation” are considered as the fundamental properties of advertizing [1: 32]. Growth of the advertizing sociocultural significance contributes to the fact that it directly serves the most important of human motivation – the desire to acquire the subjects of material / non-material sphere of life.

The purpose of this article is to examine a role and a place of the sociocultural component in the formation of mass media texts and to identify some approaches to the study of this phenomenon. We share the point of view of some authors researching the sociocultural aspects of an advertizing discourse proceeding from the prerequisite that the range of impact of advertizing is extremely wide, noting that advertizing represents not only information about goods and services giving a recipient (a consumer) setup on their purchase but also a peculiar ideological code which creates system of symbolical values: social, moral, political, family. Inclusion of goods in a symbolical exchange happens at the same time to objectification of abstract values, such as feeling of patriotism, state priority over the certain individual, men over the woman, etc. Today advertizing – always a metaphor in combination with multidimensionality, word-play and visual symbols. So, A. Levinson, analyzing development of an advertizing discourse, allocates the following stages, namely: advertising product – advertizing of its quality – advertising lifestyle – advertising of a consumer of goods (addressee) and dynamic role-playing situation, which is considered in the context of the advertised product. For the target audience advertising acts as a representa-

tive of society to which this group corresponds, i.e. advertizing legitimizes a target group, enters it in a society [2].

The problem of social differentiation of language at all levels of its structure, being one of the main problems of sociolinguistics and is considered in a modern advertizing discourse. Structure of social differentiation of language is multivariate that is caused by heterogeneity of social structure and variety of social situations. Based on a study of advertising material it is possible to claim that one of typological features of the advertising discourse is the focus on imitation, display of changes of development of language and society which are shown at all levels of language structure (phonologic, morphological, syntactic, lexico-semantic). This imitation is considered rather effective way of approach of advertizing society to objectively existing one. Thus, we share the point of view of a number of linguists that it's necessary to carry out a careful, sociolinguistic study of local dialects and city popular speech, professional and social limited subsystems – technical languages and social group jargons, which are rather active in the communicative respect (E. Bliss, J. Wells, D. Rosewarne, S. Mufwence, G. Smitherman, J. Rickford, B. Ward, L. Krysin, D. Cristal, S. Decheva, T. Anikhovskaya etc.).

The use of slang, reduced and colloquial forms is often applied in an advertizing discourse as a colloquial type of the speech for reconstruction of a real communicative situation. Some examples from our English experimental materials can serve as confirmation of the presented conclusions [3]:

* “grab a Snickers!” – an advertizing of Snickers chocolate bar directed on a youth audience, actively is marked by youth slang that can be traced in the Russian translation of the English version of an advertising slogan “Hungry? Grab a Snicker!” – “He тормози! Сникерсни!” (Russ. lang.);

* “You’ll love this vac and how it effortlessly devours dirt!” – an advertizing of a vacuum cleaner “PowerVac” (vac – vacuum cleaner [abbr.]);

* “Why moms who care say YES to Honeycomb? That’s because Honeycomb has the nutrition moms can feel good about” – an advertizing “Honeycomb” (mom – [colloq.] mommy / momma);

* “with 1/3 less sugar, you can love ‘FROOT LOOPS’ as much as your kids do” – Fast Food advertizing breakfast for children (kid – [sl.] child);

* “Want to refresh your fitness routine? Skip the gym and hit the pool” – an advertising of healthy lifestyle (gym – [colloq.] gymnasium);

* “Where there’s life... there’s Bud” – an advertising of beer “Budweiser” (Bud – [abbr.] Budweiser);

* “Bye-bye ultra dry. Introducing Never Say Dry Extra-rich moisture cream” – an advertising of a moisturizing cream (bye-bye – [colloq.] goodbye);

* “Do you want a shape like a bra? Or do you want a shape like a woman?” – an advertising “Body Bra by Warner’s” (bra – [abbr.] brassière).

Obviously Russian advertizing actively operates such lexical units because today there aren't strict regulations and requirements for creating mass media. As an example one can represent some advertising texts: "It can be fun to revel at a party in honor of St. Valentine's Day"; "Come and rock with us!"; "Just a cool drink"; "...Shop Rags – it's something!"; "This outfit is only in a store Freebie"; "Bon Pari candies – fruit lawlessness!"; "We – new, cool, lilac Mirinda. Fruit Mirinda – the funkiest lemonade!"; "For the cool grandson – the cool grandmother!!!"; "The lethal credit – 0% the first contribution, 0% the credit, 0% commission"; "Hangout rate is \$ 005!"; "LOGAN. It is not afraid of Russian roads! Where Renault Logan has been already started selling, cars go in flight"; "In Short, Autostyle – We'll surpass! All!"; "Aspirin S. Give cold up as a bad job!"; "Strepsils – When cold takes for a throat"; "Fint. For those who are true cool!"; "We'll deliver at its best! Never mind! We'll deliver, install, connect" and etc.

We note that a social differentiation of language includes also some questions which are connected with the research of influence of age, level of education, belonging to various social groups and some other characteristics on the process of speech communication. The concept of «social role» is of interest to identify the specifics of communicative act, because it determines the choice of language means, their compatibility and ways of phonetic registration of the statement. Creation of the sociolinguistic portraits can be seen as a quite perspective direction of sociolinguistic studies as the speech of the certain person can accumulate the features being typical for language habits of the social environment involved [4, 5]. It is necessary to notice that modern oral advertizing rather actively uses the methods for creating a sociolinguistic portrait of the individual and the groups united on the basis of professional, social accessory as effective expressive means. Sociolinguistics considers some problems of the description of standard situations of speech communication, formulating the rules of speech behavior of native speakers in various situations depending on the purposes of the communicative act. L. Krysin suggests to consider a speech situation as the structured object consisting of a number of variables, namely, the sender and his social role; addressee and his social role; the relations between the sender and the addressee; manner; purpose; means (literary language, local dialect, professional language, social jargon); method (contact / distant, oral / written), the change of each value leading to changes in the linguistic characteristics of speech situation [6]. We believe that the presented variables, their correlation and collocability can be considered in practice of the analysis of a modern advertizing discourse. It is obvious that social roles, which are typical in a society involved, are acquired in the socialization process, i.e. the social role is a form of public behavior of the person caused by his situation in a social group and a communication situation. Couples of social roles – the most typical form of role interaction of people: 1) the role of the first partici-

pant of a situation (X) is higher than a role of the second participant of a situation (Y): $P_x > P_y$; 2) the role of the first participant of a situation is lower than a role of the second participant: $P_x < P_y$; 3) the roles of both participants of a situation are equal: $P_x = P_y$ [6: 3].

It should be noted that differentiation of speech situations due to the communicative purposes of the statement happens according to basic laws of the theory of speech acts; by means of the sociolinguistic analysis of communicative situations one can identify the social causes of infringement of communicative postulates (maxims), the emergence of communicative failures. The process of advertising creation, according to our opinion, represents a certain communicative situation where speech intention of a sender is formed due to the influence and the factor of an addressee, his social and professional accessory, an education level, the age characteristic, etc.

In modern sociolinguistics a special place is given to the issue of interaction and relation of language and culture. These relations are of a dual nature, the processes of contact of various cultures are reflected in the lexical loans. It is obvious that in modern conditions the processes of loanwords and their development in stylistic and genre kinds of the speech have a common cultural, ideological, social context. Research of adoption of loanwords in the different social environment and means of its influence to an advertizing discourse are of a certain interest for the analysis of the advertizing texts in sociolinguistics.

The diglossia phenomenon as sociocultural phenomenon can be considered as one of features of a modern advertizing discourse. Since the language is both the transmission system of thoughts, the means of communication and the significant factor in the cultural, ideological, political, ethnic processes, so special living conditions and activity of communities lead to formation and adaptation of various sign systems. Now the development of society seeks for formation of the united sign space based on the cultural bilingualism leading to interpenetration of semiotics spaces being manifested in a language as numerous loanwords having not only lexical character, but also mental one.

Researches of the advertizing material give to us the grounds to claim that the appeal to cultural, historical events is the characteristic feature of a modern advertizing discourse and is shown by means of cliches, quotes, allusions, precedent texts and names in an advertisement. Advertizing is considered as a special type of communication in which language signs, i.e. words and various language cliches, represent the attitude of the people expressed in objects and its understanding realized in a context of cultural traditions and its understanding being a powerful source of interpretation of the hidden cultural level. So in a research of Russian advertizing discourse Y. Pikuleva suggested to use the term "precedent cultural sign" reflecting the semiotics nature of a precedence phenomenon of precedence reflecting, correlation to national and cultural background knowledge and active inclusion

in modern communicative process as the symbols traditionally recognized in this society, help to realize the pragmatical potential of the advertizing message [7: 23].

Analyzing some English and Russian printed, oral advertizing texts it is obviously possible to reveal actively used precedent phenomena, namely, precedent names (anthroponyms, theonyms, ideonyms), precedent statements (quotes, phraseological units, proverbs, sayings), quite often transformed for the purpose of easier storing and language play [8]. Let's turn to some examples: * "Who Loves Me, Follow Me" – an advertizing of jeans clothing "Jesus" (a phrase from a book "New Testament"); * "To Share or Not to Share..." – an advertizing of an investment company (an allusion of V. Shakespeare's poem "Hamlet" – "To be or not to be"); * "When Cathy Cole and Peggy Burton saw Joan Emery's new floor, they couldn't believe their feet" – an advertizing of a company "Gaf Sofstep Vinyl Floors" (an expression "Do not believe your eyes!"); * "Tastes differ, tastes cry" – an advertizing of yogurts (a proverb "Tastes differ"); * "The person for the person – the Chanson" – an advertizing of a radio channel (a proverb "The person for the person – the friend"); * "Bravo for rest and Bravo for work" – an advertizing of a cocktail "Bravo" (A right for rest and the right for work); * "Atlant", "Viking", "Suvorov" – precedent names used as a name of trade enterprises, beauty salons – "Cleopatra", "Queen Margot".

Obviously, the use of precedent phenomena in printing and oral advertisement enhances pragmatic potential of advertising, making it more vivid and memorable. However, one should take into account the fact that the appeal to this phenomenon in an advertising text suggests the common background knowledge of a sender and a recipient of the communicative act.

One of the features of the modern advertising discourse is to study a gender component and gender stereotypes of a society. The gender (social or sociocultural sex) isn't a linguistic category, but its content can be revealed by the analysis of language structures explaining the relevance of linguistic competence to study the cultural representation of the sexes [9]. It is important to identify, by what means, in what semantic fields, in which cases the sex is fixed in the language. It is known, that the factor of the biological sex of the language was established in the antiquity with understanding the grammatical gender category. The hypothesis about the appearance and functioning of the category of gender in the language was symbolic and semantic, i.e. based on correlation of natural grammatical categories of *sexus* and a grammatical category of *genus* [10]. The studies involved did not observe the correlation of gender, education and age, the conclusions were drawn using unrepresentative material. All the differences between a male and female speech were defined by only a biological sex. But in the 60th years the sociolinguistics considers the functioning of language in groups of people united on the basis of profession, gender, age, place of residence.

Studying of some language stereotypes, dynamics of their development reflecting the changes in a traditional role differentiation of a society is rather topical area of gender researches. So, according to a number of researchers, gender stereotypes are a special case of a stereotype, cultural and socially caused by opinions on qualities, attributes and standards of behavior of both sexes and their reflection in a language.

One of the most stable stereotypes is a roleplay one. This stereotype is formed already in childhood, being a result of influence of system of gender belief, i.e. knowledges and standarts how men and women have to react emotionally in these or those situations. Some time ago in Russian advertizing such concepts as “serious and responsible work” and “woman and work” were opposed. Similar TV commercials supported such stereotype, as an incompatible concepts – “career” and “woman” (woman is an assistant, a secretary, but not a leader; a female is a performer, not a generator of ideas). Advertizing texts created on the basis of using these stereotypes have two discourses. The primary discourse describes quality and advantages of goods / service. The secondary discourse informs who should carry out a work, who should make a decision, i.e. an advertiser transferred to a consumer the conventional version of social and gender world and relationship in it.

Currently, however, the advertising image of a women is changing and is presented in a slightly different way. The woman becomes free, energetic, active having new demands and desire to be independent from men, to have equal opportunities as a man pocesses in the professional term; gradually a woman takes some positions as a man has, tries being realized as a person. Respectively, for the characteristic of a such image words reflecting development of the strong-willed personality including determination, independence, self-sufficiency are used: “Live without restrictions!”, “Love yourself!”, “You have yourself one and only!”, “Be yourself!”, “Be always sure of yourself!”, “Mind and practicality won't bring you”, “You know what it is necessary for you, and you will achieve it”. According to some researchers advertising does not create new values and uses created social standards and stereotypes, and also is closely connected with the concept as «lifestyle» which is formed thanks to an advertizing.

A woman is presented in a number of commercials as the head of a company being responsible for the company development, for the employees. Such advertisings make it irrelevant the stereotype of “limited feminine behavior” (including speech), being associated with a dependent status of a woman in comparing with a man in all spheres of life. So, the expert survey carried out by the Russian psychologists showed that a woman – as a head / leader is more law-abiding, less inclined to various “everyday weaknesses”, more often recognizes the wrongfulness (the man, as a rule, seldom recognizes the mistakes, considering that he shows illiteracy, shortsightedness, incompetence), is more self-critical person. Possessing a good

intuition being considered as a typical feminine quality, the female head makes in the activity less mistakes and miscalculations [11: 111-114].

We note that the carried out analysis of some printing and oral advertizing texts allows to reveal some features of a role stereotype in English and Russian advertizing. Due to a certain level of development of socio-economic and political spheres, and also the appeared opportunities of professional skill improvement, at present a woman in Russian society is characterized originally from positions of her financial independence, opportunities of career growth. In English mass media there is a lot of examples both in printing editions, media channels where a woman often consciously makes a choice in favor of significant values, i.e. her children and family.

It is difficult to recognize or disprove a stereotype of “female verbosity” being based only on advertizing analysis. This stereotype can take place in case if a copywriter intentionally wants to pay our attention to this trait of a character.

It is considered that a woman makes her speech according to a cause-and-effect logic. As for men, the logic of temporary development of events is typical. These stereotypes can be tracked in TV and radio advertizing:

* “Bad, grey weather. Poor, grey mood... fashion stores “Sella” – the recipe from a bad mood!” (“cause” – bad mood; “the task” – is to find the means to improve it; “consequence” – the recipe was found as a new purchase);

* “To have a good rest of the weekend – now is not a problem. Yesterday we called friends, discussed everything, and today we have been already here. A camping “Borovoye”. It is both fresh air, nature and cool service... Quality and availability are the tourist center “Borovoye””. This advertizing is built according to the temporal logic of the development of events, which is typical for male speech behavior. But the text could be sounded by a female voice. Most likely a copywriter would add some details, trivia, create an additional storyline. This technique is used for advertizing the same products (service). Pronounced by a male or female voice, altered according to gender stereotypes, the advertizing sounds always in a new way, more expressive and emotionally rich.

The occurring stereotype of great politeness of a female speech isn't confirmed by the analysis of advertizing texts. Politeness is not a gender accessory, it is in direct dependence on level of the culture both a man and a woman. Politeness is not only a property of language units but the strategic principle of behavior of a speaker carrying out a choice of language means according to a communicative situation that testifies to communicative competence of a speaker. It is obvious that all cultures of the world have certain rules to ensure the successful communicative acts and prescribing to participants of communication standards of behavior, their fulfillment is strictly obligatory. As all people act within the culture according to society expecta-

tions, it is possible to call their behavior as a stereotypic speech behavior [12: 127-131]. Only a hint of rudeness, a frequent use of jargons can be noted in printing editions for a male audience:

* ““In short, Effes – beer without showing off!” – an advertizing of beer “Effes” (a radio channel “Russian Radio”); * “Prices Ohhh” – an advertizing of a tariff plan “Euroset” (a radio channel “Russian Radio”).

Let's note the peculiarities of advertising creation having some features of shock value. Being in the conditions of rigid competition to enter a market having a new product and to gain recognition of a consumer, some copywriters try to use an offensive language and vocabulary of erotic character for the advertizing purposes. This kind of advertising texts are read as a rule by a man's voice. Advertizing texts sounded by a female voice have slightly different connotations – a woman is not the primary source of this information, she only retells earlier heard and already sounded by a man.

Based on the analysis of advertising texts we can conclude that the main indicator of the orientation to the man is the use of the stereotype of masculinity, i.e. emphasis on masculinized characteristics. Respectively the social roles of a man (a son, a father, a husband) practically aren't presented or insufficiently presented in the advertizing texts. Our experimental data allow to draw a conclusion that so-called man's advertizing, i.e. aimed at a male audience is practically a gender-neutral advertizing. In turn the advertizing for female audience is distinguished by a bright gender orientation being shown in a choice of language means and a manner of scoring.

There exists a stereotype according to which women use more exact color shades. But this claim is controversial one because there is no single point of view on this issue. So, R. Lakoff [13] agrees with the opinion involved and E. Zhigaykova [14] disproves this stereotype. Probably, unless more careful researches are carried out, the question remains unsolved one. Our analysis of advertising texts to identify frequency and accuracy of the use of shades of colour has not given us a full and adequate understanding. Advertising texts do not differ in diversity using a large amount of colors and shades.

Consequently, studying the mentioned stereotypes (role-playing, conflict of ideas “woman and career”, deficiency of female behavior, verbosity, speech politeness, logic of statement creation (cause-and-effect and temporary)), a role-playing and a logic of statement creation stereotypes are obvious in advertizing texts; the politeness stereotype takes place in advertizing, but it is defined as a seldom used stereotype. But how have these stereotypes been presented in our modern society? After all an addressee and a sender of a message are separated by a copywriter who invests the author's intention in linguistic forms. And does the gender of a copywriter influence the creation of an advertizing text?

Thus, our position in the research of the advertising text is a complex approach, i.e. a study of all the components finally forming – an advertising discourse. One can conclude that the social nature of advertising communication enables it to reflect all the nuances of life of society and to form an expedient paradigm of human relations in the context of various social and cultural phenomena of reality being confirmed by the examples of our experimental texts. During the analysis it has been revealed that the appeal to this or that sociocultural component depends on a number of parameters, i.e. taking into account a social nature of language, speech communication in different social and age groups, the phenomena of bilingualism and diglossia, gender and other components. Therefore, advertising was beyond economic information and became the most important means of creation of such social phenomenon, as a way of life.

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