

Linguistic Aspect of Advertising

Alina Kolomiets, Olena Yakymenko

National University of Food Technologies, Ukraine

The article deals with the linguistic aspect of advertising. The aim of this article is to show the process of manipulating human's emotions via advertisements and to show different linguistic techniques and tricks that advertisers use to attract consumer's attention.

Key words: advertising, manipulation, emotion, consumer, linguistic techniques.

I. **Introduction.** Nowadays you can see advertising everywhere as it occupies a significant position in our society. Advertisement is a modern phenomenon with its roots in the deep past. During the whole history the aim of advertising is to inform and to convince.

Advertising agents use different linguistic techniques to evoke people's emotions. Emotional manipulation in advertising has become more popular these days. Human's activity and behaviour are always provoking positive or negative attitude to the reality, that is reflected in our brain as satisfaction or dissatisfaction, gladness, sadness, anger or shame. Emotions exert an incredibly powerful force on human behavior. Strong emotions can cause you to take actions you might not normally perform, or avoid situations that you generally enjoy.

II. **Setting Objectives.** The aim of this article is to describe the process of manipulating human's emotions via advertisements and to analyze different linguistic techniques and tricks that advertisers use to attract consumer's attention.

Different techniques for emotion evoking in advertisement were studied by such researchers as J. Schrank, J. Edell, M. Friestad and others. J. Schrank, for example, studied different techniques that were used in advertisement to attract consumer's attention. M. Friestad developed a model that shows how emotion evoking is connected with advertisement and what effect it has. J. Edell in her researchers studied the role of emotions in understanding advertising effects.

III. **Results.** As it was mentioned above the main aim of advertising is emotion evoking. So, first of all, it is necessary to give definition to the notion “emotion”. Everyone experiences emotions, but scientists do not all agree on what emotions are or how they should be measured or studied.

Emotions, often called feelings, include experiences such as love, hate, anger, trust, joy, panic, fear, and grief. Emotions are related to, but different from, mood. Emotions are specific reactions to a particular event that are usually of fairly short duration. Mood is a more general feeling such as happiness, sadness, frustration, contentment, or anxiety that lasts for a longer time.

According to C. Izard, emotion is something that senses as feeling, with the ability to motivate and direct our perception, thinking and actions. It can motivate us to act. Emotion leads thinking and physical activity of individual, filters our perception. For example, happiness forces us to see the world through rose-coloured spectacles, to be deeply moved by ordinary things [3].

R. Plutchik and C. Izard distinguished such basic emotions as anger, disgust, joy, fear, sadness and surprise. W. James added to this list love and rage; Magda B. Arnold – desire, hate and hope; S. Tomkins – interest, contempt, distress and shame.

Many advertisements use manipulative tactics that influence in ways we don't even realize. Despite how much you think you ignore them, and how little you may believe they affect you, that is not necessarily the case. You see advertisements every day, whether it is on a web page, before a movie, or in the middle of a TV show, and it is easy to say "they are just advertisements" because, at worst, they feel like a nuisance or interruption. A lot of people have difficulty accepting the idea that advertisements are manipulative because we want to believe we are in complete control of our choices.

Advertising exists because there's a product that the company wants to sell and they want people to know about it so they can buy it. There are so many kinds of advertisements, but in general they all aim to keep you from thinking and, instead, make your buying choices based on an emotional response.

As famous American comedian said: “Advertisement is 85% confusion and 15% commission. All are being weapons of advertising firms to kill viewer’s intention to buy any other product than a product for which an advertisement is made”.

The overall goal of advertisements is to sell or at least, to make the public aware of their product and all the elements they are made up of are designed to contribute to the achievement of this goal. In other words, as Jeffrey Schrank argues: “Advertising is a phenomenon through which someone tries to communicate something to a group of people and whose aim is to persuade them to act in certain way” [6].

Advertisers use all possible techniques to draw viewer’s attention, to make necessary information more eye-catching and memorable.

After analyzing different advertisements we can define several tricks that advertisers use to achieve a success.

The first technique is *the sense of obligation*. For this kind of advertisement advertisers usually use modal verbs. Very often you can see such slogans as *Must Have*. Advertisers have become so bold that they now dictate what we must buy. With this strategy, advertisers are appealing to our sense of wanting to be equipped with the essentials. They persuade us to buy, provoking emotions of duty.

Next technique is to use *coinage*. Coinage, according to Longman Dictionary, means "a word or a phrase that has been recently invented". Advertisements are full of coined words to be lively and eye-catching. For example: “Give a Timex to all, to all a good time”. (Timex is a brand name of watch). In this case, Timex is a coined noun, it is formed originally from the two words "time" and "excellent". The new word is short and easy to remember.

In order to attract more consumers it is popular to use *comparative and superlative adjectives*, for example: “More connections to Europe. DHL has the world's biggest logistics network”. In this example, DHL, the logistics company, highlight its advantage of being more accessible and more easily to reach with the word "more" and "biggest". Those who read this advertisement will have the impression that DHL is right choice for them because it has more locations to reach than other companies.

It is also popular to use the words “*better*” and “*best*.” The word “better” has been legally interpreted to be a comparative and therefore becomes a clear claim of superiority. Legal minds have decided that parity products, of which all brands are equal in quality, can use the word “best” to describe their product because if all products are equally good, they can all be considered the best. The only time “better” can be used is when a product does indeed have superiority over other products in its category or when the better is used to compare the product with something other than competing brands [1]. For example, a company selling laundry detergent can claim that their product is better than toothpaste, but one gasoline company cannot claim that their gasoline is better than any other company’s gasoline.

Having analyze examples of advertisement we can distinguish some words and phrases that help advertisers to achieve a success, these are *people’s choice*, *researches show that*, *experts tell that* and others. From such tricks we recognize that someone, who is well-qualified, recommends this product that is why we have to buy it. Also it is very popular to use the unfinished claim states that the product has more, or is better than something, but does not say what that “something” is. “Peterson’s gives you more” is an Unfinished Claim because it claims that by using the product the consumer gets more of something-but what? In this claim, the word “more” classifies as the indirect object, not an adjective, as the advertisers want consumers to think. Because we usually hear the word “more” used as an adjective, the advertisers can use it at the end of this claim to give the feeling of there being “more” to come-more of something-even though it really is the indirect object that Peterson’s claims to be giving to you. These claims, similar to the “better than” claims,” need qualifiers that answer the question “than what?” so we know what to compare the product to when evaluating the claim.

IV. **Conclusion.** This manipulation of language succeeds because people believe they are immune to the advertisements that surround them. This illusion of immunity makes them even more vulnerable to the various techniques advertisers use to target exactly those people. They infuse advertisements for parity products with special words, unfinished claims, and illusions of superiority to attract consumers to

their products, and consumers think they are buying a superior product when, in fact, they are not.

References:

1. Edell J. The Power of Feelings in Understanding Advertising Effects/ J. Edell. - Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 1987. – p. 421-433.
2. Friestad M. The Role of Emotion in Memory for Television Commercials / M. Friestad. – Honolulu, 1985. – p. 16 – 115.
3. Izard C. Human Emotions / C. Izard. - New York: Plenum Press, 1977. – p. 3 – 325.
4. Karpf A. The human voice / A. Karpf. - London: Bloomsbury, 2006. – p. 30 – 55.
5. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. - Pearson College Division, 2011.
6. Schrank J. The Language of advertising claims teaching about doublespeak / J. Schrank. - Illinois: NCTE, 1976. – p. 6 – 82.
7. Shortis T. The Language of ICT / T. Shortis. - London: Routledge, 2001.