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LOGICAL TOOLS OF ADVERTISING

Natalya Martishina (a)*
*Corresponding author

(a) Department of Philosophy, Siberian Transport University, D.Covalchuk St., 191, Novosibirsk, Russia,
nmartishina@yandex.ru

Abstract

Traditional logic and theory of knowledge were normative disciplines. They saw their task in establishing universal rules of thinking and cognition. In contrast to this approach, the research program of social epistemology, forming the basis of this article, involves studying real knowledge, immersed in a cultural and social context. Real knowledge does not always follow general norms, but this does not mean that there is no logic in it. It functions according to its own rules. Thus, logic can research the specific logical means that are used only in certain areas of knowledge and form their own alternative logical standard. The author considers advertising as a specific area. One can distinguish five basic logical techniques typical for constructing advertising message, although the traditional logic interprets them as deviations from the universal norm. A contrast analogy identifies fundamentally different objects based on broadcast quality. Second, there is a logical inversion or transition from judgment with the form "All objects of class A have property B" to the proposition "All objects, having property B, belong to class A". Third, quasi-dilemma is limited solely to modifications of the same object. Fourth, linear concretization gives transition from an unconditionally acceptable general position to maximally specific prescription from the general and unconditionally acceptable position to a direct instruction for action. Finally, super-idealization is elimination of all possible negative associations from the object image. The author concludes that these logical schemes now turn into a new logical standard of advertising and determine its manipulative potential.

Keywords: Advertising, advertising logic, real logic, social epistemology, methods of consciousness manipulation.

1. Introduction

Advertising has become an integral part of sociocultural practices and, accordingly, a part of not only the social life, but also the vital world of modern Russian society. The main objectives of advertising are to attract attention to a commercial object (product), to form and to maintain interest to it and its promotion in the market. So the first studies of advertising considered it exclusively as an economic phenomenon, primarily in terms of its effectiveness. But the growing measure of the presence of advertising in Russian culture and its influence on various aspects of the social and cultural life of society have led to the formation of a general social and humanitarian context for the theoretical study of advertising (Kharlamov, 2013, p. 173). One can research the advertising as a cultural practice and a factor that forms at least some forms of culture, for example, everyday culture or mass one (Zapesotsky, 2013); as a sphere of creative activity (Dmitrieva, Shishova, 2010) and artistic practice (Gopko, 2015); as a language phenomenon (Sedova, 2013), etc. In the author's opinion, one must supplement the formed spectrum of approaches to the study of advertising by its analysis as a logical phenomenon, a kind of the cognitive sphere where a specific style of work with information is established. Most researchers identify an informative function of advertising consisting in a message to potential consumers about the existence of some product or service, about its properties and the possibilities for its acquisition, and often about the purposes and methods of its use. It is a necessary side of advertising, and some scientists consider that it is the leading function for certain types of advertising (Bezrodnaya, 2011). Already this circumstance allows one to talk about the epistemological aspect of advertising. But the main thing is not even that the advertising gives information. The development of the advertising leads to the formation of its special logical schemes and transitions that are reproduced, and in the aggregate they create a certain style of thinking. The prevalence of the advertising in information flows leads to the rooting of these schemes in the mass consciousness, even regardless of the assimilation of the content of a particular message. Thus, the logical analysis of the advertising allows one to take a new look at the socio-cultural consequences of its spread and to discover a significant aspect of its implicit influence on the information field of culture.

2. Problem Statement

"Knowledge" as a general concept is an abstraction of a very high level. The real cognitive activity of humanity consists of a variety of discursive practices that differ not only by the subject areas, but also by the sets of methodological and logical tools of cognition used in them. Mythology or religion gives the examples of such global independent discourses; oaths or taboos constitute particular examples; a periodical as a whole (Myasnikov, 2008, p. 93) or interviews in particular form the specific type of discourse too, etc. In all these cases, one can see the existence of certain historically fixed ways to construct reasoning and move from one idea to another in some areas or situations. Accordingly, the logical techniques used in them vary. A logical scheme that corresponds to the norm in one area can be estimated as a peripheral and weak method in another area. For example, analogy, which is one of the fundamental techniques for art thinking, is acceptable only in a very limited range in science. Conversely, a logical error within some discursive practice becomes a variant of the norm within the other one. For

example, as Kasavin (2004) shows the logic of the everyday thinking involves a number of typical and stably reproducing violations of the fundamental laws of logic.

The logic has developed for a long time as a normative discipline that establishes unified rules of thinking for different subject areas and spheres of cognitive activity. But now one can see a tendency to supplement it with applied research aimed at a logical analysis of the specific implementation of intellectual operations in particular cognitive areas. Only an appeal to the variations of logical norms in various fields allows one to understand both the specifics of these areas and the features of the perception and understanding of the information in them really.

3.   Research Questions

The advertising in the modern world has become one of areas with some kind of "real logic" as a set of logical procedures specific for this particular area. Among the techniques used by advertising, a stable group of transformed logical actions stands out. From the point of view of classical logic, these actions are incorrect implementations of standard intellectual operations. But in the context of advertising practice, they have acquired the character of drawn-out schemes of thinking and namely they provide effective impact on the audience.

Most researchers speak about this problem as about the question of the relationship between the rational and the value-emotional components in advertising, which, in turn, coincides with the relationship of logical and non-logical impact of advertising (Nazaykin, 2007, pp. 49-50). Currently, most often one sees the following assessment of existing trends: "Rational motives in our lives are replaced by emotional factors ... In the advertising of the early twentieth century, the main emphasis was on the quality of the product and its technical characteristics, because the creators of advertising proceeded from the rational motivation of the consumer. But today, the consumer is guided by emotional motives when choosing a product or service"(Kuzminov, 2007, pp. 28-29). But is it a way out of consciousness beyond logic? Or are we dealing in this case with the formation of a new, alternative logic and its introduction "in the background" into the mass consciousness in the course of advertising communication? This is also a question for discussing.

4.   Purpose of the Study

Based on the above-mentioned, the author sees the goal of this work in identifying specific logical techniques that combine to the real logic of advertising. In addition, the author wants to show the necessary nature of this logic – firstly, in terms of the interconnectedness between the local logical norms of advertising, and secondly, in relation to the goals of advertising communication. The author seeks to show that the real logic is not a set of deviations from the rules and mistakes that are characteristic of advertising, but the peculiar and at the same time, rather certain logic of its construction that gradually becomes the new logical standard of this cognitive area.

5. Research Methods

The theoretical basis of the research contains the research program of social epistemology. The most common foundation of this program is the setup to consider knowledge in the context of its internal (the determination of the cognitive product by forms of activity and communication at all stages of its existence) and external (connection with social systems and cultural dynamics) sociality (Mamchur, 2010). It is the view on cognition as an activity that in all cases has sociocultural origins and consequences that determines the possibility of an epistemological analysis of such phenomena as advertising. In the framework of the traditional paradigm, the advertising is a false form of cognition and, consequently, not an epistemological object. "The advertising style of thinking is not really a style of thinking but rather acts as some irrational dogmatism that expresses itself in the conviction of the subject-carrier of this style that he knows something, but cannot explain the logic of building of his knowledge" (Ilyin, 2014, p. 34). In other words, if advertising by definition is not an objective reflection of reality, it cannot claim the status of knowledge. From the point of view of social epistemology, not only true knowledge, but also other possible products of cognitive activity (for example, opinions or beliefs) may be subjects to epistemological consideration. A significant part of these products involves modified or transformed forms of knowledge, and this circumstance does not deprive them of their cognitive status (at least completely): all the spiritual formations in which the information is transmitted can be considered as modifications of knowledge.

The empirical material used in the article was compiled by the author in the course of analysis and logical identification of broadcast advertising on three central channels of Russian television in 2014 - 2016. The author has fixed a logical scheme as stable if it was possible to detect at least two independent cases of its application. In some cases, the author gave a logical and epistemological interpretation of the techniques recommended in the professional literature (Vikentyev, 2007, etc.) for use by advertising creators.

6. Findings

As a result, the author considered it possible to identify five logical transitions which are among the special logical tools of advertising.

Contrast analogy. In general, the analogy is a scheme of thinking, based on the establishment of similarity of objects on certain grounds. In the analogy, one transfers the information related to some object to another one. There is a number of conditions for the reliability of the analogy in classical logic. Among other things, the analogy is more reliable if it connects objectively identical objects that have a number of similar characteristics. But such analogy can hardly become a basis for a vivid picture and an unexpected semantic association - and advertising must attract attention, select an object from the context, present it in a memorable perspective. In modern advertising J.-M. Drew`s "theory of the gap" is popular; according to this thesis only non-standard positioning can be successful. Therefore, advertising often uses an alternative way to construct an analogy: it is established between objects that are far apart from each other, belonging to different subject areas: "Pantyhose X is strong as true feelings"; Bank N - "Just like I (says the movie hero), but a bank." At the same time, the analogy in advertising creates connections

different from really existing ones, and the objects to be compared are not unified by the foundation of analogy, but by the only sign. For example, in the second case, the reliability is the only parameter that connects a man and a bank; what is more the reliability of a person and the reliability of the financial structure are very different. A specific type of contrast analogy gives a construction of an advertising message in which "erotic connotations ... are attached to subjects that in their daily functioning are not (or should not) be agents in the communication of the sexes" (Levinson, 2000, p. 61). From a linguistic point of view, one sees the close situation in the imitation of discourse change in advertising (Chernyavskaya, 2004). Most often, the advertising messages imitate the scientific style, but there are other possibilities there. For example, V.E. Chernyavskaya gives an example when advertising an insurance policy imitates a marriage announcement using the same structure and vocabulary.

Logical inversion. This reasoning contains the transition from direct construction of the statement to the reverse. It has the form: if the carriers of quality X use product Y, then the users of product Y also acquire quality X. This logical scheme underlies the mechanism of symbolic consumption, in the course of which one buys firstly not the goods, but the status symbolized by this product. From the logical point of view, this scheme briefly corresponds to the operation of reversal of judgment (the subject and the predicate change places), and in the more developed form it gives the categorical syllogism of the second figure ("A is C, B is C, hence A is B"). In both cases, transactions are implemented with nonobservance of logical requirements. A general statement must be converted not into a general, but into a private statement; in the categorical syllogism of the second figure a conclusion from two affirmative statements is not allowed. Thus, one again sees a situation when a certain way of deviating from logical rules becomes a new norm within a particular cognitive area – such as advertising.

Quasi-dilemma arises in advertising with such regularity that this method has a second name "seller's dilemma". The quasi-dilemma offers the consumer to choose exclusively between the proposed variants, although these options do not give the entire list of solutions that exist in principle. The seller does not even mention other possibilities, and the buyer has the illusion that the choice is really limited only by the mentioned opportunities. As M. Yagodkina notes, the advertising gives "a depleted list of alternatives for solving of problematic situations" (Yagodkina, 2007, p. 60). The "seller's dilemma" either contrasts to the proposed product or service a variant that is obviously unattractive to the buyer, or offers a choice in which any solution is beneficial to the seller. Ideally, the consumer chooses between the minimally different modifications of the same product (flavor shades, taste variations of yogurt, dosage forms of the same medicine). According to its logical structure, such reasoning is not a dilemma at all. The dilemma is a structurally more complex construction, which contains all possible variants, these options are discussed, the consequences are deduced from them, and only then the conclusion is drawn. Advertising dilemmas look more like the closed questions, i.e. questions, the wording of which contains the answers. But the classical logic gives a clear requirement: a closed question is correct if it lists all possible options. The same rule applies to the dilemma: it must begin from a whole spectrum of the main directions of development of events and go to logically correct division of possible variants into several subclasses. Thus, here one again faces the situation where the construction of reasoning which is necessary for advertising effect is alternative to the traditional logical norm.

Linear specification. One means the construction of reasoning, in which a concrete idea that programs consumer`s behavior served as a conclusion from a general and unconditionally acceptable thesis: "If you take care of your health then buy product X (biological additive Y, detergent Z)". In the framework of traditional logic, such transition would require to formulate and to demonstrate the intermediate conclusions. The logical trap here contains a particular modification that does not necessarily follow from a general thesis. The logic qualifies such course of reasoning as an error of substituting of the thesis in the form of its expansion: if it is impossible to prove a concrete position, the disputant argues a broader and a more confirming idea. Even if the general position is true, it does not follow from this fact with necessity that the particular judgment associated with it is true too. But if advertising does not appeal to the general values, it would lose a significant part of its influence on the audience. "Typically, the advertising text ... is not the subject for deep analytical thinking, so developers attach it to certain topics, settings, values that are understood by a significant number of people. Using concepts can improve the effectiveness of advertising" (Kolyshkina, Shustina, 2015). The radical, linear concretization of fundamental theses that throws a direct bridge from a general position to a particular pragmatic conclusion is also the basic logical scheme of advertising. O. Zhumayev says, "Advertising does not allow abstraction" (Zhumaev, 2011, p. 65). One would have formulated somewhat differently: advertising allows abstraction, but only if it is immediately translated into a specific plan.

Hyper-idealization is the construction of such image of the object, which does not contain any negative component. All possible negative associations are calculated and carefully eliminated. In general, one can see here a universal logical operation of idealization that means forming of the epistemological image by accentuation of exclusively one or several related features in their maximal expression. The scientific concept "an ideal gas", built on the concept of a gas molecule as an absolutely solid and elastic corpuscle gives an example of idealization. The specificity of advertising idealization associates with the selection of object`s attributes according to the value parameters. Besides, advertising does not consider the difference between the ideal object and the real one. "Of course, there are problems in the advertising world, but they are easily solved with the help of advertised products" (Kuzmin, Terski, 2005, p. 171). It is noteworthy that in the current situation, the impeccability of the object itself can be a source of negative attitude towards it, so the addition of small funny weirdness to the images of advertising characters is often the element of advertising hyper-realization today.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the author has identified a number of logical transitions, characteristic for advertising and constantly used in it. The stable reproduction of these schemes allows one, in the author's opinion, to talk about the formation of a specific logic with its own laws that forms the toolkit of advertising as a cognitive phenomenon. These schemes are united by their transformed definiteness: on the one hand, they correspond to universal logical methods of thinking, but, on the other hand, they are realized with a significant deviation from the original standard. As a result, a set of such schemes initiates a "displaced" way of processing of information, which underlies the manipulative potential of advertising. The immediate effect from using of the "advertising logic" is to introduce the content of the advertising message into the mass consciousness, blocking the rational-critical mechanisms of its evaluation. In a

broader context, the use of these schemes leads to the erosion of the logical standards in the everyday thinking. It forms the habit to non-rational data acceptance in the mass consciousness and reduces the barriers of the critical perception not only in relation to advertising, but also to such transformed cognitive forms as para-science or ideology. This long-term effect must be taken into account when one assesses the impact of advertising on the "life world" of contemporary Russian culture.

Acknowledgments

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