

TILTM 2020**Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****MINITEXTS OF ADVERTISING ABSTRACTS IN
EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE: FUNCTIONAL APPROACH**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of persuasion mechanisms in advertisements. Abstracts of English scientific editions and textbooks taken from advertising catalogues of major publishing houses are used as the experimental material for research. Abstracts are treated as a special type of minitexts which are characterized by a limited volume; moreover, they possess a complete range of textual categories and functions. This peculiar combination of small format and the necessity to actualize the whole set of functional markers causes specific choice of means aimed at realizing the aforesaid functions. It is also proved that the specific target audience presupposes a range of genre peculiarities typical of the texts under consideration. One of these peculiarities concerns the combination of the features typical of a traditional advertisement, an abstract and a literary review. It is due to this integration that there arises a vital problem of systematizing verbal instruments of persuasion used in this syncretic genre format. Further on, various types of advertising strategies aimed at persuasion are singled out and linguistic mechanisms of their realization are described. Primary attention is focused upon the verbal markers of polyfunctional paradigm embracing phatic, evaluative, metacommunicative and regulating strategies described in terms of key discourse-analysis principles. As to the other strategies, they are classified as supportive ones contributing to the actualization of the informative strategy. They are traditionally described in terms of logical arguments.

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1. Introduction

The pace of technological and social development of the present-day society is very high and, what is more, it is characterised by the constant acceleration. This tendency is characteristic of all the aspects of social life including the sphere of communication. This high speed of social processes brings about the new challenges for the traditional communication practices the leading one being the necessity to reduce the textual volume without any notable losses for the meaning of the text (Maloformatnye teksty v razlichnyh tipah angloyazychnogo diskursa, 2019). This trend results in the wide spread of the small-format texts, or minitexts. Despite their short length, minitexts possess "... typical features of all the classical standards of textuality (cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality)" (Kharkovskaya et al., 2017, p. 67). According to Taiupova (2005), minitexts can perform various communicative functions; however, two of them are the leading ones – those are the informative function and the function of social regulation (p. 46). This statement fully applies to the minitexts of advertisements whose pragmatic function is to inform the recipients about some products and to make them perform certain actions. Mechanisms of the simultaneous realization of these pragmatic functions within the texts limited in volume pose a linguistic problem which is to be considered (Aleksandrova et al., 2017). The linguistic interest for this type of texts is also enhanced by the fact that advertising pierces all the spheres of modern life, which leads to the development of new syncretic advertising genres remarkable for their specific pragmatic goals and possessing a unique combination of language means of persuasion.

2. Problem Statement

This research is based on the abstracts of English scientific books and textbooks taken from advertising catalogues of major publishing houses such as *Princeton University Press; Cambridge University Press English Language Teaching; Penguin International Literature Catalogue; Legend Press; Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers; Macmillan Readers Catalogue and others*. These texts are aimed at academicians, scholars, teachers – that is educated people specializing in a particular sphere of intellectual activity. This type of the recipient is looking for a means of performing their professional activity and is quite capable of critical thinking and evaluating the merits of a particular edition, hence a primitive instruction does not work in this case; the addressee has to be persuaded of the merits of the publication with the help of logical arguments and proofs. Consequently, these advertising texts represent a specific combination of such traditional genres as an advertisement, a scientific abstract and a literary review providing a thorough analysis of the book. While advertisements aim at sheer persuasion, abstracts proper provide purely factual information and reviews contain an overarching and unbiased analysis of a literary work, which, in turn, becomes the reason for forming a positive opinion about the book and an incentive for its purchasing (Shilnikova, 2017). The success of the realization of the persuasive function in such syncretic texts depends to a great extent on the implementation of certain advertising strategies the analysis of which requires the study of concrete language means.

3. Research Questions

This research aspires to answer the following questions:

- What are the constituents of the functional paradigm typical of the advertising abstracts of scientific and educational books?
- Which advertising strategies are employed for the realisation of these functions?
- Which language means are used in the advertising abstracts to ensure the realisation of the complex pragmatic function these syncretic texts perform?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to describe the functional paradigm of advertising abstracts treating them as part of the professional (educational) discourse. These texts are viewed as minitexts representing a syncretic advertising genre which combines features and functions of such traditional genres as an advertisement, an abstract and a literary review. Also, attention is paid to the analysis of the concrete advertising strategies ensuring the realisation of the pragmatic functions, as well as the description of the linguistic mechanisms providing the basis for these strategies.

5. Research Methods

Methodologically and theoretically, the research is based on the recent studies devoted to the problems of pragma-linguistics and discourse analysis (Alefirenko & Konrad, 2017; Aleksandrova, 2017). Besides, the advertising abstracts are analyzed in terms of the theory of minitexts developed in the works of Cherkunova (2017), Cherkunova and Starostina (2019), Radyuk and Polyakova (2017), Vedeneva et al. (2018). Also, we rely on the approaches to the analysis of syncretic advertising genres suggested by Conradie and Van Niekerk (2014), Malyuga and Popova (2018) and Popova (2018).

6. Findings

To ensure the fulfilment of the persuasive function, advertisements make use of certain types of strategies which are constitutive for the advertising discourse in general, that is the phatic, informative, evaluative, metacommunicative and regulative strategies (Prisyazhnyuk, 2005). However, these strategies are realized in a specific way in the advertising abstracts due to the use of peculiar language means.

The phatic strategy is realized through the direct address to the reader with the help of subject pronoun *you*, for example: *How can **you** make a discussion really work? With fully-flexible blended learning **you** can choose the best way to deliver the course to your students: in class, online, or a blend of the two.*

An important role for the realization of the persuasive potential of the advertising abstracts is played by the strategies of putting forward the information about the books on offer. Unlike mass advertising, which mainly describes the benefits of the product for the intended customer, the aforesaid abstracts aimed at the professional audience concentrate on the detailed description of the merits of the book advertised, including its structure, content, supplements, etc. Persuasion in this case is realized through the rational

forms and consists in the mentioning of such aspects of the professional activity as: 1) a possibility to deal with some professional matters in a more successful way: *Life skills sections help develop the self-awareness and social skills teenagers need in today's world*; 2) an opportunity to be more efficient in dealing with professional matters due to making some processes less time-consuming: *Adjusting the material to the number of contact hours and expected learner outcomes is also easy with the standard and Plus versions of Mimi's Wheel available, making the course fully flexible and reducing preparation time*; 3) the description of the compositional arrangement of the material within the book advertised: *Not only has the content been thoroughly reviewed, but the format has also been expanded to include eight new chapters and a Quick-Reference Guide. This Quick Reference Guide is a valuable resource as it summarises salient points of the chapters and is also available as a free eBook downloads*; 4) the adherence of the book to the traditional cultural/professional values: *Physics is revealed as an intrepid human quest for ever more foundational principles that accurately explain the natural world we see around us, an undertaking guided by core values such as honesty and doubt in the search for truth*; 5) the high quality of the edition: *Unique and modern cover design perfect for gifts and collections designed by Anna Morrison*; 6) the promise of the guaranteed professional achievement: *As the only local book of this nature, it is sure to become an invaluable resource for practising medical and other healthcare professionals, etc.*

Evaluative strategy involves the description of the benefits of a concrete book in comparison with other similar editions. The peculiarity of evaluation in the minitexts of advertising abstracts is that it is not imposed on the addressee explicitly or directly. These texts create an illusion of the independence in decision-making on behalf of the reader, which is achieved with the help of the peculiar arrangement of the structural elements of the text. Thus, the most important objective factual information is presented within the main body of the text, whereas the opinions are introduced within the separate structural element, namely the quotations block, which is overloaded with evaluative vocabulary units: *“Vanessa Ochs is the only person who could have written this engaging, feisty, and brilliant biography of the Haggadah. Here, she shows us not a staid or fixed text, but a text patinaed with wine, a book that both comforts and unsettles, that remembers and interprets and challenges. Ochs has done the remarkable: she has written a book about the Haggadah that is as delightful as the Haggadah itself”; “A brave, bold, warm, rich, amusing, engaging novel!”*

Another means of creating a positive attitude to the book is changing the connotative meaning of the object for the recipient. To achieve this, the advertising abstracts do not only provide highly evaluative opinions within the quotation block; they also introduce another structural element containing information about the author, their personal achievements and general input into the professional knowledge pool, for example: *Golding was one of the great story tellers of his time, always exploring in his novels the things which form human behaviour. Golding's most successful later novel was Rites of Passage (1980) about a sea voyage. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1983.*

Metacommunicative strategies aim at establishing interaction between the participants of the discourse, keep the reader's interest and attention, ensure the thematic development of the text. This strategy is realized through the direct questions to the reader: *We've all had to puzzle over such profound matters as birth, death, regret, free will, agency, and love. How might philosophy help us think through these vital concerns?; In an overloaded, superficial, technological world, in which almost everything and everybody*

is judged by its usefulness, where can we turn for escape, lasting pleasure, contemplation, or connection to others?

Regulative strategies prescribe the actions of the addressee and provide information necessary for purchasing of the book. However, the advertising abstracts do not contain prescriptive speech acts or direct suggestions of purchasing. All the information, necessary for buying the book is concentrated within a separate structural block, providing information about the additional elements of the pack, publication dates, supplements, prices, etc.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the persuasive function, which is integral for the advertising discourse in general, has a number of peculiarities in the minitexts of advertising abstracts. First of all, due to the fact that these abstracts are aimed at a narrow group of specialists in a certain sphere of intellectual activity, the advertisements are based on logic and reasoning. Secondly, the text includes information of the factual character, namely, the detailed pool of data concerning the structure and the content of the book. Thirdly, an implicit offer to purchase the book is not included into the advertisement. Finally, all the information related to purchasing of the specific edition is concentrated in a separate structural element. Thus, logical reasoning has an explicit character, which allows the reader to preserve an impression of independence of their conclusions about the merits of the book. However, the implicit influence upon the reader is also exercised through the implementation of phatic strategies, as well as the introduction of a separate structural element in the form of a quotation block, or a reference to the personality of the author.

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