

ISMGE 2020**II International Scientific and Practical Conference "Individual and Society in the
Modern Geopolitical Environment"****PERSONIFICATION AS A MEANS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
INFLUENCE IN RUSSIAN FURNITURE ADVERTISING**

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Abstract

The formation of figurative thinking is closely connected with personification – a psychological property of the individual based on the understanding of the community of the animate and inanimate world. This way of the reality artistic mastering has become a popular subject of study for psychologists, philosophers, linguists, literary critics, art historians, folklorists and cultural scientists. Personification contributes not only to intellectual, but also emotional development of people, helping them to better see and hear the nature, feel and empathize. The study of this phenomenon through the analysis of linguistic units allows to come closer to solving the problem of the language and thinking interaction, as linguistic phenomena reflect the cognitive processes of the world conceptualization. Personification is widely represented in fiction and non-fiction, in colloquial speech, its pragmatic potential is used in advertising communication to create more vivid images of goods. The article focuses on the functions of anthropomorphic verbs in Russian furniture advertisements. These personifiers are included in the texts to characterize an advertised product, to demonstrate its advantages and uniqueness, to cause a certain emotional reaction and a greater brand liking.

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1. Introduction

Since ancient times, personification has been known as a type of figurative language. This complex linguistic reality is increasingly becoming the subject of research, attracting the attention of linguists, literary critics, folklorists, psychologists, philosophers and culturologists as a peculiar and multi-dimensional phenomenon with a certain set of expressive means and a whole system of linguistic images (Serebryakova, 2010). In a broad sense, personification is understood as a poetic trope, consisting in endowing inanimate objects with the properties of animate beings (Chernyshev, 1959); with a narrower interpretation, the sphere of anthroponyms is considered to be the final sphere of a personified denotate transposition. The authors of the article support the second viewpoint and adopt the following operational definition: personification is the representation of an object or abstract concept in the image of a person (Ushakov, 2017). In personification, two semantic blocks interact – the person signs and the inanimate denotation signs, which results in the emergence of a new meaning and the appearance of implicit increments of the emotional-evaluative nature.

2. Problem Statement

Impersonation as a way of mastering reality alongside with other rhetorical devices is actively used in advertising (Hart & Royne, 2017) as it allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Personification and its functions in the language of advertising are the subject of research in the works of Yu. K. Pirogova, P.B. Parshin, S.V. Tumsky, Ye.Yu. Zhdanova, A.V. Prokhorov etc. At the same time, the action mechanism of this trope and the semantic processes associated with it are considered to be insufficiently studied.

3. Research Questions

1. What semantic classes can anthropomorphic verbs belong to in advertising texts?
2. What are the functions of anthropomorphic verbs in advertising texts?
3. How do anthropomorphic appeals influence consumer behavior?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to analyze the ways of linguistic expression of personification in Russian furniture advertisements exemplified by the anthropomorphic verbs functioning. This part of speech provides great opportunities for personification, “because it shows the subject to which it relates, dynamic, active, operating as a living or even intelligent being” (“Does the brand have a life?”)

5. Research Methods

The main research methods are the descriptive method, the component analysis and transformation analysis methods.

6. Findings

The personifying verbs in the analyzed advertisements can be divided into the following semantic groups.

6.1. Saying and thinking verbs

A) «“Caesar”. Furniture for the Manager. Your office *will tell* others about prestige, and you – about comfort! Strict, laconic design and a noble dark colour help to create a businesslike atmosphere. The "Caesar" Furniture for the Manager will fit into any interior» (DaVita-furniture, 2019a). The means of personification in the text is the verb "to tell", which has the meaning to inform verbally, state something (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2010, p. 663) and indicates the most important property of a person – the ability to speak. High evaluation of the statement is created by using the precedent name "Caesar" for the naming of the advertised product (Bychkova, 2013); its associative semantics includes such words as "emperor", "ruler", "leader", "victory", "laurels", etc. and interacts with the semantics of the word "prestige", an important semantic feature of this word being “significance in the eyes of the whole society” (sun.tsu.ru). The adjectives "strict", "laconic", "noble", as well as the noun "comfort", used to characterize the object, help to present the advertised product in a favourable way.

B) "The Dante bedroom *reinterprets* classic forms. This is a classic that fits well into a modern interior. High quality materials and refined decor will create a charming atmosphere in your bedroom» (Shatura a life story, advertising catalog, 2018). Speech influence in this advertisement is achieved by the use of the verb "to interpret" with antopomorphic semantics ("interpret – to reveal the meaning, content of something" (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2010, p. 250), the use of the emotional evaluation words (the adjectives “high-quality”, “refined”, “charming”), the precedent name “Dante” in the nomination of the advertised object, i.e. the lexemes containing an element of prestigious connotation in their meaning (Romanova & Smirnova, 2019).

6.2. Emotion verbs

A) "The bathroom, like no other room, *suffers* from overcrowding with numerous jars and vials, a variety of useful and necessary things. It is important to give all this controlled chaos a neat appearance. Convenient and roomy filling of the bathroom and laundry. The ELFA mesh systems. The Elfa Company” (Improvement, 2015a). In the first sentence, the personification effect is achieved by the use of the predicate "suffer" in combination with the inanimate noun "bathroom". The introduction of the verb with anthropomorphic semantics into the text creates a certain emotional mood and is aimed at increasing the advertising impact (Kemp et al., 2020). The offer, which contains the antithesis of "chaos–neat appearance", actualizes the idea of the need to make a purchase.

B) "Margarita Entrance Hall. *Surprises* at first sight" (DaVita-furniture, 2019b). The presence of the verb "to surprise" in the text adds an element of intrigue; its combination with the adverb "at first sight" makes it possible to replace it with the consonant (Russian) verb "to fall in love" (Letunovska et al., 2019). This means that the advertised object is given an implicit high rating. The use of a female name in the nomination of the product concretizes the image, in combination with the verb "to surprise" enhances the effect of personification (Babenko, 1999; Lyashenko, 2018, p. 130).

6.3. Verbs of volition

"Millennium. Centre for modern design. Fashion trends. Bold decisions. Designer collections. Audio and video. Stained glass. Wardrobes. Doors. Kitchens. Carpet floor. Stucco. Stairs. Furniture. Garden furniture. Floor covering. Wallpaper. Tile. Tableware. Interior item. Cloths... Your home would like to dress up here!" (Improvement, 2015b). In this example, both components of the compound verb predicate "...are ... the exponents of anthroponymy, which is due to their lexical meaning" (Serebryakova, 2010) – "want – to have a desire, intention (to do something)" (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2010, p. 868); "dress – "to order clothes in some place, from some tailor" (obsolete)" (Ushakov, 2017). The use of the verb in the form of the subjunctive mood reduces the categorical statement, the call to buy is expressed through the desire to perform an action that is not related to the act of acquisition (Reavey et al., 2018). An unusual way to present advertising information (a personifying context is combined with a bright, memorable photo image – a female mannequin in an elegant red outfit) attracts attention, causes positive emotions, helps to remember the content (Oļehnoviča et al., 2016).

6.4. Verbs of bringing into a functional state.

"Matteo Lux opens up the new boundaries of your freedom. The sofa *adapts* to your lifestyle and mood: a few moves – and this multifunctional sofa will take a comfortable position for you" (Salon Divanger, 2017). In the first sentence of the text, there is a metaphorical rethinking of the consumer qualities of the advertised object (Rodriguez, 2015). The process of its operation is associated with the emotions unusual for this situation, the anthropomorphic verb "to adjust" tells the reader about the benefits of this "smart" product.

6.5. Expanded personification

Now let's look at an example of an ad in which personification is a stylistic device of semantic organization. In such texts various life situations are modeled, products are endowed with human properties, show a willingness to help, etc. "Interior doors want to meet nice owners. A little about ourselves: we are reliable, beautiful, without bad habits (don't creak), promise to please everyone" (Va-Bank, 2000). The text is written in the marriage announcement genre; it represents a simulated appeal of the product to a potential consumer (Bobrovskaya, 2015). The personified denotation is the noun "doors", the personifiers are the predicates expressed by the compound verbal predicates with anthropomorphic semantics (*want to get acquainted, promise to please*), as well as the verb "to creak", which in its direct meaning does not indicate an action performed by a person, but in the form of the 1st person plural becomes the bearer of the personifying feature. The advantage of the product is emphasized by transferring the negative characteristic to the competitors objects. Attributing the specified action (to squeak) to bad habits – a characteristic of a person increases the effect of personification and gives a humorous tone to the utterance.

7. Conclusion

The analysis has revealed that personification is an important component of the semantic structure of the advertisement. When embedded in an ad, it may lead to more vivid images, make the text more

interesting and original. The anthropomorphic verbs alongside with other personification tools contribute to the product's individualization, its more positive evaluation by a potential buyer. These verbs are used to evoke a certain emotion or attitude, inform about the advantages and unique characteristics of the advertized object.

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