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TOPICAL SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

Elena Mashkova (a)*, Ekaterina Vinogradova (b), Yulia Kuptsova (c), Elena Kislitsyna (d),
Tatiana Kostromina (e)
*Corresponding author

(a) Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russian Federation, Mashkova_e@bsu.edu.ru
(b) Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russian Federation
(c) Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russian Federation
(d) Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russian Federation
(e) Belgorod State University, Belgorod, Russian Federation

Abstract

The article is devoted to social advertising, which is one of the varieties of advertising discourse. Despite the increasing number of scientific works on the topic, the study of social advertising requires new approaches and methods. The article discusses the importance of modern social advertising for the constantly changing society where culture and subculture problems, issues of gender and social inequality, ethnic and racial affiliation, differences in political views occur. The distinctive characteristics and key functions of advertising discourse are analyzed in the article. Also, the main differences between social and commercial advertising are given. Nevertheless, there are a lot of similarities between social and commercial advertising. By the examples of social advertising concerning political, environmental, social and other issues the author proves that social advertising is an important part of advertising discourse. From the point of view of modern scholars social advertising is one of the most effective ways to resist racism and spread the idea of tolerance. The analysis of the examples of social advertisement clearly shows certain aspects of social advertising functioning in the English-language advertising discourse and gives impetus on further scientific research on advertising discourse. In conclusion it can be stated that social advertising represents a profound area for reflection and scientific analysis.

Keywords: Advertising discourse, discrimination, impact, public advertising, society, topical issues

1. Introduction

The modern world is a rather complex split of technological and scientific progress and the social reaction that correlates with it. Rapidly developing technologies have a lot of advantages and result in significant progress in social development. At the same time, they act as the triggers for new social challenges (Danilevskaya, 2017). Thus, the new society exposes its positive and negative features. At the same time, it causes and solves many interrelated problems in the sphere of politics, environment, social life, etc. First of all, these are social conflicts between people, different cultures and subcultures, issues of gender and social inequality, ethnic and racial affiliation, differences in political views, etc.

These questions are eternal at any stage of societal development but the ways to settle them vary at different stages of evolution. So, at the moment, the solution of complex racial issues is realized via broadcasting in the media and the Internet. As a rule, the commercials dealing with these issues are made by non-profit organizations and aim to solve the topical problems (Lvova, 2019). Such informational messages, designed to influence the recipient and manipulate his mind in order to make him cope with certain tasks, are regularly associated with social advertising.

2. Problem Statement

The immanent presence of advertising in the life of society, its diversity and manipulative means of influence on the recipient allow us to consider advertising as the object of numerous extralinguistic and linguistic studies.

Advertising discourse is notable for being anthropocentric. The very focus on the person with his needs and interests provides the pragmatic component of advertising discourse. In addition, being the means of social regulation and manipulation, advertising discourse affects different social groups, appealing to their subculture, thoughts, interests and needs (Nikolaishvili, 2008).

Moreover, Vacek et al. (2017) notice the following:

> In these days, because of the wide use of social sites, everyone has a place for presenting their own opinions. There is this huge desire of authors of blogs, vlogs and videos for the fame of thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions of likes and sharing. It is obvious that something ingratiating, sensational, unusual and very simple would be more popular. (p. 481)

The most typical means for carrying out advertising activity are publications and media posts, outdoor advertising, etc. According to Moiseyeva (2008), advertising discourse together with a graphic component is a "completely motivated, meaningful, organized sign formation. (p. 152)

3. Research Questions

In modern scientific paradigm advertising is presented as a complex sociocultural phenomenon that is capable of encouraging the addressee to the predicted action and thus influencing certain spheres of public life. Being completed on semantic content and design, the advertising message acts as an incentive

to a specific action of the addressee. Such messages show the connection with the institutional advertising discourse considered as a mosaic of online advertising messages correlating with other types of discourse.

The distinctive characteristic of advertising discourse is that it includes directly various options and elements of different sign systems. In addition, advertising discourse is distinguished by continuity and complexity, interrelation with other scientific paradigms, for example, linguistics, pragmatics, marketing, sociology, psychology, etc.

Achieving the goals set by advertisers is possible via the use of a variety of rational and emotional strategies that allow advertising discourse to significantly influence the potential consumer, to assist him in drawing appropriate conclusions in his own favor and for the benefit of the goods and services offered. In this regard, the use of advertising messages in social networks is very common.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to analyse the texts of social advertising as a means of influencing the behaviour of the recipient and to consider and give an interpretation of stylistic techniques in social advertising.

5. Research Methods

Key methods other than general scientific ones are: continuous sampling method applicable to the collection of factual material, comparative method of qualitative or quantitative analysis of data adapted to the material for study, stylistic descriptive method, observation, synthesis, interpretation, classification of factual material, structural and compositional analysis of the discourse.

6. Findings

6.1. Social advert in advertising discourse

"The processes of globalization, competition, mass media politicization and mass media functioning in the conditions of informational confrontation in the past 27 years required from communication media new forms of existence and survival in the media market. Russian researchers put more and more emphasis on the functioning of the media in the conditions both of integration of different types of mass communication, as well as on mixing and hybridization of genre structures arising in the multimedia space in a screen form. The reason for this resulted to be processes of media convergence. The research of modern mass media functioning indicates that editorial services expand the types of production with the purpose to effectively represent them in the informational service market: release of advertising materials, publication of books, creation of electronic versions of publications, etc., which makes researchers speak of a "convergent" jump in the informational sphere" (Bazanova, 2017, p. 145).

One of the main components of advertising discourse is social advertising. Social advertising can be understood as "advertising aimed at the dissemination of useful, according to the society views, social norms, values, behavioral patterns, knowledge that promote co-existence within this society" (Saveleva, 2006, p. 168). The purpose of social advertising is to inform large audiences about the topical object of

everyday reality, while the target of commercial advertising is to increase profits by improving the product appeal (Anisimova, 2018).

Social advertising attracts consumer's attention to a particular social event or subject addressing to the sense of fear of the audience and herein forms the new term *fear appeal advertising*. "The main peculiar properties of new generation services are instruments for searching needed contacts and the establishment of public communication. It is allowed using them by having a profile. Unlike blogs, social networks do not give such variety of opportunities for the publication texts on a personal page" (Khamzina et al., 2017, p. 1018). The principal difference still lies in the financial background, since social advertising is an exclusively non-profit phenomenon, while the success of commercial advertising is directly related to the volume of sales.

The other differences include the target audience of the advertiser: in business advertising the commercial is focused on the limited numbers of consumers, whereas in case of social advertising it involves the whole society. The ordering party of non-commercial advertising is social organizations and the government, while commercial advertising is sponsored by business foundations.

6.2. Reflection of social problems

One of the clearest examples of social advertising is the post of the European Commission *Discrimination is Illegal. Fight it,* which in its brief report covered a whole series of questions that profile discrimination based on different reasons. Among such questions were the following: Do you have to hide your religion at work? Wish you could hide your age to get a job? Do you have to hide your sexual orientation at work?

According to the authors of a social message the target of such questions is not only in obtaining information, but in indicating the lowest position and status of the addressee on any of the social grounds. They contain methods of influence on the recipient, including the corresponding syntactic constructions. Through such constructions an emphasis on the problems of discrimination is carried out, that is, the recipient additionally indicates his place in the modern world. Presumably the addressee should think about their own status and realize its insignificance. This means of manipulating the mind performs the main function of attracting the attention of the recipient to certain information, focusing on expressiveness (Agrba, 2018). The necessary information is implicit in the message, which allows us to speak about the actualization of the concealment concept. The deployment of the message meaning (decoding of implicit messages) allows the addressee to understand the problems faced by people who are conditionally unequal in the eyes of the public (Rylov, 2018).

6.3. Migration issue

In this paragraph we would like to touch upon the problem of psychological problems of migrants and migration as a process. Many recent studies show the prevalence of intolerance among indigenous population to visitors from other countries, expressed in rejection of "foreigners". Negative attitude towards migrants reflects pendency of many social and economic problems of the inhabitants of the host country, region, city (Nesterova et al., 2015).

Let us give an example of another social advertisement proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Migrants: *A bundle of belongings isn't the only thing a refugee brings to his new country. Einstein was a refugee.*

The authors made it very short in graphic design, but capacious in semantic content of the message to draw public attention to people who had fallen into a difficult life situation because of the forced necessity to move to another state. At the heart of the presented social post is the famous name of Albert Einstein as an attempt to prove to society that it is impossible to use a common negative criterion in assessing absolutely all people of a different nationality. It is assumed that the reader will not remain indifferent to the video and will reconsider his attitude towards what is happening in general and towards refugees in particular. The achievement of such a goal by government services and non-profit organizations is fundamental in light of the need to smooth out the social struggle through street and social advertising.

The next example is from the UN Refugee Agency: *Refugees want the same problems you have*

On the one hand, this example uses the method of comparing. The author named the existing problems of the local population as *same* as the desired problems for the refugees. On the other hand, this comparison conceals the opposition that the citizens and refugees currently have different problems. Such method of comparison with a hidden opposition forces the recipient to disregard and look at the affected problem from the other side. It is interesting to mention that the author chose precisely the negative aspect of the problem and presented it as the target for refugees to come to a new country. After all, most people think that the new arrivals in their country will take away some of the benefits that were meant for the local people, but few people think that in addition to the benefits, the refugees will have to face their problems.

6.4. Domestic violence

Another grave problem of society is the problem of domestic violence. Statistics show that in most cases women are subject to violence. Moreover, in some countries, violence against the weaker sex is even equal to the norm and "emphasizes patriarchal ideology and the widespread subordinate status of women within their communities and families" (Ghimire et al., 2015, p. 319). For example, in Colombia, the regular excuses for traces of women beatings are the occasional impact with door jambs, tables, chairs, etc. In this regard, the Colombian organization shows ironically compare the rapist with an inanimate object, downplaying the role of those who are able to offend and humiliate a woman, and transmit a bitter ridicule: *The door doesn't hit a woman for ironing the shirt. No more excuses. Report women abuse. The fridge doesn't hit a woman for going out with her friends. No more excuses. Report women abuse*

The imperative in the sentence *No more excuses* and *Report women abuse* is a call to witnesses of violence and a request not to be silent, but to report obscene behavior to the appropriate authorities. The most common slogan in social advertising on this issue: *Stop the violence.*

Frequently you can find a denying in text messages of social advertising, despite the fact that it is better to use word without "not". According to psychologists this increases the negativity of the statement, because people usually miss the particle "not" in the mind, so the message will not work. Moreover, the phrase meaning will change in their memory to the opposite, but we shouldn't completely ignore this method. Properly placed accents in the phrase helps with the help of denying to achieve the desired effect,

to convey the necessary idea to the recipient. As in this example, unreadable things are combined with denying *should not.*

In social advertising you can often find an example of the life experience of people faced with this problem: *I survive domestic violence. I spoke up. I choose to live.*

This approach to highlighting the existing problem is particularly effective. People will empathize with a real person who has gone through this path, and those who have faced with this problem too will also know that they are not alone, this problem can be dealt with and live must go on. Partial constructions are particularly relevant in the example above and sound life-affirming.

6.5. Child abuse

Special attention should also be given to the issue of child abuse. This problem is considered as one of the most crucial in modern society and is usually a result of negative communication patterns within the family (Krivickas et al., 2010).

A significant impact on the audience is made by lots of advertising posts with the help of various stylistic means. In particular, a huge role is played by imperatives, rhythm, emotionality, expressiveness of the utterance and parallel constructions that allow to create an effect of influence due to brevity: *Remove is hard. Protect is easier*

The opposition and comparative degree of an adjective *easier* prompts the addressee the only correct solution to this problem - it is better to warn the child against such a misfortune, because throughout life such "stigma" will be very difficult or even impossible to get rid of.

Adults who allow themselves child abuse sometimes do not realize all the consequences of their actions. The following slogan makes you think about it: *You can lose more than your patience*

The comparison *more than* used in this example leads the reader to think, makes him weigh the advantages and disadvantages, and decide for himself once and for all whether he should lose composure with the child.

The next example perfectly combines the imperative, denying and parceling: *Don't lose control. Together we can stop child abuse. Full stop.*

Repeat with clarification *stop - full stop* is presented here especially brightly. Typically, in ordinary speech, a person rarely uses a word or a few words twice. This technique is more organic for the advertising slogan, since it distinguishes it from the flow of speech and attracts the attention of the recipient.

Then it's important to mention the issue of child sexual abuse: *Too scared to speak. Speak for her.* The impact of child sexual abuse is often slow to develop, but acute and prolonged when it does occur. A victim may experience its worst effects long after entering adulthood. Without timely, professional help, most victims will carry this weight to their graves. To prevent this, it is necessary to talk more with the child so that he can trust the adult and tell all his secrets without fear. The importance of this action is emphasized by the repetition of the verb *speak*.

Moreover, awareness of the fact that in the future children will look like parents can make you think about the consequence of child abuse: *Like father. Like son. Joey Jr. is six times more likely to abuse*

One of the ways to realize and solve a problem is abstraction or awareness of the problem on a universal scale. Imagining that your children will also beat their children, and they beat theirs, and so on,

you may want to stop it and change your life. A comparison of children and parents is underlined by the Like-Like anaphor in the first and second sentences.

6.6. Healthy lifestyle

It should be noted other problems of social advertising on popular sites. One of the hottest topics is the topic of health. For example: *Smoking. Pleasure for you. Poison for your family.*

The parsed construction used in it makes the reader structure his views on this problem and come to an important conclusion. A frightening scenario is suggested for the smoker's family via the most common association for smokers. For a tobacco user ''Smoking'' means ''Pleasure for you.'' But actually, it turns out ''Poison for your family.'' This example is a kind of *fear appeal advertising.* In this case, the effect on the recipient is produced through contraposition *Pleasure* and *Poison.*

The next example of *fear appeal advertising: Premature Ending: "If you smoke, statistically your story will end 15% before it should."* This advertising slogan is based on the fear of death, which has a huge effect on the reader. Also convincing is given by dint of statistics with numbers and percentages *statistically your story will end 15% before.*

In the advertising "There Goes My Appetite. Brain on drugs", the drugs are compared with a hot pan, and the human brain with an egg broken into this pan. As a result, the egg is fried in a pan (Time). This metaphor is also common in "This is your brain on drugs" posters (Providence Health & Services).

6.7. Discrimination on racial, sexual, and other grounds

In the modern world, the struggle for human rights and freedoms has been going on for a long time. But there is still a place of discrimination. For more than one century, the topic of racism is regarded as one of the hottest topics in society. For example, in recent years, western media coverage is frequently filled with issues relating to Islam, which are unfavorable to Muslims (Boer & Tubergen, 2019). Consider an example of social advertising of this kind: *Your Skin Color Shouldn't Dictate Your Future*

In this example, the author uses the graphic stylistic device *title case* to attract the reader's attention. Writing every word with a capital letter also underlines the significance of each word in the message. Despite the stylistic device *title case* in this slogan, the denying *Shouldn't* plays a significant role too.

The next example should be considered inextricably from the visual part. We can see the Google search page where the phrase is entered and below are the most common query options. According to query options, we see negative attitude towards black people. It is reflected in the following words *failures, losers, disgraceful*. Advertising calls to choose media that will not develop a negative attitude towards other races: *Black men are failures, black men are losers, black men are a disgrace, black men are disgraceful. You're wrong, Google.* There is a similar type of advertising with women's rights issues: *Women need to be put in their place, women need to know their place, women need to be controlled, women need to be disciplined, women need to be seen as equal.*

7. Conclusion

The impact of social advertising in itself, as well as commercial advertising, is a communicative event containing statistical data or undeniable facts. The presented stylistic techniques in social advertisement have a significant impact on the recipient, set him up for reflections and already dictate the answer to the topical question posed in the advertisement. Accordingly, the syntactic structure itself motivates the reader to reason, appeals to his inner world through personal pronouns and the colloquial style of the narrative creating an atmosphere of communication with the author. Thus, social advertising communicating with one reader and also with the whole society is a powerful tool for influencing the recipient, promoting the dissemination of important information about the current issues. Moreover, it has an educational impact. So, the purposes and target audience are different in social and commercial advertising.

Despite the differences, these types of advertising have much in common and fit perfectly into the context of advertising discourse. Due to the fact that all texts of social advertising appear to be completed, logically literate, they have a definite purpose – to attract the attention of the audience by any available linguistic and non-linguistic means. The characteristics of social advertising described above can be almost completely correlated with the features of the advertising discourse. No doubt, it can be said that social advertising is a part of advertising discourse.

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