

VERBAL MANIPULATIONS BY MEANS OF COMPARISON IN COMMERCIALS

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Summary: The article focuses on the concept and verbal manipulations by means of comparison methods in commercials. Three main areas of verbal manipulation, kinds of comparisons and purpose of their use in advertising texts are identified. The conclusion is made that comparison methods are widely used as a tool of verbal manipulations in commercials.

Key words: verbal manipulations, comparison, trope, structure.

Анотація: У даній статті ми розмірковуємо над поняттям і сутністю вербальних маніпуляцій в рекламі з прийомом порівняння. Виділено три основні напрямки мовного маніпулювання, різновиди порівнянь та мету їх використання в рекламних текстах. Доведено, що вербальні маніпуляції з прийомом порівняння – це поширене явище в сфері реклами.

Ключові слова: вербальні маніпуляції, порівняння, троп, структура.

Аннотация: В данной статье мы размышляем над понятием и сущностью вербальных манипуляций в рекламе с приемом сравнения. Выделено три основных направления языкового манипулирования, разновидности сравнений и цели их использования в рекламных текстах. Доказано, что вербальные манипуляции с приемом сравнения – широко распространенное явление в сфере рекламы.

Ключевые слова: вербальные манипуляции, сравнение, троп, структура.

The topicality of comparison in commercials is stipulated by the steadily arising advertisers' interest in methods and tools of affecting consumers' mind as well as their unconsciousness. In this respect, comparison is considered as one of the means of persuasion widely used in commercials texts to emphasize the exclusiveness and necessity (for a consumer) of the merchandise being advertised. Also, comparison as verbal manipulation in commercials is used because it imposes the criteria of product perception and evaluation into consumers' mind. In addition to that, comparison "helps to strengthen the impact of advertisement image" [1, p. 23].

The topicality of our research is confirmed by the fact that the question of comparison as verbal manipulation in advertisement has not been deeply studied so far. This is undoubtedly interesting, because manipulation technologies are successfully used to influence a significant number of consumers. Thus, S. Khara-Murzi marks in his book "Manipulation of Consciousness": "a person can become a victim of manipulations only if he/she acts as their co-author and participant. Manipulation is no violence, it is temptation" [2, p. 14].

The linguistic essence of comparison attracts more and more attention nowadays. Being one of the tools of reality comprehension, comparison is one of the artistic thinking norms. Neither language nor fiction can do without comparison. At the same time, its different forms are used in commercials in their full splendour.

Among the most interesting theoretical works focusing on the structure, functions and types of comparison, we can mark out the studies by V.V. Vomperskiy who distinguishes three elements of comparison construction:

- Object (the entity being compared)
- Image (the entity being compared)
- Feature (the attribute of the entities that are compared).

His theory of structure components will be borrowed in this article.

There are different ways to express comparison. In our opinion, classification of comparison methods by I.B. Ishchuk seems to be the most complete and accurate. The author differentiates the following types of comparison expressions:

- Comparative turn that uses conjunctions “*як, мов, немов, немовби, немовбито, наче, неначе, неначебто, ніби, буцім, ніж тощо*”;
- Nominal part of compound predicate;
- Comparison that is expressed by means of ablative case and is synonymous to a common comparative turn;
- Comparison that is expressed by means of genitive case with a comparison degree of adjectives, etc.

S.N. Ikonnivkov distinguishes the following stylistic techniques for emphasizing imagery, language emotionality by means of comparison:

- inversion of comparative turns;
- sequence of comparisons;
- comparison with a framing;
- repeated comparison;
- comparison-antithesis;
- separation of a comparative turn from sentence.

Thus, a number of researchers study comparison in different ways, consider them from various sides. Nevertheless, almost all of them underline that the element of surprise, novelty, originality are among the topmost signs of successful comparison. It is only under the circumstances above that comparisons provide the text or a commercial with more stylistic diversity, express the essence of a subject figuratively and grant expressiveness and distinctiveness to speech.

Verbal manipulation in commercials is being studied a lot mostly by American researchers, in particular D.F. Jefkins, K. Bouvet, J. Russel, M. Person.

Studies were made on the basis of more than 117 advertisement texts selected from the following magazines: «Маркетинг в Україні», «Реклама і Маркетинг», «Ліза», «Сфера реклами», «Время рекламы».

Next we discuss the term and the essence of verbal manipulations by means of comparison in commercials. Commercials became an integral part of human society, an element of its culture. It is one of the most intriguing and distinctive components of modern business. Specialists distinguish economic and communicative aims of advertisement. Economic ones make a direct appeal to merchandise purchase, while communicative ones appeal indirectly. In other words, those aims are perceived as a piece of objective information about the good

itself; being verbal manipulation, they are not recognized by a consumer (influencing the addressee with properly selected linguistic means).

There are three main directions of verbal manipulation which are generally used in commercials:

a) Emotions: general emotional reaction is mapped on the merchandise

“Насолода досконалістю не потребує слів. Мовчання золото. Nescafe Gold — прагнення до досконалості”

b) Social guidelines: self-esteem, self-affirmation, social point of view, aspiration for leadership, place in the social hierarchy, belonging to a high-standard, etc.

“Peugeot: я непереможний! Впевненість, яка завжди з тобою!”

c) World view: on the basis of knowledge, skills, experience and emotions theso-called “vision of the world” is formed, which then is pretended to be real.

“Lekker: просто, як усе геніальне”

Manipulation is influence that requires considerable proficiency in mastering a language. According to S.N.Litunov, “The nature of linguistic manipulations is in the following — the information in commercials is given in the way to make the consumer draw his or her own conclusions based on the advert. Therefore, the consumer will treat this information less critically and more trustingly” [3, p. 6].

Ukrainian language has rich expressive means at all the levels that allows describing the same object or phenomenon or even the same situations in different ways.

It is this variant of subjective interpretation that we gain as the outcome of verbal manipulations with comparison and not the objective description of reality.

It is well known that comparison is traditionally considered to be the main mechanism of the world’s cognition by a human. O.O. Potebnya emphasizes that comparison does not only strengthens a speech and motivates the expression, but “no matter how beautiful the comparison is, it makes us think of lots of things that do not properly refer to the subject we are thinking of; it entertains us, better said, it is the absence of thinking” [4, p. 8].

Therefore, “Comparison is an artistic tool built on relations of similarity, which has the following categorical sign: the availability of explicitly expressed subject and object of resemblance. Such a trope executes cognitive and expressive-stylistic function” [5, p. 138], — believes L.F. Prysajnyuk.

The considered approach is sufficient enough to evaluate the significance of comparison in commercial texts, because its use normally means verbal manipulation.

Researchers mark that explicit and implicit comparisons are one of the tools of verbal manipulations. Obvious comparison with rivals can lead to judgment trials; that is why we hear of “ordinary” things, which do not stand any comparison with the advertised ones. The most effective type of comparison is hidden comparison that creates vision of uniqueness of the advertised product; at the same time, other wares compared to that one being advertised seem to be primitive.

There are the following types of comparison:

a) extended comparison - comparing promotional item to goods of the same product category («*Супер-джинс. Ніколи ще якісний мобільний зв'язок не був такий доступний*» or «*Samsung новий вид телевізорів*»);

b) narrowed comparison - comparing the products of the same brand («*Новий Dirol. Живи з посмішкою!*»);

c) displacement comparison – comparing the product to something that is not properly stated («*Samsung. Ви бачите більше, ніж коли-небудь*»);

g) degenerate comparison - statement of the uniqueness of the product and its absolute superiority over others («*Ароматна чорна унікальна з густою піркою. Nescafe espresso унікальне відчуття!*»).

Thus, verbal manipulation by means of comparison in commercials is a kind of hidden communicative impact to the addressee including his knowledge, imagination, emotional state, social relationships, and intentions. Exerted by the addresser in order to make the addressee's intentions comply with his goals, it usually contradicts the addressee's interests. Hidden effect is considered as using comparison that affects the addressee without being directly realized by him.

Further research can be done in terms of defining semantic features of comparisons in advertising.

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