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PRINTED ADVERTISEMENT: SOME ENGLISH-LANGUAGE, ETHNIC AND GENDER ASPECTS

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The article presents a study of the way in which English language advertisements are analyzed by Chinese, Pakistani and Thai researchers. The language of advertisements presented in American, Pakistani and Thai media (in their English language translation) is studied at the lexical, morphological, syntactic and discourse levels. Some ethnic and gender surveys are also touched upon.

Keywords: advertisement, communication, consumer, English language, ethnic groups, gender, printed media.

Formulation of the problem in general. The article is focused upon a study of the way in which English language advertisements are analyzed by Chinese, Pakistani and Thai researchers. The language of advertisements presented in American, Pakistani and Thai media (in their English language translation) is studied at the lexical, morphological, syntactic and discourse levels. Some gender surveys are also touched upon. The previous analysis proves that there are numerous researches on advertisement in economics, marketing, psychology, neurolinguistic programming, theories of mass communication, semiotics. Advertisement is a good example of the application of persuasion strategies affected through the language. Linguists also pay great attention to the language of advertisement from various points of view and with various purposes. Linguists sort out the language of advertisement as a distinct register or kind of discourse characterized by particular language patterns [1].

The **subject** of research is general and special characteristics of the language of advertising bearing gender peculiarities. The **object** is English-language advertising discourse used in Chinese, Pakistani and Thai printed media. The advertisements studied in this paper are taken from English magazines: the “Time”, “People” and “Newsweek”, because these three magazines have a huge circulation; also the Thai printed amulet advertising is studied. The **aim** of research is to define the English language special features (morphological,

syntactic, lexical) which are characteristic of gender directed patterns.

Analysis of the recent researches and publications, where the solution of the problem is initiated, and which serve as grounds to the author. There exist numerous definitions of advertisement. For instance, advertising is defined as “any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor. The paid aspect of this definition reflects the fact that the space or time for an advertising message generally must be bought. An occasional exception to this is the public service announcement (PSA), whose advertising space or time is donated by the media. The nonpersonal component means that advertising involves mass media (e.g., TV, radio, magazines, newspapers) that can transmit a message to large groups of individuals, often at the same time. The impersonal nature of advertising means that there is generally no opportunity for immediate feedback from the message recipient (except in direct-response advertising). Therefore, before the message is sent, the advertiser must consider how the audience will interpret and respond to it” [2, p. 23]. The Definition Committee of American Marketing Association defines advertising as “the nonpersonal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media” [3]. One more definition states that advertisement is “mass, paid communication, the ultimate purpose

of which is to impart information, develop attitude and induce action beneficial to the advertiser (generally the sale of a product or service)” [4, p. 198].

The language of advertisement attracts special attention from researchers which is illustrated by numerous language studies. M.A.K. Halliday developed Systematic Functional Linguistics, which lay as the grounding for the study of advertisement language, namely the context and lexicogrammar. Lexicogrammar is an abstract level of language coding, the system of wording used for expressing the meaning by means of lexical and grammatical structures [5: 8; 6]. G. Leech thoroughly studied the language of advertising, his study is based on Halliday’s works. He described a press advertising structure consisting of Headline, Body copy, Signature line, Standard details [7: 59]. M. Toolan developed this analysis and proposed five typical structural components of advertisement texts. They are Headline, Body copy, Signature line, Slogan and Standing details [1, p. 55]. G. Cook studied advertisements from the discourse point of view [8]. P.H. Fries studied the advertising language in terms of the Theme-Rheme structure and invented the term “N-Rheme” (the new rheme) [9].

Description of the main research material with the groundings of the obtained scientific results. The Chinese author pays attention to the most important in printed advertisement, which is, undoubtedly, lexis. G. N. Leech lists 20 most frequently used verbs in English advertisement. They are: *make, get, give, have, see, buy, come, go, know, keep, look, need, love, use, feel, like, choose, take, start, taste* [7, p. 20]. For example: 1. *We’ll make this quick. (Hertz Car Return)*; 2. *Get great coverage that’s so weightless and water-fresh. (ALMAY)*; 3. *All you need is a taste for adventure. (Millstone Coffee)*; 4. *Don’t have much of a personality? Buy one. (Honda Motor)*. These monosyllabic verbs have comparably stable meaning. In advertising, these simple words can win the consumers by their exact, effective expression [Китай]. There are also used emotive words, most of which are pleasant adjectives. The most frequently used adjectives are as follows: *new, good/better/best, fresh, free, delicious, sure, full, clean, wonderful, special, crisp, real, fine, great, safe, rich*. These adjectives help to build a pleasant picture in readers’ minds and manage to create a belief in the potential consumer. “In addition, comparatives and superlatives tend to highlight the advantage of a certain product or service. For example: 1. *Nothing comes closer to home. (Vegetable and Chicken Pasta Bake)*; 2. *Think Lysol is the best disinfecting spray. (Disinfecting Spray)*; 3. *The world’s coolest CDs aren’t made in New York, London or L.A. They are made in my apartment. (Philips CD Recorder)*; 4. *The Compaq Armada family is lighter, with new rounded edges for easier packing. (Compaq)* [10].

Studying the language of advertisement, G. Leech called it a “loaded language”, as it possessed the following characteristics: attention value, readability, memorability and selling power [7, p. 25-27]. G. Leech also referred to rhyme, alliteration and parallelism as “special patterns of regularity” in the language of advertisement [7, p. 175]. Pun (with using polysemantic or homonymous words) and alliteration are also frequently

used. They impress customers by their readability and humor. Except for its own meaning, the word used as a pun is usually closely related to the characteristics of a certain product or the brand name of the product. Such coincidence is rather rare [10].

The Chinese author writes that, concerning gender language peculiarities, “the hygiene, beauty, food and detergents ads are dominant in the women’s magazines while technical equipment ads prevail in men’s magazines. The reason is that women are potential purchasers of daily consumer goods while men are potential purchasers of technical equipment. So advertising language tries to win its audiences by noticing audiences’ gender identity” [10]. Descriptive adjectives in daily women’s consumer goods ads such as *fresh, crispy, and soft*, tend to convey the sense of sight, touch, and taste. They wake up pleasant feelings and images, and temptation to buy. However, men, the target audience of technical equipment, are good at rational thinking. Contrarily to women, they pay attention to a product’s interior quality and function. So the descriptive adjectives used in technical equipment ads are the ones conveying information about the product, such as *audible, visible, high-volume, high-speed*, etc.

Since 1980, after the arrival of multinational company, advertisers have started giving special attention towards the language of advertisements in Pakistan. After some investigations, the researcher observed that though the role of advertisements in Pakistani society has been explored to some extent but the linguistic analysis of advertisements in Pakistan still needs attention of linguists. The Pakistani author selected forty advertisements from e- print media of Pakistan from five different domains: Telecom (4), Beverages (12), Automobile (3), Services (6) and Home appliances (5).

The Thai author underlines that advertisement is a good example of the creative use of persuasive strategies which can be illustrated through language. “... amulet advertisements are examples of persuasive discourse widely used in Thailand. ... advertising of amulets... is prevalent in a wide range of printed media – leaflets, newspapers, magazines, and books” [4, p. 195-196]. The Thai author analyzed three selected texts from a widely expanded Thai newspaper, which, according to his data, contained 115 complex and 468 simple clauses, translated into English from the Thai language. The researcher analyzed morphological and syntactic components of English clauses which make up the texts examined and presented quantitative study as to the frequency of their components [4, p. 200-212].

The texts presented by the Thai author may be divided into the following parts: 1) Capture (product attribute); historical background; purpose; positive experience of application; purchase information; 2) Capture; orientation on customer; purpose; details of production; positive experience of application; purchase information; 3) Capture; (product attribute); information about the manufacturer; positive experience of application; purchase information. It is evident that the compulsory parts are: capture, positive experience of application and purchase information. The analysis shows that declarative clauses are the most fre-

quent (80%). They strive to provide information about the product quality, sources of the material, experience of the manufacturers, expected results of usage. The implicit sales messages are observed through the text, and explicitly they are declared at the end, before the information as to where to purchase the product. These sentences are syntactically expressed by short simple clauses. Final sentences are imperative with such verbs, as: *buy, pay, book, order, contact, call, phone*.

The general impact of modern advertisement remains unchanged: raising the need of customers in a very special product, as basic needs are generally satisfied for most people in the developed and developing countries. That is the reason why advertisement uses highly elevated ways of presenting their products touching upon self-actualization and self-esteem, hence the usual phrase in advertisement, aimed at various ethnic and gender groups of customers, is: “*You deserve it!*” with the context: “*You are special and the chosen one!*” Customers are put before the choice either of taking themselves as common, ordinary people, or to choose the higher degree of their importance. Intricate and sophisticated advertisement makes customers associate their products and services with higher self-esteem. This is clearly vivid in advertisement for women directed at their looks (cosmetics, make-up, clothes, fitness accessories, sport and fitness abilities, etc.). Secondly, advertisement is directed at raising women’s self-evaluation as good and caring wives, mothers, housewives. That is explained by the modern tendency of women’s striving for domination in the ancient men’s world. Successful women from the advertisement are in all kinds of them no matter in what country these advertisements are produced.

Many researchers in various fields of knowledge notify that advertisement has greatly changed during the last twenty years. Before that there was presented a stereo-type of women who are preoccupied with beauty, household duties, and motherhood or shows them as decorative objects or sexually provocative figures. Psychologists marked that such images reflected long-fostered gender stereotypes of women as weak, passive, finding their sense of life in a happy life with the dominating men. On the opposite, men were described as active, powerful, successful, intelligent figures. However, the role of women in the modern society has changed, and advertisement reacted instantly. Now women are mostly described as smart, quickly-reacting, successful, achieving everything they wish. At the same time, advertisement of beauty and fashion products serves to underline their female attractiveness and sexuality. Along with that changing stereotype, there still remains the image of a caring mother and housewife, especially in advertising household equipment, babies’ accessories, medicals for everyday use. Examples of such are: cosmetics, clothing, microwave cookers, washing machines, diapers, furniture, etc. As for men’s advertisement, it mostly remains unchanged, only sometimes men are shown as slightly ill to underline their wives’ care in giving them the advertised medicine.

As the researchers discovered, research “on gender stereotyping in advertising targeted to children has found a pattern of results similar to that

reported for adults ... in the United States as well as in Australia. Boys are generally shown as being more knowledgeable, active, aggressive, and instrumental than girls. Advertising directed toward children has also been shown to feature more boys than girls, to position boys in more dominant, active roles as males.... Recent studies have shown ... the primary target for most of the commercials was active, white boys. Girls were portrayed in traditional roles and shown performing limited passive, indoor activities, while boys were shown in the outdoor world engaging in more exciting and active things. Feminist groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center argue that advertising which portrays women as sex objects, contributes to violence against women. These groups often protest to advertisers and their agencies about ads they find insulting to women and have even called for boycotts against offending advertisers” [2, p. 767].

Researchers notice much more attention paid by advertisers to various ethnic groups in the USA. The most popular group is Afro-Americans. Now attention is largely paid to Hispano – Americans. Another ethnic group that received attention from advertisers is Asian-Americans. Their work ethic, education, culture, career growth and hard-working have made them a popular target market group. That is why many marketers are creating target commercials for this ethnic group. Statistical analysis shows that many marketers “found that Asian male and female models are overrepresented in terms of their proportion of the U.S. population (3.6 percent), appearing in 8.4 percent of the commercials. However, Asian models were more likely than members of other minority groups to appear in background roles, and Asian women were rarely depicted in major roles. The study also found that portrayals of Asian-Americans put more emphasis on the work ethic and less on other aspects of their lives” [2, p. 767-768].

Conclusions. We can conclude that advertisement in printed media is a structurally finely organized discourse bearing the aim of achieving its strategic goal – receiving a positive reaction from the customer/client in the form of purchasing the proposed product or service. The aim of the advertisement structure is to catch the customer’s/client’s attention; cause and stimulate the customer’s/client’s interest in the product; maintain this interest by repeating (repeatedly masterfully demonstrating) the name of the product; and, finally, giving contact information for purchasing the product – i.e., achieving the ultimate result.

Advertisement clearly demonstrates gender features. If men’s advertising hasn’t essentially changed in present-day realia (in major cases strong, active, achieving, intelligent, smart and striving for success males), female image is changing. As researchers and marketers notice, “the increase in the number of working women has resulted not only in women having more influence in family decision making but also in more single-female households, which mean more independent purchasers. Researchers Steven Kates and Glenda Shaw-Garlock argue that the transformed social positioning of women in North American society is perhaps the most important social devel-

opment of this century. They note that as women have crossed the boundary from the domestic sphere to the professional arena, expectations and representations of women have changed as well. For example, a number of magazines, such as *MS* and *Working Woman*, now incorporate and appeal to the sociocultural shifts in women's lives. In many ads, the stereotypic character traits attributed to women have shifted from weak and dependent to strong and autonomous" [2, p. 769-770].

However, Thai amulet advertising differs from other types of advertisement in the way of presenting the successful results achieved by amulet believers. These results are presented as short

stories increasing amulets' qualities, functions and values. It is a necessary stage found in all Thai amulet advertising irrespective of gender.

Prospects for further research in this direction refer to the deep study of the language of advertisement, which is targeted at capturing the attention of mass audience and persuading the prospective clients to buy a product or a service. Special lexical, phonological and syntactic linguistic means are to be used, that is why both psychological and linguistic aspects of advertisement should be studied. The language peculiarities also demand thorough studies as to gender and racial features of customers/clients.

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ДРУКОВАНА РЕКЛАМА: ДЕЯКІ АНГЛОМОВНІ, ЕТНІЧНІ ТА ГЕНДЕРНІ АСПЕКТИ

Анотація

У статті представлено результати аналізу китайських, пакистанських та тайських друкованих рекламних оголошень (у перекладі англійською мовою) дослідниками цих етнічних груп у США. Рекламні оголошення проаналізовано на рівні лексики, морфології та синтаксису, а також дискурсу. Автор торкається питань етнічної та гендерної приналежності адресатів та адресантів рекламних оголошень.
Ключові слова: англійська мова, друковані засоби інформації, гендер, етнічні групи, комунікація, реклама, споживач.

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Аннотация

В статье представлены результаты анализа китайских, пакистанских и тайских печатных рекламных объявлений (в переводе на английский язык) исследователями этих этнических групп в США. Рекламные объявления проанализированы на уровне лексики, морфологии и синтаксиса, а также дискурса. Автор затрагивает вопросы этнической и гендерной принадлежности адресатов и адресантов рекламных объявлений.
Ключевые слова: английский язык, гендер, коммуникация, печатные средства информации, реклама, потребитель, этнические группы.