

HOW ADVERTISING SHAPES OUR MINDS: PRAGMATIC AND COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The immense role of advertising in modern world can hardly be limited only to persuading the addressee to buy a certain product. Its functions extend far beyond informing, influencing or stimulating and reach the level of cognition and conceptualization. The fact is advertising manipulates language to achieve its ends, and the strategies at its disposal are manifold. Moreover, it creates the substitute reality, which interferes with the recipient's world view, thus realizing its manipulative potential. Manipulation as a specific form of hidden psychological persuasion involves two participants (a manipulator and a manipulated) and is aimed at psychological categories of anchors, targets, and social stereotypes. When extrapolated to the realm of cognitive linguistics, the above mentioned notions correspond to those of the frame of the addresser, the frame of the addressee and the basic concepts of advertising discourse. The purpose of this article is to view advertising discourse in terms of both pragmatics and cognitive linguistics in order to study the nature of manipulation exerted in it, to reveal the involved strategies, to single out the key concepts, which serve as the constituents of the world view, being simultaneously its reflectors and its moulders. In order to fulfil the objectives the wide range of linguistic methods has been employed. The methods of communicative approach in linguistics have been applied to single out the constituents of advertising as a complex speech macroact with the persuasive microact being the only obligatory one. The findings of linguistic psychology substantiate the manipulative nature of advertising. The functional analysis serves as the basis for revealing its communicative strategies. The application of the tools of cognitive linguistics enables the detection of six key concepts of advertising discourse and their conceptual markers. The modern American magazine advertising discourse within the period from 2009 to 2014 has been selected as the material for the research, with 2000 samples of advertising discourse being analyzed. The main conclusion to be drawn is that advertising contributes to moulding the addressee's world view, thus affecting the way the recipient perceives the reality and shaping his/her values. To put it another way, advertising discourse causes shifts in human cognition and imposes on its recipients new ideals, standards and moral principles.*

Keywords: advertising discourse; manipulation; world view; concept; conceptual markers.

1. Defining Advertising Discourse

The concept of advertising combines the process of its creation, the means of its transmission and the final product. In view of the fact that the analysis of

advertising is impossible without considering extralinguistic factors such as market research, identifying the target audience, the choice of distribution channel, selection of unique selling points, it should be studied from the perspective of the discourse analysis and qualified as “discourse” since it is discourse that provides the description of language units in two dimensions, which can be brought to textual and contextual (van Dijk, 1988: 25). Cook put it as follows: “although the focus of discourse analysis is on language, it is not concerned with the language alone. It also examines the context of communication: who is communicating with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other” (Cook, 2005: 1-2). Thus, discourse enables the combination of the communicative situation that involves the minds of the participants, and the text that is created in the process of communication.

The interpretations of discourse are manifold and vary in different linguistic schools. However, it is generally acknowledged that discourse is anthropocentric; dynamic; verbally fixed as a text; combines the process and result; is a product of social interaction and cannot be separated from the context.

The aforementioned characteristics are also typical of advertising discourse (henceforward AD). Hence, the outcome of the advertisement creation is represented in a form of a verbal text due to the interaction with the social life and response to its slightest alternations, reflecting thus the world view of a certain social community. In our study, AD is defined as a cognitively structured, verbalized as a text, product of a social activity of a person with clearly noticeable persuasive potential.

2. Integral Features of AD

Despite the plethora of definitions of AD, the fact regarding its intentional and persuasive nature remains axiomatic. However, the character of the impact is quite ambiguous, ranging from explicit informative influence to manipulative persuasion.

2.1. Persuasion in AD

One of the primary tasks of advertising, along with providing information, is persuading. Although the concept of persuasion is versatile and, virtually, all language use can be regarded as persuasive, we will limit it to the linguistic activities that imply changing or adjusting the opinion of an audience.

As viewed in terms of communication, advertising is a complex speech macroact, structured by a number of smaller microacts with a certain illocutionary force, i.e. possessing particular intention. However, all of them act as subordinates in regard to a persuasive microact, which is the only obligatory one. Hence, the advertising macroact is of indirect nature, since its main illocutionary force is disguised by the minor intentions. The minor intentions are expressed explicitly, the major goal, which aims at changing the recipient's behaviour by means of persuasion, is hidden.

“Individuals are persuaded when they have been induced to abandon one set of behaviours and to adopt another” (Miller, 2002: 6). Therefore, persuasive communication is any message that is intended “to shape, reinforce, or change the responses of others” (Miller 2002). AD modifies those responses, appealing to the reason and emotions of the recipient.

2.2. Manipulation in AD

In order to manipulate the individual's behaviour, a number of psychological mechanisms are involved; stereotypes, targets and anchors being among them.

Stereotypes are simplified, standardized images, reflections of the real world phenomena that serve as reference points in the process of conducting a positive or negative evaluation. They can be identified, described, analyzed, but the individuals themselves cannot detect the influence of stereotypes on their behaviour or attitude, inasmuch the conscious control is rarely applied in the sphere of emotions. It was Freud (Freud, 1949) who claimed the effectiveness of the influence exerted in the realm of unconsciousness. Following his theory, emotions and instincts are most problematically controlled, consequently, much easier and more effectively influenced. That is due to this fact that manipulation appeals to the stereotypes. The AD employs the stereotypes rooted in the minds of the audience and evokes them to be associated with the advertised object. By way of illustration, the most frequently used stereotype in AD is the one about everything new being better, enhanced, of higher quality. Verbally, it is expressed through the recurrent use of the adjective *new*. *New flawless finish sponge-on cream make-up* [Marie Claire, January, 2013]. *Get to know the new BlackBerry Storm 2 smartphone* [Esquire, January, 2010]. *New even better eyes dark circles corrector visibly lightens the entire eye area* [Elle, October, 2012]. A new product possesses positive evaluation, but what truly makes it different from the "old" one is rarely indicated in the message. Therefore, stereotypes act as stimuli in the realm of the subconscious, and the programmed reaction can be gained by employing them.

Targets are personal characteristics of an individual, their needs, desires, weaknesses, and affecting those, the initiator channels the addressee into necessary solution. The manipulator seeks for the strings, which, when pulled, lead to the expected outcome. Among those, one can mention unsatisfied needs, habits, traits of character, wishes, i.e. everything that operates subconsciously and is triggered automatically.

Anchors can be defined as fixed images in the mind, which, while being addressed, evoke the necessary experience, refer to existing beliefs, values, attitudes, accepted norms. One may find a visual symbol, a sound, even a smell performing the function of an anchor. Pictures of babies, family environment, a person of authority, healthy smile may serve as the examples of an anchor. Linguistic units, in particular those with pronounced positive connotation, are equally effective anchors, e.g. *great, delicious, stylish, pure, light, protection, smooth, soft, radiant, love, high standards, perfect, best friend, sweet, sun, fresh, natural, beautiful, high quality, healthy, clear, harmony, stunning, care, effortless, prestige, confidence, nourishment* etc. The role of anchors lies in stimulating the desired behaviour of a recipient or modifying the existing sets. In order to persuade an addressee, it is sufficient to suggest the targeted opinion the moment they are captivated by positive emotions, caused by the previous use of anchors.

The fact that AD aims at influencing the unconscious and is not subject to control by the receiver, provides the implications for categorizing it as a type of manipulative discourse. Manipulation takes place when the recipient is unaware of certain elements of the message, which brings the sender into the advantageous position. Its hidden nature is *sine qua non* of manipulation. Hence, there is the

reason to assume that manipulation is the inherent feature of AD and it is implemented by thoroughly planned strategies (concealed from an average recipient), for the clear purpose of bringing profit to an advertiser at the expense of a consumer.

3. Advertising as Strategically-Planned Communication

Exerting influence is “the fundamental basis of any communicative situation” (Haslett, 1987) and basic analysis of linguistic aspects of persuasion is related to the study of communicative strategies of a speaker and all language resources at their disposal that determine the achievement of communicative goal. These communicative strategies contribute to the organization of discourse that aims at implementing the pragmatic impact on the recipient.

3.1. Understanding the Concept of “Strategy”

Recently, there has been an increase of interest in the term “strategy” (van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; Haverkate, 1984; Hasslet, 1987; Sanders, 1987), which has led to the emergence of a number of its interpretations. Following van Dijk and Kintsch, we assume that linguistic phenomena of strategic nature which are not algorithmic can be distinguished in terms of the principle of intentionality (van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983). Thus, we differentiate between the thinking strategies, the strategies of comprehension (interpretation) of the text, or cognitive, and communicative strategies. Thinking strategies are not intentional. Cognitive strategies aim at processing information and provide learning, storing and retrieving information from memory. Communicative strategies are purposeful communicative events, aimed at achieving particular communicative goals, and in terms of advertising communication meant to exert effective persuasion.

3.2. Communicative Strategies in AD

Classifications of strategies vary depending on the type of discourse, the situation, needs, goals and intentions of a speaker, which creates the foundation for numerous categorizations. For that very reason, the number of communication strategies as well as the number of speech genres (which can be compared to communicative strategies) is countless.

Our suggestion is that communicative strategies in AD should be classified according to the goals, pursued in advertising communication. The main objectives of AD are: to draw attention to the product; to single out the advertised product among the products of a similar function; to impose the need for the product on the consumer; to sell the product; to adjust the existing and create new values and ideals. Therefore, we identify the following strategies in AD: the strategy of drawing attention to the advertised object; the positioning strategy; the strategy of creating needs, and the strategy of stimulating actions.

A number of tactics, which in their indissoluble unity are all subject to manipulative macrostrategy, aiming at moulding the recipient’s world view, enables the realization of each strategy. Due to the manipulative macrostrategy the individual’s axiological system is transformed, the process of reappraisal of moral values is conducted, the stereotyped patterns of behaviour are implanted, a new type of individual – easily manageable and subjected to external influence – is cultivated. The world view is formed in the mind of each individual, and on being shaped determines and guides their activities. Accordingly, the adjustment of the

world view offers an opportunity for programming the desired behaviour of the recipient. This procedure includes a number of complex cognitive processes. The language here acts as the integral, though not the only possible means of cognition. That is cognitive linguistics, with its fundamental assertion that a language serves as an indispensable tool for cognition in close cooperation with its communicative, psychological and cultural factors, that enables holistic approach to the study of AD. Hence, as suggested by Langacker, “for a full and explicit description of interaction and discourse, a cognitive perspective is necessary (though not sufficient). A detailed characterization of the conceptual structures being built and manipulated is as fundamental and indispensable to discourse study as it is to grammatical investigation” (Langacker, 2002: 185).

Therefore, in order to thoroughly examine manipulative potential of advertising, in view of not only representation, where it is reduced only to pragmatic assumptions and leaves such issues as interpretation and valuation unaccounted, we refer to the tools of cognitive linguistics.

4. AD Through the Lens of Cognitive Linguistics

The studies of anchors and targets patterns reveal principally their psychological peculiarities, the analysis of stereotypes provides us with the cultural and sociological background, and the research on the participants of advertising communication presents pragmatic characteristics. To unify the abovementioned findings and suggest the holistic representation of AD, we extrapolate the notions to the realm of cognitive linguistics and analyze them using the conceptual framework of the science. Accordingly, stereotypes, anchors and targets, as condensed imprints of the objects of reality are reflected in concepts as the fragments of the world view.

4.1. The World View Reflected in AD

The notion of the world view is a part of the cognitive paradigm in linguistics. It is created by an individual in the process of their cognitive and mental activity. This is a secondary objective reflection of the world that is fixed and embodied in a kind of tangible form - namely, language. This is a kind of mental map that guides a person's deeds and actions among the things and events of real life. This is the arranged set of knowledge about reality that is formed in social, group, or individual consciousness. Therefore, the world view is the reflection of the reality designed to simplify and schematize it. According to Pratkanis and Aronson, an average addressee is a “cognitive miser” (Pratkanis and Aronson, 2008: 38), a person who spends minimum of efforts in the process of acquiring and processing information. Thus, a ready-made product of a universal world view, which provides the foundation for further actions and deeds, is created for an average recipient. That means that the media monopolize the process of shaping the world view and “largely determine what we think, how we feel and what we do about our social and political environment” (Stein, 2005: xii).

Consequently, AD, as an integral element of modern mass media continuum is not a reflection of reality, on the contrary, it is one of the key sources of its construction, and, accordingly, of the shaping the existing world view of a recipient. The world view can be reconstructed and described in terms of concepts that serve as its structural elements.

4.2. Concepts as Constituents of the World View in AD

The nature and definition of a concept has been the subject of much debate (Jackendoff, 1994; Langacker, 2002; Wierzbicka, 1992; Karasik, 2002). This is due to the fact that the studies of the mind, the language and their correlation have adopted fairly opposing approaches, with cognitive, psychological and cultural being among them. This research is based on Karasik's vision of concepts as basic oppositions that structure the world view. Following his integrated approach, which combines cognitive, psychological and cultural linguistic paradigms, we define a concept as a complex, multi-dimensional, multi-constituent mental construction, which is reflected in the collective consciousness, is associated with a specific sphere of reality and is expressed in various linguistic forms. Thus, psycholinguistic approach to the concept enables the separation of its affective side, so the axiological constituent is singled out. Perceptive and cognitive sides of the concept are highlighted from the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, which presents its figurative constituent. Linguistic representation of the concepts leads to the notional constituent. Therefore, the concepts are analyzed in terms of their notional, figurative and axiological constituents.

The careful analysis of the selected material has enabled the detection of frequently activated concepts of AD and their conceptual markers, which reflect basic needs, wishes, hopes and aspiration of a recipient. The following procedure has been applied. Firstly, the dictionary definitions (ODE, LDOCE, MEDAL, CCAD) served as the basis for conceptual markers at the notional level. Secondly, the modes of perception (auditory, visual, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile) provided the foundation for identifying conceptual markers of the figurative layer. Thirdly, the axiological constituent was presented through the evaluation based on three types of evaluative meanings, namely, sensory, sublimated, and rational. Consequently, each concept has been organized by a variety of its conceptual markers, which reveal the internal structure of the concept. Six key concepts of AD have been singled out on the basis of their quantitative representation. The results are presented in the following tables.

Table 1: CONCEPT SUCCESS (67 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer	Axiological layer
Conceptual markers		visual perception	holistic positive
	succeeding	wealth	
	one that succeeds	high position	
	fame	fame	
	wealth	having a partner	
	high position		

The most frequently recurrent concept in the AD under study is that of SUCCESS, which accounts for 67 %, correspondingly 1340 cases of actualization. Its reification is verbal as well as visual. *Hold your head proud, and raise your fun flag high. And claim what you deserve. Claim your Mazda 3* [Cosmopolitan, May, 2010]. *Combining rock-solid stability and the winning momentum it takes to drive economic growth, our teams partner with you to achieve your goals every day. Barclays* [The Week, May 21, 2011]. *Toshiba laptops let you take the world by*

storm – and your life beyond limits. [Men’s Journal, April, 2010]. *Rolex. A crown for every achievement* [The Week, June 19, 2010]. *Every small dog thinks he can rule the world. Introducing natural food that gives him the power to do it. Nutro®* [Good Housekeeping, September, 2010]. The conceptual markers that organize the structure of the concept are presented in Table 1. Their duplication indicates their key role in the structure of the concept and minds of the recipients. Thus, as it is implied in AD, being successful means being prosperous, famous and powerful, being able to achieve whatever planned. No moral values, spiritual accomplishments or interpersonal relationship are considered. However, the concept is granted positive evaluation.

Table 2: BEAUTY (14, 7 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer		Axiological layer	
		visual perception	tactile perception		
Conceptual markers	smth that pleases the sight	shine	smoothness	holistic positive	
	smth that pleases other senses	colour	softness		
	smth that delights the mind	youth	firmness		
	a quality that gives you pleasure	smth noticeable	moisturising		
			naturalness		
			lightness		
			freshness		
		durability			

Table 2 demonstrates the variety of conceptual markers of the concept BEAUTY, which is the second according to the number of representations in AD (294 cases). *Introducing the newest trend in beauty: Olay total effects tone correcting CC cream. Fight 7 signs of aging with a beautiful and instantly flawless-looking skin tone* [Cosmopolitan, December, 2012]. *Double the brightening intensity. Boost radiance + Target dark spots. Jurlique. Nature + Science = Beauty* [Marie Claire, June, 2013]. *Colorsensational® lipcolor. Our exclusive formula with nourishing honey nectar dramatically hydrates beyond perfection. Pinks have never been prettier, more luscious* [Ladies’ Home Journal, April, 2011]. The figurative layer proves beauty to be a set of independent qualities rather than an integral phenomenon. Beauty is associated with features perceived visually or felt by touch; nothing is mentioned about pleasing the intellect or soul. The evaluation the concept receives in the discourse is positive.

Table 3: SAVE (7, 4 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer	Axiological layer
Conceptual markers	saving money		
	saving time		
	saving other resources		

As shown in Table 3, the concept SAVE is expressed only in the notional layer, which suggests its traditionally established depiction in the collective consciousness. *Save money. Live better. Walmart* [Family Circle, November, 2010]. *Feel fabulous for less. More for your money. Bic* [Cosmopolitan, May, 2010]. *You spent weeks looking for that little black dress. Fortunately, it only takes 15 minutes to see how much you could save with GEICO* [Ladies' home Journal, April, 2011]. No additional attributes are attached to the structure of the concept. The lack of evaluation shows support for the idea that worldwide economy has become an a priori fact, requiring no assessment.

Table 4: FAMILY (4, 1 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer				Axiological layer
		visual	gustatory	tactile	olfactory	
Conceptual markers	parents and children	family structure	home-made food	safety	home aroma	delicious
	children		family meals	family fun		strong
	relatives					memorable
	household					mom-approved

Table 4 illustrates the wide variety of conceptual markers forming the enhanced and broadened notion of family enriched by supplementary characteristics. *We're bakers. But we're parents, too. That's why we bake our wholesome bread the way we do...* [Family Circle, February, 2011]. *Sometimes building a home doesn't require building anything at all. Start building your home's character with stylish and affordable décor* [Family Circle, March, 2010]. *Coca-Cola. Open happiness™. Make family night fun* [Good Housekeeping, October, 2011]. *Having a real family dinner isn't impossible. You just need a little help. "With our busy schedules, the only way we can share dinner as a family is if everyone pitches in..." Stouffer's* [Family Circle, February, 2011]. Thus, the associations brought include: certain family structure (typically, a mother and a child, as based on the analysis of the data); delicious food and smells, feeling happy and protected. No problems, responsibilities or duties are represented. Evaluation is unconventional, based on sensory and rational assessment.

Table 5: HEALTH (4 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer			Axiological layer
		gustatory	visual	tactile	
	general body condition	natural ingredients	diet	strength	eco-friendly
	being sound in mind	healthy food			
	freedom from disease or pain	nutrition			

The constituents of the concept HEALTH are shown in Table 5. As it can be seen, the concept is expanded in the figurative and axiological layer, with additional markers being ascribed to it. Consequently, being healthy implies consuming natural nutritious food, simultaneously beware of excess weight; being strong and close to nature. *Get informed. Learn about the benefits of being physically active. Get empowered. Make proper choices to create a healthier lifestyle.* [Good Housekeeping, September, 2010]. *Introducing Benifiber® Stick Packs. A natural fiber that helps your body stay healthy, in four rich flavors that you can take with you anywhere.* [Marie Claire, June, 2009]. *I drink milk. Its naturally nutrient rich like no other beverage. Besides calcium, milk is packed with protein and B vitamins to help build strong families.* [Family Circle, March, 2010].

Table 6: DANGER (2, 8 %)

	Notional layer	Figurative layer			Axiological layer
		tactile perception	visual perception	olfactory perception	
Conceptual markers	damage	heat	ageing	odour	effective (protection)
	the possibility of suffering harm or danger	dirt			heavy (protection)
	a cause of danger	sun			professional (protection)

Table 6 presents the least numerous activated concept, which nevertheless reflects a number of threats for the recipients, heat, dirt, sun, and odour being among them. Thus, the addressee is informed of the potential risks and is urged to seek for heavy, effective and professional protection. *The Lysol® No-Touch™ Hand Soap System helps to stop the spread of bacteria around your home. It automatically senses hands and dispenses the right amount of soul to kill 99.9% of bacteria.* [Ladies' Home Journal, April, 2011]. *Now defend against photo-ageing: the # 1 cause of wrinkles.* [Family Circle, November, 2010]. *It's not what you smell, it's what you don't. Our breakthrough fragrance system eliminates all unpleasant odor, turning hair removal into scent-sational experience.* Sally Hansen. [Cosmopolitan, May, 2010].

5. Conclusion

This paper has sought to show how AD and the world view, which it reflects, as well as shapes, are correlated. The integrative pragmatic, discourse-analysis and cognitive approach has served as the theoretical framework for the research. It has been demonstrated that AD is a strategic process aimed at persuading the addressee. The study provides the evidence that AD is a type of manipulative discourse since it possesses the following features: it is one-way communication (from the sender to the recipient), its main goal (modification of aims, aspirations,

desires, attitudes, tastes of the recipient) is hidden, the recipient is unable to exert the reverse coercion and may only either submit to the suggested communicative strategy or ignore it. Implying concrete and unconcealed from the recipient goals, AD is predetermined by a number of communication strategies, whose ultimate goal is the correction of the recipient's world view, respectively, they are subject to manipulative macrostrategy. Manipulation is exerted at the level of cognition.

Our findings suggest that, by adding supplementary attributes to the structure of key concepts, the addresser can modify the concepts as the constituents of the world view, hence the world view itself, in the minds of the receivers. By employing certain linguistic markers, the corresponding conceptual markers are explicated, which leads to evocation of the concept. The procedure can similarly be conducted in the reverse order. Consequently, AD serves as one of the tools for interpretation of the reality and constructing the ready-made patterns of its objects.

We advocate further research of manipulative potential of AD based on the analysis of such cognitive structures as frames and metaphors.

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