

Methods of Socio-Psychological Impact in Social Advertising

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Abstract: The author operationalizes the concepts of “social advertising” and “socio-psychological impact” concerning to the issues of research. Three main methods of socio-psychological impact in social advertising (persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness) and also the phonosemantic aspect, are described in the article. Indicators, which can accurately identify these methods are installed in the study. The author gives the practical recommendations for using socio-psychological methods of persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness in social advertising, depending on the specificity of advertising context (target, object, audience, etc.).

Key words: Social advertising % Socio-psychological impact % Persuasion % Suggestion
% Manipulation of consciousness % Advertising context

INTRODUCTION

Advertising has a lot of species: commercial, politic, private, social. But generally, only the social advertising is intended to represent the interests of society.

Social advertising represents “information disseminated in any way, in any form or by any means, addressed to the general public and aimed at achieving the charitable and other socially useful purposes, as well as the national (state) interests” [1].

In the context of a democratic civil society social advertising provides the continuity of human values system, including integrity, tolerance, respect for the environment, etc. Thus, social advertising is the conductor of the existing national, regional and world order.

Hence, effectiveness of social advertising, based on the clever using of methods of socio-psychological impact in social advertising in this kind of mass communicational process is very important.

The practical recommendations for implementation the social advertising in the mass communicational process, given in the conclusion, may be useful for advertisers: government structures, various NGOs, etc. and also for consumers of advertising information (in order to clearly aware the socio-psychological impact exerted on them in this process).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of comparative analysis was used in the given study empirical data – texts of social advertising messages.

In the studying process of the phonosemantic impact of social ads the method of content analysis was approved by the author. The practical results of content analysis were made by the VAAL psycholinguistic program [2].

The method of qualitative analysis of scientific sources and literature is also used in the given study, as well as scientific methods of system analysis, structural and functional analysis.

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RESULTS

Three main methods of socio-psychological impact are used in social advertising: persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness.

Persuasion as a method of influence on the consciousness of the recipient is based on providing the latest information in its pure form, so-called "zero" version of the text, where the meaning of the transmitted statements are not changed when it is received. This method contacts exclusively with the conscious in the mind to the recipient, causing him make choices in a rational way, real needs and a clear motivation of installation.

Suggestion is such an impact on the recipient, which gives him (against the will) certain feelings, states, behaviors that "are not directly connect with his norms and principles of action" [3. p. 120-121], but in any case not contrary to them. The method of suggestion implies that recipient has at least the minimum interest in committing the act, which is programmed by the inspiring.

Manipulation of consciousness, as opposed to the suggestion and persuasion, is a kind of exposure, leading to a "hidden excitement of recipient's intentions do not coincide with his true existing desires" [4, p. 59]. It is urgent to notify that manipulation of consciousness is not a deception of recipient. Information that gives the manipulator, almost always is truthful, but it's interpretation by the manipulable leads him to commit the act, that he did not intend to commit earlier (before the manipulation).

The impact on the recipients in social advertising may be verbal (by texts), visual (by visual images), auditory (by sensation of timbre and tone of voice, etc.). But texts in advertising messages is the main component, because, firstly, it is present (in one way or another) in all advertising messages and, secondly, in fact it is the only element of advertising messages, responsible for it's rational perception by respondents.

So, in this article we'll consider only this (verbal) kind of socio-psychological impact. "Advertising text, by its psycholinguistic characteristics, may be as close as possible to the text of art (if latent potential of psychological impact on the recipient at the manipulation of consciousness is activated), or may be used a variant of adapted to the target consumer technical text (at persuasion). The synthesis in the advertising messages art and technical texts (in suggestion) is also possible. Synthesis of art and technical in the advertising text (or the presence in it of only any one of these two components) is the criterion that allows, on the one hand, to determine in the form of verbal culture the ratio of rational and emotional aspects respectively. On the other hand, this criterion allows to define and classify uniquely applied in a particular advertising message kind of psychological impact on the consumer of information: persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness" [5, p. 118]. So, we find the criterion for classification the method of socio-psychological impact (persuasion, suggestion or manipulation of consciousness) used in the concrete advertising message.

"Problems and methods of texts research directly related to the hermeneutic aspect of it's perception by the reader... The subject of hermeneutics is based on evaluative perception of two levels of value of linguistic units: semantic and phonosemantic" [6, p. 164].

Semantic analysis uses a word as the basic semiotic unit which undergoes to the value judgment of recipients. Exactly a word is the minimal socially determined symbolic unit to which in any language belongs some sign value, required for subsequent communication. Any language consists of the set of such socially significant elements; forms particulars of national mentality, set of habits and stereotypes that exist in society, because "all higher forms of thinking depend on national language and different views of the world are based on the different languages" [7, p. 49].

The three above methods of socio-psychological impact in social advertising (persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness) are based on the semantic level of value of linguistic units by the recipients.

Phonosemantic aspect is the second level of readability. The sound value of the word (it's sound shape), based on sound's ability to cause non-audio impressions for the recipients, is in the basis of the theory of phonosemantic impact. This thesis explains the initial role of objects and phenomena, associated with different sounds, in the life of mankind. For example, various hazards to human life created a negative assessment of low, rumbling or hissing sounds. Conversely, tall, clean, melodic sounds accompanied the positive developments in the life of mankind, so they have a positive evaluation. Then sound assessments, entrenched in human's consciousness or subconscious, could be transferred on any consonant

combinations. In this case we have deal with synaesthetic effect - hidden connection of sound image with a non-audio. Emphasize that the concept of “sound image” also extends to the written text, because recipient, during it’s reading, mentally pronounces – “articulate” it in his own mind. More of that, in this theory “sound-letter mental image, which is influenced by the sounds of speech, but understands and clearly states only under the influence of a letter, id the carrier of phonetic values” [8, p. 36].

A.P. Zhuravlev is the founder of the theory of emotional impact of the phonetics of the Russian language on the human’s subconscious. According to his theory, for evaluation of phonosemantic impact in Russian language 25 scales, consist of antonymous pairs of adjectives, are used: good - bad, big - small, delicate - rude, feminine - masculine, light - dark, active - passive, simple - complex, strong - weak, hot - cold, fast - slow, beautiful - repellent, smooth - rough, easy - heavy, cheerful - sad, safe - terrible, majestic - a low, bright - dim, rounded - angular, joyful - sad, loud - quiet, good - evil, powerful - frail, moving - slow, long - short, brave - cowardly.

All the sounds of Russian language were assessed on these scales from surveys of native Russian speakers. Each of the five-point scales is graded by the following way: it’s extreme division designated superlative feature, following division - the initial level and the central division remained neutral.

Furthermore, according to Zhuravlev’s theory, on the phonetic value is also influenced by parameters the position of the sound in the word and presence of the percussiveness of the sound (is it percussive or not). So, the first first sound in the word receives the coefficient “4”, percussive sound - coefficient “2”.

Based on this theory, in 2001 Russian programmers M. Dymsitz and V. Shalak created the VAAL psycholinguistic program. Let’s analyze, using VAAL program, some texts of social advertising messages (their Russian language originals).

1) “Toys and money can not replace parents! Want to help an orphan? Try to be his mentor and friend!” – one of the billboards of the “Trust sector” project, realized by “Laboratory of Social Advertising” and Agency of Social Information with the help of Committee of Public Relations of Moscow Government [9].

The Russian language original text of this social advertising message, according to the psycholinguistic analysis of VAAL program, to some extent is bad (-3,3), repellent (-0,1), evil (-3,2), coward (-2,8). It seems that such a phonosemantic impression is not conducive to efficiency of social advertising message.

2) “We do not sell tobacco products to persons under eighteen years old! It’s the law!” – text on the special on the points of sale of tobacco products, used in the all-Russian action, realized by Russian Community Board for Advertising [9, p. 152].

In this instance, the Russian language original text of this social advertising message, according to the psycholinguistic analysis of VAAL program, to some extent is good (1,6), safe (4,0), kind (2,4), bright (0,2). In comparison with the previous message, this ad must be rather effective in achievement of its goals.

Phonosemantic factor, of course, also must be considered during the development of social advertising texts, because it can spoil the overall impression of the advertisement and provide the opposite (unwanted) result of the advertising campaign.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- C Three main methods of socio-psychological impact may be used in social advertising (persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness). Using of each concrete method in each concrete case depends on various factors (object of advertising; properties of target social group: true interests and needs of the recipients, their age, education, level of prosperity, etc.).
- C Persuasion as a method of influence on the consciousness of the recipient may be used with the maximal efficiency in the following case – recipients are sufficiently interested in the object of advertising (persuasion needs only as a method of impartial informing the target group). Suggestion as a method of socio-psychological impact may be used with the maximal efficiency in the following case – recipients have some (not very big) interest in the object of advertising (suggestion needs as a method of additional pushing recipients to committing acts, in which they have minimal interest). Manipulation of consciousness, as opposed method to the suggestion and persuasion, may be used

with the maximal efficiency in case if recipients don't have any interest in the object of advertising (manipulation of consciousness must get them to do something, in what they are absolutely not interested before the advertising).

- C The presence of technical or art text in social advertising message is the tool of using in it the concrete method of socio-psychological impact: only technical text in persuasion, only art text in manipulation of consciousness and synthesis of technical and art texts in suggestion).
- C Phonosemantic factor also must be considered during the development of social advertising texts. Despite the fact that semantic aspect is primary in the discourse of recipient's attitude to the advertising message, phonosemantic aspect of perception may screw up the recipient's evaluation and provide the opposite (unwanted) result of the advertising campaign.
- C These general rules are applicable to all kinds of social advertising: charity, ecological, healthy living, volunteering [10], etc.

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