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PRAGMATICS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL MEANS IN MEDIA ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

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Abstract. The article examines the pragmatic potential of phraseological units in media advertising discourse. It is argued that their persuasive force rests not so much on imagery as on the implicit nature of the evaluation conveyed: the addressee derives the meaning independently, and a self-generated conclusion meets no critical resistance. The paper describes the main pragmatic functions of idioms in advertising texts, the role of instantial transformation and the mechanism of dual actualisation, as well as the significance of phraseological choice for constructing the image of the addressee and for advertising localisation.

Keywords: phraseology, pragmatics, media advertising, advertising discourse, verbal persuasion, instantial transformation, implicature, dual actualisation, addressivity.

Media advertising is one of those discursive practices where the requirement for linguistic economy is expressed with particular clarity: a message must be recognized, decoded, and emotionally evaluated by the recipient within a few seconds—often under conditions where the recipient's attention is not naturally focused on the advertiser and must be forcibly captured. This explains the enduring interest copywriters show in the language's stock of phraseological units. A phraseological unit (hereinafter referred to as a PU) enters the advertising text as a ready-made element: it is reproducible and compact, possesses imagery established in the collective linguistic consciousness, and—crucially for advertising—carries a stable evaluative connotation. Unlike a free phrase, which requires the recipient to process it word by word, a PU is recognized holistically as a single sign; it thus serves as an ideal vehicle for conveying an evaluation while consuming minimal linguistic space. This article aims to examine the pragmatic mechanisms that underpin the persuasive potential of phraseological devices in media advertising discourse. It seeks to demonstrate that this potential stems not so much from the PU's imagery as from its capacity to generate inferential knowledge that the recipient constructs independently.

The theoretical foundation for this approach lies in the classification of fixed expressions proposed by V. V. Vinogradov, which shaped the subsequent development of phraseology as an independent discipline [1, p. 145]. Fundamental to this pragmatic analysis is V. N. Telia's premise that the connotative-evaluative component does not merely accompany an idiom's meaning from the outside but is integral to its structure; consequently, the use of a PU always constitutes an act of influencing the interlocutor's value-based worldview [2, p. 203]. A. N. Baranov and D. O. Dobrovolsky demonstrated that the internal form of an idiom is not "erased" during the process of phraseologization; rather, it remains cognitively active and can be actualized in discourse, generating an effect of semantic increment [3, p. 214]. For advertising texts, this implies that a phraseological unit functions simultaneously on two levels—as a holistic evaluative sign and as a construct decomposable into components—and the ability to switch between these levels forms the basis of most advertising techniques.

Advertising discourse is a highly intentional type of speech: a calculated communicative objective lies behind every textual element, and the text itself is structured as a tool for managing perception [4, p. 62]. At the same time, direct assertions regarding a product's advantages are

largely ineffective in modern advertising, as the recipient is already aware of the message's persuasive nature and adopts a critical stance toward it. An effective approach involves the implicit presentation of information, where an evaluation is implied rather than explicitly stated [5, p. 81]. The mechanism behind this type of presentation is described in terms of H. P. Grice's conversational implicatures: the meaning derived by the recipient from the relationship between what is said and communicative expectations is perceived as the result of their own inference rather than as an imposed assertion [6, p. 45]. Relevance theory, as developed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson, refines this picture: the additional cognitive effort required to process the message is rewarded by an expanded set of weak implicatures [7, p. 199]. K. Tanaka, applying this theory to advertising material, demonstrated that intentional ambiguity and wordplay do not hinder communication but rather enhance its effectiveness by engaging the recipient in the process of meaning construction [8, p. 40].

Phraseology serves this mechanism particularly well. In an advertising message, a phraseological unit (PU) performs several interconnected pragmatic functions. The *attractiveness function* is linked to the PU's placement in prominent parts of the text—such as the slogan, headline, or echo phrase—where the recognizability of the fixed expression ensures the message is instantly identified amidst information noise. The *evaluative function* involves transferring the value judgment inherent in the PU to the advertised object: the idiom's positive connotation becomes a characteristic of the product, even though no explicit claim is made regarding its properties—and thus, nothing is subject to verification. The *argumentative function* is primarily realized through paremias and precedent expressions; these act as "condensed" arguments that appeal not to rational reasoning but to the authority of collective experience, with the statement backed by the entire tradition associated with the proverb. Finally, the *contact-establishing* (or *phatic*) function is facilitated by colloquial and everyday expressions that create an atmosphere of informal, peer-to-peer communication, thereby narrowing the gap between brand and consumer.

Occasional transformations of PUs—which in advertising represent the norm rather than an exception—deserve special attention. In her study of the stylistic use of fixed expressions in discourse, A. Natsiscione demonstrated that such transformations are neither random nor arbitrary; rather, they are discursively motivated and driven by the specific objectives of the text [10, p. 27]. In advertising practice, the most productive technique is *component substitution*, where a brand name or a key product feature is inserted into the structure of a recognizable PU; the original form remains discernible, while the substituted element inherits the PU's evaluative aura. For instance, the slogan "Don't slow down—Snickers-ize" (*Ne tormozi — snikersni*) embeds an occasional verb derived from the brand name into a colloquial imperative structure; this imbues the product name with connotations of active engagement and youth-oriented relevance. Other productive techniques include expanding the phrase's composition with a clarifying modifier; truncating a fixed expression to a core fragment that the recipient mentally reconstructs; blending two established phrases; and literalization—the intentional restoration of a component's literal meaning, often reinforced by accompanying visuals.

The pragmatic impact of these techniques relies on the phenomenon of "double actualization"—the recipient simultaneously holding both the conventional and the occasional forms in their mind. Perceiving a transformed fixed expression requires a micro-effort to reconstruct the original version, and it is precisely this effort that ensures involuntary memorization: a message requiring even minimal cognitive processing sticks in the memory far better than one received passively. The KFC slogan "Finger lickin' good"—built upon an everyday evaluative collocation—illustrates this well: it makes no explicit claim about product quality but shifts the

evaluation to the realm of immediate physical experience, leaving the conclusion regarding taste up to the recipient.

The implicit nature of this type of phraseological evaluation also has a practical consequence rarely noted in linguistic literature. Since a meaning derived from an implicature is not formally a factual assertion, it is difficult to verify—and, consequently, difficult to challenge. Advertisers can thus attribute qualities to a product without assuming responsibility for an explicit claim; this aligns the technique with manipulative strategies and makes it a subject of linguistic analysis in the context of advertising copy.

The role of the target audience is also a crucial factor in the choice of phraseology. The selection of phraseological units (PUs) constructs an image of the intended recipient: colloquial and slang-laden expressions define an "in-group" within a specific age or subcultural demographic, while literary and proverbial expressions appeal to an audience that shares traditional values. Recognizing these units often requires specific background knowledge—such as familiarity with precedent texts, local cultural realities, or cinematic quotes; this "filtering" strategy deliberately narrows the circle of addressees but significantly boosts loyalty within the target segment, as the act of recognition fosters a sense of community belonging. Guy Cook aptly describes advertising as a discourse that parasitizes other discourses and appropriates the voices of others [9, p. 182]; phraseology serves as ideal material for such appropriation, as it carries the imprint of the environment that spawned it. This leads to a conclusion crucial for the cross-lingual adaptation of advertising: the criterion for equivalence during localization should not be the PU's constituent elements or its imagery, but rather its pragmatic effect—specifically, the type of implicature generated and the evaluative vector—which effectively requires the translator to recreate the text using the cultural resources of the target audience.

Finally, the factor of phraseological wear must be taken into account. A fixed expression that is systematically exploited in advertising loses its novelty, ceases to demand cognitive effort, and becomes a cliché; as the effort required to process it vanishes, so does its persuasive potential. This explains the constant renewal of the phraseological repertoire in advertising and the trend toward increasingly complex, multi-layered linguistic wordplay.

The analysis suggests that phraseological devices function in media advertising discourse as a compact tool for persuasive communication, combining economy of expression with high evaluative density. Their pragmatic effectiveness stems not from imagery per se, but from the implicit nature of the conveyed evaluation and the engagement of the audience in the active construction of meaning: a conclusion reached independently does not trigger the resistance often associated with direct persuasion. The occasional transformation of phraseological units—relying on the mechanism of "double actualization"—amplifies this effect, turning the perception of the advertising text into a process akin to solving a puzzle. These findings can be applied in the creation and linguistic analysis of advertising copy, as well as in the training of specialists in media communication and translation.

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