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COGNITIVE STYLISTIC ASPECT OF SEMANTIC DEVIATIONS IN SLOGANS

Abstract. This article is devoted to the cognitive stylistic analysis of semantic deviations as foregrounding devices in slogans. The ultimate objective of this article is to reveal and depict stylistic attractors, cognitive processes, structures and mechanisms which determine cognitive stylistic specificity of semantic deviations utilized in slogans. The article sets forth the definition of semantic deviation, expands on what impact stylistic devices falling into the category of semantic deviations make on a reader from cognitive perspective. It also displays how rules and literary norms are violated so as to foreground information, encode implicit information, defamiliarize a media text and capture a potential customer's attention in slogans. The semantic deviations were analyzed from cognitive and stylistic perspective in slogans of companies with a household name. Furthermore, conceptual metaphor analysis and cognitive-stylistic analysis were applied to analyze how semantic deviations are deployed in the text. Having conducted the research, the following findings were revealed: By means of leveraging bodily and sensory-motor experience and displaying tangible and nonhuman items as something animate metaphorical utterances allow a potential end user to envision and get a profound insight into what is being represented by the advertiser. Regarding simile, it incorporates conceptual mapping between two incompatible concepts by juxtaposing two tangible objects. Direct and specific comparison of two entities facilitates the decipherment of the message behind the stylistic device and evokes the mental images. When it comes to pun, by virtue of dual meaning pun calls forth the potential customer's brainwork and pushes him/her to interpret the hidden meaning. By means of pun the slogan grabs a potential user's attention and exerts a humorous effect on him/her. As for paradox, this stylistic device activates a potential end user's cognitive processing and encyclopedic knowledge structures as well as calls for unraveling the parallel between and make sense of two abnormal and contradictory terms to decode the creative and novel meaning behind the hidden message where pun was integrated.

Key words: semantic deviation, stylistic devices; defamiliarization; foregrounding; conceptual metaphor; cognitive-stylistic analysis.

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КОГНИТИВНО-СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИХ ДЕВИАЦИЙ В СЛОГАНАХ

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена когнитивно-стилистическому анализу семантических девиаций как средства выдвижения в слоганах. Основной целью данной статьи является выявление и описание стилистических аттракторов, когнитивных процессов, структур и механизмов, которые определяют общую когнитивно-стилистическую специфику выдвижения семантических девиаций в слоганах. В статье дано определение семантической девиации, подробно рассмотрено, какое воздействие оказывают стилистические приемы, попадающие в категорию семантических девиаций, на читателя с когнитивной точки зрения. Также показано, как нарушаются правила и литературные нормы с целью выдвижения информации на передний план, шифрования информации и привлечения внимания читателя с помощью фигур речи в слоганах. Для анализа семантических девиаций с когнитивной точки зрения в слоганах был применен концептуальный анализ метафоры и когнитивно-стилистический анализ. В результате исследования были сформулированы следующие выводы: Посредством использования сенсомоторного ощущения и отображения материальных и неодушевленных предметов как чего-то одушевленного метафорические высказывания позволяют читателю представить и понять слоган. Что касается сравнения, оно включает концептуальное сопоставление двух несовместимых концепций путем сопоставления двух материальных объектов. Прямое и конкретное сравнение двух концепций облегчает расшифровку сообщения и вызывает ментальные образы. Что касается каламбура, в силу двойного значения каламбур активизирует умственные процессы читателя и побуждает его интерпретировать скрытый смысл. С помощью каламбура слоган привлекает внимание читателя и оказывает на него юмористическое воздействие. Что касается парадокса, то этот стилистический прием активизирует когнитивную обработку и энциклопедические структуры знаний читателя, а также призывает читателя провести параллель между двумя нестандартными и противоречивыми терминами, чтобы расшифровать креативный и новый смысл скрытого сообщения, в который был интегрирован каламбур.

Ключевые слова: семантические девиации; стилистические приемы; теория выдвижения; концептуальная метафора; когнитивно-стилистический анализ.

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Semantic deviation is one type of linguistic deviations which is implemented when a combination of incompatible and illogical words violates the literary norms of language in an attempt to pique a reader's interest, capture a reader's attention, exert an emotional impact and bring aesthetic beauty to a literary or media text. Semantic deviation plays a part in a media text since this type of text is predominantly expressed in a figurative manner. Peter Stockwell points out that a reader's attention can be dragged as long as figures are constantly renewed against the backdrop of the ground as attention is normally captured by movement in the visual field (Stockwell 2002: 19). Very few investigations have been carried out to research stylistic characteristics along with cognitive characteristics of semantic deviations as a key mechanism of foregrounding in a media text. Therefore, it becomes apparent that cognitive aspect and stylistic aspect go hand in hand and in order to conduct effective research both aspects have to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, semantic deviations as a key mechanism of foregrounding have been predominantly researched in the media text. However, cognitive stylistic aspect of semantic deviations has been superficially investigated in slogans or completely neglected so far. For this reason, this research question became the central objective of the research and, thus, this was an attempt to fill the above-mentioned gap.

Multiple research has been conducted to investigate semantic deviations from different perspectives. Especially, cognitive stylistic aspect of semantic deviations in media text arouse scholars' interest and is becoming one of the most interesting subjects of investigation in Cognitive Linguistics. Petronienė, Saulė and Žvirblytė Indrė investigated semantic deviations in the headlines of online news (Saulė, Indrė 2012). Their findings revealed that journalists tend to skip information, modify the style and writing structure and, most importantly, utilize multiple stylistic devices in an attempt to facilitate headlines. According to the scholars, expressing ideas in a concise manner could be especially relevant in a newspaper style and, thus, abundance of figures of speech are deployed in order to express the message in a precise, concise and informative manner. Muhammad Uzair, Arshad Mahmood and Ubaidullah Khan investigated the lexical innovations in Pakistani English newspaper on the end users (Uzair, Mahmood, Khan 2012). Their findings showed that the usage of allusions or the language that has culture-specific features fosters emotional attachment and evokes readers' interest in reading a newspaper. According to G. Leech, effective advertising meets a number of criteria, such as attention value, listening ability as well as readability,

memorability and marketing power. Stylistic devices such as onomatopoeia, ellipsis, metaphor, paradox, etc. grab attention value and ensure memorability. Simple and informal sentences have to do with readability. Other linguistic techniques such as intensive usage of imperatives, superlatives, inversions and parallelism ensures marketing power (Leech 2018:40). Similarly, according to Vasiloaia Mihaela, lexical repetition, alliteration, grammatical parallelism being one of the most frequent techniques utilized in advertising contribute to the memorability of a product and the related advertising messages (Vasiloaia 2009:296).

English advertising capitalizes on a high adaptability of the English language. The English language enables the creators of advertisement to make use of word puns, metaphor, metonymy and blend individual styles and types of text. Having investigated the stylistic features of English advertising slogans, Maryna Zembytska and Yulia Mazur revealed that metaphor is utilized in advertising thanks to its ability to represent concept while facilitating learning about the brand of a product or service; and the more time is set aside for decoding the message, the more its meaning is internalized (Zembytska, Mazur 2018:42). Similarly, Li Xiaqing holds the view that advertising creators apply metaphor to communicate advertising information effectively to potential end users and make use of creative thinking with free association techniques to give the target audience a new perspective, give a rise to new feelings and attitudes to advertised products and generate a special and unique image at the back of the minds of the audience (Li 2017: 156). Furthermore, in advertising slogans copywriters resort to the usage of metaphor so as to contribute to the aesthetic of the message and highlight the main idea by depicting one object through another implicitly (Duboviciene, Skorupa, 2014:65). Leech finds metaphor beneficial since it “suggests the right kind of emotive associations for the product” (Leech, 1966:182). When it comes to simile, Maryna Zembytska and Yulia Mazur reckon that it is a figure of speech that explicitly compares two things using connecting words such as “like”, “as” etc., as well as it is regularly utilized by advertisers to highlight the features of a product (Zembytska, Mazur 2018:42). According to Ding, simile is applied to highlight some positive characteristics of an advertised product and intensify the emotional representation of a certain aspect in an imaginative way (Ding 2003). As far as personification goes, the figure of speech of this kind is integrated into an advertising text when inanimate items or abstractions are endowed with human attributes to make it more dramatic, stimulating and eye-catching since a reader is more bound to relate to the object that are personified (Duboviciene, Skorupa, 2014:65). Similarly, personification has a tendency to impact a reader’s perception of events and pique their interest in the topic (Hosana, Supriadi, Supriadi, 2022, 122). As for hyperbole, it is normally utilized in order to place an emphasis on the best attributes of the items being promoted (Duboviciene, Skorupa, 2014:65). Moreover, copywriters make use of exaggeration to underscore a point or make a humorous statement (Hosana, Supriadi, Supriadi, 2022, 122). The usage of hyperbole brings about contrast so as to capture a reader’s attention. To be more specific, when one is depicted with an overstatement and the other is portrayed in a conventional manner, a striking contrast emerges. Copywriters normally integrate hyperbole to create an image and items

bigger and more essential on the part of the potential customers in order to persuade and direct them to a certain aim or item to purchase.

With respect to puns, Cuddon points out that puns are oftentimes utilized for the sake of humorous effect (Cuddon, 1999: 711). McQuarrie and Mick qualify puns as one of the most complex forms of rhetoric: puns generally call for more processing efforts than the messages where simple forms of rhetoric, for example, rhyme or alliteration, are utilized (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996:430). According to Leech, in advertising language ambiguity “hinges on the orthography rather than on pronunciation” (Leech, 1966:184). Gibbs advises against using puns in advertising since in order to understand a pun, the addressee normally has to make extra mental efforts. While decoding a pun, the addressee has to process more than one meaning in the message, and this normally involves additional processing efforts. In other words, processing wordplays – or figurative speech in general – is less economical than the processing of conventional, explicit messages (Gibbs, 1994). As far as repetition is concerned, copywriters resort to repetitions so as to underscore some key aspects of the advertised product or service in order to grab attention or stimulate the potential customers (Liu, 2017:477). What is more, repetition allows a reader to recall and retain the brand slogan in the customers’ memory (Muste, Stuart, Botella, 2015:352).

Cognitive stylistic characteristics of semantic deviations were analyzed in the slogans of renowned manufacturing companies.

“Good things come to those who wait” – Guinness

We can observe a contradiction in this aforementioned metaphorical organization. In the above-mentioned example “good things” is perceived as an object which is moving towards a human or target customer who is motionless in this situation. Since this advertising campaign promotes beer which is technically considered to be a physical object, but in this sentence it is expressed as an animate or a human object. This enables us to comprehend this experience with nonhuman entities in human terms-terms that we normally grasp on the basis of our own motivations and activities and characteristics. This gives us a very specific way of thinking that some positive events are going to happen to a person who can wait. The representation of a tangible object as something animate allows the potential customer to envision and profoundly comprehend what is being described by the advertiser. According to Leech, the nature of non-human objects is grasped more vividly and tends to become more real for the reader once it is depicted by means of features, actions, experiences that are typical of a human being (Leech 1969: 158).

“Like a good neighbour, State farm is there” – State Farm

The above-mentioned slogan “Like a good neighbor, State farm is there” which belongs to State Farm, property and casualty insurance provider in the United States, comprises simile. The comparative word “like” is utilized to display the usage of simile that compares the service which State Farm delivers with “a good neighbour” who is willing to give you a helping hand in an hour of need to emphasize that this company can help out its customers. What makes this slogan more gripping is that the author compares two incompatible things such as the company itself and “a good neighbor”, but the usage of the connector “like” derives something similar between these two

concepts. This enables the customer to visualize and get a profound understanding of the message the company aims at communicating. Since simile is explicit as opposed to metaphor and the author tells exactly what is compared to what, the message behind the slogan becomes direct, crystal clear and specific.

“Think outside the bun” – Taco Bell

The slogan of Taco Bell is slightly modified idiom “think outside the box”, but instead of using “the box” the author modified the idiom and used “bun”. The double contexts refer to people’s ability to think differently and food they eat on a daily basis that needs changing. The hinge is the homonymic word “bun”. And the trigger is the advertisers’ objective to induce the target customer to start thinking outside the box and attract the consumers to purchase their Tacos. But what’s worth mentioning is that the homonymic word “bun” conveys two different meanings respectively and it becomes apparent that Taco Bell encourages the consumer to break their routine of eating “buns” and to start thinking outside the box and have a go with Tacos instead. In this situation the usage of pun made the slogan lively and striking and exerts a humorous effect on the potential customer.

“Fly the friendly skies” – United Airlines

“Think small” – Volkswagen

In the aforementioned slogans we can observe the instances of paradox. It goes without saying that “sky” cannot possess a friendly personality trait. We can see the conflicting information which is a paramount characteristic of paradox since this linguistically contradictory and absurd statement is logically unacceptable. However, it becomes interpretable and starts making sense since “the friendly skies” is related to the service which is provided by United Airlines. When it comes to the slogan of Volkswagen “Think small”, it also incorporates paradox since we are more often than not encouraged to think big rather than “small”. However, the customer has to activate encyclopedic knowledge to decode the message behind the slogan “Think small”. This slogan targets at promoting “The Beetle” aka a “compact, strange-looking automobile” which resembles a beetle. Most importantly, this slogan is focused primarily on the Beetle’s form which was the smallest manufactured machine at that point and also it geared towards its simplicity and minimalism. By means of paradox, the slogans capture the potential customers’ attention, imagination and engagement. The integration of paradox into the slogans enables the customers to evoke visual images. This way, the usage of paradox enables the customers to get a better insight into the message the United Airline and Volkswagen aim at conveying.

“Quality never goes out of style” – Levi’s

“You are in good hands” – Allstate

In the aforementioned sentence container metaphors can be observed. Human beings have a tendency to establish boundaries with a surrounding world. To put it in another way, human beings view themselves as containers separating themselves from the surrounding world by means of their skin and body as well as we perceive physical objects as containers with their certain content. The above-mentioned slogans are understood through the spatial categories and establishment of

boundaries regarding our experience. To be more specific, in the slogans of Levi's and Allstate Insurance Company, "style" and "hands" are perceived as containers. To be more specific, "style" of Levi's Jeans is seen as a container which contains quality and "hands" are also a container in which the customers will find themselves if they turn to this very insurance company.

"Own a jaguar at a price of a car" – Jaguar Car

The above-mentioned slogan is based on a metaphorical expression which is based on a comparison. It is accomplished by means of a resemblance metaphor. In this very situation the resemblance between the "car" and a "jaguar" is not physical. A "car" cannot be a "jaguar" since it is logically unacceptable. Instead, this slogan activates encyclopedic knowledge and implies that a "jaguar" is the fastest animal species. By describing this car model "Jaguar" as a "jaguar" we draw a parallel between the "car" and the fastest animal in the world.

It is possible to draw the following conclusions that by virtue of utilizing bodily and sensory-motor experience and indicating tangible and nonhuman items as something animate metaphorical utterances enable a potential end user to envision and get a profound insight into what is being represented by the advertiser. As to simile, it encompasses conceptual mapping between two incompatible entities by juxtaposing two tangible concepts. Direct and specific comparison of two entities facilitates the comprehension of the message behind the stylistic device and calls forth the visualization of mental images. When it comes to pun, by means of dual meaning the usage of pun activates the potential customer's brainwork and induces him/her to decode the hidden meaning. By virtue of pun the slogan captures a potential user's attention and exerts a humorous effect on him/her. As for paradox, this stylistic device evokes a potential end user's cognitive processing and requires him/her to draw parallel and make sense of two odd and contradictory terms to decipher the innovative and novel meaning behind the usage of pun.

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