



The Correlation between Gender of the Programmed Addressee and the Stylistic Features of the Commercial Content

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ABSTRACT

Commercial uses persuasion mechanism (Awdiejew, 2010). It is going to take some social influence that must allow for communication preferences of its recipients. Comparison of commercials intended for men and this intended for women shows that it correlates with communication style features of this recipients groups.

The paper presents the results of second part of a bigger exploration. The first part was contented on a linguistic persuasion in texts located on retail wrappings (Fleischer, 2010). It confirmed a correlation between sex of programmed recipient and a specific stylistic features of the text. The research shows that for women the most characteristic are interdependence, affinity for other people and feeling, for men - especially hierarchy and action. The paper shows how this properties are realised in commercials.

A specific commercial feature is a parallel between a verbal and a visual or a sonic part of release (Szczęsna, 2001). This different levels should communicate the same meaning. The paper concentrates on a verbal and visual aspects.

INTRODUCTION

Television advertising is still one of the most powerful media of communication with consumers. Many of them are characterized by an interesting plot and a high artistic level. This has a positive effect on the attentiveness level of the viewer and ensures the manifestation of the commercial. On the other hand, this diversity makes it difficult to conduct research processes and causes the lack of comprehensive studies on the subject of advertising. The awareness of such limitations as well as the need for interdisciplinary research (psychological, sociological, cultural, marketing, etc.) on advertising makes the article abandon the ambition to fully investigate this phenomenon. Hence, only a certain



aspect of it will be examined here, which may contribute to a complementary insight into advertising.

The communicative approach to advertising

This paper will present the communicative approach to the phenomenon of advertising. It is assumed that the commercial shows us how the world could look like when we acquire the given something that is the subject of the commercial. Therefore, in terms of communication, the aim of advertising is not selling, as marketing studies indicate, but the transfer of the world of product and/or service experience to the realm of communication. A television advertisement is a message of character nature, which manipulates recognizable symbols functioning in the culture. By means of those symbols, the sender expresses specific content, that is communicates the created world of experience. Each and every component of advertising is of symbolic value: the one constructing the verbal communication (dominant in the text ad), visual communication (typical of display ads), sound communication (on which radio commercials are based) and all of them grouped together (on which the making of commercial spots is based). The sine qua non condition is the assumption of a parallelism of the verbal, visual and sound level of the advertisement message. Thus, the content expressed verbally must be duplicated in the visual and audio aspect of advertising.

It is assumed that the effectiveness of advertising increases proportionally with the adjustment of the proposed world of experience to suit the preferences of the addressee. In the specific consumer situation, when the addressee faces a decision of the selection and purchase of the given product, the addressee is supposed to adjust to the role of a potential consumer. The adjustment process may take place at various levels of advertising, both on the content level and the text arrangement. The most frequently reported driver of the addressee's preferences is the satisfaction of needs, based on the pursuit - evasion strategy. In the article it is assumed that there are distinct gender-determined preferences in terms of communication styles used by men and women.

Communication styles determined by gender

The research on gender language has been carried out for several years. In the literature devoted to the subject matter, one can find information about the preferences, in women and men, of the different ways of listening to the interlocutor, ways of making their purchase decisions or ways of interpreting the message. It should be noted that the representatives of a particular sex tend to use different strategies. Women use the language of relationships and familiarity, whereas men use the language of status and



independence. Women strive to communicate symmetrically and treat the interlocutor in a way that signifies "we are equal" (this is why confiding problems comes to them with such ease). Men are inclined to consider the relationships in the category of an asymmetry: someone in the relationship takes a higher position, someone lower. They are particularly sensitive to all forms of the emphasis of the hierarchical nature of relationships, they avoid behaviors that could suggest taking a lower position (this explains the reluctance of men to questions about the way while traveling – which indicates the "I don't know – you know" position. A correlative feature – to the ones mentioned above - is the tendency for men to demonstrate strength, to repel rivals and establish dominance within the hierarchy, while what is typical of women is the desire to create intimacy and bond and the sense of community within the group. This has its reasons. Studies indicate that men and women's brains are inherently focused on different things: men are designed to react physically, while women react by means of feelings.

Table 1. The features of communication styles determined by gender (personal elaboration)

Women		Men	
Familiarity links	Symmetry „We are equal“	Independence status Relationship hierarchy	Asymmetry „someone takes a higher position, someone lower“
	Creating intimacy and bond Creating the sense of community within the group		Manifestation of strength Repelling rivals Establishing dominance
Reacting by means of feelings		Physical reaction – action	

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

There was a clear tendency to the differentiation of strategies of the creation of advertising text printed on the packaging of cosmetics. It led to the formulation of the following research problem: Is there a correlation between the style of communication determined by gender and communication features of advertisements of products designed for a given sex? The selection of what type of content and which way of message arrangement allows to achieve such correlation in various types of commercials.



The results of the research project carried out with the use of cosmetics packaging confirmed the hypothesis regarding the existence of the convergence of text characteristics and gender-determined communication style of the addressee.

The article presents the results of the second round of tests. These are conducted on a different kind of research material, which still meets the requirements of the research procedure. The essential feature of the investigated advertisement is a clear indication of the gender of the designed addressee of the product. Transparent and rich materials fulfilling this requirement were provided by cosmetics advertising. Over time, however, the tendency for the strategy of ad creation shifted onto other categories of products (beer, sweets).

The hypothesis formulated in the article assumes that the way the commercials are created is determined arising from gender communication features of the programmed addressee.

Womanly style of communication in commercials

The advertisements, the programmed addressee of which are supposed to be women, are characterized by a specific arrangement of content. Their main structural axis comprises the opening or even exposure of the inner world of experience of the commercial main character. The full scenario based on this creation strategy includes the following sequence of events: the main character gets separated from the rest of the world, from people (she comes back home or escapes from a place full of people). Another element of the design is the use of the product, which is the subject of the advertisement. This step leads to the shift of the character into her inner world of experience.

The images presented in the spot connote the situation of the action being performed by the spot main character, the commercial addressee and the product itself. The separation, isolation from the world, closing on the world is achieved by the scenes of the character immersing in water, showing her sitting at a dressing table, or (when the main character is a celebrity) clandestine movement away from the place where a group of paparazzi is gathered. Such isolation excludes the presence of third parties. This effect is further enhanced by the zoom adjustment: the movement of the camera covering a wide set of a room or a street is reduced to the set of a female body. Such commercial creation is used to build familiarity with the addressee who is present in this intimate world.



The content of the ad is primarily focused on images symbolizing experiencing strong internal emotions, which is expressed by gestures and mimicry of the main character. The most frequently demonstrated feeling is pleasure, the intensity of which situates on the border of erotic fulfillment. This interpretation can be connoted even from the body position of the main character who is in the pose of rapture and bliss.

The effect of concentration on inner experiences is strengthened by the sensuality of images (lips touching petals of flowers, warm rain falling on bare skin, a drop of dew flowing down the neck, a touch of linen on the naked body, a breeze in one's hair).

A typical feature of this creation strategy is stability. Time is controlled by the order of an unreal world - the world of inner experience which is made unreal to the maximum, the time is stopped as if it ceased to apply.

The creation of the commercial, characterized by the set of the presented features, while opening the area of inner experience, creates an extra dimension, which is the depth of the represented world. It is this direction in which the addressee is oriented.

Manly style of communication in commercials

In the commercials in which the addressee is the man, there are clear references to the relationship with the outside world and to the hierarchical order it follows. Such connotations are communicated by showing the attributes of success (men in elegant suits, staying in spacious offices or rooms situated on a high level). This height and the lights of the city flashing in the bottom are supposed to express the leading position that the main character of the spot takes, and which can also be taken by the addressee. The measure of success is also supposed to be popularity (expressed as a result of an association with the flashes of paparazzi flashbulbs or an ostentatiously demonstrated interest from a person of the opposite sex). In contrast to the womanly creation strategy, the main character does not escape from the noise that surrounds him, quite the contrary - he wants to be seen, wants to focus the attention of the environment on him. The man who wants to take a high position in the hierarchy, must also prevail in this environment. The dominance is most often directed at women who in the commercial spot are unable to control their desire and succumb to the main character without any effort on his part.

The domain of the manly style of communication is also action. A special emphasis should be made here on the dynamism of the situation expressed by showing the



situation of the use of the product and the subsequent reaction of the environment. The scenario of a typical commercial implementing the manly strategy follows this order: a man staying alone, using the advertised product in solitude. After this act he goes out to the people, to the world. This is where he builds relationships with the environment, with the outside world. The structural movement appearing in these commercials is the opening, extending of space for the main character to act. It is in this space, in relations with the outside world that the confrontation with the world might arise, and which will allow him to confirm or re- establish his position in the hierarchy.

RESULTS

The analysis of the material revealed that the characteristic features of the style of communication of men and women, indicated in the literature, are confirmed in the way of commercial creation.

With regard to advertisements, in which the woman is the programmed addressee, there appears as a determinant a structural relationship intimacy and the exposure of the inner world of experience of the main character, which correlates with the desire for intimacy typical of women. The second feature is the feeling connoted in advertising by static world presented and the sensualization of communication at the level of content.

This method of creation creates a dimension of depth. Reaching an agreement is possible by inward orientation to the world of emotions and experiences of the main character.

Typical of the style of communication of men is the domain of hierarchy, realized in the creation of advertising messages by the introduction of the attributes of success and associations derived from images of domination of the main character over the environment. The action in advertising is connoted by introducing dynamism into the world presented by reference to the aspect of the passing of time.

This way of creation opens the dimension of vastness, width. Reaching an agreement is possible by adopting a perspective outside the main character, in the direction of the world and the people, in the direction of his surroundings.



Table 2. Means of expression of features of communication styles determined by gender in the commercial creation strategy (personal elaboration)

Women		Men	
Communication style features	Commercial creation strategy	Communication style features	Commercial creation strategy
familiarity	the exposure of the inner world of experience	hierarchy	success attributes dominance over the environment
Feelings	stability of the presented world sensualizacja	action	dynamism of the presented world
Intimacy of relationship	separation, isolation	confrontation verifying the status	building relationships with the world and the people
depth – vertical adjustment		width, vastness – horizontal adjustment	
↓		↓	
inner perspective		outside perspective	

The climax of the discussed creation strategy constitutes the use of the advertised product. It is the product placement that triggers the adoption of a particular perspective. In case of women, the inner orientation occurs, the opening of the dimension of emotions and feelings and at the same time the isolation from what is outside, the complete separation from the environment. In the commercials in which the scenario is determined by the characteristic style of communication for men, there appears at the same time the prospect of the outside movement: the dimension of vastness and width opens up, width, enabling the action to lead to the status verification.

CONCLUSION

In terms of communication, the advertising is characterized by a great diversity in creation strategy and unables comprehensive discussion. What is characteristic of advertising is striving to match the experience of the world contained in the message to the addressee's preferences. One may note here the correlation between the characteristics of communication determined by gender and the way of the arrangement of advertising creation designed intended for the addressee. The use of symbols functioning in the given culture (words , visuals , sounds) expressing certain content



enables the design of an advertisement which corresponds with the designed addressee's preferences determined by gender.

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