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*Olena Malinka, Ph.D.(Pedagogy), Senior Lecturer of the Foreign Languages Teaching Methodology Department
Vinnytsya Mukhaylo Kotsyubynskiy State Pedagogical University*

USING ADVERTISING TEXTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The article deals with one of the modern tendencies in foreign languages teaching methodology, and specifically with the use of advertising texts (AT) in different teaching situations. The role of advertising and advertisements for the society nowadays is defined in the present research, the main components of an effective advertising text are enumerated and described, as well as the linguistic means used by advertisers to make an AT more effective. Advertising texts reflect the system of value of the society where the language is used, thus providing access to information about culture, traditions, customs, historical facts, etc. The types of advertisement given in the article indicate that there are important social and cultural aspects of advertising that make advertisements particularly useful for classroom discussion. Advertising texts are strongly situational and thus provide a perfect opportunity to focus on thematic vocabulary, they can also be used when teaching creative writing. Such texts are easily available in classroom-friendly formats, since they are comparatively short and can be used when discussing particular questions. Also ATs can be successfully used when teaching the principles and methods of translation. Since in the process of foreign languages teaching not only a language is taught, but also "ideas" and content, advertisements are perfect for discussing issues and for helping students to develop digital literacy skills and especially media awareness. So, in the article some examples of how advertising texts can be used in this area are given, the arguments for the use of advertisements in foreign languages teaching are examined, and in view of this, the effectiveness of using these types of texts as learning materials at foreign language lessons is proved.

Keywords: foreign languages teaching, advertising, advertising texts.

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*Олена Малінка, кандидат педагогічних наук,
старший викладач кафедри методики навчання іноземних мов
Вінницького державного педагогічного університету імені М. Коцюбинського*

ВИКОРИСТАННЯ РЕКЛАМНИХ ТЕКСТІВ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

У статті акцентується увага на сучасних тенденціях у методиці навчання студентів іноземних мов, а саме на використанні рекламних текстів. Визначається роль реклами у житті суспільства, аналізуються основні складові успішного рекламного тексту, а також мовні засоби, що використовуються з метою підвищення його ефективності. Також в статті наводяться приклади того, як рекламні тексти можуть бути застосовані в процесі викладання іноземної мови та наводяться аргументи на користь використання цього типу текстів у вищезазначеній сфері.

Ключові слова: навчання іноземної мови, реклама, рекламні тексти.

Problem setting. Language teaching today demands new methodology and new approaches, including teaching both a foreign language and the culture of this language. Successful communication in a foreign language is possible only if a speaker is culturally aware, otherwise saying if he/she knows the sociocultural implications of the linguistic units he/she is using. Therefore, the study of the relationships between languages and cultures is essential in both teaching and research work [5].

Language and culture are so closely related that mastering a foreign language presupposes acquisition of certain intercultural competence. Effective teaching of a foreign language depends on a clear realization of the needs of the learners and the types of the activities they will have to perform in a foreign language in their practical work [3, 50].

One of the problems that language teachers often confront pertains to the choice of teaching material. For obvious reasons teaching materials become old fast: they are to meet new social and cultural requirements.

Publications analysis. The use of advertising texts in the process of teaching foreign languages to students has long become a subject of scientific reflexion of both domestic and foreign authors (scientific research results of L. Chernyakhovs'ka, N. Drab, L. Hermeren, P. Mel'nyk, J. Williamson and others). Nevertheless this matter still remains relevant and should be further researched.

The aim of the article is to study the use of advertising texts at foreign language lessons, to define their advantages for a teacher and to prove their effectiveness in foreign languages teaching.

Basic materials. The word "advertising" means

drawing attention to something or notifying in informing somebody about something. Advertising is all around us. It is not only mediated by radio, television and print, but within print advertising, messages crop up in different types of printed materials (newspapers, magazines, leaflets etc.) and in different places and situations (hoardings, parking meters and T-shirts). There is now also advertising on the Internet (“netvertising”), a form of advertising which is interactive in that the potential consumer can conveniently respond electronically to requests and invitations in the advertisement and above all, establish links to various parts of the advertisement [7, 46].

Modern advertising reflects all radical changes in technologies and information media, in social and economic relations, in our understanding of culture, society and a person’s role in it. Being one of the most wide-spread information media, advertising is studied as a form of communication, as a component part of marketing and as a means of popularization of goods, ideas, services.

Among the texts that can be successfully used when teaching a foreign language are those belonging to the register of mass media (including advertising texts). Nowadays we can observe a lot of interest to this type of texts. This interest is quite justified. First, because at present we have the opportunity not only to read a lot of newspapers and magazines from the English speaking countries, but also to watch and to listen to various radio and TV programmes. Secondly, recent changes in Ukraine and Europe such as the integration of the economy, trade, a rapid extension of international communication, have affected the market and have called for professionals in the field of mass media. Modern mass media present a wider range of linguistically distinctive varieties than any other domain of language study. The register of mass media provides a variety of news, reports, reviews, letters, announcements, literary readings, weather forecasts and many types of advertising.

The aim of advertising language is to attract attention and to form the customers’ positive and favorable attitudes towards the product. If this means breaking the rules of language for effect or writing incomplete sentences or distorting and manipulating meanings of words, so let it be. To make the message more effective the advertisers use:

- hyperbole – exaggeration, often by use of adjectives and adverbs;
- a lot of adjectives and adverbs;
- a range of evaluative adjectives including *new, clean, fresh, big soft, slim, wholesome* etc.;
- long nouns and phrases, frequent use of pre and post modifiers for descriptions;
- short sentences for additional impact on the

reader (this impact is especially clear at the beginning of a text, often using bold or large type for the headline or slogan to catch the attention of the reader);

- ambiguity which may make the phrase memorable and readable [1].

Another device is the use of **questions** directed to the reader or listener. Using questions in advertisements is rather unexpected, because the adviser will not get an answer to this question, for advertising is generally a type of one way mass communication. This indicates that questions in advertisements have other functions than to provide answers, one of them being to attract the potential consumer’s attention and create a personal rapport, as in face-to-face conversation [3, 89].

One more strategy that advertisers draw on involves humour, often in the form of punning. Punning, which combines sound and sense, can be persuasive, at least indirectly, by distracting the customer’s attention away from some aspect of the message that he or she may oppose.

An effective advertisement includes many components. The first and foremost important is always the headline. The headline is a slogan or saying to get the readers attention. Headline must attract attention, so that the whole advertisement would be read. While writing a headline one can use the following techniques:

1. An alliteration
2. A paradox
3. A rhyme
4. Pun
5. Play on words [1].

The second component of an effective advertisement is the copy. The copy is the selling message in the written advertisement. A good copy, like a good headline, is direct and simple. Most copies can range from a few words, to several paragraphs. An effective copy should establish contact with the reader, create awareness, arouse interest and build preference for the product.

The next part of an effective advertisement is the illustration. This is an essential component of the advertisements, because sometimes this is all the reader will see. Illustrations should show the features of the product, how the product works and possible uses for the product. They should be colorful and display the total image of the product [2, 78].

There are also different types of advertisements, such as corporate, charity, government advertising, etc.

Corporate advertising tries to create a positive attitude more to the company itself than to the products or services it offers. For example, in case of car companies this often means showing concern for

the environment: their manufacturing processes as well as their products are “green”.

One more type of advertising – charity advertising – serves to raise funds to finance research into various diseases, helping refugees, etc. This type of advertising is clearly nonprofit-making.

Yet another type – government advertising – serves to inform people about the law or to warn against the dangers of smoking.

The types of advertisement listed above indicate that there are important social and cultural aspects of advertising. This is particularly obvious when advertisers sponsor sports events or act as patrons of the arts, donating funds to symphony orchestras or art exhibitions [3, 151].

These social and cultural aspects make advertisements particularly useful for classroom discussion. The fact that there is a trend towards visualizing the message, i.e. having bigger and more dominant images in advertisements, makes them useful for learners with limited vocabulary. In fact, both on visual and verbal levels, advertisements offer a scale of difficulty as classroom material all the way from asking learners to just describe simple objects depicted in an advertising to analyzing the ambiguity of words, scrutinizing the argumentation conducted in advertisements or discovering the exploitation of cherished social and cultural values [5, 68].

Advertisements offer many advantages to a teacher [4, 58]. Advantageous use of advertising texts for teaching purposes is conditioned by the following reasons:

1. Advertising texts are ubiquitous; they are often familiar to the learners who may see them every day.

2. Advertising texts are easily available in classroom-friendly formats: they are comparatively short and can be used when discussing particular questions.

3. Advertising texts help make learning process more interesting, vivid and even entertaining: they incorporate interesting images and texts which combine manageable length with fascinating cultural resonances.

4. Great lessons include an element of “bingo!” This is a key to student engagement and most advertisements are designed with moments of “surprise”. They immediately motivate and capture the attention of students. They are “fun” and students love them [6].

5. Practically all advertising texts are written in advance, therefore, these texts are properly constructed from the standpoint of structure and expressively coloured. It is quite understandable that very thorough and precise work is to be done before an advertisement is presented to the listener/viewer. When millions of dollars worth of business depend

on success of a single advertisement, then it is natural that a person making an advertisement should weigh the words and the ways in which they are arranged in a text just as carefully as any poet does. Unconventional spelling and grammatical constructions are as a rule stylistically determined, and can serve examples of expressive uses of linguistic means. Thus, pun, metaphor, parallelism, repetition are to be mentioned as rhetorical devices used in advertising texts [4, 60].

Example: *Cutex Strongnail with nylon for long, strong, beautiful nails.*

(The pun is based on the double meaning of the word “nail”)

Such texts can be used when teaching creative writing. Thus, it may be explained that pun is a linguistic device which consists in the use of a word in such a way as to suggest different meanings or applications, or the use of the words having the same or nearly the same sound, but different meaning. Then, the learners should explain the use of the pun in a given text [4, 61].

Example: the following text may be suggested:

Watch the world. Tissot.

(Sample answer : the pun used in the texts rests on the double meaning of the word “ watch”: 1. watch (verb)-to look at, to keep under observation; 2. watch (noun)- a small portable device indicating the time, usually worn on the wrist or carried in the pocket).

Examples of rhyming, alliteration, use of homonyms are also numerous:

Try Internet free for three months.

Don't get bored before you are board.

Free gifts and special promotions are waiting for you 24 hours a day. The only one stop shop.

Rhyming and parallelism are often reinforced by alliteration:

Example: *Looking Foxy. Feeling fantastic.*

Such texts may be used when teaching vocabulary. For instance, learners may be asked to find a word which would rhyme with a given one [4, 61 – 62].

Advertising texts are strongly situational and thus provide a perfect opportunity to focus on thematic vocabulary. A list of some vocabulary can be written on the blackboard (some from the text and some not) and the task can be to choose an item from the list and to play “Last one standing” (students stand/sit when their word is mentioned) [6].

5. Advertising texts reflect the system of value of the society where the language is used, thus providing access to information about culture, traditions, customs, historical facts, etc. The role of culturally imposed rules in advertising can hardly be overestimated, because in advertising one cannot confine himself to a content area expressed by means

of special terms. Besides, disregard of possible cultural implications may cost a company money and reputation [7].

One of the linguistic devices which causes a lot of difficulties is a great number of sociolinguistically determined words and phrases (such as lines from famous poems and songs, famous popular quotations, names of people and geographical names, and other derivatives, which require definite cultural background to properly apprehend). Thus, a line from a very popular song is used in the following text:

Wish you were here.

Four words are worth a thousand pictures.

Recognizing and memorizing such lines and phrases may be both a fun and intensive work for learners.

6. Advertising texts can be successfully used when teaching the principles and methods of translation. The meaning of each text is not only a sum of its constituent components: it is the purport of the text which always comes first. Therefore, it is concepts which are to be transferred to speakers of a different language. At this stage the learners should understand the difference between literary and literal translation. Different types of exercises may be suggested [5, 70]. For example: compare an original text with a translated one, indicate the advantages and disadvantages of the translation or translate the text (when translating advertising texts one should always bear in mind that a process of translation presupposes various types of compensation, replacement, transformation, etc., the result being always compared with the original). Advertising texts have the “shopping power”: they are created to attract attention.

7. In the process of foreign languages teaching not only a language is taught, but also “ideas” and content. Advertisements are perfect for discussing issues and for helping students develop digital literacy skills and especially media awareness [6].

Advertising texts are laconic and highly expressive, no matter in which language they are presented. In this sense the character of advertising texts can be defined as “international”. At the same time advertising

texts should be not grammatically accurate and expressively colored; they should be appropriate to a particular situation: any kind of text should be regarded with awareness of the cultural components it contains. As it is put in the text advertising a bank system [4, 62]:

Example: *When you head into the foreign territory,
be sure you have the right guide.*

Conclusions. The process of foreign language mastering is a creative process of discovering the country the language of which is taught, as well as the mentality of people living there. This process can become more intended only if intercultural education is fully provided. Advertising texts existing in the linguistic space of a country reflect the system of values accepted in the society where the language is used, thus providing access to information about culture, traditions, customs, historical facts etc. Due to this they can be used as one of the most effective resources in foreign languages teaching. Such texts are appropriate for the solution of a wide range of methodological tasks.

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“Корисним для себе (і для суспільства) буде тільки той, хто пізнав свою природу. Тоді людина розуміє свою місію. Своє покликання на землі й виробляє для себе спосіб життя, в основі якого лежить “споріднена праця”. Тільки так людина може самоствердитися і самореалізуватися, а значить стати щасливою”.

*Григорій Сковорода
український просвітитель-гуманіст, філософ, поет, педагог*

