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Public service announcements and their influence upon system of values of children (research of concept of "family" formation)

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Abstract

The paper focuses upon problem of public service announcements' (PSA) influence upon formation of system of values in the child's consciousness. Today we can view the mass media as well as advertising messages as a powerful tool of the society's system of values formation, including children's system of values. Children are seen as members of the society with unstable self-consciousness and world-view that is why they undergo the influence of the modern information media to their fullest extent. The author builds a model of the concept of family as a crucial part of Russian conceptsphere, which is translated by the PSA texts.

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1. Introduction

The generation of Russians born in the very beginning of the XXI is formed in a different information medium compared to all previous generations. The communicative space, mastered by a child, is constructed based on interaction of different discourses, which often contradict one another (traditional national / western; real / virtual; didactic / entertaining, etc.). Children of today, thanks to different media resources, take part in a broad spectrum of communicative events. Semantic space of the current communications becomes a powerful factor of forming the child's picture of the world. Diagnostics of the processes that influence formation of language consciousness, communicative practices and attitudes becomes an important linguistic task. Monitoring of the child's values (communicative, moral, and social), translated and engrained by the available information media is a significant issue.

One of the communication forms, influencing the consciousness of children, is advertising, including both commercial and social announcements. Advertising texts become a type of reflector and re-translator; on the one hand, authors of the advertising messages often use some stereotypical perceptions of different aspects of the society life, on the other hand, they convey some mental mindsets.

Thus, public service announcement (PSA) reflects customs, ethical standards and values of our society. Moreover, thanks to its high persuasive emotional effect, PSA can ultimately change the system of values and lifestyle of a person; reform his or her ideals and allegiances. Children are affected by this influence more than adults are. In the process of his or her growing up and socialization, the person, both consciously and subconsciously, installs different information filters to cut off a part of information received. However, the child is not always able to perform such mental procedure. That is why media messages influence the child's picture of the world dramatically.

The research focuses upon problem of advertisements influencing formation of system of attitudes towards different society concepts, particularly the concept of the family. Perception of the family, its stability, determines viability and prosperity of the nation. PSAs can have both positive and negative effect on viability of the concept of the family. Social and commercial advertisements advocate for certain behavioral models and family relationships patterns that can drastically change family life traditions, which root in a peasants' type of the family: attachment to the group, the community, respecting the elder members of the family. On the other hand, advertising may be seen as an institution that can revive the said traditions and save the family as a social entity.

The research is aimed at comparing the language concept of family with its realizations in PSA texts. As E.S. Kubryakova mentioned, the language is the most effective means to get access to the consciousness, "a way how language sees the world" [1], nearly all mental mindsets are reflected in the texts.

2. Method

In the course of the research, I analyzed 105 texts of Russian PSAs, mostly outdoor and printed ones. The comparative analysis was performed using lexicographic sources (about 10 dictionaries of different types), Russian proverbs and sayings, results of associative and receptive experiments, commercial advertising texts.

The methodology of this research is based on cognitive linguistics' tools, comprising its basic categories: concept and frame. Summarizing different approaches to the concept definition, I can conclude the following: concept is a mental construct having a linguacultural specificity, containing, on the one hand, common perceptions of the native-speakers concerning a definite fragment of their experience; on the other hand, it includes individual knowledge, emotions, and associations, connected with this concept. This complex approach became a methodological base for the present research. There is no general definition of the concept, because it has a complex polycomponent structure. Besides the components, which constitute its structure, it includes everything that makes it a cultural fact. The present research uses the method of the concept reconstruction as a frame structure.

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