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VISUALS AND TEXT IN PHARMACEUTICAL ADVERTISING: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

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Abstract

This article deals with the multimodality in modern English-language advertising. The influence of advertising on consumers has been a subject of many investigations among linguists. In this present paper, I build on the theoretical and practical data gained by researchers who studied virtual influencers in multimodal advertising, discussed the unique characteristics of the suggestion realization strategies in political advertising, evaluated advertisement discourse influence formula in terms of positive and negative orientation of the advertisement, investigated various functions of different contact languages in advertising, the phenomenon of multimodality in the Polish advertising of pharmaceutical products with the audio-visual spots. Scholars also used a pragmatic approach to advertisements in Britain and Japan and conducted a multimodal discourse analysis of malaria drugs advertisement. However, the role of multimodality in the context of pharmaceutical advertising remains understudied. Advertised pharmaceutical products have an impact on human consciousness. Misleading or inaccurate information can seriously affect consumers, including adverse health outcomes. The unique nature of pharmaceutical advertising makes pharmaceutical advertising different from other types of advertising, like political or consumer advertising. The material for this study consists of 500 samples in both paper and electronic formats. I hypothesize that the multimodal character of pharmaceutical advertising, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly enhances its persuasive impact by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging them to select specific pharmaceuticals. To prove this hypothesis, I identified patterns of interaction between verbal and non-verbal components through the prism of words, images, signs, and symbols. In this research, a multimodal approach allowed to uncover both the intended meanings and the subtle manipulation tactics used in pharmaceutical advertising.

Keywords: *advertising, advertising text, multimodal text, multimodality, pharmaceuticals, pragmatics.*

1. Introduction

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, defining the concept of advertising, its structure, and functions was among the scientific interests of many researchers. At the beginning of the 20th century, advertising was defined as a medium through which one mind seeks to influence another (Le Roy, 1921, p. 6), special pleading (Rorty, 1934, p.12), etc. Advertising is a complex issue with numerous facets that has been attracting significant attention from scientists worldwide. Scholars focus on a variety of characteristics of advertising, including gender, structure, stylistic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, cross-cultural, and onomastic elements. In the late 20th century, advertising researchers described advertising as the structured and composed nonperson communication of

information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media (Arens, 1999, p.7). Beyond traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, outdoor advertising (billboards, posters, flyers, etc.), some areas where advertising is also used appeared. There is advertising in social media – Meta, Instagram, TikTok, etc., on websites, advertising within mobile applications.

Advertising in printed form is a type of communication that informs the audience about goods or services in an appealing manner using words or images. Three essential elements form the foundation of pharmaceutical advertising. First, it reflects, to some extent, human civilization's perspectives on health-related issues. Secondly, the link between pharmaceuticals, science and medicine creates an associative relationship between advertising and scientific language. Thirdly, the promotion of medicines differs from that of consumer items because pharmaceutical advertising is associated with the concepts of life and health, which have always been among the most significant to people.

On the one hand, advertising assists customers in selecting wisely from the range of options available to them. On the other hand, persuasive strategies are used in pharmaceutical advertising to convey to potential buyers what medication is best for them. It was stated in the earliest guides on producing successful advertising that drawing the consumer's attention is the first step toward persuading them to purchase the goods. AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is a well-known formula that later reflected the role of advertising (Vilanilam & Varghese, 2004, p. 11). AIDA states that advertising should draw the recipient's attention, pique their interest in the advertised good or service, and motivate them to buy it.

Printed advertising conveys messages through semiotic complexes. Belova (2021, p. 15) states that "lately verbal and semiotic acrobatics in advertising is not limited to persuasion, an inherent characteristic of ads; it is used to provoke admiration, amazement, wonderment, so called wow effect." It is worth mentioning that because of the lack of a unified approach to the definition of advertising, there is no generally accepted opinion on the structure and number of advertising text components. There are a lot of approaches to the number of the main components of the advertising text (Blakeman, 2004, pp. 52-58; Shah, 2010, p. 230). In some instances of pharmaceutical advertising, the number of components may be different. In certain situations of pharmaceutical advertising, a concise message can be conveyed effectively through just a headline and illustrations, without any additional components (Ward, 1999, p.12). In my research, I follow Edelman (2009, p.141) who considers such components of advertising text as the headline, illustration, body copy (main text), slogan, product name, and standing details. As Baudrillard (1998) claims,

Every image and every advertisement imposes a consensus between all the individuals potentially called upon to decipher it, that is to say, called on, by decoding the message, to subscribe automatically to the code in which it has been couched.

The primary goal of pharmaceutical advertising is to attract attention and create demand for advertised objects; according to Cook (1992, p.177), the advertising seeks to achieve contact between reality and fiction, sending and receiving, characters and consumer, fantasy and fact, for the passage of product to be feasible. I agree with Jabbar (2022, p. 40) that one of the goals of pharmaceutical manufacturing companies is to design a distinctive logo, type and color of font, and a prominent size, as well as the use of colors as a background for the brochure to be prominent, so that the brochure appears in a distinctive marketing way that persuades the customers and attracts their attention to the product.

In a world saturated with pharmaceutical advertising messages, multimodal texts help a pharmaceutical company stand out from the competition. Because of this, the need to stimulate attention to the product leads to multimodal advertising, and by engaging multiple senses, advertisers create a stronger impact on the recipient.

The object of multimodal research becomes a variety of discursive spheres, such as English advertising texts (Zhang, 2017; Bezuhla, 2019), English-language comics (Ivasyshyn, 2018), virtual influencers in multimodal advertising (Belova, 2021), social media (Shevchenko, 2023),

picture books for children (Bieliekhova & Tsapiv, 2019), short fiction (Vorobyova & Lunyova, 2020), multimodal construction of negative emotions in film (Krysanova & Shevchenko, 2021), political multimodal media texts (Shevchenko, 2024), the phenomenon of multimodality in the Polish advertising of pharmaceutical products with the audio-visual spots is discussed (Szwed, 2020), a multimodal discourse analysis of malaria drugs advertisement (Olowu & Akinkurolere, 2015), etc. According to Kress (2001, p.20), multimodality highlights that meaning is not derived from a single mode in isolation but from the complex interplay of various modes working in concert. Although advertising researchers have extensively researched multiple facets of advertising (Belova, 2021; Bezuhla, 2019; Cook, 1992; Kovalevska, 2020; Kutuza, 2014; Lee & Johnson, 2005; Leech, 1966; Messaris, 1997; Piller, 2003; Tanaka, 1994, etc.), there remain under-researched aspects, such as the multimodal characteristics of pharmaceutical advertising.

The objective of this study is to analyze pharmaceutical advertising texts in English through the lens of multimodality. To achieve this goal, I have outlined the following tasks: to find out the verbal and non-verbal components of the printed English-language pharmaceutical advertising; to identify the functions of verbal and non-verbal components of the pharmaceutical advertising. The research *hypothesizes* that the multimodal character of pharmaceutical advertising, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly enhances its persuasive impact by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging them to select specific pharmaceuticals. Previous investigations into the genres of pharmaceutical advertising (Nasakina, 2018) and the functions of proper names within this context (Nasakina, 2020) inspired the hypothesis that the multimodal nature of pharmaceutical advertising, combining verbal and non-verbal elements, significantly contributes to its persuasive effectiveness by influencing consumer emotions and encouraging the selection of specific pharmaceuticals. Effective pharmaceutical advertising often leverages emotional appeals to resonate with consumers' feelings, such as happiness or relief from pain. Visual techniques can significantly enhance the persuasive power of the advertisements, making them more memorable and impactful. According to advertising researchers, visual images can have three main functions in an advertisement: they can arouse feelings by making a natural person or object appear more natural; they can act as photographic evidence that something actually happened; and they can create an implicit connection between the product being sold and other images (Messaris, 1997, p.vii).

The object of this research is the printed pharmaceutical advertising texts.

The subject of this research is the verbal and non-verbal means of meaning making in multimodal—verbal and pictorial—texts of advertisement.

Advertising belongs to mass media multimodal texts. Kress (2001, p. 4) defines multimodal texts as making meaning in multiple articulations. Zhang (2017, p. 171) points out that “a variety of modes are often used in the advertising strategy,” but “the majority of information is still transmitted in language mode and image mode.” According to Nikiforova et al. (2023, p. 87), “the multimodal approach to text and illustration investigates them as a combination of reciprocally connected modes.” The target audience for pharmaceutical advertising typically does not evaluate verbal and non-verbal elements independently. As a result, copywriters purposefully integrate these components to effectively capture the audience’s attention.

Printed pharmaceutical advertising demonstrates multimodality, characterized by the integration of visual elements—including images, colors, and graphic techniques—with verbal (textual) components. This study investigates the synergistic interplay between verbal and non-verbal elements in pharmaceutical advertising, analyzing how these components capture audience attention and influence product selection.

2. Method and data

Pharmaceutical advertising frequently employs emotionally charged language to accentuate the positive attributes of medications. This language suggests that the product can alleviate health concerns by focusing on consumer anxieties and aspirations.

Pharmaceutical advertising text is characterized by semantic precision. Conversely, images in advertising can create associative links in the minds of consumers, possess persuasive power, and enhance a manipulative effect by appealing to the consumer's perception at a subconscious level. Furthermore, visual elements can strengthen attention to the written message and improve memorability. Images add dynamism to English-language advertising messages, rendering them more engaging for consumers.

Additionally, they introduce ambiguity into the overall meaning of the advertisement, often enhancing consumer interest. The multimodal advertising format enables advertisers to utilize diverse persuasive strategies, and the interplay between verbal and visual components within advertisements is instrumental to their compelling efficacy.

The methodological foundation of this research is a set of the following methods and techniques: the continuous sampling method, general scientific methods of systematization, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction techniques, and the descriptive method. Among the unique linguistic methods, multimodal analysis and semiotic and pragmatic approaches are involved.

The multimodal approach assumes that today, any analysis can no longer rely only or mainly on language if it is aimed at interpreting the meaning of a text or a communicative event. According to Barthes (1988, p. 177), the more duplicity an advertising sentence contains, or, to avoid a contradiction in terms, the more multiple it is, the better it fulfills its function as a connoted message.

The socio-philosophical paradigm conceptualizes advertising as both a form of mass communication and a process of meaning transmission. The cultural manifestation of these meanings is a myth, rooted in the archetypes proposed by Jung (1991). The works of Barthes (1957), McLuhan (2013), and Baudrillard (1996) form the theoretical foundation for this analysis. Any advertising creates a universe of signs without referents, which form a unique semiotic matrix. As Baudrillard (1998, p.88) claims,

Advertising as a whole has no meaning. It merely conveys significations. Its significations (and the behaviors they call forth) are never personal: they are all differential; they are all marginal and combinatorial (highlighting – J.B.).

In this study, I posit that advertising, as a component of social semiotics, represents a significant aspect of a broader semiotic system. According to McLuhan (2013), the steady trend in advertising is to manifest the product as an integral part of significant social purposes and processes. Within the pragmatic aspect, advertisement is considered an action that connects communicants—the author and the potential buyer. According to the researchers, nowadays, a cognitive-pragmatic approach satisfies the need of linguistics to complement the cognitive approach with pragmatic and socio-cultural dimensions of inquiry (Shevchenko & Gutorov, 2019, p.302). The pragmatic focus of the advertising text is the need to encourage the addressee to take some kind of response, which may consist of changing the attitude towards the subject of the advertisement. According to Batsevych (2010, p. 41), in the focus of pragmatic analysis there are such important concepts of communication as strategies and tactics of communication, evaluative (axiological) aspects of human interaction, laws, rules, and conventions of communication, etc. The addressee defines communicative goals, tasks, and types of speech behavior. In turn, the addressee decodes the received message, interprets explicitly and implicitly expressed thoughts. I agree with Shevchenko and Gutorov (2019) that pragmatics is cognitive by nature. The process of interpreting the advertising text by the addressee becomes intrinsically linked to the addressee's subsequent behavior, shaped by their perception of the advertising message.

The semiotic method of analysis is utilized to uncover the sign-based nature of advertising texts and to identify the combination of verbal and non-verbal means within the framework of pharmaceutical advertising. The pragmatic method of analysis is utilized to single out the strategies and tactics of the language of pharmaceutical advertising in diverse communicative contexts.

In his seminal book “Introducing Social Semiotics”, van Leeuwen (2005) discusses various semiotic resources:

1. Images and photographs serve as powerful tools in advertising, conveying emotions and messages quickly. They can depict lifestyles, ideals, or aspirations, influencing consumer perceptions and desires. According to van Leeuwen (2005, p. 38), two elements of the content of images are singled out as especially important connotators: poses and objects.

2. Colors can evoke emotions and set the tone of an advertisement. Different colors are associated with various meanings, which can affect consumer behavior and brand perception. For example, red often symbolizes passion or danger, while blue can represent calmness or trust. Van Leeuwen (2005, p. 61) claims that in contemporary Western consumer society color also signifies identities.

3. The choice of words, typography, and text arrangement contribute significantly to the overall message. Advertisers often use persuasive language to evoke particular feelings from recipients. The specific words used in an advertisement can influence its meaning. For example, using of positive or negative vocabulary can affect the emotional impact of the message.

4. The direction of a person’s gaze in an image can determine the relationship between the viewer and the subject. Direct gaze can create a connection or confrontation, while averted gaze can suggest privacy or contemplation.

5. The arrangement of elements within an image can influence its meaning. For instance, a central placement might suggest importance, while a diagonal composition can create a sense of movement or dynamism. How elements are arranged within an advertisement affects how viewers interpret the message. A well-composed layout can attract audience attention.

In pharmaceutical advertising, I study how semiotic resources create compelling messages that resonate with the target audience and achieve desired outcomes. This study was carried out in several stages.

The first stage consists of forming of the corpus of research materials using the continuous sampling method. I used the descriptive method for the purpose of a systematic inventory of advertising units and explaining the peculiarities of their structure and functioning. I examined how visual and textual elements work together to convey messages and influence consumer perceptions. After that I compared different advertising campaigns across various media (print, digital) to identify successful strategies. This provided insights into effective practices in pharmaceutical advertising. I defined the research questions and stated the hypothesis. I used general scientific methods of systematization to categorize the various elements of pharmaceutical advertising, such as visual and graphic components (images, colors, etc.), textual elements (headlines, body copy, etc.), and regulatory compliance aspects.

In the second stage, the inductive method was employed to collect and categorize samples of pharmaceutical advertising. By analyzing these samples, I identified patterns and trends in the use of multimodal elements. Then the deductive method was applied to generalize these findings and establish broader theoretical principles regarding the effectiveness of multimodal pharmaceutical advertising.

In the third stage, I identified key semiotic resources as well as pragmatic strategies and tactics within advertising texts. Using the insights derived from my research, I proposed theoretical frameworks to explain how multimodal elements enhance the effectiveness of pharmaceutical advertising. I concluded by evaluating the efficacy of multimodal pharmaceutical advertising and its influence on consumer behavior.

I took *the material for the research* from the printed advertising texts of pharmaceuticals in the form of booklets, catalogs, prospectuses, and from Internet sites. 500 examples of advertising

were collected through continuous sampling. In this paper, I *aim* to address several key *research questions*: What are the linguistic and semiotic choices employed by different pharmaceutical companies to make their messages more effective? How does the multimodal nature of pharmaceutical advertising contribute to its persuasive power? What specific emotional responses are targeted by multimodal pharmaceutical advertising?

3. Results and discussion

The pharmaceutical market has always been a vital part of the global economy due to stable demand and the demand for pharmaceutical products. Marketing experts need to develop innovative advertising methods to draw attention to the pharmaceutical products in the face of intense competition. That's why advertising strategies are founded on strong emotional and are rational levels and carried out with the aid of visually appealing and imaginative advertising. The main visual elements of the non-verbal part of pharmaceutical advertising often become images of people, animals, pharmaceutical products, and nature. In this research, I analyzed verbal means of pharmaceutical advertising at the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical levels in their close connection with the non-verbal elements (images, graphic and color components, illustrations).

In the sample below (Fig.1), the verbal mode in *Lipitor* advertising effectively presents it as a medication designed to reduce the risk of heart attacks. The accompanying imagery enhances the verbal message, aiding in interpreting of the advertisement's intent. The central image of a man captures the viewer's attention, with his name displayed in large font to intrigue the audience. Additionally, photography is strategically used to portray a typical consumer of the medication, which is why the place where he lives and the date of the heart attack are mentioned. The dark color palette serves as a crucial element, creating a somber backdrop that underscores the severe health implications associated with heart disease (Fig.1).



Fig.1. Lipitor advertising (Vecchione, (2008).

Attention to the advertising is attracted by the man's close-up and frontal positions in the advertising, which facilitate eye contact. With the help of the semiotic heterogeneity of advertising texts, where information is encoded through various semiotic resources, a manipulative effect is exerted on the addressee.

3.1. Phonetic and graphic level

At the phonetic level, advertising texts frequently employ diverse sound repetition techniques. I identified the strategic use of rhyme, alliteration and assonance **in the analyzed advertisements**. The text of the multivitamin advertising in Figure 2 is built in the rhyme: "*Sleep. Eat. Repeat*". These three words attract attention because they are written with the help of a big font. In the advertisement, **an image of the advertised pharmaceuticals compensates** the lack of photos of potential consumer. Within the advertisement, the photo of vitamins (a non-verbal component) is positioned in the foreground on the right, emphasizing their primary role as the focal point of the visual composition of the advertising message.



Fig.2. Swisse Multivitamins (Green, 2024).

Alliteration and assonance are often used in the advertising texts. In the following sample, there is both alliteration (the repetition of phoneme *d*) and assonance (the repetition of phoneme *I*) (Fig. 3).



Fig.3. Vitamin D advertising (McQuigge, 2016).

I agree with Shevchenko (2022, p.71) that “in a multimodal narrative, different modes are not inherently the main or subsidiary (verbal/visual/audial); their salience is contextual”. For example, in Figure 3, both verbal and non-verbal components—image, graphical means, and color—matter. Rightly selected color schemes and color contrasts add dynamism to this advertising message. Furthermore, images of animals create a favorable background, thereby forming a positive attitude towards vitamin D. Dog in pharmaceutical advertising (Fig.3) captures attention quickly and draws viewers in, making them more likely to remember the advertisement. Productive techniques for attracting attention include capitalization, highlighting words with a different font, color, or size. To attract attention, the letters are often italicized to mimic handwritten text, creating a sense of authenticity and trust. In addition, the question mark in this advertising is a powerful rhetorical tool, inviting the audience to participate actively in the discourse and consider the implications of the posed inquiry (“*who knew I needed to do the D?*”).

The important linguistic means that draws readers’ attention to the advertisement is the repetition of the same or similar sound combinations, morphemes, words, etc. These texts are easily remembered, for example, the repetition of the word *smart* in the vaccine advertising (Fig.4).

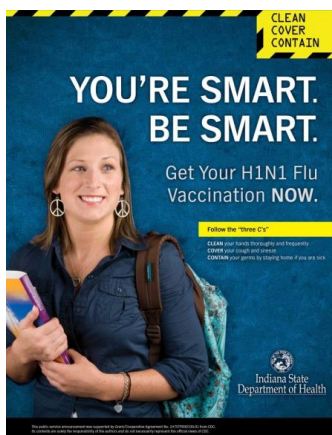


Fig.4.H1N1 Flu vaccination advertising (H1N1 Immunization, n.d.).

Additionally, the persuasive strategy of addressing the consumer is exemplified by the imperative phrase “*Get Your H1N1 Flu vaccination NOW*”. The above-mentioned sample contains keywords that the advertiser emphasizes, which are printed in a large font. As it was mentioned earlier, graphic symbols in the language of advertising can also include punctuation marks. The exclamation mark in the slogan (“*More Vitamins D` For Strong Bones!*”) attracts the recipient’s attention, emphasizing strengthening bones that is an important characteristic of vitamins (Fig.5). Such punctuation marks as a question mark and an exclamation mark provide the function of expressive reinforcement of the significance of the content, so they are often used in advertising texts. They give the language of advertising the characteristics of oral speech, lively dialogue, casual, friendly communication of the advertiser and the reader.

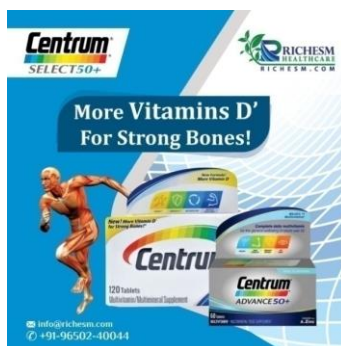


Fig.5. Centrum advertising (What Is Centrum Tablet, 2022).

In advertisements, both upper- and lowercase letters can be highlighted in bold to serve as keywords.

Consequently, the phonetic and graphic elements, as integral components of the multimodal composition, effectively capture the audience’s attention to pharmaceutical advertising.

3.2. Grammatical level

Texts of pharmaceutical advertising are characterized by the predominance of adjectives with a positive connotation, numerals, and pronouns.

Derkachova and Lazebna (2021, p. 130) claim that “in video advertising, significant importance is given to first- and second-person pronouns, creating the effect of a dialogue between the manufacturer and the potential buyer” (*translation is mine – S.N.*). I observe the same in printed pharmaceutical advertising. For example, the pronoun *I* in the text “*I am stronger than diabetes*” allows to relate to the image of a man in the advertising, and the adjective *stronger* in the comparative form expresses the determination to fight the disease (Fig.6).

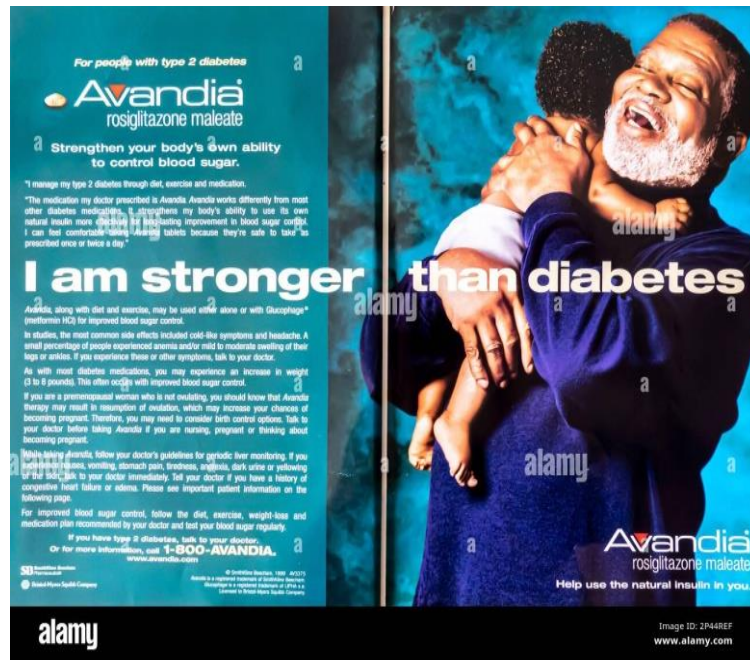


Fig.6. Avandia advertising (Avandia, n.d.).

Numerals in pharmaceutical advertising enhance the persuasiveness of advertising messages by providing concrete, quantifiable information. The use of specific numbers makes the advertising message more believable, leading to increased audience trust. Advertisers use numerals to highlight the benefits of pharmaceuticals (Fig.7) and make the advertising more appealing to potential customers. The fact that the numerals are grounded in scientific research adds to the impact of advertising.

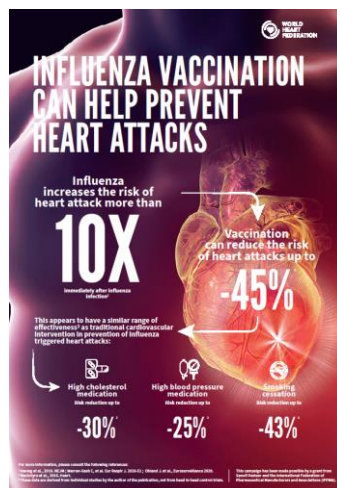


Fig.7. Influenza vaccination advertising (Influenza vaccination, n.d.).

The alarming intonation in this advertising instills a feeling of anxiety in the addressee with the help of the different modes (the image of the heart on the background, the numeral 10 in the large font, the red and purple colors, the warning “*Influenza increases the risk of heart attack more than 10*”). The feeling of fear is an ancient irrational feeling. The intimidation tactic in pharmaceutical advertising is aimed at the fear of any person losing health. The use of this tactic blocks the addressee’s ability to objectively evaluate information and therefore creates conditions for manipulation.

3.3. Lexical level

The use of proper names and images of real people, such as famous athletes and actors, helps create an informal and unique level of trust in pharmaceutical advertising. Many psychologists believe that one of the most important issues for successful advertising is trust in the source of information. It is known that the more trust a communicator inspires, the easier it is for them to convince other people. In the following sample, the photo of the American singer and actress *Cyndi Lauper* is used (Fig.8). She has advertised *Cosentyx*, a prescription therapy used to treat psoriasis. Large font sizes are designed to stand out, making *Cyndi Lauper message* more noticeable to the audience. Besides, using large font helps establish a visual hierarchy within the advertisement, guiding viewers to the most critical information first. This structure facilitates effective communication by enabling audiences to quickly identify key points. In addition, hyperbole is used in this advertising to emphasize the exclusivity of pharmaceutical product (*thousands of patients*).



Fig.8. Cosentyx advertising (Tompkins, 2018).

Celebrities are often perceived as more relatable to the general public than faceless pharmaceutical corporations, which is why seeing a familiar face can make a pharmaceutical product feel more personal. Featuring celebrities discussing their illnesses helps normalize conversations around health issues that may be stigmatized. Using famous people to promote a medicine makes people believe that it will work. For example, the American actress Sally Field took part in the advertising of Boniva (Fig.9).



Fig.9. Boniva advertising (Arnold, 2011).

In Figure 9, the advertising is created with the help of different modes (the image of Sally Field, the sea and sky at the background, the message “*I wanted to stop my bone loss. But I did more. I reversed it with Boniva*”, and the repetition of the pronoun *I*). Sally Field evokes strong emotional responses in viewers by sharing her personal experiences with a particular illness, and she creates a deeper emotional connection with the audience. All these methods enhance the authenticity and reliability of advertising, creating a trusting relationship between the advertising creators and the audience. Sally Field’s direct gaze evokes feelings of trust and sincerity, as if she is personally addressing the viewer.

As previously discussed, advertisements often employ nonverbal elements such as color symbolism, font variation, and spatial arrangement of text (Fig.9). Celebrities promote a specific vaccine or any other pharmaceutical and have large followings that are likely to be influenced by their opinions. It is worth noting that several celebrities have partnered with Pfizer to promote COVID-19 vaccines and boosters during COVID-19 pandemic as well; for example, Michael Phelps advertised it on his Facebook (Fig.10).

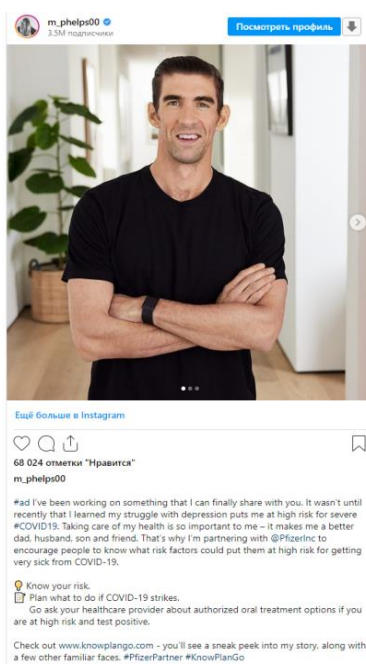


Fig.10. Michael Phelps Facebook page (Michael Phelps, n.d.).

Celebrity endorsements on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook (Meta) regarding COVID-19 vaccination serve as a form of pharmaceutical advertising, mainly when these endorsements are part of a partnership with pharmaceutical companies. Hashtags(#) in the Facebook post (Fig.10) play a crucial role in increasing engagement. Besides, hashtags in Pfizer advertising (Fig.10) offer contextual cues that deepen the meaning of the message, for example:

[#ad](https://www.facebook.com/michaelphelps/photos/ad-ive-been-working-on-something-important-that-i-can-finally-share-with-you-it-/718810869607920) I've been working on something that I can finally share with you. It wasn't until recently that I learned my struggle with depression puts me at high risk for severe [#COVID19](#). Taking care of my health is so important to me – it makes me a better dad, husband, son and friend. That's why I'm partnering with [@PfizerInc](#) to encourage people to know what risk factors could put them at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 (<https://www.facebook.com/michaelphelps/photos/ad-ive-been-working-on-something-important-that-i-can-finally-share-with-you-it-/718810869607920>)

3.4. Images in the pharmaceutical advertising

Any pharmaceutical advertising text acts within a suitably broad framework of its meaning, advertising campaign, and culture, and could be connected to cultural, philosophical and informational background. Sometimes, both the text and the picture (image) are used metaphorically, for example, the Novartis advertising in Fig. 11.



Fig.11. Novartis advertising (Novartis, n.d.).

The phrase “*Sophisticated engines require frequent care*” and the image of the engine used in Novartis advertising serves as a metaphor to highlight the importance of ongoing attention to the health of the man because Novartis is a global healthcare company that helps people with cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, ophthalmology and neurology diseases, etc. Metaphors are powerful tools in pharmaceutical advertising as they can enhance persuasion. The picture resembles a heart, symbolizing that a man’s heart requires regular care, just like a car engine needs regular maintenance.

Advertising often employs ethically questionable speech tactics, like intimidation, to influence consumer behavior. The alarming intonation in such advertising instills a sense of anxiety in the addressee. Intimidation tactics in pharmaceutical advertising target people’s fear of losing their health. Such tactics impede the recipient’s ability to assess the information presented, fostering an environment conducive to manipulation. For instance, the advertising campaign for *Treximet* (Fig.12) exemplifies this approach by instilling fear about health conditions. This is visually represented through a striking image of a headless woman accompanied by the text, “*My migraines are so excruciating I just want to take my head off*”. The image visualizes conceptual metonymy: CONTAINER FOR THE CONTENT (*head for headache*). The verbal resource builds on this metonymy to create a metaphor PAIN IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT that can be thrown away. Together they form a metaphonymy “*take my head off*” that reads TAKE OFF THE CONTAINER (of pain) IS TO GET RID OF THE CONTENT (pain). The cognitive-pragmatic approach allows to take a new look at the objects of anthropocentric research, which include metaphonymy, because according to Shevchenko (2019, p. 171), cognitive pragmatics concentrates on cognitive principles and processes, which underlie meaning-making in the utterance/discourse or non-linguistic situational, social, and cultural environment.

Within the framework of traditional linguistics, a structural-aspectual approach to the study of metaphonymy has developed, which only allows revealing partially the theoretical potential behind this complex phenomenon. The term *metaphonymy* was introduced by Goossens (1990) to define

the interaction of two cognitive entities – metaphor and metonymy. To build on these ideas, scholars considered cases of simultaneous interaction of several metaphors or several metonymies, as a result of which endless chains were formed (Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera-Masegosa, 2011). The primary task of metaphonymy analysis in pharmaceutical advertising is to find out how metaphonymy models consciousness and reality.

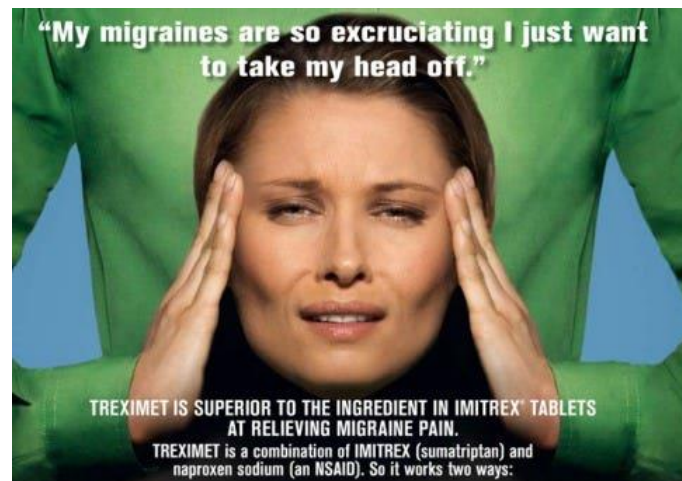


Fig.12. Treximet advertising (Ruiz, 2010).

The advertising campaign for *Difflam*, through its use of verbal and non-verbal elements, exemplifies the use of metaphor, metonymy, and metaphonymy (Fig.13). Depicting a throat as a ‘cactus’ evokes a vivid comparison between the discomfort of a scratchy throat and the prickly nature of a cactus. This metaphor shows the painful feeling associated with sore throats, prompting people to compare their symptoms to the picture in advertising. The advertising creators use ‘throat’ to refer to all throat-related ailments or discomforts, it exemplifies metonymy by substituting a part (the throat) for the whole sore throat symptoms. In Fig.13, *Difflam* advertising utilizes metaphonymy by blending metaphorical imagery with metonymic references to create a compelling message that resonates with consumers. This strategy presents both the experience of pain and the relief offered by the product, making it memorable and persuasive. Letters in black against a light-colored background create a strong contrast, making it easy to read and understand. They are associated with formality and professionalism, which is essential for pharmaceutical advertising. Using a grimace in advertisements for sore throat remedies effectively communicates pain, engages emotions, fosters the connection between the illness and medication, and serves as a call to action for potential consumers.



Fig.13.Difflam advertising (Sore throat remedies, 2022).

Pharmaceutical advertising often suggests that the medicine will help immediately and the effect will be fast, although it is impossible to verify. The visual and verbal components of advertising usually emphasize the effect which the advertised product aims to provide (Fig.14).

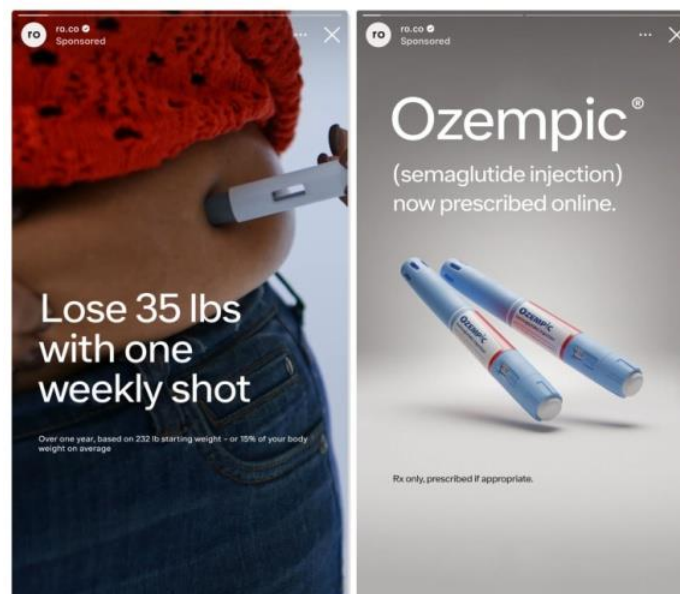


Fig.14.Ozempic advertising (Berg, 2023).

The attention-grabbing slogan “*Lose 35 lbs with one weekly shot*” is memorable and concentrates on the pharmaceutical ability to help with weight loss. Advertising consists of two vertical panels that promote *Ozempic*. The person is dressed in jeans and a red sweater. The abdomen in advertising is associated with weight management and metabolic health. By highlighting this area of the body, the advertisement directly addresses concerns related to obesity and diabetes, which are vital issues that *Ozempic* aims to treat. This visual cue helps consumers immediately associate the medication with weight loss and improved health outcomes. By focusing on the abdomen and the injection in its advertising, *Ozempic* effectively uses visual metaphor and metonymy to communicate its health benefits clearly and emotionally resonate with its target audience. Numerals from this advertising

provide specific, quantitative information and help consumers understand the potential benefits of this pharmaceutical. The sentence “*Lose 35 lbs with one weekly shot*” is written in bold, large font. Numerals create a sense of urgency or importance. The phrase “*Over one year, based on 252 adults starting at 23+ or 19% of your body weight on average*” in tiny writing is below. Stating that “*Over one year, based on 252 adults starting at 23+ or 19% of your body weight on average 8 out of 10 patients experienced relief*” motivates people to consider the medication seriously, as it suggests a high probability of positive outcomes. The phrase “*one weekly shot*” indicates that weight loss is simple.

So, images in advertising visually demonstrate the pharmaceutical product’s use or benefits, they evoke emotions and create a connection with the audience and the medication and make the product more memorable, they convey information quickly and efficiently.

4. Conclusions

This present study offers a multimodal approach in media linguistics, focusing specifically on pharmaceutical advertising—a type of commercial advertising. This research has proved that modern pharmaceutical advertising is becoming more complicated and multifaceted. Verbal and non-verbal elements work together in advertising discourse to convey messages to readers and shape their decisions and actions.

Pharmaceutical advertising involves various semiotic resources—verbal, graphic, and visual—that are equally important for capturing the audience’s attention and persuading them to buy the medication. The findings reveal the most typical advertising structure: an image, a headline, a subhead, the main advertising text (or body text), an echo-phrase, and product details. Advertising texts are designed to inform and persuade within the advertising message.

Images realize both pragmatic and cognitive functions: on the one hand, they are effective instruments to attract readers’ attention; on the other, they contribute to meaning-making by decoding the advertising creator’s multimodal message. The role of color and the choice of definite color are important in pharmaceutical advertising. The research proved the hypothesis that combining verbal and non-verbal components in pharmaceutical advertising can persuade people to choose a particular medicine.

In future, analyzing pharmaceutical advertising on social media could provide insights into the unique ways that ads combine different forms of communication to interact with audiences.

Declaration of competing interest

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ВІЗУАЛЬНІ ТА ТЕКСТОВІ ЗАСОБИ В ФАРМАЦЕВТИЧНІЙ РЕКЛАМІ: МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ТА ЕТИЧНІ ДІЛЕМИ

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Анотація

Ця стаття присвячена мультимодальності в сучасній англомовній рекламі. Вплив реклами на споживачів був предметом багатьох досліджень серед лінгвістів. У цій статті я спираюся на теоретичні та практичні дані, отримані дослідниками, які вивчали віртуальних інфлюенсерів у мультимодальній рекламі, обговорювали унікальні характеристики стратегій реалізації сугестії в політичній рекламі, оцінювали формулу впливу рекламного дискурсу з точки зору позитивної та негативної спрямованості реклами, досліджували різноманітні функції різних контактних мов у рекламі, явище мультимодальності в польській рекламі фармацевтичних препаратів за допомогою аудіо-візуальних роликів. Науковці також використовували прагматичний підхід до реклами у Великій Британії та Японії і провели мультимодальний дискурс-аналіз реклами ліків від малярії. Однак роль мультимодальності в контексті фармацевтичної реклами залишається недостатньо вивченою. Рекламовані фармацевтичні продукти впливають на свідомість людини. Оманлива або неточна інформація може серйозно вплинути на споживачів, включаючи несприятливі наслідки для здоров'я. Унікальна природа фармацевтичної реклами відрізняє її від інших видів реклами, таких як політична чи споживча. Матеріалом для дослідження слугували 500 зразків у паперовому та електронному форматах. Я припускаю, що мультимодальний характер фармацевтичної реклами, що включає як вербальні, так і невербальні елементи, значно посилює її переконуючий вплив, впливаючи на емоції споживачів і спонукаючи їх до вибору конкретних фармацевтичних препаратів. Щоб довести цю гіпотезу, я визначила закономірності взаємодії вербальних і невербальних компонентів через призму слів, образів, знаків і символів. У цьому дослідженні мультимодальний підхід дозволив розкрити як приховані смисли, так і тонкі тактики маніпуляції, що використовуються у фармацевтичній рекламі.

Ключові слова: *реклама, рекламний текст, мультимодальний текст, мультимодальність, прагматика, фармацевтика.*