

The analysis of modifications of phraseological units producing a humorous effects: an account of phraseological puns in selected market advertising campaign

Abstract

According to Wittgenstein (1955) limits of one's world can be reflected in one's language. However, it is hard to agree with this statement as language skills, either limited or not do not seem to influence the mental processes, as they usually take place no matter the language abilities. Though, it should be stated that language has the ability to influence human thought. What is more, since the world and the language usually evolve in different pace, it is possible that limits of the world may be reflected in the language and not the other way round.

Phraseology is a very creative and picturesque way of expressing oneself, yet at the same time it constitutes a very popular linguistic device used on everyday basis. Phraseology is considered to be a huge bank of linguistic means that verbalise the linguistic image of the world which is considered as subjective model of the objective world. In other words, the linguistic image of the world may be explained as the system of language units used in representation of conceptual model of the world from individuals' perspective. What is more, phraseological units with their ability to be modified, constitute an excellent stylistic device not only used by ordinary people but often by some writers, poets and different kinds of artists. Phraseology reveals another feature which makes it so popular among language users, namely ability to be modified, especially when connected with humour.

In order to address certain issues concerning the subject of the dissertation, particularly modifications of phraseological units in the context of advertising to achieve a humorous effect, some useful information needs to be provided. As a result, the first chapter of the dissertation is entirely dedicated to the subject of phraseology. Following various approaches suggested by different scholars towards the issue in question, some characteristic features of it are presented in addition to diverse types of phraseological expressions, including the distinction between phraseological unit and idiom. Moreover, the phraseological modifications are described with the special reference to common types of such alteration and most importantly their application in advertising.

Chapter Two demonstrates theories of humour, starting with the most classical ones, such as Superiority Theory of Humour, Incongruity Theory of Humour and Psychic Release Theory of Humour. Furthermore, certain modern theories concerning the subject of humour are presented, among them Script-based Theory of Humour, General Theory of Verbal Humour which constitutes an extension of the previous one listed and Multimodal Theory of Humour. Such modern theories of humour have been chosen due to the fact that they are not only widely known but also most frequently applied in the research concerning humour. Following the mentioned theories, the typology and definition of humour have been demonstrated, but also types of linguistic puns. The emphasis has been placed on the most common types of puns, namely phonological ones, but also morphological, lexical or connected with syntax. Additionally, extended metaphor of phraseological units and phraseological puns have been described. Of all the literary devices most often used, a metaphor remains one of the most popular. Over the centuries authors, poets, songwriters and everyday people wield metaphor to explain something in non-literal terms which proved metaphor to be so popular. An extended metaphor is an interesting rhetorical technique which explains a particular concept by directly mentioning another concept and drawing multiple parallels between them. It is often used to explain a complex idea — allowing readers or listeners to visualize it in terms that they already understand. The concept of extended metaphor may be explained as simple as a metaphor which takes the comparison a few steps further, thus it is worth further investigation.

Chapter three constitutes the semantic analysis, next to qualitative and quantitative investigations of specific examples of lexical items excerpted from advertising spots. The commercials constitute the campaign of Biedronka supermarket chain. The conducted analysis demonstrated numerous examples of lexical items which juxtaposed with other communicative modes, such as image, vocalic features, facial expression, etc. result in a humorous effect, which not only simply amuses, but also may influence the tendency of buying certain goods or services. The semantic analysis revealed the polysemous nature in each case of investigated lexical items and image appeared to be the non-linguistic element that added to the meaning. In the analysed campaign the humorous effect was achieved due to polysemy, however in all instances it was supplemented by image and such communicative modes as music, manner of speaking, but also facial expression, i.e. grimaces, meaningful looks, smiles, but also some vocalic elements, for instance voice, tone, etc.

All in all, it needs to be stated that numerous reference sources listed in the dissertation enabled first to broaden the knowledge concerning the issues of phraseology and

humour, then conduct in-depth analysis and finally to present accurate results. Moreover, this research study does not address all of the issues connected with the topic in question. However it may be said to constitute the introduction to further studies within the subject of phraseology, humour, especially the linguistic type of humour, discourse analysis and other disciplines of linguistics which enable to conduct the research of the issues mentioned from different perspectives.

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