

Manipulation of Visual and Linguistic Information in Russian TV Commercials

Abstract

TV commercials use common conventions of audiovisual media for conveying meaning not only through language, but also through particular camera angles and camera-subject distance. In this paper, I investigate the interaction between the visual and verbal components of Russian TV commercials. The data will be examined in the framework of a Transactional Discourse Model of Yokoyama (1986). This model views communication as a process of relocation of knowledge between two interlocutors represented by two distinct sets of knowledge. I demonstrate that the interaction between the visual and linguistic components of ads is used strategically to control and manipulate the audience: the impression is created in the mind of the viewers that they themselves wanted to know about the product, and furthermore that they actually need it.

1. Introduction

Advertising has attracted consistent and intense attention across academic disciplines including linguistics, media studies, psychology, and sociology. Previous research on advertising has been primarily concerned with describing surface features that define the linguistic shape of a prototypical ad, advertisers' creative use of language, the relationship between language and literature, and deceptive strategies used to sell the product (Geis, 1982; Cook, 1992; Tanaka, 1994; Chapman, 2001). All studies point to deception and manipulation employed by ads; these categories are intuitively clear but universally recognized as vague. The interaction between linguistic and visual components of TV commercials present a challenge for consistent analysis (Rossiter & Percy, 1983). Geis claims that "the fact that television commercials use both the auditory and visual communication channels very much complicates the problem of evaluating the message, for viewers are not normally able to focus their attention simultaneously on both channels." (1982:3) Cook also emphasizes the 'multimodality' of ads – the mixture of modes (pictures, music and language together) – and observes that this multimodality creates an 'obstacle' to analysis of TV advertising in that it "enables advertising to keep analysis at bay, for it can shift its ground constantly, emphasizing now one mode and now another." (Cook, 1992:100)

The focus of this study is to elucidate the connections that exist between the linguistic and visual components of an ad and to understand how advertisers employ this connection to achieve their goals as well as to understand the mechanism responsible for interaction between linguistic and extra-linguistic reality. In this paper, I will investigate the interactions between knowledge introduced visually and verbally. A framework that allows one to analyze this interaction and explain how an advertisement can transcend language and result in consumer action is Transactional Discourse Model of Yokoyama (1986). I hope that the insights proposed in this study will provide us with a more informed view of how advertising discourse works.

2. Theoretical framework

The Transactional Discourse Model (TDM) was proposed by Yokoyama in 1986 and developed further by Chapman (2001), who applied TDM to the study of Russian and Polish ads. Especially useful for my analysis is the part of the model called Fictional Discourse Scenario (FDS) in ads. What is important for my analysis of visual and linguistic input, is that Yokoyama's model operates with such categories as knowledge of language and knowledge of reality which provides one cognitive space for analysis of interaction between the visual and the linguistic components of the ads. Yokoyama's and Chapman's research suggests an approach useful for simultaneous analysis of linguistic and extra-linguistic reality.

The main premise of Yokoyama's model is that every utterance is an act of knowledge transfer from one participant to another. This is represented by two intersecting knowledge sets A and B. Each knowledge set contains subsets of "the matter of current concern" (C_a and C_b respectively) that also have to intersect for the discourse to take place. What C_a and C_b share at the moment immediately preceding an utterance is mutual readiness to participate in the discourse, represented by {DEIXIS} ({I, you, here, now}), and the predication knowledge that 'some event took place' - $\|P\|$. Once an item of knowledge has been relocated, the picture of A's and B's matters of current concern merge into C_{ab} which now contains the knowledge item that A has just relocated.

Yokoyama describes successful manipulation as knowledge transaction with no merger, which results in two different pictures of the same discourse situation: the one held by A and one that reflects B's view of the same situation, because "manipulative utterances are assumed by the speaker to relocate into the Addressee's set of current concern, in addition to the knowledge conveyed by the utterance, a particular piece of knowledge the Speaker desires the Addressee to come up with, as well as items of associated knowledge necessary to connect that knowledge to the one uttered. To put it more concisely, manipulative utterances are meant to convey more than what they say" (Yokoyama, 1988: 146). For example, if A wants to manipulate B, A might say 'I have a

headache' and think at the same time 'B does the dishes'¹. These two knowledge items are located in the Speaker's matter of current concern. First is overtly verbalized and the other is non-verbalized implicature that the Addressee is expected to recover. These two items are linked by the associative knowledge 'a person with headache should rest' that both A and B share, but that is not part of B's matter of current concern. If the manipulation is successful, after A has verbalized proposition [[A has a headache]], B would relocate the item of associative knowledge into his matter of current concern and reply with 'B does the dishes'. B would think that s/he came up with this answer on her/his own. In advertising manipulative discourse, the marketers strongly rely on the common associative knowledge of the audience, which is mostly coded in the visual image and links the propositions that they state with the implicature [[advertiser wants you to buy product X]]. Verbal information 'anchors' the visual, restricting the number of interpretations it might give rise to.

Advertising is by nature fictional. However, it differs critically from literature in that an advertiser cannot fully rely on the suspension of disbelief that is applied to authors of a literary text, because the viewer knows that the intent of a commercial is to sell. This puts the advertiser in a situation in which they are forced to employ different tactics in order to rapidly gain the viewers trust and influence the viewer's behavior.

Some of the previous studies of advertising discourse (Geis, 1982; Cook, 1992) have considered the fictional component of ads as the channel through which the product travels from the world of fiction and fantasy into the real world of the viewers. Although these worlds are interconnected, it is not clear how the message actually travels from the real world of the advertiser and product, through the fictional world of the advertisement, and back into the real world of the viewer. Neither is it clear who exactly is the Addresser and who is the Addressee. "The identity of the "I" or "we" who speaks the "you" is unclear. Sometimes it seems to emanate from the fictional world, sometimes from the sender beyond it, sometimes from elsewhere." (Cook, 1992: 178)

¹ The example is from Yokoyama (1988).

Chapman (2001), comparing the structure of advertising discourse to that of fictional discourse, provides the answer to this question. She suggests that the pragmatic structure of advertising must distinguish the roles of the advertiser and recipient from those participating in the advertising narrative. Similarly, the roles of writer and receiver in the literary discourse must be different from the real speaker and hearer. She adapts Adam's (1985) model for the pragmatic structure of fiction in which he distinguishes the real-world writer (W) and reader (R) of the text from the fictional speaker (S) and hearer (H).

Figure 1: Adam's model for the pragmatic structure of fiction

W (S (text) H) R

That is, the speaker, the hearer and the text are fictional, and the writer and the reader are not participants in the actual communication that is taking place in the fictional discourse. This is an important distinction to make, as it emphasizes the extra set of participants in the communication transaction.

Chapman's Fictional Discourse Scenario (FDS) allows us to model advertising discourse as a type of fiction. By bringing together the linguistic reality of the advertising text with the extra-linguistic reality of the audience we can analyze communication between fictional characters while looking at the interaction of real people within the text.

Figure 2: Chapman's model of Fictional Discourse Scenario

Adv (Sp (advertising text) Add) R²

Geis (1982: 162) suggested that the fact "that viewers are willing to suspend disbelief doubtless derives from the fact that those watching fictional television programs, which constitute the vast majority of programs, are already in this state." However, he does not explain why viewers watch TV commercials despite knowing their promotional intent. "In many ways, ads are parasitic upon their situation and other discourses" (Cook, 1992:29). They are identified by their position in an accompanying discourse and intrude into people's lives. As soon as an ad appears viewers know that they will be subjected to biased communication. Therefore, they will be skeptical of its true value and relevance. Chapman's model deals with this issue and argues that by

² Adv = Advertiser, Sp = Speaker, Add= Addressee, R = Recipient.

introducing a fictional component into the communication transaction, advertisers attempt to establish trust that is one of the conventions associated with writer-reader 'contract'. According to this contract, the reader gives his/her consent that "s/he will find everything that the author has to say relevant, and that s/he will accept all the assessment errors and impositions." (Yokoyama, 1986:144) Thus, it allows the author "safe" one-sided relocation of knowledge. However, Zaitseva (1993) demonstrated that the author's security is not unbound and that it does not guarantee an acceptance of imposition. The author must follow certain rules for relocation of knowledge: (1) correct assessment and prediction of the reader's inference, and (2) acknowledgement of the reader's provisional inference. These two conditions are especially important in TV commercials, otherwise viewers would simply feel fooled and change the channel. Advertisers carry them out by planting the persuasive argument into the audience's minds through asking a question and carefully choosing visual images (some commercials do not have the verbal component at all) as a visual argument. Jeong and Hwang (2006) showed that visual arguments require a great degree of mental participation from viewers and lead to a production of their own construction of meaning. Since people are more willing to adopt a proposition that they have constructed themselves, the implicitness of visual argumentation can be a strong point of visual persuasion. The viewers' impression that they have arrived at the proposition themselves is the essence of manipulation.

3. Data

A corpus of 100 Russian TV commercials was collected. The commercials were recorded in primetime from major national channels (ORT, RTR, STS, and NTV). The recordings were made between January and April of 2010. For the purposes of this paper, I randomly chose one of the commercials to analyze in detail.

4. Analysis

Before we proceed to the analysis of an ad, it is important to point out that both visual and linguistic components of a TV commercial transfer various kinds of knowledge that contribute to the message that the advertiser wants to communicate to the audience. Visuals play a significant, if not preeminent, role in representing the fictional entities in the FDS of an ad. Advertisers rely heavily on color, imagery, music together

with linguistic signals to encode aspects of the FDS and their relevance to the commercial recipient. A video image is designed to achieve certain effects through staging, framing, and cutting. Therefore, visual component is responsible for creating pictorial cues that manipulate audience's attention, their understanding, and their inferences about what they see. A typical example of this would be the Brooke Bond commercial where the audience is guided to the following implicature (1b):

- (1) a. Need energy? Then you need strong, black, and invigorating tea Brooke Bond.
b. > Brooke Bond gives energy.

(1b) is a conversational implicature derived from the fact that (1a) seems to follow the Gricean maxim of Relevance. Through the common knowledge that caffeine boosts your energy and brief mentioning of the qualities of Brooke Bond tea (strong, black, invigorating), the audience can easily infer (1b). This implicature can be regarded as overt, since it is made clear even though it is not explicitly stated, and there is no reason to believe that the copywriter would wish to deny it. Moreover, this implicature (1b – Brooke Bond gives energy) inferred by the viewers from the oral text is at the same time illustrated visually through a series of pre-planned images. Thus, the audience is given cues as to what inferences to make. The viewers are drawn into a “creative act in which their individuality is not subordinated to the author's individuality, but is opened up throughout the process of fusion with the author's intention.” (Eisenstein, 1947:33) The imagery on the screen is the one planned by the author, but at the same time it is also created by the spectators themselves while processing it in their own way with the aid of their own experience. As a result, the audience is left with the impression that they themselves came to the conclusion (1b). In what follows, I will demonstrate the mechanism of interaction between linguistic and extra-linguistic reality in advertisers' attempts to guide the inferencing process of the audience.

Let us now examine in some detail the following example (2) of the Brooke Bond tea commercial which is based on the sequence of changing discourse situations given in diagrams (3) – (10) below. As suggested in TDM, the changes in the interlocutors' knowledge sets are captured through “pictures” of their states before and after the utterance:

(2) **Product:** Brooke Bond (STS, 2/1/2010, 10:13pm)

Type: Live action

Setting: Kitchen, outside, office

Characters: man and woman

TEXT:

(a) \emptyset *Nužen zariad energii?* (b) *Značit* \emptyset *nužen krepkij, černyj,*
 (\emptyset = you) need charge energy-Gen. mean (3 sg.) (\emptyset = you) need strong
 black

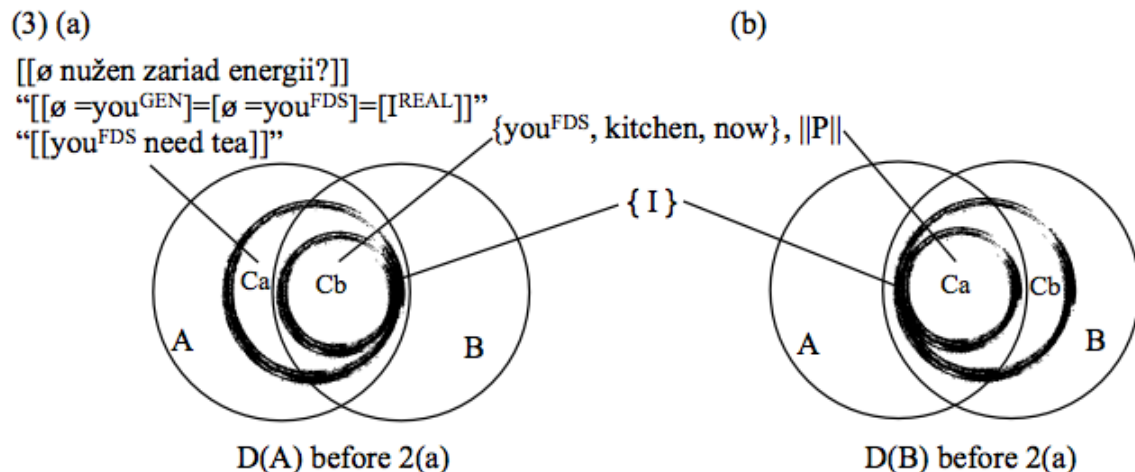
bodriasčij čaj Brooke Bond, (c) \emptyset *Zariadilsia sam, zariadi drugikh!*
 invigorating tea Brooke Bond \emptyset charge (3sg, past, perf.) yourself charge others

(d) *Čaj Brooke Bond.* (e) *Zariažet na vse 100!*

Tea Brooke Bond. Charge (3 sg.) on all 100!

(Need to get charged up? Then you need the strong, black, and invigorating tea, Brooke Bond. Once you're charged up, why not charge up your friends? Brooke Bond Tea charges you up to full power!)

The utterances in (2) are voluntary contributions based on links by associated knowledge³ by the same Speaker, which means that each of the following utterances is based on some knowledge found in C_{ab} prior to it. Due to monological nature of the advertising genre where acknowledgment is not possible, Addressee receives the relocated knowledge and makes the appropriate adjustments. The discourse situation before (2a – “ \emptyset nužen zariad energii?”) as viewed by the Speaker (A) and the Addressee (B) is shown in (3):



³ See Yokoyama 1986 (312-326) for a discussion of voluntary contributions based on links by associated knowledge.

As shown in (3) both {I} and {you} are found in C_{ab} as members of the {DEIXIS}. In advertising discourse, the Addressee is naturally assumed to be the topical concern of both interlocutors. Due to the nature of the advertising genre, the target audience is in focus at all times. In other words, at any point during the discourse {you of fictional Addressee (you^{FDS})} is most likely located in the center of the C_{ab} and the advertiser's task is to merge it with the {you^{REAL}} of the target consumer. {ja (FDS fictional speaker = real world Advertiser)} is demoted from this intersection and placed on the periphery. The placement of {I} in the center would lead to violation of the Relevance Requirement: the product is more relevant at this point (Yokoyama 1986: 28-29). Besides, each item found in {DEIXIS} correlates with a bundle of propositions that comprise 'referential portraits'. Only some of them are activated at a given point in a discourse situation (Moon, 1995; Zaitseva, 1995, 1999; Yokoyama, 1999). One of these bundles will contain at least one proposition that the speaker is expected to act upon in the {here, now} setting (Zaitseva, 1999). Consequently, linguistic output is affected by which of the propositions correlated with {DEIXIS} are activated at the moment. For example, if {DEIXIS} correlates with the activated combination of (4a) and (4b), then utterance (4e) uttered by A would violate the Relevance requirement and thus, be unacceptable.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (4) | {I} | {you} |
| | a. [[I am your doctor]] | b. [[you are my patient]] |
| | c. [[I am your wife]] | d. [[you are my husband]] |
| | e. [[I have a headache]] | |

With cues embedded in visual and linguistic components of the ad, the first utterance encodes the human identities of the Speaker, the Addressee or other fictional personas represented in the FDS. Each commercial is addressed to a target consumer of a specific profile. Component features of the fictional personas represented in the advertising discourse may be encoded as a way to signal the ad's relevance to the target audience, which is defined by the pre-determined bundle of features $F_1+F_2+...F_x$. Through the visual and linguistic components of a fictional Speaker, the Advertiser encodes selected features onto the fictional discourse participants which the target consumer is intended to recognize as being relevant to him or her, leading to further

cognitive involvement in the advertising message (Chapman, 2001: 45).

Personal pronouns are a complex category where code and message overlap. Therefore, in the Brooke Bond commercial, fictional features of $\{you^{FDS}\} = [sleepy], [tired], [need\ energy]$ are expected to trigger the viewers to identify with the character on the screen, thus bridging $\{you^{FDS}\}$ of the fictional Addressee to $\{I^{REAL}\}$ of the recipient in real life.

At the moment immediately preceding (2a), A's knowledge set contains two items connected by associative knowledge (caffeine boosts energy), the one A is about to utter ($[[\emptyset\ nu\zeta en\ zariad\ energii?]]$) and the one he is not going to utter, but actually expects the viewer to come with independently ($[[you^{FDS}\ need\ tea]]$ in quotation marks that denote "A wants B to think"). The propositional knowledge that A is about to verbalize in (3) is located in part of A's set of current concern not shared with B ($A \cap (Ca-B)$). The way this knowledge is coded shows that $\{you^{FDS}\}$ is represented by the following propositions:

$[[I\ need\ energy]]$

$[[I\ am\ tired]]$

$[[I\ am\ sleepy]]$

The Speaker deliberately chooses the elliptical form of the question, which has two main functions: 1) to create short interlocutors' distance thus evoking trust; and 2) to acknowledge the emotional state of $\{you^{FDS}\}$ ⁴. By using questions advertisers put themselves in the position of experts who not only sympathize with the viewer who has problem X, but also know how to solve it. Conveying this knowledge in such an indirect way, advertisers hope to make the viewers forget a transparent proposition $[[The\ Advertiser\ wants\ you\ to\ buy\ product\ X]]$. Discourse deletion (ellipsis) requires a close relationship. The closer the interlocutors are the more knowledge is shared, i.e. located in the C_{ab} ⁵ and thus, can be omitted. The elliptical structure of the question suggests that the topic belongs essentially to the Addressee's business. It is an invitation to participate in a search for the referent; and even though the viewers see a man on the screen who needs

⁴ A similar process is described in Cameron (2002), who showed that in a service context questions are often asked not to elicit information, but to display interest in customer as a person, to make the interaction more genuine, to show concern for the customer. Asking questions thus aims at creating rapport with the customer and conveying understanding of their problems.

⁵ The same rule applies to the deletion of *est* 'to have' in Russian.

energy {you^{FDS}}, advertisers direct this question to the viewers {I^{REAL}} and using verbal and visual cues make them identify with the fictional character on the screen.

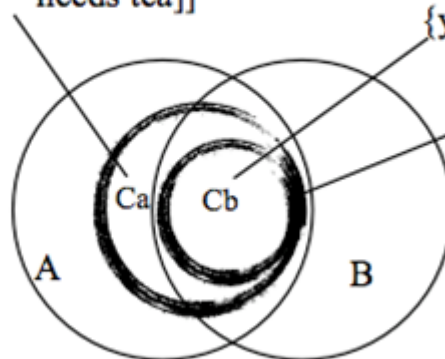
“Metaphorization is one of the most important principles relating language, thought and reality” (Zaitseva, 1994:104). That is why metaphors and visual puns have become a widely used feature of much contemporary advertising. They create a maximally effective impact during the brief time span in which the advertiser captures the consumer’s attention. Expression ‘zariad energii’ used in the question is a trite metaphor that has lost its original imagery through extensive popular usage. One can charge a phone or a battery, but it is impossible to literary charge a person. Therefore, on hearing (2a) the audience will search through their knowledge of CODE items such as *zariad* ‘charge’ and *energia* ‘energy’ for a number of associative links with these words/images: *energia* – *tok* – *svet* – *lampočka* ‘energy – electricity – light – light bulb, *zariad* – *zariadit’ ružje, telefon, akumulator energiej* ‘charge – to charge a phone, a car battery’. As seen from the associative links, verb ‘to charge’ is firmly associated with energy.

Jakobson refers to the use of such phrases with interplay between sound and meaning or meaning and visual image that invites Addressee into the “Do you get it?” kind of game as poetic function. The focus in such expressions is on the message itself. “This function, by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects...The poetic function projects the principles of equivalence from the axis of *selection* into the axis of *combination*” (which are the two basic modes of arrangement used in verbal behavior) (Jakobson, 1981:71) It creates the impression of an ‘inside joke’ and thus, includes in the creative process the emotions and intelligence of the audience, it makes them mobilize their cognitive recourses involving them in the active process of decoding the meaning. It puts the viewer in the position where he is compelled “to proceed along the same creative road that the author travels in creating the image” (Eisenstein, 1947:33).

In Brook Bond commercial, after (2a) has been voiced, both the Speaker and the Addressee reshuffle the content of C_a and C_b as shown in diagram (5):

(5) (a)

[[ø nužen zariad energii?]]
 "[[you^{FDS} needs tea]]"

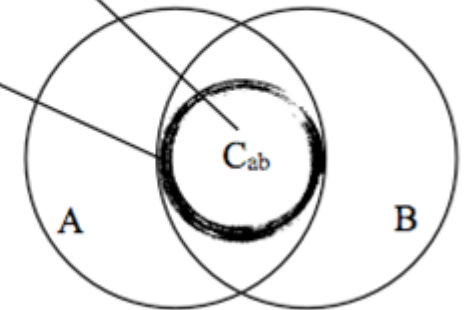


D(A) after 2(a)

(b)

{you^{FDS}, kitchen, now}, ||P||

{I}



D(B) after 2(a)

Advertiser's planned image:

Advertiser wants viewer to think:



he^{FDS} is yawning →

[[he^{FDS} is sleepy]]
 [[like I do in the morning]]

he^{FDS} leans on the counter with one hand →

[[he^{FDS} needs energy]]
 [[like I do in the morning]]

he^{FDS} moves towards the mug →

[[he^{FDS} needs tea]]



he^{FDS} stops right by the mug →

[[he^{FDS} needs tea]]

Viewer's interpretation of the image

[[he is sleepy]]
 [[like I do in the morning]]

[[he needs energy]]
 [[like I do in the morning]]

[[he needs tea]]

[[he needs tea]]

As shown in (5a) both visual and linguistic elements participate in the construction of the advertising message. The advertiser's assessment of the viewer's matter of current concern at the moment directly preceding (5a) seems to be erroneous: A is convinced that B is currently occupied with what A is about to verbalize. When in reality, both the Advertiser and the audience know that it is not true, because advertisements are often embedded in another form of discourse such as a TV program, a film, etc., and thus are intrusive and impositional. The Speaker's question in (5a) is not intended to obtain an informational answer. Such questions are closer to what Yokoyama defines as *effusions* (1986: 243). They do not accomplish any relocation from A's into B's knowledge sets. Instead, they bring some shared propositional knowledge into C_{ab} from $C_a \cap (B - C_b)$, i.e., they activate some knowledge that A already assumes to be in B's knowledge set. By using different tactics they then ensure that the audience adjusts that error and continues to watch the ad.

Advertisers strongly rely on the objective common knowledge of the audience, which serves as a basis for composition of the meaning of images, lexical items and other linguistic structures. Everything the viewers see on the screen becomes their reality and happens here and now, therefore visual impositions are easier to accept than verbal. Once the audience is placed in the context of a real kitchen with a red mug (a tea box and a kettle on its side) in the very center, they see a man who is yawning and whose eyes are closed. His body is slumped and he moves towards the mug leaning on the kitchen counter with one hand. He stops in the center of the screen right above the red mug and slightly bending over it. What happens in the heads of the audience when they see this image is they make inferences based on their prior experience of the world:

X is yawning -----	X is sleepy/bored
X's body is slumped -----	X doesn't have energy
X leans on the counter with one hand	
X moves towards the mug -----	X needs tea
X bends over the mug -----	X needs tea

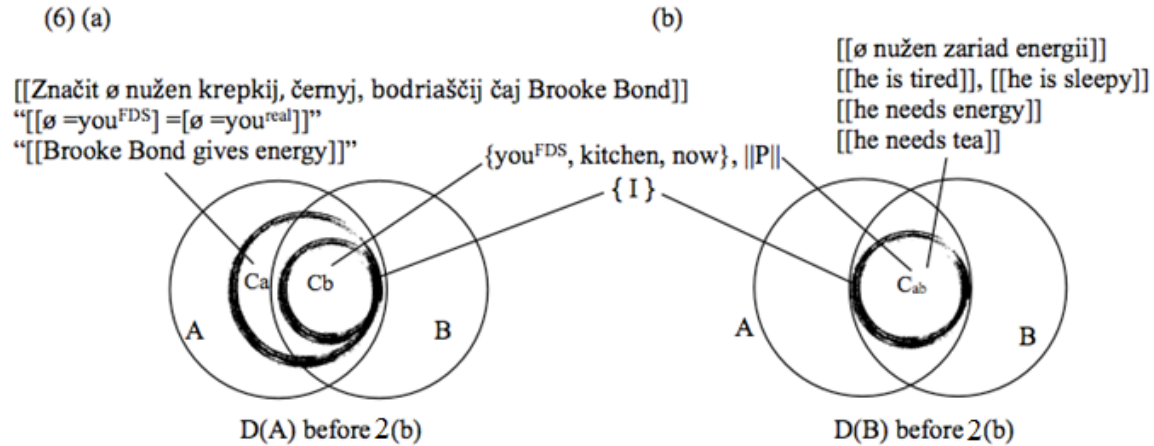
Thus, the proposition that the viewer hears [[nužen zariad energii]] is at the same time mentally constructed in their heads and visually illustrated by the proposition [[nužen čaj Brooke Bond]].

In advertising how you sell a product is often more important than the product itself. TV commercials, just like films, use common conventions of audiovisual media for conveying meaning through particular camera angles and camera-subject distance. Camera angles may not only affect the viewers' product evaluations, for example eye-level shots produce the most favorable evaluations of the advertised products (Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1992), but add some interest or even entice a viewer to identify with a character. Visual images may direct our attention, clarify or emphasize meanings, and shape our emotional response.

In the Brooke Bond commercial, the opening establishing shot is used to place the audience in the kitchen, but as soon as they see the man on the screen the camera zooms in to the medium shot (from waist up) thus shortening the distance between the character and the viewer. However, the audience is still on the other side of the kitchen counter that separates the man from them. Static visual cues for “when to look where” are reinforced not only by the color of the mug, it is bright red, but also by movement of the figure of the man to the mug.

As shown above in (5a), the advertiser, having taken into account the cognitive work that the audience is doing in the viewing experience to make meaning, guides the viewing process of the audience and leads them to the conclusion expressed by the proposition [[nužen Brooke Bond]]. However, the audience is left with the impression that they came up with this conclusion on their own. This process constitutes manipulation, because the advertiser relocates into the viewer's knowledge set more information than was voiced and the Speaker and the Addressee have two different pictures of the same discourse situation.

Before the Speaker moves onto (2b – “*Značit nužen krepkij, černyj, bodriaščij čaj Brooke Bond*”), another reshuffling of the content of C_{ab} occurs. The discourse situation as viewed by the Speaker and the Addressee immediately prior to (2b) is shown in (6):



The comparison of (6a) and (6b) shows that while the Addressee B has made adjustments and accepted the impositional placement of the propositions into the C_{ab} , the Speaker has two new knowledge items, one of which A is about to utter ([[Značit ø nužen krepkij, černyj, bodriaščij čaj Brooke Bond]] ‘Then you need the strong, black, and invigorating tea, Brooke Bond’) and the one he is not going to utter ([[Brooke Bond gives energy]]), but expects the audience to come up with. These two knowledge items are connected by the associative knowledge:

A: X needs energy.

B: >X needs tea.

A: Brooke Bond is a black, strong, and invigorating tea.

B: >Brooke Bond gives energy.

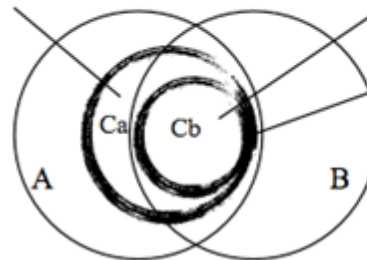
As previously mentioned, due to the unilateral nature of the advertising genre, advertisers cannot immediately verify if the audience will respond to their proposition the way they want. To ensure that they do, advertisers use visual cues to plant the images in the audience’s mind and make them “flesh of the flesh of the spectator’s risen image” (Eisenstein, 1949: 34).

The discourse situation as viewed by the advertiser upon completion of (2b) is represented in (7):

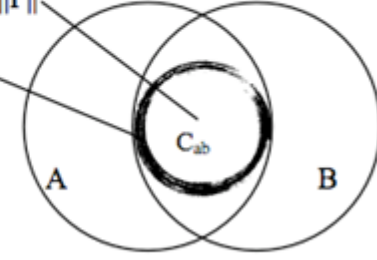
(7) (a)

(b)

[[Značit ø nužen krepkij, černyj, bodriaščij čaj Brooke Bond]]
 "[[ø =you^{FDS}] = [ø =you^{real}]]"
 "[[Brooke Bond gives energy]]"



D(A) after 2(b)



D(B) after 2(b)

Advertiser's planned image:

Advertiser wants viewer to think:

Viewer's interpretation of the image:



you^{FDS} are reaching for the
kettle and pours water →
into the mug

[[you^{FDS} need tea]]

[[he needs tea]]



The viewer is now on the other
side of the kitchen counter,
where you^{FDS} is, now sees the
mug like you^{real} does

[[he is I]]
I see the tea, I see the boiling water
when I pour it

[[he is I]]
I see the tea, I see the boiling
water when I pour it



you^{FDS} drink the tea →

[[you^{FDS} need tea]]

[[he needs tea]]



you^{FDS} smile and glow →
like a light bulb

[[Brooke Bond gives energy]]

[[Brooke Bond gives energy]]

This part of the Brooke Bond commercial is filled with implicit characteristics of visual syntax and advertisers make viewers active participants in the construction of the proposition $[[\text{Brooke Bond gives energy}]]$. Camera angles here change from a medium shot (II) to a close-up on the mug (III), thus shortening the distance between the viewer and the man with the tea in the center of the screen. Then the distance becomes even shorter as the audience finds themselves on the same side of the kitchen counter. A point-of-view shot (IV) places the camera, and thus the viewer, in the position of the man. The image from the camera becomes an extension of the viewer's perception. The camera becomes the 'eyes' of the main character, the audience is seeing what he sees and seeing things from the eyes of the character makes the viewer identify with the character. Thus, $\{\text{you}^{\text{FDS}}\}$ and $\{\text{you}^{\text{REAL}}\}$ become one.

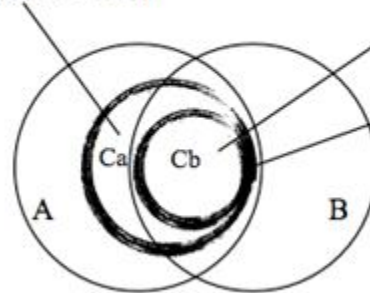
After the man drinks the tea his upper waist becomes bigger and glows like a lamp. As shown in (7), one of the knowledge items found in $A \cap (Ca-B)$ ($[[\text{Brooke Bond gives energy}]]$) is not stated outright but only implied. To make sure that the audience gets this proposition, the advertisers strongly rely on pictures. They create visual metaphors that allow the viewers to use their imagination. Verbal metaphor in (2a - 'zariad energii') here is reinforced by the visual metaphor 'tea=energy' the meaning of which is not 'contained' in the text but is generated in the process of interpretation. In order to solve this metaphor, the viewers must draw inferences that find similarities between the two objects and infer how Brooke Bond is like an electric lamp. An electric lamp is an iconic sign for energy and therefore the first association that comes to the viewer's mind.

Diagram (7) represents another example of the advertiser's manipulation. There are two pictures of the same discourse situation, one held by the advertiser, and the other by the Addressee. Once again more information was relocated into the Addressee's knowledge set than was verbalized. The implied proposition $[[\text{Brooke Bond gives energy}]]$ was relocated with the aid of visual metaphor that leads to a greater degree of mental participation by the viewing audience. They are left with the impression of self-constructed meaning. What they produced in their minds is theirs – they believe it easier and this may even increase credibility in the product's value and lead to a more positive

response to the persuasive claim of the message that they ‘themselves’ constructed. But in reality, advertisers led the audience to this conclusion.

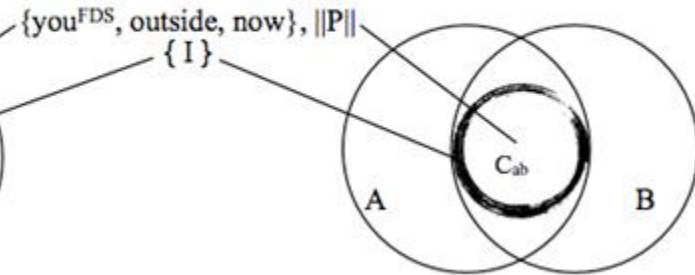
The next part of the commercial does not contain any verbal component, however it does convey information via visual cues. The discourse situation that represents the knowledge transaction as it is viewed by the advertiser is shown in (8):

(8) (a)
 "[[you^{FDS} is charged with energy]]"
 "[[tea=energy=success]]"



D(A) after 2(b) before 2(c)

(b)



D(B) after 2(b) before 2(c)

Advertiser's planned image:

Advertiser wants viewer to think:



he^{FDS}, full of energy, →
 runs across the bridge

[[he^{FDS} is charged with energy]]



he^{FDS} catches the ball and
 throws it from →
 behind his back

[[he^{FDS} does things easily with
 Brooke Bond]]



the ball gets right into the
 basket, all the players →
 take a step back

[[Brooke Bond =energy= success]]

Viewer's interpretation of the image:

[[he is charged with energy]]

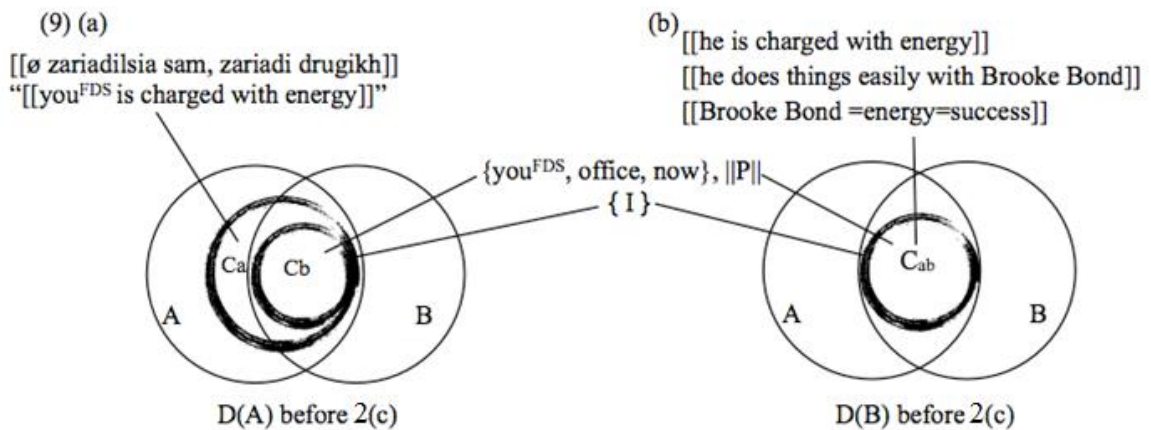
[[he does things easily with Brooke
 Bond]]

[[Brooke Bond =energy=success]]

In (8) the audience is expected to extract meaning from five seconds of just visual images. Proposition $[[\text{Brooke Bond gives energy}]]$ is illustrated by the use of space and active movement of the character. In such a short period of time, $\{\text{you}^{\text{FDS}}\}$ performs a number of actions: after having drunk Brooke Bond he runs across the bridge, walks energetically by the basketball court, catches the ball, throws it with one hand from behind his back and scores. His facial expression also conveys his emotional state – he smiles, he is ‘energized’.

However, the audience is left to deduce that drinking Brooke Bond has other benefits besides the energy it brings. This piece of commercial appeals to the viewers’ emotional desire for success. The grounds for the proposition $[[\text{Brooke Bond} = \text{energy} = \text{success}]]$ are presented in the links available, which make the viewers connect the meaning of the verb *popast* ‘to score’ in a basketball game with another meaning of this verb ‘to be successful’. Judging by how the character has scored – with one hand from behind his back and from across the basketball court – it also suggests that once you drink Brooke Bond it is easy to be successful.

The discourse situation prior to (2c) – “Zariadilsia sam, zariadi drugikh!”) as pictured by the Speaker (A) and the Addressee (B) is represented in (9):



As expected, the diagrams in (9) are practically identical to those in (4) and (6): both $\{\text{you}^{\text{FDS}}\}$ and $\{\text{you}^{\text{REAL}}\}$ are found in the center of the C_{ab} , and the Speaker is about to relocate two knowledge items, the one he is going to utter and the one that he expects the viewers to come up with. The proposition $[[\emptyset \text{ zariadilsia sam, zariadi drugikh}]]$ that A

is about to verbally relocate into B's knowledge set is loaded with a number of implications. First, the expression – $\emptyset V^1 \text{ sam}, V^2 \text{ drugomu/im}$ ‘ $\emptyset V^1$ yourself, V^2 others’ – is a set language formula which (with the substitution of the verb within the borders of the same structure) may express rather wide array of meanings (*Uznal sam, nauči drugikh, vybral sam, pomogi vybrat' drugim* ‘Learned yourself, teach the others; chose yourself, help others to choose (lit.)’). The absence of a pronominal subject (antecedent of *sam*) in this recognizable formulaic expression testifies to the predictability of ‘generic you’ that stands for all people as the topic of the Speaker's utterance and hence undergoes deletion. The use of the ‘common you’ is another attempt of the advertiser to unify $\{\text{you}^{\text{FDS}}\}$ and $\{\text{I}^{\text{REAL}}\}$.

Second, the use of the past tense of the verb *zariadilsia* ‘got charged’ confirms the proposition $[[\text{you}^{\text{FDS}} \text{ is charged with energy}]]$ that has been visually illustrated in (8). Third, the emphatic pronoun *sam* ‘(one)self’ carries an identifying function in (9). After the merger of $\{\text{you}^{\text{FDS}}\}$ and $\{\text{I}^{\text{REAL}}\}$ in (7), the Speaker directly addresses the audience signaling that this referent is nothing new in the speech situation -- it is the viewing audience itself. Furthermore, the use of imperative (*zariadi* ‘charge’) as a suggestion or an instruction about the product is a direct address to the audience.

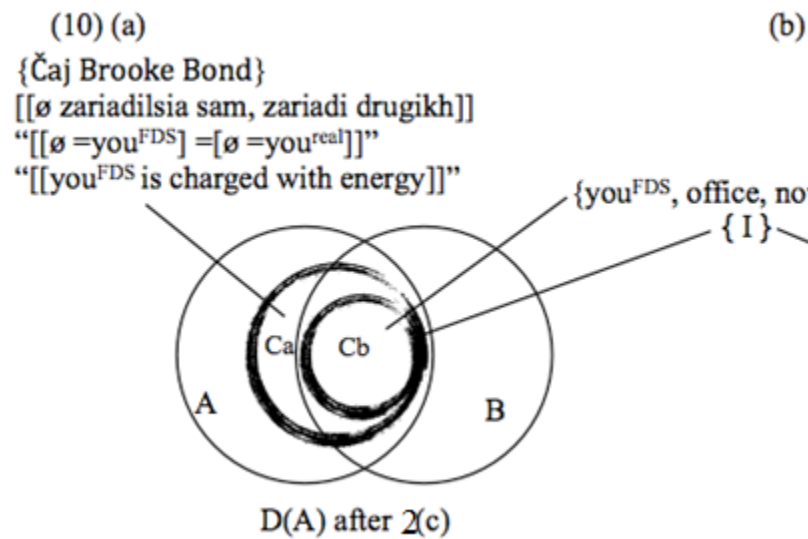
Poetic function is expressed here by the metaphorical use of the verb *zariadilsia*, which was discussed above, and intensification through repetition of the same verb within the scope of a single utterance⁶. According to Yokoyama, intensification is a function of emotion, whose main function is “driving the point home” (Yokoyama, 1994: 97). Although the sentential stress is placed on the word *drugikh* ‘others’ in the second part of the phrase, the reassignment of the focus does not make the phrase less powerful. Compare, for example, the phrase in (9a) and its possible variant with the verb *pomogat'* ‘help’ that is often used within this formulaic expression:

$\emptyset \text{ zariadilsia sam, zariadi drugikh!}$ vs. $\emptyset \text{ zariadilsia sam, pomogi drugim!}$

(lit.: got charged yourself, *help* the others)

⁶ For detailed discussion of intensification see Yokoyama (1994) pp 93-98.

To reinforce the proposition [[Brooke Bond gives energy]], the same scenario is visually represented in (10): lack of energy, getting the energy through drinking Brooke Bond, and demonstration of energy through movement:



Advertiser's planned image:



you^{FDS} energetically
walk in the office

→

you^{REAL} now see the
receptionist like
you^{FDS} do

→

she is yawning

→

her eyes are closed

→

you^{FDS} make the
tea and give it to the
receptionist

→

she drinks the tea

→

she smiles and spins
around in her chair

→

Advertiser wants viewer to think:

[[you^{FDS} (=you^{REAL}) are charged
with energy]]

[[he is I]], I see the receptionist
when I walk up to her

[[she is sleepy]]

[[she needs energy]]

[[Brooke Bond gives energy]]

[[she needs Brooke Bond]]

[[she is charged up with energy]]

Viewer's interpretation of the image:

[[you^{FDS} (=you^{REAL}) is charged with
energy]]

[[he is I]], I see the receptionist when I
walk up to her

[[she is sleepy]]

[[she needs energy]]

[[Brooke Bond gives energy]]

[[she needs Brooke Bond]]

[[she is charged up with energy]]

This part of Brooke Bond commercial is another example of how advertisers use language in conjunction with images to produce meaning. The audience sees the character energetically walking into the office and a receptionist across from the entrance from a very high camera angle (X). The characters are swallowed up by their setting, they become part of a wider picture – the office where the viewers are placed at that moment. Then the camera shifts to the point-of-view shot (XI) and the viewer is again placed in the shoes of the character. The camera zooms in on the yawning receptionist, imitating the viewer getting close to her. The receptionist's eyes are closed. Here again {you^{FDS}} becomes {you^{real}}. The viewing audience is visually forced to identify with the energized character. By looking at the receptionist's body language the viewer draws the following inferences: [[she is sleepy]] and [[she needs energy]]. Since the proposition [[Brooke Bond gives energy]] has already become part of their knowledge set, the viewers will also draw the expected conclusion [[she needs Brooke Bond]]. The next high angle frame (XII) simulates a point-of-view shot. This angle allows the viewers to see themselves in the advertisement by showing isolated hands pouring the water into the mug. Thus, the viewers see the mug as if it were from their own point of view. Once the receptionist drinks Brooke Bond, she opens her eye, smiles and spins around in her chair. Based on her behavior, the audience will infer that [[she is charged up with energy]].

It is important to note here that the proposition [[Ø zariadilsia sam, zariadi drugikh]] neither explicitly states what it is that {you^{FDS}} used to get charged up nor what he should use to charge up the others. However, visually this information is presented in (XIII) and (XIV). The text of advertisement is ambiguous and enigmatic and requires information supplied by the picture to solve the riddle, which may subsequently lead to the increase in the amount of thought that the Addressee devotes to the message.

It seems clear from the above discussion that marketers rely heavily on the poetic function, which manifests itself in verbal and visual puns and metaphors in advertising. As shown in (11), two red tea packs and a red mug with steamy tea appear on the screen on the black background. The text [[Ø zariažet na vse 100!]] 'Charges you to full power' appears right next to the tea pack that says Brooke Bond in big letters. Thus, the viewers see a sentence on the screen saying *Čaj Brooke Bond zariažet na vse 100*.

(11)



The advertisers ‘wink’ at the audience again when the tea pack becomes bigger as the voiceover pronounces *na vse 100!* ‘to full power’. The power is again being illustrated and confirms the consumer-based construct of [Brooke Bond=energy].

5. Concluding remarks

This paper addresses the interaction between the visual and linguistic components in advertising discourse in Russian TV commercials. Analyzing this connection within the TDM framework allows us to understand how the content of the speakers’ knowledge set and their assumptions about the interlocutor map onto the surface structure of language, and helps us to understand the connection between linguistic and extra-linguistic reality.

Our subconscious mind absorbs everything we see even when our conscious mind does not register its presence. Advertisers make it hard for today’s consumer to separate instantly a product from its speaker, because such deconstructing makes the commercial more recognizable and, therefore, less effective. Instead, many commercials have resorted to showing isolated body parts rather than full-body portraits of models using or wearing products (Rushkoff, 2003). These camera angles allow the viewers to see themselves in the advertisement, rather than the character.

I have argued that viewers react to TV commercials in much the same way they react to fiction, namely by accepting the premises of the commercial without question and with willingness to suspend disbelief. We can see in the examples explored in this paper that the advertisers illustrate rather than directly state claims about their product leaving the audience with the impression they themselves arrived to a certain conclusion

about the product. The rationale for the product emerges from the visual image and the mapping of characteristics of the recipient onto the fictional addressee. Thus, the impression is created in the mind of the viewer that they themselves wanted to know about the product, and furthermore that they actually need it.

By using verbal and visual metaphors and camera work advertisers shorten the distance with the viewers and thus overcome lack of trust and social co-operation between the speaker and the addressee. The poetic function of language is widely exploited by advertisers to make the viewing audience active participants in the construction of meaning. It does much more than simply attracts the audience and entertains it. It retains its attention and it creates message conditions that promote high elaboration under which the audiences are likely to thoughtfully consider and actively respond to the persuasive claim of the message.

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