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SENSORY MODALITY IN ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

The article is dedicated to the study of sensory modalities in advertising discourse. Advertising discourse refers to the language and communication strategies employed in advertising messages as cohesive texts deeply embedded in real-life contexts amidst numerous accompanying background elements within an integrated communicative environment. It encompasses the linguistic choices, persuasive techniques, and stylistic features used to convey marketing messages to a target audience, aiming at attracting attention, creating desire, and encouraging action, typically towards purchasing a product or service. The aim of this article is to analyze the ways of realizing sensory modalities in advertising discourse. The object of the research is advertising discourse, the subject being manifestations of sensory modalities in advertisements. The factual material of the research was selected from the collections of popular or iconic advertisements. Advertising discourse often appeals to emotions and utilizes visual elements to communicate the intended message effectively and influence consumer behaviour. The heterogeneity of advertisements, represented by a phrase alone or in combination with a static or dynamic visual image or acoustic accompaniment, these combinations vary

significantly, increasing the desirability of the advertised product to impress us daily. Different sensory modalities — visual, associated with images; auditory, associated with sounds and their perception; and kinesthetic, associated with physical sensations, as well as their manifestations, reflected in certain speech predicates – influence how we think, feel, mentally represent our experiences and make choices. The application of sensory modalities in advertising discourse is observed on three levels: on the first level, we deal with the material representation of the advertising message that results in different communicative types of advertisements; on the second level, the preferred representational system is revealed via predicates or the sensory-based words; on the third level, product names, pragmatonyms, become the bearers of sensory information, consequently appealing to human senses.

Key words: advertising discourse, sensory modality, visual, auditory, kinesthetic.

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СЕНСОРНА МОДАЛЬНІСТЬ В РЕКЛАМНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

Стаття присвячена дослідженню сенсорних модальностей у рекламному дискурсі. Рекламний дискурс відноситься до мовних і комунікаційних стратегій, що використовуються в рекламних повідомленнях як зв'язних текстах, глибоко вбудованих у контексти реального життя серед численних супровідних фонових елементів

в інтегрованому комунікативному середовищі. Він охоплює мовний вибір, методи переконання та стилістичні особливості, які використовуються для передачі маркетингових повідомлень цільовій аудиторії, спрямованих на привернення уваги, створення бажання та заохочення до дій, як правило, щодо придбання продукту чи послуги. Метою статті є аналіз способів реалізації сенсорних модальностей у рекламному дискурсі. Об'єктом дослідження є рекламний дискурс, предметом — прояви чуттєвих модальностей у рекламі. Фактичний матеріал дослідження було відібрано з добірок популярної чи культової реклами. Рекламний дискурс часто звертається до емоцій і використовує візуальні елементи для ефективної передачі повідомлення та впливу на поведінку споживача. Неоднорідність реклами, представленої окремою фразою, або в поєднанні зі статичним чи динамічним візуальним зображенням, акустичним супроводом, причому ці поєднання значно варіюються, підвищуючи бажаність рекламованого продукту, справляє на нас враження щодня. Різні сенсорні модальності — візуальні, пов'язані з образами, слухові, пов'язані зі звуками та їх сприйняттям, і кінестетичні, пов'язані з фізичними відчуттями, а також їхніми проявами, відображеними в певних мовленнєвих предикатах, — впливають на те, як ми думаємо, відчуваємо, подумки представляємо наш досвід і робимо вибір. Застосування сенсорних модальностей у рекламному дискурсі спостерігається на трьох рівнях: на першому рівні ми маємо справу з матеріальною репрезентацією рекламного повідомлення, результатом якого є різні комунікативні типи реклами; на другому рівні репрезентативна система, якій надається перевага, розкривається через предикати або сенсорні слова; на третьому рівні назви продуктів, прагматоніми, стають носіями сенсорної інформації, а отже, апелюють до органів чуття людини.

Ключові слова: рекламний дискурс, сенсорна модальність, візуальний, аудіальний, кінестетичний.

This article is dedicated to advertising discourse, which has been the centre of scientific attention for years. Our research is aimed at its linguistic peculiarities. At the same time, the investigators were not concerned with the application of the sensory modality theory, which we will borrow from neurolinguistic programming to advertising discourse analysis, making this particular vector of scientific research **relevant**.

The term **discourse** is many-sided and multi-fold, incorporating four main trends of its employment [20, с. 120]:

- an immersed in life coherent **text** within the context of accompanying factors;
- an integrated communicative **situation**;
- a **style** of linguistic communication;
- a pattern of linguistic **behavior** in a particular social sphere.

It is necessary to outline the essence of advertising discourse. We suggest the following definition: **advertising discourse refers to the language and communication strategies employed in advertising messages as cohesive texts deeply embedded in real-life contexts amidst numerous accompanying background elements within**

an integrated communicative environment. It encompasses the linguistic choices and persuasive techniques of the addresser and stylistic features of advertisements used to convey marketing messages to a target audience, aiming at attracting the attention of the addressee, creating desire, and encouraging action, typically towards purchasing a product or service. Advertising discourse, in other words, is “a complex communicative and cognitive process, not only reflecting knowledge about the world but also conveying a new “glossy world” in accordance with the aesthetic, pragmatic and value orientations of the author” [1, c. 3651].

Any advertising message is “a complex semiotic unity, representing a chain of sign components, presented through structural components ..., fully adapted to implement the basic goal — the impact on the target audience to achieve the desired effect” [1, c. 3657]. A simplified view of the linguistic component of the advertisement states that “the meaning produced from the interplay between **Lead** and **Announcement** is constructed or modified by the **Enhancer**”, followed by **Call — and — Visit Information**, the linguistic component is frequently combined with the visual **Lead**, **Display**, and **Emblem**. Both linguistic and visual components allow us to treat the advertisement as a single, unified commodity [11, c. 147].

The aim of this article is the analysis of the ways of realization of sensory modalities in advertising discourse. **The object** of the research is advertising discourse, **the subject** being manifestations of sensory modalities in advertisements. **The factual material** of the research was selected from the collections of popular or iconic advertisements such as *30 Famous Print Ads That Went Viral* (<https://contentfuel.co/famous-print-ads/>), *The 15 ad campaigns that made marketing history* (<https://www.typeform.com/blog/opinions-and-expertise/ad-campaigns/>) and the like.

Actualization of sensory modalities in advertising is carried out on three levels, resembling a pyramid. **On the first level**, we deal with the material representation of the advertising message. The heterogeneity of advertisements, represented by a phrase alone or in combination with a static or dynamic visual image or acoustic accompaniment, these combinations vary significantly, increasing the desirability of the advertised product, impresses us daily. Several communicative types of advertisements may be deciphered, presenting purely **verbal** information, such as printed text; **visual** information, such as an image; **audial** information, as a radio advertisement; multimedia message, as in a TV commercial. Currently, investigations are aimed at establishing the most effective way of influencing the target group [5, 17].

On the second level, we proceed to the main point of our discussion: what **sensory modality** is and how it enhances the desire to acquire a new product. This question sends us back to the 7th and 6th centuries BCE to the ancient Indian philosophical system of Sankhya of Kapila. Explaining the nature of reality, this system distinguishes five Primary Elements (sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell) [12, c. 65]. According to Kapila, with the help of these senses and organs, a person interacts with the world, feeling pleasure and pain, which we can consider as the beginning of the theory of perception known to us today, distinguishing sensory modalities.

A similar theory regarding sensory modalities was developed by Aristotle in the treatise *De Anima*, which deals, in particular, with the mental faculties of living beings (nutritional, appetitive, sensual, locomotive and thinking power) [3, c.18] and five senses are distinguished (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch), which provide a person with various types of information about the surrounding world [3, c. 33]. Aristotle noted the role of feelings in perception and cognition and distinguished sensory modalities on the basis of their objects and *modus operandi*.

That is, the concept of sensory modalities, as we now understand it, has been refined and developed over centuries of scientific research and remains a key area of research in fields such as cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics. The idea that different sensory modalities can influence how we think and feel has also been incorporated into various linguistic approaches, including neurolinguistic programming, where the concept of **sensory modalities**, which R. Bandler and J. Grinder have called **representational systems**, is used to understand how people mentally represent their experiences: “There are three main input channels through which we as humans receive information about the world around us — sight, hearing and kinesthetic (body sensation). (The other two commonly accepted input channels — smell and taste — are apparently rarely used as ways of receiving information about the world).” [4, c. 5]. Accordingly, three **major** and two **minor sensory modalities** are distinguished: **visual**, associated with images and visual stimuli, **auditory**, associated with sounds and their perception, **kinesthetic**, associated with touch and physical sensations, as well as **olfactory**, associated with smell, and **gustatory**, associated with taste, and their manifestations are reflected in certain speech predicates.

When applied to the **teaching** process [9, c. 140], this method of perception of information, outlining four possible preferences in delivering information are deciphered (V — visual, R — reading/writing, A — aural, K — kinesthetic):

- “diagrammatic material often used by teachers to symbolize information (e.g., graphs, charts, flow charts, models, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices);
- “printed words from which some students appear to get a greater or lesser degree of understanding”;
- lectures, tutorials, and discussions;
- “the use of experience and practice (simulated or real)”.

Busan [6] applied this classification to **learning** styles, returning to three basic modalities proposed by Bandler and Grinder: “among the 73% of students who prefer only one learning style: 45% are visual learners, 36% are auditory learners and 19% are kinesthetic”. It should be noted that “these data differ greatly from those generally accepted for the general population that is 65% for visual learners, 30 % for auditory learners and 5% for kinesthetic learners”.

The preferred representational system is revealed via **predicates** or the sensory-based words in the used language, “recognised as a key identifier of dependence to sensory modalities” [2, c.5].

We can see the examples of speech predicates, including the main classes of visual, auditory and kinesthetic ones:

Visual Predicates	Auditory Predicates	Kinesthetic Predicates
Imagine	Talk through	Hold on
Focus	Tune in	Put finger on
Look at	Listen to	Strikes me
Point out	Rings a bell	Get a grip of
Seeing it	Explains it	Close fist
Show it	Deaf to	Tingling
Blind to	Crashing down	No stomach for it
In a flash	Hear me out	Hanging on
An eyeful	A little voice	In touch with
Bright as day	Lowering the tone	A handful
Dark as night	Harmony	Touched me
Drawing a blank		

Fig. 1. Sensory speech predicates.

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<https://unleashyourpotential.org.uk/influential-communication-communicating-in-everyones-language/lanagauge-communcation-prefernces-predicates/>

Analysis of the collected material allows all ads to be divided into several groups: **visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, and polymodal.**

Visual advertisements are quite common. They are primarily represented by a static visual image, which consists of a picture that can be accompanied by a text, or simply from a text printed in a certain way. “In the modern advertising, visual elements are critical in conveying information to the audience. Designers often simplify and emphasize key elements, aligning with the Gestalt concept of perceiving a visual image as a unified whole” [15, c. 3].

Such advertisements contain visual predicates, for instance, *look, imagine, point, bright*, as in the following example:

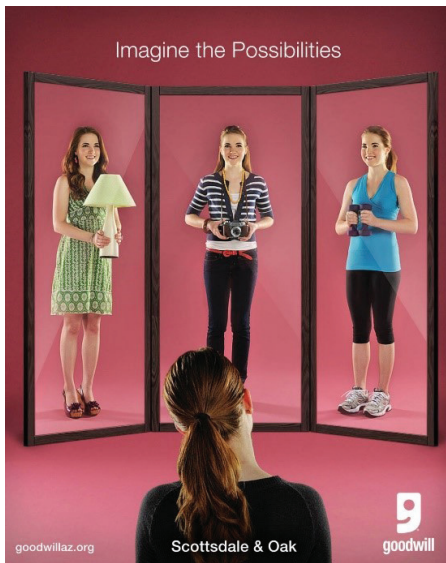


Fig. 2. Realisation of the visual predicate *imagine*.

In this advertisement, the predicate *imagine* appeals the the visual representational system. The same cognitive process is realised in the following advertisement via the predicate *bright*:



Fig. 3. Realisation of the visual predicate *bright*.

Auditory advertisements are based on the actualization of the audio channel of information perception or its imitation with the help of speech predicates. Here, we include examples with corresponding verbal components such as *loud*, *listening* in the following examples:

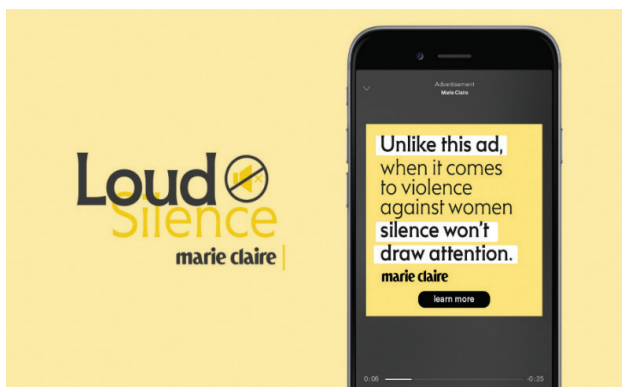


Fig. 4. Realisation of the auditory predicates loud, silence.



Fig. 5. Realisation of the auditory predicate listening.

Kinesthetic ads are usually represented by images of movements, fragments from films, clips, gifs, that is, it is a dynamic image that incorporates the movement of characters or depicted objects or contains speech predicates related to movement. We can illustrate this with examples from the following advertising messages with such predicates as *do*, *touch*, *feel*, as in the examples below:



Fig. 6. Realisation of the kinesthetic predicate do.



Fig. 7. Realisation of the kinesthetic predicate touch.

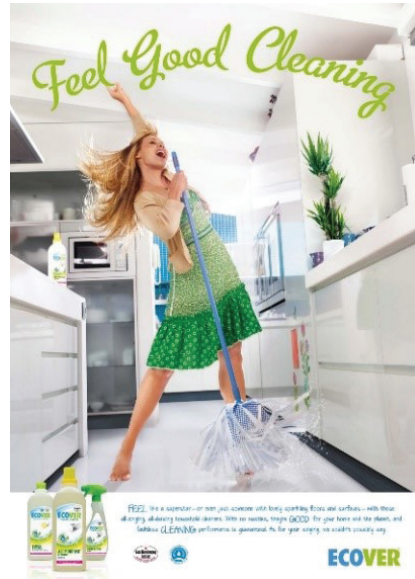


Fig. 8. Realisation of the kinesthetic predicates feel, cleaning.

Olfactory ads are related to the presentation of smells, as we can see in the following messages with such predicates as *smell*, *aroma*:



Fig. 9. Realisation of the olfactory predicate smell.



Fig. 10. Realisation of the olfactory predicates aroma, fresh.

Notable is the application of the olfactory predicates in the name of the product in the last example, which will be discussed further in this article.

Gustatory advertisements are based on taste reflection in the text. The corresponding speech predicates (*taste, sweet*) implement this sensory modality, as illustrated below:



Fig. 11. Realisation of the gustatory predicate taste.

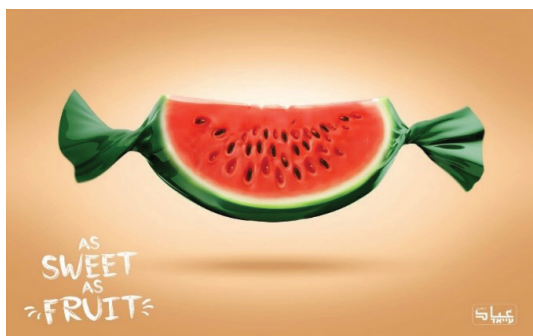


Fig. 12. Realisation of the gustatory predicate sweet.

On the **third level**, names of products, pragmatonyms, come into action. The study of sensory modalities of brand names of perfumes was applied by E. Bila [19], who established that the dominant position belongs to aromatonyms (names of perfumes) with kinesthetic predicates with tactile, olfactory and motor elements, as well as visual aromatonyms with colour designations and isolated cases of auditory aromatonyms. Danesi states that the names given to high fashion items, especially the use of the manufacturer's name "assigns an aura of artistry, craftsmanship, and superior quality to the product" [7, c. 6], because "when people buy an Armani or a Gucci product, for instance, they feel that they are buying a painting, a sculpture, a work of art to be displayed on the body; when they buy *Poison*, by Christian Dior, they sense that they are buying a dangerous, but alluring, love potion; when they buy *Moondrops*, *Natural Wonder*, *Rainflower*, *Sunsilk*, or *Skin Dew* cosmetics they might feel that they are acquiring some of nature's beauty resources" [8, c. 236].

Product names frequently become the bearers of sensory information, consequently appealing to human senses. A bright example is the *Johnnie Walker* line of products, presented on the official site of the manufacturer as *Johnnie Walker Colours*, realizing visual sensory modality: *Johnnie Walker Red Label*, *Black Label*, *Double Black*, *Gold Label Reserve*, *Platinum Label 18 Years Old*, *Blue Label* (there also used to be *Green Label* before) [13]. Notable is that the brand was created by John Walker, whose surname comes from cloth-fulfilling, a pre-industrial stage of thickening wool by beating with hands and feet [18], simultaneously having a transparent inner form, connected with the movement. It inspired the advertising campaign back at the beginning of the 20th century, "*Johnnie Walker: Born 1820, still going strong*", featuring the Striding Man. As it is possible to see, a potent kinesthetic component emerges on the scene, thus creating a **polymodal** message, a synesthesia of **visual** and **kinesthetic** sensory modalities:



Fig. 13. *Johnnie Walker advertisement (the beginning of the 20th century)*

By the end of the century, the image in the advertisement was changed, reversing the direction of movement and another slogan was introduced: “*Keep Walking*”, again emphasizing the **kinesthetic** components of the advertising campaign.



JOHNNIE WALKER.

KEEP WALKING.

Fig. 14. Johnnie Walker advertisement (the end of the 20th century)

We may have a look at the top-selling Amazon perfumes (as of April 2024), establishing what sensory modalities are actualized by these product names:

Table 1. Sensory Modalities in the Names of Perfumes

Sensory modality	Product name
Visual	Blue Japanese Cherry Blossom Bright Crystal White Diamonds Cloud La Vie Est Belle Curve
Auditory	—
Kinesthetic	Pure Seduction Tease Crave Really Ripped Abs Rave Now
Olfactory	Cheirosa Choco Musk Spice & Black Vanilla Crème Vanille Bare Vanilla Honey Oud
Gustatory	Cotton Candy Sweet Tooth

As is seen, the dominant place is taken by visual, olfactory and kinesthetic pragmatonyms; no auditory product names were found here (if we consider a wider range of perfume names, it will be possible to find those that realize auditory modality, as in *French Waltz, Tango, Violin Music*). It illustrates not only the wide employment of such a powerful instrument of influence as sensory modalities but also the dominant semantic fields for every subdivision: precious stones, sexual desire, vanilla smell and sweet taste.

Various sensory modalities — visual, linked to images; auditory, related to sounds and their perception; kinesthetic, connected to physical sensations; olfactory, associated with smells; and gustatory, linked to taste — along with their expressions in specific speech predicates, shape how we think, feel, mentally represent our experiences, and make decisions, since the consumer “who grasps the ad forms an unconscious bond with the ad through the narrative analysis that builds on the impact of its creative features” [14, c. 723].

In fact, the addressee of the advertisement creates (and buys) an image of herself, a gestalt of a possible “experience that, when considered as a whole, has qualities that are more than the total of all its parts” [10] — that of a beautiful woman, wearing her perfume as an haute couture outfit, of a successful businessman, driving an exclusive car, of a happy child, drinking Christmas Coca-Cola: “Brand messages are powerful as they advocate causes and ideals ... through repetitive and omnipresent messages whose ultimate goal is to influence the target audience’s behavior” [16]. Different sensory modalities play a significant role in shaping our cognitive and emotional processes. These sensory experiences, along with their corresponding expressions in language, influence our thought patterns, emotional responses, mental representations of experiences, and the decisions we make.

Further avenues of research are to embrace the employment of sensory modalities in other types of discourse, thus allowing the final comparison of their scope and aims.

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