Architectonics of advertising text with the use of Ericksonian hypnosis

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Abstract. Nowadays, advertising has penetrated into all areas of human activity. Advertising, being a multifaceted and complex phenomenon, is the object of research not only by economists, marketing specialists, sociologists, but also linguists, psychologists, architects. The increased interest in the phenomenon of advertising, of course, has also affected its verbal part in the psychological aspect. In this article we will consider verbal methods of influence in advertising texts, namely, the use of speech patterns of Ericksonian hypnosis. These patterns help not only to increase the effectiveness of the advertising text, but also to influence the consumer's behaviour.

1 Introduction

The creator of the method, Milton Erickson, is a well-known psychotherapist and a world-famous scientist. He practiced the state of trance, which was called "Ericksonian hypnosis". Erickson believed that the trance state is a kind of a bridge between the conscious and unconscious levels of the psyche. This method is based on the idea to use a hypnotic state and to change human way of thinking and behaviour.

In modern science, M. Erickson's ideas and methods have become widely used in marketing, pedagogy, and advertising.

In advertising, Erickson's hypnosis can be used to achieve various goals. It can help to attract the consumer's attention, cause an emotional reaction, enhance the memorability of an advertising message and even change the consumer's attitude to the product.

Ericksonian hypnosis is a non—directional, or indirect, type of hypnosis, because when it is introduced, indirect influence is used, the suggestion is made in wakefulness. Its task is to put a person into an involuntary trance in order to turn to the unconscious and activate the internal resources of a person. The basis of the technique is the ability of a person to reflex trance, which gives a chance to produce the necessary impact subtly. So, for example, hypnotic trance is defined by M. Erickson as "a focused glow of attention within ourselves, penetrating through conscious barriers, activating unconscious resources and excluding all external stimuli, i.e., a special state of consciousness is created in which attention is not unfocused on a variety of stimuli and is not turned off, as in a dream state, and the hyperactivity of consciousness characteristic of a person decreases, and attention is directed to the "combination" of stimuli. This is the state of trance. The state of trance in Ericksonian
practice is also understood in a special way: as a natural cross-contextual phenomenon that can be caused in various ways, in addition, this state is necessary for a person “to process information at an unconscious (deep) level, as the researchers of Eriksonian hypnosis Havens Ronald, I.N. Melikhova, Richard Bandler and John Grinder declare [1,11,17,2].

The material for the article was continuous sampling data of advertising texts from magazines "Dorogoye udovol'stviye", "Kto glavnyy", "Sobaka.ru", in which the techniques inherent in Ericksonian hypnosis are analysed. In total we analysed 200 advertising texts.

2 Discussion

The methodology of M. Erickson is based on conscious silence in combination with the uncertainty of speech, as well as the processes of distortion of reality, motivating consciousness to fill in the gaps with material taken from their own experience. Milton's speech ambiguity switches the dominant hemisphere associated with language, opening access to the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind is a repository of memories and life experiences. This is the structure behind consciousness. When clients, while in a trance, hear strange, ambiguous phrases, they have to perform a transderivational search in this knowledge repository in order to comprehend the meaning of what was said [1, p.32]. The principles of processing information by the human brain are the basis of Ericksonian hypnosis. When transmitting information in the form of words, people use the processes of reality distortion. This is really necessary, because otherwise human speech would turn into an instruction for each step and action.

The approach of M. Erickson is an effective technique of inducing trance, which is actively used by advertisers. It’s a model in which each recipient perceives the advertising text in their own way, investing their experience, knowledge and interests. For example:

Yes, the Buffet story is the gastronomic accompaniment of your events. Organization of a coffee break, buffet, banquet, with service and all necessary equipment. We make your holidays even brighter! [20, p.54]

"Euphoria" makes everything possible for children what they are dreaming of! Euphoria has been organizing children’s parties for 7 years, creating truly unforgettable events [7, p.23].

The basis for the analysis of advertising texts was the theory of I.N. Melikhov, according to which the model of speech organization is divided into three main parts / three main techniques:

1. Elimination of information - omission of the utterance object, sentence reduction, missing reference index, indefinite verbs, indefinite designations, nominations, comparisons;
2. Semantic ambiguity - organization of speech by causal modeling and linking, omitted condition;
3. Generalizations - modal operators of possibility and necessity, limiters of the scale of listeners' representations, presuppositions.

4. In addition to the main parts, I.N. Melikhov also identifies additional ones: indirectly stimulating reactions; complex equivalence; prerequisites; patterns in metaphors [17].

Having analyzed more than two hundred advertising texts, we noticed that generalizations occur more often than other techniques (Fig.1). The aim of this technique is aimed not only to create the reality, but also to model it.
Nominalization is words that do not denote a specific object and, accordingly, the meaning of which is often subjective and can be interpreted in different ways. Examples: happiness, love, success, control. Each of these words (concepts) can be understood in its own way in a specific context and by a specific person. According to the dictionary of neuro-linguistic programming, nomination is a linguistic characteristic in a meta-model, a hypnotic pattern of a trance language, a process or verb turned into an (abstract) noun; a process frozen in time [18]. A distinctive feature of nomination is its less informative nature, during the transformation of the verb into an event or thing, the reference index is omitted, concretization is lost. "Erickson exercised his linguistic skill in following the unobserved experience of the client by choosing verbs that are relatively vague, thereby increasing the likelihood that the statement he makes will be suitable for describing the current experience of the client" [2, p.134]. Here is an example of the use of nominalizations in advertising:

Althera SMAS-lifting is the synthesis of new, young collagen in the skin, lifting at the SMAS level without damaging the skin surface, without rehabilitation, Althera SMAS-lifting is working with facial contours, with eyebrow lifting, compaction of fat packages and, in particular, “malar bags” <...> and, of course, with the body [10, p. 65]. In this example, the nominalization technique is reinforced by repetition. The repetition itself already attracts attention, and the arrangement of repeating parts at the beginning of the text makes this technique even more advantageous.

The next technique, which is often used in advertising and refers to the methods of Ericksonian hypnosis, is "mind reading", a kind of cognitive distortion, when the advertiser prescribes certain thoughts, attitudes to the recipient, projects them onto a potential consumer. According to the theory of Bandler and Ginder, “mind reading” is a technique in which it is stated as vaguely and generically as possible that the addresser knows the thoughts and feelings of the addressee, without mentioning the source of information [2]. This technique is an effective means of establishing trust between the speaker and the recipient. For example,
The Magnolia Medical Center cares about the quality of life of its patients and gives them the opportunity to experience aesthetic pleasure, and you will surely admire the unique feature of our clinic – the consolidation of anti-age and aesthetic medicine! You will undoubtedly feel more confident, healthier, and the quality of your life will improve! [5, p.16]

People nowadays are often subjected to stress, overwork, which reduces their effectiveness and leads to deterioration of health. You certainly want to regain strength, as well as quickly return to normal life after illnesses. So, the Vivaldi clinic provides services for rehabilitation and recovery [8, p.54]. In this example, the mind-reading technique is enhanced by a truism that increases the effectiveness of the impact.

Similarly, the methods of Ericksonian hypnosis include causal modeling or binding. This technique is a combination of phenomena based on the principle of "cause-and-effect", which includes the use of real cause-and-effect relationships between phenomena that, in fact, have no relation to each other, but the respondent wants 'to cause'.

Linguistically, there are three categories of causal relations or connections: 1) with the help of connective conjunctions and phrases "you can imagine", "it's curious to know" - conjunction or "logical and" (optional type). For example,

Take the time and come to the clinic of plastic surgery, aesthetic cosmetology and anti-age medicine "Olvia" [14, p.78] - this binding is of an optional type, formed with the help of the conjunction "and", uniting phenomena that in fact have nothing to do with each other;

2) with the help of such linking words and word combinations as ‘as’, ‘so far as’, ‘all the time’, ‘before’, ‘while’, ‘after’ etc. It implies indirect or implied causative relationship (average degree of obligation).

Residents of ‘the Golden Kids children's club’ attended a festive party devoted to the anniversary of the Pierrot boutique. While the young guests were entertained by animators, partners of the organizers prepared treats and gifts. Pierrot celebrated its 23rd anniversary! [20, p.43];

3) with the help of such causative verbs as "to force", "to prompt", "demands", "to cause", etc. (obligatory type of binding).

Excursions from Marina Natalyan make you forget about everything and plunge into the history of an unknown courtyard of Paramonov warehouse or Spielrein house, fall in love with our city, admire the facades of buildings, the historical heritage. It’s always obvious when a person works “for love” [10, p.33].

The article also analyses the over-generalized concepts that give the message an absolute character, namely the use of the words "all", "every", "everyone", "always", "constantly", "never", "nobody", "none", "any", etc. This technique helps to hint, indirectly emphasize the consumer’s need to purchase goods. For example,

Everyone dreams of beautiful, even, healthy teeth. The ideal bite not only solves medical problems, but also gives self-confidence. The dental clinic Dental SPA contains all the most advanced technologies for your health and beauty [8, p.21].

Everyone knows that a healthy and a beautiful body must be protected and preserved. No one, even the most expensive and luxurious thing, will improve the quality of life as well as excellent well-being and self-confidence. The main mission of Olvia Clinic is improving the quality of life of our patients [14, p. 78].

The true need of every woman is the opportunity to grow as a person and improve all areas of her life. It’s the basis that unites our community “Sok” [4, p.78] (advertising of the women's club “Sok”).

In all the examples based on the statement formulated with the use of over-generalized concepts, the conclusion is drawn about the reasonability of the purchase, the need to use the service. The information is invested about the need to take care of yourself in the advertised clinic.
A powerful rhetorical device within the framework of the methodology of Ericksonian hypnosis is the use of an indefinite class of comparisons in advertising. It is the use of the so-called "empty" comparisons in which the advertiser claims an advantage. For example, Balance Cosmetics’ bioactive serum restores damaged cells 10 times better and stimulates hair growth [6 p.48]. The use of the word “better” implies a comparison of the advertised product with some others, but it is not explicitly indicated with which one.

The new BATUR collection gives even more examples of conscious slow fashion, natural and airy eco-fabrics [6, p.50].

In these advertising texts the subject of comparison is isolated from others. It does not specify "more", "better" or "cheaper" in comparison what with.

The article also analyses the use of modal expressions of possibility and necessity, i.e. words such as "possible", "impossible", "capable", "not capable", "I can", "I can't", "necessary", "not necessary", "should", etc. Many advertisers emphasize that these words can cause the opposite effect, the effect of resistance, because these words deprive the consumer of choice and require specific actions, as well as imperative verbs. However, Erickson hypnosis includes this technique in its methodology and, as it is shown in the analysis of advertising texts, it is used quite often.

In advertising motivational verbs denoting an abstract action that does not restrict the consumer in their choice are used.

The LOLDENT clinic has fulfilled the dream of a beautiful smile for hundreds of patients! You should see it! [21, p.82]

The visiting card of the SKY restaurant is the homonymous SKY dish. Now our chef is diligently working on it to bring it to perfection. It's divine! You should taste it! [16, p.39]

You need to get acquainted with the new women's brand MAVA, because the creators of the brand came from the idea to the first results in one year term - a fully functioning business with a regular client base, for which they received the “Woman Leader 2023” award [8, p.23].

The technique based on the illusion of choice is also often widely presented, and advertisers actively resort to it; a potential consumer is invited to make an “independent” choice within the boundaries allotted by the advertiser:

In the Art Cosmetology clinic, aesthetic doctors will offer you procedures that will help you prepare for the swimming season. You can choose “endosphere” or “aikun”. Any of these procedures will provide you with additional bonuses for your skin such as light peeling and good hydration [12, p.28]. So, the recipient focuses on choosing one of the types of procedures, not taking into account the choice of Art Cosmetology or another clinic.

Choose which outfit from Patrizia Pepe will best emphasize your personality - a glamorous sensual outfit where exclusive patterns demonstrate high quality and attention to detail or a flowing skirt, bright color and print, which will add zest and sharpness to its owner [22 p.65].

The essence of Ericksonian hypnosis is that it does not imply direct orders. It just gives an advice overcoming the resistance of consciousness that arises when receiving an order or command. The replacement of the command is also a truism - (Lat.). a well-known truth, a common place in reasoning that would be superfluous to prove [23].

All women love flowers, especially if it's a fresh bouquet that is delivered from the flower bed to your hands in just a couple of hours. Own flower farm, as well as reliable delivery to other cities and countries are the main features of GRANPRI flower salons. All women love GRANPRI [15, p.57]. The truism at the beginning of the sentence sets the frame of perception of reality and does not create a sense of suggestion.

Well-known proverbs and sayings are also truisms and are often used in advertising setting the desired frame of perception:
Happiness rarely keeps company with an empty stomach. The Vinograd exclusive products store is a treasure for gourmets and a real discovery for those who appreciate a high quality of life, choosing the best for themselves [10, p.14].

Everyone wants to be healthy. Health is wealth that cannot be bought with money or received as a gift. Marina Bulgakova knows everything about physical therapy and skillfully finds a way to heal each patient [13, p.70]. – An over–generalized concept (every person) who is in strict accordance with reality (wants to be healthy; health, you can't buy it, you won't get it as a gift) creates subconscious trust in information and further, after a person hears a statement that, in his opinion, is in strict accordance with reality - the truth, his subconscious begins with trust in the subsequent information (Marina Bulgakova will heal everyone).

Truisms are used to elicit a desirable behavioral "yes" reaction [17]. In advertising, this construction is used as follows: information about the product is preceded by phrases with the content of which one cannot disagree, thus the recipient's vigilance is lulled, and he perceives all subsequent information less critically.

I.N. Melikhov also highlights the presupposition technique, calling it “extremely effective and efficient”. Presuppositions (preliminary assumptions) can be found in advertising. Presupposition is "verbal patterns consisting of phrases in which the presence of some object, phenomenon or behavior is assumed as granted, and the interlocutor unwittingly agrees with the correctness of the assumption."

An interesting fact: Vetrova VIP Bakery is known and loved both in our city and abroad. Famous people are among customers! [10, p.11] In this example the listener's attention shifts to the assessment of the situation (an interesting fact) by the speaker, and the situation itself (Vetrova VIP Bakery is known and loved as in our city…) becomes kind of true.

The key feature of presupposition is its ability to disorient the recipient's consciousness with the help of questions, create situations of choosing or modeling a certain sequence of actions, effectively and imperceptibly influence the perception of the recipient of information by asking him certain attitudes and imposing his conclusions, which is actively used by advertisers.

Why do you think customers choose the company “Audit NT”? [20, p.73] In this phrase it is presupposed that customers choose the company “Audit NT”, and the focus of conscious attention shifts to finding out for what reason.

Have you noticed that this season's collection of Effortless Attitude brand reflecting the mix of West and East, has become even more eclectic by combining Italian DNA with colors and fabrics borrowed from Eastern culture [12, p.98]. Finding out the awareness of something implies that this "something" really exists (this season's collection of Effortless Attitude brand reflecting the mix of West and East). But it needs to be found out whether it is conscious or not (Have you noticed…).

As soon as you visit the modern clinic of preventive medicine and systemic health “Vivaldi”, you will immediately feel systemic care of your health. Highly qualified general specialists will comprehensively assess your condition, trace the interrelationships of all processes of your body, discover the true causes of the disease, accurately diagnose and prescribe effective treatment [8, p.55].

In this type of presupposition, the advertiser assumes that if one event happens (you visit a modern clinic), then another will happen afterwards (you will immediately feel systemic health care, general specialists will comprehensively assess your condition …).

Choosing a new capsule brand WANNA A. in different situations, you will attract attention and arouse interest. WANNA A. it will help you to be expressive and remember what flirting is and how wonderful it is! [8, p.27].

It should be noted that it is not static situations that are interconnected, but dynamic processes, multidirectional and unrelated in any way, however, the communicative intention
of the advertiser forces the recipient of information to link two not so mutually dependent processes into one reality.

It works like this: synthetic, holistic thinking, which is more characteristic of the unconscious, perceives sequences as a whole - and if the first event occurs, the second does as well automatically. Presupposition in the construction of assumptions is addressed to the unconscious, which reduces the criticism of reality perception, shifting the focus of attention.

Human consciousness, as a rule, resists the direct imposition of opinions, assessments or commands that pass through it. Among all the techniques of Erickson's hypnosis discussed in this article, we noticed that advertisers prefer truism, we assume that this is due to the fact that this technique is implicit, it is addressed to the unconscious, and therefore it is easy to direct it to create a model in which there are only the right choices and, consequently, the conditioned behaviour.

3 Conclusion

As a result of the analysis the following conclusions were made: Ericksonian hypnosis is a powerful tool for influencing the consumer in advertising. These techniques allow to attract attention, cause an emotional reaction and enhance the memorability of an advertising message. For these purposes, the following techniques of Ericksonian hypnosis are used in advertising texts: over-generalized concepts, false choice, truism, presuppositions, nominalizations, causal linking, indefinite comparisons and judgments.

All techniques contribute to a successful and effective influence on a potential consumer’s mind, choice and behaviour. The techniques of Ericksonian hypnosis are aimed at the unconscious, they are associated with hidden meanings of the text and therefore these techniques are actively used as tactics of language manipulation. Ericksonian patterns are convenient and effective methods of imposing a certain point of view. They help to describe and form reality in the way the advertiser needs, as a result, they turn out to be powerful influence tactics.

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