

Stylistic Techniques in Russian and Chinese Medical and Cosmetic Youth Advertising Texts

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Abstract

Background: An endless stream of messages aimed at disseminating information about the sale of certain products attracts the attention of philologists who study the features of media works and the language of advertising, distinguished by various linguistic units, techniques, methods, tactics, etc. Currently, there are dozens of different aspects of mass media research communications.

Objective: The study compared commercial texts in Russian and Chinese on medical and cosmetic topics.

Methodology: The material was Russian and Chinese medical and cosmetic advertising video texts selected by continuous sampling within the YouTube video hosting (2010-2020). A total of 201 advertising texts were selected in Russian (101 medical, 100 cosmetic) and 207 in Chinese (103 medical, 104 cosmetic). Particular attention was paid to the analysis of stylistic and expressive means.

These, namely lexical, morphological, and syntactic devices, act as tools to influence the mind of a potential buyer.

Result: A thorough analysis has established that Russian and Chinese cosmetic commercial products are dominated by tropes that put "beauty products" in the most attractive light to increase their sales and make more profit. In medical advertisements in both languages, lexical means predominate due to the specific orientation of the text; the frequency of the use of terminological units related to the field of medicine is recorded. The presence of unique medical vocabulary, terms, and professionalism in advertising medical goods and services helps to create trust and reliability among the audience for the sold object. Russian advertising is dominated by rhyme—a way to quickly memorise information about the proposed product or service.

Conclusion: The study reveals that stylistic and lexical manipulative devices are frequently used in Russian and Chinese medical and cosmetic advertising. Russian ads favour rhyme and memorisation techniques, while Chinese advertisements employ similar manipulative strategies.

Unique Contribution: This paper offers a comparative analysis of Russian and Chinese medical and cosmetic advertising, a relatively under-researched area, particularly by focusing on the manipulative stylistic and lexical techniques used. It sheds light on using expressive language devices and how they impact consumer trust and product perception.

Key Recommendation: Given the influence of linguistic and stylistic techniques in shaping consumer behaviour, advertisers and marketers should consider incorporating culturally sensitive and ethical approaches when crafting medical and cosmetic advertisements. Additionally, further research could focus on the long-term effects of these manipulative advertising strategies on consumer trust and purchasing behaviour, especially in the context of health-related products.

Keywords: language, medicine, cosmetics, advertising, Russian, Chinese, technique of expressiveness.

Introduction

Due to active globalisation and economic development, we see the production and advent of new products on the market daily in recent years. The emergence of various products directly affects the need for their promotion and distribution, which in turn demands media strategies and advertisement. Today, advertisement acts as a link between the business sector and potential customers. Thus, it is the main way to promote products (Inshakova, 2005).

Cosmetic and medical advertisements are among the most common in other advertisement areas. It began in the late twentieth century, around which time there were changes in the political arena, globalisation, and a complete rethinking of the attitude of people toward themselves, the emergence of an increased interest in health, nutrition, and lifestyle (Arens & Bove, 1995). During the same period, the number of studies in sociology and advertising increased. The main task at that time was to find different options and ways of meeting the needs of modern man. The concept of advertisement changed and was perceived as a «finished message of the addressee with strict setting and the purpose to draw attention to the good or service» (Arens & Bove, 1995).

Medical and cosmetic advertisement around the world helps shape the health and beauty standards related to a country's national and cultural characteristics. Because medical and cosmetic advertisements are about human health and beauty, they are one of the most prominent and central cells in a huge flow of advertising information. Such materials require credibility, honesty, and strict compliance with established laws and regulations (Wise, 2021). Advertisers have had to become extremely careful in their texts, which has led to the use of various non-verbal and verbal tricks to introduce and distribute goods and services effectively. Grammatical and morphological means of language and various artistic means of expression were highlighted among similar ways of

influencing the consumer, which authors of texts managed to create a convincing media area (Borisova, 1999).

While studying people's stereotypes about health and beauty products and services, as well as the motives of the offeror and the consumer, it was discovered that advertisers have resorted to different ways of attracting customers' attention to products (Mikhaleva, 2009). For example, in the early 2010s, a survey was conducted among women aged 15 to 50 and over to determine the direct requirements and means used for advertising. It was found that advertisements captured less than 7% of buyers' attention, with personal experience and recommendations from acquaintances being regarded as the most trusted sources of information (Nikolaeva, 2012). The result of the study was a challenge for advertisers. It was necessary to come up with a concept that could be trusted. In media culture, sociologists tried to find means of language that would influence consumers and force them to purchase a product or service (Mikhaleva, 2009). One of the popular ways to influence a potential buyer is the use of various stylistic artistic techniques, which can display the sold in the most attractive light.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) Analyse Russian and Chinese medical and cosmetic youth advertising texts.
- 2) Compare manipulative stylistic and lexical means in Russian and Chinese medical and cosmetic advertising texts.
- 3) Identify the dominant and common techniques used in both languages.

Method

The researcher used comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences in stylistic techniques in Russian and Chinese medical-cosmetic advertising.

Research Methodology

The modern advertising language was formed by many factors: the development of science and technology and the emergence of new forms of information distribution (newspapers and magazines, outdoor advertising, radio and television, and the internet). Commercial messages are becoming the subject of study in many disciplines. Linguistics currently counts dozens of diverse works aimed at researching and describing the language of advertising.

Advertising is a mechanism that has a direct impact on the consciousness and behaviour of society. The information about the product should be written in such a way that the audience is willing to buy the advertised product. Commercial text takes into account all the subtleties of language. The stylistic techniques used in advertising as a manipulative and cognitive modelling tool have a special place in such text. Thanks to various techniques and artistic figures, advertisers can create strong texts, attract the attention of potential buyers, and increase the sales growth of products or services.

The interest in comparing Russian and Chinese medical-cosmetic advertising arises from the desire to find similarities and differences in the textual part of advertising, which means the techniques used by advertisers from these two distinct cultures.

This paper is based on the works of Golub (1997), Moskvin (2004), Kokhtev (1991), Medvedev (2004), Galperina (1958), Ringrow (2016) and other philologists. As I. V. Golub correctly noted, word plays a crucial role in the system of language. The Russian authors, in admiring the beauty, strength, and richness of the Russian language, first of all, noted the diversity of the language's

vocabulary, which contains inexhaustible possibilities for transmission of various meanings» (Golub, 1997).

Medvedev (2004) observed that advertising is a form of mass communication in which informative and expressive texts, both unidirectional and multidirectional, are created and distributed. These texts, paid for by the advertiser, are directed at groups of people to encourage them to make favourable choices and take action in line with the advertiser's intentions. The language of advertising is expressive and emotive, conveying emotion, appreciation, intensity, and imagery. Commercial texts fulfil an important communicative-pragmatic function—they influence the recipient, persuade them of the message's truth, and prompt decision-making' (such as purchasing) (Medvedev, 2004).

Moskvin (2020) investigated the rhythmic aspects of language, specifically chronometric or syntactic rhythm. The linguist identified techniques and styles of rhythm, particularly periodic rhythmization (Moskvin, 2020). Dibrova (2001) focused on folklore traditions, emphasising the repetition of words and phrases as figures of expression. Galperin, in *Sketches on the Style of the English Language*, noted that all expressive means of language are studied not only by stylistics but also by lexicography, grammar, and phonetics. He classified expressiveness into 'lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonetic' categories. The author highlighted several stylistic approaches, including terms, poetics, periphrasis, euphemisms, comparisons, litotes, antithesis, metaphor, and the stylistic use of phraseology (sayings, proverbs, maxims, allusions, quotations). Additionally, he discussed the blending of words with different connotations and syntactic stylistic devices (such as sentence structure, inversion, intentional syntax violations, cadence, sentence intonation, exclamatory structures, rhetorical questions, ellipses, silence, non-verbal speech, indirect speech, and parallelism). He also addressed compositional stylistic approaches and other related techniques (Dibrova, 2001; Galperin, 1958).

Ringrow (2016) dedicated her work to the cross-cultural comparison of French and British cosmetics advertising. The scholar explores how beauty advertising discourse presents ideas about femininity in French and English linguistic contexts. As the global beauty industry expands and consumers become more critical of products, the theme of cosmetics advertising discourse is explored through an analysis of feminist critical discourse. The author and other researchers such as Lou and Tse (2021) analyse the relationship between language and gender, media and identity, as well as advertising in different cultures to show exactly what happens in the language of cosmetics advertising (Lou & Tse, 2021; Ringrow, 2016).

In their study, Krasnozheva and Shevchik (2022) wrote that “the intensity of persuasion applies a certain marker to some spheres.” The authors referred to media texts and internet content as examples of such spheres, and this list can be extended to include advertising messages, as they also pertain to communication situations where influencing the reader is crucial (Krasnozheva & Shevchik, 2022).

Results and discussion

The expressive techniques found in Russian medical and cosmetic advertising texts were ranked in descending order based on frequency of use.

Lexical means accounted for the highest percentage (43%). These included descriptions of cosmetic flaws, an abundance of positively connoted vocabulary, medical terminology, symptoms, names of medications, and lists of medical services provided by the advertised company. Examples include: ‘Dry, dehydrated skin causes early wrinkles. It’s essential to begin caring for the face and neck as soon as possible... The new formula of hydration + nourishment helps smooth out irregularities’; ‘The "Euromed" clinic offers a department of traumatology and orthopaedics, a diagnostic and X-ray

centre, and a clinical laboratory...'; 'The "Ultraced" clinical diagnostic centre includes hospital units, a robust outpatient clinic... Expert-class ultrasound machines that detect fetal development defects and diagnose diseases in unborn children... liver, kidney, and other organ punctures.'

The alternation between positively and negatively connoted vocabulary was also prominent. For example: 'Bags under the eyes, swelling, lifeless skin? No problem! The natural formula of "Orange" helps you recover from even the most fun nights'; 'The "Instant" pill can tackle even the most severe headaches'; 'If joint pain keeps you awake, try the proven solution—"Fastum-gel"...'; 'With "Ten-a-Ten," you can get along with children without feeling irritated'; 'Headaches making every sound unbearable? I've tried everything, but now I rely on "Partdiven." Its effective formula relieves headaches, toothaches, and joint pain... it's indispensable for women on special days... I can forget about pain.' Notably, a common pattern in Russian advertising involves contrasting language units. Negative connotations highlight the source of problems or illnesses, while positive connotations emphasise relief from ailments, recovery, or improvement achieved through the advertised cosmetic products, medications, or medical services. Tropes ranked second (27%). Tropes refer to 'linguistic units that carry a shifted meaning, i.e., a second layer of meaning that shines through the literal one' (Varantova, 2023). Examples include:

Epithets (artistic descriptions): 'Modern, tested, inexpensive remedy ("Mezem")'; 'Gentle remedy ("Phytomucil")'; 'No worries ("Magnesium B6")'; 'Unique combination of organic calcium forms ("Calziums Sandoz Forte")'; 'Active life with "Amway"' (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2023). Comparisons: 'As light as in youth ("Joint-gel")'; 'More useful and ten times more profitable than daily consumption of regular magnesium products ("NUTRILITE")'.

Hyperbole: 'Headaches can knock you off your feet, rendering you helpless ("Trimol")'; 'The vitamin complex contains calcified algae, carefully extracted from the crystal-clear waters of Iceland ("NUTRILITE")'.

Personification (attributing human qualities to medical and cosmetic products): 'Tantum Verde Forte pills make throat pain feel like a personal torment'; 'Coughs follow you every step... even the smallest tickle is no game... Don't let the cough play along'; 'I wanted everyone to get sick, but it turned out "Gexoral" is stronger'.

Anaphora: "'Selimar" with active ingredients... "Selimar"'; 'It's your wife. It's your son. It's a neighbour. It's the gift your son wants. It's what your wife found in bed this morning. It's your boss. It's your daughter's boyfriend. It's your daughter. It's you. When her head hurts, she hurts from everything. "Andor"'

Metaphor: 'Children are expected to shed a tear... Dad will calm the storm, and Mom will throw thunder and lightning ("Ten-a-Ten")'; 'Gentle care for delicate places... A gentle remedy for serious issues ("Proktonis")'; 'It's time to extinguish the throat pain ("Gexoral")'.

The metaphor in medical advertising leverages the semantics of words deeply rooted in the human mind. It transfers the hidden meaning of a subject or phenomenon to the field of medicine, facilitating a better understanding of professional terminology (Rasheed, et al., 2024).

Cosmetic advertisements in Russian discourse often employ the following expressive techniques:

Epithets: 'Formula with precious oils. Luxurious volume. Flawless separation'; 'Expressive volume. Sensational look.'

Comparisons: 'Skin smooth, soft, like a cloud'; 'Your lashes, like a fan.'

Metaphors: 'Crow's feet appeared near the eyes'; 'Your look is worth a million. Mascara for a million lashes from L'Oréal Paris.'

Hyperbole: ‘YUNA will help tackle any wrinkles’; ‘You are becoming younger before your eyes, without resorting to radical measures’; ‘Infinite length.’

Personification: ‘Two fillers—instant and restorative—work in harmony’; ‘This cream solves the problem of wrinkles in two steps’; ‘Eyes speak louder than words.’

Morphological techniques account for another 12% of usage. Verbs frequently encourage the purchase of the advertised product by describing its pharmacological action, such as: “‘Fastum gel’ helps overcome inflammation and pain’; ‘I come from Germany with medicinal syrup to help cure coughs. It clears bronchi and thins mucus (“Ambroxol”).’ This also includes imperative verbs: ‘Don’t wait—act now!’; ‘Say goodbye to wetness (“ACZ”); ‘Take “Kyupen”’; ‘Don’t wait until the cough worsens.’

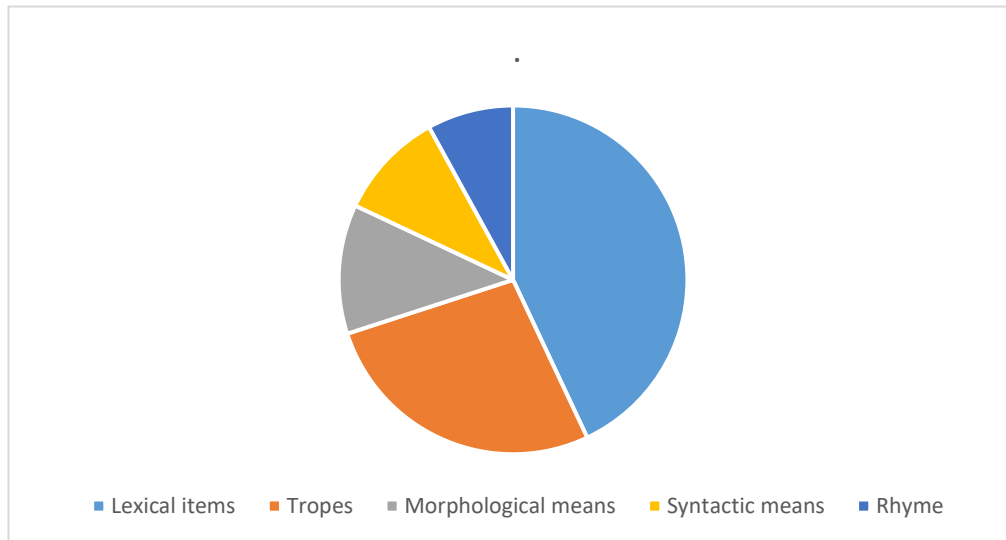
In cosmetic advertising, imperatives also drive the call to purchase: ‘Shine with new mascara from MaxFactor’; ‘What are you waiting for? Run to “Music Lider” while discounts last!’

Fourth, syntactic techniques (10%) are evident, such as the use of interrogative sentences, rhetorical questions, and question-and-answer formats that create the illusion of dialogue, seemingly involving the audience in the ‘advertising conversation.’ Kokhetev referred to these techniques as expressive syntax, which includes rhetorical figures and tropes that imbue the text with emotion and artistry, allowing the reader to ‘try the situation on themselves’ (Kokhetev, 1991): ‘Has your life turned into black-and-white days? Are you often overworked? Take vitamins...’; ‘Feeling done? Try “Mirishin.”’; ‘Headache? Just choose “Trimol.”’; ‘Want to know why I look so good? Why I have great posture and strong nails? Look! I have no secrets: calcium is the foundation of everything (“Calcium Compilation”).’

Like medical advertising, cosmetic advertising builds a dialogue with the audience through direct appeals to the buyer, narrating personal problems, and offering questions and answers: ‘Are you 40, 45, 50?’; ‘I have low self-esteem. How come? In my heart, I’m a pioneer, but what? A pensioner? Well, no!’; ‘Do you want to be beautiful?’

Finally, rhyme occupies the lowest position (8%), serving as a memory mechanism. Simple, straightforward ‘stylistic combinations’ easily and memorably imprint themselves on the minds of potential buyers. Often, the rhyme resonates with the product's name: ‘Hop, hop—“Ribalype”’; ‘Noise and grumble in the stomach—take “Esmomizan”’; “‘Mezem” is indispensable for the stomach... Your stomach will be great with it’; “‘Fastum gel.” Life without pain is our goal.

Below is a graph showing the percentage frequency of the artistic techniques used in Russian medical and cosmetic advertising (Figure 1).



An analysis of Chinese advertising discourse in the field of medicine and cosmetics has identified the following expressive techniques, listed in descending order of frequency.

The dominant position in Chinese advertising is occupied by tropes (56%).

Metaphor: Do you have a cold? Feeling weak in the face of a virus? All you need is a faithful friend by your side. Tea 999 is your best companion against the cold. One cup of our tea will protect you from the effects of the virus and envelop you in the warmth and atmosphere of a friendly evening. All you need is one cup, shared with a true friend. Tea 999—the one that's always near. 28 days, showing a change in muscle age; Contains hyaluronic acid and bozein, which provide the skin with incredible youthful strength.

Through metaphor, the advertiser can most effectively convey the essence and key characteristics of a product or service, subtly persuading the customer and lowering their guard through expressive language.

Calambure: Liuwei Dihuang's pills - let's give your heat a kick.

The play of words based on homonyms or sound similarities between language units gives a comic character to advertising. Such advertisements are short and large, preserving the advantages of the product sold, the originality and the meaning of the original text. Often, customers are treated with a smile to such advertising, which makes them buy the offered goods or services, effectively affecting the sale of the product.

Alliteration: Liuwei Dihuang—let's give your heat to the heat. We can notice the alliteration, which is often used by advertisers in their texts. The repetition of identical or uniform consonants embellishes the text and gives it a unique sound and expressiveness. In this case, we see a cluster of hissing.

Such a repetition of sounds in an advertisement should be pleasant to the ear, so that the potential customer perceives the advertisement as a natural combination of language units, while the advertiser calculates every word and manipulates the consumer.

Assonance: Jiu Zhitang, treat without sugar for three hundred years!; Nail fungus treatment bright.

Within the framework of advertising texts, this press gives a material rhythm and expressiveness that grabs the ear of the potential consumer and is remembered for a long time by its tone and brevity. In this advertisement, we observe the repetition of vowels [a] and [o] (Golub,1997).

Antithesis: Do you have a pain in your bones? Are you rheumatic? We will cure!'

In advertising, antithesis is often used to enhance the expressiveness of the text, placing the necessary emphasis on the best quality of the product, the future effect of using the product and their superiority over other companies through contrast (Soboleva & Faizulina, 2015).

Gradation: The pills “Treasure of Huiren” - he is healthy, and I am even healthier.

In this instance, each next language unit has a slightly stronger value than the previous one. This allows advertisers to give a comparative characterisation of their product and promise the customer a better effect from using it (Skovorodnikov & Kopnina, 2019)

Parallelism: If you have neck pain, stick it; if you have back pain, stick it; if you have joint pain, stick it! Parallelism is a form of compositional repetition. In advertising texts, it helps structure the necessary information about the product, shaping it to make customers easily remember the content.

Hyperbole: Our little pills will give you a lot of energy. Your good heart will be healthy in safe hands; Twenty this year, eighteen the next.

To emphasise the positive and unique characteristics of the product, advertisers often resort to hyperbole. It is an exaggeration of the product's strengths, making it even more necessary. Repetition: Your stomach is hard to digest? Is your stomach making itself known? Word repetition in advertisements is used to give the text an emotional and visual appeal. It places emphasis on the most positive qualities of a product or highlights the results after using the product or service. By duplicating certain phrases or words, the product is subtly imposed on the consumer, encouraging them to want to buy it.

Comparison: Skin is like a shell-cleaned egg; My hair smells fresh, like a meadow.

Epithets: You are really beautiful. The new formula will give eyelashes incredible volume.

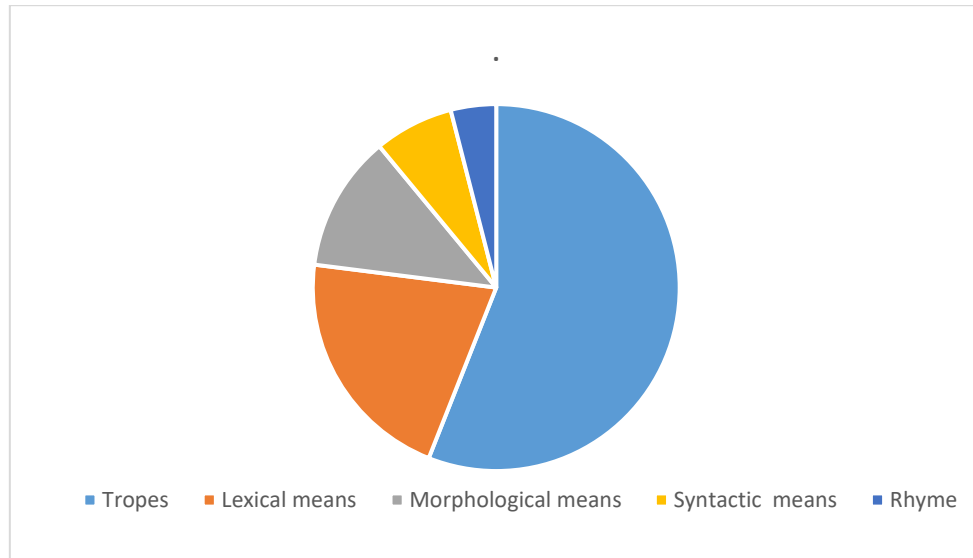
The following was taken by the following (21%): ‘We are always unhappy, so you can always be satisfied. If you suffer from heartburn, just take one pill of our remedy. Due to its excellent and effective components, the product has remarkable benefits for improving the condition of dry skin.

The third line is morphological means (12%): Take care of yourself more; Say goodbye to sensitivity and change the natural skin barrier; Make every woman’s biggest dream come true with the most effective and beneficial products.

Syntax means are fixed in fourth place (7%): ‘My child has a strong cough, what should I do? It’s mostly warm lungs, use sunflower brand; ‘Food accumulation in the stomach, loss of appetite? ‘Geshan Elimination Granules’ will help you on time; Autumn, you have changed, and the mask has not yet changed? The correct choice of mask for changing seasons is a royal way.

The list ends with a rhyme (4%): This year, the festival does not accept gifts but accepts melatonin; I’m here, so comfortable; Your dream, our motivation.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of stylistic approaches in Chinese advertising.



Conclusions

Thus, medical and cosmetic advertising in Russian and Chinese cultures plays a central role in shaping mental images and standards of beauty and health. Today, medical and cosmetic services are in high demand, which explains the abundance of products and services on the market and, consequently, the volume of advertising. Companies compete with one another, pushing them to create the most eye-catching and engaging advertisements for their products. They employ various linguistic and stylistic techniques to make their promotional materials unique and memorable. By skillfully using the richness of language, advertisers shape public opinion—creating a positive impression of their product and boosting sales.

In both Russian and Chinese advertising for medicine and cosmetics, various stylistic devices are actively employed, providing a perlocutionary effect of manipulation. The richness of vocabulary, its expressiveness, and the construction of simple dialogues with potential buyers—through questions and direct appeals to the reader—also play a significant role. Multilingual 'selling' messages exhibit both similarities and differences. Unlike Russian advertisements, Chinese ads tend to use more technical terminology in both medical and cosmetic contexts. Through the manipulative effect of tropes, advertisers exert greater influence on their target audience. Figures of speech such as comparisons, hyperbole, personification, and metaphors are found in both Russian and Chinese texts. In Russian commercial texts, the dominant stylistic feature is the use of lexical expressions, particularly medical and cosmetic language units. The use of rhyme is rare in both Russian and Chinese advertising.

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