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**MANIPULATIVE MEANS
BASED ON THE NUMBER PARAMETERS**

**[Е.С. Гайломазова. Манипулятивные средства,
опирающиеся на параметры количества]**

In the present report we touched upon a question of manipulating influence with the help of a number. In different spheres the manipulation is characterized by following features: invisibility effects and its managing nature; the presence of explicit and implicit levels of influence; the attitude of the sender to the recipient of communication as means of achieving the objectives; the intention of the initiator of communication to change the recipient's settings to get a one-sided win. Manipulative means based on parameters of quantity is a super summarizing (quality of some people and events are taken as a quality of all members of this group) and expansion (negative attitude to one feature or sign spreads on all other signs and their carriers).

Key words: quantification, manipulative method, discourse, superlative, comparative.

The particularity of manipulative influence is regarded as one of the characteristics of modern speech activity the study of which is in the focus of linguists (R.M. Blakar, T.G. Vinokur, Van Dijk, V.G. Kostomarov, I.A. Sternin etc.). In most papers devoted to the manipulation of mass consciousness are analyzed manipulative technologies, strategies and tactics of influence, the variants of psychological protection. At the periphery of research is the role of language resources (verbal and nonverbal), which are the basis for the implementation of manipulation in the field of mass communication.

The most important distinctive feature of manipulation is rightly considered its non-obvious, hidden character. Manipulative influence can only be deemed to be made when the recipient has a sense of voluntary adoption of the opinions of others, interest, perceived relevance of the views of their truth and their satisfaction. If we compare manipulative communication with known postulates of P. Grice [1985], the manipulation is a violation of the maxim of

information quality (report only what you think is true and to what you have a sufficient evidence) and maxim of process (statement must be clear, unambiguous and sequence).

E.S. Kara-Murza in its political bestseller "Manipulation of consciousness" identifies special section – "Manipulation with number and measure", which results in the usual manipulations startling facts: *T. Zaslavsky argued that in the USSR the number of those who are working in full force in economically weak farms was 17 %, and in high - 32 %. And these numbers seriously repeated in academic journals - a wonderful example of the loss of social scientists minimum of scientific rationality. The concept of "work in full force" in principle indefinable, it is nothing more than a metaphor - but it is measured by our courtier sociologists up to 1 percent. 17% percent! 32% percent!*. According to E.S. Kara-Murza the biggest campaign of manipulation of consciousness using the number was associated with Stalinist repressions. So the most deposited in mind is that to "kulak exile" were sent millions of peasants, sometimes even used the total term: exiled were all "capable workers". However, cross-study of a variety of independent records gave some reliable information of quite different properties: sent were about 1800000 people, i.e. 1.5% of the peasant households. E.S.Kara-Murza wrote: "Needless to dwell here on the fact that we do not discuss the essence of the tragedy of our peasantry and the entire country. We only note: using quantitative images consciousness manipulators profited on this tragedy" [1]. Any reflective speech has a universal feature - interpretive, inseparable from varying, alternations. The opportunity to tell differently about one and the same object is implemented at all levels of the language system - from word to text, while interpretive property actually determines the functioning of speech. To manipulative techniques many authors include simplification, stereotyping, manipulation of image instead of logical constructions. Advertising phrases with broken logic (e.g., compressive phrase *Value Now and forever " Delmi " for sandwiches on 15% cheaper*, where advertisers are not willing to consider that the quality can not be cheap or become cheaper) "can be accused of manipulative: grammatical errors breaking the automatism of perception, thought to go from knowing selling proposition, and it, in its turn, is unconvincing" [1].

General advertising discourse sometimes considered as inseparable from the manipulative influence. The basic idea of the advertising message paying attention to the

creation of an attractive image of the destination is the following: "Suchlike you can be only due to the advertising goods!" Advertising style, in fact, is always positive (up to "touting" the limits prescribed by law "About advertisement ") story about goods and services. Advertisement in its nature can not be objective but, as noted in many studies, it does not follow that it has certainly manipulative character. It may well be (and definitely should!) based on the conviction, but in advertisement, of course, wider than in other styles the argument ad hominem is used.

E.S. Popova suggests that prototypical advertising text does not provide compulsory manipulation. Manipulative it becomes as a result of specific transformations. As stylistic feature is the impact of the advertising text an inherent property of text units becomes evaluative and that is in what way advertising is different from the informative article designation: *metal pipes* turn into *the most reliable pipes*, *oil the highest grade* into *"the Gold" – oil of the highest standard*.

The major intention of advertising discourse is realized through not only positive, but the maximum positive evaluation. Means of expression of such an assessment are quantificatives - superlatives and lexical indications of the maximum degree of expression of a characteristic as well as the unique, exclusive characteristics of the product. Cf. frequency of adverbs of degree *extremely*, *highly*, *maximum*, *absolutely*, prefixes *over-*, *super-*, *extra-* (*unique effect*, *extremely resistant*, *particularly elastic*, *maximum care*, *superstable lipstick*, *super absorbent top layer*, *an all-natural*, *extrastable foundation*, *gentle care* and so on).

Manipulative means based on the number parameters - is an overgeneralization (properties of individuals and events as properties of all members of the group), and extension (negative attitude towards any feature or attribute applies to all other signs and their carriers). But if hyperbole still can not be implicitly reckon in manipulation, the typical advertising incorrect comparison when "strangely superlative (*The world's best laundry detergent!*) becomes an euphemism for comparative (*Powder A is better than powder B*), of course, manipulative. Compare also cases where the figure of comparative is formally retained but the second comparison element (B) is completely abstracted, and we have essentially our own superlative" [2].

Generally the boundary between permissible (and even inevitable) advertisement properties that willingly resorts to tropeization (especially to hyperbole) manipulative destructive techniques are very thin and conventional. According

to O.A. Feofanov, advertisement manipulates our minds, but with our own consent, because we are the willingly partners of this manipulation. Our tastes, desires, illusions are reflected in "the permissible advertising lie". When in TV advertisement of vacuum cleaner *Moulinex* they show how the vacuum cleaner pulls to a ceiling a neighbor living on the floor below, the viewer realizes that the goods advertised property – its power is hypertrophied. Experienced advertiser is obliged to "skin feel" thin line that lies between the stimulation of self-deception and direct deception.

When the advertiser uses the old trick of argumentation which is described in ancient rhetoric as *kvezitsiya* – incorrectly formulated question (e.g. typical introductions in advertising: *Do you know that there is no better means for washing /for saving white and healthy teeth/to quench your thirst, and so etc., e.g. advertisement of coffee "Chibo": How long have you realized that coffee "Chibo" is your favorite drink?*), it is certainly a manipulative technique based on false presuppositions.

Hyperbole transmitting subjective emphasized emotional attitude towards the subject of speech essentially corresponds to the essence of advertisement. Cf. paradoxical hyperbole with which advertising mascara promises incredible long eyelashes – *sky-high curves*. Cf. also:

Paint eyelashes - this is the biggest effort I make a day! (Advertisement of cosmetics "Bourgeois").

According to E.S. Kara-Murza a popular technique of advertisers is to measure the essentially immeasurable phenomena:

Male and female students! Cadets! Unite! Relax! Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from 8 pm to 8 am in the most scandalous youth club "Disco Park Avenue".

Four stages of pleasures and one thousand and a half thousand meters of ecstasy pub "Trash" dance floor "Scam" < ... > Park Avenue Disco ! Do not forget the beer for free (radio station "Hit –FM");

"University". New chapter is funnier on 20 %. (Advertisement of a new serial on TNT).

Differentiation of manipulation and elementary deception is conducted on the basis of correlation with different kinds of truth. Ontological (semantic) truth approves or denies the existence of referents - phenomena beyond utterance. The truth or falsity is established due to case in fact. The second type of truth is the epi-

stemological (pragmatic) - claims correspondence between what is said and understood. If the sender extremely veiled genuine intentions, inspired the recipient thoughts and feelings, which he never would have come to without such exposure (because they are contrary to its interests, character, nature, etc.) the manipulation has been realized, which is opposite to the epistemological truth.

E.I. Sheigal distinguishes two types of manipulation:

1. Referential manipulation associated with the distortion of the image /denotation in the process of notation reality, which in its turn is divided into factual manipulation (distortion of the facts in the form of outright lies, juggling of facts, exaggeration, creating of referential uncertainty) and focusing manipulation (shift of pragmatic focus changes the angle of view and therefore the nature of referents perception that makes the recipient to perceive it in a favorable light)
2. Argumentative manipulation associated with breach of communication postulates. The second type includes violations of logic of the text (evading from the answer, changing themes) evading the burden of proof (the formulation of point of view in a proof unrequired form) or evading the completeness of the information (for example the introduction of uncertainty qualifiers), disguising of logic moves, an objection under the form of consent, false arguments.

As we know the quantitative analysis in the social sciences is one of the most powerful means of understanding of social realities. "Not only any science is unthinkable without number but any knowledge, any relation to life" [3, p. 385]. Graduation and quantificative evaluation act as arguments in judgments about the quality of the object.

Manipulative misinformation method consisting of using the exact numbers is often called sophism of imaginary accuracy. It is based on the fact that people tend to trust the exact number. So at the end of the 90s in the weekly television program " Results" its emcee E. Kiselev carefully recorded the ratings of politicians of the time (Boris Yeltsin - 34.78 % , Zyuganov – 17.64 % , etc.) indicating how many hundredths of one percent gained or lost each of them over the past week. They reported accurate figures on the number of informants, called the city where the interrogation was conducted and nothing has been said among what groups of popu-

lation that interrogations were conducted. Using sophism of hasty generalization it is very easy to make an outsider from a leader or vice versa [4].

The use of numbers is mentioned in the tutorial as a separate manipulative method characteristic for advertisement [5]. The above mentioned author writes that this method is based on the "holy" people's faith to exact numbers. The most common manipulation is that with ratings which are a numerical expression of public opinion on this or that politician. Manipulative and so-called "average data" (cf. the old joke about "the average temperature in the hospital") which tends to veil the problem. Cf. also manipulative potential of commercial advertisement like *Windows for five plus*.

It is interesting that even before the final fiasco of politic interrogations the following tables appeared in the press:

1. Do you know any other country where people breathe so freely?

I know - 52%

It is Israel - 26%

It is Latvia - 13%

Are you kidding me? - 9%

2. What percentage to your mind should increase workers' income?

10% - 10%

90% - 90%

200% - 200% and so on.

"Paradoxes of figures and numbers perception" are used as means of influencing in trade: cf. price 2999 rubles which is interpreted as 2000 with something, and this very price (not 3000, 3001, 3002) can be seen more often. Y.I. Levin noted occurrences in Soviet-era slogans of magical elements - namely numerical magic like *To XXVI congress – 26 striking weeks! To the fortieth anniversary of the victory – forty striking weeks!* If this manipulative technique apparently sunk in the past many others have gained popularity in recent decades.

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