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ФОНОСЕМАНТИКА – НЕ НОВШЕСТВО, А НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ

The Public Relations (PR) industry is not only a voice of our modern society but also one of the ways of manipulation. PR provides an influence on a person for achievement of a particular goal. Sounds are the elements of influence.

There exists a hypothesis that every phoneme is meaning-bearing. It's called the Phonosemantics hypothesis. The branch of linguistics which refers to the idea that sounds have meanings is called 'sound symbolism' or 'phonosemantics'.

There are several ancient traditions where relationships between sounds and ideas are mentioned. These meanings were associated with the letters of the alphabet and used as oracles – the Viking Runes, the Hebrew Kabbalah, etc. The ancient Greek philosophers wrote sagely about the phonetic and semantic relationships, but, until recently, many of their intriguing observations have been ignored.

The first records of phonosemantics were made in the 17th century. The 18th century scientists also cultivated the idea, they were Jean Jacques Rousseau, Wilhelm von Humboldt, etc. Then, Ferdinand de Saussure (19th century), who is considered to be the founder of modern linguistics, stated that "the sign is arbitrary" [1] and we use words and sounds in particular only to name things. He says that because words are arbitrary they have their meaning only in relation to other words. A dog is a dog, because it is not a cat. These ideas have permeated the study of words since the 19th century. However, Saussure himself is said to have collected examples where sounds and referents were related. Ancient traditions link sounds and meanings, and some modern linguistic research does also.

The most famous Russian scholars, who studied the relations between sounds and their meanings, are V. Khlebnikov – a famous Russian philosopher and poet, A. Zhuravljev - a well known linguist who created the list of Russian phonemes and their meanings, S. Voronin - a famous Saint-Petersburg scientist who stated the main principles of phonosemantics taking into consideration 100 predominantly unrelated languages. But still M. Magnus, a famous American linguist, is the author of probably the only popular book on phonosemantics – "Gods of the Word".

It's necessary to mention that many scholars say, in the English language only consonants are meaning-bearing. What concerns the Russian language – the consonants and the vowels have the meaning.

The next vitally important thing is - a person recognizes that he is affected by the tone of voice, sounds, etc. So, there is a certain connection between phonosemantics and neuroscience. The research of V.S. Ramachandran, professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of California, describes the links between brain structure and function. He explains that people hearing sounds can see even certain colors and vice versa, besides, our Russian scholar A. Zhuravljev stated the same thing in connection with the Russian language.

On the basis of multiple researches in phonosemantics and the table worked out by M. Magnus [2], we have committed a small research that involved 20 students of Saint Petersburg State Polytechnic University. We proposed the slogan to the students asking them to write what they feel concerning it. The slogan is "Nobody can watch a child and not believe in magic". The research shows that 65% percent of the students considered the slogan to be expressive, bright, giving hope and positive feelings. Here, it's important to mention that there is a certain correlation between the text of the slogan & the meaning of sounds. It's as follows. The sound [n] is used in the slogan five times. According to the table of consonants, the meaning is connected with something

'new', which is quite 'near', something which is 'neat' and 'nice', that's why the slogan gives the feeling of hope, new understanding of life and eternity. The phonesthemes [b], [t], [l] are used two times each. They give the sense of 'charm' & feelings of 'love', 'life' & air. The sound [d] is also repeated twice and the meaning of the phonestheme is the presence of some opportunities which give us hope. So, the phonosemantic meaning together with the direct meaning of the slogan are designed to guide and influence perceivers in order to reach the goal.

Definitely, understanding and perhaps usage of phonosemantics can broaden our vision of the Modern World and its constituents, especially connected with such spheres as politics, business, marketing, PR and etc. The main objective of PR is to persuade the target audience and make them do or buy what producers or politicians wants. Hence, if PR-specialist knows the meaning and effect of sounds, he will manage to create an effective and proper message. Reading the message (some slogan or brand-name), we realize not only meanings of words but also a phonosemantic meaning of each phonestheme. Some associations arise and very often our preferences depend on them as a result of the influence on our minds. Finally, phonosemantics is a type of manipulation by means of sounds and their meanings. Moreover, its one of the most important psychological ways of influence on perceivers.

ЛИТЕРАТУРА:

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