

## World-modelling in advertising discourse: pragmatic aspects

### Modelagem global no discurso publicitário: aspectos pragmáticos

Svetlana Leonidovna Kushneruk  
South Ural State Humanitarian and Pedagogical  
University – Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation  
Svetlana\_kush@mail.ru

**Abstract:** The article is dedicated to world-modelling in commercial advertising. The author draws on European and Russian cognitive-discursive theories, which emphasize the importance of studying discourse in terms of mental representations and sets out the basics of World Modelling Theory. The named theory is used in the paper as a framework for understanding linguistic mechanisms of structuring information about the world by ‘the powerful’ agent of advertising discourse and its representation in slogans for the main objectives of communication. The argument is that text-worlds, generated by slogans, are cognitive-pragmatic representational structures of discourse, mediating the interaction of agent, client, and product, that depend on a wide range of contextual factors, having marketing character. The paper considers linguistic mechanisms of activating representational structures in correlation with pragmatic aspects of advertising communication, which lead to profiling three entities in the text-worlds – ADDRESSER, ADDRESSEE, PRODUCT. Typical world-modelling patterns are analyzed in the perspective REALITY – POTENTIALITY. It is shown that agent of discourse governs the perception of state of affairs presented in the text-world either exploiting the existing mass representations or creating new ones that eventually become socially accepted.

**Key-words:** advertising discourse, text-world, world-modelling

**Resumo.** O artigo é dedicado à modelagem mundial em publicidade comercial. A autora baseia-se em teorias cognitivo-discursivas europeias e russas, que enfatizam a importância de estudar o discurso em termos de representações mentais e define os conceitos básicos da Teoria Mundial da Modelagem. A teoria nomeada é usada no artigo como uma estrutura para entender mecanismos linguísticos de informa-

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<sup>1</sup> Professor of the English Philology Department. Doctoral Degree in Philology.

ção estruturante sobre o mundo pelo agente “poderoso” do discurso publicitário e sua representação em slogans para os objetivos principais da comunicação. O argumento é que os mundos-texto, gerados por slogans, são estruturas representacionais cognitivo-pragmáticas do discurso, mediando a interação entre agente, cliente e produto, que dependem de uma ampla gama de fatores contextuais, tendo caráter mercadológico. O artigo considera mecanismos linguísticos de ativação de estruturas representacionais em correlação com aspectos pragmáticos da comunicação publicitária, que levam ao perfil de três entidades no mundo dos textos – DESTINATÁRIO, ENDEREÇO, PRODUTO. Padrões típicos de modelagem do mundo são analisados na perspectiva REALIDADE – POTENCIALIDADE. Mostra-se que o agente do discurso governa a percepção do estado de coisas apresentado no mundo do texto ou explorando as representações de massa existentes ou criando novas que eventualmente se tornam socialmente aceitas.

**Palavras-chave:** discurso publicitário, mundo-modelagem, mundo-texto

## Introduction

The paper focuses on the problem of world representation in discourse. It has attracted the attention of scholars worldwide, starting with its origins in Werth (1994, 1995). Sharing this interest, the current study dwells on the phenomenon of world-modelling in commercial advertising. It is assumed that agents of advertising discourse know what audiences they want to reach and what responses they seek. They have access to discourse, monitor and control it, trying to anticipate the desired effect on people. To communicate effectively they have to have common frame of reference with the target audience. The goal of the author is twofold: to understand linguistic mechanisms of structuring information about the world by ‘the powerful’ agent of advertising discourse and its representation in slogans as independent elements of marketing communication, and to demonstrate that text-worlds, generated by slogans, are representational structures of discourse that depend on a wide range of pragmatic factors. The empirical material includes English and Russian corporate, company, product taglines which fall under the category of best advertising slogans. The rationale for this is the researcher’s subjective interpretation of what is considered ‘best’, taking into account the promotional materials currently spread on the Internet.

Methodologically, the paper presents analysis within World Modelling Theory that studies discourse in terms of representational structures. It is an autonomous branch of Russian discourse studies that takes into account cognitive, communicative and social factors. It integrates ideas of European and Russian cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis, to explain the characteristics of mental and linguistic representations of reality in discourse for the purposes of communication (Kushneruk, 2017, 2018a and 2018b). The named theory mainly derives from Text World Theory, Discourse Representation Theory, Sociocognitive Theory of Discourse, outlined by Van Dijk, and approaches which highlight ideological influence of discourse in terms of mental representations (Chilton, 2004; Van Dijk, 2006; World Interpretation in Language, 2017).

In this paper I draw on World Modelling Theory to investigate what language choices enable world-modelling in commercial advertising. In the next section, I define the basic concepts to further apply them to commercial advertising and provide an investigation into the way mental representations can be used as instructions for actions in the world. In the third section, I suggest that World Modelling Theory offers an adequate framework through which one can analyze how advertising discourse is conceptually constructed to suit pragmatic goals. In the fourth section, I tackle the problem of idiosyncrasy of text-worlds as cognitive and pragmatic representational structures, induced by American, British and Russian advertising slogans, which allow agents of discourse to design and disseminate ‘the necessary versions of reality’ in the interest of economic institution. In the final section I draw conclusion and suggest development to the chosen framework to account for the ways world is represented in diverse discourse practices.

## Underlying concepts

In this section I list and briefly define terms that are used as bases for further investigation.

**Agent of discourse.** A sender of communication: a collective term, denoting a person or a group of people (copywriters) who have access to discourse and write scripts for commercials or announcements that are then transmitted through communication channels, such as magazines, newspapers, radio, the Internet, etc. I emphasize the active role of agent of discourse in constructing ‘the picture of reality’ that is intentional, symbolic and pragmatically relevant.

**Client of discourse.** A receiver of communication: a collective term, denoting a person or a group of people who receive the advertising message (either having intention to do it, or by chance) sent by agent of discourse.

**Access to discourse.** The idea is rooted in van Dijk’s approach to ideology, discourse and power. The latter is defined in terms of control one group has over another (Van Dijk, 2004). Such control is exercised over advertising discourse and its properties, that is the agent of discourse chooses the context, its topics, styles and genres, so that they influence marketing practices, including the comprehension of advertising messages.

**Construal.** The concept of *construal* offers a promising approach in understanding the role of language as constitutive social practice. It is broadly defined as “the relationship between a speaker (or hearer) and a situation that s/he conceptualizes and portrays” (Langacker, 1987, p. 487). Langacker (1990) maintains that in any construal of a scene some components are foregrounded, while others serve as reference points for the characterization of the foreground. The idea finds proof in advertising where the agent occupies a ‘vantage point’ (E. H. Casad) and takes a particular ‘mental route’ presenting a product. Under construal, thus, I mean the relationship between agent of discourse and fragments of the real world (scenes, situations) that he portrays in advertising for the purposes of communication.

**World.** Etymologically, *world* means ‘age of a man’, ‘human life’, and the circumstances of a life (Lewis, 1967, p. 214). Modern uses of the word ‘have retained the subjective, anthropomorphic

perspective’ (Taylor and MacLaury, 1995, p. 3). Following Taylor, I argue that *world* at large presents a subjective reality, ‘construed’ by human cognition, that comprises experiences, imaginations, vague impressions and the like. In other words, the reality that we perceive as ‘objective’ is always mediated by our cognitive processing. Similarly, Jackendoff (1983, p. 29) postulates that people have access only to the ‘projected world’ that is organized by the human mind and exists in the form of mental representations).

Since the world, presented in advertising discourse, is radically different from the world we inhabit, further discussion of the connections between language and mental representations of the world in advertising concentrates on two basic concepts – *discourse-world* and *text-world*, introduced by the proponents of Text World Theory (Canning, 2017; Gavins 2007; Gavins and Lahey, 2016; Downing, 2000; Ho *et al.*, 2017; Matczak, 2013; Tincheva, 2013; Trimarco, 2015; Werth, 1999).

**Discourse-world.** Presents the first level of communication that refers to the conceptual space shared by those who communicate. It is the basic world that includes participants, objects and entities, surrounding them, together with background knowledge they bring to the language situation (Gavins, 2007). Relying partly on their immediate situation and partly on their personal and cultural background knowledge, which exists in the form of knowledge frames, participants then construct text-worlds (Werth, 1999).

**Text-world.** Presents the second level of communication. It is the conceptual space created by the text of the communication itself (Trimarco, 2015, p. 100). Gavins (2007, p. 2), text-worlds are mental representations that “enable us to conceptualize and understand every piece of language we encounter”. The basic constituents of text-worlds are *world-building elements* (time, place, objects, characters) and *function-advancing propositions* (states, actions and processes which move discourse forward).

Though the typology of mental structures, textualized in discourse, is not limited to discourse-world and text-world, Text World Theory, being very applicable in literary criticism and literary stylistics, has proved useful for understanding how the recipients construct mental representations as they read (Peplow *et al.*, 2016; Whitely, 2011). In fact, contemporary Text World Theory is more focused on the receptive side of communication, that is, the analysis of the reader’s experience of text rather than the writer’s production of it (Trimarco, 2015). Though the theory generally accounts for the language situation and the context in which it occurs, it pays almost no attention to pragmatic aspects of communication, initiated by agents of discourse as representatives of social institutions (government, business corporations, university, legal system, etc.), that have access to discourse, control it, structure and disseminate ideologically relevant information that leads to the formation of mental representations of varying degree of conceptual complexity. I address this gap and stipulate a pragmatic twist to the study of discourse-world and text-world in discourse. Not only do I consider pragmatic factors that determine the choice of language in advertising, but also argue that mental representations can be effectively used to control social practices and interactions. In what follows, I suggest development to the basic concepts of Text World Theory to account more specifically for pragmatic aspects of world representation in advertising discourse.

## Framework: World Modelling Theory

The philosophical underpinning of World Modelling Theory establishes that reality is not given us directly, but through mental representations, the totality of which constitutes the reality in our minds. Besides Text World Theory, the idea is traced to van Dijk's Sociocognitive Theory of Discourse, which upholds the application of embodied realism to the analysis of communication, and Discourse Representation Theory, advocated by Kamp, Van Genabith, Reyle, who foreground the issue of representationalism (Van Eijck and Kamp, 2010).

Being focused on discourse representation in context, Van Eijck and Kamp (2010) emphasize a dynamic perspective on natural language semantics. Their central concern is to account for the context dependence of meaning. Context is seen taking place only through the human mind. The notion of 'discourse-world', used in Text World Theory, proves an alternative to 'context' within Discourse Representation Theory in respect that it approaches context focusing on the cognitive properties of the participants in a communicative situation: it is the context which should be seen as part of the cognitive constructs processed by the participants (Tinceva, 2012, p. 13). Similarly, sociocognitive approach to discourse, introduced by Van Dijk (2006, p. 163), considers context in terms of subjective participant interpretations – mental constructs,

“able to function as the interface between situational and societal structures and discourse structures, because they subjectively ‘represent’ relevant aspects of situations and society and directly interfere in the mental processes of discourse production and comprehension”.

One of the basic theses behind the above mentioned theories of discourse is that the recipient creates a mental representation of the world as ‘a picture of the world’ through constructing a mental representation of discourse as communication proceeds. Discourse is interpreted by the recipients as a whole, even if it consists of many expressions: each utterance contributes to a complex mental representation in the recipient's mind. The process is described in detail by Matczak (2013): a) each sentence of a text projects an element of mental representation in which certain properties (characters, objects) exist; b) the picture of the state of affairs is integrated by the recipient into the epistemic framework of a possible world; c) certain sentences of a text co-refer, i.e. they relate to the same state of affairs, and each new sentence which co-refers modifies the mental representation; d) all sentences of the text which refer to the same state of affairs contribute to creating a complete mental representation, that is the meaning of the fragment of the text under consideration; e) the mental representation of all states of affairs described by a given text creates the mental representation of that text's world.

Trying to make a serviceable framework for analyzing institutional types of discourse, it is argued that each type of discourse creates its own ‘specific picture of the world’. Addressing commercial advertising in particular, I employ the notions of discourse-world and text-world and develop them to suit a pragmatic discourse perspective. Pragmatics is generally concerned with what speakers mean when they use words in situated language context, and how recipients retrieve the intended meaning. It accounts both for receptive and productive side of communication and its main goals. In the case of advertising, the ultimate purpose of



the agent of discourse is to change the thinking of uninterested people in his audience and make them buy the product (Tanaka, 1994). Normally, advertising communication involves five factors: *sender – encoding – message – decoding – receiver* (Meeske, 2003). Message as a combination of symbols that the agent transmits is the central element of the chain. Around it there are two meaningful oppositions: sender – receiver and encoding – decoding. As has been mentioned above, sender is *agent of discourse*, and receiver is *client of discourse*. Encoding is what the agent of discourse does, it is a process of transforming thought about a product into semiotic forms that will convey the pragmatic message to the target audience. Decoding is on the part of the client, who assigns meaning to the symbols encoded by the agent. Advertising communication is effective, if they possess common frame of reference.

In this paper, holistic approach to discourse processing, supported by the discussed cognitive-orientated theories, evolves into the idea of world-modelling on the part of the agent of discourse, who communicates promotional announcements to the target audience. For this reason, I introduce and define the term **world-modelling** as structuring information about the world and its representation in discourse that best conforms to the purposes of communication. It is stated that ‘advertising world’, distinct from the real, is intentionally constructed by ‘the powerful’ agents who have access to discourse and govern people’s perception of the described situations. World-modelling is effective in case the intended message hits the target audience as planned (though in the paper the discussion on feedback from the intended audience is omitted). Set forth below are the main theses that make up the concept of world-modelling in commercial advertising:

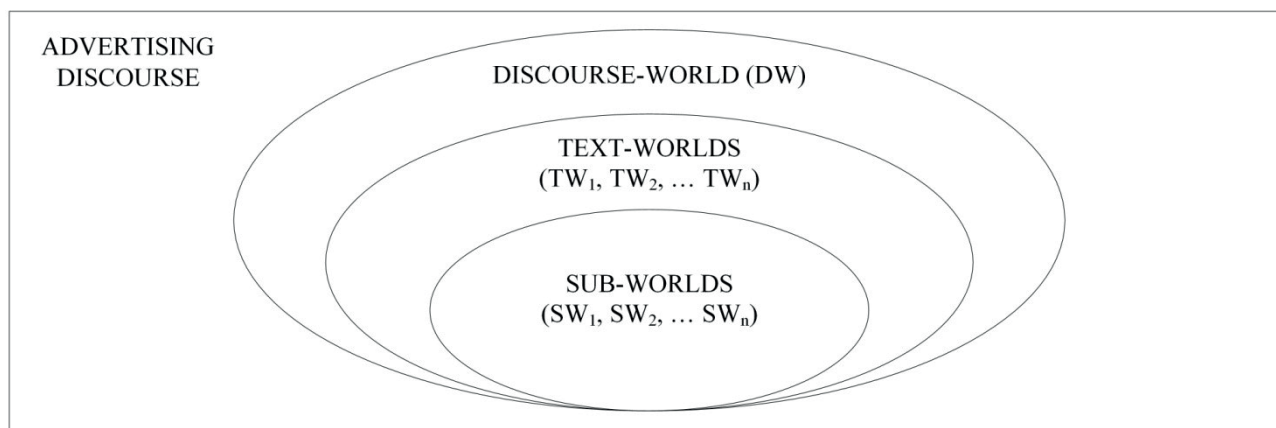
*Representational structures* is a generic term used to denote mental constructs of different degrees of conceptual complexity, objectified in discourse, which relate to the processes and results of world representation (and/or its fragments) for the purposes of communication. Since discourse-world and text-world are conceptual structures functionally connected with representation of the world and collective knowledge about the world, I interpret them as conceptually-complex, rich, discourse-level representational structures, textualized in advertising discourse. They are mental representations of different conceptual quality, projecting worlds that are far less problematic than the real and often urge the client to tempt fate by purchasing the advertised product.

Ontologically, both discourse-worlds and text-worlds are dynamic in nature, because they develop as discourse progresses. As Werth puts it, they are essentially ‘text-driven’ (Werth, 1999, p. 103). The principle of ‘text-drivenness’ has the following implications: firstly, worlds are derived from the propositions in a text; secondly, from all the knowledge and experience held in the minds of participants as they interact, it is the text on hand which determines what elements of knowledge are needed to understand the discourse. Agents of discourse in commercial advertising attempt to encourage readers to implicate themselves in the text-worlds they create. Reading an ad, though, a person will draw only from those areas of knowledge that are required by the text. Specifically, reading an ad about dentistry services can evoke knowledge about dental care, including accessibility, treatment options, and the cost of it, but experience of tuning a guitar or embroidery is highly unlikely to be activated because these are not referred to in the ad.

I share the idea that the relationship between discourse-world and text-world is that of integration and distinction at the same time (Trimarco, 2015). While a discourse-world contains enactors, or

participants, a text-world is inhabited by characters. Bearing in mind that these representational structures are dynamic, I show the correlation of them in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Correlation of representational structures.



Source: elaborated by the author.

On the one hand, text-world (or rather text-worlds) is considered to be a constituent element of discourse-world. In terms of top-down processing model, currently accepted by Text World Theory, discourse-world knowledge is imported into the text-world. Crucially, within a conceptual space of a text-world ontologically distinct text-worlds can be generated. They are termed ‘sub-worlds’ (Werth, 1999, p. 55), ‘world-switches’ (Gavins, 2007, p. 48), or ‘modal worlds’ (Trimarco, 2015, p. 101). Gavins (2007, p. 49) proves that “the majority of discourses which extend beyond a sentence or two will contain multiple world-switches, and discourse participants are normally able to monitor and manage their varying deictics without difficulty”. Thus, text-world is a generic term used to denote a main text-world from which sub-worlds can spring. Trimarco (2015) describes them in terms of modality, namely: boulomaic modal worlds (represent desires), deontic modal worlds (relate to obligations), and epistemic modal worlds (hypothetical worlds, or possible worlds).

On the other hand, the question of multiple text-worlds (and sub-worlds) contributing to discourse-world understanding shouldn’t be underestimated. I can’t but agree with Canning who points out that “upward influence from the text-world to the discourse-world level is not predicted by contemporary Text World Theory” (Canning, 2017, p. 174). However, as soon as text-worlds are incremented back into the discourse-world, they reshape it and contribute to creation of a biased ‘picture of reality’ that best serves the goals of a powerful agent of discourse.

The definition of discourse, given by one of the eminent Russian scholars Kubryakova (2004, p. 525), modifies our understanding of discourse-world. Discourse is a form of language use in real time, which reflects a certain type of social activity, which is created in order to construct a special world by means of its detailed language description. It is part of communication process, characterized by participants, conditions of its realization and goals. Taking into account social, cultural and cognitive

factors of the construal of the world, under discourse-world I mean a projected reality that presents a dynamic system of meanings, created by agents of advertising discourse and interpreted by clients under the influence of a wide range of pragmatic factors. The most conspicuous of them result from advertising generic goals and objectives: to inform, persuade or remind customers about the product. Thus extending the notion, I hope to shed new light on discourse-world as a representational structure of advertising discourse that can be reconstructed and assessed on the basis of a large number of texts, that are thematically, communicatively, or functionally connected.

Text-world is a derivative of discourse-world, it is a cognitive-pragmatic mental representation, activated by text in use, which is encoded by the agent and decoded by the recipient and provides understanding of a particular communicative situation. Text-worlds are considered as models of discourse understanding, representing reality and its fragments ‘in miniature’, in which individuals and their properties are selected in accordance with the needs of communication (Eco 2007, p. 392). In advertising discourse, text-worlds can be induced by different constituent elements of an ad: headlines, subheads, slogans, blurbs, body-copies.

I further focus on slogans as short catchy phrases, brief and laconic, pleasing to the ear and easy to remember. Good slogans can boost memory value of ads. Memorability of a slogan has to do with the ability to be recalled unaided. For example, the translated English slogan of cat food brand, sold throughout the world, contains a rhyme in the Russian language that contributes to its memorability. In Russia it has been very popular for many years, meaning “*Your cat would buy Whiskas*”. The epistemic text-world is generated by the slogan. It is introduced by the modal verb *would* and presents a hypothetical situation, in which two entities (‘your cat’ and ‘Whiskas’) are the character and the object. Pragmatically, the agent creates the desired perspective that should drive the client to buy what is promoted: in a remote text-world the advertised product is bought. As will be shown, one slogan can generate more than one text-world.

The demarcation line between text-world and discourse-world is very often blurred in commercial advertising, where there are multiple and often disembodied voices used to capture the client’s attention. It is quite possible for a discourse-world to coincide with a text-world. In other words, they may overlap completely, considerably, or partially. In this case, according to Tincheva (2013), participants in the discourse-world are constructed as characters in the corresponding text-worlds. Cook (2001) alludes to this, stating that many ads exist in four worlds: the world of the sender (in which the product is manufactured); the fictional world of the characters; the fantasy world of the receiver; and the real world of the receiver (in which the product may be purchased). He highlights that the advertised product can exist in all four worlds; real celebrities and even real consumers often appear in fictional worlds and can inhabit both real and fantasy worlds. Linguistically, it is the personal pronouns that form a connection between them. However, the identity of them in some well-known advertising slogans is unclear and can be simultaneously attributed to discourse-world participants and characters in the text-world, as the following example of Verizon cell-phone company slogan shows:

*Can you hear me now? Good (1).*

In the text-world, created in (1), *you* and *me* can refer to both the discourse-world enactors, whose participant roles in the communicative situation are those of a speaker and a hearer/viewer



(who might watch a commercial on TV), and the characters in the text-world, that is, the man and his interlocutor. In fact, the representative of the target audience is not told who is speaking. This omission passes unnoticed as soon as he fills this gap, identifying with the character that finds himself in different places of the world and can natter on the phone thanks to good Verizon Wireless service.

Consider the text-world, created in Canon EOS slogan:

*See what we mean (2).*

In (2) *we* can refer to different entities: a giant corporation specializing in manufacture of optical products, employees, working for the Canon brand, or people who like the brand and tell others to check out the products to understand the quality of the cameras. The model is common occurrence in slogans with a first person narration like the previous ones. The most popular slogans, that demonstrate it, serve the purposes of multinational corporations: *We'll take more care of you* (British Airways); *I'm Loving it* (McDonald's); *I'd love a Babycham* (Babycham); *I am what I am* (Reebok).

Agents of discourse are almost unconcerned with presenting objective properties of goods, they tend to create entirely new wants and desires, projecting fictional situations or worlds that invite the client to identify with the desirable properties. The agents try to push the product, often via text-worlds of fiction and fantasy into the real world of the client. We'll further illustrate that, modelling the picture of the world in advertising, the agents of discourse regularly resort to integrating reality and potentiality. Within the conceptual space of text-worlds they establish contacts between real producer, real client and product, characters and product for a soft and easy passage of the product from the world of advertising to the real world of consumers.

## Application of World Modelling Theory to commercial advertising

For the purposes of product promotion, the agent's marketing activity often involves 'intrusion' into the client's cognitive system to change and/or form opinions and create new values that are beneficial to the advertiser. This influence is effective if it is not insulting or straightforward. The intention to sell is often not stated at all, being implicit and very subtle. Advertising discourse is modeled as a semantic interaction between the characters, mediated by the product. The construction of a favorable impression of the advertised product or brand is largely due to an effective slogan that often draws on the existing mass representations. Among them, "The customer is always and completely right" is arguably one of the most successful slogans of Marks & Spencer brand. Advertising as persuasive form of communication reflects, exploits and creates mass representations, that are socially approved.

People bear 'the burden' of mass representations that in the course of time distance from their source, start to live their own lives and direct people's opinions. The main functions of mass representations are: 1) orientation of client in the choice of things from the available variety of products; 2) establishment of standards and norms (good – bad, right – wrong); 3) discrimination of advantages and disadvantages of goods as compared to the products of the same type (Zaretskaya 2008). Mass representations are based on shared knowledge that forms common frame of reference in communication. In the era of globalization it is of special importance in advertising discourse. Mass representations are

generally culture specific. Some of them, however, become universal in the course of time. This happens gradually when people are informed about new products and accumulate information about them. Eventually this information becomes so natural and obvious to those who communicate, that they are not even aware of the assumptions they make.

For example, the culture of fast food industry first appeared in the USA, and only later it was introduced in Europe and Russia. Being not commonplace, new table manners, concerning eating fast food, needed to be explained to people. At present it is common knowledge that a big-size burger has to be eaten without cutlery, just with two hands. This would have destroyed the tradition of good table manners about 60-70 years ago because of absence of mass representations. In 1957 Burger King launched a new product that was created to compete with rivals who were selling burgers of a larger than usual size. They suggested the following slogan:

*It takes two hands to hold a Whopper* (3).

In the text-world, created in (3), the client is metonymically represented by the expression ‘two hands’, and the product is named (*Whopper*). Within the conceptual space of the text-world the two are connected and a new element of eating etiquette is established. It can be described with the help of the scheme PRODUCT + ADDRESSEE. The same scheme is realized in the text-world, generated by the iconic slogan, associated with the Mars brand from the late 1950s through to the mid-1990s:

*A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play* (4).

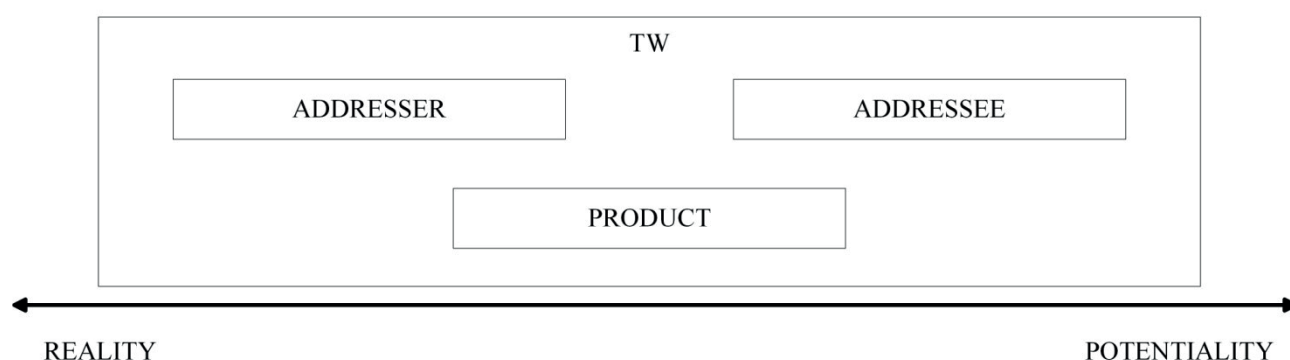
In (4) the presence of the client (the addressee in the text-world) is marked by the pronoun *you*, the product is named (*Mars*). The effect of entertainment is enhanced due to the association with one of the most recognizable expressions – *An apple a day keeps the doctor away*. The fact that it rhymes makes it fun and easy to recall. It also imparts enthusiasm and stimulates a positive healthy interest in active lifestyle and, in the long run, contributes to creating the ‘right attitude’ to life, where the advertised product (a bar of chocolate) is usual.

The pragmatic intention of the agents of discourse is realized as soon as the clients accept the offered traditions, rules and behavior and begin following them. The clients are sophisticated, and that’s what makes the agents seek for new methods of persuasion. Rising to the challenge, they often conceptually combine reality and potentiality to make the intrusion of a key message into the minds of the target audience almost unnoticed. To demonstrate this, I’ve analyzed 862 product and brand slogans in different categories: food, beverages, cosmetics, machinery, clothing, shoes, cars, pharmaceuticals and medicine, household chemicals, banking system, airlines, vehicles.

Text-worlds, projected in slogans, are regularly grounded in the perspective REALITY – POTENTIALITY, that is intentionally constructed in advertising discourse due to the use of world-building elements, the major of them being: time and space markers (for example, locatives: *on holiday, in the air, in Britain*; temporal adverbs: *today, tomorrow*; variations in tense and aspect: *the family finds it..., You’ll love the way...*, мы продаём... [*we sell...*]); deictic elements, nominating characters and objects (personal pronouns: *we, I, you*; definite reference: *the discriminating family, Heinz*). The term ‘perspective’ goes back to Talmy and Langacker (Evans and Green, 2006) and is used in the study to denote the orientation program according to which the situation, presented in the text-world, should be viewed and assessed by the recipient. When promoting a product, agents often resort to profiling

in the text-worlds of slogans. Profiling has to do with ‘conceptually highlighting’ some aspect of the described state of affairs in the text-world that involves selecting some entity necessary for realizing the pragmatic goals of the discourse. In advertising slogans, the entities, that are regularly profiled, include addresser, addressee and product (Figure 2), though one of the elements or even all of them can be omitted, that is, not expressed linguistically. In this case, the client relies on inference to get the basic idea of the slogan.

**Figure 2.** Profiling in the text-worlds, generated by slogans



Source: elaborated by the author.

As can be seen in Figure 2, two vectors form the perspective. REALITY direction is all of physical existence that comes with experiential and cultural knowledge. The situation(s) that is(are) likely to happen, but still not a fact for the client, form(s) POTENTIALITY direction. The vector of REALITY points out that the constructed text-worlds either draw on the existing mass representations or create them. They often ‘mimic’ worldly wisdom to get the status of common knowledge. For example, Buick brand highlights one in its slogan, popular in the 1950s:

*Today the discriminating family finds it absolutely necessary to own two or more motor cars* (5).

In (5), the deictic parameter of the text-world is indicated by the adverb *today*, meaning ‘at the present period of time’. The principal character (a representative of the target audience) is marked by the noun *family*, that is characterized as ‘the discriminating’. The attribute in preposition to the defined noun underlines that people who buy cars of the brand are having refined taste. The objects that inhabit the text-world are the advertised products – *motor cars*. The conceptual gist is easily inferred: if your family has only one car nowadays, you find yourself in a minority group, because among driving households several cars have become the accepted norm. The idea comes naturally in the created text-world. It contributes to the realization of the pragmatically relevant association, the multi-car household is a norm, we should buy the cars of the brand to correspond to it.

Grammatical markers of text-worlds, grounded in REALITY direction, are mainly indicative forms of verbs. They fix the deictic parameter of the text-world in the present time-zone and the client

conceptualizes them with reference to zero point of subjectivity (Gavins, 2007, p. 36). World-building information, provided in the slogan by verbs in present tenses, not only creates the effect of immediacy for the client, but introduces some feature that is intentionally linked to the advertised product and contributes to forming mass representations. Consider the baked-bean slogan, introduced by Maurice Drake in 1967, which became one of the best-known catchphrases in advertising:

*Beanz Means Heinz* (6).

In the text-world, created in (6), the advertised product is named (*beans*), which is the main entity together with the brand name (*Heinz*). The peculiar spelling of ‘beans’ with a ‘z’ contributes to the addressee’s world-modelling – a world where plurals end in ‘z’, as in Heinz. Thus, PRODUCT, associated with the brand, is profiled. Moreover, the agent of discourse managed to intentionally link the product with the brand name, infiltrating the mind of the clients through rhythm and rhyme, that were making the slogan sound like poetry. It is no coincidence that the phrase was voted into the Advertising Slogan Hall Of Fame by a panel from the UK’s advertising industry in 2000. The slogan still has enormous brand power, appealing to millions of people in an everchanging world. Its success may be credited to masterly created mass representation.

Similar examples of text-worlds, grounded in REALITY direction, are found in Russian slogans. Consider BMW car company tagline [throughout the text, in brackets we give the translation of Russian slogans]:

*Мы продаём очень дорогие автомобили. Но они того стоят.* [*We sell very expensive cars. But they are worth it*] (7).

In the text-world, induced by (7), the scheme PRODUCT + ADDRESSER is realized. The addresser is marked by the pronoun *мы* (we). The product is referred to by the noun *автомобили* (cars) and the pronoun *они* (they). The time-zone is present, which is indicated by the forms of the verbs *продаём* (sell) and *стоят* (*are worth*). The fact that the cars of this brand have a special allure and are very expensive is well-known to Russians. Having one, is more a question of status or a dream, as the stereotype of a typical BMW owner is that they are powerful, pretentious and like to get maximum driving pleasure. The stimulus for the target audience to act is as follows, if you want to feel powerful behind the wheel of a luxury car, which is cool, get ready to pay for it.

At the same time, advertising has been witnessing a shift towards creative modelling of POTENTIALITY, which happens due to the use of different language means. The vector of POTENTIALITY points to the future that is liable to take place on certain conditions. It adds a new dimension to the study of advertising text-worlds because they demonstrate a particular degree of deviation from the existing mass representations. Text-worlds are directed to a period of time ahead, following the moment of speaking or writing, and the likely prospects for transformations and changes in the state of affairs, described in them. The change of unreal state of affairs, presented in the text-world, into the real can involve an addresser, an addressee, and a product.

Broadly speaking, the clients are invited into the world, that is broader than their living space, and is located in a different psychological dimension. The mental pictures, modelled in the text-worlds, install the clients to another life, which is more attractive and unproblematic, though it shouldn’t conflict with the existing mass representations about the world order. This perspective is supposed to contribute to credibility and enhance the client’s loyalty. Text-worlds, grounded in POTENTIALITY

direction, are manifest in all product categories and similarly structured in American, British and Russian slogans. The following patterns of world-modelling have been singled out:

**Text-worlds, generated by slogans containing future forms.** These text-worlds are called *prospective*, that is, expected to be the specified thing in the future. They model the state of affairs that the addressee should mentally anticipate and materialize in his mind. They possess potentiality as they are induced by verbs in the future forms. Semantically, all future forms are potential. In the statements, referring the situation to the future, there is always a certain measure of potentiality, opposed to the actual as central, clearly expressed manifestation of reality. The addressee and the product can be implicit. The slogan of Slavneft engine oil generates the prospective text-world:

*Машина будет довольна* [The car will be satisfied] (8).

The text-world, created in (8), has one deictic parameter: the form of the verb *будет* fixes the future time zone. Location is not specified. The addressee and the product are not nominated, their presence can be inferred on the basis of metonymy *машина* – the person who has a car. In fact, the main object (the car) is personified and attributed with human emotions. A remote potential situation is constructed, in which the car is satisfied. By association, the client should implicate himself into the text-world and get satisfied as well.

Prospective text-worlds can be inhabited by characters, as the following slogans of airlines show. The typical scheme includes ADDRESSER + ADDRESSEE: *We'll take more care of you* (British Airways); *You'll love the way we fly* (Delta Airlines). *You're going to like us* (Trans World Airlines). The characters are marked by personal pronouns *we, you, us*. Attribution of the described situation to the future is combined with the intention of the agents to stimulate a meaningful action on the part of the clients. Pragmatically, the text-worlds of this type are designed to create the effect of 'palpability of the future'.

**Text-worlds, generated by slogans organized by imperatives.** Semantically, imperatives contain a call for action. This makes slogans sound prescriptive, the as yet unrealized state of affairs is presented in the text-world. The addressee is implicit. The product can be both explicit or implicit. Such text-worlds are deontic, that is, they depict an action that the recipients should do in order to change their life. I term them *text-worlds of prescribed actions*. The spacial and temporal setting of the text-worlds is usually unspecified. Text-worlds of prescribed actions are often generated by slogans that touch the so called 'procrastination' button all people have. That has probably propelled some brands into global recognition. In the world of fitness, for example, behind the instantly recognizable words associated with the Nike brand in *Just Do It* slogan, opens a deontic text-world that calls the client to act. In the category of computers, it is Apple's famous *Think Different* advertising slogan. It was probably a play on the much earlier slogan *Think* of IBM (1911), realizing the same model. In the category of beverages, it is *Enjoy* by Coca-Cola. *Think Small* is a well-known Volkswagen's slogan; *Think big* was introduced by IMAX. If a polysemantic verb triggers a text-world, its conceptual content becomes more complex. Consider the following slogan of Russian Orenburg airline's company:

*Взлети над суетой!* [Soar above bustle/vanity] (9).

Text-world of prescribed actions is generated in (9) due to the imperative *взлети*. In the Russian language it has several meanings, that co-actualize in the slogan. This can be illustrated by the follow-



ing componential analysis. Firstly, the primary meaning of the verb взлети is *fly or rise high in the air*. Secondly, it means that *a person suddenly starts to feel very happy*. The semantics of the noun cyera adds to the conceptual content of the text-world due to polysemy as well. Cyera is defined as *excited activity and movement* and is generally associated with everyday life, in which people get tired of work and fuss. On the other hand, cyera means *excessive pride in or admiration of one's own achievements*, the quality that is negatively assessed in Russian culture. Thus, the addressees are invited to the text-world, in which the potentiality is two-fold, both pragmatic and psychological. The clients are welcome to *rise high in the air above the bustle of the city and get rid of excessive and negatively evaluated pride in their achievements to start feeling happy*. The clients are recommended to project themselves into the text-world, though they may or may not choose to follow the recommendation in their real life. While the pragmatic aspect realizes the agent's ultimate goal, i.e. make the clients use the services of the company, the psychological aspect enables the most comfortable realization of what is recommended.

**Text-worlds, generated by slogans containing infinitive constructions.** The semantic essence of the infinitive is to express existence or action without reference to person, number, or tense and that can function grammatically as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Text-worlds, generated by slogans containing infinitives, are also potential in Russian advertising, not being related to the 'here and now' state of affairs. They are similar to the previous pattern. If we translate them into English, they may contain the formal subject *it*, or elliptical structures with meaningful omission of one of the principal parts. That is why they also refer to text-worlds of prescribed actions. In many Russian slogans infinitives are often used to express the purpose of the agent's opinion about something:

*Увидеть всё, испытать всё!* [To see everything, to experience everything] (Philips brand).

*Побеждать – хорошая примета!* [To win – (is) good luck!] (Oral-B toothbrush).

*Легко запомнить – легко купить!* [(It is) easy to remember – (It is) easy to buy] (pain reliever Codelac) (10).

The use of the infinitives увидеть (to see), испытать (to experience), побеждать (to win), запомнить (to remember), купить (to buy) in (10) contributes to the creating of text-worlds that are less prescriptive than in the previous pattern, though, they are pragmatically and culturally relevant in Russian advertising, highlighting its own peculiarities. In the above three examples, the infinitives indicate the action, that is recommended to be taken by the recipient – to see, to experience, to win, to remember, to buy. Noticeably, the addresser and the addressee are implicit, that is, the recipient should infer what the message is about. Moreover, there is a culturally specific aspect, that is closely connected to a genre of *lozung*. As has been rightly explained by Cook, initially *lozung* was a hoarding bearing a communist slogan (Cook, 2001, p. 8). Fundamentally, the Russian word лозунг (*lozung*) is a borrowing from German (*Die losung*) meaning 'a military password' or 'watchword'. It is primarily associated with the USSR times and the political slogans, which concisely expressed socially required attitude to particular subjects or things, such as labour, political party, education, citizens' behavior, moral norms, etc., e.g. На работу – с радостью, а с работы – с гордостью! – [To work (one goes) with pleasure, and from work (one goes back) with pride!]. They were widely used to ennoble Soviet people in order to make them more dignified and morally better. It is true that in the course of time

Russian people have got used to lozungs, which go back to a 70-year-long Soviet epoch and presuppose exciting appeals to the public (usually exclamations). This is the reason, why nowadays Russian advertising slogans often exist in the form of exclamatory sentences, conveying excessive emotionality (see the above examples).

**Text-worlds, generated by advertising slogans containing markers of hypotheticality.** These text-worlds are hypothetical, because they represent probability, potential opportunities that do not exist in the real world, but can become real under certain conditions. They can take numerous forms. The key markers of hypotheticality are question-answer structures, problem questions, chains of questions, conditional sentences, modal words and word combinations, epistemic modals (must, could, might, may, can, could), modal particles (in Russian: *ли, бы*). Slogans that syntactically exist in the form of conditional sentences, generate at least two text-worlds that are epistemic in nature. They describe situations which are not actualized in the reality. Consider an iconic slogan of Bromo-Seltzer pain reliever, suggested in 1895:

*If you keep late hours for Society's sake, Bromo-Seltzer will cure that headache* (11).

Two text-worlds are generated by (11). The first one presents a single hypothetical situation, grammatically indicated by an if-clause (*If you keep late hours for Society's sake*). It establishes an epistemic modal world which has the status of unrealized possibility. The second text-world, presented by the main clause of the sentence, takes the initial situation to a further point of conclusion. It is developed according to the pragmatic aim of the agent to promote the product (*Bromo-Seltzer will cure that headache*). Nowadays the slogan that has been existing for more than a century is considered as the source and product of mass representations, deeply rooted in social conventions.

**Text-worlds, generated by advertising slogans functioning as nominal sentences.** Text-worlds are created by slogans that are nominal sentences. These are nonverbal syntactic constructions without a finite verb. They have no verbal predicate, and their structural basis is the subject. In English grammar, the term *nominal* refers to a noun or noun phrase – or to any word or word group that functions as a noun. A nominal sentence is one in which the predicative element is an adjective or noun phrase without a copula. Though nominal sentences are typical of advertising slogans, they fulfil different functions.

In the text-worlds, induced by nominal constructions, the advertised services or products are directly or indirectly characterized by naming the features that distinguish them from others. Consider the slogan of airline Transaero:

*Безопасность. Комфорт. Качество* [Security. Comfort. Quality.] (12).

There are three text-worlds in (12), generated by three nominal sentences. The semantic function of each sentence is to nominate the most important characteristics of the advertised service. The only 'inhabitants' of the text-worlds are the priorities one can get if they use the service: security, comfort and quality. The attention of the recipient is drawn to three basic features: the state of feeling safe from fear and anxiety, physical ease, and excellence of standard of the service. Pragmatically, these comprise key benefits that differentiate the company. Other examples include: *Точность. Надёжность. Комфорт.* [Accuracy. Reliability. Comfort.] (airline Kogalymavia). *The happiest place on earth* (Disneyland). *Power, beauty and soul* (Aston Martin). *The miracles of science* (DuPont).

In Russian advertising, it is common that text-worlds are generated by slogans containing abstract concepts that are not overtly related to the advertised product. The pragmatic aim of the agent

is to make the client emotionally driven, because people often rely on emotions, rather than rational information when making brand decisions. In marketing industry they are called emotional slogans. Consider the following slogan for Polo car:

*Жизнь без компромиссов* [Life without compromise] (Polo car) (13).

The text-world in (13) is created in the present time-zone. There is an object profiled by the noun *жизнь* (life). Addresser, addressee and the product are implicit. The emotional twist, created in the text-worlds, relies heavily on freedom in making decisions that presupposes the power of a person to act, speak, or think as they want. The clients should infer the meaning and connect it with the advertised product, thus, concluding that owning a car of this brand is going to give you freedom to act. Such slogans sound philosophical and thought-provoking, and constitute the foundation, on which decisions of buying are made. Other examples include: *Лёгкость жизни* [Ease of life] (fast food Daria); *Встреча с удовольствием* [Meeting with pleasure] (beer).

***Text-worlds, generated by advertising slogans containing no subject.*** The text-worlds are generated by syntactic constructions, in which the subject, denoting the doer of the action, is not expressed. Formally, within the text-worlds, induced by these slogans, there are no linguistically marked characters. There is no indication of either the addresser, or the addressee, or even the service or product. Many are found in Russian slogans of airlines. Consider the famous Russian Aeroflot airline's slogan:

*Меньше в пути – больше в отпуске* [Less on the way – more on vacation] (14).

In two text-worlds, created in (14), there are neither characters, nor objects. No referential information is used to specify who or what is present in the text-worlds. The only deictic parameters set the spatial boundaries of the two: the first is constructed due to the locative *в пути* (on the way), while the second is fixed by the locative *в отпуске* (on vacation). Conceptualizing these two text-worlds is a complex process, which is aided by space deictic and involves inferences, that the recipients draw from the slogan according to their background knowledge. Thus, the potential situation is constructed: if one spends little time, getting to some place of destination, they could have a longer holiday, which is always pleasing. This potentiality is possible if the client uses the services of the airline. In other examples the same model is realized: *Всегда на высоте!* [Always on top!] (Siberia); *В небе как дома!* [In the sky (it) is like at home!] (Domodedovo airlines); *At the heart of the image* (Nikon).

## Conclusion

By looking at the phenomenon of mental and linguistic representation of the world in discourse, I have set out the basics of World Modelling Theory that studies discourse in terms of representational structures, the main being *discourse-world* and *text-world*, that tend to overlap. I have shown that the proposed theory integrates the advances of Text World Theory, Discourse Representation Theory, Sociocognitive Theory of Discourse and World Interpretation Theory to account for multi-factor nature of communication, initiated by agents who have access to discourse and structure it in accordance with the main objectives of social activity.

Focusing on both cognitive and pragmatic aspects of communication, I have introduced

the term *world-modelling* to denote structuring information about the world by a powerful agent that controls discourse production and forms necessary perspectives of perception. I hope to have demonstrated the utility and value of world-modelling in advertising slogans, in which the agent transforms ideas about a product, service, or brand into semiotic forms for the client to assign meaning. Text-worlds are considered cognitive-pragmatic representational structures, activated by slogans, which are encoded by the agent and decoded by the clients who rely on the information presented in the text and their background knowledge. It has been proved that in order to suit the ultimate pragmatic goal (to drive up sales), advertising text-worlds, generated by slogans, are constructed to be grounded on REALITY – POTENTIALITY perspective, that serves as background for profiling characters and entities in the text-worlds for the purposes of product, service or brand promotion. Commercial advertising exploits and creates mass representations. Text-worlds, grounded in REALITY direction, mainly draw on the existing mass representations, whereas those, that represent potential situations, create new pictures of reality and invite the client to identify with.

The sample of studying world-modelling, presented in the paper, is by no means conclusive. The spheres in which the exploration of world-modelling will advance are numerous. World Modelling Theory can prove a usable framework in better understanding how representational structures of different conceptual complexity interact, being generated by texts of different genres, including modern online forms in diverse discourses. It can offer further insights into the way world is represented in discourse to serve purposes of social interaction.

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