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STRUCTURE AND SEMANTICS OF SLOGANS (based on international song contest slogans)

Linguistic research of the of slogans structure and semantics is an increasing trend which helps to understand how a company can shape its image and achieve its communicative goals. The article clarifies the definition of the term “slogan” and presents the findings of the research done into the slogans used in international song contests, namely their syntactic structure, and lexical and semantic features.

Key words: *slogan, syntactic structure, seme, message, advertising campaign, branding.*

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Introduction. In today’s world digital technologies, social networks and the media are developing so rapidly that a person is bombarded with an almost unlimited number of messages round-the-clock. High competition for the consumer's attention forces psychologists, linguists, and marketers to look for tools that could attract the attention of a potential addressee, stimulate them to actions, and convey the main idea of the sender's message in a bright, symbolic form. It seems that a slogan meets these requirements. O. S. Akhmanova defines a slogan as “a short independent advertising message that is easy to remember and that conveys the main message of the advertising campaign and explains the main offer to the consumer in a bright, vivid form” (Akhmanova, 1966, p. 234). In addition, we can assume that slogans reflect the cultural and communicative processes that are taking place in modern society.

Purpose and tasks of the article. The **purpose** of the research is to identify and characterize the syntactic structure, lexical and semantic features of the international song contest slogans. In accordance with the main purpose of the work the following **tasks** must be performed:

- 1) to identify socio-cultural features of modern English-language advertising discourse;
- 2) to clarify the definition of a “slogan” in modern linguistics;
- 3) to determine the syntactic structure of slogans;
- 4) to explore lexical and semantic content of slogans.

The **object** of the research is a modern English-language slogan which is considered to be a linguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon within the advertising discourse. The **subject** of the study is the syntactic structure and lexical-semantic features of international song contest slogans.

The hypothesis of the research was that international song contests use slogans in order to attract more viewers and to make a particular contest more popular and appealing to the audience. The longest-running TV song contest nowadays, and thus the most popular one, is Eurovision, which was founded to strengthen the relations and cultural cooperation between European countries after World War II. Other international song contests started appearing on the wave of Eurovision popularity, among which the ones with the most media

publicity like Sopot International Song Festival (Eastern Europe), ABU TV Song Festivals (Asia), AfriMusic Song Contest (Africa), All For One Caribbean (the Caribbean region), The Great American Song Contest (North America), Unisong International Song Contest (worldwide). However, while conducting the research into the brands of these popular song contests, it was discovered that only Eurovision Song Contest has formed its brand with its typical components: since 2002 – a slogan (except 2009), since 2004 – a logo, a color scheme, a text form and a font associated with the contest, as well as additional thematic visual images that accompany the contest in a particular country according to the theme of the year and reinforce the importance of the contest in each country. Thus, the material of the research comprises 18 English-language slogans of the Eurovision Song Contest which were used during the contest advertising campaigns from 2002 to 2021.

The novelty of the research is based on the contention that a slogan of a successful company reflects its image policy regarding current trends and timely responses to changes in a society, so the findings of the research will contribute to understanding trends in advertising and mass communication. In this regard, it is worth analysing a company that has proven its viability, is known around the world, is constantly increasing its multicultural audience, responds quickly to modern challenges and is an influential player in the media. The Eurovision Song Contest, often referred to as “Eurovision”, can be a good example of such a company. It was founded by the European Broadcasting Union in 1956, and has been held annually ever since, with an exception of 2020, when the event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 1950’s, only seven countries participated in the contest; today, musicians from 50 countries take part in Eurovision, and the event is watched by fans from all over the world. In 2015, when the Eurovision Song Contest celebrated its 60th anniversary, it was recognized as the longest annual television music contest by the Guinness Book of Records.

Review of recent research and publications. The advertising slogan has repeatedly been the subject of research conducted by various scholars, so the theoretical basis for this article is formed by the works of Ukrainian linguists such as G. Chulanova, I. Griliches, I. Moiseenko, S. Semetsky, A. Soloshenko, V. Zirka, and foreign scientists such as I. Arnold, Y. Karaulov, G. Leech, I. Morozova. Although linguistic papers present many definitions of the term “slogan”, most linguists consider it to be a special kind of a message and define it as an utterance, a unit of the syntactic level of a language. I. Morozova claims that “a slogan is a short independent advertising message that can exist in isolation from other advertising products and presents a summary of the advertising campaign. The main tasks of a slogan are to attract attention (as the slogan can cause a rational positive attitude to the advertised product), and to be memorable” (Morozova, 2004, p. 8).

The current research is aimed not only at studying the content and structure of the slogan, but also at investigating the functions of the slogan in an advertising text. These papers mainly focus on informative and persuasive functions, ways of influencing the addressee and the role of the slogan in the brand identity formation.

In his book *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in the UK*, Geoffrey N. Leech argues that a slogan is a short phrase used by a company in its advertising to strengthen the brand identity (Leech, 1972, p. 137). From his point of view, the slogan is more powerful than the company logo because people easily remember and recite it. Moreover, the scientist argues that slogans should clearly state the basic idea of advertising, that is, they should be easy to understand. Kenneth Clow and Donald Baack (Clow and Baack, 2015, p. 78) note that the advertising slogan is an easy-to-remember fictional phrase that becomes a key point in forming a company’s image for the client. A. Radu emphasizes that expressiveness is necessary for a slogan, which is the main element of any advertising campaign. The main

features of the slogan are emotional saturation, conciseness, and the ability to present an advertising offer (Radu, 1999, p. 122).

Although there is no single definition that includes all the features and functions of an advertising slogan, all of the above mentioned definitions have a common idea, that is an advertising slogan is a phrase related to an advertised product or service of a particular brand or a company. Thus, a slogan is a short catch-phrase associated with a specific brand that defines, presents, and helps customers to remember key messages of the advertising campaign or the brand itself, and combines informative, expressive, suggestive and aesthetic functions.

Findings of the research. The main features of the Eurovision slogan include information compression, reduction of a verbal message, creolization of the text and unification of the message form. We see that the slogan establishes a direct or associative link between the contest and the country that hosts and conducts it. Moreover, Eurovision slogans are designed to stir the interest, indicate the desire to get acquainted with the country better, establish contact with the consumer, set them up for further acquaintance with the program, arouse curiosity and a sense of involvement.

The ability of the slogan to describe the essence of the contest in a particular country, distinguishing it from a number of other countries, in our opinion, is determined by its syntactic structure, the components of which have a particular meaning expressed in a single sentence in an advertising text that makes the brand of the contest recognizable.

Imperative sentences prevail in the analyzed language material (9 sentences, which is 50 % of the total number of slogans).

According to its structure, the most common slogan pattern is: verb in the imperative mood + object, for example: *Feel The Rhythm* (2006, Greece), *Share the Moment* (2010, Norway), *#JoinUs* (2014, Denmark), *Celebrate Diversity* (2017, Ukraine). However, we also encounter the following structures:

- verb in the imperative mood + complex object, for example: *Feel Your Heart Beat* (2011, Germany); *Light Your Fire* (2012, Azerbaijan);

- verb in the imperative mood + adverb, for example: *Come Together* (2016, Sweden), *Open Up* (2020/2021, the Netherlands);

- verb + to-infinitive, for example: *Dare to Dream* (2019, Israel).

Nominative sentences were used as a slogan 7 times, which constitutes 39 %. They are based on the scheme (article) + adjective + noun, for example: *A Modern Fairytale* (2002, Finland), *A Magical Rendez-vous* (2003, Latvia) and *True Fantasy* (2007, Finland) and were typical when slogans were first used as a component of the Eurovision brand.

Further analysis of the structure of nominative sentences singled out the following patterns:

- of-phrase with the meaning of possession, for example: *Confluence of Sound* (2008, Serbia);

- gerund, for example: *Awakening* (2005, Kyiv);

- prepositional phrase, for example: *Under The Same Sky* (2004, Turkey).

The participial construction (*Building Bridges* in 2015, Austria) and a **simple narrative sentence** (*We Are One* in 2013, Sweden) were used as slogans once (5,5 % each).

The language used in advertising is a powerful tool to influence the recipient: not only it clearly describes the advertised object, but also with the help of an utterance you can control the perception of this object by the recipient. The analysis of the lexical and semantic content of the Eurovision slogans allowed us to identify semantic cores which reflect the mission of the contest to support the idea of diversity but at the same time to promote the unity of peoples, and to praise music among the nations.

The seme “diversity” is verbalized in such lexical units as *fairytale, rendez-vous, awakening, fantasy, diversity, dream, to open up*.

The idea to create the Eurovision slogan first appeared during the preparations for the 2002 song contest in Tallinn, Estonia. The official broadcaster of the show chose the slogan “*A Modern Fairytale*”, which in their opinion described the modern history of Estonia very accurately, namely the independence of the country in 1991 and the intention to join the European Union (implemented 2 years later, in 2004). In such a way, the producers of the show wanted to draw attention to historical differences between the countries.

The following year, the song contest was held in the neighbouring country – Latvia, in Riga. The slogan of Eurovision 2003 was “*A Magical Rendezvous*”. There is a hint here that Latvia is holding a competition on its territory for the first time, and is extremely proud to welcome participants and share its diversity with everyone who joins in.

The winner of the 49th competition was a performer from Ukraine, Ruslana, and, therefore, the 2005 competition was to be held in Kyiv, Ukraine. The period from late 2004 to early 2005 was quite a difficult one for the country: the state experienced a series of protests and various acts of civil disobedience related to the results of the presidential election. Ukraine has properly survived the wave of political instability and entered the world arena with a new domestic and foreign policy course, which was reflected in the slogan of Eurovision that year – “*Awakening*”.

A group from Finland won the victory for the first time in the history of the country’s participation in the competition, and in 2007 Helsinki welcomed Eurovision. The slogan “*True Fantasy*” was chosen to inspire the designers of the competition to implement new unprecedented projects and impress all participants with the variety of ideas.

In 2017, for the second time in 15 years, Ukrainians shared their hospitality with Europeans during the competition in Kyiv, Ukraine. And again, the times were quite challenging for the country; “*Celebrate Diversity*” became the slogan of Eurovision that year, embracing both the pain of recent years, the consequences of the Revolution of Dignity, and the country’s new attitude to the geopolitical picture of the world. In addition to the slogan, the visual representation of the competition was also symbolic, since the logo was based on a traditional Ukrainian piece of jewellery – a necklace, a protective amulet and a symbol of beauty and health, each bead of which celebrates individuality and diversity.

The slogan of the 2019 contest, which took place in Tel Aviv, Israel, embodied the call to courage: the courage to dream, the courage to be brave, the courage to be confident. According to the organizers of the competition, the slogan “*Dare to Dream*” also contained all the values that formed the essence of the competition: diversity, inclusiveness, community.

The next competition among musicians was scheduled for May 2020 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The slogan of the competition was announced in the fall of 2019: “*Open Up*”. It was deliberately created unfinished: Open Up to others. Open Up to music. Open Up to... Any variation will do. However, the competition was cancelled in March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Only a year later, the competition was finally confirmed to take place in May 2021 if held in compliance with all the measures against the spread of the disease. The slogan remained the same – “*Open Up*”, but its context and perception have dramatically changed, and the most appropriate extension of the slogan has become “Open Up to the World”.

The seme “unity” is verbalized in such lexical units as *the same, to share, fire, one, to join, building bridges, to come together, all*.

Istanbul hosted the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest, the main theme and slogan of which was “*Under The Same Sky*”. The idea of this slogan was to show the unity of Turkey and Europe

despite the fact that only a small part of Turkey is geographically located on the European mainland.

In 2010, the city of Oslo, Norway, invited participants to “*Share the Moment*”. This slogan not only encouraged people to join in the celebration, but also physical flash mobs were organized all over Europe, which were broadcast live during the competition between the performances, thus giving the audience the opportunity to participate in the event regardless of their location.

In 2012, the competition was the most unusual one in terms of its location: for the first time in the history of Eurovision, all participants went on a long journey to the East, to the capital of Azerbaijan – Baku. Azerbaijan is often unofficially called the “land of fires” (in the Turkic languages, “azer” means “fire”), so the symbols of fire and hearths are widely used in the international positioning of the country. This was successfully reflected in the slogan of the competition – “*Light Your Fire*”. The organizers of the contest also explained the metaphorical idea of this slogan by the fact that from ancient times people gathered together by the fire for communication, singing and dancing, and the Eurovision Song Contest is also a place where performers and spectators meet to communicate, sing and dance.

The contest in 2013, held in Malmö, Sweden, was under the slogan “*We Are One*”. Its main idea was to draw attention to equality and unity among the contestants and the nations.

The following year, in 2014, the neighbouring country of Denmark set a course for a more modern slogan – “*#JoinUs*”. This slogan seems to be particularly interesting because it uses the symbol #, which is usually used on social networks to search for information on the topic, thus encouraging viewers to share their impressions and discuss the contest in online communities. This pattern also represents the reflection on the latest trends in the integration of broadcasting and social networks. The pragmatic load of this symbol is the call to join the contest community or to adjust to a common emotional state. Viewed from a pragmatic perspective, such slogans make communication more expressive, personal and effective, as they directly motivate listeners or viewers.

The organizers of Eurovision in Vienna, Austria, in 2015 also continued to incorporate television and social media through posts with the symbol #, but the slogan did not reflect this. The idea behind the slogan “*Building Bridges*” was to promote music as a force for unity, when political and other differences between the countries are left out for the period of the contest. It is also worth noting that “*Building Bridges*” is the name of the song performed at the opening ceremony of the contest by the winner of 2014 Conchita Wurst together with the hosts of the program.

Within a year, in 2016, the tradition of appeals for unity between the nations continued, and was implemented by the slogan “*Come Together*”. The show’s main producer in Stockholm, Sweden, stressed that the ideas of community and unanimity are as important in the 21st century as they were in the 1950s, when the contest was just founded; that Eurovision continues to work towards a noble goal and to extend beyond the boundaries that separate humanity from each other.

In Lisbon, Portugal, where Eurovision was held in 2018, the slogan was “*All Aboard!*”. It combined, on the one hand, a hint to the history of the country which is a maritime power, and on the other hand, a call for the international community to join the contest and unite for music and creativity.

The seme “music” is verbalized in such lexical units as *rhythm, sound, beat*.

In 2006, the song contest was held in Greece - just two years after the grand Summer Olympics in Athens. The mood of Greeks to celebrate, have fun and enjoy the music was reflected in the slogan of the event, “*Feel the Rhythm*”.

2008 was a significant year for Belgrade, Serbia: the country won the previous year's contest for the first time. The slogan "*Confluence of Sound*" became an allusion primarily to the geographical feature of the city's location: two rivers converge in Belgrade, the Sava and the Danube. However, the developers also noted the importance of another connotation of the slogan: the merging of sound and people together in order to praise the music and unite in creativity.

The 2011 Eurovision Song Contest was held in Düsseldorf, Germany, with the slogan "*Feel Your Heart Beat*". This slogan was successfully visualized during the contest: the presentation of all participants took place with a big heart on the screen in the background, and each heart had the colors of the national flag. Moreover, the actual announcement of voting results was accompanied by a heartbeat, which further alarmed the expectations and excitement of spectators and musicians.

Thus, having analyzed the slogans of the Eurovision Song Contest for the period from 2002 to 2021, we can conclude that the ideas of international cooperation, peace and unity, as well as praise to music, are expressed in all slogans, which, in fact, confirms the main purpose of the contest and its mission. In addition, the slogans establish a direct or associative link between the contest and the country that hosts and conducts it, has a socio-cultural background, is interesting and makes you want to get to know the country in more detail.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. After a thorough research into different international song contests, we found out that the Eurovision Song Contest is the only international music contest that uses slogans whose structures and messages are aimed to attract more viewers and to make the contest more popular and appealing to the audience. Slogans make the message of the advertising campaign about the contest more expressive, personal and effective, as they directly motivate the recipients (listeners, viewers, fans) to join the event. In addition, the slogan establishes a direct or associative link between the contest and the host country: it is designed to attract interest to the topic of the contest and to make it memorable, to arouse curiosity and inspire to get acquainted with the host country in more detail.

The syntactic structure of Eurovision slogans is represented by two sentence models, namely *the imperative sentence* (50 %) and *the nominative sentence* (39 %), leaving the remaining 11 % to other types of syntactic structures (specifically, *the participial construction* and *the simple narrative sentence*).

The lexical and semantic content of Eurovision slogans is limited to three semes: "*diversity*", "*unity*" and "*music*". These groups of lexical units broadcast the mission of the song contest, which is to ensure international cooperation, unity, diversity and to promote music. Although Eurovision slogans evoke numerous associations with the countries where the contest was held, all slogans retain the primary ability to broadcast the global mission of the Eurovision Song Contest briefly and accurately, and to influence the actions of the audience.

Further research of slogans can be done into the dependence of lexical and semantic content and pragmatics of the message on cultural features of the country that hosts and conducts the competition. We also find it interesting to study the stylistic techniques used in the slogans of the Eurovision Song Contest, as well as the creolization techniques of the slogan and logo.

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СТРУКТУРА ТА СЕМАНТИКА СЛОГАНІВ

(на матеріалі слоганів міжнародних пісенних конкурсів)

У сучасному світі цифрових технологій лінгвістичні дослідження структури та семантики слоганів набувають популярності завдяки тому, що вони допомагають компаніям ефективно втілювати рекламні комунікативні цілі, а також створювати імідж бренду.

Метою цієї статті є ідентифікувати та схарактеризувати синтаксичну структуру та лексико-семантичні характеристики слоганів міжнародних пісенних конкурсів. Реалізація поставленої мети передбачає виконання наступних завдань: ідентифікувати соціокультурні особливості новітнього англомовного рекламного дискурсу, уточнити поняття «слоган» у сучасній лінгвістиці, визначити синтаксичну структуру слоганів та дослідити лексико-семантичний зміст слоганів.

Об'єктом дослідження статті є сучасні англомовні слогани, які вважаються лінгвістичним та соціокультурним феноменом у рекламному дискурсі. Предметом дослідження статті виступають синтаксична структура та лексико-семантичні характеристики слоганів міжнародних пісенних конкурсів.

Матеріалом дослідження є 18 англомовних слоганів пісенного конкурсу Євробачення, що супроводжували рекламну кампанію конкурсу, а також широко використовувались під час проведення конкурсу у 2002–2021 роках.

Аналіз матеріалу дослідження показав, що слогани Євробачення реалізують мету викликати інтерес до конкурсу за допомогою синтаксичних структур, а саме використання імперативних речень (50 %), номінативних речень (39 %), а також

дієприслівникових зворотів та простих розповідних речень (відповідно по 5,5 % від загальної кількості слоганів).

Мова слоганів також є потужним інструментом впливу на аудиторію, й може викликати бажання у людей ближче познайомитись із країною, яка організовує захід, а також почуття зацікавленості та залученості до події, незважаючи на географічне положення глядачів. Сема «diversity», «unity» та «music» дуже влучно передають головну мету проведення пісенного конкурсу Євробачення, яка полягає в ідеях різноманіття, спільності та звеличання музики, яка об'єднує народи.

Подальші розвідки слоганів пісенних конкурсів можна проводити у таких напрямках, як аналіз стилістичних прийомів та засобів, що використовуються в слоганах, дослідження креолізації слоганів як текстів малої форми, а також аналіз культурного та прагматичного навантаження повідомлення слоганів.

Ключові слова: слоган, синтаксична структура, сема, повідомлення, рекламна кампанія, брендинг.