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**Pictogram and Ideograms
as the Main Means of Multimodality
(on the basis of the Australian newspapers)**

**Piktogramy oraz ideogramy
jako główne przekąźniki multimodalności
(na przykładzie prasy australijskiej)**

Abstract

In modern Australian newspaper advertisements there is a wide range of non-verbal means of communication though the most frequent and popular ones are ideograms and pictograms. Other non-verbal means of modern mass-media communication are unusual letter writing and their capitalization, substitution of letters with pictograms, images or ideograms, intentional spelling mistakes, unusual word building patterns, changes of sizes of letters, variations of fonts, texts layout and colours. Pictograms and ideograms can be independent transmitters of information but in the majority of cases they correlate with verbal signs. Like other signs they perform such functions as attractive, informative, expressive and esthetic. Copywriters and advertisers appeal to human emotions as much as possible keeping in mind the fact that when the information is not just seen but sensed

and felt it will be remembered for a longer time. Non-verbal means in combination with verbal elements convey a certain pragmatic meaning and perform three main functions: (1) intensification of the meaning of verbal signs; (2) substitution of a verbal sign that has been omitted (this can happen on all language levels: phonetic, morphological, lexical); (3) addition of extra information to the verbal message, though, sometimes, it can be of an antonymic character. Besides that, they perform such specific functions as: duplication, specification, substitution of the whole verbal part or its section. According to the territorial parameter, non-verbal means of communication can be divided into two groups: *international* and *national*. Another distinctive feature of means of non-verbal communication is their ambiguity because decoding of the real semantics is defined by the context, linguistic distribution, and background cultural knowledge. Despite the heterogeneity of the constituent elements, multimodal advertisements are homogeneous units of information that are aimed at attracting customers' attention, making them think and buy the promoted products or services or modify their behaviour.

Key words: *multimodal advertisements, Australian newspapers, pictograms and ideograms, verbal and non-verbal signs, functions.*

Abstrakt

We współczesnych australijskich ogłoszeniach prasowych można spotkać wiele niewerbalnych komunikatów, z których najpopularniejsze są te w formie ideogramów i piktogramów. Inne niewerbalne sposoby komunikowania stosowane w środkach masowego przekazu to nietypowy sposób pisania liter, zwłaszcza wielkich, zastępowanie liter piktogramami, wizerunki lub ideogramy, zamierzone błędy ortograficzne, nietypowy szyk wyrazów, zmienna wielkość liter, różnorodność w kroju czcionek, układzie tekstu i barw. Piktogramy i ideogramy mogą być same w sobie przekazywanymi informacjami ale w większości przypadków korelują one jednak ze znakami werbalnymi. Tak jak inne znaki, odgrywają one takie funkcje jak, emotywna, informatywna, ekspresyjna czy estetyczna. Autorzy tekstów i ogłoszeniodawcy chcą poruszyć ludzkie emocje tak dalece jak to możliwe mając na względzie to, że kiedy przekaz jest akurat niewidoczny a jedynie odbierany zmysłami będzie on zapamiętany na dłużej. Niewerbalne środki przekazu w połączeniu z elementami werbalnymi tworzą swoiste znaczenie pragmatyczne i spełniają trzy zasadnicze funkcje: 1) znaczeniowej intensyfikacji znaków werbalnych, 2) zastępowania znaku werbalnego, który został celowo pominięty (to może mieć miejsce na wszystkich poziomach językowych: fonetycznym, morfologicznym, leksykalnym), 3) dodawania informacji do przekazu werbalnego chociaż, czasami, może on mieć charakter antonimiczny. Ponadto, niewerbalne środki przekazu w połączeniu z werbalnymi spełniają takie specyficzne funkcje jak: wzmocnia-

nie znaczenia, uszczegółowienie, zastępowanie całej kwestii werbalnej lub jej części. Według parametrów terytorialnych, niewerbalne środki przekazu mogą być podzielone na dwie grupy: *międzynarodową* oraz *narodową*. Inną cechą dystynktywną niewerbalnych środków przekazu jest brak klarowności ponieważ proces kodowania semantycznego jest określony przez kontekst, aranżację języka, kompetencję kulturową. Mimo różnorodności elementów składowych, ogłoszenia multimodalne są jednorodnymi jednostkami przekazu, których celem jest zintensyfikowanie skupienia uwagi klientów i spowodowanie, aby zdecydowali się na kupno promowanych produktów lub usług względnie – zmienili swój stosunek do nich.

Słowa kluczowe: *ogłoszenia multimodalne, prasa australijska, piktogramy i ideogramy, znaki werbalne i niewerbalne, funkcje.*

The origin of pictograms and ideograms has a very long history and is closely connected with the invention of writing. Therefore, the names “pictogram” and “pictography” come from Latin *pictus* – painted and Greek *grapho* – writing, *gramma* – letter, line; so a «pictogram» is a graphic sign that depicts a life situation or an event with the help of a picture. (Yermolenko, 2005, p. 125) The term “ideogram” (from Greek *idea* – idea i *gramma* – letter, line) is a written sign (of an ideographic type) that depicts the whole word or a root of a word, and does that in a form of a scheme picture or a symbol of a concept. (Selivanova, 2006, p. 172) In other words, an ideogram is a graphic sign which is a symbol, a sign of a concept that communicates the meaning but is not connected with the sound form.

According to Collins Dictionary, a pictogram is a simple drawing that represents something. (*Collins English Dictionary...*, 2011) Such definition is ambiguous as a lot of questions arise from it: like how a pictogram must be created, under what conditions it can be interpreted or even what is the actual difference between a pictogram and an ideogram.

It is worth mentioning that R. Abdullah has singled out not only pictograms but other forms of pictorial signs such as iconograms, cartograms, diagrams, logograms, typograms, phonograms and ideograms. (Abdullah, 2006, p. 7)

So, pictograms and ideograms are elements of coding systems that are used to transfer and communicate information. They have all characteristics of signs, that is why their structural, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic peculiarities are viewed from the aspect of formal, cognitive and communicative semiotics, as well as applied semiotics. We understand applied semiotics as a branch of linguistics that studies the sign language, the usage of signs in

the field of zoosemiotics, social semiotics, in the sphere of marketing, and creation of advertisements. (Andreichuk, 2011, p. 45) Due to the fact that pictograms and ideograms function in combination with language signs, it is logical to look at them from the linguo-semiotic point of view and analyze the correlation of natural language and other communicative sign systems.

If we talk about modern usage of ideograms and pictograms, more and more often they can be found in advertisements. More precisely, in the multimodal texts of mass-media advertisements, where a combination of verbal and non-verbal signs (pictograms and ideograms) are widely used. Copywriters and advertisers apply them in order to achieve the final aim – to sell a product or to encourage a consumer to perform a certain action or change his/her point of view.

Modern studies show that, besides pictograms, ideograms, and pictures, such nonverbal means as unusual letter writing and their capitalization, substitution of letters with pictograms or ideograms, intentional spelling mistakes, unusual word building patterns, changes of sizes of letters, variations of fonts, texts layout and colours are widely used in newspaper multimodal advertisements.

While studying multimodal (multicodal) advertisements, a big attention is to be paid to their visual part as visual signs make a deep emotional influence on the readers/consumers/customers. A famous American scholar L. Ries compared visualized multimodal advertisements to a visual hammer that drives the intended information into the customers' brains. (Ries, 2014)

Copywriters and advertisers appeal to human emotions as much as possible keeping in mind the fact that when the information is not just seen but sensed and felt, it will be remembered for a longer period of time. Alerted emotions can be compared to glue that sticks in our memory and makes us think about an advertisement again and again. (Ries, 2014)

According to the Ukrainian scholar T. Semeniuk, in the majority of cases non-verbal means are self-explanatory. (Semeniuk, 2017) Different graphical elements, that are parts of multimodal advertisements, make the forms of presenting the information more vivid and visualized, which, in their turn, make the comprehension easier, quicker, more memorable and persuasive.

The American scholar – P. Messaris, using Ch. Pearse's classification of signs, denotes that visual persuasion is possible because of certain functions of a non-verbal visual sign (image). First of all, he meant such features as iconicity, index and syntax implication. (Messaris, 1996) Iconicity gives copywriters an access to a wide range of emotional reactions of their target audience as well as possibilities to influence it. The index becomes an important component of the visual persuasion, as a graphic image can be

a documented proof of the authenticity of an advertised product, service or idea. A syntax implication of images lies in the non-verbal ambiguity, which forces the target audience to think and analyze the message, to correlate visual, non-verbal means/elements with the verbal ones and to create a unified picture. Such implied engagement makes the target customers feel that they actively participate in the perception and processing of the multimodal message, as well as in the decision making processes.

Another distinctive feature of means of non-verbal communication is their ambiguity because decoding of the real semantics is defined by the context, linguistic distribution, and background cultural knowledge. According to O. Anisimova, non-verbal means of communication attract the attention of the participants of the speech act, but again, in order to decode it, one must decipher and interpret it. (Anisimova, 2003, p. 8) L. Minaeva stresses that, if a lot of non-verbal signs are easy to decode, there are a lot of examples when visual elements of mass-media texts cannot be decoded unless the addressee belongs to the same culture. (Minaeva, 2002) Moreover, many verbal signs used in the newspaper advertisements are culturally marked and require additional cultural knowledge for their comprehension. The most complicated situations appear in the written communication when there are no direct contacts with copywriters or advertisers and their target customers. It means that it is not always clear what the intended primary meaning was and what exactly the copywriters wanted to convey. An example of such ambiguity can be seen in the following picture:



Picture 1: The Currier Mail, 25 Jan, 2013

The headline of this advertisement is Cellarbrations. *Cellarbrations* – is a chain of liquor stores in Australia. The name is a telescopic composite, that was created as a result of blending of two lexems – cellar + celebrations = cellarbrations. In the structure of the new word we can also see a substitution of letter “o” with the pictogram of gas bubbles (fizzy drink). Alcohol

and fizzy drinkst are attributive parts of all Australian celebrations and pastimes. It is important to point out that copywriters of Australian printed advertisements use a lot of red colour which, on the psychological level, has a strong manipulative impact and can evoke quick reactions and actions in the recipients. A special attention must be paid to the verbal part of this advertisements – a sentence that is placed on the red pin: *Grab a tinnie for your tinnie*. The interpretation of the meaning of this sentence can cause difficulties to non-native speakers or strangers because they may be unaware that “*Tinnie*” – is an Australian slang word which is used to refer to a boat and/or to name a can of beer. In such a way, Australians are encouraged to buy beer and to take it with them on a boat and spend their free time in a very typical for the local population manner.

In multimodal advertisements, non-verbal signs correlate with the verbal parts and perform three universal functions: (1) intensification of the meaning of verbal signs; (2) substitution of a verbal sign that has been omitted (this can happen on all language levels: phonetic, morphological, lexical); (3) addition of extra information to the verbal message, though, sometimes, it can be of an anthonymic character.

Non-verbal signs perform universal as well as specific functions. The Ukrainian scholar T. Semeniuk defines three types of correlation between verbal and non-verbal elements of the advertisements:

- (a) dublication,
- (b) addition,
- (c) disparity.

Dublication takes place when a non-verbal means of communication completely reflects the verbal information of verbal signs, depicting the same ideas and concepts. The following advertisement can serve as an example of dublication.



Picture 2: The Courier Mail, 29-30 Jun, 2013

The advertisement is about a fund-raising event. The message “make every step count” has been created with the help of the pictures of foot

prints and separate words that are written on them. So, the verbal phrase conveys the general information about the event that gets strengthened by the visual non-verbal sign. At the same time, other non-verbal means – colour, location of images, design – emphasise the meaning of the verbal message making it bright and memorable.

Addition means that the interpretation and cognition of a visual element depends upon the verbal explanation that accompanies it. Compare the below example of an advertisement from the Australian regional newspaper *The Cairns Weekend Post*.



Picture 3: The Cairns Weekend Post, 22-23 Jun, 2013

In the following advertisement one can see a road sign, where the names of possible professions/careers are used instead of the names of streets or cities. It is rather symbolic as young people, when choosing their career, find themselves at the life cross-roads, similar to the real city road signs. The actual verbal part is an addition to the image, and it gives more details and clarifications. It is important to point out that addition is the most typical form of correlation used in the printed advertisements in the Australian newspapers.

Disparity can be found when the verbal and non-verbal signs do not have direct points of contact, and the correlation can be created on the associative basis. For example, the advertisement from *the Sydney Morning Herald* explains the point:



Picture 4: The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 Jan, 2017

This example shows us the ways of attracting attention by using the opposites. The advertised verbal message and non-verbal visual elements do

not directly cooperate with each other. By saying this, we mean that a picture of an older gentleman looking pretty shabby and overweight does not really bring to mind the notions of “quality” or “master foodmakers”. As a result, we can say that the phrase “*only Fred supplies the best*” is the one that conveys the actual meaning of the message, while the image of Fred is just to strike the customers or attract their attention.

It is important to bring out attention to the fact that non-verbal elements perform the *function of replacement/substitution*. This means that they can substitute verbal units (a letter, letter clusters, morphemes, lexemes etc.) on different language levels. The most typical substitution that was found by us in the Australian printed newspapers is the one of letter “o”.

Below, there are a couple of examples that demonstrate how pictograms and ideograms substitute a verbal sign – letter – and also add more information about the concepts which the copywriters wanted to convey.



Picture 5: The Cairns Weekend Post, 28 Jan, 2012



Picture 6: The Herald Sun, 26 Jan, 2013



Picture 7: The Cairns Weekend Post, 22-23 Jun, 2013

HURRY, TIME'S RUNNING OUT!
NO TIME TO WASTE.
 IRELAND MITSUBISHI CAIRNS
END OF FINANCIAL YEAR SALE
ENDS JUNE 30

MIRAGE ES **LANCER SPORT**

FROM **\$7 PER DAY** **FREE PLATINUM PACK**
 • 12 months unlimited car hire
 • 10000 kms
 • 24/7 roadside assistance
 • 24/7 breakdown cover

\$1,000 CASH BACK*

MANUAL FROM \$12,990 DRIVE AWAY **MANUAL FROM \$19,990 DRIVE AWAY**

LANCER SPORT
 • 16 inch Alloy Wheels
 • Bullbar front bumper & radiator grille
 • V6X high rise rear spoiler
 • Chrome muffer tip
 • Side airbags

ANCAP
 • Bluetooth with audio streaming
 • Steering wheel controls
 • Active Stability Control
 • Side & curtain airbags
 • Capped price servicing
 • Premium paint

LANCER SPORT
 • 16 inch Alloy Wheels
 • Bullbar front bumper & radiator grille
 • V6X high rise rear spoiler
 • Chrome muffer tip
 • Side airbags

LANCER SPORT
 • 16 inch Alloy Wheels
 • Bullbar front bumper & radiator grille
 • V6X high rise rear spoiler
 • Chrome muffer tip
 • Side airbags

Picture 8: The Cairns Weekend Post, 22-23 Jun, 2013

LOOK

**COMMODORE VZ '05, V6,
 auto, RWC, rego, \$7,500.
 Low kms. 0405 080 111**

Picture 9: The Saturday Age, 26 Jun, 2013

SHO Cairns!
 1974-1977-1978-1979-2013
PRE-SOLD TICKETS ON SALE TODAY!
 NOW at Stockland Cairns & Cairns Show Ground

SHOWS
 • Showbags
 • Famous Rivers
 • Animals
 • Deeped Dogs
 • Entertainment
 • Spectacles
 • Auctioneer
 Plus loads more for the whole family

NEW 3 DAY PASSES AVAILABLE
DISCOUNTED PRICES
 All Pre-Sale Venues only

1 Day Pass	\$200.00
2 Day Pass	\$350.00
3 Day Pass	\$500.00
Child 1-12	\$100.00
Child 13-17	\$150.00
Adult 18+	\$200.00
Senior 65+	\$150.00
Family 2-4	\$700.00

SIDE SHOW BONUS DOLLARS
 Earn extra for 2013 Show! Buy 100 tickets for \$100.00 and receive 100 Bonus Dollars!

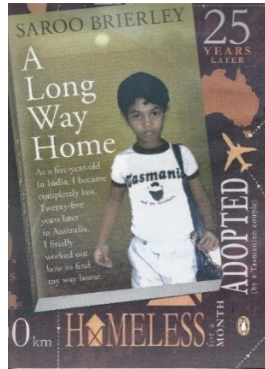
Cairns Show Association • Phone: 07467 68899 • Fax: 07467 36733 Email: info@cairns-show.com.au • Website: www.cairnsshow.com.au • Follow us on www.facebook.com/TheCairnsShow

Picture 10: The Cairns Post, 5 Jul, 2013

So, we can clearly see the most typical substitutions of letter “O” with the corresponding and contextually defined ideograms and pictograms. The following pictorial replacements were found: sun – in the solar energy advertisement; a tennis ball – in the newspaper section, devoted to sport news; zero – in case of no interest rate when buying a car; timer – to attract attention that time is running out and customers should hurry up if they want to buy a car at a good deal; eyes – to attract attention to the given

advertisement; and the last one – a ferriswheel – to talk and notify about a fair that is going to take place in Cairns, Australia. It is important to mention that throughout our research while analyzing eight newspapers, it was found that a sports ball is the most typical pictogram that substitutes letter “O”. In most cases these are tennis, rugby or golf balls.

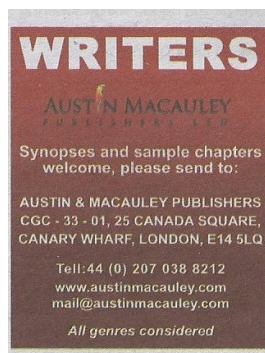
Another very interesting substitution of letter “O” can be found in the following example, taken from the newspaper *The Age*.



Picture 11: The Saturday Age, 29 Jun, 2013

One can see a word “homeless” where letter “O” is substituted by a pictogram of a house that is crossed out. This little pictogram conveys the meaning of the whole word and is very self-explanatory. Besides that, a very interesting pictograms of Australia, a plane and plane routes that start in Tasmania, give a short insight into the story of a little boy who was lost and managed to find his real parent, 25 years after being adopted.

Another typical example of a letter substitution is the one for letter “T”.



Picture 12: The Telegraph, 23-29 Jun, 2013



Picture 13: The Cairns Post, 26 Nov, 2012

In the first example, when the goal of advertisers is to promote their printing services and find the potential authors, the letter “I” is substituted with a pictogram of a bird. In the second example letter “I” is substituted with the ordinal numeral “1” which performs two functions – substitutes letter “I” in the word *choice* and the word *first*. In such a way copywriters emphasise the premium quality their store and visualize the information making it more precise and squeezed. The text layout is also rather unusual as its second part – *WE BEAT everyone’s liquor prices* – is located on the pictogram of a sports bat. The copywriters capitalized the key words WE BEAT and wrote them in white colour against the black background. The second part of the sentence – everyone’s prices – is written in very small letters which may mean that it is not very important. At the same time the chosen combination of such colours as yellow and black stands for aggression (these are the colours of a wasp) and conveys the meaning of aggression and readiness to fight. The last part of the advertisement – *Even if they’re crazy enough to undercut us, we’ll beat them again* – is written in small letters but on the red plate which underlines power and action.

According to the territorial parameter, non-verbal means of communication can be divided into two groups: *international* and *national*. The majority of our examples have national features but sometimes international visual signs are found. Among them there is the sign that is used to describe American money – \$, a pictogram of a heart – ♡, images of the sun and a ball, international smiley faces and emoticons, and an ideogram & etc.

For example, there were found a couple of advertisements that had a photo of a pig on them, or better to say – a piggy bank. A concept which is understandable and clear to all the readers.

In many cultures, including Australian, a pictogram of a pig means savings. It very clearly depicts and conveys the main idea of the advertisement – to encourage the consumers to save money by buying goods that are on special, or we can also say that it very effectively manipulates their consciousness and encourages them to act, that is to start buying goods.



Picture 14: The Herald Sun, 26 Jan, 2013

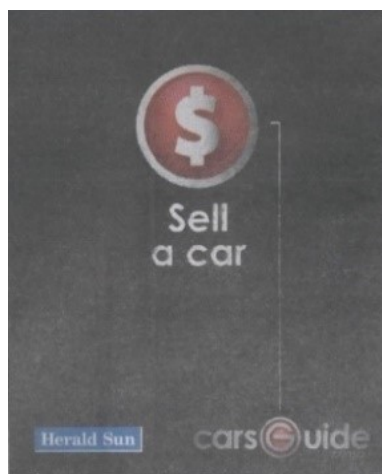


Picture 15: The Cairns Post, 5 Jul, 2013

The next examples contain ideograms that stand for the international monetary items.



Picture 16: The Weekend Cairns Post, 28 Feb, 2012



Picture 17: The Herald Sun, 26 Jan, 2013

By using the symbols that depict the US dollar or euro, copywriters make their messages clear and easy to comprehend. In the given examples non-verbal means perform the functions of substitution, intensification, and attraction, making the messages more clear, attractive and memorable. Such examples make it possible to conclude that internalisation of pictograms and ideograms and their cross-cultural convention makes them understandable and clear to consumers both on local and on international levels.

To conclude, we may say that non-verbal means, mainly ideograms and pictograms, became an inalienable part of modern multimodal advertisements in the Australian printed newspapers. With their help, newspapers advertisements become more appealing, easy to read, comprehend, and remember. As visual means they appeal to human senses and, on the subconscious level, stimulate customers to pay attention to the advertised product, to think about it and to act.

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