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Term Paper

„Idioms in present-day Anglophone commercial advertisements”

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## INTRODUCTION

English idioms are widely used in everyday conversation. They frequently appear, both in written and spoken English. Since idioms often do not make sense when read literally, it is important to be familiar with how to use them all. Even though it may appear tiresome, learning idioms can be fun, especially when you compare them to idioms in your native tongue.

One of the most crucial components of mastering the English language is studying English idioms. Every speech contains passages where the words that make up this sentence lose their primary meaning. The general meaning of this term was not developed by fusing many word meanings.

Idioms can be a vital part of commercial advertising, by making the message more memorable and attention-grabbing. Idioms are frequently utilized in advertising to establish a rapport with the audience by utilizing idioms or phrases that are universally understood.

Idioms may be a powerful tool in advertising for businesses if they are used in a way that connects with the target market and supports the message of the brand. The topic of the term paper is usage of idioms in present-day Anglophone commercial advertisements. My main goal is to analyze the functions of idioms.

**The object** of the research paper is confined to the role of idioms in present-day Anglophone advertisements.

**The subject matter of the study** is concerned with the functions of idioms in the advertisements.

**The aim of this research** is to study the impact of idioms on Anglophone commercial advertisements; to specify the importance of fixed multi-word utterances.

**The theoretical value** of the paper lies in introducing the theoretical basis for further research, providing a more detailed insight into the definition of “idiom”.

**The practical value** of the research is to have an ability to analyze the advertisements, to be aware of beneficial or harmful features of Idioms.

The research paper is arranged as follows:

**Introduction** explains the choice of the topic of the study, states the object and the topics matter of the research, purposes and tasks.

**The first chapter** focuses on types of approaches to Idioms; outlines theoretical foundations for their studies.

**The second chapter** highlights the impact of fixed multi-word utterances on people.

**General conclusions** describe the collected study results, provide theoretically valuable inferences and outline the key perspectives for further investigation of the subject under discussion.

## CHAPTER ONE. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF IDIOMS.

### 1.1 Approaches to the Study of Idioms

Idioms are fixed multi-word utterances that are regarded linguistic units that theoretically encode non-compositional meaning. Several essential topics for the study of language and the mind are presented (e.g., whether they are stored in the lexicon or in memory, whether they have internal or external syntax similar to other expressions of the language, whether their conventional use is parallel to their non-compositional meaning, whether they are processed in similar ways to regular compositional expressions of the language, etc.). Idioms illustrate the fundamental idiom forms that have been discussed in the linguistic literature, the aspects on which idiomaticity lies, as well as some similarities and differences with other categories of formulaic phrases.

M.Teresa Espinal and Jaume Mateu(2019) also say that idioms display a fascinating behavior in regard to the collection of semantic variables that define their meaning (i.e., conventionality, compositionality, and transparency, as well as aspectuality, referentiality, thematic roles, etc.).

More specific applications limit the use of idiom to a specific type of unit, such as one that is fixed, semantically ambiguous, metaphorical, or, classically, “*not the sum of its parts,*” as in *kick the bucket* or *spill the beans*. These are sometimes referred to as pure idioms (Fernando and Flavell 1981: passim; Cowie 1988: 133). By and large, clear analogies like “*skate on thin ice,*” and phrases with no possible literal meaning, like “*move heaven and earth,*” are occasionally removed from the definition of an idiom.

Idiom, in its broadest sense, refers to a variety of multiword items, whether or not they are semantically opaque. The Anglo-American tradition of dictionaries frequently refers to FEIs що це за абрєвiатypа? as “idioms,” without providing any more typological description. In Makkai, non-compositional polymorphemic words like “*blackbird*” and non-freely generated collocations and constructions are covered by idiom (1972) Hockett’s perspective is still more expansive because he

includes even single morphemes because their meanings cannot be inferred (1958: 171ff.).

In this part types of approaches to idioms will be highlighted.

The first type of Approaches is broader and semantic. Many older, more traditional models place a strong emphasis on the unanalyzability of units or semantic non-compositionality. These models, which were inspired by Fernando and Flavell, can be categorized as structuralist (1981: 10). Hockett establishes a reductionist model of the lexicon in his exploration of the concept of word, with all irreducible components—the exceptions to the principles of free composition—being idioms in his terms, regardless of whether they are morphemes, words, groups, clauses, or even exchanges (1958: 166-73).

The second type is **syntactic**. A secondary classification of units that have already been recognized as non-compositional in structuralist methods like those of Makkai and Healey is syntactic structure or function. But from a transformational or transformational-generative (TG) grammar perspective, studies of fixed expressions and idioms begin with syntax (Rosamund Moon, 1998: 9). Because of their syntactic or grammatical irregularities or anomalousness, strings are classified as non-compositional units. FEIs are thought of as specialized instances of syntactic rules or as solitary realizations of rules. Since productivity is a key element of TG models, spontaneous generation is not possible because such models are either nonproductive or only partially productive (Weinreich 1969: 24 f.). While Harris (1988: passim) describes "a finite learnable store of idiomatic material" that deviates from the grammar rules, Radford (1988: passim) discusses sets or classes of unusual statements. Attention is frequently drawn to pure idioms, especially those that are semantically opaque or semi-transparent and are homographic with compositional strings, in addition to FEIs with verbs with complementation, including phrasal verbs, because these clause-like structures are more complex and interesting syntactically than lower-level phrases like nominal groups and prepositional phrases.

The third type of Approaches is **Functional**. Other, more behavioral approaches regard FEIs as encoding or enabling tools, as opposed to the previously described approaches' primary focus on the internal properties of FEIs and their roles within the lexicon. According to research in psycholinguistics and collocations, such those by Peters (1983) and Sinclair, language is encoded in chunks rather than words. (1987) Others, like Coulmas (1979b, 1981), Drazdauskiene (1981), and Strässler (1982), have discussed the use of FEIs and standard formulae from discourse perspectives, as strategies for establishing contacts, as boundary markers or gambits, and so forth. A similar approach is taken by Lattey (1986), who examines pure idioms and the like in terms of a pragmatic classification to show how they fit into in-context communication.

The last type is **Lexicographical**. Compiling a database of FEIs is fundamentally a lexicographical effort. In contrast to dictionaries in the European tradition, which were influenced by Soviet phraseological models, general dictionaries in the Anglo-American tradition have tended to be theoretical. They occasionally fail to distinguish between compounds, phrasal verbs, and other FEIs while still listing FEIs. Proverbs and sayings are occasionally referred as such, although more frequently FEIs are grouped together under a notional or real term like “idioms” or “phrases (Rosamund Moon,1998:14).

## **1.2 Typology of Idiomatic Expressions**

In this part of term paper three main types of idioms will be disclosed in detail. The results of linguistic analysis will be consistent with the intended idiomatic meaning when phrase-induced polysemy has arisen, especially in compositional idioms. Compositional idioms are idiomatic expressions whose meaning can be deduced from their individual word meanings and grammatical structure. This should be easier to understand because the language and defined meanings are consistent. Non-compositional idioms will have conflicting linguistic and defined meanings, making comprehension more difficult. Non-compositional idioms are idiomatic expressions whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of their individual words or their syntax. The evidence is consistent with this initial



classification: compositional idioms are mastered more quickly than non-compositional idioms (Gibbs, Nayak, & Cutting, 1989).

In compositional idioms, there is typically some connection between the words that make up the phrase and its intended meaning. How to use and comprehend these idioms depends on the particular relationship and pragmatic considerations. Word meanings can match an idiom's intended meaning in at least three different ways (Cacciari & Glucksberg, 1991). In the first type of mapping, obscure compositional idioms are used. (In linguistics, mapping refers to the way in which elements of one linguistic structure correspond to elements of another linguistic structure.) More specifically, mapping involves the relationship between the form and meaning of language. The meanings of individual words can nevertheless restrict usage and interpretation even when it is unclear how an idiom's components relate to its meaning in this type of idiom. The semantics of the term "kick" for the idiom "*kick the bucket*," for example, constrain interpretation and the potential for discourse.

Compositional and transparent idioms, often known as Type CT idioms, make up the second category of idioms. There are one-to-one semantic relationships between the idiom's words and its meaning components in certain idioms, typically as a result of metaphorical correspondences between the idiom's words and its meaning components. For instance, in the phrase "*break the ice*," the term "*break*" refers to the idiomatic sense of altering an emotion or mood, while the word "*ice*" refers to the idiomatic sense of interpersonal tension. Likewise, the components that make up the phrase "*spill the beans*" correspond to those that make up its meaning. *Spill* is the action of disclosing or letting something out, and *beans* is the substance that was previously hidden or unknown (Douglas Biber, Randi Reppen, 2015:125-145)

Additionally, the words themselves in these idioms have developed unique idiomatic meanings, such as one definition of *spill* in this context is "*to reveal*," and another definition of *beans* in this context is "*information*." Both the ordinarily and abnormally decomposable idioms from Nunberg's (1978) and Gibbs, Nayak, and Cutting's (1989) classifications fall under this category of idioms. Normal

decomposable idioms, like “*pop the question*,” contain almost literal relationships between their constituent parts, but in unusually decomposable idioms, like “*spill the beans*” or “*break the ice*,” these relationships are more or less metaphorical. There is no strong reason to distinguish between these two forms of phrase-induced polysemy since it should occur regardless of the original kind of connections between an idiom's component words and that idiom's component idiomatic meanings.

The third kind of idioms described by Cacciari and Glucksberg is type M, or quasi-metaphorical (1991). “*Giving up the ship*,” for instance, is both an ideal or archetypal example of the act of surrendering and a word that may be used to describe any incidence of total surrender. In these idioms, the literal referent of the idiom is also an instance of the idiomatic meaning. Other examples of this idiom kind include “*count your chickens before they hatch*” лапки скрізь по тексту мають бути однакові to suggest having premature trust in an outcome, “*carry coals to Newcastle*” to symbolize bringing something to a place where there is already an excess of it, and so forth. This group of idioms includes metonyms like “*bury the hatchet*,” which originally referred to the ritualistic process of burying a hatchet but is now used to describe any incident of peacemaking in its entirety.

This illustrative division of idioms into three broad categories points to some factors that influence how well they are understood and used. The functional relationships between an idiom's parts and its meaning ought to control comprehension and usage. When such functional linkages are retained, lexical replacements, syntactic functions, and discourse productivity should all be conceivable. Furthermore, the use of an idiom in a different form from its original form must have some clear communication or discourse function. As was previously noted, any change must be explicable to a reader or listener. Thus, neither a structural nor a functional typology will be entirely adequate. The internal semantics of an idiom and the pragmatics of the discourse environment are always jointly responsible for determining comprehension, application, and even alteration of the idiom (Cacciari Cristina and Tabossi Patrizia, 1993:17)

There are some more types of idioms due to M. Teresa Espinal and Jaume Mateu: quasi idioms, whose meaning includes the meaning of the lexical components plus an additional non-compositional meaning (Mel'čuk, 1995) (e.g., *give the breast, start a family*).

Phrasal idioms (lexically headed) versus clausal idioms (headed by a sentential functional head: a fixed tense or mood, a modal, obligatory (or impossible) sentential negation, or CP-material such as a complementizer or a *wh*-phrase) (Horvath & Siloni, 2016,2017) (e.g., *land on one's feet* vs. *can't hold a candle to someone/something*).

Idiomatic phrases (which do not distribute their meanings to their components) versus idiomatically combining expressions (whose meanings—while conventional—are distributed among their parts) (Nunberg, Sag, & Wasow, 1994) (e.g., *saw logs* 'to sleep' vs. *pull strings* 'to exploit connections').

Constructional idioms, which are not lexically fixed in full and whose meaning is associated with the whole construction (Jackendoff, 2002) (e.g., 'the *way* construction', '*the X-er, the Y-er*' comparative correlative construction, 'the *V* time-away construction', 'the *V* one's part-of-the-body *out/off* construction', 'the *X after X* construction' (Fillmore et al., 1988).

### **Conclusions to Chapter One**

Idioms are fixed multi-word expressions that encode meaning that is not compositional. The study of idioms is essential for understanding language and the mind, and this chapter has covered several important topics, such as whether idioms are stored in the lexicon or in memory, whether they have internal or external syntax, whether their conventional use is parallel to their non-compositional meaning, and whether they are processed similarly to regular compositional expressions. Idiomatic meaning is defined by semantic characteristics like as conventionality, compositionality, transparency, aspectuality, referentiality, and thematic roles. Specific applications limit the use of idioms to a fixed, semantically ambiguous, metaphorical, or "not the sum of its parts" type of unit. However, in its broadest sense, idiom refers to a variety of multiword items, whether or not they are

semantically opaque. Approaches to idioms can be categorized as broader and semantic, syntactic, functional, and lexicographical. Each approach offers a different perspective on how idioms are analyzed and understood.

The structuralist approach emphasizes the unanalyzability of units or semantic non-compositionality, while the syntactic approach looks at the grammatical irregularities or anomalousness of strings. The functional approach regards FEIs as encoding or enabling tools, while the lexicographical approach focuses on compiling a database of FEIs.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS IN COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS

#### 2.1. The Role of Idioms in Advertisements

A commercial advertising is a type of marketing communication tool that is used to promote and sell goods or services to a specific audience. It entails developing a convincing message that grabs the attention of potential clients and pushes them to act.

The use of idioms in commercial advertisements is critical in conveying a memorable and compelling message to the target audience. Idioms are terms with a figurative or metaphorical meaning that differs from their literal meaning. They are frequently employed in daily language to make a message more vivid and striking.

Idioms may be used in commercial advertising to capture the audience's attention, elicit emotions, generate a memorable message that lingers in the audience's mind, and build a unique brand identity that distinguishes the product from its rivals. Idioms in commercial commercials may assist develop an emotional connection with the audience and deliver a message in a memorable and engaging fashion, boosting the possibility of buyers taking action and acquiring the advertised product or service.

Advertising has a lot of influence. Manufacturers of commercial goods and services frequently spend sizable amounts to market their goods through the media because they are aware that a successful campaign can win them critical market share and that an unsuccessful campaign can have disastrous results. Advertising is by its very nature promotional, and it draws our attention. In order to achieve this goal, it must first identify its target audience and then captivate that audience with a message that is both attractive and unforgettable (Niklas Fourberg et al., 2021:18-20)

From a linguistic standpoint, commercial English must be distinctive, persuading, educational, and enlightening. It must employ a linguistic manner that will help draw readers in while also effectively communicating information. One of

the language techniques used in advertising is the use of phrases. Because the majority of prospective customers are acquainted with them, idioms are used in advertising. To create a pun and, as a result, a connection with a product, an element of an idiom is barely altered or substituted by another word. Idioms are frequently used in advertising as a rhetorical device to promote a specific product by adding comedy, grabbing the reader's attention, and bolstering the message.

As representatives of national cultural tastes and traditions, they are also useful instructional resources for emphasizing the distinctive linguistic and cultural features of a foreign language (Abu Joloud, M. S., 2014: 220–239)

## 2.2. Analysis of Idioms and their Functions in Advertisements

Let us consider the following example of commercial advertisement from the company “VIA rail Canada”:

“TIME IS MONEY. WANT SOME?”



“Time is money” is usually said to emphasize that you should not waste time, because you could be using it to earn money. This idiom is often used in advertisements for productivity tools or financial products to suggest that time is a valuable commodity.

This advertisement was created for “VIA rail Canada”, which is a Canadian Crown corporation mandated to operate intercity passenger rail service in Canada (TA -[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g155025-d2230208-Reviews-VIA\\_Rail\\_Canada-Quebec.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g155025-d2230208-Reviews-VIA_Rail_Canada-Quebec.html)).

According to the functions of idioms outlined in *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, the given expression may be referred to “formulaic sequences as devices of memory limitations”, the idiom in this advertisement has such sub-function as

time-buyers. Here are some effects of this type of function:

- 1) planning time without losing the turn
- 2) vehicles for fluency and rhythm (Alison Wray, 2002:1-28)

So, the analysed idiom was used in the given advertisement with some purposes: to catch people's attention with the help of the important word "TIME"; to emphasize their company's value, to show that the speed of their trains can save them time and as we all know TIME IS MONEY.

Let us consider the following example of commercial advertisement from the company "Lucky Strike": "STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER"

The phrase "*straight from the shoulder*" is an idiom that means to "*be direct, honest, and straightforward in communication, without any attempt to hide or sugarcoat the truth.*" It can also simply being frank or candid in expressing one's opinions or feelings. Essentially, it refers to someone speaking plainly and openly without any pretense or deception. The origin of



the phrase is unclear, but it may have originated from boxing, where a punch delivered straight from the shoulder would be a direct and forceful blow.

The idiom was used by the company "Lucky Strike" in according to advertise their product, in particular, cigarettes.

According to Formulaic sequences as devices of social interaction outlined in *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, the idiom in this advertisement has such function as manipulation of others. The possible effects of this type of function involve satisfying physical, emotional and cognitive needs (A.Wray, M. Perkins, 2000: 1-28.).

The idiom "*straight from the shoulder*" was used by company "Lucky Strike" in the advertisement to convince the customers of benefit and usefulness of their product. They say: "*Your throat protection-against irritation-against cough*". The company positions itself as very honest, so they used the given idiom.

Let us consider the next example of commercial advertisement from the company ThatWeiler.

## “TO HAVE A FINGER IN EVERY PIE”



The idiom "*TO HAVE A FINGER IN EVERY PIE*" refers to having a wide range of interests and involvements, frequently with the suggestion that the person may be meddling or intervening in matters that are not their own. It implies that the person is excessively interested, engaged, or nosy in various matters that don't concern them, or that they frequently attempt to exercise control over circumstances where they have no right to do so. The expression may also suggest that the speaker is eager and enjoys participating in a variety of endeavors.

According to functions of idioms, the given idiom is a formulaic sequence that serves as a device of memory limitations (посилання на першоджерело), the idiom in this advertisement has such subfunction as manipulation of information and its possible effect gaining and retaining access to information (A. Wray, M. Perkins,



2000:1-28.)

“ThotWeiler” is a company, that creates designs. They produce any kind of illustrations and motion graphics (TW-

<http://www.thethotweiler.com/>). They have used such an idiom with the purpose of convincing people that they keep their fingers on the pulse and are definitely good at creating illustrations.

Let us examine the following idiom used by the company “The North Face.”  
 “GO THE EXTRA MILE”

The expression "go the extra mile" refers to going above and beyond what is required to accomplish a task or meet a person's requirements. It is frequently used to motivate people to go above and beyond standards and to demonstrate initiative and



devotion. The idiom implies that in order to get a better result or leave a stronger impact, the individual should go above and beyond what is necessary or anticipated. According to Formulaic sequences as devices of situation manipulation, outlined in *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, the idiom in this advertisement has such function as changing one's physical and perceptual environment with such effects as satisfying physical, emotional, and cognitive needs (A. Wray, 2002:1-28)

The famous company "The North Face" has used the idiom "*Go the extra mile*", to encourage people to be the best and the first, of course, with the help of their clothes it would be easier. So, actually, this kind of advertising can boost sales.

Let us analyze one more example of idiom, that was used by Ikea in their advertisement.

"OUT OF THE BLUE"

The idiom "*out of the blue*" refers to anything that occurs unexpectedly or abruptly, with no notice or preparation. It frequently refers to something unexpected, strange, or astonishing that appears to emerge from nowhere. For example, if someone receives a job offer "*out of the blue*," it suggests they were not anticipating it and it completely caught them off guard. Similarly, when someone says something "*out of the blue*," it indicates they stated it abruptly and unexpectedly, with no prior signal or context.



According to the functions of idioms outlined in *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon*, the given expression may be referred to "formulaic sequences as devices of memory limitations", the idiom in this advertisement has such sub-function as

time-buyers. Here are some effects of this type of function:

- 1) planning time without losing the turn
- 2) vehicles for fluency and rhythm (A.Wray, M. Perkins, 2000: 1-28.).

One of the most famous companies, Ikea, has used the idiom “*out of the blue*” to persuade customers that the company’s products can be needed in any moment, so people should be prepared.

### **Conclusions to Chapter Two**

Commercial advertising is a powerful tool that marketers use to promote and sell goods or services to specific audiences. Idioms play an important role in commercial advertising because they help create memorable and compelling messages that resonate with the audience. They can be used to capture attention, elicit emotions, and build a unique brand identity. Idioms in commercial advertisements can also help develop an emotional connection with the audience, making it more likely for them to take action and purchase the advertised product or service.

Commercial English must be distinctive, persuasive, educational, and enlightening, employing a linguistic manner that effectively communicates information. The use of idioms is an effective way to achieve this because prospective customers are often familiar with them. Idioms can be used in advertising as rhetorical devices to promote a specific product by adding humor, grabbing the reader's attention, and bolstering the message.

Idioms are also useful instructional resources for emphasizing the distinctive linguistic and cultural features of a foreign language. The functions of idioms in advertisements can vary from being time-buyers to manipulating others. The former function can help people plan their time better, while the latter can satisfy physical, emotional, and cognitive needs.

Finally, I analyzed five examples of commercial advertisements that used idioms. In each example, the idioms were used to convey a specific message to the target audience. The first example, from VIA Rail Canada, used the idiom “*time is money*” to emphasize the company's value proposition of saving customers time. The second example, from Lucky Strike, used the idiom “*straight from the shoulder*” to position

the company as honest and trustworthy. The third example, from ThotWeiler, used the idiom *"to have a finger in every pie"* to convey the idea that the company has a wide range of interests and involvements. The fourth example, from The North Face, used the idiom *"go the extra mile"* to encourage to go above and beyond norms and to display initiative and dedication. And the final example, from Ikea, used *"out of the blue"* to to convince clients that the company's products may be required at any time. Overall, the use of idioms in commercial advertising is an effective way to create memorable and compelling messages that resonate with the target audience.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of the term paper is to show the importance of idioms, their functions in commercial advertisement, and to analyze their impact on people.

Firstly, idioms are frequently used in business advertising to draw attention to a product or service and set it apart from rival offerings. Idioms can rapidly transmit a message or emotion that connects with the target audience because they are frequently distinctive, catchy, and unforgettable.

However, poorly used idioms can have the opposite impact and backfire, repelling prospective consumers or even harming the image of the business. For instance, if an idiom is used insensitively or offensively, it may repel particular demographics and bring about a bad impression of the company.

Idioms' effectiveness in commercial advertising generally relies on the adept use of language and the capacity to engage the target audience in a meaningful and genuine manner. Idioms have the potential to be a potent instrument for increasing brand recognition, connection, and loyalty when used wisely.

The use of idioms in advertising is based on the theory of cognitive linguistics, which suggests that language is not just a means of communication, but also shapes the way we think and perceive the world around us. Idioms are a part of our shared cultural knowledge and are deeply rooted in our mental lexicon, making them a powerful tool for conveying meaning and emotion in advertising.

The practical purpose of the research was to analyze the advertisements, to be aware of beneficial or harmful features of idioms. The term paper can also be used to raise awareness about the importance of cultural competence in advertising. By understanding the cultural significance of idioms, advertisers can avoid using offensive or inappropriate language that could harm their brand reputation.

Overall, the use of idioms in commercial advertisements is based on a variety of theoretical frameworks, including cognitive linguistics, persuasive communication, consumer behavior, cultural branding, and semiotics.

## RESUME

Дослідження зосереджено на важливості та використанні ідіом у комерційній рекламі. У курсовій роботі висвітлюються такі аспекти, як підходи до визначення поняття «ідіома» та їх функції в рекламному дискурсі..

Практична частина містить аналізи ідіом та обговорення проблематики їх визначення.

Предметом цієї роботи є ідіоми в комерційній рекламі, де розглядається використання ідіом для створення пам'ятних і привабливих слоганів, які можуть привернути увагу цільової аудиторії та допомогти підвищити впізнаваність бренду.

У цьому дослідженні розглядаються теоретичні основи використання ідіом у рекламі. Крім того, досліджуються різні приклади використання ідіом в комерційній рекламній інформації, аналізується ефективність і можливі ризики використання ідіом в рекламі.

Результатом цієї роботи є розуміння теоретичних засад використання ідіом у рекламі, їх ефективності та ризиків використання, а також здатність використовувати ці знання для створення більш ефективних та привабливих рекламних повідомлень.

**Key words:** ідіома, комерційна реклама, вплив, увага, формульна мова, комунікація, переконання, лінгвістичний аналіз.

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