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LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS IN BRITISH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Social advertising is a type of non-commercial advertising created to draw public attention to certain social issues and raise public awareness of them. The distribution of this type of advertising is not intended to gain any profit. It usually focuses on social values and areas of interest, ranging from health and charity to appeals to vote in elections. Social advertising originated in the early twentieth century. The first social advert (1906) was a call from the American Civic Association to protect Niagara Falls from the damage caused by energy companies [1].

The social advertising of each country has specific cultural and linguistic features that may vary depending on the area in which it is used. An analysis of social advertising that can be seen in public transport in the UK today has shown that there are 4 main themes that such ads focus on: 1) safety; 2) digitalisation; 3) politeness; 4) law-abidingness. Let's take a closer look at each of the thematic groups.

The British are very concerned about safety, including in transport. Here are some examples of social advertising that encourage passengers to be careful and cautious: ***Mind** the gap when getting on and off the train / **Mind** the step. When*

hopping on and off the raised seats on our new trains. Such ads often contain imperatives.

Such ads may also contain repetitions (often three), alliteration, and rhyme: *Be **safe**. Feel **safe**. Travel **safe**. / See it. Say it. Sorted.* (announcements about dangerous suspicious objects and bags left on the train) / *Watch your step. **Go slow** to avoid **slips, trips** and banana **splits**. Take care and use handrails as you pass through the station, especially on steps or wet surfaces.*

Here's another example of a social advert that is focused on safety, which has a number of gerunds for different types of sexual harassment on public transport, as British society is actively fighting against such phenomena: ***Cyber flashing. Upskirting. Exposing. Catcalling. Staring. Touching. Pressing.** It's all sexual harassment and it won't be tolerated on our network. See it or experience it, text British Transport Police on 61016. In an emergency, always dial 999.*

Safety notices often contain polite words: ***Please** keep your fingers away from the lift doors at all times and ensure children are supervised. **Thank you**.* They also may include compound words: *Our colleagues wear **bodycams** for everyone's safety.*

One of the key points to security for British society is also the mental health of its citizens. Here's an example of a social advert placed at train stations that aims to deal with the stigma that psychological help is something to be ashamed of. The advert is characterised by repetition: *It's **okay** not to be **okay**.*

The following group of social advertising on British transport is focused on the processes of digitalisation (i.e. the transfer of the transport system to the digital world). Such social advertising is characterised by using the following linguistic features: 1) imperatives and repetitions – ***Book** from **anywhere** travel to **anywhere**. **Buy** your train tickets online or on our app / Fly through the station with paperless **eTickets**. **Buy eTickets** online before you travel to skip queues and limit your contact with others;* 2) telescopisms – *Enjoy our **enterTRAINment**;* 3) alliteration – ***Top up. Tap in. Go!*** 3) substantive adjectives – *Oyster and **Contactless** are not valid from this station.* An interesting example of wordplay is the following advert where the lexeme “F-word” does not refer to a swear word, but to the word “fee” – *We never use the **F-word** - No booking **Fees** when you buy an eTicket direct.*

The values of British society are multinationalism and tolerance. That is why a lot of social advertising on public transport is designed to bring up respect and polite attitude towards others. Such advertisements are characterised by using of the following linguistic features in it: 1) antonyms – *A **little** kindness goes a **long** way;* 2) polite words – ***Please** take off your backpack to make room for others;* 3) imperatives and similarly structured sentences – ***Be** tolerant. Not every disability can be seen / Getting your groove on? Get your headphones on!* 4) words in a figurative, metaphorical sense – *There's no excuse for **prickly** behaviour.*

An interesting example is the use of various symbols in social advertising that appeals to a polite attitude towards others, similar to the way swear words are hidden in various texts: *There i\$ n* excu\$e f*r @bu\$e*.

The last thematic group includes adverts focused on law-abidingness. The linguistic features of such social advertising are repetitions, the use of similarly structured sentences, and homophones: *No railcard? No excuse. / No ticket? No excuse. Seriously, it's only **fair** we all pay the **fare**. / Buy ticket. **Bye** fine. / 90,000 reasons you shouldn't fare-dodge. Buy a valid ticket. **Fare's fair**.*

Thus, social advertising in modern public transport in the UK is marked by specific linguistic features depending on its thematic focus.

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