FANTASY WORD SOUNDING
IN MARKETING PHONOSEMANTICS

Maria Danilchuk

The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Abstract: The paper represents the results of a linguistic experiment aimed at establishing if the sounding of different fantasy brand names can cause the same associations in collective consciousness. The experiment drew upon crowdsourcing. The data received can be useful for marketing phonosemantics in relation to the methods used for the creation of new brand names.

Key words: phonosemantics, marketing phonosemantics, naming, brand name, experimental phonosemantics, neologism.

1. Introduction: Marketing phonosemantics

The new term *marketing phonosemantics*, the principles of which should help create new effective and memorable brand names, appeared at the beginning of the 21st century (Куцерубов 2011). The main point of marketing phonosemantics is its potential for using sounds as a tool of influence on the consumer. The audible difference in sounds and its perception can be used in brand naming, slogans, and creation of advertising texts because the knowledge of these differences can help the author generate the needed insight in order to anticipate the desired associations, which can be subsequently referenced exactly to the core audience (Володина 2011; Куликова 2008; Шестакова, *s.a.*).

The mechanisms of creating neologisms in linguistics resemble the methods used in marketing when a new brand name is created (Названова 2013; Скок 2011; Уланович 2013; Ягафарова 2014). One of the naming stages in marketing is phonosemantic analysis. It is not only described in marketing course books and taught in universities but is also used by marketing specialists intuitively. The real potential of phonosemantic analysis in solving naming problems in marketing should be proved linguistically.

According to the common opinion shared by marketing specialists, an appropriate name raises sales and forms a positive image of the company (Андреева 2003). It is generally admitted that a brand name should sound soft. Any word, especially a neologism, may be pleasant or unpleasant to the ear (Кожанова 2007). Nonetheless, experimental researches in the sphere of the potential of Russian marketing phonosemantics in solving naming problems have yet to be held.

It is also said that human reaction to a word as a sequence of sounds is subconscious and can be seen as an emotional tone. Osgood (1967) was the first to investigate this phenomenon. Later Zhuravlev (Журавлев 1974; 1991) discovered these subconscious meanings for the Russian language. A lot of experiments have already proved the existence of the phenomenon of phonosemantics in isolation, without reference to their practical implementation. Therefore, the question of the potential of phonosemantics in the sphere of modern marketing has yet to be explored.

Communication in the life of a modern person is connected to a great extent with media and with advertising in particular. An advertisement message is a special type of text where the main idea can be hidden "between the lines" (Ягодкина et al. 2014). It can be conceived in a similar way to fictional literature where specific feelings can be decoded with the help of different literary devices. As the main purpose of an advertising message is to sell, it should have a significant influence on the recipient.

Stashko (2017: 303) points out that "many researches demonstrate certain similarities in the way individuals perceive the relationship between language sounds and sensory impressions". Thus, the data collected is important for the current research and is the basis for the experiment set-up.

Within the preliminary experiment (the first stage of the experiment out of two), associations of different respondents with each of the 4 neologisms studied (the word combination *fantasy word* (Auracher et al. 2011) is used in the current experiment to specify the term neologism in order to show that the fantasy words were created specifically for the experiment) should be compared. Will these associations be the same for a group of people or will there be only unmatched individual associations? If the first is true, can we control and predict these associations? Or can we advisedly influence potential customers with the help of phonosemantics and manipulate our target audience? The paper answers these questions and shows if the linguistic phenomenon of sound symbolism has potential in marketing, how it can be used in practice, and what factors can influence fantasy word perception besides the sounding of the word.

1.1 Background of experimental phonosemantics
In order to set up our experiment, a review was done of the preceding experiments in phonosemantics (Братчикова 2011; Magnus 2001; Wagner, *s.a.*). It was important to survey not only the results but also to examine the logic of the research, and to understand how it could be transformed in relation to the process of naming and brand name perception.

Successful experiments in phonosemantics are connected mainly with round-angular sound symbolism and size sound symbolism. The word "successful" here means that the results were the same in the independent experiments done by different researchers in different parts of the world over a long period of time (Kovic et al. 2010 – for the

English language; Ramachandran & Hubbard 2011 – for the English language; Shinohara & Kawahara 2012 – for the English, Chinese, and Japanese languages).

Neuroscience helped to extend knowledge about both types of sound symbolism (round-angular and size symbolism), as it has helped us understand how the human brain works with language. Sound symbolism here is connected with the phenomenon of synaesthesia. It was investigated by Ramachandran in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Wagner, *s.a.*). Earlier, in 1947, Kohler did an experiment (Auracher et al. 2011), where he showed the respondents two figures – of round and angular shape – and asked, which one they would call "maluma" and which one "takete". The majority of respondents answered that "maluma" had a round shape and "takete" had an angular shape. Ramachandran repeated that experiment but replaced the words with "bouba" and "kiki". The results are explained by the effect of synaesthesia, an ability to create cross-modal abstractions (to make an analogy between different senses). Therefore, the acoustics of the word "bouba" was paired with a round shape and that of "kiki" with an angular shape.

In 2004, Westbury continued these studies (Wagner, *s.a.*). The respondents were given words (existing in the English language and newly coined fantasy words) in different frames – round and sharp. Each word could be found twice in round and angular frames. The participants were asked to decide quickly, which word was real. The reaction time was also measured in that experiment. The results showed that the participants spent less time on recognizing the word when the frame and the sounding of the word were compatible according to the hypothesis. Westbury in the next experiment decided to lessen the role of semantics and to use only letters instead of words, which were surrounded by frames as before. One of the important points of this experiment is that the respondents were not informed about the purposes of the test, nor were they informed about sound symbolism. Therefore, the results cannot be contradicted and interpreted as forced. The conclusion of the experiment is the confirmation that round-angular symbolism exists and it can be useful when the role of

semantics in the word is inconspicuous: for example, in neologisms or in the process of language acquisition. For the current experiment centering on brand naming and described in this paper, it was crucial that only experiments with words without a referent or else fully unknown lexical items be seen as conclusive because when the respondents know the word and its meaning, there is no need to use phonosemantics (round-angular or size symbolism).

In 2010, Kovic, Plunkett, and Westermann did an experiment similar to Kohler's (Wagner, *s.a.*). The words for the round and angular objects were "riff" and "mot". The reaction time was also measured. The results again proved Kohler's theory. The respondents were similarly asked after the test if they knew anything about phonosemantics. The participants answered that they were unfamiliar with phenomenon of sound symbolism. As the researchers were interested in neurology, they supposed that if round-angular and size sound symbolism were psychologically applicable, then not only the reaction time would be faster but also there would have to be a difference in neuron activation. They did the same experiment but changed the words to "schick" and "dom", which were thought to be more sound symbolic and used EEG (electroencephalography). The signatures appearing from sound-symbolic and non-sound symbolic conditions were different after the demonstration of a visual object. The congruent associations caused a "negatively peaking wave". It is not known what this difference in signatures indicates but this fact suggests the existence of sound symbolism.

In 2010, another experiment similar to Kohler's was done by Ahlner and Zlatev (Wagner, *s.a.*). Participants were required to match the neologism and the picture. Only one model was used for the neologisms – CVCV (e.g., *lili/lulu* or *kiki/gigi*) and the syllable structure was identical. The results were expected and proved Kohler's theory again. Moreover, it was explained that roundness and angularity correspond mostly to consonants and size symbolism specifically to vowels.

A well-known experiment for size symbolism was done by Sapir, who created two new English words – "mil" and "mal" (Coombes 2014). The participants of his experiment answered a question about the quality of the table – which was large and which was small – "mil table" and "mal table". The majority answered that "mil" is connected with small and "mal" is connected with large. It is obvious that people really have a symbolic feeling for these two vowels. It can be explained by articulation (the opened or nearly closed mouth when pronouncing these two sounds) or acoustics ("a" sounds louder than "i" as the tongue position is lower and the mouth is more opened), so this explanation refers to objective sound symbolism. Since Sapir wanted to understand if it was a universal phenomenon or a product of the English culture, he continued the experiment, testing the same question on Chinese participants. He wanted to understand whether it was a universal phenomenon or a product of the English culture. The results were similar to the previous ones, and that proved universality of the phenomenon.

In 2010, more researchers, Shinohara and Kawahara, studied sound symbolism in the English, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages (Wagner, *s.a.*). The idea for the experiment was to find out if Sapir's size symbolism was a cross-linguistic phenomenon. The respondents were asked to give a mark from 1 to 4 according to their feelings for the size of each sound. The results proved that the phenomenon was really cross-linguistic; however, for people of different countries, the main reasons behind choosing the "big" or "small" label were also different: vowel height was the most important quality for the Chinese speakers and vowel backness, for example, for the English speakers.

In 2011, Thompson and Estes decided to continue the studies on size symbolism (Wagner, *s.a.*). The respondents were given pictures of different size and the neologisms, which they could choose to describe the images. As they saw that the visual length of the word influenced the participants (the visually longer words coincided with the larger images), the researchers decided to repeat the experiment so

that the respondents could perceive the words audibly. This produced the same results as the previous test, substantiating their hypothesis.

The prior experiments prove that the phenomenon of sound symbolism exists. Nevertheless, the main point of the experiment described in this paper is to understand how phonosemantics "works" in the sphere of brand name creation and how it fulfills its potential there.

2. The use of different types of phonosemantics in marketing

Phonosemantics is divided into two main branches: objective and subjective phonosemantics (Данильчук 2016). Objective phonosemantics is divided into:

- synthetical sound symbolism (iconism);
- conventional sound symbolism (phonesthesia);
- productive sound symbolism (onomatopoeia).

Synthetical sound symbolism (iconism) is the product of the synaesthesia effect as a person's capability to make cross-modal abstractions bridging non-related characteristics (e.g., colour and shape). The existence of synthetical sound symbolism is proved by the experiments held by Sapir (1929), Kohler (1947), and Ramachandran (2001), all described above. This phenomenon is usually explained both by acoustics and articulation. If iconism is used consciously in the field of marketing while creating new brand names, it is possible to associate fantasy words with some specific characteristics like size or shape, etc.

Conventional sound symbolism (phonesthesia) is studied with the help of etymologic analysis. The main idea of phonesthesia is that any word containing some specific phoneme has its specific connotation. It was identified within the phonesthesia experiment that, for instance, the phonestheme "gl" appears in English words in the semantic field "light" (Magnus 2001). It can be assumed that concrete phonesthemes can be used in the creation of fantasy words functioning as brand names.

Productive sound symbolism (onomatopoeia) complies with the rules of the Russian language. It is the most visible and evident type of phonosemantics, which is produced consciously. Different onomatopoetic words are used in video and audio advertising (e.g., *Schweppes* (the onomatopoeia is intensified by being pronounced imitating the sound of an opening bottle like "Schschschwepssssss"), *Mazda zoom-zoom*).

Subjective phonosemantics exists due to the synaesthesia effect but it cannot be explained objectively by acoustics or articulation. It is the question of subconscious feeling associated with word perception, like pleasant or unpleasant, positive or negative, etc. Subjective phonosemantics is based on the method of semantic differential (Osgood 1967). In marketing, it works the following way: a fantasy word sounding French feels like something romantic and may well serve to name beauty products and services; a fantasy word sounding German feels strong, strict and suitable for naming some equipment.

All the types of phonosemantics are important for marketing. As far as the experiment described in this paper is concerned, the synthetical sound symbolism (iconism) in marketing is researched. Subjective phonosemantics is not the aim of the research but will also be involved because of the peculiarities of the experiment, connected with the method of receiving data described below.

3. The material, methods, and aim of the experiment proving the potential of phonosemantics in brand name creation

If there is a hypothesis that the sounding of fantasy words is the principal source of information for the customer, fantasy words require experimental evaluation. An experiment proving the potential of phonosemantics in solving naming problems should be conducted on a massive group of people of different occupations, age, and gender by means of the crowdsourcing **method**. The term "crowdsourcing" was first coined in the magazine "Wired" (Howe 2006b) in January, 2006. After half a year, the author of the term, Howe (2006a), admitted that he had not expected that both the term

and the method it designated would spread so fast. In this paper, the term crowdsourcing means the involvement of respondents on the Internet on a voluntary basis in order to collect data during a linguistic experiment. It is psychologically easy for a respondent to participate in a crowdsourcing project because the project is uploaded onto the Internet, which is currently the most popular and demanded source of communication (Ивашнева 2014; Курочкин 2013; Панкрухин 2011; Kietzmann 2016).

The **material** for the analysis is the answers of respondents to a specially designed questionnaire. A survey aimed at collecting phonosemantics data must be elaborated very carefully in view of the correlation between the anticipated answers and the **aim** of the experiment. Accordingly, the main **tasks** are to understand if the generator of the name can hide any specific associations "between the lines" with the help of the sounding of the fantasy word, and to establish if these associations will be perceived in the same way by the respondents (potential customers).

The target audience of the experiment is the inhabitants of the Russian Federation and specifically those whose mother-tongue is the Russian language.

The experiment is divided into two parts:
1) preliminary experiment by using the focus group **method**;
2) main experiment by employing the crowdsourcing **method**.

The preliminary experiment shall help analyze:
1) if the expectations from the experiment meet the preliminary results;
2) if the questionnaire should be corrected (the design, the number of questions, etc.);
3) if the respondents are motivated enough to answer the questions.

The preliminary experiment gives an opportunity to discuss the answers with the respondents, to see their reactions, to understand the logic of their answers as well as their attitude to the quality and number of questions, the questionnaire design, and the time taken for answering. A suitable method for this purpose is the focus group **method** (Дмитриева 1998).

These primary results were very important for the success of the main experiment using the crowdsourcing method and would help avoid any possible mistakes. The results were processed by methods of statistical linguistics.

4. Fantasy words used in the experiment

It is hypothesized that when a customer hears a fantasy name, he/she is mostly focused on its phonetic characteristics. A fantasy word is a newly constructed word (Auracher et al. 2011). We can conclude that a brand name that enters the foreign market without translation can act as a fantasy word for customers if one does not know the meaning of the word and hears it for the first time. This problem is connected with brand name translation (Данильчук 2017). The famous Russian car brand "Zhiguli" (Жигули) made a mistake when it decided to enter the foreign market with that brand name not only because the word was difficult to pronounce for Europeans but also because it had some consonant-related associations with obscene words in several European languages. Then the brand name was changed to "LADA". A well-timed analysis can help prevent negative associations and cause positive ones in the customer's mind. A brand name shall be memorable and attract attention, which can be achieved with the help of phonosemantics (alliteration, rhyme, etc.). It is said that a brand name should not provide false expectations and is expected to clearly identify the product or service because the name is included in the system of communication with the customer and it is the first thing that gives information about the brand (Вегенер 2012). Sometimes brands provide deceitful expectations because of their foreign name sounding while, in fact, the products are produced in China or *Russia: Bork*, *Mr. Ricco*, *Incity, Savage*, *Sela*, *Gloria Jeans*, *Gee Jay*, etc. These names try to raise the prestige of the goods

because of the stereotype on the Russian market that a product produced in a foreign country is always of a high quality. There is also another tendency connected with the fact that the name of the product in the Russian language raises patriotic feelings and makes the customer proud of these goods and services. Therefore, the name in any language shall provide the appropriate positive associations, and the ideas put by the creator into the fantasy word with the help of its sounding are meant to be recognized by the customer in the same way.

The main goal for brand holders is to understand how to create fantasy words, which will be suitable for current market conditions and still comply with the product description supplied by the creator. Also it is still not clear what characteristics can be put into the sounding of the word by the creator of the brand name and understood by the customer in the same way. The linguistic experiment described in this paper answers these questions.

The hypothesis that is tested by the experiment indicates that different people can have the same feelings or associations in perceiving the sounding of unknown, fantasy words, which, as a consequence, confirms the possibility of putting hidden or additional meanings into the words. That can be useful, especially in the process of naming new products or services and their subsequent entry to the market.

Two pairs of contrastive fantasy words, *Eveloun – Zippeg* and *Tikiton – Raola*, were chosen to test the hypothesis during the preliminary experiment. Each pair belongs to a specific type of synthetical sound symbolism: the first pair – to round-angular symbolism and the second – to size symbolism.

The first pair *Eveloun – Zippeg* has already been tested in a phonosemantics experiment, which was launched by Zhuravlev (Журавлев 1991), the founder of experimental phonosemantics in Russia. In his experiment, the respondents were asked to match two pictures representing lakes – with round and angular shores – with the

fantasy words. The experiment showed that the majority of the respondents thought that the word *Eveloun* was suitable for the lake with a round shore and the word *Zippeg* for the lake with an angular shore. Therefore, the author concluded that *Eveloun* is a "round word" and *Zippeg* is an "angular word". In fact, similar experiments were held with the word pairs *maluma – takete* and *kiki – bouba,* which were described above. The idea of the current experiment is to test how Zhuravlev's fantasy words will function in relation to the names of products and services and to find out whether these associations, caused by the phenomenon of sound symbolism, can be in the same priority or some other factors will affect them.

The second pair *Tikiton – Raola* was created by analogy with the experiment connected on size symbolism, where the sound /ɪ/ appears smaller than the sound /a/ in a pair of Sapir's fantasy words *mil – mal* (Coombes 2014). The task was to create two contrast words where one would contain mostly close, narrow vowels and the other – mostly open, broad vowels.

Both pairs of fantasy words were written in Russian in the following way: *Эвелоун – Зиппег (Eveloun – Zippeg)*, *Тикитон – Раола (Tikiton – Raola).* The description of the fantasy words used in this experiment is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the fantasy word pairs used in the preliminary experiment

Contrastive fantasy words	Type of phonosemantics	Type of sound symbolism	Author of a fantasy word pair	Examples of previous experiments
Eveloun – Zippeg	synthetic sound symbolism (iconism)	round-angular symbolism	Zhuravlev	maluma and takete (Kohler); kiki and bouba (Ramachandran, Hubbard)
Tikiton – Raola	synthetic sound symbolism (iconism)	size symbolism	Danilchuk	mil and mal (Sapir)

The fantasy words were referred to the brand names of different goods and services, and used in the questions testing the hypothesis of the research.

5. Phonosemantics experiment and its results

5.1 Preliminary experiment

The respondents in the preliminary experiment were 34 students aged 21 to 22 (from the philological faculty of Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia).

The respondents were asked to fill in a form containing 14 questions and write explanations for their answers, which were discussed in a focus group after all the questionnaires were collected. The task was to answer, which of the proposed names were suitable for the different goods and services. All the questions were closed, therefore the respondents could only choose A or B from the set of questions situated randomly on the form. The random order anticipated any influence on the respondents' choice because contrast items were not placed side by side (e.g., remembering the answer about a woman's perfume can influence the answer on a man's cologne).

Here is the list of questions and possible answers to check the potential of round-angular symbolism:

1. Which name is suitable for a health center for the elderly?
2. Which name is suitable for milk chocolate?
3. Which name is suitable for a man's perfume?
4. Which name is suitable for cheese spread?
5. Which name is suitable for a cream donut?
6. Which name is suitable for a recreational center specializing in extreme sports?
7. Which name is suitable for dark chocolate?
8. Which name is suitable for a woman's perfume?
    A. Eveloun
    B. Zippeg

And the list of questions and possible answers to check the potential of size symbolism is as follows:

9. Which name is suitable for a small café?

10. Which name is suitable for a company engaged in townhouse (low-rise flat blocks) construction?

11. Which name is suitable for a big concert hall?

12. Which name is suitable for a tall fairy-tale character?

13. Which name is suitable for a business centre situated in a skyscraper?

14. Which name is suitable for a short fairy-tale character?

   A. Tikiton

   B. Raola

Also the respondents were asked to leave explanations for their choice where it was possible. After collecting all the forms, there was a focus group discussion in order to understand the logic of the respondents' answers in more detail. The results are partly represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of the respondents' choice explanation

Goods and services	Respondent's explanation of the fantasy word appropriateness	Respondent's explanation of the fantasy word inappropriateness
health center for old people	Eveloun is a soft-sounding word for gentle people; Eveloun is associated with a glade, milk, and a cow; Eveloun just sounds lovely.	Zippeg is associated with a concentration camp; Eveloun sounds like the English "forever alone".
big concert-hall	Sounds "a" and "o" in Raola standing nearby come across as something massive; Raola sounds like something big and rolling; The name Tikiton resembles the Russian word "титан" (giant); Tikiton is masculine in Russian and "концертный зал" (concert-hall) is masculine too.	Tikiton resembles the English word "tiny".
short fairy-tale character	Tikiton sounds like something little; The word Raola is shorter than Tikiton; Raola sounds like "ravioli", something little.	

The majority of the respondents marked the sounding of the fantasy word (e.g., soft, liquid, sharp-sounding). The respondents also had consonant-related associations (caused by the sounding similarity, e.g., *Raola – ravioli, royal*; *Tikiton – tiny, titanium*) and rhyme associations (e.g., *Eveloun – forever alone)*, and they were the same among the homogenous audience. However, if the reaction to the sounding of the word is more or less uniform, the consonant-related and rhyme associations with each fantasy word may change in accordance with the context. For example, in the context of a health center for the elderly there was a repeated rhyme association "Eveloun – forever alone", but it was the only negative association with this word; in all the other contexts, the respondents ignored it and had positive associations. The respondents who were familiar with different languages (e.g. the fantasy word *Zippeg* sounds like a German word, *Raola* sounds like a Finnish word) made stereotypical conclusions about the characteristics of the product or service (e.g., a German product has a high quality, a Finnish brand can be appropriate for a company engaged in construction, etc.) according to these connections. For example, in reality it can be seen that all the well-known perfume shops are named in a French-like style: *L'Etoile* (*Л'Этуаль*), *Rive Gauche* (*Рив Гош*), *Ile de Beauté* (*Иль де Боте*) because the French language is always associated with fashion and cosmetics.

The other reason for this phenomenon is connected with the term **artlangs** (Coombes 2014), which is created with the help of two words – "artistic" and "language". Artlangs are languages able to provide aesthetic pleasure because of their sonority. Hence, artlangs unite pleasant sounding languages. They can also be fantasy languages like Tolkien's Elvish because their creators forget about semantics and mostly focus on how they sound. Artlangs creators are similar to poets because they can forget about language rules and create their own fantasy words, for example, the Russian futurists, who harmonized literature with music in their poetry. In fact, they created words without meaning and relied on their sonority as the only means of forcing feelings and emotions in people (Coombes 2014). Thus, French is always presented as the most beautiful, romantic, and emotional language. However, this does not mean that other

languages cannot be used for the names of goods and services. The German and Finnish languages can be used for naming goods and services in order to show the high quality of the latter and establish trust, the Italian language is suitable for food and restaurants, etc. A fantasy word, which may sound like French, German or Italian, can provide associations with the "right" country and manipulate the customer in the best way for the brand holder.

In a lesser degree, the respondents mentioned the non-phonetic characteristics which are nevertheless also important when a new brand name is created: speed of articulation (*Tikiton* is pronounced quickly, that is why it is appropriate for a small café), word length (*Tikiton* is a long word, that is why it is appropriate for a tall fairy-tale character), word gender (*Tikiton* is masculine, *Raola* is feminine, concert hall is masculine, that is why *Tikiton* is appropriate for the concert hall). One respondent explained that he imagined how the name could be written on billboards, leaflets, and packages, and gave the answers according to the appropriateness of the graphic of the word for the product or service. However, the non-phonetic characteristics influenced the respondent's choice less than phonetic ones.

The explanations obtained during the discussion indicated the focus of respondents' reactions to a fantasy word (Fig. 1).
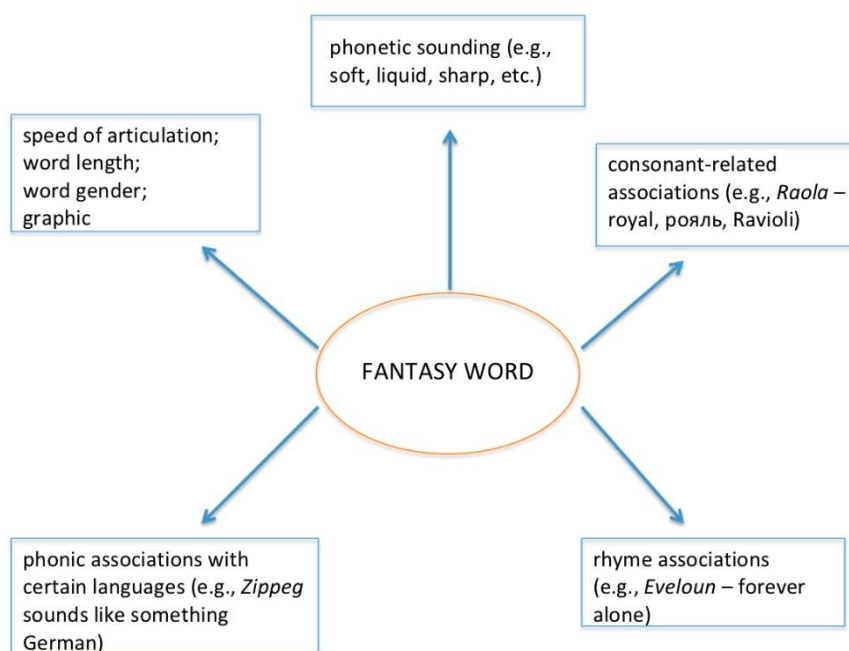
Figure 1. Focus of respondents' reactions to a fantasy word

Despite the fact that these were only the results of the preliminary experiment, they gave understanding of the possible logic behind the respondents' answers. The preliminary experiment itself provided an opportunity to improve the design and quality of the questionnaire and to prevent possible mistakes in the main experiment done in a massive group of people by means of crowdsourcing. The crowdsourcing method is the most suitable if the aim of the experiment requires expanding a small group of respondents to a large group of Internet users (Шуровьески 2007). The most important factors for the main experiment are the design of the questionnaire, quality of questions and respondents' motivation (Čibej et al. 2015).

5.2 The main experiment

For the validity of the main experiment it was decided to add questions with two new pairs of words: *Лиовьель – Бритринг* (*Liovielle – Britring*) for testing round-angular symbolism and *Ринти – Гауварра* (*Rinti – Gauvarra*) for testing size symbolism. In addition, it was decided to add questions with an open answer because there was not any opportunity to ask each respondent to explain their choice during the discussion

like in the preliminary experiment. As a result, the number of questions was expanded to 36. All the questions were put on the platform Google Forms and the link was shared on different social media platforms like Facebook.com, Vk.com, etc. Google Forms was chosen for the experiment because it gives an opportunity to collect data without a fee and has different ways of presenting data: pie charts, diagrams, etc., which can be exported to Excel. Additionally, the questionnaire was tested on two respondents (a man and a woman, who had not participated in the preliminary experiment), in order to check that the platform worked well, the answers were fixed, and the time slot for answering was comfortable. Both respondents answered the questions in 10 minutes and that was a comfortable time for them.

An online calculator (Социология по-новому, s.a.), a tool of linguistic statistics, was used to count the sample – the quantity of respondents needed to answer the questions in the form so that the answers could be extrapolated to the parent population. The online calculator counted that as many as 666 respondents would be enough for the highest percentage of experimental accuracy. For an additional control, the "snapshot" of the results is made: the first stage – after 300 answers, the second stage – 600 answers, and more if needed. The statistics should be compared at each stage. If the quantity of answers increases and there is no fundamental difference in the results (breakdown of percentage), this indicates that the experiment can be finalized. At the moment, the experiment is at the first stage (302 answers in total) and these statistics are partly presented below (the number of answers can be different as the respondents had an opportunity to skip questions). In addition, knowing the results of the preliminary experiment can greatly substantiate the initial claim and predict that at the second stage there will be no significant changes. However, the more answers will be received, the more accurate the results of the experiment will be.

Each question and answer were analyzed by means of comparing the idea of the generator of the fantasy name and the respondents' associations caused by the fantasy name. Moreover, it was important to observe the percentage ratio of the answers: if the

reactions to the stimuli (fantasy names) can be the same in a massive group of people. The representation of the results includes the statistical data counted by Google Forms automatically.

Here are two examples of results representation for round-angular symbolism:

Question: Which name is suitable for a woman's perfume?

Expected answer: Eveloun.

Reason: a "rounded word" is associated with the soft, feminine qualities.

Results of the preliminary experiment: Eveloun (32 answers) – Zippeg (2 answers).

Results of the experiment by means of crowdsourcing: Eveloun 89.9% – Zippeg 10.1%.

Question: Which name is suitable for a man's cologne?

Expected answer: Zippeg.

Reason: an "angular word" is associated with firm, masculine qualities.

Results of the preliminary experiment: Eveloun (11 answers) – Zippeg (23 answers).

Results of the experiment by means of crowdsourcing: Eveloun 81.5% – Zippeg 18.5%.

Examples of results representation for size symbolism are as follow:

Question: Which name is suitable for a short fairy-tale character?

Expected answer: Rinti.

Reason: close narrow vowels in the word are associated with little things.

Results of the experiment by means of crowdsourcing: Rinti 92.9% – Gauvarra 7.1%.

Question: Which name is suitable for a tall fairy-tale character?

Expected answer: Gauvarra.

Reason: open wide vowels in the word are associated with big things.

Results of the experiment by means of crowdsourcing: Rinti (9.2%) – Gauvarra (90.8%).

The main experiment percentage ratio is partly represented in the figures below (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).
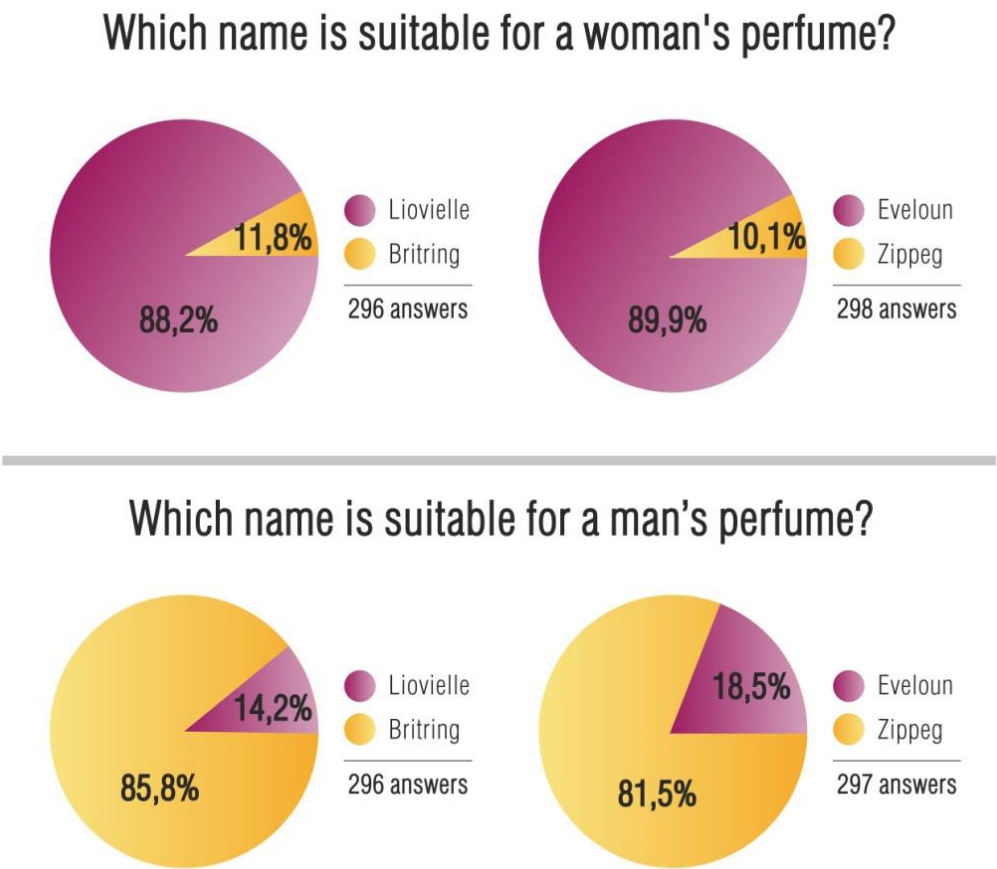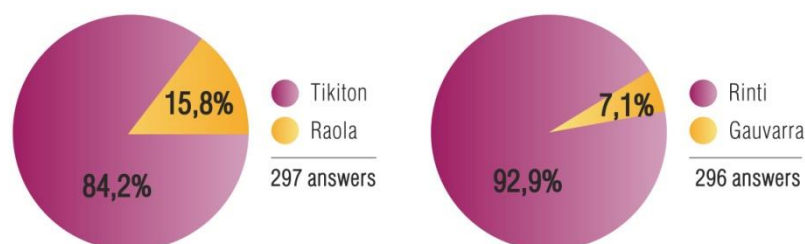

Figure 2. Examples of the percentage ratio of the answers intended to check round-angular sound symbolism

Which name is suitable for a short fairy-tale character?

Tikiton / Raola — 297 answers
- 15,8%
- 84,2%

Rinti / Gauvarra — 296 answers
- 7,1%
- 92,9%

Which name is suitable for a tall fairy-tale character?

Tikiton / Raola — 296 answers
- 28,7%
- 71,3%

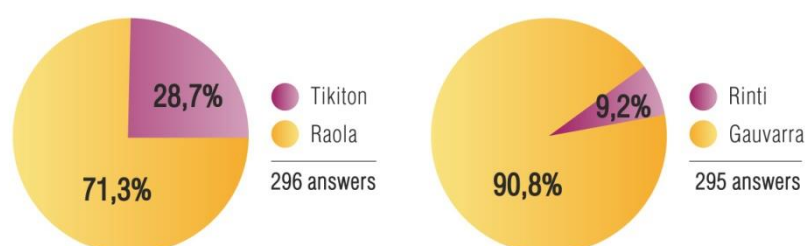**Rinti / Gauvarra** — 295 answers
- 9,2%
- 90,8%

Figure 3. Examples of the percentage ratio of the answers intended to check size symbolism

The expected answers were a match for all the respondents in every question related to round-angular symbolism and the percentage ratio was very high. Several respondents during the discussion within the preliminary experiment mentioned that they would not prefer the word *Zippeg* for any of the items because of its unpleasant sounding: this explains a slight deviation in the experiment, namely in the question concerning a man's cologne, when the answer *Zippeg* is more expected.

However, in certain questions checking size symbolism, the answers of the respondents reached the expected answers with limitation. The size contrast in the pair of fantasy words *Tikiton – Raola* was less evident for the respondents than in the pair *Rinti – Gauvarra*. The possible explanation is that in the pair *Tikiton – Raola* (where *Tikiton* is expected to be something small and *Raola* is expected to be something large) the contrast is not so evident and is influenced by other factors such as:

1. the influence of round-angular symbolism (*Raola* is a "rounded word" and can also be associated with something cosy and pleasant);
2. the length of the word (for some respondents *Tikiton* is "bigger" than *Raola* because the word *Tikiton* is longer);
3. phonic associations with certain languages (*Raola* is associated with something Finnish that can be felt like something of a high quality);
4. speed of articulation (*Tikiton* is pronounced more quickly than *Raola*).

After the set of closed questions in the questionnaire, the respondents were asked 8 open questions: they had to write several attributes, which could describe the words *Eveloun, Zippeg, Liovielle, Britring, Tikiton, Raola, Rinti*, and *Gauvarra*. When the respondents were requested to give several attributes associated with each of the words in isolation, without reference to any specific goods or services, the associations were nearly the same for 90% of the respondents. Here are the examples of respondents' answers in Table 3 – 10 (10 answers chosen at random for each fantasy word from the whole list of answers are given below in the original language with translation).

Table 3. Associations with the fantasy word Eveloun

Association	Translation
плавное, приятное	smooth, pleasant
нежное	tender
плавное	smooth
тягучее, плавное	viscous, smooth
мягкое, 'тянучее', пышное, спокойное	soft, viscous, gorgeous, calm
мягкое, нежное	soft, tender
мягкое, обтекаемое, светлое, теплое	soft, flowing-shaped, light, warm
большое, округлое, нежное, приятное	large, rounded, tender, pleasant
плавное	smooth
нежное, ласковое, мягкое	tender, gentle, soft

As it is clearly seen, all the respondents have the same feeling about the fantasy word *Eveloun* and their further associations have the same tendency: positive associations

with something rounded, soft, tender, and light. These associations correlate with the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

Table 4. Associations with the fantasy word Zippeg

Association	Translation
острое, угловатое	pointed, angular
острое	pointed
немецкое, резкое, мужское, сильное	German, sharp, masculine, strong
брутальное, мужское	brutal, masculine
резкое, твердое	sharp, firm
резкое, острое	sharp, pointed
твердое, резкое, решительное	firm, sharp, decisive
четкость, твердость, бескомпромиссность	precision, firmness, uncompromising attitude
точное, четкое, специальное	exact, precise, specialized
немецкое, твердое, грубое, экстремальное	German, firm, coarse, extreme

The other answers are also similar. Hence, for *Zippeg*, the most common associations are with something firm, pointed, masculine, and German. These associations coincide with the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

Table 5. Associations with the fantasy word Liovielle

Association	Translation
французское, изящное	French, exquisite
мягкое, плавное, доброе, красивое	soft, smooth, kind, beautiful
французское, напоминает имя Лион	French, like the name Lyon
европейское, тёплое, ветреное	European, warm, windy
мягкое, изысканное, французское	soft, elegant, French
французское, вкусно пахнущее, разноцветное	French, smells good, colourful
изысканное	exquisite
французское, романтичное, плавное	French, romantic, smooth
люксовое	deluxe
певучее, женственное, изящное	melodious, feminine, exquisite

The most common association for *Liovielle* is connected with the country of origin of the word – France, so the other reactions stem from the perception of France as a

country usually connected with romance, love, tenderness, etc. The associations correlate with the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

Table 6. Associations with the fantasy word Britring

Association	Translation
жесткое, резкое	rough, sharp
деловое, уверенное	business-like, confident
резкое	sharp
немецкое, военное, неприятное, опасное	German, military, unpleasant, dangerous
мужское, брутальное, резкое	masculine, brutal, sharp
деловое, серое	business-like, grey
мужское	masculine
немецкое, строгое	German, strict
самолет, ружье, тушенка	plane, gun, tinned meat
британское, дорогое, конкретное	British, expensive, related to something specific

The "angular" fantasy word *Britring* also causes associations connected with something sharp, rough, and pointed, which are similar to the answers for the "angular word" *Zippeg*. The associated countries of origin are also mentioned – Germany and Great Britain. The associations coincide with the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

Table 7. Associations with the fantasy word Tikiton

Association	Translation
маленькое	small
детское, сказочное, летнее, смешное	childlike, fabulous, summery, funny
доброе, крошечное	kind, Lilliputian
смешное, забавное, детское	funny, amusing, childlike
название китайской, японской кухни	name of Chinese or Japanese food
неинтересное, скучное, серое	unexciting, boring, grey
японское	Japanese
большое, важное	large, important
русское	Russian
напоминает Титаник	reminds of Titanic

There are several single associations coming out of the line connected with something small as was expected: single associations with something big and also associations not connected with size symbolism itself (association with Titanic is a consonant-related association). That means that size symbolism in this case is not so prominent and there were other important factors that influenced the respondents' associations and also their choice in the closed questions.

Table 8. Associations with the word Raola

Association	Translation
финское	Finnish
глобальное, большое	global, large
круглое, милое	round, cute
женское, эстонское, неспешное	feminine, Estonian, slow
"Виола"	"Viola"
что-то финское	something Finnish
сыр	cheese
Италия, круглое, равиоли	Italy, rounded, ravioli
овальное, желтое	oval, yellow
финская компания	Finnish company

The associations are caused by different reasons, which were deduced in the preliminary experiment: sounding, consonant associations, and phonic associations with certain languages. Those respondents who paid attention to phonic associations with the word mentioned Finland and Estonia as the countries of origin, while those who had a consonant-related association (the association with ravioli was the same for a large group of people) named Italy. Some respondents had a consonant association with an existing product – cheese "Viola". Those respondents whose associations were caused by size symbolism defined the word as round and large, which had been expected when creating the fantasy word.

Table 9. Associations with the word Rinti

Association	Translation
детское, сказочное, маленькое, звериное	childlike, fabulous, small, related to animals
маленькое	small
что-то небольшого размера, игрушка	something of a small size, toy

миниатюрное	miniature
низкое, маленькое, английское, простое	short, small, English, simple
маленькое, рыжее	small, gingery
миниатюрное, яркое	miniature, bright
маленькое	small
имя, десерт	name, dessert
мультипликационное	animated

The fantasy word *Rinti* in isolation mostly provides associations caused by size symbolism. Compared with the word *Tikiton*, that is also a small word, *Rinti* is shorter, pronounced more quickly, hence there are no other significant factors (length of the word, speed of articulation), which can influence the perception of the size feeling of a fantasy word. The associations correspond to the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

Table 10. Associations with the word Gauvarra

Association	Translation
экзотическое, дикое, сочное	exotic, wild, juicy
непонятное, забавное	unfathomable, amusing
твердое	hard
фрукт, экзотическое, шаманское	fruit, exotic, shamanic
экзотическое, мощное, сочное, большое	exotic, powerful, juicy, large
испанское, мексиканское, яркое	Spanish, Mexican, bright
серьезное, высокое, статное	serious, tall, stately
латиноамериканское, кофейное, теплое	Latin American, coffee-like, warm
смелое, кофейное	courageous, coffee-like
мексиканское, текила	Mexican, tequila

Except for the associations resulting from sound symbolism, the phonic associations with certain countries and the correlations caused by these were prominent. The interrelations in question correlate with the respondents' choice while answering the closed questions.

To summarize the results of the first "snapshot" of the experiment it should be said that the influence of round-angular symbolism is stronger than that of size symbolism. The

associations caused by size symbolism appear when the fantasy word is given isolated, but when the fantasy word is used in a context related to goods and services, the other factors mentioned in Fig. 1 can become more important for the respondent. As for the round-angular symbolism, it appears both isolated and along with other factors in the questions related to the goods and services. Round-angular symbolism can be the strongest factor for the respondents' perception of the word and generalizations about the goods and services designated, as a consequence. Despite the fact that the results presented above are provisional, it is expected that an increase in the number of respondents will not change the percentage ratio of the answers significantly. Hence, phonosemantics can potentially become a very important tool in the process of naming.

6. Conclusions

The results of the experiment described in this paper confirm the potential of marketing phonosemantics as a tool of influence on the consumer. The experiment, which proved the potential of marketing phonosemantics, was conducted on a massive group of people by means of crowdsourcing. The subconscious auditory perception of fantasy words is connected with different types of associations. The experiment showed that these associations generate diverse factors (both phonetic and non-phonetic), and they do not appear randomly but can be predicted and controlled. Phonetic factors in the process of coining a fantasy word are stronger than non-phonetic ones but both should be taken into account.

The experiment questioned the possibility of putting a deeper sense into a fantasy word and proved the hypothesis about the sounding of a fantasy word as the principal source of information for the customer. Hence, the results of the linguistic experiment can be applied practically to the process of naming in marketing and also in slogans, and advertising texts production. As a matter of fact, the mechanisms of creating the name, slogan, and advertising text can be similar to the mechanisms traditionally used in poetry or folk songs. As poets are able to employ literary devices in order to create a powerful connection with their audience, advertisers can use text, which, besides being

informational, has aesthetical functions and can be easily recognizable, allowing for the establishment of a perfect formula to attract consumers. In comparison to poetry, for example, an advertising text has much less time to provide the effect needed, so the mechanisms of creating the appropriate name, slogan, and advertising text should be even more powerful. The experiment confirmed that one of such mechanisms can be marketing phonosemantics.

The results of the first stage of the experiment are as follows:

1) the sounding of different fantasy words can cause the same associations in a massive group of people;

2) employing the sound symbolism phenomenon, it is possible to put the specific characteristics of a brand in the sounding of a fantasy name: softness, hardness, liquidity, sharpness, size, etc.;

3) respondents evaluate the name of a brand in the context of the country of origin and make generalizations about the brand according to the sounding of the word denoting it;

4) round-angular symbolism is the most important factor influencing the perception of a fantasy word (in comparison with size symbolism);

5) the associations of the word in isolation, on the one hand, and in relation to any specific goods and services, on the other, can be different (depending on the context of the fantasy word);

6) there are some factors besides the sounding of the word, which are also important in the perception of a fantasy word: the length of the word, speed of articulation, word gender, etc.

Making a suitable combination of all the factors influencing fantasy word perception can not only help create a good brand name but also prevent any misunderstandings – about the price, taste, target audience, etc. For example, the sounding of the name of a beauty salon can evoke associations with luxury and expensive costs while in reality the prices can be cheap. This misunderstanding can disappoint both the customer who

will expect a higher level of the service and the salesman who will not get the customer to purchase his commodity because he/she is not attracted by the name, which is associated with a top service.

In our opinion, the brand name creator should make a list of attributes to describe the product and to define the message he/she intends to get across to the customer. Only after that is it sensible to choose the sounds that can be used in the new name. Of course, the name can be taken from the existing vocabulary but it will not necessarily be effective, memorable, or able to compete with other brands. In addition, the brand name may not even become a registered trade mark because the current lexical pool, which can be used in the process of naming, is limited, and it may appear that the chosen word has already been registered. Nevertheless, a lot of salesmen have to create new names, which can become one of the main factors influencing the customer's choice in the situation of high competitiveness.

The name is the first thing that a customer hears when he/she gets acquainted with the brand, and the first thing the salesman pronounces when presenting himself. Therefore, the mechanisms of naming in marketing are expected to be original and even fanciful. One of these mechanisms is connected with marketing phonosemantics, whose potential is proven by this experiment. However, the experiment on proving the potential of phonosemantic analysis in the process of naming will continue: the more respondents' answers are collected, the more accurate the results will be.

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Contact data		**Fields of interest**
Maria Danilchuk PhD student, Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, 48, Moika emb. Saint Petersburg, Russia, 191186 e-mail: maryanadan@yandex.ru		Applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, phonosemantics, phonetics, advertising discourse

Résumé

The new term marketing phonosemantics was coined in the 21st century and is defined as an ability of sounds in the brand name to influence the customer with the help of creative and even aggressive methods. A brand name is the first thing that gives information about the product or service. Furthermore, a brand name must be memorable, informative, and impressive in order to be competitive on the market. Previously, it was supposed that the sequence of sounds in fantasy names is of prime importance for the customer. The previous experiments on phonosemantics described

in academic literature have already confirmed that phonosemantics in isolation "works". The current experiment had to show how phonosemantics functions in relation to brand names. The results of the preliminary experiment involving a group of 30 respondents have showed a wide range of factors that influence the customer during brand name perception: it is not only the sounding of the word itself (associations provided by sound symbolism), but also other phonetic factors, etc. The preliminary experiment helped correct and improve the questionnaire in order to enhance the validity of the experiment on a massive group of people by means of crowdsourcing. The paper represents the preliminary results of the experiment (with the involvement of 300 respondents), which confirmed the potential of phonosemantic analysis in the process of naming. Thus, as a consequence of the sound symbolism phenomenon described in this paper, it is possible to include the specific characteristics of a brand in the sounding of the word: softness, hardness, liquidity, sharpness, size, etc. The results of this linguistic experiment can be useful in real life and can make marketing phonosemantics an important tool of influence on the customer's mind.