



SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ADVERTISING TEXT IN ROMANIAN AND THE ADVERTISING TEXT IN FRENCH

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Abstract *The present study, entirely original, covers several aspects referring to advertising texts published in Romania and France in the first decade of the 21st century: statements, intertextuality, figures (construction-related, sound-related and semantic), semantic links between advertising text sequences, lexis. The analyzed body contains more than 2000 texts published in the press from Romania and France. We can assert, based on the analysis performed, that all the means and methods available in the language are used both in the Romanian advertising text, as well as in that drafted in French in order to create an often amusing complicity with the reader and to have them glue their attention to the subject of the advert – the name and/or its main characteristics. The differences between the compared texts are small and are, in general, due to the differences between the two languages, the usage or the regulations.*

Key words:

Advertising text, similarities, differences, Romanian, French

JEL Codes:

1. Introduction

The advertising text has been and is being extensively written about, with some of the most diverse approaches of the subject. The present study, entirely original, aims at comparing the Romanian advertising text with the advertising text in the French press.

Why a comparison of Romanian advertisements with the French ones? First of all, in order to see whether there are essential differences between a very young publicity—in Romania the advertisement was practically reinvented after 1990ⁱ – and a mature, vastly experienced one – the French advertising. Second, in order to see whether the differences between the two languages are reflected in the advertising text. Third, as a result of the special connections between Romanian and French and between Romania and Franceⁱⁱ.

The research method is that of linguistic analysis (as it is defined in the *Dictionary of language sciences – DȘL*: 49). We carried out a synchronic-descriptive type of research. As far as the path is concerned, the research focused on both phrasal (corpus of sentences), as well as paradigmatic (linguistic units) aspects.

2. Similarities

2.1. The verbal components

2.1.1. The general aspect of the text

The vast majority of adverts published in the Romanian and French press are small-sized and written in prose;

they represent a single thematic unit and usually display a mixed style. Most texts are accompanied by pictures depicting the object or the service advertised.

2.1.2. The statements

Both in the advertisements in the press printed in Romania, as well as those in the French press the reader can find all types of statements:

- assertive ("Hyundai îți aduce acum o mașină de nota 10."; "Depuis 60 ans, Estée Lauder embellit les femmes.");

- imperative ("Exprimă-te așa cum simți! Vorbește extra cu oricine dorești! Abonează-te și alege Vodafone Complet Extra"; "Rallumez l'éclat et les contrastes de vos mèches!"), including directly imperative ("Nu mai bine alegei Prăjitura casei? Pregătită de Alka așa cum ți-ar plăcea ție!"; "Votre ange gardien vous attend chez votre concessionnaire MINI."); in this statement type one usually avoids using the verb *to buy* ("Descoperă noul LG Viewty Smile, telefonul multimedia conceput pentru a surprinde toate momentele importante din viața ta"; "Découvrez le nouveau Samsung Wawe");

- exclamatory ("Bun de-ți lingi degetele!"; "Portes coulissantes électriques Sésame. Elles coulissent sur simple pression de votre clé et tout devient facile !") and

- interrogative ("Ai nevoie de un ghid ca să-ți depășești temerile legate de sarcină sau de îngrijirea copilului? Citește lunar noua revista Mami!"; "Vous vous souciez de la qualité de son alimentation ? Nous aussi. Happy

Meal.”); in both advert texts total interrogation (“Ai nevoie de mai multă libertate de mișcare cu laptop-ul tău de acasă sau cu PC-urile tale de la serviciu?”; “Vous avez la volonté de mincir?”), as well as the partial one (“Tu unde vezi meciul?”; “Comment faire oublier à votre peau le temps qui passe? Réponse Temps. Les soins professionnels anti-âge après 40 ans”) are used; the question is, numerous times, rhetorical (“Nu e absurd să fii obligat să plătești pentru lucruri pe care nu le ceri? Acum ai de ales. La Groupama ai 5 opțiuni pentru asigurarea Casco: Mini, Midi, Grand, Total, Total Plus”; “Comment réussir à contenir sa joie lorsqu'on effleure d'un doigt l'écran tactile de son système de navigation GPS?”) and, almost always, it represents a mere pretext to introduce in the text the name of the advertisement subject or other data pertaining to it (“Care este rețeta unei siluete atât de delicioase? Fitness, bineînțeles.”; “Des performances optimales sur circuit et sur route? Oui. Avec la technologie diesel Bosch”).

Imperative, exclamatory and interrogative statements are, both in the Romanian advertising texts, as well as in the French ones, more frequent than in other types of text.

Often, advertising statements are elliptical (“Foame? Poftă? The Library Restaurant & bar”; “Nouvelle Golf GTI. Nouveau moteur. Nouveau son.”) and leave it to the reader to fill them out with adequate sequences, suggested by the context.

Another characteristic of advertising statements – both those written in Romanian, as well as those written in French – is the fact that they are regularly fragmented in two or more segments (“Tehnologie înaltă. Siguranță. Experiență de condus excepțională. Ținută de drum impecabilă. Consum redus de combustibil. Toate acestea sunt caracteristici standard ale noului Ford Mondeo, care te asigură că te vei bucura de fiecare secundă petrecută în trafic.”; “Enfin un fond de teint à la fois longue tenue et ultra léger. Frais, naturel, confortable.”). This procedure emphasizes the dislodged text sequences.

2.1.3. Intertextuality

This procedure is present in both advertising texts compared. Adverts alter proverbs (“Kinder dulce mult aduce! Poftește la cadouri cu Kinder Pingui și Kinder Felie de Lapte!” cf. “Vorba dulce mult aduce”; “Qui se ressemble rêve de s'assembler! Calgonit et Electrolux Arthur Martin: la performance en toute simplicité” cf. “Qui se ressemble s'assemble”), titles or denominations (“Visul unei nopți de iarnă. Ice hotel. Bâlea Lac 2010” cf. “Visul unei nopți de vară”; “Découvrez la nouvelle Opel Agila. Flex in the city” cf. “Sex and the city”), quotations (“Noapte incendiară! Abandonați orice urmă de oboseală, voi cei care intrați în cursă!” cf. “Lăsați

orice speranță, voi cei care intrați” – Dante, *Inferno*, *Therd circle*; “Crème Précieuse à la fleur d'Immortelle et le temps suspend son vol” cf. “O, temps, suspends ton vol” – Lamartine, *Le lac*) or other familiar phrasal units (“A venit toamna cu noile colecții. Vino și tu la București Mall să le descoperi! Fii în pas cu toamna!” – cf. (a fi) în pas cu moda; “Egalement, un rayon de rideaux et voilages prêt à poser” cf. prêt-à-porter). The most commonly used alteration is the one resulting from replacement (*vorba multă mult aduce* cf. *vorba dulce mult aduce*); “Le cœur a ses raisons ... que la raison approuve.” cf. “Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point”).

2.1.4. Figures of speech

Figures of speech are often present and endow advert texts with “plasticity and colour” (Vintilă 1963: 171).

a) Among the construction-related figures of speech the repetition (“Câștigi tehnologie de ultimă oră. Câștigi bună dispoziție. Câștigi relaxare. Câștigi... premii în fiecare zi!”; “Deux couleurs, deux œuvres d'art, deux personnalités, deux familles plutôt: celle des fruits rouges et ses notes de griotte et de mûre, en robe rouge intense et celle des fruits confits et de ses notes de noix et de tilleul, en robe vieil or”) and the enumeration (“Senscience este o colecție de prestigiu special formulată de laboratoarele Shiseido pentru a obține un păr fantastic: rafinat, strălucitor, mult mai puternic și sănătos. Este combinația perfectă dintre senzualitate, exclusivitate și știință: repară, hrănește, hidratează și protejează părul”; “Un sourire éclatant, des lèvres hydratées, repulpées, apaisées et protégées.”) are mostly used.

b) Sound-related figures of speech – the alliteration (“Dero alb, Dero dalb, De iarnă să-ți fie drag!”; “Varier les huiles végétales, c'est vital”), the assonance (“Tonic și Răcoros!... atât de Sănătos!”; “Petit matin... fin de soirée, votre teint reste parfait”) and the rhyme (“Mărci originale, la prețuri senzaționale!”; “Révolution anti-âge de Nivea Visage”), many times enhanced by the rhythm, are found in numerous adverts, both in the Romanian, as well as in the French press. In both corpuses compared, the rhyme is the most frequent sound-related figure of speech.

c) Semantic figures of speech – the epithet (“ZVONcafé Te invită să faci un popas dulce și aromat”; although French does not consider the epithet a semantic figure of speech, the word combinations classified as such in Romanian are also present in the French press adverts: “Le plaisir d'un régime gourmand”), the metaphor (“Ai grijă și protejează mica ta rază de soare. Mămicile știu cel mai bine: bebelușii adoră plimbările în aer liber – dar pielea lor are nevoie de protecție specială”; “Plus qu'une télévision. Aurea de Philips est une fenêtre sur l'âme”), the simile (“Brillance – culori strălucitoare și

intense, durabile precum un diamant”; “La 1^{ere} gelée à lèvres nourrissante: nourrit comme un baume, brille comme un gloss”) and the personification (“Te invităm în micul și inimosul nostru magazin de pe Știrbei Vodă nr. 87A, căruia i-am aplicat un bine meritat face lift”; “Les Fromages de Suisse ont le sens des traditions, ils sont chaleureux et parfaits sur une table de fête!”).

2.1.5. Semantic or apparent links between advertising text sequences

In both languages the words in the advertising text are chosen in such a manner that they would support one another to create the strongest impression possible to the reader. There are various types of semantic links among these:

- synonymy (“Chef de Dragobete! Ziua Îndrăgostiților la români!!! Petrece și iubește românește!”; “Avec son look baroudeur spécifique, ce véhicule aux lignes rasées, est assurément le plus intrépide de sa catégorie.”);

- antonymy (“Mégane Sedan Influence. Serie limitată. Atracție nelimitată”; “Morpho-Slim: gagnez en fermeté ce que vous perdez en cellulite”);

- homonymy (“Înscrie-te până la data de 6 iunie 2008 și beneficiazi de un discount la curturile: Managementul resurselor umane Managementul relațiilor cu clienții Ce курс va lua cariera ta mai departe? Depinde de tine!”; “Pour les fêtes, invitez des amis suisses à votre table! Les Fromages de Suisse ont le sens des traditions, ils sont chaleureux et parfaits sur une table de fête! Faites davantage connaissance, vous ne résisterez pas à leur caractère.”);

- paronymy (“De luni, 24 septembrie, clubul-bodega 13 Sfinți, din str. Sfinții Voievozi nr. 13 își redeschide porțile. Pardon, porțile.”; “Garnier Fructis, le shampoing des cheveux propres depuis 35000 ans. Vous voulez avoir le cheveu soyeux pour être cro-mignon?”). It is always apparent paronymy, created ad-hoc.

Additionally, numerous texts see the use of,

- polysemantic words (“Bun la tuse, bun la gust.”; “Jamais un cil n’avait été aussi loin. Amusez-vous à battre des cils pour faire battre les cœurs”);

- several words belonging to the same lexical family (“Lenor Elegant Feel. Te învăluie în elegantă: Simte-te elegantă și atrăgătoare cu parfumul rafinat, asemeni petalelor de trandafir al noului Lenor Elegant Feel”; “Mincir est devenu pour vous une nécessité? Découvrez les séjours MINCEUR”) or

- several words belonging to the same field (“Te vei simți ca un erou. Spune bun venit unei noi vedete: noul Opel Astra. Design-ul său dinamic atrage lumina reflectoarelor. Dotările sale de ultimă generație vor entuziasma fanii. Intră în lumea Opel Astra și trăiește bucuria de-a fi chiar tu un star. Și ... Acțiune!”; “Vivez

votre mythe en Grèce. Le héros c’est vous. Un patrimoine culturel unique, des plages sublimes, une hospitalité légendaire, une cuisine équilibrée, des paysages magnifiques, des expériences infinies”).

Sometimes, these links are only apparent: “Se caută cea mai tare Bunică Nebunică! Ai o bunică mai trăsniță? Atunci încarcă o poză cu ea pe site-ul www.europafm.ro”; “Carrément efficace... et carrément bon. Carrément simple... Un carré environ 30 minutes avant le repas de midi”.

2.1.6. The vocabulary

More often than not advertising texts create or only circulate new words formed by

- derivation (“Atrăgătoarele, sofisticatele, celebrele, inegalabilele, deșteptele, sexoasele noastre române sunt iarăși puse în situația delicată de a concura cu cele mai dorite femei de pe mapamond.”; “le Samsung J600 a été relooké par Rip Curl pour celles qui aiment sortir de l’ordinaire.”);

- composition (“10 secunde de faimă pe mediafațada Cocor”; “RoC révolutionne l’anti-âge avec Renevex, son premier système de microdermabrasion pour obtenir des résultats cosmétiques de niveau professionnel chez vous”);

- agglutination – portmanteau word (“Dorințele tale se îndeplinesc la Bricooiversare! Vino la Bricostore și ești câștigător!”; “La Fashion Car à prix écochic c’est jusqu’au 31 décembre seulement”);

- truncation (“degustări de ceaiuri și recitaluri live de sax și pian”; “Sécurité et fiabilité pour un usage pro. Performance et design pour un usage perso”) or

- adaptation of foreign models (“Capabilitățile off-road îți permit să treci prin vaduri de apă și să rămâi uscat!”; “Elles swinguent avec Clarins. Faites découvrir le golf à vos amies”).

The presence of neologisms, anglicisms in particular, is noticed both in the Romanian adverts, as well as in those published in the French press (“Tariful include valoarea audiobook-ului și taxele de transport”; “Plus résistant, plus stylé, le crossover original plus que jamais à l’épreuve de la ville”). Their frequency is higher in the Romanian texts.

The text of advertisements uses all the language registers, but we do have to acknowledge the presence of a vast number of informal terms, some of them even at the border of informal and slang (“Trei pahare dacă bei, al patrulea moca îl ie!”; “Cochonneries, z’êtes foutues La nature est dans la rue”).

2.2. The role of the verbal component of advertisements

We can assert, based on the analysis performed, that all the means and methods available in the language are used both in the Romanian advertising text, as well

as in that drafted in French in order to create an often amusing complicity with the reader and to have them glue their attention to the subject of the advert – the name and/or its main characteristics.

The advertising text uses all the verbal resources to draw near the readerⁱⁱⁱ and make him or her its “accomplice”. At times one can see the clear intention of amusing the reader. We cannot draw clear borders between one and another for these often overlap.

This intimacy towards the reader is achieved in the form of:

- the use of direct approach;
- the use of amusing^v words, created ad-hoc. Each reader will, naturally, relate in their own way to the text – words as *bebeologie* or *sexos* for example may or may not appear amusing to them;
- the use of the unconventional language;
- the use of polysemy, homonymy, paronymy based on word games;
- the use of elliptical statements giving the reader the possibility to collaborate in the creation of the text by adding the missing sequences;
- the use of sequences resorting to the reading-based experience; When an advert makes reference to a literary work – see *Intertextuality* – only those who have read it can fully understand the text..
- the use of sequences resorting to one’s life experience: many text refer to things that many or most readers are supposed to know. “*Câştigă super-telefoane cu noul Gândul! Fii gând la gând cu CTP!*” and “*Des cils bonnet D, forcement ça avantage!” are such examples. In the Romanian advert the initials CTP next to the word *Gândul* will probably make the reader think of the journalist Cistian Tudor Popescu, chief-editor of the newspaper *Gândul*, whom, many refer to, in public, with the initials CTP; in the French advert, the sequence *bonnet D* must be understood by the readers as “[something] big”, as the „cup D bra” the text refers to is used for large breasts.*

The advertising text attempts to draw the reader’s attention upon the advertised product or service.

a) Emphasizing the name of the product is achieved:

- by graphic means: “*Mega Image a găsit soluția!*”; “*Libérez-vous des remontées acides Pantozol Control!*”;
- by integrating the name in the text: “*Vrei să dai START... carrierei tale?” reclamă pentru Programul Start Intership România; “*Nouvelle Golf Plus. Plus de place au confort. Plus qu’une Golf, découvrez le Golf Plus!*”;*
- by adding in the text other terms belonging to the same field: “*Camarazi pe 1 dec., ora 19.00 facem de planton la popota Army United [...] fasole cu ciolan ca la cazarmă [...] concurs de recitare poezii ostăsești, cu premii militărești; “*Dior. Escale à Portofino. Une Essence. Un Voyage!”;**

- by means of fragmentation; the name borne by the subject of the advert forms, most times, a segment all by itself: “*Dove Intense Care. Reface părul puternic degradat!”;*

- by using the name within sound-related (“*Claritine Lovește alergia din plin!”;* “*Prouesse minceur signée Dio!” or semantic (“*Apa, izvorul crystalin al vietii!”;* “*Pour les fêtes, invitez des amis suisses à votre table! Les Fromages de Suisse ont le sens des traditions!”)) figures of speech;**

- by integrating the name within an established phrasal structure: “*Kinder dulce mult aduce!”;* “*Une étoile est née: la nouvelle Opel Astra!”;*

b) Underlining particular features of the subject of the advert is achieved:

- using the graphic form – by means of the upper-case
- lower-case game, by the different characters of the letters in the respective sequence etc.

- by using several words belonging to the same lexical family or the same field;

- by using equivalent or antonymous sequences;

3. Differences

There are a few small differences between the advertising text in Romanian and the one in French:

- As we previously mentioned, direct approach is employed in both texts, but in the Romanian adverts, with very rare exceptions, the verbs are in the 2nd person singular^v, whereas the adverts in the French press sees them used almost always in the 2nd person plural. In current Romanian, the use, with a generic value, of verbal forms in the 2nd person singular constitutes a discursive procedure manifested with an extremely high frequency; this might be even deemed a specific feature, within a typological characterisation of the language (Zafiu 2003: 233), and the advertising text, just like most of the press articles, reflects this trend. In French, the press included, the habit indicates the use of the 2nd person plural and, although researchers mention a (recent) shift of preference from the use of the pronoun *vous* (*you*) to the use of *tu* (*you*) (Peeters 2004: 30), it is not manifested in the advertising text.

- In most adverts published in the French press, the slogan is written in the source language and then translated in French, and the reference to the equivalent sequence is made with an asterisk; in the Romanian adverts, the slogan is either translated in Romanian or written in the source language.

- The words rhyming in the Romanian advertising text also display an identity of the final graphic form, which does not apply to the rhyming words in the French advertising text; this differentiation is, however, noticed in the case of any rhymes in the two languages, though it bears no connection to the text of the advert.

Other differences encountered between the advertising texts we have compared are quantitative:

- In the French advertising texts there are more verbs in the infinitive than in the Romanian ones. Not only in the text of adverts, but also in general, the infinitive is more extensively used in French than in Romanian, given that when two or more verbs come in succession and have the same subject, the second and the subsequent ones, if any, are used in the infinitive.

- Anglicisms are more numerous in the Romanian advert texts, but in France, on the one hand there are laws limiting the use of anglicisms, adverts included, and on the other hand, the language is endowed with specialised terminology.

- In the Romanian advertising text we have encountered more terms at the border of informal and slang, more fragmented statements, etc. than in the French text of adverts, however, to select the corpus in Romanian, we only had a series of publications available (e.g.: *Șapte Seri, 24-FUN*) which contain numerous adverts for clubs, restaurants, etc. comprising such sequences, whereas in order to select the corpus in French we could not find in Romania this sort of publications.

4. Conclusions

Despite the existence of small differences – part of which are due to the differences between the two languages, the regulations or the studied corpus – we can state that the advertising text published in the press of the two non-neighboring countries, with related, yet different languages and where advertising has evolved on different paths, uses in the same manner and for the same purposes the words and the ways of combining them.

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ⁱ <http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/filologie/Zafiu/23.htm>

ⁱⁱ The reference is made to the Romanians' undeniable Francophilia and the Francophony of an important part of the population (<http://www.ambafrance-ro.org/spip.php?article2213>).

ⁱⁱⁱ „The text you write must prove me that it wants me”, said Roland Barthes in *Plăcerea textului* (*The Pleasure of the Text*) (Barthes 1994: 11) and advertising attempts to do precisely that.

^{iv} Each reader will, naturally, relate in their own way to the text; portmanteau words such as *bebeologie* (*infantology*) or *sexos* (*engaging*) may or not appear amusing to them.

^v Exceptions are the advertisements of the French company L'Oréal.