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Lexical Creativity in Romanian Language of Advertising

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we dealt with a subject which was insufficiently discussed in the Romanian linguistics so far: *lexical creativity* and its occurrence in the Romanian language of advertising – a type of persuasive language by definition, constantly reinventing itself and using lexical creations and expressive forms, as striking as possible.

Taking into account that this linguistic phenomenon is no more than an inherent component of human creativity in general – a human specific ability; moreover, considered at some point „not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional property of all people” (Carter 2004: 13) –, we first presented the main extra-linguistic theoretical approaches, regarding this phenomenon generally (psychological, biological, cognitive research and sociocultural points of view), in order to observe, on the grounds of this theoretical framework, the lexical creativity, in particular.

Since an optimal, successful construal of a lexical creation often depends exclusively on (extra-)linguistic factors, such as the discursive context in which the nonce forms occur, but also, the sociocultural context; the general knowledge of the interlocutors; their cultural background (especially of the addressee, in the case of the advertising language, because in this situation, achieving the purpose of a creative message depends particularly on the way this message is construed, but also on the information provided by the addresser), we described the main cognitive linguistics theories (the Conceptual Blending Theory, a cognitive approach to figurative language, the lexical (re)categorisation based on the prototype model; the Relevance Theory and the Meaning Salience Theory) on the grounds of which we could explain more properly the most prevailing issues of the lexical creativity. Because the phenomenon we are interested in belongs, in formal/morphological terms, to the field of word-formation, we also foregrounded some aspects of the main theories of lexical morphology, which, by following some cognitivist approaches, often revealed interesting aspects regarding the lexical creativity – for instance, the notion of *creative compound* (Benczes 2006, 2007, 2010).

Because the concept of *lexical productivity* is defining for word formation patterns (in charge of lexical morphology field) – productive patterns which, by definition, constantly produce new lexical items, based on repetition and recurrence, we also considered necessary to describe the lexical creativity from this point of view. Thus, the phenomenon we are interested in defines

itself, on the whole, as being complementary to lexical productivity, because it often deviates from the morphological rules, it deconstructs or reinvents patterns, being non-repetitive, non-recurrent and exclusively depending on the context. More often, lexical creations have the status of *hapax legomena*, occurring only once, in a given context. Therewith, the linking between these two concepts (*lexical creativity – lexical productivity*) raises the issue of other dichotomies like *lexical creation – lexical innovation* or *lexical creativity – neology*.

The rich and varied corpus that we have selected allowed us to notice that the Romanian language of advertising abounds in expressive forms, more and more creative, which is due both to the nature of this type of language and to the present-day society, where new products and concepts are invented constantly, which need new denomination or renaming in order to be presented in a more attractive way.

Taking into consideration the varied material for our analysis – an excerpt of a corpus made from Romanian advertisements in various forms (from written press, audio-visual media, electronic advertising) and also the theoretical material consulted so far (especially the lexical morphology studies), we purposed to make a minimal classification of the lexical creations occurring in the Romanian language of advertising (in formal types, semantic types and mixed types). This classifying surely needs an enrichment, which we plan to do forwards by reclassifying also the corpus and by adding up to our paper new bibliographical material; we need to take this fact into account as the advertising is constantly reinventing itself, including on its linguistic level.

Thus, this paper aimed placing this subject (about a phenomenon existing in Romanian language as well as in any other language; specific, to some extent, to every individual) in the international context, according to the current status of research in this field (research especially from the Anglophone space, but also from the Romance space – French, Italian, Spanish). We intended to prove that the lexical creativity occurring in Romanian language advertising is not an artificial or marginal phenomenon, but a subject that needs to be more foregrounded, as it happens in the international studies on this topic. Moreover, in a persuasive speech like the one used by advertising, lexical creativity needs an increased consideration, both from the side of the persons who create the advertisement (i.e. copywriters) and who can thus use it as a persuading device, and also from the side of the addressees of the creative advertising message, being in the key-position of potential buyers.