Book review

Șimon Simona. 2014. THE PERSUASIVE FUNCTION OF WRITTEN ADVERTISEMENTS. Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință. ISBN 978-606-17-0601-3, Timişoara: Ed. Orizonturi Universitare, ISBN 978-973-638-570-4, pp. 327

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Advertisements promote goods, services, and sometimes other issues being designed to attract public attention. Being ubiquitous in our lives, they have aroused the interest of many researchers who have tried to grasp this fascinating universe created by advertisers and which, whether we like it or not, plays an important part in our daily lives. Of all the perspectives, British and American advertisements have been studied from (diachronical, psychological, sociological, semiotic, economic), the linguistic perspective sheds light on the advertisements' verbal message concerning cohesive devices (Cook, 1986), information organisation, or grammar features (Gieszinger, 2001).

In this light, Simona Șimon's study brings more insight into the fascinating world of the discourse of written advertisements defining the advertisement as a genre from a somewhat different perspective, identifying and explaining, both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view, the recurrent patterns in terms of coherence markers, thematic and pragmatic structure in written advertisements.

Using a corpus made up of eighty-four written advertisements from different magazines and newspapers promoting various products, services, and general interest issues, the author has worked out a classification of written advertisements on the

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basis of Brinker's (1997:105-121) interpersonal categories. The classification is made up of four classes, each of them having two or three sub-classes: informative advertisements (informative-descriptive, informative-argumentative, informative-narrative advertisements), appellative advertisements (questioning-appellative advertisements, directive appellative advertisements), commissive advertisements (commissive advertisements making a firm offer, commissive advertisements making a promise), and contact advertisements (contact advertisements directly identifying the target group, contact advertisements referring to the recipients' desires/ wishes/ needs, contact advertisements using jokes or informal speech). The description of each class of advertisements takes into account Brinker's (1997:105-121) characterisation of the interpersonal functions identifiable in a text, Gieszinger's (2001:205-253) semantical and grammatical analysis of the interpersonal functions in advertisements, other sources, and the author's personal observations regarding the types of directions encountered in written advertisements. Thus, a sub-classification of the directive sentences into *directive imperative sentences, emphatic directive sentences, directive sentences devoid of punctuation marks, subject and predicate elliptical directive sentences*, and *elliptical declarative directive sentences* has been created by the author in order to better emphasise the syntactic peculiarities of the written advertisements.

From a quantitative point of view, the author has observed that the eighty-four written advertisements are of various types: twenty-seven being informative advertisements (nine informative-descriptive, nine informative-argumentative, nine informative-narrative advertisements), eighteen appellative advertisements (nine questioning-appellative advertisements, nine directive appellative advertisements), eighteen commissive advertisements (nine commissive advertisements making a firm offer, nine commissive advertisements making a promise) and twenty-one being contact advertisements (seven contact advertisements directly identifying the target group, seven contact advertisements referring to the recipients' desires / wishes /needs, seven contact advertisements using jokes or informal speech).

The most frequent canonical structure of the advertisements identified by Simona Șimon in her corpus is made up of the following superstructural categories: *Identifying a need – Introducing the offer – Soliciting feedback,* while almost all advertisements describe their product / service / issue by using the present tense simple of the indicative mood, as they describe permanent truths or characteristics of the advertised product/ service/ issue.

The possible thematic and rhematic semantic references have also been identified by the author, who has supplemented Daneš' (1974) classification of thematic progressions with eight more possible classes and who has adopted a class proposed by Dejica and Superceanu (2004:49), which has been termed differently for

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the sake of a unitary terminology. The final classification of thematic progressions comprises thus thirteen classes. The author has also reached the conclusion that advertisers resort to a few types of thematic progressions to persuade, such as derived hyperthematic progressions, constant thematic progressions, constant rhematic progressions, simple linear rhematic progressions
and simple linear thematic progressions.

The types of speech acts encountered in the written advertisements have also been described in terms of their characteristics, taking into account some pragmatic and rhetorical studies. The author has identified the fact that single speech acts are most frequently used in written advertisements due to the fact that most advertisements follow the KISS principle, i.e. *keep it short and simple* (Russel & Lane, 2003: 604).

In her study, the author has also proposed a more comprehensive model of analysis, by supplementing van Dijk's conditions for coherence (1977/1992) with one more condition, namely the thematic one. The conclusions that have been reached concerning the coherence markers most frequently used in each sub-class of written advertisements and of written advertisements are that about half of the
informative-narrative,   questioning-appellative,   directive-appellative,   contact advertisements identifying the target group and contact advertisements referring to the recipient's desires / wishes / needs use relations of possessor - possessed.
The relations of including -included are used in about half of the informative-argumentative advertisements. Emphatic element-subset-set relations appear in almost all informative-narrative advertisements and emphatic part-whole relations in about half of them.

In conclusion, dealing with advertisements from a structural and functional perspective and focusing on some textual properties that are exploited by advertisers in order to persuade the possible customer, Simona Şimon's book, *The Persuasive Function of Written Advertisements*, proves to be a thorough study and will definitely be a useful tool for teachers, students, advertisers, and for all those interested in applied linguistics.

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