

Analyzing the advertising content through qualitative methods

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Abstract. The main goal of the study is to point out the need to use a multidisciplinary approach in the analysis of advertising content. The scope of the study includes the use of qualitative methods for data collection in advertising research, the role and importance of applied semiotic analysis of advertising text. Recommendations for the use of primary qualitative data are formulated to overcome the subjective point of view of the researcher. Special attention is paid to the use of reduced focus groups, arguing the relevance of the European approach in designing and conducting them in relation to the objectives of advertising analysis. The scope of the proposed study includes two different advertisements of two competing beer brands on the Bulgarian market. Based on quality data collected through a reduced focus group, the meanings that respondents attach to the signs used in the tested advertisements are derived, and a semiotic analysis procedure concludes the differences in perceptions of female audiences of these two brands. The results of the research can be used as guidelines for conducting preliminary advertising tests conducted with limited research resources related to the study of the perception of the elements included in the advertising text and their role in consumer evaluations of advertising. Also, the results obtained can be considered when designing a research tool to collect quantitative data for preliminary advertising tests.

Keywords: advertising, applied semiotics, analysis of advertising, qualitative methods.

1. Introduction

The use of qualitative methods in advertising research, although often questioned because of their representativeness, is an established practice that can be traced in two key areas. As can be seen from the literature review, the main application of these methods is related to either going into the depth of consumer perception of advertising, or the design of advertising content. (Fjynn, 1991). The use of qualitative methods in generating ideas for advertising content, as well as in the preliminary advertising tests, is also widespread in practice, even though since the introduction of the tests, the experimental approach has been used. (Dodd, 1953). In recent years, however, it has been argued that only one method of collecting data for the study of advertising content cannot give the information needed for analysis of advertising and therefore seeks to use a combination of methods - qualitative research, applied semiotic analysis. of ad text and experiment (Ivanov, 2021).

The arguments for the need to analyze advertising content can be sought in two directions. On the one hand, this is their role in research related to the design of advertising content as part of the creative and production process. In the practice of advertising research, they mainly use quality methods and projective techniques, such as focus groups, in-depth interviews or techniques, arising from the ZMET procedure (Zaltman, Wilson and Coulter, 1995), which generate ideas about the brand's personality and related advertising content. Quality methods are used at a later stage in this process, to understand the meanings that costumers can read when interacting with advertising (mainly focus groups with representatives of the target audience). This, of course, can also be done using quantitative or experimental data collection methods, but the decision of which approach to use depends primarily on the existing resources available to the advertising department.

On the other hand, quality methods are also used in the analysis of already completed and ready for publication advertising content - in pre-tests or preliminary tests of advertising. Their role has been widely discussed, with opinions being both in favor and against their implementation. (Fenwick and Rice, 1991)(King, Pehrson and Reid, 1993). The main criticisms of them are related to the question of whether consumer reactions can really be predicted due to the impact of advertising. The reproduction in a laboratory environment of the conditions of perception of advertising, like those in the "real life" of the audience is also questioned. Although methods have been developed and widely used to overcome the "test effect", doubts remain. It should also be noted that in the context of advertising tests, quality methods are seen as a means of obtaining information in the

design and engineering of a research tool, rather than a stand-alone method of advertising analysis (Ivanov, 2021).

No matter what their goals are, quality methods play an important role in advertising research. Since the mid-fifties of the last century in sociology began the application of the so-called "Focused interviews", which aim to establish the reactions of consumers in previously researched situations by the researcher (Merton and Kendall, 1946). At a later stage, the use of this method in the field of advertising research is argued as an alternative to focus groups (Merton, 1987) because of the need to take into account the factors of the general situation in which respondents' reactions occur. It should also be noted that qualitative methods in advertising research are seen as an alternative to quantitative, and their main task is to understand how respondents think and feel (Flynn, 1991), and in this direction is most often used mini focus groups, focus groups, and in-depth interviews.

Of course, the methods discussed so far can provide valuable information about how the target audience of advertising content reacts (or would react). This is possible because, even when it comes to testing different alternatives to advertising or individual variants of advertising, it is seen as a general stimulus that provokes certain reactions. However, the structure of the ad is complex, as it consists of different elements - such as title, main text, logo, characters, colors, main theme, etc. and these elements affect the audience in different ways. From this point of view, the statement we advocate is that quality methods can be used to gather the information that we need to analyze together and separately both the effects of advertising on target audiences and the importance that respondents attach to the individual elements of the ad text. In this regard, it is necessary to clarify that the definition of advertising as ad text advocates the semiotic point of view, in which the ad is considered a super sign, consisting of individual characters that combine their meanings into a common, superficial meaning generated from the interactions between these individual characters or elements of the ad (Ivanov, 2021).

To illustrate the role of qualitative methods in the analysis of advertising from the already formulated point of view, two specific advertisements of two competing brands are used. The main goal of the study is to analyze the different impacts of the elements of these ads on the target audience. However, to do this, the selected ads must first be analyzed in terms of their structure and the elements used in the ad text. As already discussed, each of these elements has its own meaning, through which it is perceived by the respondents. However, this meaning, within the specific advertising text, is formed in the context of the relationships between it and other elements of advertising. In this way, in practice, the meanings are generated, which determine the specific effects of advertising on the audience. In other words, without taking into account user reactions, the advertising text cannot be analyzed by itself, which excludes the use of the hermeneutic approach.

This task in the study is performed by qualitative methods. After analyzing the structure of the two tested advertisements, a series of in-depth interviews collected data on how users perceive the individual elements of the advertisement and what meanings they attribute to them. Based on the collected data and their analysis, not only the formal differences between the two advertising texts are discussed, such as the type, number, and nature of the elements, incl. and advertising, etc., but also differences in how consumers read the meanings generated by these elements.

The results of the study can be used in the design of a research tool for quantitative data collection to analyze the impact of advertising text on consumers. In addition, as a result of the analysis, the importance and role of qualitative methods in the analysis of advertising content are justified. When defining the scope of the concept of quality methods used in the text, the definition is accepted that these are the type of marketing research of advertising, which uses quality methods for data collection and analysis (Imms and Ereaut, 2013).

2. Literature review

The use of qualitative methods in the analysis of advertising content has been debated by researchers in recent decades. Initially, researchers focused on analyses of advertising effectiveness (Mitchell, 1967), rather than studying the elements of advertising and their impact on the audience. However, despite several problems with their use, the contribution of qualitative methods in advertising research is not in doubt - especially when it comes to making strategic marketing decisions based on concepts for advertising content design. (Bengston, 1982). Moreover, it is argued that despite the huge variety of quantitative, experimental, and mathematical methods for researching advertising in the 21st century - without the use of qualitative methods, the reactions of individual users to the advertising impact are difficult to analyze and understand (Belk, 2017).

Such a statement, of course, is not new, as the perceived importance of qualitative methods for understanding consumer behavior was launched in the 1950s, arguing the need to introduce a new approach other than the use of quantitative data collected through questionnaires (Britt, 1950). Over the next two decades, several guidelines related to the development and implementation of tools for quality advertising research are

discussed (Mitchell, 1967). During this period, research interest is focused on the contribution of qualitative methods for understanding the psychological interpretation of the meanings that consumers attach to advertising messages and their relationship with the formation of opinions about the advertised products. (Myers and Warner, 1968). In this regard, it is important to point out that the consideration of adjectives used in advertising text is in fact part of the attempt at this early stage to divide the advertising text into parts and to determine the contribution of its elements to the advertising impact.

The considered cases are an exception rather than a rule in advertising research and currently, they have the character of something atypical. Although data on the application of qualitative methods in advertising research over the next decade are difficult to find they have been used in practice. It is significant that in the mid-eighties the idea of their importance was argued, especially when it comes to gathering information on strategic marketing decisions or decisions related to product mix management. (Bengston, 1982). And although in this period their legitimacy in marketing and advertising research is still questioned (Kover, 1983), scientific circles are beginning to raise questions about the need to adapt established in sociology and psychology quality methods to marketing and advertising research (Bartos, 1986). During this period, the interest of researchers is again focused on legitimizing the quality methods in advertising research and in particular the tools used to collect and analyze quality information to understand the impact of advertising on consumers (Durgee, 1986).

Particular attention should be paid to the growing popularity of semiotic science during the period under review and in particular the application of semiotic analysis to other scientific fields (Barthes, 1964b, 1964a; Bremond, 1964). This process is directly related to the application of qualitative methods in advertising research because the semiotic approach allows the use of semiotic tools in different areas and essentially creates prerequisites for analyzing the meanings of the text and its elements. Since in semiotics the term "text" has a wide scope and includes a set of elements with different meanings that give rise to new meanings (Ogden and Rishards, 1923), the use of a semiotic approach in the analysis of advertising seems very appropriate. In this regard, in the early 1990s, the contribution of semiotics to qualitative research was argued, especially about "reading" the hidden meanings encoded in respondents' responses. (Kauslik and Sen, 1990).

On the other hand, researchers argue that semiotic analysis is not able to provide sufficient information to understand the meaning of advertising and its impact on consumers, arguing the need to use it in advertising research in combination with other methods, such for example, experiments and in-depth interviews to obtain primary quantitative and qualitative data (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992). In this regard, the authors point out that during the period under study, the most common method in advertising research remains focus groups, emphasizing the importance of their role in stimulating discussions to find common, shared meanings. This, in turn, is extremely important, as it creates the preconditions for reading how the audience, and not just the individual, perceives the elements of advertising text. Particular attention is paid to applied semiotic analysis in combination with other methods, such as content analysis of advertising texts, combined with laboratory or field experiments to collect primary data related to the perception of advertising.

Issues related to the use of a multidisciplinary approach (Vasilev and Kehayova-Stoycheva, 2019) in the analysis of advertising content are also being discussed by other researchers. The necessity of using quantitative data and their processing with statistical procedures to verify the information obtained through qualitative methods are commented on (Rust and Cooil, 1994). However, this again raises the question of distrust in the validity of information obtained through qualitative methods, especially regarding the validity of its interpretation by the researcher. Methods borrowed from other scientific fields are often used to overcome such mistrust. Such as the already mentioned application of the semiotic analysis of the elements of the advertising text and especially of the rhetorical figures, through which one can get in-depth to how the elements of the text are perceived by the audience (Phillips, 1997).

It should also be noted that this distrust is generally not so much related to the nature and use of qualitative methods in advertising research as to the interpretation of the data obtained through them (Walvis, 2003). It is also argued that the results obtained by qualitative methods depend to a much greater extent on the subjective interpretations of the data by researchers, compared to the relatively less freedom of interpretation observed in quantitative methods (Rossiter, 2008). However, the advantages of qualitative methods in terms of understanding the nature of in-depth user responses are indisputable, but they are directly related to the experience and skills of the in-depth interviewer or focus group moderator (Johns, 2009), and their role in generating ideas and content for brand management in communication channels (Stallworth-Hooper, 2011).

Despite all the doubts about the place, role and validity of the results obtained through qualitative methods, it can be argued that at least in the last decade they have gone beyond the shadow of quantitative methods (Nuttall *et al.*, 2011) and their role, especially in the field of academic advertising research is beginning to be defined as indisputable and extremely important (Bailey, 2014). The contribution of online qualitative research to the understanding of digital behavior and reactions of consumers and the study of online advertising

is also pointed out (Rogers, 2015) and attention is paid to the trend of their parallel use together with quantitative methods (Chang, 2017).

The task of the literature review made here is to examine the existing practices and at the same time to argue the need to use qualitative methods in advertising research. Particular attention is paid to overcoming mistrust in the results obtained through them, which is done through the application of a multidisciplinary approach. At the same time, the importance and role of semiotic analysis of advertising text are pointed out, especially in reading the meanings that respondents attach to the advertisements they watch (Barnham, 2019) and the need to use qualitative methods to obtain data by which these meanings are to be defined.

3. Methodology and main results of the research

Criticisms of the use of semiotic analysis in advertising research are mainly related to the researcher's interpretation of signs as elements of advertising text. Of course, these criticisms are primarily about the subjectivity of the analyst. They are related to the idea that in reading the meanings, regardless of the inclusion of the cultural context of the use of these signs, its subjective point of view dominates (Oswald, 2015). To overcome this subjectivity, it is recommended to use a multidisciplinary approach in the study of advertising text, which includes the collection of primary data through qualitative methods to determine the meaning that users (not the researcher) attach to the signs in advertising text (Ivanov, 2018). In this regard, the design of advertising research based on a combination of qualitative methods and semiotic analysis may include the following stages:

1. Selection of ads for analysis;
2. Analysis of the structure of the plot of the advertising text and the signs used in the advertising;
3. Design of research tools (focus group scenario or in-depth interview) for primary data collection;
4. Analysis of the respondents' associations related to the signs used in the advertising text based on the collected data;
5. Secondary analysis of the structure and elements of advertising text;
6. Conclusions based on the analysis.

Since the semiotic analysis of the advertising text based on the interpretation of primary data collected by qualitative methods from respondents may have different applications, the goals and structure of the described six stages may have different natures in different situations. In general, it can be used for two types of purposes - (1) in choosing between several alternatives for advertising to be broadcast in a communication channel to a specific audience and (2) in assessing the effectiveness of already distributed advertising content to achieve advertising, communication and marketing goals and the contribution of advertising content. With these two main goals, the differences in the content and structure of the stages are observed only in the first and last of them. In Objective (1), for example, the selection of ads for analysis is carried out between already created alternatives or variants of ads, and here the analyzed text may be in a different phase of the production process - script, storyboard, animatic, or ready-made advertising. It should be borne in mind that the different phases of the ad text can lead to different results when testing different types of advertising impact (Ivanov, 2018) and this specificity must be taken into account when using the proposed procedure. On the other hand, in Objective (2), the selection of advertisements is based on the attempt to establish the contribution of the specific elements or signs of the advertising text to the achievement of the respective advertising, marketing, or communication goal. Similarly, in step 6. for Objective (2) the results of the analysis should be compared with data from the measurement of the result of the campaign, while in Objective (1) the researcher can use an experimental study of the next phase in the research process, to determine the effects of the characters on a sample of the ad's audience (Ivanov, 2021).

In the framework of the proposed procedure, the collected primary data play a key role, through which the associations of the respondents with the meaning of the signs are extracted. What has already been commented on in the literature review, the most suitable for collecting such data are qualitative methods and in particular focus groups, the use of which is accepted as a standard in the field of marketing research for collecting quality data, despite criticism with the relevance of the information received through them and in particular the inability of the respondents to express their real opinions in a group discussion (Randle, Mackay and Dudley, 2014). When using focus groups as a method for collecting quality data, two approaches are observed - European and Anglo-Saxon, and because of the objectives and limitations of this study, the first is more suitable for use. This choice is motivated by the specifics of the information that is intended to be extracted from the respondents.

The advantages of this approach are related to considering the focus group discussion as a way to obtain information that existed a priori among the target audience of advertising (Murgado-Armenteros, Torres-Ruiz, and Vega-Zamora, 2012), namely - the meanings which are given to the signs used in the ad text. Other

advantages of this approach are related to the nature of the less structured discussion, the role of the moderator in extracting the associations, as well as considering the respondents included in the group as typical representatives of the advertising audience, and finally the researcher's desire to access the information "in-depth". Moreover, in the tradition of the European approach, the design and implementation of reduced focus groups (with 6 to 8 participants) are accepted as a standard, without necessarily raising doubts about the validity and relevance of the results to the general population, or in other words - without it will be necessary to pay special attention to the question to what extent the information received from the reduced focus group can be related to the audience of advertising in general.

For the purposes of this study, a reduced focus group with six participants was designed. In their selection, the main research goal was taken into account - to analyze the differences in the perception of two different advertisements of two competing beer brands on the Bulgarian market by the female audience. The choice of the audience, in turn, is since in general the advertisements for beer on the Bulgarian market are aimed primarily at male audiences (Jeleva, 2003)(Terzieva, 2004) and in this sense, the stereotypes imposed on the perception of beer as a product category by men will not affect the process of extracting associations from the signs used in advertising. The following restrictions and procedures have been followed in preparing the focus group scenario:

1. Each of the tested advertisements is divided into separate frames, according to the procedure proposed by Young for conducting advertising tests (Young, 2008) and adapting it to the objectives of this study.;
2. The frames in which the tested advertisements are divided are shaped like show cards and are shown to the respondents in an order determined by a random number generator. The approach of the sequence of frames not to correspond to their sequence in the advertising text and to be commented in any order is motivated by the desire to reduce the role of the plot of the ads in extracting the meanings of individual signs, as the plot is perceived as a separate super sign in advertising text;
3. In the analysis of the associations through the use of show cards, projective techniques and step-by-step interviews are used, but in compliance with the open format of the discussion, typical for the chosen European approach in organizing and conducting focus groups.;
4. The extraction of the meanings from the signs of the advertising text displayed in each show card is done in two stages - (1) by directing the respondents' attention to the individual sign and (2) by connecting it with the other signs in the show card to determine the influence of the context of the communication situation in which the sign appears and generates new meanings (Ivanov, 2021);
5. Based on the extracted associative meanings from the signs included in the advertising texts the semantic fields are determined, based on which conclusions are formulated about the differences in the perception of the advertisements by the respondents.

Before the show cards are prepared, the two commercials are divided into separate scenes according to the change of the place of the action. Each of the scenes is designed as a separate show card but is shown to the respondents with the participation of sounds to the relevant topic (background music, natural sounds, and dialogue), as these two groups of elements are perceived as separate signs and respectively have direct participation in generating meanings and cannot be excluded from the analysis. The adaptation of Young's procedure is required by the specifics of the research task related to the extraction of the meanings of the signs used in the advertising text, and not by determining the impact of advertising on respondents to achieve advertising or marketing goals. Based on the meanings derived from the respondents, the tested advertisements are subjected to the procedure of applied semiotic analysis, the results of which can be seen in Table 1. and Table 2. The tables show the relationships between five main elements of advertising text - time, place, the action, the signs included in the scene, their meaning, and the semantic fields, which are obtained because of the meanings extracted through qualitative data from the respondents. The tables also indicate the main elements of the plot of the advertising text - Exposition, Climax, and Resolution. The ads selected for testing are broadcast for the same period in the advertising channels used by both brands.

Table 1.

Structure and signs in A1

Time	Place	Sign	Meaning	Sematic field
Exposition				
0.00	Forest	Forest path	Walk	Memories
		Man and woman	Childhood	
		Guitar	Creativity	
		„The familiar walk “	Picnic	
0.03	Hut	Wall	Home	Coming home
		Dog	Security	
		Firewood	Glow	
		Lantern	Coziness	
		Closed shutters	Protection	
		„The familiar host “	Home	
0.05	Forest	A man and two women	Friendship	A journey along a familiar path
		Hiking clothes	Adventure	
		Backpacks	Hike	
		Dog	Security	
0.07	Hut	Open shutters	Waiting	Tranquillity
		Woman	Glow	
		„ Familiar view “	Coziness	
		Forest	Protection	
0.08	Hut	Man	Friend	Coziness
		Stump	Protection	
		Ax	Force	
0.09	Room	Man and woman	Childhood	Waiting
		Table	Being together	
		Library	Free time	
		„ Familiar wait “	Calmness	Memories
		Fork in a frame	Food	
„ In case of acute thirst “	Necessity			
0.12	Forest	Jeep	Overcoming difficulties	Time for friends
		Man	Friend	
		Friend	Friendship	
		„ Familiar company “	Time with friends	
		Handshake	Greetings	
0.15	Forest	The sound of a car horn	Warning	New beginning
0.16	Forest	Crate of beer	Party with friends	
0.18	Room	Fork in a frame	Food	Memories
		„ In case of strong thirst “	Necessity	
		A man's hand	Resolution	Beer drinking
		A bottle of beer	Thirst	
Climax				
0.20	Room	Opening a beer cap with a fork	Solve a problem	Help from friends
		Hands	Friendship	
0.24	Meadow in front of Hut	Glasses full of beer	Party with friends	Companionship
		Cheers with glasses	Celebration	
		Friends	To share	
		Dog	Security	
		Fire	Warm	
		Guitar	Memories	
		V.O. „ If everything seems already seen ... “	Slice of life	
		Friends drink beer	Party with friends	Companionship
V.O. „... add the exciting aroma and soothing taste ... “	Temptation			
Resolution				
0.25	Room	Glasses full of beer	Thirst	Fellow traveler
		Bottle	Journey	
		Logo	KAMENITZA	KAMENITZA
		„ Add KAMENITZA dark beer for variety “	Winter	Atypical
		„ Men know why “	KAMENITZA	KAMENITZA
		V.O. „... on KAMENITZA dark. For a little variety “	Winter	Atypical

Source: Own development

The first advertisement is for KAMENITZA beer (A1) and the second is for ZAGORKA beer (A2). The structure of A1 is shown in Table 1. The plot of the ad (A1) takes place in a forest hut, where a group of friends gathers to celebrate. The main and secondary characters are introduced through a sequence of shots. Within the plot, there are also such signs that have functions different from those of others to build the plot. These are the verbal messages, the brand logo, the fork, and the product (bottle, glass, label). A special place is played by the last two signs, which, according to the morphological analysis of the plot (Propp, 1995) enter the role of "magic objects" and from this point of view are directly related to the culmination and unfolding of the plot and provoke them (Fig. 1). The development of the plot of the tested advertisement is done by accumulating a sequence of signs, and the rhythm of the action is built by repeating the idea of "something familiar". The verbal signs used in the advertising text obviously contribute to this by verifying this principle on a symbolic level. In fact, it communicates as a dramatic technique the main advertising idea encoded under the elements of the advertising text - characters, environment, objects, visual signs, and main and supporting advertising messages - that in the cozy world of the familiar new taste (beer) can add variety and from there to motivate a desire for an initial purchase, by striving to get something new out of the routine.

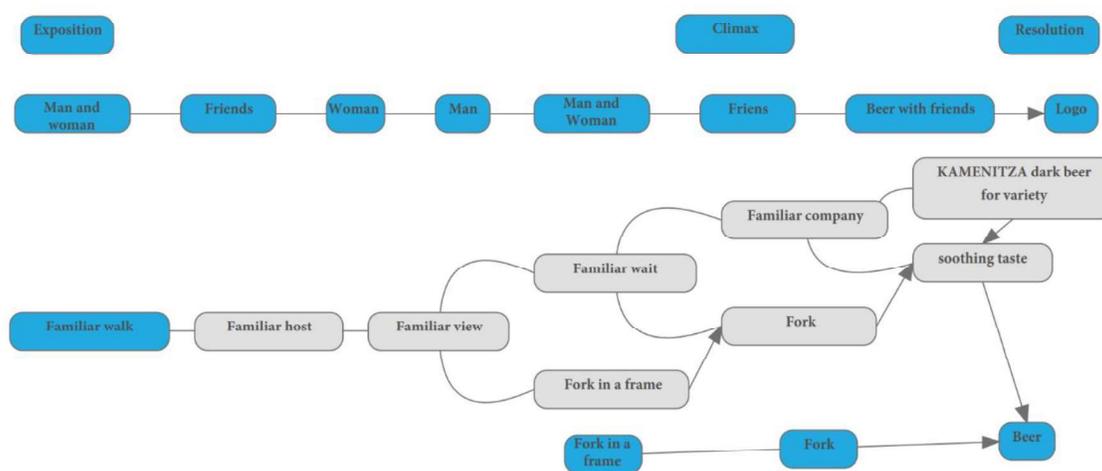


Figure 1. Development of the plot in A1
 Source: Own development

The meanings based on which such an analysis of the tested advertisement can be made were derived from the respondents by using show cards in a reduced focus group. In the discussion after extracting the associations for each of the used signs and by adapting the technique of triads to the tasks of analysis (Zaltman, Wilson and Coulter, 1995)(Zelev, 2008) the semantic fields that create the specific meanings of these signs in the communication situation are defined. Due to the limited space, the data collected here are presented only in summary form, if the study does not require a detailed presentation of the discussion, but it is enough to indicate the key values in the applied semiotic analysis in synthesized form. As can be seen from fig. 1 immediately after the culmination one reaches the point of refraction in the action, which leads to the denouement - and here, again following the set rhythm of the repetitions of verbal signs (variations of the already known), the "magic object" appears for the second time. It is through him that the decision for the desired transformation from already known to something new and exciting is communicated with the audience, which transformation is bound to a specific product offer.

The data for (A2) were collected in a similar way. The analysis was performed based on qualitative data collected by respondents from the same focus group and is summarized in Table 2. Since both tested advertisements are intended to be broadcast on a television channel, their duration is determined by the specifics of the advertising format and is, therefore, the same. From Table 2. it can be seen that despite the same duration, the number of signs used in the advertisement, as well as the number of scenes in which the action takes place, is smaller in A2. This, in turn, has a direct impact on the rhythm and hence on the structure of the action. In support of this, the established differences in the perception of the music (considered as a separate sign in the framework of applied semiotic analysis) used in the two advertisements can be accepted.

Table 2.

Structure and signs used in A2				
Time	Place	Sign	Meaning	Sematic field
Exposition				
0.00	Hill	Chapel	Prayer	Transformation
		Honeymooners	Change	
		Tree	Security	
		Bench and table	Reflection	
		Friends	Joy	
		Wedding bouquet	Liberation	
		V.O.: „ What a beautiful wedding it was ...	Ritual	Decision
0.06	Meadow	Retro car	Past	Overcoming
		Wedding bouquet	Liberation	
		Honeymooners	Change	
		Godfather	Support	
		Mountain	Difficulty	
				V.O.: „ And you hesitated to the last “
Climax				
0.08	Car compartment	Bridegroom	New beginning	Support
		V.O.: „ It's good that your true friend encourages you to the end “	Help	
0.10	Movie	Actor: "Did you see that it's not scary"	Retro movie	Past
0.12	Car compartment	Honeymooners	Change	Future
		Kiss	Happiness	
		V.O.: „ Well, yeah, it's even great “	Confirmation	
Resolution				
0.15	Meadow	Tree	Security	Feast
		Glowing garlands	Warmth	
		Dancing people	Party	
		Piano	House music	
		Double bass	House music	
		V.O.: „ After all, that's what friends are for “	Party	
		Bottle of beer	Joy	
		V.O.: „To be always with you “	Support	
0.22	Table	Bottle of beer	Thirst	Quality
		V.O.: „ Some things do not change “	Standard	
0.24	Movie	Actor: "Are we waiting for someone?"	Waiting	Waiting
0.26	Table	Bottle of beer	Thirst	Real taste
		Hand	Satisfaction	
		Ken	Journey	
		V.O.: „ And, yes, ZAGORCA "Retro" now in can “		
		„0.85 “	Good offer	It's worth it
		„ recommended price “	Discount	

Source: Own development

The data collected show that differences in the tempo and modality of the music used to evoke different associations and refer respondents to different semantic fields - a relationship that has been found in previous research of radio advertising (Brooker and Wheatley, 1994) and the impact of background music in radio commercials (Oakes and North, 2013). Here is another key difference related to the background music in the two ads, found during the focus group. If in A1 the background music is mostly associated with the general mood of the development of the action and the suggested idea of the routine by repeating the familiar, in A2 the background music is "read" by the respondents as a reference related to the scenes from the movie. In this regard, unlike A1, music in A2 is given additional meaning, directly related to the semantic field of the past as something that gives rise to positive connotations. This means that in A1 and A2 the background music has its own meanings (and respectively has the character of a sign), which are directly related to the communication of the main advertising message and in this sense are charged with and fulfil specific advertising goals.

Apart from the music, the plot of both commercials plays such a role. As can be seen from fig. 2 in A2 in the dramaturgy of ad a similar function is observed to that observed in A1 (Fig. 1), and of course, the already mentioned differences related to the number of signs, scenes, and the resulting specifics of the rhythm and role of the movie frames and background music must be taken into account. On the other hand, it can be noted that in dramating plan the role of the characters in the development of the plot, performing the function of "magic objects" in A1, in A2 is performed by the quoted signs. Moreover - as with A1 and A2, these signs are directly related to the specifics of the offer - in this case by activating nostalgia for the idealized past as the main motive for accepting the advertised offer in the ad text.

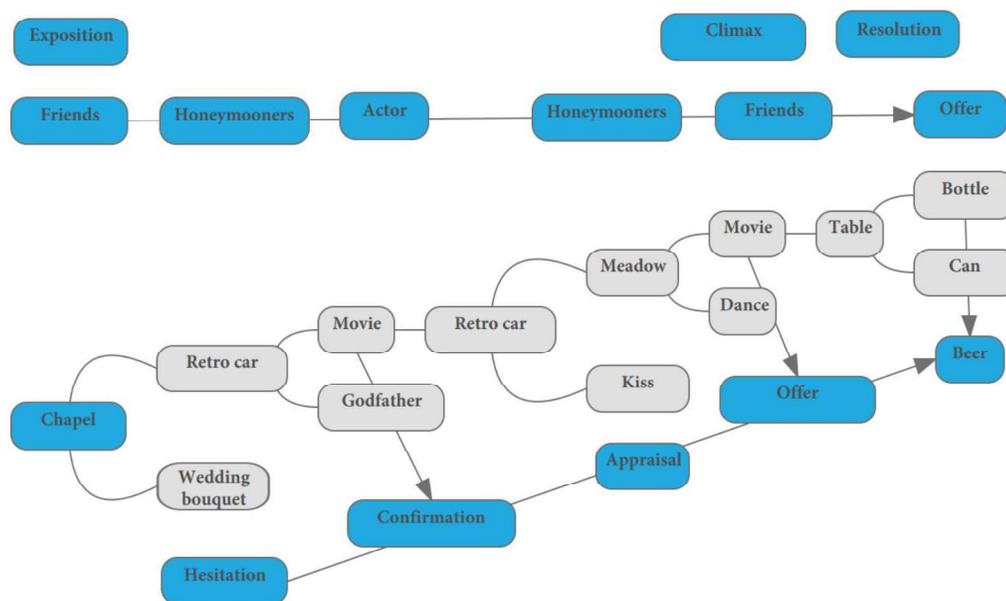


Figure 2. Development of the plot in A2
 Source: Own development

Although the two commercials seem completely different at first glance - in terms of advertising characters, the number of scenes, the role of characters, creative strategy, dramatic rhythm, style of background music used and the presence/absence of characters from other plots - based on the collected qualitative data and the applied semiotic analysis can be found and not a few common features. Since the model of emotions is used in both advertisements, the semantic fields formed by the meanings of the signs included in A1 and A2 lead to a series of emotional states (Table 1 and Table 2), which in turn are directly related with the development of the plots (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) and ultimately lead naturally to the product offer communicated after the denouement - in the first case "the different taste of " KAMENITZA DARK ", and in the second - the familiar taste of " ZAGORKA RETRO " already in the can".

The role of the signs included in the advertising texts of the two tested spots is precisely in the creation of the semantic fields related to the development of the plot to the presentation of product offers. At the same time, in both advertisements, the techniques used in the construction of the plot and respectively in the selection of signs in the advertising text derive from the product specifics. In A1 the sequence of generating semantic fields follows the logic of the accumulation of familiar elements associated by respondents with routine until the emergence of the "magic object", which has the power to change the current state of what is known and boring and make it available new, atypical taste, as for respondents the focus group is that of dark beer. Similarly, in A2, the semantic fields generated by the used signs follow the logic of accumulating associations leading directly to the idealized past, to unite at the end of the video with the idealized idea of the true taste of beer from the past, locked in the brand name that remains unchanged in the new packaging.

The reading of the hidden logic in the dramatic decisions and the related signs could be considered as a conclusion obtained as a result of the subjective reception of the researcher, especially if it is not confirmed by data obtained by qualitative methods for the associations of respondents, defining the meanings of ad text elements. It is in this direction that the value that qualitative data collection methods add to applied semiotic analysis of advertising text can be sought, reducing the researcher's freedom to subjectively interpret the

meanings of signs. In this way, its seemingly hermeneutic character is overcome, which, according to the conclusions of the literature review made here, is pointed out by researchers as its significant weakness.

4. Conclusion

As a result of the study, the following more important conclusions can be drawn. Based on the literature review, it is established that in the scientific literature, as well as in the practice of advertising research, distrust in the use of qualitative methods of data collection seems to have been overcome in recent years. Moreover, their application meets strong arguments, especially in cases where advertising and marketing concepts and ideas for generating content are tested. At the same time, they play an extremely important role in understanding consumer behavior and exploring those factors "below the surface" of consumer reactions that influence their decisions. Finally, their advantages for understanding the meanings that the audience attaches to the elements of the ad text should be pointed out.

Although in the field of marketing in general qualitative research finds a place mainly in the initial phase of the research process in the formulation of problem areas, the subject of research related to the collection of quantitative data, there are more and more opinions that they should go beyond the formulation program and be considered as an alternative to quantitative methods. On the other hand, their role in providing the necessary data within the multidisciplinary approach in advertising analysis is also of great importance. This role is especially relevant for research related to the structure of advertising text and the analysis of the relationship between its elements and the impact that these elements may have on the target audience of advertising.

In this direction, the focus of future research related to the role and place of qualitative methods of advertising analysis can be determined. In addition to providing data for the applied semiotic analysis of advertising text, this group of methods also contributes to the extraction of associations through which the encoding and decoding of advertising messages within the communication process between the brand and its audiences. This, in turn, creates prerequisites through the use of a multidisciplinary approach to study and respectively establish not only the overall impact of advertising on the audience but also the contribution of individual elements of the advertising text. The use of such an approach can be considered as an alternative to the established theory and practice metrics for determining the effectiveness of advertising. This, in turn, creates the preconditions for a deeper understanding of the nature of advertising text and the mechanisms by which it affects the audience.

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