

Visual Rhetorical Figures in Canadian Advertising: Differences between Anglophone and Francophone Consumer Magazines

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to explore whether visual rhetorical figures are used differently when addressing Anglophone and Francophone target groups in Canada. For the empirical analysis I applied the method of content analysis to a corpus of advertisements drawn from two Canadian women's magazines, the Anglophone magazine Chatelaine and the Francophone magazine Châteline. As analytical construct I used the typology of visual rhetorical figures developed by Phillips and McQuarrie (2004). The results reveal that French Canadian advertisements appear to apply significantly more visual rhetorical figures than English Canadian advertisements. Practical implications for marketers are given and avenues for further research are proposed.

Keywords: Marketing Communications, Cross-Cultural Marketing, Visual Rhetorical Figures, Cognitive Processes, Mass Media, and Canada

INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural research between countries has been constantly increasing since the 1970s with respect to both the number of studies published and the number of countries analysed (Sojka & Tansuhaj, 1995: 461). Over time, the number of studies on subcultures within a country has also augmented. In general, when exploring subcultures as opposed to the dominant culture of a country, such as Hispanics in the US (Webster, 1992; Imperia, O'Guinn & MacAdams, 1985) or French Canadians in Canada (Laroche, Kalamas & Cleveland, 2005; Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Bergeron, 2003), language has been frequently employed as a variable to segment or measure ethnicity (Sojka & Tansuhaj, 1995: 463). Yet, Sojka and Tansuhaj (1995) suggest including also artifacts as cultural representations, like goods, as well as beliefs and values in the conceptual definition of 'culture'.

Moreover, research has been conducted on the differences between French and English Canadian consumers from many different perspectives, such as their values and lifestyles (Chéron & Muller, 1993; Hui, Joy, Chankon, & Laroche, 1993; Laroche, Roy, Kim, & Muller, 1996; Laroche, Bergeron, Tomiuk, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2002) as well as their product evaluations and consumption patterns (Laroche *et al.*, 2003; Schaninger *et al.*, 1985;

Laroche *et al.*, 1997; Chebat *et al.*, 1988; Joy *et al.*, 1991; Laroche, Pons, and Turmel, 2002).

Therefore, in view of the differences between the Anglophone and Francophone subcultures of Canada mentioned above, the question arises if and how advertisements are adapted to these two different target groups. The following exploratory study concentrates on the visual components, and, in particular, visual rhetorical figures of print advertisements placed in French Canadian and English Canadian consumer magazines. First, let us take a closer look at the role of visuals in international print advertising.

ADAPTATION VERSUS STANDARDISATION OF VISUALS IN INTERNATIONAL PRINT ADVERTISING

In general, advertising to different cultures requires that the marketer decides whether to standardize or adapt the message. Agrawal (1995), as well as Melewar and Vemmervik (2004), give a comprehensive overview of the debate on standardisation versus adaptation which has been going on for more than four decades. In essence, there are three main approaches: standardisation, adaptation, and a combination of both. The latter is also referred to as the compromise school or contingency perspective.

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Academics and practitioners have taken different positions on this issue over time, and positions have also changed within these two groups. Nevertheless, academics usually opt for at least a certain degree of adaptation in order to succeed in international advertising (Melewar & Vemmervik, 2004: 863-864). However, Kanso (1992: 14) supports the tendency towards adaptation from a practical point of view. By analysing companies' advertising strategies he found that the majority adapts their messages.

In the case of standardisation, that is, when applying the same advertising idea to different cultures, one proceeds from the assumption that the response will also be similar. But the advertising message will only be understood according to the intention of the sender of the message (marketer) if the recipient of the message (reader) shares the same cultural conventions with the sender of the message (de Mooij, 2005: 8). Teng, Ye, Yu, & Wu (2014) have shown that the number of positive responses towards brands increases if ads are congruent with the consumers' cultural beliefs and values. Hence, ad messages need to be adapted, at least to a certain degree. 'Adaptation' is also referred to as 'localisation' (Keegan & Schlegelmilch, 2001: 459) or 'differentiation' (Búrca, Fletcher & Brown, 2004: 347). Among others, Mueller (1991 and 1992) as well as Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos (1997) have investigated this dichotomy.

The decision on the degree of standardisation or adaptation is a trade-off between two factors, namely costs and effectiveness (Backhaus, Büschken & Voeth, 2001: 266). Several models have been developed to measure the optimal degree of standardisation (Berndt, Fantapié Altobelli & Sander, 1997; Whitelock & Chung, 1989; Mueller, 1991; quoted in Backhaus, Büschken & Voeth, 2001: 272-279).

According to Melewar and Vemmervik (2004: 865-866), there is no clear definition of standardisation in the advertising literature. However, the visual component of an advertisement seems to play a crucial role in classifying a particular advertisement according to one of these two basic strategies. Furthermore, the mere translation of advertising copy into the local language generally does not mean that the advertisement has been 'adapted'.

With respect to the visual components of print advertisements, Cutler, Javalgi, & Erramilli (1992: 17), who analysed magazine ads from the US, UK, France, Korea, and India, found that the visuals were more different than similar across these five countries. By contrast, Harris and Attour (2003: 163) concluded in their study of the international advertising strategies pursued by multinational companies that the likelihood of

standardisation was much higher with the visual elements than with the copy elements used.

Furthermore, one has to take into account that the perception of visuals in print advertisements might vary across cultures. A recipient from a high-context culture, who is accustomed to decoding contextual messages, might process visuals differently and read more into them compared to a person from a low-context culture (de Mooij, 2005: 151). Moreover, generally, while in low context cultures, like in the US, the relative use of words compared to that of visual cues is higher, in high context cultures, such as in Japan, the relative usage of verbal communication is lower compared to that of visual communication (Hall, 1984: 60-63).

Research in psychology has shown that these differences in the perception of visual design also stem from the fact that viewing patterns are different between, for example, Westerners and East Asians. While Americans concentrate on the focal elements in images, Chinese people pay closer attention to the background and contextual information (Chua, Boland, & Nisbett, 2005: 12629).

Therefore, since, as mentioned above, the visual components of advertisements are of particular importance to determine whether the strategy of standardisation or adaptation is pursued, especially the visual design of the corpus of advertisements was analysed.

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

De Mooij (2005: 9) states that, despite the increasing importance of visual communication over verbal representations in advertising, research usually focuses on the copy used, which neglects the importance of the visual components of advertisements. The rising importance of pictorial elements over verbal elements in consumer magazine advertisements has been confirmed by McQuarrie and Phillips (2008: 103). They have carried out a content analysis on the style of magazine advertisements by using the nine editions of *Which Ad Pulled Best?* from 1969 to 2002. They have found that especially after the 1990s the emphasis has shifted from the verbal to the visual. As a reason for this development McQuarrie and Phillips (2008: 96) hold that "while the older ads assume an attentive *reader*, the more recent ads presume a visually oriented, casually browsing *viewer*" who seeks "visual entertainment".

In addition, Briley and Aaker (2006) have shown that marketing messages which are aligned with the audience's cultural values seem to be most persuasive when processed in a cursory and spontaneous way. In other

words, culture-bound marketing communications placed in media vehicles, such as consumer magazines, which the audience usually thumbs through and where the target audience does not engage in deliberative processing, appear to be most effective.

Hence, the aim of this study is to find out if and how marketers pursue different strategies with respect to visual communication in Canadian consumer magazines to appeal to their Anglophone and Francophone target groups. Furthermore, it is of particular interest which visual rhetorical figures they apply to address these two target groups. In the following, visual rhetorical figures are defined and taxonomies of visual figures are presented. In particular, the typology developed by Phillips and McQuarrie (2004), which constitutes the analytical construct applied to the content analysis conducted for the present study, is pointed out in greater detail. Finally, results of cognitive research on visual figures are reported.

VISUAL RHETORICAL FIGURES IN ADVERTISEMENTS

Print advertisements are, from a semiotic point of view, complex texts since they are made up of different sign systems, that is, normally visual and verbal elements (Spillner, 1982: 91-92). Hence, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 177) coined the term “multimodal text” for print advertisements since they use different modes, that is, mainly visual and verbal modes, to convey the message. As a matter of fact, due to the interdependence of the verbal and visual codes used in print advertisements Rentel (2005: 95) speaks of the ‘verbal text’ and ‘visual text’ building the ‘whole text’, that is, the advertisement. Bateman (2014) gives a detailed survey of the different approaches to text-image relations in persuasive discourse.

Marketing research has been recently critically exploring visual texts, and, in particular, visual rhetoric of advertisements, and has presented taxonomies of visual rhetorical figures (Forceville, 1996 and 2010; van Mulken, le Pair & Forceville, 2010; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004; Gkiouzepas & Hogg, 2011, Oversteegen & Schilperoord, 2014).

The importance of visual rhetorical figures has been confirmed by Phillips and McQuarrie (2002: 7-8) who conducted a study on advertisements appearing over the period of 1954 to 1999. They found that the frequency of visual figures increased in this period. In general, the use of visual rhetorical figures in print media has been increasing steadily over the last forty years (McQuarrie & Philips, 2008). Besides print media, TV also appears

to employ visual rhetorical figures relatively heavily. Enschoot, Beckers and Mulken (2010) found in their content analysis of 199 British and Dutch TV commercials that nearly 70% included visual rhetorical figures.

According to Scott (1994: 252), visual figures are “complex figurative arguments”. In general, McQuarrie and Mick (1996: 425) hold in their presentation of taxonomy of rhetorical figures in advertising that “a rhetorical figure occurs when an expression deviates from expectation”. They specify that such deviation refers to form rather than content, and it “conforms to a template that is invariant across a variety of content and contexts”. Recipients do not judge such deviations as errors as they have gained cognitive competencies in decoding such deviations by repeatedly encountering them over time (Scott, 1994: 264; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2002: 11). Oversteegen and Schilperoord (2014: 94) refer to visual rhetorical figures as “visual anomalies”.

Tom and Eves (1999) conducted a study on print ads which showed either a verbal and/or pictorial rhetorical device and concluded that these perform better in terms of recall and persuasion compared to ads which do not include rhetorical devices at all. Similarly, Mzoughi and Abdelhak (2011) argue that both verbal and visual rhetorical figures enhance mental imagery and result in a more favorable attitude towards the ad. The ability of figures to produce mental imagery seems to increase the recall of advertising messages. In another study, Mzoughi and Abdelhak (2012) confirm that the employment of verbal and visual rhetorical figures can significantly increase the effectiveness of print advertisements as such figures have a positive effect on emotions, immersion, and attitude towards the brand. Yet, McQuarrie and Mick (2003: 586) found in their analysis of ads that, although both visual and verbal figures increased ad recall and enhanced the recipients’ attitude towards the ad, visual figures appeared to be more effective at inviting elaboration than verbal figures.

According to Maes and Schilperoord (2010), three aspects concerning the taxonomy of visual rhetoric can be distinguished: first, the structural dimension, that is, how the objects building the figure are positioned in the ad, or which design template is used; second, the conceptual load, that is, the meaning operations involved; and, third, the pragmatic implications, that is, how viewers respond to the various structural and conceptual configurations. Hence, in the following these three aspects in relation to the taxonomy of visual rhetorical figures will be pointed out in some detail.

Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) defined different types of visual rhetorical figures. Their theory is based on

Durand (1987), Forceville (1996), Kaplan (1992), as well as McQuarrie and Mick (1996). Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 116-120) show how visual rhetorical figures can be generated. They combine two dimensions: on the one hand, the visual structure, and, on the other hand, the meaning operation involved. By visual structure they mean how two visual elements, building the rhetorical figure, are physically positioned in the advertisement. The visual structure can take three forms, that is, *juxtaposition*, *fusion*, and *replacement* with the degree of its complexity increasing from *juxtaposition* to *replacement*. Forceville’s typology of visual metaphors (Forceville, 1996; van Mulken, le Pair & Forceville, 2010) is quite similar to Phillips’ and McQuarrie’s (2004) taxonomy of visual structure. Forceville (1996) calls *juxtapositions* ‘*similes*’, *fusions* ‘*hybrids*’, and *replacements* ‘*contextual metaphors*’. In addition, Gkiouzepas and Hogg (2011) use the term ‘*objects’ mode of representation*’ for the visual structure of visual rhetorical figures and distinguish between ‘*juxtaposition*’ and ‘*synthesis*’, with the latter being similar to the visual structure of *fusion*. Nevertheless, Gkiouzepas and Hogg (2011: 104-106) focus on the conceptual framework of metaphorical visual structures and distinguish between different ‘*visual scenarios*’: ‘*realistic symbiosis*’, ‘*replacement*’, and ‘*artificial symbiosis*’ depending on how the relation between the two objects depicted are in accordance with visual experiences in real-life situations.

Oversteegen and Schilperoord (2014) have recently presented a new form of visual structure, which they refer to as “visual denial”; they differentiate between schema-based and categorical denial. Whereas, in the first case, objects that are expected to be depicted as parts of a whole (an object, a scene or an event) are omitted, in the second case, “an element of an equivalence class” is left out; this form of visual denial is created by juxtaposition. For a schema-based visual denial they give the example of an advertisement for a rinse free hand cleansing gel where a wash bowl in a bath room is depicted but evidently the faucet is missing. Hence, the ad, which operates on the omission of an object in a natural scene, stresses

the benefit of the product that no water is required for washing one’s hands. As an example of categorical denial they show an ad with two rows of products. In the upper row Western products are shown and in the lower row their Chinese equivalents are depicted. Yet, the space below the manifest of human rights has been kept empty. The purpose of this ad, which was shown before the 2008 Olympic Games in China, was to raise awareness of China’s violation of human rights (Oversteegen & Schilperoord, 2014: 96-98).

The second dimension that determines visual rhetorical figures, according to Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 118-120), is meaning operation, as mentioned above. Meaning operation denotes the focus of the cognitive processing needed in understanding the rhetorical figure. Again, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) distinguish between three possible meaning operations from the least rich to the richest one, that is, *connection*, comparison for *similarity*, and comparison for *opposition*. Richness of meaning operation refers to what extent the instructions for inference provided evoke different responses and, thus, are polysemous. In the case of comparisons, images can share, on the one hand, features at a surface level, such as form or appearance, or, on the other hand, structural features without looking alike.

An advertisement may contain more than one visual rhetorical figure, which Phillips and McQuarrie (2002: 5) have named “layering”. This may result in the addition of effects, in the sense that the net effect of an advertisement which shows layering is quite the same as an advertisement including a very complex and/or very rich individual figure (Mothersbaugh, Huhmann & Franke, 2002: 593). However, layering may make processing on the part of the viewer very difficult (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2002: 131).

The matrix shown in Fig. 1 depicts the nine resulting types of visual rhetorical figures. For illustration purposes, examples from the corpus analysed are given and described in the following. The order of their presentation goes from *juxtapositions*, over *fusions*, to *replacements*, that is, from the least complex to the most complex visual structure.

C O M P L E X I T Y ↓		RICHNESS		
		Meaning operation		
	Visual structure		Comparison	
		Connection ('A is associated with B')	Similarity ('A is like B')	Opposition ('A is not like B')
	Juxtaposition (two side-by-side images)	<i>OM3</i>	<i>Déco Découverte</i>	<i>Tampax Pearl</i>
Fusion (Two combined images)	<i>Aquafina</i>	<i>Dove</i>	<i>Dove</i>	
Replacement (Image present points to an absent image)	<i>VISA</i>	<i>French's</i>	<i>Fruit To Go</i>	

Fig. 1: Typology of visual rhetorical figures, adapted from Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 116)

Visual Figures of Connection

First, let us take a look at advertisements where there is a *juxtaposition* of images. Consider the ad for *Isodisnatura* and its nutrition supplement *OM3* (see Fig. 2). Two visual elements are shown. There is an obviously happy woman who balances a coated tablet on top of her nose. Of course, the viewer is not led to believe that the woman is like the tablet, which would express *similarity* between these two objects, but the viewer is supposed to associate, that is, *connect* the tablet with her happiness. To put it differently, the tablet is supposed to have a direct influence on the woman's cheerful mood



Fig. 2: OM3, Chatelaine (Feb 2006, p. 61)

The next ad uses the visual figure of *connection* via *fusion*. The ad shows a bottle of *Aquafina* (see Fig. 3), the brand name for bottled water, and next to it a glass of water can be seen. A gauge measuring the chemical substances of water has been put into the glass, so that it is partly *fused* with the glass of water. Again, the inference is not that the gauge is like the water but that *Aquafina* constantly measures the chemical substances of its water and, hence, ensures the high quality of its product.

Finally, the following ad is an example of ads which create a figure of *connection* through *replacement* with a visual element of the ad pointing to an absent image. The ad for the credit card company *VISA* (see Fig. 4) shows a woman copying what is most likely pages of a fashion magazine. But the copier does not produce copies of paper (absent image) but clothes (present image). Hence, the copies of paper which are expected to come out of the copying machine are *replaced* with clothes. Since copies are not akin to clothes the ad asks the viewer to come up with certain association. A *VISA* card helps you to materialize the fashion items shown in the magazine. The

ad conveys the much too simplified idea that you only need a *VISA* card to get the desired fashion items you see when thumbing through a fashion magazine.



Fig. 3: Aquafina, Chatelaine (Oct 2006, p. 99)



Fig. 4: Visa, Chatelaine (Jan 2006, p. 18)

Visual Figures of Similarity

As mentioned above, these types of visual figures require richer meaning operations than visual figures of *connection*. The viewer has to compare images and identify physical or structural *similarities* between them. The ad for the kitchen, bed, and bath superstore *Déco Découverte* (in English Canada its name is *Home Outfitters*) provides an example of a figure of *similarity* via *juxtaposition* (see Fig. 5). Various pieces of kitchen equipment are represented of which all share a salient surface feature, that is, they are all partly red. But maybe it is more important that they are also *similar* from a structural point of view, since they are stylish, modern,

state-of-the-art, and, above all, they facilitate kitchen work.

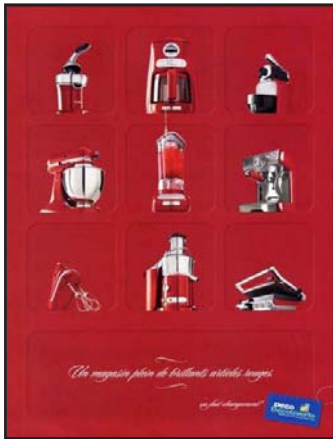


Fig. 5: Deco Decouverte, Chatelaine (Nov 2006, p. 35)

In the next advertisement, the visual figure of *fusion* has been created by using the meaning operation of *similarity*. In the ad for Dove's *Cool Moisture* line (see Fig. 6), that is, personal care products, you see two visual elements which have been *fused*. First, there is a jug of water with ice-cubes, a cucumber slice and a leaf, supposedly a tea leaf, in it. Second, various products, that is, a body lotion, soap, deodorant, foaming facial cleanser, and shower gel have been dropped into the jug of water. Hence, this ad asks the potential consumer to view these two visual elements as *similar*. The personal care products are supposed to hydrate like water. Furthermore, both the slice of cucumber and the tea leaf point to the natural ingredients of the products. This *similarity* is emphasized by both the visual and verbal representations shown on the products; a slice of cucumber and a tea leaf are depicted and it says "Cucumber and Green Tea" on most of the products.



Fig. 6: Dove, Cool Moisture, Chatelaine (May 2006, p. 107)

The last example of a figure of *similarity* shows an image which alludes to an absent image, and which consequently, the viewer has to picture. The ad for *French's* (see Fig. 7) shows a jar of Dijon mustard (present image) with a cork screw in its lid. Obviously, a wine bottle (absent image) has been *replaced* with the jar. Hence, this ad suggests that both the jar of *French's* Dijon mustard and the absent wine bottle are *similar* in the sense that both contain wine and, hence, are associated with socializing and fun.



Fig. 7: French's, Chatelaine (March 2006, p. 185)

Visual Figures of Opposition

A comparison of visual elements suggesting *opposition* is illustrated by means of the following example. Consider the ad for *Tampax Pearl*, where the visual elements are placed next to each other (*juxtaposition*).



Fig. 8: Tampax Pearl, Chatelaine (October 2006, p. 209)

The ad for *Tampax Pearl* (see Fig. 8) actually contains two visual figures and two inferences need to be made by the viewer. First, there is a visual figure of *opposition* via *juxtaposition*. The pictures of two men are placed next to each other. Both are obviously picking up their girlfriend from her home. Whereas the man on the left side is overweight, sloppily-dressed, and brings a six pack of beer and a bucket of chicken wings as a present for his girlfriend, the man on the right-hand side is slim, handsome, well-dressed, and carries a bottle of champagne and a bunch of flowers as tokens of his affection. So, the ad shows that the man on the right is different from the man on the left. The woman clearly opts for the man on the right-hand side because there is an arrow which points at him. Moreover, she thinks “J’évolue! “ (I am improving!). Hence, the woman connects the first visual figure, described above, with the second one which is made up by the pictures of the two men (visual element 1) and the yellow and framed area below (visual element 2), which demonstrates the technical improvements of the new *Tampax Pearl* tampons together with a package of *Tampax Pearl*. The second visual figure is a figure of *connection* via *juxtaposition*.

The viewer is supposed to make the inference that the woman has not only improved her situation by choosing the man on the right but also by using the new and improved *Tampax Pearl* tampons.

Yet, in the advertisement for *Dove*, the visual figures of *opposition* are formed via *fusion* of the visual elements (see Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: Dove, Advanced Colour Care, Chatelaine (October 2006, p. 87)

Two women are shown, one of who is depicted upside down. Either they are identical twins, or the same woman is depicted twice. Both women wear the same pullover and have the same hairdo with fringes. Hence, they look exactly the same; they are distinguishable only by their hair colour. The hair of both women is open and *fused* into a circle. This circle alludes to the well-known Chinese yin and yang symbol, which means that although two elements are obvious *opposites*, they build a whole and are interdependent. Both women have had their hair coloured, one lightened, and the other darkened. The products in the left and right corners below show different colour care for lightened and darkened hair. To put it differently, *Dove* offers customised solutions for hair care.

The third type of *opposition* created by the *replacement* of visual elements has been applied in the following advertisement for *Fruit to Go* by *Sun-Rype* (see Fig. 10).



Fig. 10: Fruit to Go, Chatelaine (September 2006, p. 225)

The ad for *Fruit to Go* cherry fruit snacks shows a cherry stem together with a leaf. But instead of two freshly picked cherries on the stem there are two beakers, in which obviously cherries have been produced. Therefore, this ad suggests that the fruit snack contains real cherries (absent image) and not only artificial cherry flavour which has been created in a laboratory (present image), which represents a visual figure of *opposition* via *replacement*.

Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) have drawn conclusions on the pragmatic value of their different types of visual figures. In other words, they have made predictions on

the cognitive and emotional responses viewers may have towards the various figures. As mentioned above, they have argued that the complexity of visual structure increases from *juxtaposition* to *fusion* and from *fusion* to *replacement*. Moreover, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 128-129) have argued that an increase in complexity or richness of visual figures results in an increase in cognitive elaboration and ad liking on the part of the reader. Cognitive elaboration is defined as “the extent to which a reader engages a text or the amount of interpretation occasioned by a text or the number of inferences drawn” (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999: 39). In contrast, ad liking is an affective response. Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 129) contend that “complexity, within limits, is pleasurable arousing”. According to DeRosia (2010: 3940), pleasure is an important affective response aroused by rhetorical figures. Hence, Kim, Baek, and Choi (2012) generally distinguish between *cognitive* and *affective elaboration* generated by visual figures.

Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) hypotheses on the effects of their typology of visual rhetorical figures on cognitive and affective elaboration have been empirically tested. First, Madupu, Sen, and Ranganathan (2013) carried out a study, which turned out that the visual structure of juxtaposition generates most cognitive elaboration in comparison to fusions and replacements. Hence, this is in contrast to Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) hypothesis that views replacements as the most complex figure. For Madupu, Sen, and Ranganathan (2013) one explanation for this discrepancy is that visual complexity may not only depend on how elements are arranged in the ad as proposed by Phillips and McQuarrie (2004). According to Pieters, Wedel, and Batra (2010), the degree of visual complexity generally depends on both *feature* and *design complexity* (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). While an ad with a high *feature complexity* shows a large amount of details and variations in basic visual features, edges, luminance, and colour, an ad that has a high *design complexity* depicts, for example, many objects, which are irregularly shaped and are asymmetrically and irregularly arranged in the ad. Moreover, Madupu, Sen and Ranganathan (2013) showed that juxtapositions and replacements are equally liked whereas fusions are liked the least. This finding again contradicts Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) hypothesis that ad liking enhances in the direction from juxtaposition to replacement.

Second, van Mulken, le Pair, and Forceville (2010) conducted a study among participants from Spain, France and the Netherlands. They revealed that the respondents generally perceived *contextual metaphors (replacements)*

as more complex than both *hybrids (fusions)* and *similes (juxtapositions)*. This result is in line with Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) predictions. Yet, whereas the French and Dutch participants considered *hybrids (fusions)* and *similes (juxtapositions)* equally complex, the Spanish participants perceived *similes (juxtapositions)* less complex than *hybrids (fusions)*. Therefore, these results partly confirm Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) hypothesis as there seem to be differences between the nationalities analysed. Finally, van Mulken, le Pair, and Forceville (2010) found that all the three nationalities preferred *hybrids (fusions)* to *similes (juxtapositions)* and *contextual metaphors (replacements)*, which again does not support Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) contention that complexity increases ad liking, that is, ad liking increases in the direction from replacement to juxtaposition. In conclusion, the findings of the studies reported above, which relate to the pragmatic value of visual rhetorical figures and which either support or partly contradict Phillips and McQuarrie’s (2004) hypotheses, show the necessity to conduct further research in this field.

DATA AND METHODS

To answer the question of how the use of visual rhetorical figures in magazine advertisements differs when targeting Anglophone or Francophone Canadians specific magazines had to be chosen. The basis for selecting an appropriate magazine was the *Print Measurement Bureau* (2003) report, which is published annually. It conducts research on the readership of more than 115 publications and consumer usage of more than 2,500 products and brands by using an annual sample of 24,000 interviewees (PMB Print Measurement Bureau). PMB gives detailed information on circulation and readership according to various criteria such as sex, education, region, and language most often spoken (Print Measurement Bureau, 2003).

The criteria for selecting a particular magazine were the following:

- Country of origin (Canada): The reason is to keep the influence of US American media and culture as minimal as possible.
- Published in both official languages of Canada: This allows for an analysis of cultural differences and similarities between the Anglophone and Francophone groups in Canada.

Among all the Canadian magazines some are published in both official languages, with the English magazine *Chatelaine* and the French magazine *Châteline* having the

highest circulation. As a consequence, the corpus consists of issues of the monthly women's magazines *Chatelaine* and *Châtelaine* published by *Rogers Publishing* (Rogers Publishing).

The readers' demographic profile of both English *Chatelaine* and French *Châtelaine* are very similar. According to the PMB (2003) report the readers are primarily women of the age between 35 and 49, are married or live together with a partner, own their dwelling, are full-time employees, and their household size has more than 3 people including children under the age of 18. Concerning their level of education, they either have no certificate or diploma, or they are graduates of secondary high school, or hold a university degree below a Bachelor's degree. However, while the typical readers of *Chatelaine* speak English most often, live in the province of Ontario, specifically Toronto, and have a household income of \$75,000 or more, the typical readers of French *Châtelaine* speak French most often, reside in the province of Quebec, particularly Montreal, and have a household income between \$50,000 and \$74,900.

From all the issues available I collected 13 issues of English *Chatelaine* (January to December plus an extra Halloween issue in October) and 12 issues of French *Châtelaine* (January to December) over the year of 2006. I chose a whole year in order to ensure the largest possible variety of products. The reason is that in the summer advertisements for particular products, such as ice creams, may appear, whereas in the winter, for instance, decorations for the Christmas season may be advertised. From all the issues of English *Chatelaine* and French *Châtelaine* I recorded altogether 2,280 advertisements. To avoid duplication, completely identical advertisements, both visually and verbally, which were placed several times in a number of issues of the same language, that is, English or French, were only counted as a single one. Consequently, the total number of advertisements analysed decreased to 863 in English *Chatelaine* and 713 in French *Châtelaine*.

For my empirical analysis I applied the technique of content analysis to a corpus of advertisements. According to Krippendorff (2004: 18), "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". In this definition, the expression "or other meaningful matter" implies that the use of content analysis is not limited to written material, but may also be applied to texts such as images, sounds, signs, symbols, or works of art provided that these refer to phenomena beyond our senses and observation. These texts are also determined by a specific social context (Krippendorff, 2004: 19).

For Bailey (1994: 304), the main objective of content analysis is "to take a verbal, non-quantitative document and transform it into quantitative data."

Krippendorff (2004: 38) suggests that content analysis may serve as an argument confirming an analyst's abductive claims. He illustrates the reasoning process involved in content analysis by drawing upon Toulmin's theory of argumentation, which does not only apply to abductions. Toulmin (2003: 89-92) holds that in order to reach conclusions or claims from data an appropriate warrant needs to justify the inferences. These warrants, in turn, need backing, the form of which depends on the relevant field of argument (Toulmin, 2003: 95-97). Accordingly, Krippendorff (2004: 38) argues that, in finding an answer to a research question based on texts, the inference has to be warranted by the assumptive analytical construct, that is, the theoretical concept, which needs to be applied reliably. In addition, inferences also have to be supported by the analyst's expertise in the context in which the texts appear or are interpreted. The chart shown in Fig. 11 illustrates this process:

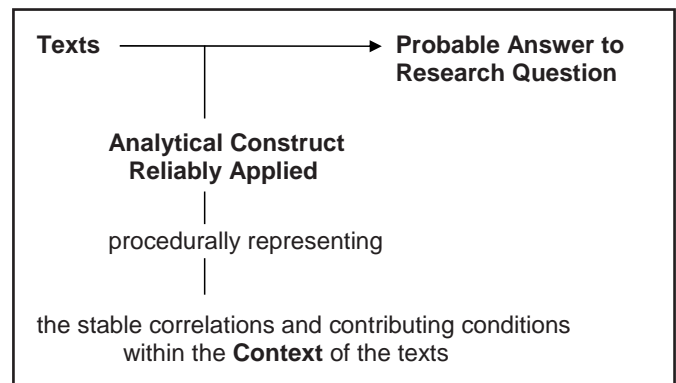


Fig. 11: Process of Content Analysis, Adapted from Krippendorff (2004: 38)

Hence, I applied Phillips and McQuarrie's (2004) typology of visual rhetorical figures (analytical construct) to the corpus of advertisements (texts) to answer my research question.

As a next step, I determined variables, together with mutually exclusive and exhaustive values (Bell, 2001: 15-16). In particular, the variables and corresponding values were the following: number of visual rhetorical figures (0-...), average complexity of visual structure (*juxtaposition*, *fusion*, and *replacement*), and average richness of meaning operation (*connection*, *similarity*, and *opposition*). In the following, the coding frame was pre-tested on parts of the corpus of advertisements. It turned out that, in particular, the assignment of visual rhetorical figures to the categories of *connection* or

similarity was rather difficult and, consequently, needed to be most precisely defined and pointed out to the coders in the following training process.

In order to determine the intercoderreliability, I calculated the percentage of agreement between my coding and that of other coders. As a basis for the coding I arbitrarily selected ads from both the English and French issues of January and July, that is, the first half of the issues. While coders 1 and 2 looked at the English issues, coders 3 and 4 analysed the French issues. The magazines of January and July were selected to provide for as high a diversity of products as possible, taking into account that the types of products advertised may vary according to the seasons of the year. The four coders were trained carefully to ensure the accurate application of the variables. The overall agreement for the variables which was achieved was 0.89. This agreement is in compliance with the minimum level of agreement of 80% demanded by Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998: 128). After coding all the advertisements of the corpus the software SPSS was used to generate cross tabulation tables and to carry out a *Pearson Chi-Square* test on the data.

RESULTS OF THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Generally, we can conclude that two variables are related if the significance value is small enough, that is, it is below 0.05 (Field, 2009: 696-697). Moreover, in order to make the results valid, the expected frequencies need to be greater than 5 in each cell (Field, 2009: 690). In the following both the results of the statistical analysis and the conclusions which can be drawn from these findings are presented.

Distribution of the Visual Rhetorical Figures

The results show an association between the use of visual rhetorical figures and the language: $\chi^2(3) = 12.320$, $p < 0.007$. If we take into account all the cases where one visual rhetorical figure is shown, the analysis reveals that while French *Châteline* actually shows more figures than statistically expected, English *Chatelaine* has fewer figures than statistically expected. In other words, the French magazine *Châteline* appears to make more use of visual rhetorical figures than the English magazine *Chatelaine*.

If we define dichotomous values, that is, either none, or at least one visual rhetorical figure occurs, then the association between the occurrence of visual rhetorical figures and language, as pointed out above, becomes even more statistically significant: $\chi^2(1) = 11.636$, $p < 0.00065$.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of ‘layering’, defined by Phillips and McQuarrie (2002: 5) as the occurrence of more than one visual rhetorical figure in a particular advertisement, seems to be extremely rare in both languages. In particular, both the Anglophone and Francophone advertisements analysed showed three cases of layering each with containing two or three visual rhetorical figures, respectively.

Average Complexity of the Visual Rhetorical Figures

In view of the average complexity of the visual rhetorical figures employed in the corpus of advertisements, the statistical analysis reveals that complexity determined by the physical position of the elements forming the visual rhetorical figure (*juxtaposition*, *fusion*, and *replacement*) do not show any statistically significant relation to language: $\chi^2(2) = 1.5469$, $p < 0.461$.

In addition, the visual rhetorical figure of medium complexity, that is, *fusion*, is the one least frequently employed in both languages. There are altogether only 72 *fusions* compared to 208 *juxtapositions* and 155 *replacements*, where a visual element points to one that is absent.

Average Richness of the Visual Rhetorical Figures

Concerning the average richness of meaning operation applied in the corpus of advertisements, the statistical analysis demonstrates that richness, which is defined as the cognitive processing required to comprehend the visual rhetorical figure, does not vary as a function of language: $\chi^2(2) = 5.0541$, $p < 0.0799$.

It is important to note that concerning the total number of comparisons through *opposition*, the results demonstrate that visual rhetorical figures, which require the reader to compare two visual elements, and which make the reader infer that the visual elements making up the rhetorical figure are *opposed* to each other, are relatively scarce in the English and French ads. The reason is that there are only 23 cases in English *Chatelaine* and 19 cases in French *Châteline*. In other words, advertisers apply visual rhetorical figures which require a meaning operation of *opposition* only to a very small extent. The high degree of polysemy, with respect to the implicit image-based instructions for inference, may prevent advertisers from using such visual rhetorical figures.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Canada, as an officially bilingual country, is made up of two major subcultures, that is, English and French Canadians, each of which has its specific cultural traits and sense of belonging. Of course, these two subcultures do not only include native Canadians but also immigrants who have been acculturated to one of these subcultures.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to answer the question whether visual rhetorical figures are used differently in Canadian magazines when targeting Anglophone or Francophone readers. To this end, a content analysis was conducted on a large and representative corpus of advertisements drawn from the English women's magazine *Chatelaine* and the French women's magazine *Châtelaine*. Emphasis was put on the visual design of advertisements since the visual components of ads seem to be important in determining whether the strategy of standardisation or adaptation has been pursued in intercultural advertising (Melewar and Vemmervik, 2004: 865-866). In particular, the use of visual rhetorical figures was analysed in view of their increase in occurrence over time, according to Phillips and McQuarrie (2002: 7-8). As analytical construct for the content analysis of advertisements the theoretical framework of the typology of visual rhetorical figures developed by Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) was applied. In order to illustrate Phillips and McQuarrie's types of visual rhetorical figures advertisements were selected from the corpus and analysed in detail.

The results of the quantitative analysis show that the French magazine *Châtelaine* appears, generally, to make more use of visual rhetorical figures, defined as visuals deviating from expectation, than the English magazine *Chatelaine*. In other words, French readers seem to view more visual rhetorical figures than Anglophone readers when thumbing through a magazine. Hence, while the Francophone ads tend to use a rather high context communication style, the Anglophone ads seem to employ a rather low context communication style. Nevertheless, both the average complexity of visual rhetorical figures (*juxtaposition*, *fusion*, and *replacement*) and the average richness of meaning operation (*connection* as well as comparison through *similarity* and comparison through *opposition*) used in the corpus analysed do not vary in relation to the French magazine *Châtelaine* and the English magazine *Chatelaine*. Furthermore, layering, which is defined as the occurrence of more than one visual rhetorical figure in a particular advertisement, seems to

be an extremely rare phenomenon in both magazines, most probably owing to the difficulty in processing the combination of visual rhetorical figures.

As a reason for the finding that visual rhetorical figures are more frequently used when addressing Francophone Canadians, tentatively, one might point to the general importance of visual culture in Quebec, as reflected by the fact that the province hosts one of the largest film industries in North America. Moreover, it has a strong presence in the sectors of high-tech digital media and interactive entertainment. That, in turn, is closely connected to the existence of numerous tertiary educational institutions that offer programs in this field and, thus, generate a large pool of creative professionals. Similarly, the visual orientation of French Canadians is corroborated by the fact that, according to Laroche *et al.* (1997), French-speaking Canadians watch more television than their English-speaking counterparts, as mentioned above.

In addition, in cases where Anglophone advertisements are adapted to the Francophone audience marketers may opt for the use of visual rhetorical devices to avoid making any errors in the translation process of the copy for the fact that visual codes are more universal than verbal codes. This may be another reason for the greater use of visual rhetorical figures in the case of the French Canadian advertisements analysed.

In contrast to both the possible cultural differences involved and the particular requirements of the adaptation process, one may also assume that, due to the higher fashion consciousness of French Canadian women, compared to English Canadian women (Hui *et al.*, 1993: 25-32), the former may tend to show higher involvement in reading French *Châtelaine*. Consequently, according to the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (ELM) of attitude change proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981 and 1983), French Canadian women may use visual rhetorical figures as arguments in the persuasion process, that is, the 'central route'. However, English Canadian women may use the same visual figures as peripheral cues ('peripheral route'). Hence, there is reason to believe that the difference in the number of visual rhetorical figures reflects a greater involvement of French Canadian women with regard to lifestyle trends.

Since attitude changes that are initiated via the 'central route' are both more persistent and predictive of future behaviour, that is, purchase of products, than induced by the 'peripheral route' (Petty & Cacioppo 1983: 13), the implications for the design of advertisements are that visual rhetorical figures need to be integrated in advertisements when addressing particularly French Canadians. They

are more likely to be persuaded argumentatively by visual rhetorical figures, and hence, more likely to buy the product, probably also on a consistent basis. To put it differently, advertisers who develop magazine advertisements to appeal to French Canadians may focus on visual rhetorical figures and, therefore, may encourage the reader to deploy his or her cognitive abilities in the decoding process.

The positive correlation between involvement and cognitive elaboration has been confirmed by a study carried out among voters of the 2011 Canadian federal election campaign. Francophone and Anglophone Canadians were shown English and French televised ads in their native language. It turned out that ads that matched the subject's affiliation (high involvement) led to greater cognitive efforts (high cognitive elaboration) (Daignault, Soroka, & Giasson, 2013).

What is more, based on the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* mentioned above MacKenzie and Lutz (1989: 51-52) posited that in the case of the 'central processing' of advertisements the antecedents of the general attitudinal response to ads is especially determined by both ad credibility and ad perceptions. Ad perceptions, in turn, refer to the executional characteristics of advertisements. It follows that for French Canadians the design of advertisements including the use of visual rhetorical figures may be particularly important for developing a positive attitude towards advertisements.

One of the limitations of the present research is that solely language was applied as a discriminatory criterion for the selection of the corpus. However, as a matter of fact, both Anglophone and Francophone Canadians are not only different from each other but the two subcultures are also very heterogeneous in terms of their makeup. According to *Statistics Canada/Statistique Canada* (2011: 3), the 2011 *Census of Population* reported a large linguistic diversity in Canada with more than 200 languages spoken at home or as a mother tongue. At the same time, the 2011 *Census of Population* revealed that 63.5% of the population whose mother tongue was neither English nor French spoke English at home. Therefore, since allophone immigrants choose much more English than French as their second language, the Anglophone population is most likely to be much more heterogeneous than the Francophone population. Consequently, it can be concluded that the audience of English *Chatelaine* is also most likely much more heterogeneous than the readership of French *Châtelaine*. Last but not least, the 2011 *Census of Population* reported a bilingualism rate of 17.5 % among the Canadian population. Hence, bilingual

Canadians who may switch comfortably between English *Chatelaine* and French *Châtelaine* need to be taken into consideration, too.

Another limitation is that only the occurrence of visual rhetorical figures, their structural dimension, that is, the physical positioning of the visual elements forming the visual figure, as well as the conceptual load, that is, the meaning operations involved, were analysed. Yet, investigating the pragmatic implication of the visual rhetorical figures in view of Anglophone and Francophone Canadians would be a viable option for future research (Maes & Schilperoord, 2010). In other words, differences in both the cognitive and emotional responses with regard to these two ethnic groups may be analysed. This is especially interesting with respect to the findings of current research which, as pointed out above, partly contradict the pragmatic predictions made by Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) in their typology of visual rhetorical figures used for the present study (Madupu, Sen, & Ranganathan, 2013; van Mulken, le Pair, & Forceville, 2010).

For this purpose, the corpus used for the present study may be applied, or, alternatively, advertisements could be deliberately manipulated: the same ad with and without visual rhetorical figures, or with different degrees of complexity and richness, could be shown to Anglophone and Francophone subjects in order to explore differences in cognitive processing and emotional response. As dependent variables ad recall or the recipient's attitude towards the ad may be chosen. These may be measured by a survey or in-depth interviews. Moreover, the different levels of cognitive elaboration generated by the ads may be measured with agree-disagree Likert-type scales based on phrases descriptive of the cognitive efforts involved.

In general, the corpus of advertisements analysed may be segmented to obtain more detailed results. First, locally placed advertisements (in English and French Canada) may be contrasted with internationally shown advertisements. Second, advertisements for products (in English and French) may be compared to advertisements for services. The reason is that both the characteristics of the target group and the nature of the product definitely have an influence on the creation of advertisements. Furthermore, to avoid any contextual bias pairs of advertisements, one in English and one in French, which advertise the same brand and are placed at the same time may be directly compared.

Last but not least, since print advertisements are 'multimodal texts' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 177), that is, their visual codes (image) and verbal codes (text)

are interdependent (Rentel, 1995), as pointed out above, one may look into the differences between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians with respect to the verbal anchoring of visual figures. In general, Phillips (2000) has shown that different strategies of verbal anchoring have different impacts on the comprehension and attitude towards ads. Likewise, Lagerwerf, Hooijdonk, and Korenberg (2012) have discovered that in the case of verbal anchoring comprehension seems to be higher for the meaning operation of connection than for similarity.

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