

## THE PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE OF YOGHURT ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND ROMANIAN COMMERCIALS

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### Abstract

Advertising is as creative a story as an infinitely varied one. Also, a highly manipulative one. In a world where everything is for sale and the competition is fierce, what can dairy producers do to stand out on the market? How to persuade the customers using multiple aspects—look, discourse, intonation, colour, energy, and music—except the one that is most important in such industries—taste? In this paper, we examine TV commercials for yoghurt presented in the United Kingdom and Romania in recent years and find out the common traits and aspects that set them apart. We focus on grammatical and stylistic traits. A thorough analysis is made of the function of the sentences, the tenses used, the polarity, and several syntactical strategies such as simple sentences, minor sentences, ellipsis, parallelism, and anaphora. Also, the phonological aspect is tackled, i.e., alliteration, assonance, and rhyme.

**Key words:** yoghurt, advertisements, stylistics, grammar

Television is the primary traditional promotional medium for this product category. This guarantees the maximum effect on the general public.

There are numerous ways to derive enjoyment from yoghurt, whether it is as a customary breakfast item, a convenient snack, a versatile ingredient in culinary preparations, or as a fundamental component in the creation of delectable beverages.

Milk and dairy products have long been recognised as food sources all throughout the world. Additionally, yoghurts and other dairy products are categorised as functional foods, which are products that are good for the consumer's health and wellbeing [2,43]. Multiple authors have highlighted the significance of milk and dairy consumption, particularly for pregnant women, children, adolescents, and elderly individuals. This is attributed to the elevated presence of mineral salts and vitamins, which play a crucial role in the appropriate growth and upkeep of bones and muscles [3, 44, 45]. Givens [3] expands on this by saying that clinical trials have disproven concerns about an increase in cardiovascular disease owing to milk and dairy intake, while further research is needed into the link between yoghurt consumption and type II diabetes.

Yoghurt is a dairy product that is produced by the process of bacterial fermentation of milk or cream. Yoghurt is predominantly derived from

bovine milk, although variations exist that are produced from the milk of alternative animal sources such as goats, sheep, yaks, camels, and water buffalo.

In the process of yoghurt production, milk or cream undergoes pasteurisation and homogenization. Subsequently, the introduction of *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* subsp. *bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus* bacteria facilitates the conversion of lactose into lactic acid. The thickening agent contributes to the viscosity of the substance, hence imparting a discernible tang.

The yoghurt has been maintained at precise temperatures throughout the entirety of the operation. Following the completion of the cooling process, delectable flavours can be incorporated.

### History of yoghurt

With the domestication of milk-producing animals (cows, sheep, and goats, as well as yaks, horses, buffalo, and camels), milk products are thought to have been introduced into the human diet between 10,000 and 5,000 BC. Nevertheless, milk is prone to spoilage, hence presenting challenges in its utilisation. During that period, herdsmen in the Middle East transported milk using containers constructed from animal intestine tissue. The observation was made that when milk came in contact with digestive secretions, it underwent curdling and souring processes, which resulted in its preservation and enabled the long-term conservation of this dairy product.

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According to a dictionary, advertisement is *a picture, short film, song, etc. that tries to persuade people to buy a product or service.*

The etymology of the term *yoghurt* suggests that it originates from the Turkish word "yogurmak," denoting the process of thickening, coagulating, or curdling. Also, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language presents the etymology of *iaurt* to be a Turkish one.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The corpus taken into study was chosen from Romanian and British advertisements that were presented on TV along the years, starting from 1967 until 2021.

We selected seven British adverts and seven Romanian ones, the most interesting, from our point of view. In this paper we presented them largely and then compared them, to see the resemblances and differences, pointing out their most distinctive traits. The analysis was made stylistically and phonologically.

In this section we will present the fundamental components of language analysis. According to Widdowson (1996), the examination of language varies depending on the level of analysis, with different features receiving emphasis (p. 39). The term "discourse" pertains to the intended message sent by the author of a text and the interpretation of that text by the recipient (p. 7). It is not uncommon for a recipient to misconstrue the intended message of a slogan, which may occur either as a deliberate tactic employed by advertisers or as an unintentional occurrence. Hence, it is imperative to conduct a thorough analysis of the language prior to its dissemination to ensure its efficacy and the achievement of desired outcomes.

The concept of linguistic organisation was first proposed by Crystal and Davy (1969), who posited that there exists a distinct component of organisation at every level. The study of linguistics distinguishes across many levels, including the phonetic/graphetic, phonological/graphological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic levels (p. 15). The cross-referencing of levels, notwithstanding their separate studies, is deemed crucial (1969). This section primarily examines linguistic aspects that are associated with the analysis of slogans. However, this paper will now present other aspects of the language in addition to the sophisticated discourse description. Breeze (2013) identified the primary rhetorical figures found in advertising language. These include different types of repetition (such as alliteration, rhyme, and doubling), as well as forms of emphasis such as synonymy or gradation. Figures of omission, such

as ellipsis, and figures of amplification, such as oxymoron, comparisons, and superlatives, are also commonly used. Additionally, appellation techniques such as direct address, exclamations, and rhetorical questions, as well as tropes like euphemism, metaphor, and metonymy, are prevalent in advertising language (Breeze, 2013, p. 125).

Phonological units refer to the discrete elements or segments of sound that are used in a particular language to distinguish meaning. These units

Shifting our focus to the subsequent subject, we delve into the examination of phonological components commonly employed in commercial contexts, including rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration. The fundamental terminologies will be referenced and explicated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study examines the linguistically significant distinctions within a language and the systematic patterns in which sounds are organised. (Page 33). In the realm of advertising, various phonological aspects are employed.

By advertising, the aim is to develop a more refined and innovative phrase. According to Roach (1983), these entities are referred to as "aspects." According to the author (p. 134), the concept of connected speech is discussed. The establishment of formal connections between sentences and clauses is hereby delineated. The coherent devices identified by Cook (1989) are well recognised in academic literature (p.14). The repetition in advertising is a recurring occurrence. The application of sounds in order to create the literary devices of rhyme, chime, and alliteration can be observed.

### British commercials

#### Walls - Fresto Yoghurt (1967)

The 1967 campaign sees a rather mechanical hand-drawn boy making Fresto by adding 'lots and lots of fruit' to a churn of 'fresh country milk'.

*New from walls and dairy fresh comes Fresto . A new kind of yogurt fresh Fresto is made with fresh country milk and then we add fruit. lots and lots of fruit. Go on! more than that!! Ripe juicy fruits and fresh milk make Walls Fresto tastes of fresh sweet and creamy that, even if you've never been a yogurt fan, Fresto you will love! Walls Fresto the fresher taste in fruit yogurt*

From a phonological point of view, **alliteration** is used (through the *f* used more than fifteen times), thus imposing a repeatable and emphatic effect on the receiver.

The story presents the manufacturing process in the form of a **traditional cartoon film**. There is the narrator presenting the scenes, but, at a certain point, he is the one that gives directions on when to stop putting fruits into the yoghurt. His active involvement in the course of action can surprise the viewer, just as it can happen when tasting this type of yoghurt.

### Fage - Plain Extraordinary 2011

The poetry campaign for Fage Total can be regarded as a piece of art that celebrates simplicity, since it is characterised by its beauty, calming nature, and serene ambiance. Through the amalgamation of artistic visual representations of the act of milk splashing and a compelling narrative delivered by the esteemed actor Willem Dafoe, this audio-visual presentation effectively transcends the cacophony of competing stimuli, thereby elucidating the remarkable nature inherent within an ostensibly unremarkable commodity. Consumers undoubtedly perceived it as a memorable experience.

*Plain was the same*

*As it ever was the same*

*Plainly plain,*

*Samely same,*

*But then someone lid the flame*

*Plain rode away on lions' main*

*Where plain met fruits with strangely names*

*Such wonderful things they did contain.*

*A shot of life to a hungry vein.*

*The captive beasts who broke the chain*

*And there-upon that fruited plain*

*is where plain became what plain became*

*so much more than more than plain.*

*Plain will never be the same!*

As we can notice, there are other literary devices present here: the **metaphor** “plain will never be the same”, several **puns**, all connected to “plain”, the title of the commercial and **alliteration**, which impose a certain **rhythm** on the speech.

### Muller Corners 2012

This commercial was made to relaunch the company, which had a drawback in the previous year.

*Each delicious spoonful of Muller corner is an art form like swirlism, created by those with a love of circular shapes. Pointillists, who explore repetition to achieve and sensation and those who use broad strokes, the tippists. 20 varieties to stir, swirl and mix. Muller corner. Delicious yogurt. Your way. Introducing the British classics: Eton Mess, cherry Bakewell and apple pie.*

As the text shows, it is made for a certain type of customers: not the ordinary ones. There are used words connected to arts, painting and exquisite persons. Those who stand out as bringing *haute couture* to lifestyle. The entire vocabulary is related to higher classes. Examples in points are *sensation, tippist, pointillist, swirlism*.

Also, we observed the use of *Muller* (the brand) only twice, i.e. the customers are bright enough to remember the name.

### FAGE Total 0% Yoghurt Split Pot with Strawberry. 2016

This commercial is made especially for the youngest generation: children. The words used (especially little) send us directly to childhood and exploration of the garden, while the same time rendering some past times...since 1926.

*You're a little nut maker Strawberry. Cupid's little helper. And you deserve a sweetness as true as your own. How about a yogurt that's been lovingly produced since 1926. Fage total 0% strawberry split pot. Nothing more, never less.*

Stylistic devices used are: **antithesis** – at the beginning and ending of the presentation and **paradox**: *Nothing more, never less.*

### The Prize Guys Yoghurt

In the advertisement for St. Ivel, a group of invasive 'thin yoghurts' attempt in vain to impress a group of fruit pieces basking on a beach. Then enter The Prize Guys, the thickest and fruitiest yoghurts in the area. Never before has dairy been so emasculating.

*It happened last summer. Some other fruits were ripening in the Sun. Some thin yogurts were trying to impress us; I remember... When I saw my first prize guy. I'd seldom seen such body in a yogurt before. I think I knew even then that I'd never look at a thin yogurt again they're thick, they're fruity, they're the good guys. They're the prize guys!*

Literary devices employed are pun and personification, all put together in a love story.

### SKI 1970'S

A family with this much vitality in the morning could only be found in a 1970s yoghurt advertisement. After tossing several pots of Ski at one another during breakfast, everyone has a better morning

*Ski, that Sunday morning mood,  
it's a real fruit can-smashed food,  
for all the family....*

*Everyone enjoys the good things. The fruits of summer sunshine and all the natural goodness of fresh dairy yoghurt. That's SKI!*

*Ski, tastes naturally 'nd so good, just like you knew you would, the real fruit goodness food, for all the family.*

The song is **vibrating, energetic**, and has good rhythm and **rhyme**

### Danone Slim fit Activia (2013)

Who better than the master of body positivity, Gok Wan, to endorse a yoghurt that makes you feel better from the inside out? In a series of advertisements from the 2010s, the style maven eloquently extolled the virtues of Activia's gut-friendly products, alongside a diverse group of contented women. Not only were the commercials immediately recognisable for their music –but also for employing a dependable and likeable host.

*Hei, gorgeous! Right! I'm gonna let you log into a little secret: if you really want to feel good, then you have got to start from the inside. Your confidence, your gap and go, it all starts from within. A daily part of Activia with its dairy goodness can help you look after yourself from the inside. And not only does Activia contain exclusive Bifidus Acti-regularis, but it's also completely delicious. A total win-win!*

*Come on, it's 2013! A new year, a new start, the new you!*

*I love it! Activia! Because feeling good starts from within!*

Rhythm of the presentation – **catwalk**

Attitude of fashionistas

Vocabulary secrecy: a little secret, within, inside – small world, enclosure,

Boldness, courage, openness – **antithesis**.

### Romanian advertisements

#### Napolact –Asa cum se cuvine (2020) – Things done right

Napoca is a company with tradition on the Romanian market. It stood out with the campaign for bio products and their logo is *We believe in things done right*.

*Dimineața ne trezim și ne pregătim pentru ziua care ne așteaptă, că așa trebuie. Ce ar fi să ne bucurăm de prezența celor dragi, așa cum trebuie. Ia micul dejun în tihnă, cu iaurt cremos de-al nostru, făcut doar cu lapte din Ardeal.*

*Napolact. Așa cum se cuvine!*

**Intertextuality** is evident here, as the phrase "done right" is **repeated** three times.

As a remark we noticed that the word *tihnă* is not from the same register as all the others. According to DEX, *tihna* is a state of peace of mind; lack of care, peace, rest, which seems to be in contradiction with the morning mood expressed in the advertisement. So, we can conclude that an **antithesis** is used here.

#### Covalact – Iaurt cu caimac (2012)

Covalact is an example of a company that, by appealing to tradition and "natural," "countrylike," succeeded in establishing the yoghurt "Very good, very countrylike." In this instance, the Romanian side is responsible for production, while the Dutch side, Campina, is in charge of distribution and advertising.

*Floare dalba vas de lut*

*Pe care ți l-am umplut*

*Cu bunătațe de lapte*

*Și l-am lăsat peste noapte*

*Sub cerul cu lună plină*

*Să prindă pojghiță fină*

*l-am lăsat la odihnit*

*de la apus la răsărit*

*să prindă caimac vartos*

*Doamne, ce iaurt gustos!*

*Iaurt cu caimac, de la Covalact de țară*

*Prea bun. Prea cu caimac*

From our point of view, the presentation of the yoghurt making is the most attractive of the entire analysed group of advertisements. The intertwining of tradition with magic, mystery and reality is outstandingly done. The vocabulary used is both creative and totally appropriate for rendering the magical work of the manufacturers. It transposes us into a land of traditions, closely connected to the world of spirits, wizards, spells, and enchantments.

The **rhythm** is artistically made, in **paired rhyme**: *lut/umplut; lapte/noapte; plina/fina a.s.o.*

The very beginning of the enchantment starts with "floare dalba" – which is a **metaphor** for the yoghurt, as *dalb's* significance is that of white, immaculate, according to DEX.

#### Danone Casa Buna (2005)

From rituals and magic spells, we move directly to the contemporary, down to earth and mercantile advertisement. It is an ordinary conversation between a young wife and her mother-in-law. Even if there are presented the benefits of the yoghurt (calcium, vitamins), the only thing that sticks to the mind is the fact that things are expensive, and that the Casa Buna yoghurt costs only 50 bani.

*Sărut-mâna, mama soacră*

*Dar ai luat ceva iaurt.....*

*Păi e foarte sănătos*

*Sănătos....dar și o groază de bani..... Casa bună.....e nou, nu?*

*Și are și calciu și vitamine.....*

*Foarte bun.....*

*Noul Danone Casa Bună are nutriplus. Un plus de calciu și vitamin și costă numai 50 de bani. Danone Casa Bună. Sănătate la îndemână.*

This ad came during a period when the yoghurt market was on the rise, the focus being on the costs. In fact, this very type of yoghurt targets lower class citizens who struggle with poverty.

And, in order to be true till the end, there are no stylistic devices used in this commercial.

### Zuzu Fin – Divin de fin (2019)

Commercial appeared in 2019, still used this year (2023). Zuzu is part of Albalact Factory, a traditional Romanian brand that became part of Lactalis group in 2016. Even if, at the starting point of Zuzu, it was meant to express the creative part of every customer, along the years it shifted direction to divinity, together with the appearance of the Greek-style yoghurt. A clever initiative was to use the ancient Greek gods in order to aim the target customers, *noblesse oblige*.

*Atena: Tată, oamenii au construit o statuie în onoarea ta!*

*Zeus: Eeeee.....*

*Hera: Dragule, poate ar trebui să le oferi niște iaurt?*

*Zeus: Dar nu mai am foarte mult.....*

*Bine, poate doar puțin.....*

*Iaurt în stil grecesc creat de zei, râvnit de toată lumea!*

*Zuzu Divin. Divin de fin*

Of the **stylistic devices**, we mention the **antithesis** found in the very words of Zeus: *bine, dar nu mai am foarte mult [...] bine poate doar puțin...* When, in fact, the images show that there is more than enough yoghurt for everyone.

The **discourse** is **short**, just as the gods' rulers' speech should be or is expected to be. Also, a fine **alliteration** is present in the game of words *divin/fin*.

### Olympus Iaurt Grecesc: Învârte Lingurița

We chose two commercials promoting the same type of yoghurt: the Greek-style one. As we can see, this one does not make the connection to the Greek roots but more to the traditional and playful image of the perfect family, when the parents have time to play with the children at breakfast time.

*Tati, ce jucăm azi?*

*Hai să jucăm....învârte lingurița!*

*Pot să învârt eu prima?*

*Iieiii.....cu musli și cu miere*

*Acum e rândul meu: cu afine*

*Hai, cine învârte pentru prânz?*

*Învârte lingurița! Jocul preferat al Iaurtului grecesc!*

Playing the game highlights the diversity of combinations that can be used when eating yoghurt, which was a creative thing to do. The Stylistic device used is the **repetition** of two key words: *învârte* and *joc*

### Activia – Danone

Obviously, we cannot overlook the Activia campaign, which demonstrates Danone's concern for the health of the female gastrointestinal tract in Romania since, at least, 2002. The brand has imposed a standard target group of customers, regardless the country. This commercial strikingly resembles the British one, even if it precedes it by 11 years, enough time to change the look and environment.

*Am o viață activă. Ca să câștig timp, mănânc ceva pe fugă și gata masa. După o vreme, încep să mă resimt....ceva nu mai funcționează cum trebuie. Dar acum, am găsit soluția. Activia de la Danone. Activia conține fermentul unic Bifidus essensis. Activia reglează tranzitul intestinal, ajutând la purificarea organismului.*

*Simt că e activ. Activia de la Danone*

*Activ în interior, se vede la exterior!*

It is a commercial of **problem-solving** type. **Repetition** of the word *active/ Activia*, to render the hectic rhythm of life. The advertising message shifted towards the health advantages of yoghurt, with some spots resembling advertisements for pharmaceuticals.

### Muller –Doza dublă de răsfăț (2021)

The German company Muller its advertising campaigns very carefully, Just like British one, presented above, the Romanian one is quite short, one of the shortest of the entire group taken into study. Nonetheless, the effect is striking due to the music, shift of images, and tones and few words, accompanied by pauses in order to let the information sink in.

*Prima data când am gustat Muller cu bucăți de fructe a fost intens, cremos, uimitor.*

*Muller. Momentul meu de plăcere*

Three adjectives are used, all different, and all used to characterize the type of yoghurt, having the role of **metaphors**. **No repetition**, just inner rhythm.

The commercials taken into study can be grouped as follows:

1. Traditional yoghurts: Walls Fresto, Covalact, Napolact
2. Yoghurts with innovations on taste: Muller corners, Muller, Doza dubla de rasfat, Olympus – Invarte lingurita
3. Yoghurts with innovations on packaging: Fage Split Pot

4. Yoghurts with upgrading of the standard taste: Activia, Zuzu Divin,

Fage Plain Extraordinary.

Table 1

Frequency of stylistic devices used in the studied corpus of commercials

|    | Stylistic device | British commercials | Romanian commercials | Total number where the stylistic device appears |
|----|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1. | Alliteration     | 2                   | 1                    | 3   |
| 2. | Repetition       | 3                   | 3                    | 6   |
| 3. | Metaphors        | 4                   | 2                    | 6   |
| 4. | Antithesis       | 3                   | 1                    | 4   |
| 5. | Personification  | 1                   | -                    | 1   |
| 6. | Rhyme            | 1                   | 1                    | 2   |

Both Romanian and British commercials are open and tight in the race for the customers' attention. Many of the ads are part of international trusts, so we can see when imposing a tone for the brand. Examples in point are Muller – similar ads in both countries and Danone Activia – different characters, same tone and hectic style. A specific trait is the fact that some complaints appear in the Romanian commercial, a characteristic of Romanians who seem to be more keen on complaining and creating melodramas from every trifle thing.

## CONCLUSIONS

Of the 14 advertisements studied, we can notice that, generally in almost half of the commercials. For Romanians, the antithesis stirs the most the mood of the viewers, which the British are more keen to personify. And of all, Muller has the most exquisite vocabulary and Covalact the most magical one.

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