

## ***1 Advertisement in Hungary: what happened during Socialism?***

Hungarians always looked to the West as to a better and desirable world, as to a place of freedom and wellbeing. Advertisement couldn't be safe from this mental disposition, and after the end of the socialism in 1989, Hungarian advertisers started to think about the role of advertisement in the new Hungarian society.

What was advertising then?

*“Advertisement is that special way to inform people that reflects the owners' interests, who are also the one who pay for advertisements. The main aim of ads is to simplify the choice to people who is going to buy a product: ads turns to more than one addressee and have to show them the advantages and qualities of the article”* (Ravasz & Kaminski 1973:16).

In Hungarian there are two terms to define advertisement: this dualism is really important to understand the conflicts in the definition of ads' role in Hungary after the socialism.

The first word, *hírdetés*, means “news, announcement”, it is the nominal form of the ancient word *hírdet*, still currently used in Hungarian, which means “to announce”, this word is documented since 1372. The second word is *reklám*, a loan word from French, which is documented in Hungarian since 1860. The two terms have differences in meaning: *hírdetés* is considered a more informative and objective message than *reklám*, which has a funny and commercial shade of meaning. *Reklám* has a stronger connotative function, it is itself a product to be sold (Lagneau 1977), it has to like people and to be remembered; *hírdetés*, instead, has a stronger denotative function, it gives information in a more detailed way.

The Hungarian academician, István Varga wrote in 1960: *“the only aim of ads is to sell products, for this reason ads are financed by owners (...). All the messages which contains information, about objects or services, but are not intended to make people buy the product, can not be considered advertisement.”* (Varga 1960: 15).

It's a really interesting definition, it shows what was the main opinion about ads during the socialism and which changes has occurred in the last ten years in Hungary.

Information was not an instrument to persuade people to do something, it was a right; only when a message contained a clear invitation of buying something, it could be considered advertisement *tout court*.

Varga underlines the most important difference between *hírdetés* and *reklám*, which lays in the different economical interest that invests the two messages: both let people know about the existence of products, both messages describe the products, but for the *hírdetés*, the information is given in consideration of the national economy, without any clear intention of selling or persuading people. *Hírdetés* doesn't belong to any marketing plan, as *reklám* does; in the *hírdetés* information are occasional, they are given when there is really something to say about the product, not often and insistently (Varga 1960: 15).

But what happened in Hungarian ads during the socialism?

The first study on ads in Hungary was made in 1961: in this year, the TV user were 103.700, of this, 25% used to watch ads on TV, 23% liked ads, 2% disliked programmes, and 83% says to remember advertisements. Since the 40's in Hungary advertisements' development stopped because of the socialism: *hírdetés* gain a special position and it became the most popular way of advertisement: text are easy, short and detailed, this was due also to the absence of the concurrency (Rumbold 1996: 6).

Another important problem of the socialist period was connected to the person who had to pay for ads: was the producer or the seller? The producer sold the article in any case (he was the only one to produce it). The seller would have sold it as well, there was very little choice and high fidelity to the usual products. (Lagneau 1977; Ravasz & Kaminszki 1973:31).

In Hungary during socialism there was a third kind of advertisement, a very characteristic one: propaganda.

We can distinguish ads from propaganda paying attention to the message aims and the way of expressing the message itself. Varga says that "*propaganda wants to make people know thoughts, ideas, ideologies and facts that could influence the addressee just showing him/her the real effects produced by the idea*" (Varga 1960: 10).

So, *hírdetés* could be compared to the propaganda as it doesn't persuade people to do something. But it is also similar to *reklám*, as it is financed by firms, which has many interests in letting people know about their products (if the product is unknown, it has less possibility to be bought).

But what was the role of ads during the socialist period?

Varga answers to this question: "*advertisement has to help the popular economy, to fulfil every social, material and cultural need, it has to oppose to the capitalistic ads, where the only aim is to sell the products (...). It fulfils people's interest in being informed about the products and it mirrors how the national economy goes*" (Varga 1960: 70-71).

With these problems, both conceptual and lexical ones, the Hungarian advertisers had to deal in the early 90's, when capitalism broke in Hungary and the role of advertisement had to follow the events, change and transform itself looking to the West as a source of ideas and experience.

Obviously, the changes involved both the advertising technique and the language used in the new messages. There was a new ad, there had to be a new way to express the strong desire to belong to Europe, to be a part of that world from which Hungary has been excluded for almost 50 years. Hungarians started to look at West: imported everything, learned everything they missed for that long time and passed the last 10 years looking to reach Europe.

## ***2 Hungarian: linguistic influences and language trends***

Hungarian language status went through a lot of changes, especially during the last ten years: in this period many English words come into Hungarian. This is a strong trend, which can't be explained with a real need of the language as almost every new loan word from English has its own Hungarian equivalent (Nádasdy 1997). English is regarded as the language "of capitalism", it is strictly connected to The United States and the idealistic opinion Hungarians have about the States. In Hungary, since 1945, Russian language was a comprehensive subject at school: that has created a strong opposition to URSS and a growing interest to the English speaking world.

Before the '90s, Hungary was under a strong German cultural influence, both historical events (Hungary gained its independence from Austria in 1867) and the cultural importance Germany had in the XIX century, provided German a high prestige, which influenced Hungarian language and culture too.

In Hungary since 1844 the official languages were Latin and German, well educated people used to speak in German and not in Hungarian, which was considered the language of the lower classes (Kiss 1993: 130). This kind of bilingualism caused a lot of confusion after

1844, when Hungarian became the official language. Many Hungarians, who used to speak in German or Latin, didn't know the new language; so, when they couldn't explain a concept in Hungarian, used the German word for the everyday terms, or the Latin one, for the cultural ones. These words remained in Hungarian and are still used in the current language (Kiss 1993:135).

In the '90s German lost its prestige and the most influential language became English, which is regarded as the international language and became the symbol of a new way of life. English loan words have come into Hungarian since XVII century (Kiss 1993: 193). As many scientific and technical texts are written in English, many words reached Hungarian and entered in the current language. As many English words came into Hungarian, some linguists proposed to define this mixture of Hungarian and English words as *Hunlish* (Szabó 1997:25).

There is another interesting trend: many English words which get into Hungarian replace old German loan words and renew the language in a more international way (Guszkova 1998:193).

This deep interest for English is due to the end of the Russian influence: the way of life of the States and the international languages are considered a "new Latin", the new common language and a model to be followed in the globalization process (György 1999: 83). Globalization involves risks for the national language: as it has happened in the last century, when Hungarian was subjected to German, now Hungarian risks to lose the correctness and its importance because of the growing influence of international languages and terms (Kosztolányi 1999: 95-96). It's clear that the importance of English is an answer to the feeling of exclusion Hungary felt during the socialism; speak in English is seen as the fastest way to reach Europe and all the capitalistic countries (Jettmarová 1997: 188).

### ***3 Advertisements' language before and after 1989***

I have studied ads' language both of the socialist period and after the changes of 1989: there are many important changes to underline and to think of to understand how politics changed the way of communicating in Hungary.

From a lexical point of view, there is an important trend: before 1989, in the ads there was a wide use of Latin words in order to give the message a more scientific and technical connotation. In this way the reader believed that the product had undergone to studies and it was efficient as the presentation sounded professional. In any case, the Latin or German terms, belonged to the common vocabulary, it was a word that everyone could understand, but the connotation the terms brought to the message was useful and studied (see *Caola Cream* ad which has only two words, both have Latin origin).

In the '90s this trend changed in a wide introduction of new terms that most of the people can't understand. Messages are full of international words, chiefly taken from English and German, and almost every of these foreigner terms, has its own equivalent in Hungarian: people doesn't understand clearly the messages if they doesn't know that languages!

During the socialism, in the ads, loan words and each term used in the advertisement, belonged to the common vocabulary and were clear to everyone: everything had to be turned to the mass, had to be accessible to everyone.

In the '90s there's no need for these international and new terms to be used, it's just a trend, which has also negative effects on people who were used to live in a socialist

society where everything was turned to everyone, without distinctions or discriminations. Often this large use of obscure terms make people dislike the ads, they doesn't understand the messages and feel excluded from the communication. This trend involves not only loan words, but slogans too: there are advertisements in which the slogans are entirely in German or English with no translation: if the addressee doesn't know the language is automatically excluded from the communication, feel silly, inadequate to the product... (see ads of AEG washing machine).

Slogans in foreign language suggest a transfer between the target of the ads and the prestige of the article: ads in a foreign language turn to a specific addressee, a higher level people, and by doing that, the message attributes to the product itself a higher prestige. It's a deep difference if we consider that during the socialism every advertisement was addressed to everyone and every product was destined to everyone. There was no linguistic discrimination as in the recent advertisements.

Technical words and calques are widely used in the post-socialist advertisement: many advertisement reach in Hungary from different countries, as are imported with the products: this involves a work of adaptation to the specific socio-cultural context in which the advertisement is going to be presented. That favours the creation of calques and the use of international terms instead of looking for a correct Hungarian form, which would take more time and wouldn't be as efficient as the new forms are.

There is also a morfological influence: there are example of superextensions of a particular suffix, the superessive one, which in Hungarian is *-on*, and recalls the English preposition *on*: this assonance allows many play on words, obviously, the slogans in Hungarian are grammatically wrong.

During the socialism, the advertisements didn't turn to the addressee directly, and if it happened, the addressee was regarded with formal and kind allocutives.

In general, before 1989, verbs in advertisements were used in the implicit or impersonal form, often as participles: a cream could be regenerating, a coffee was well grounded... there was no a direct conative function in the messages, there was a strict, objective description of the product.

Superlatives weren't used during the socialism to describe an article; all the adjectives were at a neutral degree.

Obviously, things changed in the '90s: superlatives are one of the most frequent forms used in ads, there are many adjectives that try to convince the addressee that the article is the best. The new advertisements turn to the addressee in a familiar way, not in a formal and kind way. There are exhortative subjunctives that addresses to the readers, try to convince him/her. In the ads now there are many comparisons between the product and everything else in the world, technical and loan words are used to convince buyers.

Also the syntax went over many changes: if during the socialism the messages were short and the preferred structure was parataxis (see *Caola Cream*, a typical old advertisement).

In the newest advertisements there are a lot of complex ipotaxis and messages are long and detailed.

From a pragmatic point of view, there is a different use of the Hungarian allocutive system: during the socialism, the ads followed the correct and polite way of addressing to people. The recent advertisements regards the addressee in a more informal and friendly way, like in English, where the distinction between the formal or informal allocutive *you* is weak and undefined.

All these changes are due to the new targets: before 1989 there was not a defined target to address messages to, the readers were considered a mass without deep differences, so everything would have been good for everyone. In the past, ads paid attention to prices too: in many ads it is specified that the prices are low and convenient, this information was considered important for the buyers, and socialism asked ads to be informative.

The capitalism in Hungary changed advertisement, removing the old kind of objective and informative messages and generating a more international and sophisticated advertisement. These changes influenced the current language and the Hungarian culture in a more globalized direction. This shows how politics can influence languages and life style through ads too.

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