ON THE PORTMANTEAU WORDS BASED ON COMMERCIAL NAMES IN CURRENT ROMANIAN ADVERTISING

Raluca Alina POPESCU
University of Bucharest
ralucapopescu_88@yahoo.com

Abstract:

This paper samples the dynamic phenomenon of the portmanteau words frequently occurring in the current Romanian advertising speech: more exactly, those portmanteau words that are based on commercial names (i.e. brand, and product names respectively, which should be distinguished one from the other). Thus, we noticed that in advertisements not only commercial names themselves could often be formed by the same lexical and/or phonetic processes as the portmanteaus, but also most of them have, in turn, a brand name as one of the forming constituents, whilst the other category, based on product names, are less frequent.

Keywords:

Commercial names, portmanteau words, blending, advertising language, lexical creations.

1. Preliminary remarks

In the era of globalization and consumerism, we are all around surrounded by logos and symbols, by trademarks and all sorts of commercial names, more and more ingenious, ostentatious or intriguing. Therewith, this flow of particularly (new) product names, could be explained by the increasing competition between producers. So, brand and product names start playing a remarkable role in the sociocultural transformations, and in building our individual but, more especially, our collective cultural universe[1]:

[1]This is proved by a large number of lexicalized brand names, which have been already listed in lexicographic works, as eponyms, i.e. lexical elements created by the process of antonomasia and by submechanisms of the metonymic substitution-type (Stoichițoiu Ichim 2006: 333-334): *xerox, adidași, converși, aragaz, aspirină, google, dero, pamperși,* etc (acc. to DCR3).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

"*La marca, con tutto il potenziale di senso ad essa conesso, è riconosciuta, dunque, non solo come segno di appropriazone, identificazione e differenziazione, ma soprattutto come vettore di significati, come patrimonio culturale che, in quanto tale, può essere interpretato e trasmesso, superando, quindi, le barriere generazionali e, in epoca di globalizzazione come la nostra, i confini nazionali e linguistici.*"[2] (Mattioda 2008: 110)

In the battle for winning the customers, it is not enough anymore for a company or a product to be displayed to the public as often as possible, but what matters, above all, it is the most original way in which this could appear, in order to convince and to be remembered long-term:

"*The advertising message respects various structuring rules but, at the same time, it generates and it requires specific patterns, ephemeral or long-term resistant*" (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 205).

Advertising has been assigned the difficult role of directing the target audience's attention right to certain products or producer brands. No wonder that advertising has started offering a discursive framework more than appropriate for the occurrence of lexical creativity, as well as for the most expressive ways of rendering the information that a certain brand wants to make public. The advertising discourse in reference to a certain brand or products has to entertain, to seduce, to tease the public, to repeat that brand/product name in a most unusual way, so as not to bore and miss its initial aim. This is why, in order to catch attention upon a certain brand or product, in the Romanian advertisements there can be noticed some truly ingenious lexical creations having their forming structure based on various brand or product names; however, the majority of them have a temporary status ("lexical ephemerides", acc. to Stoichițoiu Ichim 2006: 226): "di soluzioni linguistiche prefabbricate, di deviazioni […] della lingua"[3] (Simone 1972: 114). Sometimes seeming common, these prove, however, the Romanian language dynamics and the productivity of some word-

[2] "The trademark, with all the prospective meaning related to it, is recognized, therefore, not only as a sign of appropriation, identification and differentiation, but mostly as a carrier of meanings, as a cultural heritage which can be intrinsically construed and transmitted, surpassing therefore the generational gap and also the national and linguistic boundaries, in a globalization era as ours" (Mattioda 2008: 110).

[3] "[…] prefabricated linguistic solutions, language deviations" (Simone 1972: 114).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

formation processes, as well as the importance of foregrounding the brand and product names, which, once fixed in the community awareness, start being lexicalized and they even become commonplace.

Examining a corpus made up of Romanian language advertisements of the present-day period (from 2012 to 2015), in various forms: written (flyers, posters, also listed in some stores and companies booklets and catalogues or on their websites); spoken (advertising videos, broadcasted through the audiovisual media) or mixed (online media ads), we noticed that the contemporary Romanian advertising abounds in condensed lexical forms of the portmanteau words type, much more interesting as persuasive yield (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 234); and many of these words are based on a commercial name in their formation. Thus, we intend to closely investigate some sorts of this kind of lexical forms, so as to observe the role they play in the advertising message, as well as their impact upon consumers, on a mental level.

2. Commercial names: *brand names* and *product names*

In the advertising and commercial onomatology studies, researchers discuss more often about the urgent need to distinguish between brand names and product names, and this distinction is essential in order to analyze them properly and to define their status. Even from a linguistic point of view, they form different, non homogeneous classes. Therefore, the borderline between them it is not always clear – consequently, when lexicalized and being listed in dictionaries (like the dictionaries of eponyms, the dictionaries of proper names etc.), they can create various confusions, some of them being listed as brand names instead of product names and vice versa (Fèvre-Pernet, Roché 2005). Recent studies, specialized on this subject, even use the phrase *brand product name*, a contamination of both terms.

The *brand name* refers to the name which is always used, in the same form and accompanied by the same logo, on the packages of different products (for instance, *Danone*). The *product name* designates a product/a range of products specific to a certain brand (for example, *Danonino*, a product of the *Danone* brand). But these "definitions" are not enlightening at all, because it could happen that a new name and an adequate logo to be developed for a certain product, different from any other product of the same brand (for instance, the case of the juice *Sprite*, produced by *The Coca*

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

Cola Company). In this last case, we can talk about *brand product name* or *product-brand name* (Fèvre-Pernet, Roché 2005). Also, there are situations when the product name corresponds to the brand name, but all the ambiguities can be solved within the discursive context, especially since both of them do not belong to the same paradigm, despite their identical form. As a result, in some reference papers, in order to avoid confusions, the generic term *commercial name* is used both for designating a product name and for brand names (Mattioda 2008: 119).

Therefore, it is not easy to delimitate between the two concepts, taking into consideration the fact that they almost have the same function (to assign a "label"), even if this function does not always have the same effect in both cases. However, above all, the brand name has to indicate the origin of the product to the target public, with reference to the producer. But nowadays, as a new trend, the brand name refers rather to an abstract entity, loaded with meaning or, at least, conveys a concept that the advertising community is committed to build and, moreover, to guarantee its survival in this world of trades. The product names respond instead to a denomination need, as the emergence of new products involves the creation of novel names for the new referents. But, therewith, these have to be as short as possible and easy to designate, and must answer, as well, to the language economy requirement. (Fèvre-Pernet, Roché 2005).

We considered necessary to mention all these issues, without going in further detail, whereas they could help us in detecting some specific characteristics of certain products or producer brands and, also, in building and structuring their advertising messages. In this respect, we will operate as much as possible with the *product name versus brand name* delimitation.

3. The portmanteau words in advertising

The *portmanteau words* – a metaphoric term[4], the term most used in Romanian, referring to the results of the blending/telescoping process –,

[4] The English word *portmanteau* represents, in fact, a borrowing from French (< Fr. *porte-manteau*), meaning 'a large suitcase with two compartments, in which the clothing can be transported by hanging on a device, in order not to crease' and being used for the first time by Lewis Caroll in his *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1821), where the character Humpty-Dumpty explains to Alice the word *slithy*, created by the crossing between *lithe* and *slimy*, as well as the term *mimsy* < *flimsy* + *miserable*: "You see

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

blended words, *blends* or rarely referred to as *telescopic words*, were carefully studied, most often, as a type of wordplay characteristic of the familiar language and slang (acc. to Zafiu 2010: 78). But these have already exceeded by far this domain, nowadays being used especially in the artistic, in the journalistic (Răuțu 2010) or in the advertising language (see also Popescu 2015), thanks to their state of being creative lexical formations by definition:

"*The commonest places for blends to occur are in product names, advertisements, newspaper and magazine headlines and titles"* (Lehrer 2007: 128).

Being hybrid words, created by mixing formal and semantic fragments of words (*splinters*) – the results of the truncation of two different lexemes (or, at least, of one of them[5]), which are often connected by semantic contiguity (Suciu 2009: 74), the portmanteaus become an effective means of concentrating a message, because they involve a double lexical-semantic reference (usually to the object being advertised and to its features) (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 234), and also observe the principle of language economy– the reason which explains why they are increasingly used in advertisements. The success of these lexical creations depends on many factors: context, external factors (who creates them, the moment of their release, the theme they are related to), intrinsic qualities (more interesting forming rules, creating an effect of surprise, a high level of semantic motivation) (Zafiu 2007). However, above all, the portmanteau word has a dual functional justification: a precise designation and also an insistent and possibly aggressive emphasis upon the referent (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 208), but put in a sympathetic and amusing form[6], because:

"[...] one way in which advertisements are persuasive is by giving their audience a pleasurable experience. The consumer may associate the pleasure they experienced in processing the ad with the product that is being advertised, which in turn may lead to a more positive attitude towards the product" (van Mulken *et al.* 2005: 708).

it's like a *portmanteau* – there are two meanings packed up into one word." (*apud* Răuțu 2010: 287; Suciu 2009: 73).

[5] It is also possible that only one of the components of a portmanteau to be clipped.

[6] Cf. "[...] blends are often cute and amusing" (Lehrer 2007: 115).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

Although they are considered a form of puns, the portmanteau words are not ambiguous, but ambivalent, being given their double reference, supposing even the fusion between the meanings of the words that are blending (Fuchs 1996: 21, *apud* Răuțu 2010: 291). Moreover, those which are formed by the commercial names are explicit enough, referring directly to those brand or product names or indirectly, very rarely, by metonymic-type substitutions. The other component of the portmanteau word, although it does not represent a precise reference to the brand or product concerned, belongs to the same semantic sphere with that name or, if not, it becomes the manner in which that product/brand is intended to start being connected with that concept so as to be set this way in the public memory.

As for the fabrication of the portmanteau words in the advertising message[7], of which tendency, more and more frequent, is that one of its components (*splinters*) – usually, parts of some words (*clippings*, i.e. truncations of words) – to be represented by a word/a part of a word which designates the product/brand name, it is almost useless to mention that it aims at drawing the attention of the target public directly upon a certain product (or brand), so as to be more easily remembered, and to set in the public's memory in order to be purchased (Popescu 2015).

"*In the case of a product name or an advertisement for a product, we are supposed to be motivated to buy the product or at least remember the product name*" (Lehrer 2007: 128-129).

Besides, being easily distinguishable and assigned to famous brands, which is why some companies/brands constantly use such portmanteau words in their ads, these forms settle for long time and become recognizable to every following reproduction, based on memory (for instance, the lexical creation *domoferta* – in English, *the domoffer* –, which is used in almost every DOMO store catalogue, but also in most of their TV video ads; or the words *dedemanual* and *dedeplan*, already registered trademarks of the brand Dedeman – see *infra*). Therefore, they become a sort of expressive tools, repeating certain messages – cf. "strumenti di cristallizzazione espressiva e

[7] Many of the commercial names themselves represent also blended forms like the portmanteau words. For instance, Engl. *Nabisco* < ***Na****tional* ***Bis****cuit* ***Co****mpany*; *Adidas* < ***Adi*** ***Das****sler* or Rom. *PariSport* (the name of a sport betting house) < ***pari****uri* ***sport****ive* ('sports betting'); *Mobexpert* (the name of a furniture and interior decoration store) < ***mob****ilă* ('furniture') + *expert.*

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

di ripetitività"[8] (Simone 1972: 114) and means of shaping some prototype models meant to set not only in the customer's mind, but also in the collective line of thought.

"*The meaning that is more popular, or more prototypical, more frequently used, more familiar, or recently activated by previous context, is the more salient one*" (van Mulken *et al*. 2005: 709).

Being given the distinction *brand name versus product name*, we consider it necessary to also discuss separately about the portmanteau words based on a brand name and the portmanteaus based on a product name, respectively.

3.1. The brand names are involved in the telescoping/blending process in a very large number, more often than the product names do[9]. This could be explained by the desire of the companies to promote themselves and their brands rather than their products, as once they gained their public's adherence and managed to retain their customers, the products of that brand sell well. Moreover, there are some companies that do not market their own products, but they only represent a means by which (inclusively) the products of other brands are marketed. However, the strategies of this sort of mechanisms, meant to build the advertising messages, are the same.

For instance, in the following advertisements:

"De Paște, **Domoferta** bate orice ofertă!" (TV ad, broadcast in April 2014);

"ATACUL **DOMOFERTELOR**" (poster, distributed in February 2014)

On Easter, the Domoffer beats any offer!

THE ATTACK OF THE DOMOFFERS,

the bonding of the lexical elements *DOMO* (brand name) and *ofertă* 'offer'(with its plural Romanian genitive flexional form, *ofertelor* 'of the offers'), in a form that seems rather a compound than a portmanteau word, is even more felicitous because it is more sonorous (it represents an assonance), by having constantly repeated the vocal *o*, which is, at the same time, the only common point of the two components of the new word[10]. This

[8] "[…] expressive crystallizing and repetitiveness instruments" (Simone 1972: 114).

[9] I already drew attention on this fact in a previous study on the portmanteau words used in Romanian language of advertising. Thus, this paper complements, in some way, my previous study on this subject – for further information, see Popescu 2015: 370.

[10] This type of portmanteau words, in which the mixed terms have a mutual fragment which is preserved and facilitates the blending process, are very common. If this vocal fragment occurs at the end of the first word and, at the same time, at the beginning of the second one,

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

could also be the reason why this word is constantly repeated, being reproduced in many other TV and radio ads of the same company, ever since 2012. Besides, these lexical forms not only grab the public's attention regarding that brand, but they also present the quality of a very economical and fairly expressive language (as compared to the formulating of the same message this way:[*atacul*] *ofertelor* [*de la*] *DOMO*, '[the attack] of the offers [from] DOMO').

We observe a similar construction pattern (based on a brand name) with another brand/company, also specialized in the sale of electronics and appliances:

"**eMAGIA** Sărbătorilor. Cele mai tari cadouri sunt aici." (online banner and TV ads, broadcast in December 2013).

**eMAGIC* [It is MAGIC] *of the Holidays. The best presents are here.*

This construction is the more interesting as it can be construed in two ways, at least in its written form: 1) from a lexical point of view, as a portmanteau word, formed by the almost entire overwriting of the brand name eMAG on the common name *magie* ('magic'); 2) from a syntactic point of view, as a sentence having its predicate reproduced (*E*[*ste*] *magia Sărbătorilor*. / 'It is the magic of the Holidays')[11], especially if we take into consideration the graphic wordplay (the writing of the word *magia* 'magic' by capital letters – see *Image 1*) and also if we pay enough attention the homophonic pun.



Image 1

then it is entirely reproduced in the portmanteau form, hence the new lexical creation seems to be only partially clipped (Suciu 2009: 74).

[11]Besides, the highlighting of this construction, by using the red colour only for writing the letters of the portmanteau word, differentiating it from the rest of the text, also invokes Christmas, with its red specific colour. Likewise, the gift boxes in the image are red too or they are tied with red ribbons (see *Image 1*).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

We have also found the same sort of portmanteau words in the advertising messages of the online store of Dedeman, a company specialized in the sale of building materials, furniture, and electronics and appliances: *dedemanual* and *dedeplan*, (available on the website: www.dedeman.ro/ro/tutorial/, last time accessed on 05.06.2014), both being trademarks of the *Dedeman* company.

If in the form *dedemanual*, the brand name Dedeman is kept intact, overlapping entirely with the other component (the common name *manual*, also completely kept), inside the word *dedeplan*, the same company name, Dedeman, is clipped into the form *dede-*, by an apocope, and bound to the common name *plan*. In this case, it is a normal thing that the common names *plan* and *manual* remain entirely in the newly created lexemes, as they are designating concrete concepts, recently emerged, and not yet settled in the consumer minds, whilst the brand name, already known enough for the public, has only a designating and individualizing function. Besides, the formal resemblance with the brand name, in the first example (*dedemanual*), as well as the case of its clipping, in the second example (*dedeplan*), make the references to that brand easy noticeable.

The *dedemanual*, as its name indicates, is a bricolage guide full of advice and guidance on different activities that construction workers run in house constructions and decorations, while the *dedeplan* stands for a shopping plan, meant to help customers create their own personalized shopping list, adjusting the quantities and the dimensions of the products they need, by reference to different measuring criteria that are related to the measuring of the workspace (for instance, by using *dedeplan*, customers can calculate the price and the quantity of the parquet they need according to the floor surface of the place where they want to assemble it). In this situation, not only the lexical creations, but also the concepts they designate constitute a powerful persuasive strategy[12].

We found another brand name – of a company that also sells construction materials –, involved in the creation of a portmanteau word, in the following situation, where the portmanteau *depocracy* is created by the analogy with the concept of *democracy*. Moreover, the term is explained, at

[12] The inoculated message is the following: benefiting from such a permanent assistance, it is easier for the target customers to purchase from Dedeman the construction materials and all the other home products they need, without spending too much time and money, rather than purchasing much more large quantities of materials, sometimes unnecessary, from other stores that do not offer such an efficient and client need-centered assistance.

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

some point, in the company's catalogue, clarifying the reference to the above mentioned word[13]:

"BRICO DEPÔT – **Depocrația** prețurilor mici";

"**Depocrația** este forma de organizare și conducere a proiectelor de construcții și amenajări în care puterea supremă este exercitată de CEL MAI MIC PREȚ. Aici nu există termenul ofertă, toate prețurile sunt mici în fiecare zi. În **depocrație** credem în egalitatea proiectelor, mari sau mici. Asta înseamnă stoc pe loc, pentru toate proiectele. Ia-ți chiar tu marfa din raft și ai CEL MAI MIC PREȚ. Totul e simplu: vii, găsești ușor ce cauți, iei cât vrei și plătești într-o clipă. Șantierul tău nu mai trebuie să aștepte!" (BRICO DEPÔT catalogue, 28.03-15.04.2014, front cover, p. 2);

[13] Even one of the microsites created for advertising the store BRICO DEPÔT has this name: www.depocratia.ro, and this has been constructed in a most ludic and suggestive way, in order to broadcast in the most original way as possible the brand message. When accessing the site, the visitor is greeted by an animation (a flash-type image), each time representing a powerful tool, by the help of which a red wall must be demolished; each time, behind the wall, it is written a message containing this nonce word (*depocrație*). The visitor (and possible customer) is offered the option of changing the initial tool (see the group of images from *Image 2*). The metaphors are obvious, especially if we analyze the coinage *depocrație* by analogy with the already existing concept, *democrație* ('democracy'). The breaking of the wall could represent an allusion to the events happened in Germany at the end of 1989, which resulted in the fall of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the reunification of Germany and, implicitly, the freedom gained henceforth. It is not a haphazard, thus, either the choice of red as the colour for the wall that is to be broken, the dark red referring to communism and the USSR. At the same time, red is one of the background colours used in the logo of the brand BRICO DEPÔT and, from the point of view of the psychology of colors, it is believed that, uninterruptedly watched, for several seconds, it instigates to action – thus, to the breaking of the wall, of the barrier to freedom, in this case, to the area where you can find whatever construction materials you need, in order to build the world that you dream of (?). We also find a 'definition' of this lexical creation in some of the pages of the store catalogue: „forma de organizare și conducere a proiectelor de construcții și amenajări în care puterea supremă este exercitată de cel mai mic preț. Aici nu există termenul ofertă, toate prețurile sunt mici în fiecare zi. În depocrație credem în egalitatea proiectelor, mari sau mici. Asta înseamnă stoc pe loc, pentru toate proiectele"/'the form of organization and management of construction and decoration projects, where the supreme power is held by the lowest price. Here, there is no such thing as discounts, all the prices are low every day. Depocracy promotes equality among projects, either big or small. This means availability on the spot, for any project.'(BRICO DEPÔT catalogue, 28.03-15.04.2014, p. 2). Keywords like *organization, management, power, equality* refer to the idea of democracy and they remind of another type of persuasive discourse: the political discourse (especially the one performed during the electioneering).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

"În **depocrație** suntem toți egali! Profesioniști sau particulari, toți sunt bineveniți la BRICO DEPÔT." (BRICO DEPÔT catalogue, 28.03-15.04.2014, p. 16-17).

"În **DEPOCRAȚIE** cu toții muncim pentru un cost mai mic. Ia-ți chiar tu marfa din raft și ai CEL MAI MIC PREȚ."; "**DEPOCRAȚIA** e simplă! Vii, găsești ușor ce cauți, iei cât vrei și plătești într-o clipă!" (www.depocratia.ro, last time accessed on 02.05.2014).

BRICO DEPÔT – The depocracy of the low prices.

The depocracy is the form of organization and management of construction and decoration projects, where the supreme power is held by THE LOWEST PRICE. Here, there's no such thing as discounts, all the prices are low every day. Depocracy promotes equality among projects, either big or small. This means availability on the spot, for any project. Pick the merchandise yourself from the shelf and get THE LOWEST PRICE. Everything is simple: you come, you find easily what you need, you take as much as you want, and you pay in an instant. Your yard does not have to wait anymore!

In depocracy we are all equal! Professional or individual, everyone is welcome at BRICO DEPÔT.

In DEPOCRACY, we are all working for a lower price. Pick the merchandise yourself from the shelf and get THE LOWEST PRICE.; DEPOCRACY is simple! You come, you find easily what you need, you take as much as you want, and you pay in an instant!



Image 2

The portmanteau word *depocrație*, formed by the clipping[14] of the second particle of the brand name BRICO DEPÔT, which is the French

[14] Here, the truncation consists of the apocope of the final sound *t* in the particle DEPÔT, which is actually a mute sound in French.

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

word for 'warehouse', and the particle *-crație* ('-cracy') functioning as a sufixoid (i.e. pseudo-suffix), represents, just by its allusion to *democracy* and to all its implicit metaphors, an extremely ingenuous and efficient form of persuading potential clients. The customer is not only drawn by the wordplay, but he/she is also involved in the game itself (i.e. the game of the welcoming application on one of the brand websites), and, further, in the metaphor play that the lexical creation decoding is involving, in its turn.

The following portmanteau has been conceived in a similar way as *depocracy*, meaning that its construction is rather based on an analogy and less on the rules set by a typical structure, and the difference between both components is being set only by a single sound. This lexical creation has been made up of the brand name BIC and the initial part of the adjective *economic* (>*econo-*):

"**ECONOBIC**: -40% la toată gama de instrumente pentru scris și coloriaj BIC, special semnalizate la raft!" (Carrefour catalogue, 20.03-2.04.2014, p. 8)

ECONOBIC: -40% on the whole range of BIC writing and coloring instruments, especially signaled on the shelf!

The compression of the two aforementioned words in a single lexical form, leading to a much more economical expression, represents a very efficient way of drawing the potential customer's attention upon the BIC product discounts.

The following verb forms can be framed in the same semantic field of economy. They are made up in the same manner (by a brand name) and they are also expressed in their imperative mood form, becoming what have been called as odd "imperatives assigned to some verbs created *ad-hoc*" (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 219):

"**AEGONOMISEȘTE** acum pentru momente cheie din viata ta!"; „Fii eroul familiei tale. **Aegonomisește**!"; "Aegon îi premiază pe cei ce **aegonomisesc**." (posters, distributed between December, 2013 –January, 2014, also available on the website with the same name aegonomiseste.ro)

**AEGONOMIZE now for key moments in your life!; Be the hero of your family. *Aegonomize!;Aegon is awarding those who *aegonomize.*

These lexical coinages are also portmanteaus, being formed by the multinational insurance company name, the most probably pronounced [egon], so it becomes quasi-homophonic to the initial particle of the Romanian verb *(a) economisi* 'to economize'. The first verbal form, on the imperative mood, represents a usual exhortation, often occurring in advertising (especially in those advertising campaigns in fields like banking and insurance), like: *Economize! Invest!* But what astounds about this exhortation is the way in which it is made up, in order to direct the target

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

public straight to that insurance company, and also to arouse their curiosity. It could be unsafe for such a brand to make use of such jocular processes in order to send its message, but it would be more dangerous if the designated company would remain anonymous, using banal, too long and even boring texts or having nothing new to inform – cf. *Economisește!/Investește acum într-o pensie/asigurare de viață la Aegon!*; *Economize!/Invest now in a pension/life insurance at Aegon!* This way, "the campaign is both expressive, and informative, as the compounds of this category refer simultaneously to two benchmarks" (Cvasnîi Cătănescu 2006: 219).

After being urged to *aegonomize*, the customer is awarded by prizes, because they trust the company and follow its advice (see the second verb form: *Aegon îi premiază pe cei ce* ***aegonomisesc***.; *Aegon is awarding those who *aegonomize*.) – this is another persuasive technique, often used in advertising. Not even the use of the present tense (in this example) is accidental, even if, at a first look, it seems to address only those who had already **aegonomized.* More precisely, it is the present tense by which all the potential clients (that are about to be convinced to **aegonomize*, in order to be awarded) are, in fact, included and referred to in this message.

3.2. The lexical creations based on a product name, also formed by telescoping/blending processes are less frequent than the first category, discussed above:

"Cu Tymbark, marea **fizzyune** a sosit." (from a TV ad for Tymbark Fizzy, a sort of juice, broadcast in June-September 2013)

*With Tymbark, the big *fizzyon has arrived.*

The portmanteau word *fizzyune*, probably a calque of a foreign variant of the same advertisement broadcast in another country, refers to the mixing of a soda bubbled fruit juice name (*Fizzy*) – produced by the brand Tymbark, and the common name *fuziune* 'fusion' - referring to the fusion between the fruit and the bubbles.

The same pattern has also been used to create the verb form *fizzyonează* (**fizzyonize*), instead of *fuzionează* 'merge' (**fusionize*):

"**Fizzyonează** și câștigă!" (poster for a contest organised by Tymbark Fizzy in August-October 2013)

**Fizzyonize and win!*

The imperative form of the verb, *fizzyonează,* friendly urges the target client to buy as many sorts of the Tymbark Fizzy juice, available with different flavors, thus trying (Rom. *Să fizzyoneze*/**to fizzyon*) the different categories of this product, in order to have as many chances to win. Thereby, this metaphor of the fusion and the analogy with the verb *(a) fuziona* ('to coalesce') (between the flavours and types of the juice Tymbark

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

Fizzy) becomes more explicit and their technique of persuading the target public is more than efficient, involving the consumer in the game of *fizzyon*.

"Prinde premiile din Locuri **DEROmânia**!":

"Vara **DEROmânia**" (posters of a contest organized by DERO – producer of detergents and washing powder, in July-August 2013)[15]

*Catch the prizes in *DEROmânia* places [*meaning 'from Romania'*]!

*The summer *DEROmânia* [*meaning 'from/of Romania'*]!

This word, before being considered a portmanteau word [formed by the product name *DERO*, joined to the proper name *România/Romania* and overlapping the syllable *Ro*-(the mutual element of both components)] represents a graphic pun meant to highlight the product name. Graphic puns are frequently used in advertising posters. Also, in the graphics of DERO posters, the font and the color (light blue) of the product logo (see *Image 3*). Moreover, the pun is also based on the quasi-homophony between the nonce word and the phrase *de România*, having an attributive function. This phrase determines common names like *locuri* 'places' and *vara* 'summer', with which it perfectly collocates, and by the help of which the implicit-explicit interplay is maintained. In such a case, "we do not operate with a clipping process, […] as both terms can be found in the new structure, but with a stitching" (Răuțu 2010: 158), an overwriting of the commercial name (non-clipped) upon one part (a common part) of the other component of the portmanteau word (cf. *domoferta, eMAGIA, dedemanual*– see *supra* at 3.1.).



Image 3

In the example:

"Cei mai tari fani își schimbă numele pe facebook în **Crispyan/Crispyna**! (și se laudă aici că au făcut-o)." (on-line banners and

[15] The prizes consist of trips to different places in Romania.

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

posters of a contest organized by KFC Romania in order to promote their Crispy Sandwich, a new product, distributed in March 2013)

The best fans change their name on facebook into Cryspian/Crispyna! (and they boast about this here),

the portmanteau word is structured upon the formal resemblance between the proper names *Cristi(an)* and *Cristi(na)* and the product name which is advertised, *Crispy (Sandwich/Strips*), an English word meaning '(of food) having a firm, dry, and brittle surface or texture'. By this lexical creation, which is a direct allusion to the aforementioned product, the customer, already considered a KFC fan, is seduced to buy, being directly involved in the message; this is much more than manipulating the consumer's attention, it is a manipulation of their behavior. However, this strategy can be considered less inspired, taking into account that not all the fans have this name (*Cristina*, *Cristian*) or a similar one. But the wordplay draws attention, is funny and challenges the customer to decode the message.

The wordplay below is also based on graphism and homophony:

"Descoperă **Coolmea** senzației de răcoare." (poster of the beer Ursus Cooler, also available in the Carrefour catalogue, 22.05-04.06.2014, p. 13)

*Discover the *Coolmea* ['the height']/**Coolmination of the sensation of coolness.*

Here, the form *coolmea*, instead of the common name *culmea* ('height, peak, culmination'), refers to the product name of the Ursus brand, [the bear] *Cooler*, formed by the English borrowed word *cool*, already lexicalized in Romanian. The lexical creation *coolmea* is made up thanks to the homophony between the lexical base of the product name (from which *Cooler* has been already derived) – *cool*, and the first syllable of the word *culmea*. Thus, we consider that this nonce word is a portmanteau as it has been created by combining two clippings (*Cool-* < *Cooler*+ *-mea* < *culmea*), although, at first sight, this word seems a simple graphic pun, a "pseudo-compound" (acc. to Stoichitoiu Ichim 1997: 48). Also, the context within which this word occurs (namely the advertising message for the cooling beer with lemon juice Ursus Cooler) constitutes the main argument in order to consider it a lexical blend.

4. Conclusions

Taking into consideration the examples analyzed above, we notice that blending, the phenomenon by which portmanteau words are created, can produce not only commercial names, but goes beyond this level, by generating portmanteau words based on this kind of proper names. Moreover, this mechanism is used more and more often in the advertising industry of our days, as a persuasive, and explicit strategy (Popescu 2015:

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

370-371). Thus, a new means of creating novel words, specific to the advertising language, is starting to take shape:

"*In questomodo si configura una specie di super-uso, di super-norma, che, valendosi dei procedimenti di formazione persuasiva ben noti, finisce per mutare le strutture della lingua stessa*"[16] (Simone 1972: 113).

Given the fragments excerpted from different types of Romanian advertisements, described above, we can see that the Romanian advertising uses this kind of portmanteau words especially in the ads referring to companies that commercialize construction materials, electronics and appliances (see *domofertă, domokit, dedemanual, dedeplan, depocrație*, *eMAGIE*), but also food products (*Crispyan/Crispyna*) or beverages – juice or beer (*fizzyune*, *coolmea*), detergent (*DEROmânia*), office supplies (*ECONOBIC*). In the same semantic field of the economy we find the verb-based lexical creation *aegonomisește/aegonomisesc*; what is surprising about this nonce verb form is that it refers to an insurance company, as it is less usual for this kind of company to promote itself in an amusing manner to the target public.

Although more and more new products are launched daily on the market, by the advertisements that we have selected above we can see that, however, brand names are more often engaged in wordplays, especially in the creation of nonce words like portmanteaus, a fact that could be explained by a company's desire for refresh their name in the public memory. The portmanteau words based on product names especially occur in the ads created first of all for promoting that product at the moment of its launching on market, so as to be introduced to the large public.

If this type of special words represent a more used process in the Romanian advertisements, it means that this is indeed an efficient persuasive trick:

"[...] non sono finalizzati ad un ampliamento della competenza linguistica del singolo, ma ad un risultato extra-linguistico, che è la captazione della volontà di acquisto"[17] (Simone 1972: 114).

Also, even if these lexical creations constitute occasional occurrences, being ephemeral words, they sometimes have a long-lasting stylistic effect and, although they do not settle in the language usage, they prove the productivity of some processes and means of linguistic

[16] "This way, an extra-use and extra-norm species is configured, a kind that by the virtue of the well-known persuasive forming processes ends up changing the language structure itself" (Simone 1972: 113).

[17] "[They] not only end up in the extension of linguistic competence of an individual, but in an extra-linguistic result, namely the seeking of the customer's will" (Simone 1972: 114).

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

innovation. We share the opinion that, similarly to the poetic language, the lexical creativity in the advertising industry knows no limits; however, linguistic research in this field is rather sporadic, whereas the advertising is ever more present in our lives and ever more surprising.

Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/136077.

Sources

Carrefour catalogue, 20.03-2.04.2014; 22.05-04.06.2014.
On-line sources:
www.aegonomiseste.ro, last time accessed on 06.06.2014.
www.dedeman.ro, last time accessed on 05.06.2014.
www.depocratia.ro, last time accessed on 02.09.2015.

References

CVASNÎI CĂTĂNESCU, Maria, 2006, *Retorică publicistică – de la paratext la text*. Bucuresti: Editura Universitătii din Bucuresti.

DCR3 – DIMITRESCU, Florica (coord.), Alexandru CIOLAN, Coman LUPU, 2013, *Dictionar de cuvinte recente*. 3rd edition, Bucuresti: „Logos".

FÈVRE-PENET, Christine, Michel ROCHÈ, 2005, „Quel traitement lexicographique de l'onomastique commerciale? Pour une distinction Nom de marque/Nom de Produit", in: *CORELA – Numéros thématiques. Le traitement lexicographique des noms propres*, 02 décembre 2005 [also available on: http://corela.edel.univ-poitiers.fr/index.php?id=1198, last time accessed on 05.06.2014].

LEHRER, Adrienne, 2007, „Blendalicious", in: Judith Munat (ed.), *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts*. *Studies in Functional and Structural Linguistics*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, p. 115-133.

MATTIODA, Maria Margherita, 2008, L'«Eau d'Issey» delle marche. Migrazioni lessico-culturali nell'onomastica commerciale", in: *Synergies Italie*, 4, p. 109-121.

van MULKEN, Margot, Renske van ENSCHOT-van DIJK, Hans HOEKEN, 2005, "Puns, relevance and appreciation in advertisements", in: *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37, p. 707-721.

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)

MUNAT, Judith (ed.), 2007, *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts*. *Studies in Functional and Structural Linguistics*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

POPESCU, Raluca Alina, 2015, „Some Aspects Regarding the Portmanteau Words in Current Romanian Language of Advertising", in: *Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*, 7, p. 358-374 [to appear].

RĂUȚU, Daniela, 2010, „Despre cuvintele telescopate din presa actuală. Teorii, procedee și valori", in: Rodica Zafiu, Adina Dragomirescu, Alexandru Nicolae, Florentina Sâmihăian (eds.), *Limba română. Controverse, delimitări, noi ipoteze. Actele celui de al 9-lea Colocviu al Catedrei de limba română (4-5 decembrie 2009)*, p. 287-295.

SIMONE, Raffaele, 1972, „Pubblicità e creativitàlinguistica", in: *Sipra*, 2, marzo-aprilie 1972, p. 16-20.

STOICHIȚOIU ICHIM, Adriana, 2006, *Creativitatea lexicală în româna actuală*, București: Editura Universității din București.

STOICHIȚOIU ICHIM, Adriana, 1997, „Strategii persuasive în discursul publicitar" (II), in: *Limbă și literature*, III-IV, p. 45-54.

SUCIU, Emil, 2009, *Condensarea lexico-semantică*, Iași: Institutul European.

ZAFIU, Rodica, 2007, „Păcatele limbii: «Fabulospirit»", in: *România literară*, 29 iunie 2007, 35, p. 11.

ZAFIU, Rodica, 2010, *101 cuvinte argotice*, București: „Humanitas".

BDD-A20387 © 2015 Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:04:01 UTC)