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Prosopopeia Como Orto-Doxia Estética e Retórica:
Literariedade e Eficácia do Discurso da Publicidade

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Paulo Barroso



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Paulo Barroso

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7638-5064>

Departamento de Comunicação e Arte, Escola Superior de Educação, Instituto
Politécnico de Viseu, Viseu, Portugal

Advertising discourse is peculiar, it has the appealing and persuasive functions of language and has the following general objectives: attract attention, arouse interest, provoke desire and lead to the action of purchase and consumption. Whether it's in verbal form (text) or non-verbal form (image), the language of advertising combines two fundamental aspects: aesthetics, because it is essentially literary, fictional, poetic, emotive and seductive; rhetorical, because it is pragmatic, effective and persuasive. These aspects are present due to the use of frequent and diverse rhetorical figures, particularly those that establish analogies, as they imply identities and make comparisons. This is the case with prosopopoeia, a frequent and effective rhetorical figure in advertising, because it is simple to establish implications and understand them and because it enhances the discourse, making it more lively, attractive, and empathetic, whilst identifying both products/brands and consumers. How does advertising language become aesthetic and rhetorical with prosopopoeia? How does prosopopoeia establish meaning and guide the understanding of the significance of advertising messages? Using a theoretical-conceptual approach, this article presents a qualitative study centred on the application of prosopopoeia as a stylistic and rhetorical resource in advertising discourse. Its objectives are: (a) to relate the two aspects mentioned

(aesthetics and rhetoric) in the lure of persuasive strategies within advertising communication, and (b) to justify prosopopeia as a power of *ortho-doxo* in the literary discourse of advertising.

Keywords: literary discourse, persuasion, prosopopeia, advertising, rhetoric

Prosopopeia Como Orto-Doxia Estética e Retórica: Literariedade e Eficácia do Discurso da Publicidade

O discurso publicitário é peculiar, tem as funções apelativas e persuasivas da linguagem e objetivos genéricos: chamar a atenção, suscitar interesse, provocar desejo e levar à ação de compra e consumo. Quer se apresente na forma verbal (texto) quer na forma não verbal (imagem), a linguagem da publicidade concilia duas vertentes fundamentais: a estética, porque é essencialmente literária, ficcional, poética, emotiva e sedutora; a retórica, porque é pragmática, eficaz e persuasiva. Estas vertentes devem-se ao recurso a frequentes e diversificadas figuras de retórica, em particular as que estabelecem analogias, pois implicam identidades e estabelecem comparações. É o caso da prosopopeia, figura de retórica frequente e eficaz em publicidade, por ser simples de estabelecer implicações e de as entender e por potenciar o discurso, tornando-o mais vivaz, atrativo, empático e identificando os produtos/marcas e os consumidores. Como a linguagem publicitária se torna estética e retórica com a prosopopeia? Como a prosopopeia estabelece o sentido e orienta o entendimento da significação das mensagens publicitárias? Através de uma abordagem teórico-conceitual, este artigo apresenta um estudo qualitativo centrado na aplicação da prosopopeia como recurso estilístico e retórico no discurso publicitário. Os objetivos são: (a) relacionar as duas vertentes mencionadas (a estética e a retórica) na atratividade das estratégias persuasivas em comunicação publicitária, e (b) justificar a prosopopeia como potência da orto-doxia do discurso literário da publicidade .

Palavras-chave: discurso literário, persuasão, prosopopeia, publicidade, retórica

Introduction

I have discovered the most exciting, the most arduous literary form of all, the most difficult to master, the most pregnant in curious possibilities. I mean the advertisement. (. . .) It is far easier to write them passably effective sonnets, good enough to take in the not too inquiring critic, than one effective advertisement that will take in a few thousand of the uncritical buying public. (Huxley, 1961, pp. 127–128)

Advertising discourse has strategic objectives, particularly to attract attention, arouse interest, provoke desire and lead to the action of buying and consuming what is being advertised (products, services, brands, ideas, etc.). Whether in its verbal or textual component or in its non-verbal or visual component, the

language of advertising explores two fundamental and complementary aspects: the aesthetic aspect and the rhetorical aspect. In a way, these two strands are implicit in Huxley's (1961) epigraph, when he recognises and values advertisements as the most exciting and arduous literary form, the most difficult to master and the most fertile involving curious possibilities of all literary forms. In this epigraph, the author identifies advertising language as a literary form and acknowledges the high level of requirement and difficulty of a sufficiently effective advertisement.

Advertising language shows and develops an aesthetic aspect, because it is essentially a literary language (it uses rhetorical figures or stylistic resources and presents a narrative, telling a short story), which is fictional and hyperbolic (it creates possible and imaginary worlds, always with a happy ending), poetic (with aspects of subjectivity and the exploration of feelings, emotions, desires, passions, etc., in its recipients), and which is seductive (it transforms the *pathos* of consumers).

Advertising language also has and develops a rhetorical aspect because, as a general rule, it is a pragmatic language (succinct, terse, appealing to the obvious), effective (it aims to achieve these objectives and obtain commercial results) and persuasive (it contains words, expressions, images, rhetorical strategies and figures and illocutionary and perlocutionary formats, with such argumentative powers creating, modifying or reinforcing consumer attitudes, actions or behaviours to the benefit of the advertised brands).

These two aspects exist due to the use of rhetorical figures, which are varied and enhance any discourse in accordance with the peculiarities of the latter. Rhetorical figures that establish analogies are particularly interesting because they imply identities, empathies and comparisons. This is the case with prosopopoeia, a rhetorical figure widely used in advertising to create lively, attractive, empathetic and relatable relationships between, on the one hand, products and brands and, on the other hand, these and consumers.

Rhetorical figures are tools that enhance both the literalness (the text) and the visuality of messages, creating literary effects in the most vivid and expressive form of communicating ideas, as well as adding interest and emotion. They involve the unconventional or non-literal use of language to convey meaning. The relationship between rhetorical figures and visuality resides in the fact that many figures are designed to evoke vivid mental images in the mind of the recipient. This helps to make the language more colourful, attractive and memorable. In this sense, visual rhetorical figures, which occur at the level of the advertising image, are directly related to visuality, as is the case with metaphors, metonymies and, in particular, prosopopoeia. These and other rhetorical figures contribute to the visuality of an advertising text, allowing the advertisement's target audience to form stronger mental images and connect emotionally with the language used. However, these and other rhetorical figures that act at a visual level also contribute to the visuality of a photograph or a moving sequence of advertising images.

The relationship between prosopopoeia and visuality lies in the evocative power of this rhetorical figure, able to make the elements described in the text more tangible, vivid and easily imaginable for the reader or, in the case of an image, to represent the idea that the advertisement is intended to convey in a more comprehensible manner. When an advertisement uses prosopopoeia in its text or image, it endows something which does not normally have human characteristics with life. This strategy is effective because it creates richer and more intense mental images, allowing the target audience to visualise the scene more concretely. By attributing human actions, behaviours, attitudes or emotions to objects or concepts, the advertisement makes the textual and visual narrative more engaging and emotional, as the target audience can relate to the human characteristics that have been attributed. As a consequence, the relationship between prosopopoeia and visuality is pertinent both in advertising, as a rhetoric and aesthetic element of the image, and in increasingly visual contemporary cultures. In both cases, prosopopoeia stimulates the imagination of the advertisement's target audience, making the verbal and non-verbal narrative elements more palpable, emotional and visually evocative.

However, how does advertising language benefit from prosopopoeia and become aesthetic (poetic, metaphorical, seductive) and effective (pragmatic, persuasive)? This article uses a theoretical-conceptual approach to consider the semiotics of advertising, the logic of which is to determine structures of meaning. The aim of advertisements is to engage us in their structure of meaning, and to encourage us to participate by decoding their linguistic and visual signs (Bignell, 2002, p. 31). Semiotics teaches us to see the structures of meaning of tropes, such as prosopopoeia, syntactic forms and semantic models that are involved in advertising, in a somewhat innovative and somewhat effective and coherent way (Volli, 2003/2004, p. 11). Using a theoretical-conceptual approach, this article presents a qualitative study centred on the application of prosopopoeia as a stylistic and rhetorical resource in advertising discourse. Its objectives are: (a) to relate the two aspects mentioned in the lure of persuasive strategies within advertising communication, and (b) to justify prosopopoeia as a power of *ortho-doxy* in the literary discourse of advertising.

Prosopopoeia and Analogous Rhetorical Figures

Prosopopoeia is a language device used to make discourse more attractive and stylistic. Discourse can be verbal (text) or non-verbal (image), it can be direct (explicit) or indirect (implicit), denotative or connotative. Prosopopoeia is used to express and signify in a more figurative, metaphorical (aesthetic, embellished, stylistic) and effective (rhetorical, as it fulfils the objectives of advertising) manner. In advertising, prosopopoeia involves the actual animation of inanimate objects and elements as well as the humanisation of animals, as is traditionally the case in fables. Although prosopopoeia and personification are related and are very similar rhetorical figures, they should not be confused, because prosopopoeia

is based on attributing human actions and behaviour to non-human entities or beings, abstractions, objects or ideas.

Etymologically, the term “prosopopoeia” comes from the Greek *prosōpopoīia*, which is made up of two words: *prósōpon*, “face or countenance”, “character”, “mask” and “person”, as Lanham (1991, p. 123) states in *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, and *poien*, “to produce”, “to create”, “to make” (Morier, 1961, p. 335). The term “prosopopoeia” literally means “making the face of another person”. In particular, the word *prósōpon* (from *pros* “face, opposite”, + *ōp* “eye, sight”, thus “the eyes, or sight, opposite their own”) and the term *poien* (*poīa*, “to do”, from *poi*, base of *poieîn* “to do” + *ia*) are part of the formation of the words *prosopoeia* and *prosopography*, which are related terms and therefore have the same root, *prósōpon*. However, *prosopography* means the description of imaginary people or bodies, that is, the animated description of individuals (Lanham, 1991, p. 186).

Prosopopoeia arises when an animal or inanimate object is represented as having human attributes and is addressed or made to speak as if it were human (Lanham, 1991, p. 123). Prosopopoeia is the assignment of human actions and behaviour to non-human elements, entities or inanimate objects. When in a text or image a non-human element is shown performing human actions or behaviours, this involves textual or visual prosopopoeia, depending on whether this rhetorical figure is presented in words or images.

Prosopopoeia is close to personification and apostrophe, but they are not the same rhetorical figure, nor do they serve the same purposes. However, some authors consider that prosopopoeia is personification or that both are different names for the same rhetorical figure. For example, in *Elementos de Retórica Literária* (Handbook of Literary Rhetoric), Lausberg (1967/2004) considers that “personification is a variant of the realisation of allegory”, which is a *fictio personae*, *prosopoeia*, that is, prosopopoeia “which consists of introducing concrete things”, for example a river, and “abstract and collective notions”, for example the homeland, “as people who are shown to speak and act” (p. 251).

Furthermore, Mayoral (2001c), in the entry “Prosōpopoeia” in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, considers that this term means *fictio personae* and *sermocinatio* in Latin, i.e., a form of prosopopoeia in which the speaker answers their own question or observation, and the term “prosopopoeia” can be inferred etymologically from the Greek and Latin names. In *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory*, Habinek (2005, p. 106) identifies *sermocinatio* with the Greek term *prosopopoeia*, defining it as speaking about the character of another person.

According to Mayoral (2001c, p. 663), prosopopoeia is the artifice of introducing into the discourse a feigned presentation of personified characters or things, that is, things feigned *sub specie personae*. The scope attributed to prosopopoeia is that of the “pretence or impersonation of a person” or “mock exposition of persons”, “fiction of something” or “fiction of a person” which is achieved “by attributing to the feigned persons or ‘personified’ or feigned things ‘sub

specie personae', human qualities and in particular the capacity to speak/hear" (Mayoral, 1994, p. 279). Prosopopoeia is thus assigned an important role in the creation of literary characters, which is an interesting testimony to the many points of contact between poetic devices and rhetoric (Mayoral, 1994, p. 279).

This contact between poetics and rhetoric, fields of construction for any discourse for Aristóteles, is evident in advertising. If rhetoric deals with the verisimilar, aiming to produce a firm belief, poetics deals with the possible, through addressing the imagination. Any discourse exploits poetics and rhetoric as language enhancers, which is the hallmark of advertising. Poetics, a term that also comes from the Greek word *poien*, which appears in the word "prosopopoeia", means the simple production of discourse. If rhetoric has to do with the ways in which discourse is presented, poetics is the actual production of discourse. Despite the affinities and complementarities in the creation of discourse, the poetic act is an invention of fables and intrigues, while the rhetorical act is the establishing of arguments (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 148). Poetics aims at the imaginary, because imagination is poetic, while rhetoric aims to persuade, but both are based on expression. In *A Aventura Semiológica* (The Semiological Adventure), Barthes (1985/1987, p. 20) considers rhetoric to be a metalanguage (the object language of which is discourse) and, like poetics, a discourse about discourse, which includes various practices, such as a technique or art of persuasion and a social practice. Prosopopoeia (verbal or visual) therefore lies at the convergence point of poetics and rhetoric.

Considering advertising as a persuasive communication technique that produces discourses with a certain structure and strategy in order to become public and effective (persuasive), the rhetoric of advertising and the effects it aims for take on, within the framework of Aristóteles' rhetoric, the fundamental stages of discourse: (a) *inventio* or *pisteis* (search for arguments), which corresponds to market studies, consumers (their motivations, interests and needs) and the most appropriate modes of expression and creativity to match the message to the target audience (Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1355a); (b) *dispositio* or *taxis* (organisation of the discourse), which involves the copy strategy (content strategy, which determines what to say in the advertisement to consumers about the brand, product or service, in order to obtain their preference; Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1403b); (c) *elocutio* or *lexis* (assigning an effective form to the discourse), which would be the creation of the advertisement itself, that is, the conception and writing phase of the discourse (Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1404a); and (d) *pronunciatio* or *hypocrisis* (technique or artistic style of enunciating the discourse), which would correspond to the actual final transmission of the discourse as it is received and understood by the target audience (Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1404a). Thus, the framework of prosopopoeia in the rhetoric of advertising would correspond to these four phases of structuring rhetorical discourse for Aristóteles, who rehabilitated rhetoric by including it within a systematic vision of the world where it occupies its rightful place, according to Reboul (1991, p. 55). In *Introduction à la Rhétorique* (Introduction to Rhetoric), Reboul considers that Aristóteles transformed rhetoric into a system by identifying these four parts.

Prosopopoeia is the usual way of assigning human qualities, especially speaking or listening, since the terms *dialogismos* and *sermocinatio* refer to this quality (Lanham, 1991, p. 138). As a rhetorical device or figure, prosopopoeia must be duly regulated by literary norms involving stylistic decorum (Mayoral, 2001c, p. 663), considering that most authors distinguish between two modalities when assigning this to personified characters or things: direct speech (*prosōpopoeia recta*); or indirect speech (*prosōpopoeia obliqua*; Mayoral, 1994, p. 279).

In the *Dictionnaire de Poétique et de Rhétorique* (Dictionary of Poetics and Rhetoric), Morier (1961) defines prosopopoeia as the "figure by which the author makes an absent or deceased person speak, or even a personified being, such as France, Glory, Fame, the Muse" (p. 334). Prosopopoeia is multifaceted and virtuoso, and has been used since ancient times in the discursive arts of rhetoric and oratory (Morier, 1961, p. 335).

Personification is different from prosopopoeia because, as the name suggests, it consists of transferring personality traits to an inanimate or animate object. It is the transfer of human elements to non-human elements. Personification is thus a process of attributing human life to an object, animal or plant. It is a process of representing something in the form of a person.

While personification is defined by the assignment of human characteristics, abilities or attributes to inanimate objects, abstract ideas or concepts, animals, among others, and apostrophe happens when the sender, narrator or character speaks directly to an inanimate object or abstract concept, in prosopopoeia the sender, narrator or character presents a different, artistic perspective, strengthening arguments or making their words or images (in the case of visuals) more striking and memorable. Prosopopoeia is therefore extremely appropriate in advertising language.

As for apostrophe, according to Mayoral (2001a, p. 37), the Greek term *apostrophē* (or *aversio* in Latin) traditionally designates the rhetorical device that indicates the momentary interruption of discourse, in order to address, often in a vehement tone, a real or imaginary addressee, present or absent, human or non-human, living or dead, different from the original addressee of that speech. This interruption is characterised linguistically by a change from one discursive type to another. For example, when it is included within the expository-narrative mode, modes associated with the expressive and appealing functions of language (Mayoral, 2001a, p. 37).

Prosopopoeia is close to another rhetorical figure, namely animism. This consists of assigning animate properties to objects, inanimate entities or to what is inanimate. However, animated properties do not have to be specifically human, as in personification. Animism and prosopopoeia have an analogous character in common, but they differ in the nature of what is compared or what is contained within the analogous framework. Animism assigns movement (not necessarily human) to that which is inanimate, endowing it with animation, spirit, life; prosopopoeia assigns human properties and qualities to animals or what is

inanimate.

Prosopopoeia is therefore a type of anthropomorphism (from the Greek *anthropo*, “human”, and *morphé*, “form”, “appearance”), that is, the assignment or moulding of something into human form. Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human form, characteristics or behaviour to inanimate beings or non-human living beings; it is a system that assigns human forms to divine or supernatural entities. In this system of anthropomorphisation, the divine (e.g., God or the saints) are beings with superhuman powers and attributes, but with human forms. As such, prosopopoeia also includes this quality of what is anthropomorphic or what has human form or characteristics.

In addition to the use of prosopopoeia in advertising as a form of anthropomorphism, the relationship between anthropomorphism and advertising lies in the use of this technique as an effective strategy to fulfil aims within advertising, such as attracting the audience’s attention, creating an emotional connection and conveying messages in a more engaging manner. Anthropomorphism in advertising involves assigning human characteristics to products, brands, mascots, anthropomorphised characters or animals and objects related to their products or services for brands to represent. The aim is to make the elements of the campaign more attractive, memorable and accessible to the public. Anthropomorphism in advertising creates an emotional connection between the public and the items being promoted, making the message more memorable and persuasive. By bringing products, services, brands and concepts to life through human attributes, advertising establishes a closer and more meaningful relationship with consumers.

The rhetorical strategy of utilising anthropomorphism in advertising discourse occurs frequently. Through text or images, advertising messages can refer to brand products with human characteristics, such as “versatile personality”, “intelligent product” or “your friend and companion for life”. In this way, anthropomorphism, as a strategic resource, is important in advertising through creating an emotional relatability and connection with the public, thus transforming products and brands into more accessible and engaging entities. This is a process of making merchandise and brands subjective, creating brands with “personality” (brand images) or the role of *ethos* in advertising, to which prosopopoeia, as part of the strategic discourse of advertising, contributes by assigning personality traits to products, services or brands.

Aristóteles’ understanding of rhetoric (1998, para. 1356a) is based on the value given to three technical means of persuasion: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. It is a tripartite division that Aristóteles sees as elementary and necessary, namely the rhetorical relationship that links a speaker and an audience through language (Meyer et al., 1999/2002, p. 14). These technical means of persuasion “are those that speakers themselves invent” to incorporate into their argument or speech, and which are divided into three groups or instances of that rhetorical relationship: *ethos*, the character of the speaker; *pathos*, the emotion of the audience; and *logos*, the argumentation (Sousa, 2001, p. 17).

According to Péninou (1976), in *Semiótica de la Publicidad* (Semiotics of Advertising), the need to signify information explains the graphic characteristics or the “visual scandal” (p. 128) of many advertisements. Information is marked through the use of a formal, appropriate and specific code, which fashions what target audiences should understand and think; it is therefore not just information.

All these rhetorical figures belong to the same family as those that establish analogies (e.g., a product or brand and the people who consume them, and with whom they identify through analogy), creating animation in the elements metaphorically represented in the statements. These rhetorical figures are used to increase the expressive power and vividness of advertising statements. Advertising becomes more expressive, more appealing and more easily fulfils its objectives. Furthermore, by focusing on analogy and anthropomorphism, these rhetorical figures create empathy and relatability between products/brands and consumers.

Prosopopoeia and rhetorical figures that establish analogies are prominent in advertising statements, both in the textual part (through the use of words that speak about inanimate objects or describe them as if they were people) and in the visual part (when relating, comparing or identifying a product with the consumer). Advertising uses literary and fictional language, which is specific and full of rhetorical figures.

Transmitting a message following an *ortho-doxy*, a discursive conformity or an idealised and conventionalised rhetorical mode provides variety to the effects or influences of what is enunciated. This is basically the function of rhetorical figures: to adapt the discourse in aesthetic and rhetorical terms. According to Vanderspoel (2007, p. 130), the classical Greek authors not only created, studied and developed rhetorical technique, but also rooted it on the basis of certain elements of language that enhance the abilities and effects of persuasion through discourse, such as the figures of speech or discourse that a speaker may employ to make their speeches interesting and effective (e.g., prosopopoeia, irony, anaphora and synonymy).

As a rhetorical figure, prosopopoeia is used in advertising messages as a means to align (“orto”, from the Greek *orthós*, “straight”, “right”) the understanding (“doxia”, from the Greek *dóxa*, “opinion”, “understanding”). According to Nascentes (1955, p. 268) and Peters (1967, p. 40), it represents a form of discursive compliance, an idealised and agreed rhetorical mode aimed at guiding the interpretation of messages in a predetermined and deliberate manner. When used within persuasive and engaging discourse such as advertising, prosopopoeia is an asset for *ortho-doxy*, steering the “right” understanding of the literary and figurative discourse in advertising. Prosopopoeia points to the right, ideal and agreed interpretation of messages, aiding in directing the understanding of target audiences.

Rhetoric, Prosopopoeia and *Ethos*

There is no communication (let alone advertising) without persuasion. What you say is as decisive as how you say it. The peculiarities and subtleties of the way a message is conveyed are part of persuasion strategies, which include any element or aspect of the communication process that contributes to apodictic influence.

Persuasion is part of the *ars* or *techné* of the use of words, according to the rhetorical tradition of Aristóteles. Rhetoric is the technique that ensures persuasion. According to Klikauer (2008), persuasion continues to employ certain Orwellian techniques, because “the goal is the invasion of one’s mind by readymade phrases to alter our attitudes” (p. 127). Persuasion is strategic and can deceive. Certain seduction and illusion strategies are based on distortion or misinterpretation, omission or deception, as well as falsification or manipulation of information (Klikauer, 2008, p. 134). It is from this perspective that we recognise the theory underlying all communicative and strategic action, which Aristotelian rhetoric is (Argenti, 2007, p. 21). In this sense, the art of strategic communication is a classic Hellenic heritage, as everyone “tries to a certain extent to question and sustain an argument, to defend themselves or accuse another” (Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1354a).

Rhetoric is the set of non-coercive argumentation techniques (Perelman, 1989, p. 258). The pragmatic power of rhetoric is thus to act with words. For Aristóteles (1998), rhetoric is the ability to discover “what is appropriate in each given case in order to persuade” (para. 1355b). What is appropriate is what is attractive to the audience and therefore equally persuasive. Rhetoric consists of the strategic use of persuasive resources such as rhetorical figures. In its essence rhetoric is being able to get the other(s) to agree with what is being stated. To this end, rhetoric and the use of rhetorical figures are essential.

Aristóteles distinguishes between two categories of persuasive evidence: (a) non-artistic or non-technical; and (b) artistic or technical. The former are not produced by us (Aristóteles, 1998, paras. 1375a–1377b); they already exist independently of the speaker (e.g., laws, treaties, wills, written documents, etc.). The latter are specific to the art of rhetoric and are the result of its application, since they are those that speakers invent to strengthen their argument. These artistic or technical proofs of persuasion may be based on three elements: (a) *ethos*, persuasion through the moral character of the speaker, which gives credibility to what is said; (b) *logos*, persuasion through discourse; or (c) *pathos*, emotional or pathetic persuasion utilising the mood of the listeners.

Truth, verisimilitude or facts are not received in the same light for those who love and those who hate, nor are they the same for those who are indignant and those who are calm. Facts are either completely different or differ according to certain criteria. According to Aristóteles (1998), “the way in which speakers present themselves and the way in which they make their dispositions known to their listeners, in such a way as to cause them to also enter a certain state of

mind towards the speaker” (para. 1377b), influences the outcome of the speech, which is measured by its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. In the same way that prudence, virtue or benevolence make orators persuasive, without them having to resort to demonstrations, emotions (anger, compassion or fear) also cause alterations in human beings and their judgements, because they involve pain and pleasure and influence persuasion (Aristóteles, 1998, para. 1378a); that being so, anyone who wishes to move an audience must resort to these topics.

This is what happens with advertisements. Messages convey emotions and moods that are perceived and assimilated by consumers, predisposing them to purchase and consume products, services and brands. Communication techniques influence the reception of messages, making it easier to accept what is being said by, for example, selecting a colour that can be connotative of the product and benefits for consumers in the advertising. The alteration of the statements, which are strategically adapted, may focus on a detail that nevertheless capitalises on the expressive power of the chosen signifiers: a colour, word, lettering, logo, sound, layout style or rhetorical figure that is predominant in the statement (advertisement) for the production of meanings and the transmission of connotations.

Prosopopoeia is one such rhetorical figure, that makes advertisements more effective and aesthetic, while enhancing their technical means of persuasion. *Ethos* in particular, as prosopopoeia is a figure of analogical thought and creates an identity (personality) for the product or brand. If prosopopoeia literally means “making the face of another person”, it has to do with lending an identity to a non-human object or being, thereby justifying an association with *ethos*. The emotion, identity and sympathy (*sin* + *pathos*, the same *pathos*) that prosopopoeia triggers in the target audience also puts it at the service of *pathos*.

Ethos has to do with character, a person’s usual way of life (Peters, 1967, p. 66). As one of the technical means of persuasion, it is reproduced by prosopopoeia. *Ethos* persuades when discourse presents the character of the sender or speaker or when it appeals to credibility. In advertising, where these three technical means of persuasion are found in abundance, discourses that exploit *ethos* aim to persuade by characterising a figure, image, identity or reputation, thereby allowing character traits to be recognised in it (e.g., trust, honesty or credibility). By humanising, animating, endowing life and human behaviour to the product or brand, prosopopoeia attributes a positive value which in turn creates affinity in the consumer to buy product X from brand Y. Celebrities appear in advertisements alongside products and brands as a way of showing empathy, affinity or identity with those products and brands, thereby transferring their personality traits, although these are immediately recognised by consumers when they notice the personification and believe that these traits are acquired through the consumption of the said products and brands. For example, celebrities like Catherine Deneuve at 70 years of age in an advertisement for the prestigious Louis Vuitton brand in 2013 or Carmen Dell’Orefice aged 78 in an advertisement for the well-known Rolex brand in 2009.

Prosopopoeia imbues the identity of products and brands with personality traits, i.e., a certain *ethos* that is considered ideal for associating with products and brands and promising them to consumers. This prosopopoeic practice is an ancient and rhetorical practice and has an impact on *ethos*. In advertising, the use of prosopopoeia enhances advertisements in terms of their effectiveness, because it persuades consumers, doing so in terms of aesthetics as well, since it creates an easy-to-perceive analogy and understanding between products/brands and consumers.

Ancient Greek authors had already developed the use of prosopopoeia in connection with *ethos*, because the analogical nature of prosopopoeia makes it possible to understand character (*ethos*) rhetorically of the two elements being compared, the human element from which the characteristics of the actions or behaviours are drawn and the compared element to which the characteristics of the human actions or behaviours are applied (Bloomer, 2001, p. 178). Classical authors, such as Plautus, perfected the soliloquy genre, allowing their characters to address the audience on moral topics, using elevated language and working with prosopopoeia so that the speaker took on another voice (Connolly, 2007, p. 143).

Rhetorical strategies and subtleties serve both rhetorical technique and art as well as poetics and include, for example, prosopopoeia or the personification of historical persons, as well as prosopography, the recreation of a place. This is what Jost and Olmsted (2004, p. 91) argue in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, pointing out that as early as 1588, in *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, Fraunce attributed to prosopopoeia that potential to represent someone's characteristics in an animal through a discourse adapted for such a purpose, "making it speak" as if the person represented were present. In fact, this is the rhetorical power of prosopopoeia as an "excellent [rhetorical] figure much used of Poets, wherein wee must diligentlie take heed" (Fraunce, 1958, as cited in Jost & Olmsted, 2004, p. 91). Prosopopoeia in this case is understood as "a fayning of any person", that is, the way of making one believe that something is a person with the intention of deceiving, "pretending to be a person".

Mayoral (2001b, p. 278) also distinguishes prosopopoeia from ethopoeia (*ēthopoeia*), or *notatio* in Latin (from *notō*, "to mark, write, note"), which designates a textual unit wherein the individual nature of a character is imitated by assigning certain discourse to that character. There are different types of this rhetorical figure: the invention of discourses assigned, for example, to real living characters (*ēthopoeia*), to real dead characters (*eidōlopoeia*), or to fictitious characters (*prosōpoeia*). In this sense, ethopoeia and prosopopoeia are both rhetorical figures assigning identity to something or someone based on another assignment of discourse or behaviour to that something or someone.

Prosopopoeia is therefore a rhetorical figure similar to ethopoeia (Baumlin, 2001, p. 279; Mayoral, 2001c, p. 663), in that it is etymologically related to the Greek term *prosōpon*, "face" or "mask" (from which the Latin *persona* also derives), referring to the meaning of a character identity (*ethos*).

Literariness and Effectiveness of Rhetorical Figures in Advertising

Rhetorical figures are expressive resources; they are artistic modes, forms or methods or deviations in expression from ordinary rules (McQuarrie & Mick, 2008, p. 196); they are more elaborate, figurative and peculiar forms of expression in stylistic terms when compared to the common, literal, objective and expected ways of expression. When considering “what to say” there is always a palette of options regarding “how to say it”. Different forms of expression result in different effects on the recipients of messages. The central concern of rhetoric has always been method and manner (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 424). Since Greek Classical Antiquity, rhetorical techniques have focused on what is still relevant today in advertising: what is the ideal way to express something and achieve the desired results?

This justifies the use of rhetorical figures to maximise the effects of language on audiences. This is what happens with the rhetoric of advertising, which subtly proposes the consumption of products, services or brands, masterfully promoting not only objects of consumption, but also signs, values, social representations, ideologies, stereotypes, ideals or lifestyles, responses or effects that are intended for the public to have.

Rhetorical figures are diverse and therefore serve multiple purposes and linguistic aesthetic effects (literariness of the discourse, that is, the attribute of what is literary) and persuasion (effectiveness). They can be simple or complex, frequent or occasional, textual or visual, but rhetorical figures are used in all genres of discourse because they economise forms of expression and thought, both on the production and encoding side of messages and on the reception and decoding side. They are therefore categorised modes of expression. Each rhetorical figure has specific characteristics and translates into the use of the potential of language to build messages that are as beautiful or poetic as they are expressive, persuasive and moving, translating what is intended in a creative, analogous and animated manner, as is the case with prosopopoeia.

The language of advertising is peculiarly polysemic and therefore invites us to analyse its meanings and significances. Advertising discourse is seen as an intentional activity or social interaction, because there are effects of meaning within it (Corral, 1997, p. 15). Advertising discourse is a fabricated language, a logotechnique, in which meaning does not reside solely in the text presented (Corral, 1997, p. 18). In semiotics, we must reject a superficial look at statements or discourses and give priority to the forms of organisation of meaning that make up the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of the advertising text/image.

As advertising language is rhetorical (in the sense of being strategic, structured, thought out) and literary (as justified by Huxley’s epigraph at the beginning of this article), it uses concepts figuratively, following an art which involves connotative rather than denotative expression. Prosopopoeia is one of the most widely used forms of expression in advertising due to the high level of vivacity,

attractiveness, empathy and relatability it provides for. Rhetorical figures always serve an ornamental purpose, as they are a type of artifice used to embellish discourse (Mayoral, 1994, p. 225). Thus, prosopopoeia belongs to the group of rhetorical figures based on the establishment of relations of similarity, that is, metaphorical tropes (e.g., metaphor, hyperbole, synaesthesia, irony, allegory; Mayoral, 1994, p. 227). Considering that prosopopoeia provides variety and animation to discourse (Mayoral, 1994, p. 278), advertising makes use of the potentialities of language provided by rhetorical figures.

Advertising is multifaceted and creative, as well as presenting itself as evident, simple and influential, living up to the etymological meaning of the word *advertere*, “to announce, to make public”. Advertisements aim to commit us to a structure of meanings, to encourage us to adopt what they advertise and to decode their signs, codes and social myths (Bignell, 2002, p. 31). Advertising has commercial objectives (in helping to sell something), but it also creates structures of meaning and an exchange of “symbolic values”, translating the language of objects into the language of people (Williamson, 1978, pp. 10–12). As advertising is a vehicle of mass communication (Uceda, 2001, p. 31), the rhetorical figures cannot be too complex or else they will jeopardise the understanding of connotations and the structure of meaning. Thus, there is no intrinsic ambiguity, nor would it be strategically appropriate to create misunderstandings of meaning in the understanding of prosopopoeia in advertising. Prosopopoeia, whether at a textual or visual level, affirms and shows another reality that must be objectively understood as such. For example, adding human animation to the packaging of a soft drink product does not create ambiguity or hinder the understanding of the message in an advertisement, because everyone will see the packaging as an animated being with human behaviours and actions, without having to be convinced that soft drinks packaging talks or drinks juice like people. In its nature, prosopopoeia is an objective rhetorical figure, as it is a deliberate and intentional choice to assign human characteristics to non-human elements for creative purposes in advertising. Prosopopoeia is objective because advertisers use it consciously to convey a denotative message, create animation, emphasise ideas or make language more engaging and imaginative. Ambiguity could arise in the interpretation of prosopopoeia, depending on how it is individually understood.

“The semiological analysis of an advertisement is an examination of what is explicitly manifested: the words and images” (Brochand et al., 1999, p. 288). These images identify objects, shapes, situations, details, in other words, the emission (and omission) of signs among which discrimination is made between relevant and non-relevant features. “Semiology makes an important contribution to understanding communication phenomena in general and the functioning of each message in particular” (Brochand et al., 1999, p. 288). Advertisements exploit the advantages that rhetorical figures add to the production of connotations, that is, what is stated or shown, whether explicit or implicit, making them more aesthetic (attractive) and effective (persuasive).

The use of images makes the visuality of advertising more appealing. Iconic and analogous signs achieve a greater resemblance to what is represented and a greater relatability with the target audience. Advertising is an art and arts have different forms of expression or ways of shaping reality, coded representations that create connotations. It is in this sense that, according to Bernbach (as cited in Tungate, 2007, p. 51), advertising is not a science, but rather it is persuasion and persuasion is an art. Advertising is an art because it is a creative practice moulded by the art of rhetoric. According to Eco (1968/2001, p. 161), one of the aims of rhetorical research into advertising is to see how the rhetorical solutions in the verbal and visual registers intersect. This intersection can be one of homology or discordance, either with the image having an aesthetic function and a text having an emotive function, or with the image of simple tropes and a text involving places (or even with a metaphorical image and with a metonymic text).

Therefore, literariness (aesthetics) and effectiveness (rhetorical persuasion) characterise the language of advertising, which is an *ortho-doxy* of collective forms of thinking, understanding and living, that is, a stereotyped and tautological discourse that presents conventions and advocates positions favourable to a brand, product or service, through introducing them as useful, indispensable and beneficial to consumers. The language of advertising uses stereotypes to enter the world of consumer wishes and needs more easily. It does so by using rhetorical figures, such as analogy and anthropomorphism within prosopopoeia. As an *ortho-doxy*, the language of advertising is defined by its use of connotations, which are produced by rhetorical figures.

The literariness and effectiveness of advertising discourse is ensured by the use of rhetorical figures, which are aesthetic and rhetorical artificial constructs. Rhetorical figures can only fulfil their function if they are understood on the receiving end of messages. To be understood, they have to form part of the cultural patterns of the recipients of the advertisements and follow a certain *ortho-doxy*, that is, a cultural conformity as regards the use of signs and forms of expression, as well as codes and meanings strategically followed by both advertising discourses and their recipients.

Advertising discourse often uses rhetorical mechanisms and technical means of persuasion to attain an effective discourse focused on achieving results, that is, centred on the ability to get recipients to act in accordance with what is stated in the advertising message. Since its remote origins, advertising has had this rhetorical and persuasive aspect of guiding the recipients of its messages into a course of intended actions. Classical rhetoric finds an ideal home in modern advertising, wherein it is able to manifest and implement all its argumentative and persuasive ability. Often, the creative lines, concepts and approaches utilised in advertisements focus more on a visual level and a classic heritage of rhetorical figures, corresponding to a transposition from the classic and ancient to the innovative and modern. Therefore, in order to understand and analyse contemporary advertising, it is necessary to pay attention to its connotations

and resort to visual rhetoric and an inventory of its classical figures. That is why the contemporary world is full of ancient rhetoric, according to Barthes (1985/1987, p. 19).

Advertising discourse is persuasive because “wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric”, states Burke (1969, p. 172). Rhetoric transforms and adapts the meanings and senses of messages so that their presentation exerts persuasion on their recipients. Persuasion is the act or effect of arousing or engendering someone’s belief in some meaning or connotation presented; it is getting the target audience to believe what is stated (by the text) or shown (by the image) in the advertisement. Persuasion through the simplest rhetorical figures, such as prosopopoeia or personification, is a technique or ability to create connotations of analogy and identity in a simple, metaphorical manner.

From the simple and important seminal moment of making known or informing of the existence of something (arousing attention, triggering interest and provoking desire in the recipients), to the culmination of discursive effects, through the memorisation of the message enunciated and the corresponding action and repetition of that action, advertisements exploit the potential of argumentation to become rhetorical discourses capable of persuading effectively and with stylistic elegance. As Bitzer (1968) points out, “rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action” (p. 4).

Examples of Prosopopoeia in Advertising Discourse

Advertising discourse is essentially brief and simple in its denotations, as it needs to condense what is essential through the *jingle* (acoustic signs, i.e., music), the *slogan* (verbal signs, i.e., text) and the *pack shot* (iconic signs, i.e., images). The creative and careful presentation of the verbal and visual message through the use of prosopopoeia follows an argumentative strategy and becomes captivating and appealing, thereby exerting more guaranteed persuasive effects. The use of prosopopoeia in advertising allows advertisements to present positive images of life through a verbal and/or non-verbal discourse that is optimistic, seductive, sensual, attractive, along with sensations of enjoyment and pleasure, ideal models and stereotypes to follow and imitate, as if it were an animated collective fantasy in which people believe and which has a “happy ending”.

The language of advertising is conceived paying attention to particular linguistic features and ways of stating things, in order to signify what is intended in an elegant, aesthetic, subtle and effective manner. That is why rhetorical figures are used. In the case of prosopopoeia, advertisements use this rhetorical figure in order to create a more intimate relationship with the target audience.

For example, in an advertisement for the Água de Luso brand, prosopopoeia is used as the predominant rhetorical figure in the structure of meaning. Such prosopopoeia lies in the assignment of human behaviour to the water bottle, the branded product version of which is a “sport pack”, that is, a package suitable for

those who practise sport. This version of the product explains the composition of the advertising image through the use of prosopopoeia, as well as through text using the slogan “for those who give their body and soul to sport”. This visual prosopopoeia means that the product, due to the shape of its packaging, is ideal for gym-goers and is their best “companion” when practising physical activities. In the advertisement, the prosopopoeia lies in the bottle with the towel around it, imitating people who work out in gyms and play sport, because this is their stereotypical human behaviour. The advertisement’s slogan clarifies the “human behaviour” that the water bottle presents in the image, with the pack shot of the packaging in the ideal form as to highlight the analogy and animism of such typical behaviour. The brand has developed several advertisements featuring its products (water bottles) exhibiting human actions and behaviour in everyday situations, as if they were people.

Another example of prosopopoeia in advertising is the Schweppes advertisement, which features the text “the eyes are the mirror of the soul, although often the hands have something more interesting to say”. In the image, an animal (a leopard) displays human action and behaviour, as it sits at the counter of a bar drinking Schweppes. This action and behaviour are exclusively human, not that of leopards or any other animal. The slogan emphasises that “the hands have something more interesting to say” while the animal is holding up a glass of the drink as if it were going to drink it, and it is precisely the glass of Schweppes in the “hands” (paws) that is, logically, the most interesting aspect.

The Schweppes brand often uses this prosopopoeic strategy, both in advertising posters and in audiovisual television advertisements. In a 1999 television advertisement, Schweppes used prosopopoeia with a leopard talking, acting and behaving as if it were human, mentioning: “after a hard day chasing antelope across the Serengeti, you crave the particular effervescence which only Schweppes can provide. Hmm, an absolute tonic”. The leopard is the prosopopoeia of the target audience that the advertisement seeks to identify with the situation shown, that is, someone virile, energetic, seductive (the leopard interacts with a female antelope in the bar and invites her to dinner) who, after a hard and tiring day’s work, goes into a bar and enjoys a Schweppes.

The Gatorade brand, which has several similar advertisements featuring the packaging of the drink playing sport and beating its opponents as if it were an athlete, uses prosopopoeia as a simple rhetorical strategy to establish the desired analogy between the product/brand and the consumer. In a recent advertising campaign, one of its posters uses prosopopoeia to communicate a simple message: Gatorade is the best energy drink brand. The packaging is even featured on the poster using a characteristic runner’s badge with the number one and crossing the finishing line in first place, while the other brand packaging falls behind. The slogan “Gatorade always wins!” emphasises that if consumers drink Gatorade, they, too, will win.

In a final example, an advertisement provides animation to a computer mouse (a figurative/metaphorical name of an animal, due to the isomorphy and movement

of the object when it is used as part of a computer) through an animising strategy in the form of prosopopoeia. This is not a personification, since the advertisement animates human behaviour, as the slogan (“don’t know where to go on the internet?”) states that it is we, the internet users, who are represented in the image and find ourselves much like the computer mouse in the image of the advertisement, undecided between the various possible entry points (denotatively, holes in the ground; connotatively, websites) in front of us.

Conclusions

Advertising discourse is multifaceted. Advertising is creative, uses literary language, relies on polysemic structures of meaning and particularly focuses on aesthetics and rhetoric. The literariness and effectiveness of verbal (text) and non-verbal (image) language in advertising demonstrates both the versatility and *ortho-dox*y of expression and content planes, in which discourse can take various forms and be moulded in different ways, depending on its objectives, the context and, above all, the recipients.

Advertising discourse exploits the performativity of the verbal and the visual and has the primary function of persuading, using stratagems, strategies involving analogue reasoning and eloquence, in which what is important is not just what is stated, but above all how it is stated. It is a literary/poetic and rhetorical discourse, with the eminent function of triggering emotions, particularly joy and satisfaction, based on its narrative of human actions and behaviour. On the one hand, this requires knowledge of human nature, the collective psychology and culture of a people and, on the other hand, the adaptation of textual and visual messages through the use, for example, of rhetorical figures such as prosopopoeia.

Widely used in advertising, prosopopoeia simplifies discourse and makes advertisements more aesthetic and effective, particularly through analogy and the animation of a certain identity. By attributing human characteristics, actions and behaviour to a comparative non-human element, which can either be an object (a product of a brand), an animal taking part in an advertisement or the brand itself, the prosopopoeia produces (*poien*) the *prósōpon*, the *ethos* of someone who serves as a model, imitation or reproduction in the form of text or image in advertising. This is the virtue of prosopopoeia in enhancing discourse, especially advertising discourse, which is measured by literary aesthetics and the rhetorical persuasiveness with which it is imagined and applied.

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Biographical Note

Paulo Barroso is an adjunct professor in the Department of Communication and Art at the School of Education/Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, where he teaches courses on strategic communication, sociology of communication, semiotics of

advertising, theories of communication, ethics and deontology. He has a PhD in philosophy (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain), a post-doctorate in communication sciences (University of Minho) and is a researcher at the NOVA Institute of Communication.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7638-5064>

Email: pbarroso1062@gmail.com

Address: Escola Superior de Educação de Viseu, Rua Maximiano Aragão, 3504-501 Viseu (Portugal)

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