

Mental Models of Communication and Television Advertising

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"Mental Models of Communication and Television Advertising"
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Abstract: In their paper, "Mental Models of Communication and Television Advertising," Detlev Nothnagel and Gilda Vera Aguirre discuss the question whether and if so, how and to what extent television advertisement spots differ cross-culturally. In contrast to the majority of studies on this topic, Nothnagel and Aguirre concentrate on a protocol-based formal analysis that is statistically oriented. In a more general perspective, the relation between face-to-face communication and communication mediated by technology is scrutinized. Provided that there are important differences, one hypothesis would be that they originate in habits of communication older than those found in technically-mediated communication. That would, at least in part, presuppose a transfer between different media, linking the organization of speech with that of pictures, etc. As only comparative studies are suited to address these questions, two samples are compared in the study, contrasting German and Ecuadorian examples of data. In order to avoid an overestimation of cross-cultural differences and to get a handle on content-related fluctuations, intercultural differences are measured in a parallel fashion.

Detlev NOTHNAGEL and Gilda VERA AGUIRRE

Mental Models of Communication and Television Advertising

The coupling of globalisation processes with the evolution of new media technology has entered the mainstream of cultural and social sciences at least since Marshall McLuhan's notion of the "global village" (see, e.g., McLuhan and Powers). At present, indications that stress this relation can easily be multiplied (see Barker and Borlagdan; Gaddis; Giddens; Hafez). And, in fact, media technologies can be understood as technologies of facilitation which change, fundamentally, the spatio-temporal structures of cultural localization (see Nothnagel, "Lokalität und Globalisierung"). This concept, originating in studies of literature and media (e.g., Pörksen), as well as in fieldwork-based natural/basic science studies (e.g., Latour), puts the accent on the analysis of intermedia translation processes by which the "content" gains new qualities, loses its local affiliation, and becomes movable. However, it turned out as well that unilinear theories of modernisation foretelling an unavoidable decline of cultural differences and summarised in evocative topoi like the "McDonaldization" of the world (see Ritzer), are unrealistic in many aspects. Cultures are defined fundamentally by contrasts which presuppose that all definitions of culture are a consequence of contact (see Ginzburg 12; Nothnagel, "Lokalität und Globalisierung"). Identity formation in cultural contexts greater than face-to-face communities has to rely on mediated communication because an overall identity cannot be experienced in a direct fashion (see Anderson). In addition, the recent evolution of new media technologies inherits new chances for the restoration or preservation of cultural identities in that they offer opportunities to relate to traditions, to focus scattered identities, to preserve traditions that otherwise would get lost, etc. Even the debates of anti-globalization are unthinkable without the extensive use of modern techniques of communication. Processes of globalization thus inevitably produce contradicting consequences so that unilinear concepts are increasingly seen as naive and counterfactual. Consequently, it seems necessary to change the term globalization in favour of glocalization (globalization and localization; see Robertson 192-219; with special focus on McLuhan's notion see de Kerckhove, "Jenseits des globalen Dorfes" 137) and to define these processes as complex forms of practice which result from specific, situated forms of behaviour (see Faulstich, *Medienkulturen* 7). On the phenomenological level, indications multiply which are documenting the failure of transcultural formats of media. Coca Cola, for instance, more than 100 years old and therefore older than a good fraction of nation states, is discussing the regionalization of its campaigns. Also MTV, a television station imprinted by the Anglo-American music industry, is pursuing the regionalization of its formats of emission (Breidenbach and Zukrigl, *kulturelle Identität* 44, 68; Müller "Die Standardisierbarkeit"). In addition, detailed ethnographies demonstrate that even standardized formats (e.g., television series) gain substantially different interpretations in function of the cultures into which they are exported (see Ang; Liebes and Katz). Mass media thus do not entail mass reception; mass, if it equals with uniformization, is a misleading term. Processes of "re-invention" or "re-framing" (see Goffman; McCracken; Burke 17) take place in which cultural traditions older than technical media influence the patterns with which these are perceived and interpreted. With respect to traditional forms of culture, acculturation or -- to avoid unilateral connotations -- transculturation studies (Burke 13; Nederveen 101ff.) have analysed the evolution of these hybrid forms. They were first described in the realm of religious, syncretistic blendings and were later generalized as "hybridization," "metisage," or "creolization" (Burke; Hannerz). Euphoric (see, e.g., Bolz; Negroponte) as well as pessimistic approaches (see, e.g., Postman; Sennett; Faulstich, "Jetzt geht die Welt") thus tend to fall short in the analysis of the consequences media have in cultural dynamics and a need for detailed research becomes obvious. Taking into account the shortcomings sketched so far, this has to cope with multi-faceted phenomena which relate technical media and traditional cultural patterns in a more subtle way. Furthermore, it is not only important whether traditional forms of culture are inscribed into technical media, but, above all, how. As early as in 1913, Wolfgang Riepl -- in his until today unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Geschichte des Nachrichtenwesens* (History of News Media) -- stresses the fact that the historical sequence of technical media does not render preced-

ing forms meaningless. Also the transfer of situated standards of face-to-face communication into usage patterns of advanced technical media (for instance with respect to the attribution of trust) is proven to a certain extent (see Reeves and Nass). Finally, empirical investigations pointed out that traditional narrative structures typical of oral cultures are repeated in fiction films (see Nothnagel, *Der Fremde im Mythos*). This can be said, similarly, for the evolution of visual motives in processes of transculturation (see Gruzinski). Common to all studies is that they remain on only a single level of comparison: Images are compared to images, structural features in the construction of narrative remain just as constant as situated models of communication. These fixed matrices of comparison, however, fail to do justice to the dynamic, media-related forms of culture contact, especially when complex forms of "re-framing" and "re-invention" are concerned.

In the following study, our aim is to enlarge the focus introduced above, with a twofold objective: First, we document cross-cultural differences empirically whereby formal differences of TV-spots and the association linked to them are of primary importance (see McCracken); in addition, we address questions of transmodal transfers because, provided the differences can be detailed, the question remains where they come from, that is, our hypothesis is that they emerge from habits of communication older than the formats in which they find their form. In other words, the question becomes important how principles of face-to-face communication influence the organization of pictures in this dynamical context. Second, in order to avoid empirical shortcomings, intracultural fluctuations are measured in parallel. Our definition of culture follows this orientation: Culture is understood as a conjunction of affiliation and membership with cognitive and communicative competences and it is defined as "whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members" (Goodenough 36). In this regard knowledge forms are of prime importance which to a great deal remain unconscious ("tacit knowledge," see Polanyi; Beneke and Nothnagel "Reibungsfelder") and can only be perceived consciously by contrast experience as they are inscribed mostly into frequencies and preferences (see, e.g., Nothnagel, *"The Physics Way"*). Further, additional detail can be obtained by a closer look at cross-cultural studies of TV-spots, as, to a great majority, they are of US-American origin (nota bene: this limits transferability of results owing to differences in cultural traditions and processes between US-American and European advertisement styles). The second characteristic of these usually dichotomically opposed approaches is that they rely almost exclusively on quantitative rating procedures based on simple "value" assignments (on this, see Albers-Miller). Test subjects (often trained previously) are confronted with a series of spots and asked to rate degrees of humour, sexual connotations, or persuasiveness. A standardized questionnaire transforms the respective attributions (so-called "advertising appeals," see Pollay) into a format that allows the statistical analysis of large sample data. However, this type of research methodology leaves the question open as to how differences in appeals are produced because the measures of such ratings do not disclose the subjects' knowledge of the questionnaire's hidden mechanisms. Thus, the statement of intercultural differences -- especially for consumer goods, which is what most of these studies pertain to -- remains on a general level (see, e.g., Dmoch; Müller, *Interkulturelle Werbung*; Usunier and Walliser; Whitelock and Rey; on intercultural communication, see also Haase

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol7/iss3/2/>>). For instance, individualistic and collectivistic cultures are distinguished but what remains unclear is whether these ratings refer to real differences between the spots or whether complex attribution matrices are addressed (which, in turn, transgress this frame and point to a value-oriented instance). We concede that this question could perhaps be neglected in applied contexts only interested in the process of reception; however, for the guiding principles of our study it remains essential to address the ways in which (cultural) differences are constructed in the media themselves. In addition, in the studies we refer to, fluctuations with regard to interculturalities are neglected. The level of interculturality as a contrastive level would be imperative for cross-cultural research because it provides an essential corrective that avoids the hypothization of cross-cultural differences while at times it can provide surprising results (see, e.g., Nothnagel, *"The Physics Way"*). In sum, these studies, whose orientation is also typical of comparative research of advertising in Europe (see, e.g., Dmoch; Müller, *Interkulturelle*

Werbung; Usunier and Walliser; Whitelock and Rey) are characterised by the neglect of the formal level of TV-spots (see Nam-Sook 1).

To avoid this shortcoming, in our study we chose a detailed formal analysis inspired by film studies. Already classical film analysis (e.g., Bordwell; Kanzog; Kuchenbuch; Monaco) -- in spite of its focus on narrative films (for exceptions, see, e.g., Kuchenbuch; Grimm) -- has tried to set up a tableau of persuasive strategies by drawing on semiotics and linguistics. For instance, the indexical character of filmic statements can be understood by analogy to deictic strategies common in language (see Kanzog 30). In other approaches, camera operations are scrutinized following speech act theory (see Kanzog 48; for a critique, see Nothnagel, "*The Physics Way*" 126), analyse montage types in analogy to syntactic structures (see Metz; for a critique, see Doelker), or gain inspiration from structuralist theories in the analysis of narrative structures present in fiction films (for a summary Nothnagel, *Der Fremde im Mythos* 31). However, most of these approaches are based in hermeneutics and use film protocols only to a limited degree, that is, in a non-statistical manner. In addition, they remain too isolated for the purpose of this study, because the comparative perspective -- which take habits of face-to-face communication into a systemic context -- is missing (this may be due to the fact that there is no theoretical basis common to both forms of communication research). The question whether films and advertising spots can be understood by linguistic means and, if in the affirmative, to what extent, thus remains open. Consequently, a theoretical orientation is indicated which since the early 1990s has sought to reframe the analysis of moving pictures in the framework of cognitive theories (see e.g., for film Grodal; Ohler; for advertising Celuch and Slama; Chaudhuri and Buck; Tucker).

Communication is distributed cognition and, consequently, a blend of "mental spaces." The concept of "mental blend," originally developed to understand figurative speech (especially metaphors) in the framework of cognitive semantics (see Fauconnier), is valid in several respects. Independent of its character, be it face-to-face or technically mediated, every communication relates to at least two frames of cognition. In this dynamic process, mental blending concerns the fusion of different cognitive scripts, schematas, or mental models in which experiences that characterize each party are stored. Briefly, scripts, schematas, and mental models signify a prototypical representation of experiences, often in an subconscious manner. They are related to limited contexts of experience and guide behaviour and expectations. In this perspective, schemata cover the range between sensorial and abstract expressions (with respect to the link between the two extremes see Lakoff and Johnson); a script formats, for instance, the purchase of cinema tickets by providing precise expectations and certainty; and mental models cover complex domains of experience, where a holistic tendency and dynamic quality represent a synopsis of systematically distinguished ways of cognition, as for instance propositional and analogical ones (see, e.g., Holland). With respect to technical mediation, processes of mental blending are significant because what is communicated has to be associated with something outside media (Coulson and Oakley 183). They also are central to multimodal and dynamic fields of communication when diachronic and synchronic processes of mental blending assure a joint frame of understanding, for instance, when pictures are understood in terms of music, or a sequence via the preceding one: "blending processes depend centrally on projection mapping and dynamic simulation to develop emergent structure, and to promote novel conceptualizations, involving the generation of inferences, emotional reactions, and rhetorical force" (Coulson and Oakley 176; see also Schmidt). Contents and the form of presentation are configured by expectations that give rise to inferences via processes of cueing or priming. The flouting of the respective expectations is experienced as cognitive dissonances (on this, see Festinger).

In the same vein, processes of transculturation, specified by Peter Burke as "cultural translations" (23), can be understood as mental blendings whereby the degree of cognitive dissonances produced equals the intersection size the respective cultural mental spaces have. For example, an object-oriented communication can be performed in different ways with respect to its personal aspect or a car can be associated with erotic motives or with performance data. This connection between object-oriented and relation-oriented aspects of communication tends to be culture-specific (see Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson): "cross-domain mappings" find culture-specific formats

(Fauconnier and Turner 134; see also Breidenbach; Cha; Landbeck). Corresponding differences in face-to-face communication were shown by socio-linguistic studies where it was demonstrated that object-orientation and the corresponding confrontational style in conversations and discussions vary. What for one culture is in the range of an animated conversation is for another one already a severe dispute. Compared to Western Europe, Latin American conversations tend to be more person oriented, less confrontational, and maintain a higher level of indirectness in developing positions in interpersonal discourses (see Silva-Corvalán; Fant, "Regulación conversacional"). An additional aspect on a paramount level addresses the question of what has to be stated explicitly in communication to define the situation, the appropriate way of address, and the contents in such a way that the communication can be successful. One can distinguish between "high" and "low" context cultures to signify the extent to which the prerequisites of communication are already inscribed in its contexts, a context blended onto the performative aspects of communication. Latin American cultures rate the importance of personal contexts relatively high (see, e.g., Albert). Rhetorical appropriateness finds its bodily complement in proxemic behaviour during conversations. Latin American distances tend to be shorter than Western European ones (see Albers 343). On a general level, these features indicate differences in the individual's self-concept, especially with respect to its autonomy in social situations. Cultures also are distinguished by their ways to manage conversations. One example is turn taking (see Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson; Nothnagel, "The Physics Way"; Scollon and Scollon): If the sequentiality of turns is preferred, turns are carefully managed while parallel sequences and overlaps are relatively rare. If, however, active floor taking predominates, they are frequent and unproblematic. Styles of turn-taking differ substantially. The German-speaking cultures are predominated by sequentiality, whereas the Spanish-speaking cultures in Latin America are characterized by a style of "floor taking" that result in a higher frequency of interruptions and parallel sequences (see Fant; Beinhauer; Briz Gómez; Christl). Styles of time management couple correspondingly, setting apart monochronic and polychronic ways of time management which parallel the dichotomy outlined above (see Hall). Consequently, cultures can be distinguished by what can be called "communicative density" which, hypothetically, should influence the frequency of filmic operations. This intermodal transfer seems, theoretically, plausible because similar to interpersonal discourse film is fundamentally a phenomenon in time. And although it is an asymmetric form of communication typical for mass communication, there are empirical hints that important parts of its configuration by recipients follows the standards set by face-to-face communication (see Reeves and Nass). If these empirical indications are right, the transfer of habits characterizing face-to-face communication onto communication mediated by film should not only apply to the systemic level this study addresses but also to the cross-cultural differences that have been proven for face-to-face communication. One domain in which these differences should manifest themselves is what we call "communicative density" and parameters linked to the concept.

A further aspect is the construction of arguments: An argument can gain weight with respect to the object addressed; quality is attributed to the artefact itself by stressing its distinctive and specific qualities. On the level of face-to-face communication such a strategy corresponds for instance to a relatively high frequency of intensifications (see Nothnagel, "The Physics Way"). With respect to another model of a convincing argumentation, it is the number of supporters that counts. An argument is convincing if it is shared by a relatively large part of people and if linguistic parameters linked to strategies of inclusion are frequent enough (see Nothnagel, "The Physics Way" 225). The question what a persuasive argument is thus finds relatively different answers pointing to contrasts in ethno-epistemology and the respective rhetorical strategies. They parallel those present in etymological contexts: "Truth" is linked to trust, a social quality, whereas *veritas* is qualified by the issue itself (see Nothnagel, "The Physics Way" 261). A first, very general indication for a relation between techniques of *mise-en-scène* in films and preceding traditions in face-to-face communication was given by Seana Coulson and Todd Oakley. However, studies that analyse both tendencies in a common and in a comparative framework of research do not exist. All levels sketched refer to mostly subconscious mental scripts, schemata, and models which condense in a communicative *habitus* realized as *préférences manifestées* (Bourdieu) where the form

of an utterance, its time and framework are fitted into structures of adequacy. With respect to the definition of culture developed above, the exchange of information, the production of sense, and cultural identity are enacted in a multifaceted dynamics of mental blending which is inscribed into overlapping ethno-theories of rhetoric and aesthetics.

In our research project, we have compared an Ecuadorian with a German sample of TV-spots advertising beer, in each case with six examples. In Germany and Ecuador, traditionally, beer is a local product. Because it is perishable, a modern chain of distribution with high standards of hygiene and conservation is required if it is to be marketed non-locally, that is on an industrial scale and thus these conditions were fulfilled only recently. Owing to these reasons, local brands prevail, independently of the ownership which is undergoing some changes in both countries. In our sample, spots advertising specific varieties of beer were excluded; to measure genre-linked and intracultural fluctuations the binary comparison matrix was doubled and the contrast sample contains examples of various products related mostly to items in a household (laundry detergent, ice cream, toilet paper, tooth paste, etc.) and is composed in a symmetrical fashion with respect to the two cultures sampled. In our contrast samples, the product history presents a different picture, because products are more recent and embedded in a technological frame of production and distribution. In our methodology, in view of the association matrices implied we concentrate on content analysis aiming at subconscious parameters of communication inscribed into frequencies and their combinations. The variables measured can be divided roughly into two groups: 1) there are diegetic and extra-diegetic variables, where the latter ones address what is not present individually, for instance music, the sources of which are not realized in the scene. In addition, a second dichotomy distinguishes formal and content-based variables, such as shot size vs. the numbers of actors present in a specific surrounding. In detail, the following variables -- as proposed previously, common to classical film analysis -- are measured: 1) length of takes, 2) size of takes (8 categories from detail to distant shots), 3) numbers of fades, zooms, tracking shots and pans (horizontal and vertical), 4) numbers of animations and typographical elements, whereby the latter category is split up into artificial insertions and naturally given typographical elements like labels on beer bottles, 5) slow motion and time lapse, 6) special effects (split screens, etc.), 7) numbers of actors present (1 to 5 and more), 8) sex and age of actors playing an active role (child / young adult / old adult / senior), 9) dialogue on / off, 10) music on / off, 11) takes with and without actors (if the latter was the case product details, design environments and landscapes were distinguished), 12) number of locations; in addition, dialogues, texts, etc., were transcribed and the contents carefully described.

Our results: On an average, the length of shots in the Ecuadorian samples, which address exclusively the white middle class, are shorter in the spots advertising beer (around 103%), but also in the non-specified contrast sample (around 106,50%), although the differences are not very significant. The scrutiny of the shot size gives a complex result. In general, Ecuadorian examples show a tendency towards shot sizes determined by face-to-face activity, whereas German spots tend to contextualize what is shown. Extreme close ups, close ups, and medium shots all refer to a personalizing tendency. Frequencies in the Ecuadorian beer spots are especially high (differences range between 212.53% and 347.88%). Results also show product specificity. Values for the contrast group continue to show an Ecuadorian preference for these shot sizes, although to a much lesser degree (differences range between 105.25% and 153.49%). In both cases contrasts peak at close-ups. A special case is the US-American shot size, which shows the actor from head to thigh. Frequencies are significantly higher in both Ecuadorian samples (290% to 104.40%), which in addition to the personalizing tendency may indicate the influence of US-American visual culture on the Ecuadorian advertising industry. Hence, the influence of Hollywoodian models of communication on other cultures is not uniform (on this, see Gallardo). So where do these differences come from? A first hint is given by formal aspects in the configuration of contents: Although Ecuadorian spots in both groups only show a slight increase of shots showing persons (105.45%), the density of persons per take sharpen cultural contrasts. First, there is a considerable difference between the numbers of "leading characters," which are defined by an identifiable role profile and a decisive contribution to the story on the whole. Ecuadorian spots advertising beer introduce more than the

double amount of protagonists of this type than the German equivalent. Differences in the contrast group are not as prominent but still significant (more than 138%). Detail shots, on the contrary, are relatively densely represented in the German samples, although in a product-related way (105.60% for the beer and 170.58% for the contrast example). The tendency to prime the situation by presenting features from the world of things is paralleled by strategies referring to the other extreme, the contextualization of persons in a wider frame. Medium long shots, long shots, and extreme long shots of all sizes are overrepresented in the German samples. The *mise-en-scène* of products and people configures directly and indirectly a personalising or depersonalising strategy: Although global differences between takes with and without persons are not very significant, the presentation of landscapes and designed surroundings without any persons acting is distinctive. Landscapes are an almost exclusive feature of German spots and practically non-existent in the Ecuadorian counterparts while for designed surroundings the tendency is reversed. The contrast samples show a similar chiasmic tendency although to a much lesser degree. Differences in the relative tendency to contextualization is confirmed by the rate at which sites are changed. German samples are characterized by a higher frequency and reveal that, relatively speaking, strategies of priming are linked to a contrasting strategy (differences amount from 114.29% for the contrast sample to 178.57% for the beer sample). Contextualization has not only consequences for the presentation of products and the models evoked by mental blending, but also results in a greater transparency with respect to the action frames presented. Indirectly, it differentiates the mental models governing communication behaviour. The concentration of people can be proven directly by counting their numerical presence per take. Results show that Ecuadorian examples tend to associate the consumption of beer with social events and construct the private/public dichotomy differently. Particularly high is the difference for takes presenting more than five actors, a tendency that is inversed in the contrast group. As can be expected from the discussion above, in shots with 1-5 actors present, the number of those actively communicating is significantly higher in the Ecuadorian beer spots (130.02%). Again, contrast samples present an inversed tendency with differences more pronounced (640.43%). The combination of the relative population of takes and the shot sizes preferred indicate another cultural difference. It is related to proxemic behaviour as indicated by the distance interacting persons tend to prefer in a given type of situation. These "spaces of intersubjectivity" are an expression of mental models of appropriateness. Formal parameters show that distances in the Ecuadorian examples have to be considerably closer which confirms findings of face-to-face communication, although product types play an important role in the composition of moving pictures. The consequence is a relative increase of pace, complexity, and convolution, because if more is represented in a smaller spatio-temporal frame a stronger polychronic organization of action follows.

Beer is an essentially "male" matter in German contexts, where only 12.50% of the characters playing an active role are women. In the Ecuadorian cases, however, women play a more significant role (50%), at least as a reference point for the enactment of its socializing attributes. In the contrast group -- addressing mainly household articles -- relations are modified. In the German examples 53.85% of the characters playing an active role are female while the figure is 66.67% in the Ecuadorian sample. Thus, reference structures in the evaluation of products relate to different ways in the communication between the genders. Hints for the specificity of association matrices related to the product are confirmed by other socio-demographic variables: There is a tendency to associate beer with youth in the Ecuadorian beer spots (168.55%) which is not the case in the contrast sample, where young German actors populate the spots in a relative dense manner (203.06%). On an average, older adults are less present, but owing to the higher population of takes, the frequency of older adults is relatively high in Ecuadorian beer spots. The association of beer with socialization is reflected by the frequency of words per shot. Its average is higher in Ecuadorian spots (154.17%). More important in the acoustic channel, however, is music. Although music per se shows a slight difference in favour of the German examples, singing turns out to be an exclusive Ecuadorian category. The relative importance of dialogue and song also characterizes the contrast samples, whereas music alone is equally distributed. In the contrast group, German spots reveal a much higher density of words (606.45%). The difference with respect to singing is

reversed (254.62%) on the basis of an equal frequency of takes with music. This relates to the fact that in Ecuadorian examples often the whole message, even if it is a factual one, is transmitted via singing, thus in a multimodal fashion. Authoritarian comments as specified by the number of words uttered whose sources are in no relation with action on-screen (extra-diegetical) are distributed as follows. In both samples German examples present a higher average score. The differences amount to 126.98% in the beer sample and to 142.19% in the contrast sample. This tendency to increase power distance is only paralleled partially by the frequency of angle shots. Putting low and high angle shots together, German beer spots show a small relative increase (105.94%), whereas in the contrast sample the tendency is inverse (129.13%). Thus, in the Ecuadorian mental model especially beer is not only characterized by its socializing functions, but in addition by a reduced power distance. Overall, the nine camera operations counted show significantly higher frequencies in the Ecuadorian beer spots (127%). This tendency, however, is reversed in the contrast sample, where German examples show a positive digression (123,60%). Typographical elements in general populate Ecuadorian beer spots more densely (138.46%). A closer scrutiny distinguishing "artificial elements" not included in the scenery and those which are part of the action -- a label on a bottle, for instance -- show more complex dynamics. Non-artificial typographical elements are preferred by Ecuadorian (209.52%) and artificial ones by their German counterpart (180%). Similar to what has been seen with respect to the asymmetry of comment strategies, closure as realized via the diegetic / extra-diegetic dichotomy differs remarkably, indicating that Ecuadorian beer spots opt for a "naturalizing," direct strategy in their presentation of typographical information. The contrast group is characterized by only a small difference (112.70%) and shows a chiasitic situation in respect to the two classes distinguished, which once again proves a coupling of formal and content-based variables.

Our conclusions of this preliminary study are twofold. On the specific level we found that Ecuadorian and German advertising spots are distinguished by profound formal differences and that these apply to nearly all the variables scrutinized. Furthermore, we have been able to show that on the micro-level, face-to-face communication and audio-visual media are related via a transfer of communicative habitus. Traditions older than the media investigated incite processes of "re-invention" or "re-framing." On the macro-level, persuasive communication and the typicality of frames concern values related to the family, the private / public, individualism / collectivism, and men / nature dichotomies, and the relation between the sexes. Cross-cultural differences are not stable with respect to the products advertised. The parallel measurement of intracultural fluctuations revealed a strong coupling between product and an associated communicative habitus. Thus, there is an elaborated mental blend between formal registers and the products advertised. The relative composition of variables is product-specific. The ratio between the population of spots and shot size, the higher density of camera operations, and the increased frequency of multimodalities, for instance the amount of verbal information given in musical form, or the higher frequency of typographical elements all indicate -- although in a product-specific way -- an increase in the communicative density in the Ecuadorian examples scrutinized. This is also documented for face-to-face communication with respect to conversation management so that the relative distribution of communicative complexity indicates parallels between verbal and visual registers. The macro-level and the micro-level results are similar when complex forms of persuasive rhetoric are concerned. The blend between actors, their specific behaviour, and the products advertised is organized in a culture-specific manner. An argument can gain weight with respect to the parameters attached to its object or with respect to the number of people that seemed to be convinced. Beer can be evaluated on account of its association with nature or its socialising values. These differences are enacted by employing a variety of the variables discussed. It is related to the private / public dichotomy as well to the differences related to communicative density. It concerns the concept of person as well as that of nature. If the creation of something common, that is a mental blend, is what communication is all about, then this kind of *communio* that persuasive strategies are trying to install via priming follows different mental models. In general, we were able to show that traditional forms of communicative habitus linked to oral culture and face-to-face communication are introduced into the technical media scrutinized. Introduction of new media gives rise to

complex processes of mental blending in which new forms of communication are partially reinvented in terms of the old ones. Processes of transculturation linked to the importation of technical media frames surpass the traditional classification of media. We are therefore convinced that the results are significant and justify a study which follows the lines tested but on the basis of enlarged samples and a broader range of cultures.

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