

ADVERTISING AND WINE LANGUAGE: CONSIDERATIONS ON NEW CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Case study

Keywords

Advertising
Linguistic strategies
Consumption
Social values
Wine knowledge

JEL classification

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Abstract

In today's consumer society, the wine has gone from being the staple diet to become one of the signs that show the status of the subject, as a demonstration of high rank and taste, aspirations, status, lifestyle, in which having fun, the pleasure, is the fruit of knowledge. It's a hobby, a leisure culture, an environment implying major activities (vineyard tours, wine tastings, contest criticism), but also a passion "for lovers of good wines". The paper commences from the results of a survey carried-out in Romania in 2011, focusing on women purchasing power and consumer behaviour related to wine. The questionnaire included many questions on key dimensions of product-oriented knowledge. This major participation of women in the selection and consumption of wine is interrelated with their independence, with the active role they occupy in the society, especially at a professional and family level. The bottle and the label, the brand and the phrase or slogan identifiers are clearly elements that are associated unambiguously, highlighting a feature that is primarily phatic. Certain brand, image or customer loyalty campaigns alter the balance to emphasize certain aspects, in favour of the referent denoted, from the connotation or appeal towards the recipient, with a greater attention to the text. According to the paradigm of knowledge-based economy, it is often stated that information asymmetry between producers and consumers will be reduced thanks to information availability and dissemination through the Internet or other media channels. As a consequent, for the present approach, it turns out to be interesting to analyze advertising to find out the social values and their relation to the adoption of new linguistic strategies in wine mass-media advertising.

1. Introduction

In today's consumer society, the wine has gone from being the staple diet to become one of the signs that show the status of the subject, as a demonstration of high rank and taste, aspirations, status, lifestyle, in which having fun, the pleasure, is the fruit of knowledge. It's a hobby, a leisure culture, an environment implying major activities (vineyard tours, wine tastings, contest criticism), but also a passion "for lovers of good wines".

From an anchor with references to tradition and the past, the challenge, as any challenge of modernity, seems to be not losing its roots while still being original, keep in touch (with the earth and nature, whether infrequent its images), despite having to use sophisticated technology; in social terms, a continuous search between conflict posed by group membership, medium-high and the need to feel exclusive; loyalty and personalization in terms of marketing. Advertising that we analyze prevents, in general, especially in the images, the presentation of this conflict (Delbecque, 1990). Wine advertising exalts only positive values, in a continuous incitement to purchase through the weighting of qualities to which it is presumed that the consumer is identifying with. The images take us to a prestigious world of culture, usually artistic, or to traditions in which the current social connotations are rare; advertising represents masculine values: the mature man, especially young people and the current women now occupy much less space.

The consumer is inscribed in a culture, new in many aspects, where he needs to have at his disposal a special language, for connoisseurs, coded, ultimately. It's a world more and better described through wine guides, like Peñín (2004), and those that appear on websites: Wine Business, Decanter, or Vinul.ro.

We will primarily undergo a reading of the language used and the values conveyed

around a discourse that occurs generally as characterized by quality and culture, image and word. Samples analyzed were positive advertising of products, in a connoted context in which its qualities are well-balanced exposed: it usually produces a clear fusion between the textual and iconic resources (Ferraz Martínez, 1995).

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According to the paradigm of knowledge-based economy, it is often stated that information asymmetry between producers and consumers will be reduced thanks to information availability and dissemination through the Internet or other media channels. As a consequent, for the present approach, it turns out to be interesting to analyze advertising to find out the social values and their relation to the adoption of new linguistic strategies in wine mass-media advertising.

2. Theoretical and Practical Background

Sentiment mining is the central focus in both qualitative and quantitative surveys on consumers, but more interesting, developed since the affluence of social media networking, is the analyze of consumer reviews on microblogs such as Twitter or Facebook. Former researches suggest that the limited size of the posts (fewer than 140 words) on these social networks positively influence the text mining efficiency, due to the reduced ambiguity of the topic, rendered by shorter expressions, on the other hand influencing their frequency and timing. Of continuous interest for the corporate environment is the content of these posts or reviews,

referring to the sentiment expressed towards products manufactured by companies. Go et al. (2009) classified sentiment as positive or negative, based on an algorithm they built. Kennedy et al. (2006) went further and examined the effect of changes in sentiment, that they called "valence shifters" - negations, intensifiers, diminishers – consisting in sentiment modification.

Wine stokes strong provincial and nationalist sentiments because it is regarded not merely as a product but as a true expression of a region. This is what could result from a national survey conducted by the author in end 2011, having as target women. The online survey contained 37 questions, aiming at finding facts about women as consumers, prescribers, household buyers and wine-knowledge, cultural and taste features. The questionnaire was sent by email or Facebook to acquaintances, which also propagated it further on to other female persons. Of all questions, the one about choosing the vine varieties known, from a given list, shows an interesting fact: from the sample of 48 women who answered the survey, we validated the question for 35 of them, who preponderantly indicated varieties cultivated in Romania (Merlot 24, Riesling 18, Sauvignon Blanc 17, Cabernet Sauvignon 20, Muscat Ottonel 21, Chardonnay 15, Pinot Noir 24, Fetească Neagră 23) (Figure No. 1). As the majority of these women stated not having visited a winery not even once in their lifetime, we suppose that knowledge about vine varieties, enological notions such as controlled designation of origin or geographical indication are consequences of efficient advertising of winegrowers, i.e. information transposed on bottles, labels, brand, via websites, TV advertising campaigns, wine events, that reach final consumer and boost wine sentiment through the use of an attractive language, but also more and more technical.

3. Methodology

For the purpose of the present analysis, we collected and stored wine descriptions or tasting notes from the websites of three important wine producers in the Oltenia Region in Romania, that is: Domeniile Sâmburești, Agricola Știrbey, and Corcova Roy & Dâmboviceanu, chosen due to their tradition in winemaking, which is reflected in their colorful, rich of information and fervent descriptions of the companies, history, regions, climate, soils, vineyards, people and wines found on their websites, and because their websites have an English version, which facilitated our work, while avoiding a rough translation, that would have not pertained to the producers. Contrary to the researches undertaken until now, concentrating on consumers' reviews as post-buying and post-tasting experiences, we thought of mining wine producers' textual descriptions in order to see if they have a specific communication strategy for each wine product/variety, if they use a certain linguistic register specific to a sentiment in our palette. We used a data set of wine descriptions for all wines listed in English, data collected including wine name, technical details, and the description. In this study we make use of only the textual descriptions.

To extract the sentiment of these texts automatically, we used LIWCLite 7 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count; Pennebaker, Chung, and Ireland, 2007), a text analysis software developed to assess emotional, cognitive, and structural components of text samples using a psychometrically validated internal dictionary. This software calculates the degree to which a text sample contains words belonging to empirically defined psychological and structural categories. Specifically, it determines the rate at which certain cognitions and emotions (e.g., future orientation, positive or negative emotions) are present in the text. For each psychological dimension the software calculates the relative frequency with

which words related to that dimension occur in a given text sample. We concatenated all texts published into one text sample, for each producer, and used these as inputs into LIWClite 7.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Content Words versus Style Words

When LIWC was first developed, the goal was to conceive an efficient system that could tap both the content of what people were writing or talking about and the psychological processes behind these actions. Not after long time, it became clear that there are two very broad categories of words that have different psychometric and psychological properties: (1) "content words" are generally nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs; "style (or function) words" (intertwined through content words) are made up of pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, and a few other esoteric categories. From a psychological perspective, content words convey what they are saying, whereas style words reflect how people are communicating. In our analysis, we will focus on content words, as they are much more closely linked to measures of people's social and psychological worlds, as the ability to use them denotes interest for social values that could educate consumers. From this psychological perspective, advertising or brand image promotion are always looking for measures that reveal the secret, hidden, or distorted "real" self, even if not perceptible by the receiver of the message (Correa et al., 2000). Freud's popularity was partly attributable to his assertion that subconscious thoughts, emotions, and experiences drove our behavior. People continue to be enthralled with his methods of dream analysis, slips of the tongue, and other psychoanalytic claims. Analysis of language – especially on function or style words - sometimes can reveal social

psychological processes that people are not able to easily conceal. Despite the appeal of computerized language measures, they are still quite crude. Programs such as LIWC ignore context, irony, sarcasm, and idioms, being, like any computerized text analysis program, a probabilistic system.

4.2. The Psychological and Social Meaning of Words

In this section, we give a brief discussion of psychological processes and a small set of related language categories that the 3 winegrowers project in the readers' mind, creating an atmosphere, entourage or defining the time and moment of serving or drinking their wines. Absolutely, like the "marriage" between specific varieties or blends of wine and food dishes, wine consumption requires a special "état d'esprit", or is meant to awake desired human conditions, to remember seasons, times lost or spent in the company of someone dear or associated with a particular wine brand or wine flavor. Generally, it is not only the tasting note or wine description on the websites that novelize these appetencies. We can find them on dedicated-type bottles (i.e., for special collections), on originally recreated labels, on re-branded logos or slogans, on cave mural inscriptions or paintings or architecture, at thematic events, etc.: "In fact, Corcova was the favourite place of Anton Bibescu and Martha Bibescu for holiday spending, as well as for some of their famous friends. Marcel Proust wrote: «Dear names, such as Corcova, were so familiar and close just like Senlis and a thousand times dearer than Bonnelles and I lived in constant fear not to see them publicized in a press release and at the same time I blamed myself for not knowing that you must hold dear through your memories, Emanuel's or Princess Bibescu's. Oh, how dear I hold you in my heart at these moments!»" (www.corcova.ro).

As Figure No. 2 shows, Domeniile

Sâmburești use preponderantly words belonging to the cognitive category (12.11% - insight, certainty), reinforced by the present tense of the verbs, which reassures the consumer of the quality of the wines, not only from experience, but also confirmed by the history of places, Agricola Știrbey ranking second at the use of this type of words (11.63). Relativity is the following category were the Sâmburești vintner is remarkable (9.42%), but this time is outperformed by Agricola Știrbey (11.94) who is promoting better the wine estate and the region. If Domeniile Sâmburești and Agricola Știrbey are following exactly the same strategies in communication, Corcova Roy & Dâmboviceanu stand out through 4 categories: perceptual (16.89), cognitive (12.75), biological (8.94), and affective (8.44), demonstrating a complex, multi-targeted strategy of conveying subconscious thoughts, emotions, sensations, and experiences that drive consumers' behavior. Hereinafter, we will have a concise discussion for each winegrower, with examples.

Figure No. 3 shows these profiles for all wine varieties, taken as a group, for Domeniile Sâmburești. The most prominent dimensions are positive emotions (5.83): fascinating blend, tasty. Affective is a dimension that relates to moods, feelings, and attitudes. In terms of positive emotion, Sâmburești is tied for second place after Corcova, evidence from the Cabernet Sauvignon of Domeniile Sâmburești and Château Valvis collections.

The wine brand, as for spirits and other food products, is often associated with countries and regions. A complementary scenario is that of the wineries: currently, modern buildings that meet high technical capabilities, without leaving at all aesthetic considerations. The winery has acquired, together with the industrial dimension, another aesthetic and social meaning, highly valued in the hands of renowned

architects who are giving space to the history, to the nobility of origins and current approaches to socialization and respect for the environment. So, for the space dimension (5.38), we find words having to do with home, location, affiliation to a region: blessed land of Sâmburești, noble vineyards, land of Dealurile Oltului. Time (3.14) is referring to perpetuation, origin, succession, winemaking process: bourgeois origin, nights, tradition, and aging potential. See (2.24) has to do with visual perception including color and brightness: red, light and full of flavor, seems, scent of fireplace, fruit dried on mats, tempered astringency, black cherry and raspberry flavors, blueberries, dried plums, figs, chocolate and tobacco. Achievement (2.24) suggests unique characteristics of the wine, but also the status gained by drinking a Bacchus liquor: structured wine, powerful, majestic; leisure (4.48) is suggested by words infiltrated with the purpose to create a familiar place and occasion to drink: convivial, spend in the company of your friends, chatting and having good food, made by mom.

A bottle of wine, in the Romanian society, and worldwide, opens the door to communication; sharing wine as a gift is no longer anonymous, but personal. Starting with the wine, which is a very suitable gift for the cultural and social values it represents, the prestige that comes with certain brands has grown to become collectible gem when various circumstances of peculiarity and rarity concur, and thus, investment element: "In the cellar or in the safe?" says one advertisement. Following Figure No. 4, Agricola Știrbey excels at space words (6.58), beating by far the other two winemakers, which shows disposition to history depicting: Drăgășani region, Bordeaux; hand in hand with time dimension (4.28): pre-Roman Empire days, over the course of two thousand years, young wine, heritage, early Greek and

Roman settlers; posemo (3.52): fall in love with, panoply of taste; leisure (3.06): social occasions, to buoy up a summertime evening barbecue; achievement (1.45): icon, First Class section of Lufthansa flights, character of this grape variety, emblematic; and feel (1.30): refreshingly fruity notes in the nose and on the palate, bracing acidity, subtle minerality, elegant, complex bouquet, to feel quite at home, warm continental air currents, semisweet, residual sugar, blossoming with touches of ripened fruits on the palate, sunny climate.

Corcova analysis reports certain matters relating to the production and winemaking. Thus, the terms used are positive emotions (6.95), exulting from states of mind after drinking a wine with characteristics as exquisite, excellence, great, unique, high quality level, original: expressive and agreeable, pleasant, happy. However, there are a number of specific names and ways in which wine and its qualities are defined. There is first a series of nouns and adjectives defining textures, brushstrokes, trims, tones and colors (especially red: ruby, red, cherry), pertaining to the feeling (1.99) and visual (1.82) (Figure No. 5) dimensions that lead us to the artistic, pictorial dimension. The wines are distinguished by colors: white, red, pink or claret (in trade are also sparkling, sweet and generous), in this dimension, perfectly integrating its velvet-like or silky effects of the palate, and also the synesthesia as "the nose surprises with spicy tones", very distinguishing, and the poetry, art that some advertisers also try to associate with, like a poem full of original flavors and great elegance: fine nose, spicy notes, aromas of tree bark and animal skin, fruits reserved in alcohol, aftertaste of mint, notes of berries, pepper and nuts, mouth, vanilla taste, hints of aged red fruits, blueberries and blackberries, aromatic aftertaste, butter, brioche and hazelnuts. The pictorial detail may be the signature, naturally by hand, which appears highlighted on the labels of Corcova, as it

were, in fact, the signature of a painter: "The portfolio of red, white and rose wines is reminiscent of the aristocratic life with its rich texture and scent of Parisian epoch, hobbies, friends and palace intrigues". That production and winemaking are an artistic challenge is also evident in the use of music, the harmonics, the crescendo in taste, the live notes on the palate presented in Jirov or Reserve, using the name of the medieval castle to identify with Wallachia. Wine product presentation came together with the wineries, vineyards, authority or freshness of taverns, which fits the issuer, is a feature of the current advertising, more objective, material, one could say, with its colors, liveliness, density, when time (3.64) is atemporal: decant this wine half an hour before serving, long-lasting delicate aromas.

The phenomenon of using the terminology characterized by technical criteria and creative resonances simultaneously responds on the one hand to the existence of a market very important in volume of crop, labels and exports and, second, to the so-called culture of wine, in which is very important the ability to distinguish or discover traditions, wineries, strains, wood, grape varieties (*fetească - the Romanian queen variety, cabernet, sauvignon, merlot, chardonnay*, etc.) and its optical, olfactory and gustatory characteristics.

The tasting, turned into ritual, is the moment when, briefly, you have to uncover origin, development, production and a number of technical parameters such as *hue, color, intensity, vividness, tear*, etc., interspersed with the description of the pleasure produced: all this, in an objective manner and if you can, with the so-called electronic taster.

Reviewing current trends, in which seem to enjoy of particular popularity the fruity young wines, even female or "easy going", without losing their intensity and power, even their flesh, one has the impression of attending a strange mixture of metaphors,

jargon and common expressions, with curious synecdoche, in which a harmonious, structured and even elegant product is offered. An example would be: "Fine nose, spicy notes, aromas of tree bark and animal skin, fruits reserved in alcohol. Allow to be decanted half an hour before serving. On the palate the attack is supple with delicate tannins and an aftertaste of mint", or "With notes of berries, pepper and nuts. In mouth, the attack is supple, spicy and fresh with notes fruitful. Fine tannins permit a final smooth taste sensation".

5. Conclusion

It is interesting to analyze advertising to find out the social values and their relation to the adoption of new linguistic strategies. It becomes a task trying to cover all the nuances and developments in this evolving industry related to different cultures and traditions that transmit at a time, both nationalist and internationalist impulses. The marketing and dedicated journals have managed that the current Romanian gourmet follow fashion, even in matters apparently traditionalists as wine. Whoever approaches the Romanian language and culture, as speaker, interpreter or mediator, cannot dispense with all its richness and timeliness. There are increasingly frequent the terms "sommelier", "variety", "tannins", "polyphenols", "tear", "decanter", "cave", "maceration", "winegrower", "clarify", "barrel", "decant", "spirits", "winemaker", "vintner", of low frequency of use but for the influence of wine culture. Colors and flavors, with details and nuances

Biography

Silvia is Assistant Professor PhDc at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova since 2010, when she began her doctoral studies in Management field. She graduated from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, specializing in "Economy of Trade, Tourism and Services", and simultaneously from the Faculty of Letters, specializing in "Translation and Interpretation" (2005-2008), continuing with a Master's degree in "Marketing and Business Communication" (2010). Her main areas of expertise are: Management, Marketing, Tourism, Communication and Negotiation. Silvia is also an active

increasingly refined in sensory descriptions are now components of a communication about wine that has managed to uncover and appreciate their cultural roots, to relate well with other cultures, not only gastronomical but artistic in general. Its ascension and progression is linked to a consumer of upper-middle class, identified with the cultural and linguistic connotations that wine spreads. The cases analyzed with LIWClite 7 are just an attempt in a sector in expansion which rests on the incalculable propagation that the network represents, in terms of diffusion, through many channels of possible trade.

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FIGURES:

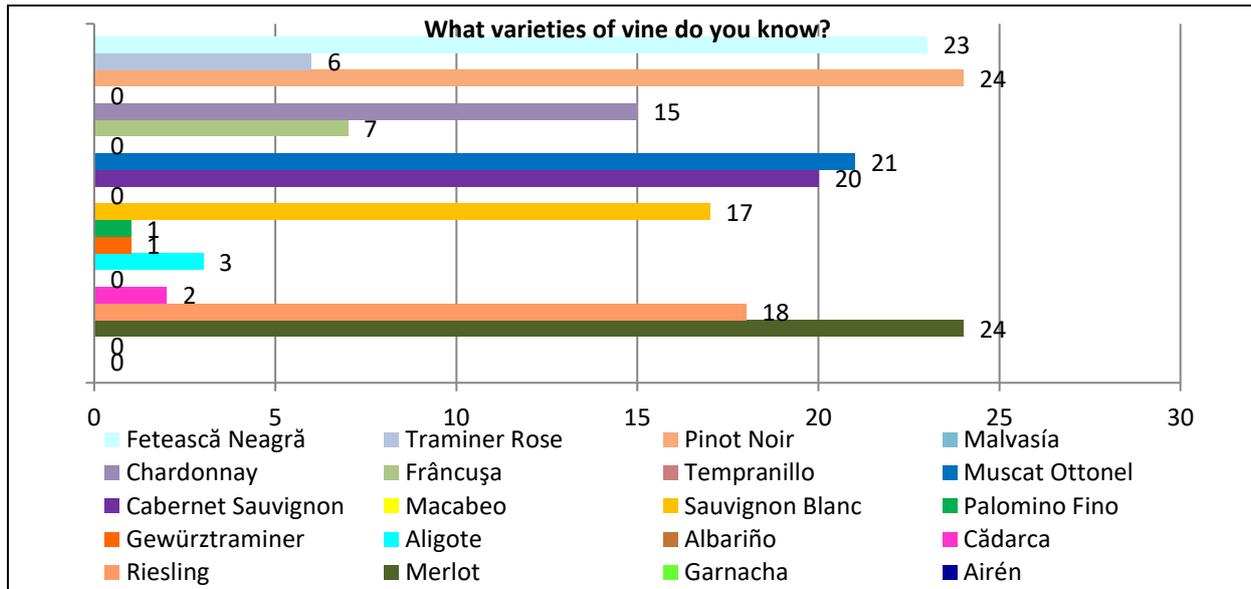


Figure No. 1 Vine varieties knowledge from Romanian Survey "Women Purchasing Power and Consumer Behavior"

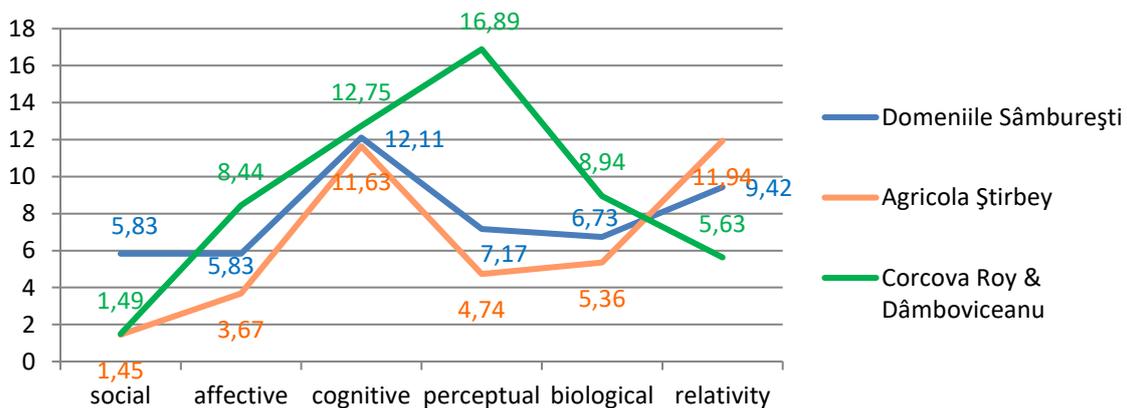


Figure No. 2 Summary Information for LIWClite 7 Statistics on the Wines of the 3 Winegrowers Evaluated on the Psychological Processes and Personal Concerns Category Dimensions

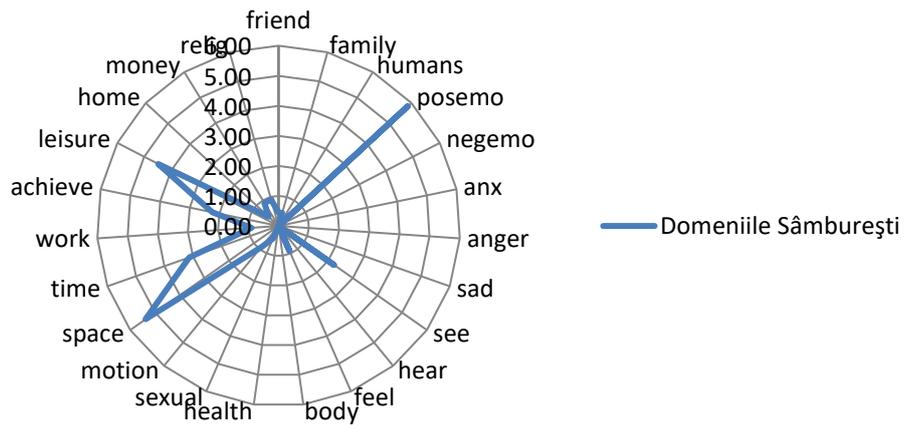


Figure No. 3 Domeniile Sâmburești Wines Evaluated on 23 Dimensions using LIWClite 7

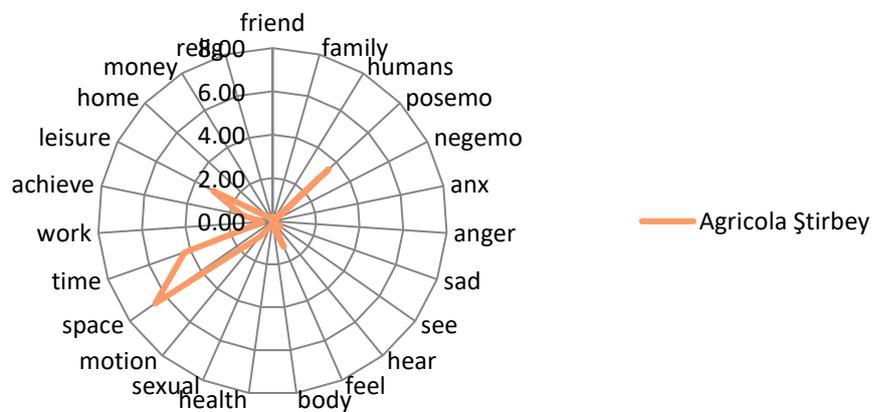


Figure No. 4 Agricola Știrbey Wines Evaluated on 23 Dimensions using LIWClite 7

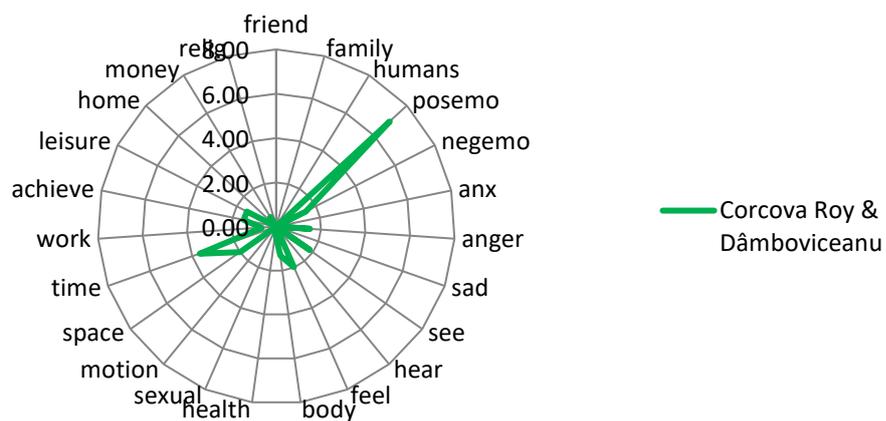


Figure No. 5 Corcova Roy & Dâmboviceanu Wines Evaluated on 23 Dimensions using LIWClite 7