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Hypothesis and deduction in the studies of the discourse of advertising

The paper is an attempt to show that a discourse type can in itself be an analytic determinant, i.e. that it can effectively dictate methods of investigating it. This claim is illustrated by a study of the discourse of advertising, or rather, of how the discourse of advertising motivates an analyst to adopt a specific track of analysis. In the paper, the discourse of advertising is shown to possess certain properties which favor a deduction-based approach to analysis, whereby an analyst is likely to postulate about a given text's function *a priori*, that is before an inquiry into particular samples of textual data takes place. This approach may lead to a number of analytic fallacies such as, for instance, underspecification of data supporting the thesis or illustration of thesis with atypical or even irrelevant data.

Keywords: discourse analysis, linguistic pragmatics, advertising, linguistic methodology, deduction, 'top-down' analysis, induction, 'bottom-up' analysis, persuasion, rhetoric.

1. Introduction

The present paper aims at outlining ways in which a sample type of persuasive discourse, namely the discourse of advertising, affects the way(s) in which it is approached analytically from the perspective of formal pragmatics and discourse studies. It is very often assumed (cf. Beaugrande 1991; Wilson

1990, etc.) that discourses which rely on high density of macropropositional cues as well as discourses which involve more condensed or consolidated text samples have a tendency to be approached in analysis in an inductive, “bottom-up” manner. Since discourse of advertising is to a large extent a discourse of highly meaningful word-puns, hard-hitting slogans or other textual devices characteristic of a maximum economy of expression, it might seem logical to expect language-of-advertising analysts to follow largely similar tracks, whereby data collection and componential analysis are both necessary and sufficient tools to generate thesis.

While not detracting from partial accuracy of this assumption, the following discussion brings up a prevailing proportion of argument to the contrary. It attempts to show that, although discourse of advertising is not completely devoid of “bottom-up” prompts, a vast majority of analytic activity in the field is affected by “top-down” determinism, which manifests itself in particular texts being approached with a clear-cut hypothesis regarding their function and indicators of this function represented in both form and content of the analyzed text sample.

2. Literature on advertising and idealized models of advertising rhetoric

Post-war discourse analysis and explorations in propaganda and persuasion in particular get a high mileage out of language-of-advertising research, on both sides of the Atlantic. Studies by Ogilvy (1964), Leech (1966), Turner and Pearson (1966), Goffman (1976), Williamson (1978), Dyer (1982), Schudson (1984), Vestergaard and Schroeder (1985), Chapman (1986), Lutz (1990), Myers (1994), and Goddard (1998) are only among better-known instances of this massive research, but they nonetheless give a fair picture of the analytic attitude to discourse of advertising which has developed over the past fifty years. To put it somewhat simplistically, all these studies demonstrate a tendency to presuppose *a priori* about manipulative character of advertisements, reflected in a clever application of several standard (though definitely heterogeneous) features, such as the use of alliteration/assonance, rhyme, reiteration of weasel words, unfinished comparisons, parity claims, etc. In the quoted literature, practically all research into these features is a research in cue distribution, not interaction. This appears to follow from the relatively uncomplicated character of developing a hypothesis concerning the function of advertising, which is commonly (and by no means truthlessly) seen as a tool to make the addressee pursue an action (i.e. buy a product) or develop some kind of favorable mental state toward an action (i.e. admit possibility of buying a product at a later date). The point is, however, that although this hy-

pothesis is probably true, the readiness of developing it seriously hinders further investigation into the many consistently-structured, homogeneously grammatical elements which underlie such effective advertising.

In fact, little needs to be said about why analysts should be so prone to postulate *a priori* claims concerning language of advertising. Over years, as world markets have come to be dominated by same product brands, so have the marketing and advertising outlets. A Coca-Cola ad is nowadays much more likely to attract (in the same form) worldwide attention than it used to, say, thirty years ago. And since majority of language analysts are exposed to similar advertising experience, with similar products, in similar time, it comes hence as little surprise to see similar analytic layouts pursued worldwide.¹

Post-war analytic attitude to the discourse of advertising is still representatively manifested in Lutz (1990), Myers (1994), and Goddard (1998), though these works, being relatively new in the field, do invite certain shift in approach to analysis of advertisements, which, ironically, might well result from the proliferation of similar attitudes demonstrated in earlier studies. For all these reasons, analyses by Lutz, Myers, and Goddard will be quoted and commented on extensively in this paper.

3. Criteria of manifestation of “top-down” approach to discourse of advertising

In subsections 3.1-3.4 I look at how studies by Lutz, Myers, and Goddard have been affected by “top-down” determinism and which of the tenets and strategies of their analyses have undergone such overdetermination to greatest extent. There are four analytic activity domains postulated, each of which is claimed to have been affected differently in each of the quoted studies. These are:

- *data vs thesis placement*, involving the placement of definition of (a) given discourse function(s), in relation to the whole of the data examined with a view to formulating this definition;
- *degree and frequency of occurrence and placement of componential data support*, involving absence/presence and status of textual exemplification of thesis definitions, as well as placement of particular samples vis a vis the thesis;

¹ This observation has much in common with the description of some political language analysts as being ‘part of the scene of events’ and therefore offering studies of highly deductive nature (cf. Wilson 1990).

- *ratio of data amount to thesis amount*, involving a statistical look at the analyst's balancing of the data/thesis parts in terms of management of the writing space;
- *radicalism of thesis*, involving investigation of language forms and their illocutionary capacity of scientific persuasion.

3.1. *Data vs thesis placement*

One of the most striking manifestations of “top-down” determination in studies by Lutz, Myers and Goddard is placement of thesis statement prior to data analysis. The latter is hardly ever (occasionally in Lutz) followed by any reiteration of the thesis, since the thesis is considered too evident to pose a need for reiteration. The assumption of clarity and straightforwardness of the thesis further affects data presentation, in the sense that data components are shown to occur randomly, rather than interact with one another. In other words, the analysis adheres predominantly to the visuality of the text/image sample, at the expense of an autonomous investigation of the lexis/grammar used.

These tendencies are most radically exemplified in Goddard's study, where thesis statements about advertisements are all voiced in the “Introduction” (and never reiterated later), while the question of the definition of advertisement is first tackled (in, arguably, somewhat trivialized manner) in “Chapter 1”, with a sample analysis (or rather simple description of an ad) following yet later in “Chapter” 2:

Make no mistake: advertising works [...]. It is not difficult to see that and why advertisers should want to make their texts capture our attention. The whole aim of the copywriters is to get us to register their communication either for purposes of immediate action or to make us more favourably disposed in general terms to the advertised product or service. (1998:2, “Introduction”)

Advertising is so familiar to modern readers that it may seem odd to ask what an advertisement is [...]. At the root of the word ‘advertisement’ is the Latin verb ‘advertere’, meaning ‘to turn towards’ [...]. Often, though, classifications [of advertisements] are more a question of degree rather than of absolutes. For example, clothing in its broadest sense can be seen as advertising ideas about the wearer, but manufacturer's labels on clothing are a direct strategy of getting free publicity. Therefore, central to the idea of an advert appears to be the factor of conscious intention behind the text, with the aim of benefiting the originator... . (:7, “Chapter 1”)

[...] One attention-seeking strategy [...] is the startling image, combined with emotionally stirring text. The Benetton clothing company, for example, showed a series of large-scale hoardings which featured real scenes of life and death - a baby being born, covered in blood from the mother's womb, a man on his deathbed, some of them shockingly coupled with a sequence of universally-appealing, emotion words... . (:13, "Chapter 2")

It seems from Goddard's study that an approach so radical, in terms of the formulation of hypothesis about function of the text, might strongly affect what I shall henceforth call 'management of the writing space', that is, the whole complexity of the build-up of analysis, or, in yet other words, any analytic activity involving the quantity and sequencing of data and theory. Before commenting further on Goddard, however, it is worthwhile to point to a couple of issues underlying the study by Lutz (1990), an analysis being eight years older than Goddard's, and apparently indicative of methodological tendencies which have subsequently grown into a problem for analysts of advertising in late 1990s.

Lutz's study offers what might be called a 'deductive catharsis' in advertising analysis. He is in fact the first analyst to have posed an ultra-clear set of hypothesis concerning the language of advertising ("advertisers try to wrap their claims in language that sounds specific and objective, when in fact the language of advertising is anything but", "Unfinished comparisons abound in advertising since they create a possibility of filling the claims differently by different addressees", "The biggest weasel word used in advertising is 'help'; once the advertisement starts with 'help', it can develop to make whatever (insincere) promise or claim, because 'help' qualifies all the follow-up of the sentence" (Lutz 1990 :85-9), and many more), to have limited data's function to a *a posteriori* presentation, and to have gone to the final extreme of almost ignoring data analysis after its presentation. As a result, Lutz's analysis would turn into a series of exemplification chunks, each looking more or less in the following way:

HYPOTHESIS

(e.g.)

One of the most powerful weasel words is "virtually" [...]. "Virtually" is used in advertising claims that appear to make specific, definite promises when there is no promise. (Lutz 1990: 88)

DATA

(ctd. from the same example)

In 1971 a federal court rendered its decision on a case brought by a woman who became pregnant while taking birth control pills. She sued

the manufacturer for breach of warranty. The woman lost her case. Basing its ruling on a statement in the pamphlet accompanying the pills, which stated that, "When taken as directed, the tablets offer virtually 100% protection," the court ruled that there was no warranty, expressed or implied, that the pills were absolutely effective. In its ruling, the court pointed out that, according to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, "virtually" means "almost entirely" and clearly does not mean "absolute" (*Whittington versus Eli Lilly and Company*, 333 F. Supp. 98). (Lutz 1990: 88)

THESIS

(ctd. from the same example)

[...] So whenever one encounters an ad claim that uses the word "virtually", one should translate that claim into its real meaning, which is "in essence or effect, although not in fact." (:88)

However, in an attempt to keep the addressee constantly preoccupied with his (hypo)thesis claims, Lutz would use a massive number of examples, each needing or in fact just naturally entailing a hypothesis-thesis wrap-up of the kind quoted above. Goddard, in turn, is quite reluctant to use multiple examples, especially if they should concern everyday commercial advertising. Whatever the reason (reluctance of mental plagiarism?; fear of triviality?), this seems to prove that with the 'hypothesis space' almost filled up (here: by authors such as Lutz), the analyst is tempted to take all the established pre-conceptions about the function of the analyzed discourse 'for granted', voice them out concisely, and possibly look for some atypical instances of this discourse, which have not yet been accounted for. And this is what is clearly manifested in Goddard's writing, as she makes up for the limited hypothesis space with an inflated data-analysis space - yet never concerning the principal issue of commercial advertising, but an apparently marginal subject of non-profit advertising (this tendency is especially provoking in the light of Goddard's "Introduction", in which there is no hint whatsoever as to her being interested in this subtype of ad discourse).

3.2. Degree and frequency of occurrence and placement of componential data support

This last observation on Goddard's writing leads us to consideration of language of advertising via the prism of its increasing and ever-changing (also diachronically) determination of data support. A diachronic look at works by Lutz, Myers, and Goddard reveals an increasingly greater role of the status of function-defining hypothesis in data presentation and/or analysis. Seemingly,

the bigger the perception of hypothesis as objective (this awareness will naturally grow in the analyst over time, as homogeneity of the discourse and its source in real-world context increases), the smaller the amount of data related to the principal discourse under investigation. And consequently, the bigger the perception of hypothesis as objective, the bigger the amount of data related to atypical manifestations of the same discourse. These observations are reflected in Goddard's (1998: 9-13) analysis of an anti-tobacco ad, which takes the space of four pages to develop (contrary to mini-analyses of commercial advertising), offers linear approach to the study of wording (a substantial degree of pragmatics-based metalanguage is used - "pragmatically presupposes...", "illocutionary point", etc. - unlike in analyses of commercial ads), and although does not reiterate the hypothesis of the effectiveness of advertising (1998: 9), still goes a long way in data presentation to have the addressee develop such reiteration for him/herself.

In her analysis Goddard is unable, however, to restructure her hypothesis in such a way as to make it stem from anything but 'visuality' of the discourse context. Hence, her study is overdetermined by the perception of the effectiveness of commercial advertising, quite fallaciously applied in her approach to non-profit advertising, a subtype which must be, logically, quite different from the main type.

Myers (1994) encounters the same problem of visual determination, by real-world factors. His study is also somewhat more clearly indicative of the determination of (specifically) the frequency and placement of data. Therefore, in the rest of the present subsection I shall first quote (with minor cuts) a sample analysis by Myers, then point to data determination manifested in it, and finally offer an enriched analytic approach to the quoted case, applying some of the "bottom-up" orientation which has been missing from the original analysis.

(quoted after Myers 1994:2-4, paragraph structure retained, numbering mine)

(1)

Here is a description of an exciting advertisement for a chocolate bar that appeared in the middle of a broadcast of Disney's *The Reluctant Dragon*. [...] The ad begins with the pop song 'Oh oh oh it's magic', and the O on the screen becomes lips. Then it runs through a series of snatches of songs and phrases, each with an 'Oh' in it, each for just a few seconds (a doctor saying 'Say oh,' a reggae song, Mendelsohn's 'Oh for the wings of a dove', Al Jolson, from *The Jazz Singer*) and for each the cartoon O is transformed to illustrate the soundtrack. The slogan 'It's the air in your Aero that makes you go O' comes with a picture of the chocolate bar at the end [...].

(2)

Now you could argue that with so much exciting going on, language was not very important to this ad. It would certainly fall flat if you just read the script for it, or just had the slogan. But it makes extraordinarily deft play with language at a number of levels [...].

(3)

We could start with the slogan *It's the air in your Aero that makes you go O*. This plays on the relationship between *Oh*, the exclamation, the shape of the letter *O*, and the sound /o/ as part of the product name. The pattern of these *Oh-O-/o/s* relies on linked choices. The sounds that go with the letters *air* and the *o* are both repeated. [...] Not only that, the pattern of stresses makes a regular metre - two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable (*It's the AIR in your AERo that MAKES you go O*). You can test the effect by trying to rephrase the ad without the poetic effects - *An Aero is full of holes that make you say Ah* - the point is the same but it's not very catchy or memorable [...].

(4)

The rest of the ad is an elaborate series of plays on the slogan. It starts with a metaphorical relation between the *O* at the end of the product name and the mouth that eats the product. This provides the basis for a series of phrases, all linked by an *Oh* [...].

(5)

The structure of this slogan is also crucial to its effect. It is constructed to put the product name near the end, where it will have maximum weight. But the Aero slogan is a statement. It doesn't tell us or ask us to eat Aero chocolate but states something about the Aero bars we already eat - one important result of stepping back from the ad this way and analysing the language is that we learn to see choices; we realize even with a slogan that has been thoroughly drummed into us, it could have been otherwise [...].

(6)

We can get that far just looking at the linguistic features of the ads in isolation - in some ads there will be very complex formal play with these patterns, and in others not much. but of course the effect does not just arise from a repeated *O*, from the regularity in the occurrence of a letter. Each variation of the *O* has different associations - medical language, a concert recital, rock and roll, reggae, soul. They are not only different kinds of music, they are done with identifiably different social varieties of English. It's an effect like flipping the channels on a TV, or like the snatches juxtaposed in house music, or like leafing through some pop music magazines. And the different voices alternate male and female, high and low, ending with a very deep voice with exaggerated intonation, and a very feminine voice, also with exaggerated intonation [...].

(7)

These associations and meaning are confirmed by the little sketches that flash around the *O* - palm trees or hands or a mirror or wings [...]. The associations are crucial to the effect of the ad - for instance the suggestive mock sexiness of the last two voices. It's not sex it promises; it's a kind of excitement - as if adding holes was adding something. There are also double meanings, so that the *O*s are at the same time holes, letters, and exclamations. Puns like this are particularly common in contemporary British advertising [...]. Part of the effect of these ads is their relation to other cultural artefacts - what is called *intertextuality*. One may not be able to trace all the linguistic and musical allusions in the Aero ad, but one does recognize them as allusions to different periods and subcultures. All ads, even those making no explicit allusions, carry associations from other texts: ads, movies, novels, everyday talk. Language in ads comes to us used.

As can be seen from this study, almost each time a linguistic point is made, it is offset by an extralinguistic observation. It is somewhat as if Myers couldn't stop being monitored by what he (in some probability, subconsciously) perceives to be the genuine reason for the effectiveness of advertising, that is, a well-worked out and consistent build-up of image. In his analysis, Myers typifies an analyst of a homogeneous discourse genre whose function is pre-defined and therefore calls for little data support. There are language data points raised throughout the argument (cf. para. 2, 3, 5, 6), but these are invariably interspersed with real-world-context based clarifications (esp. para. 1, 2, 4, 7). Occasionally, a language data point is made implicitly; for instance, the closing part of para. 3 invites discussion of theme and rheme, or topic/comment, but a further interrelated observation is withheld until para. 5 ("...to put the product name till the end..."), and even as such gets downplayed by the general comment that follows ("...one important result of..."). It is also interesting to look at the placement of the word "exciting" in the analysis. As this word, in Myers's (subconscious?) understanding, provides a bridge with the effect of advertising that can be observed in real-world context (and it is probably a well-entrenched image of consumer behaviour that serves as a basis here), the distribution of "exciting" or "excitement" is always among visual data, not language data (cf. para. 1, 2, 7). In paragraph 1 it occurs with localization of the advertisement, in paragraph 2 it precedes a strong assertion of the action movement underlying the ad ("going on"), and in paragraph 7 it occurs with an image description. Finally, it has to be noted that the bulk of the 'linguistic' commentary on the ad relies on phonetic and phonological accounts, that is, the accounts of sounds and sound patterns which can again be "seen" (or rather sensed in an act of hearing) in real-world context.

As a result of being monitored by extralinguistic considerations, the structure of the argument gives the analyst little space to "pick up speed" to develop the otherwise interesting points which could explain the effectiveness

of the advertisement in linguistic terms, by adhering to such concepts as pragmatic presupposition (para. 5: "...but states something about the Aero bars we already eat...") or cleft sentence structuring (cf. later analysis in the present subsection). The use of these concepts should not entail any unnecessary and abundant formalization; it should be approached as a tool for generalization of the analytic findings characteristic of the given sample, but at the same time clearly representative of the whole of the source discourse. Thus Myers's analysis turns out not so much faulty as simply incomplete, both critically at the sample level and methodologically at the genre level. And it should be stressed again at this point that the incompleteness of Myers's study results from the fragmented occurrence of language data support within an analytic space which is dominated by all kinds of extralinguistic accounts. Ironically, it is a linguist here that tends to admit the inferiority (!) of language description (cf. para. 6: "We can get that far just looking at the linguistic features of the ads in isolation...") or dares to make a strong claim in favor of componential research (cf. para. 2: "But it makes extraordinarily deft play with language at a number of levels..."), with little or no follow-up to come. But this tendency only goes to show the degree of determination in analysis of a discourse which an analyst is part of and thus holds a well-defined, homogeneous attitude to its function. The following discussion attempts to show how the quoted analysis could possibly profit from the shake-off of such attitudes which, as has been claimed, appear to stem largely from over-attachment to cognitive factors.

Predominantly, it is the status and function of the presupposition made in the ad ("your Aero") that needs to be accounted for. It is an existential presupposition (cf. Karttunen et al. 1979; Kempson 1975; Cole 1981; Levinson 1983 and later works), under which it is taken for granted that the addressee is familiar with the object being referred to, which in this case is the advertised chocolate bar. Assuming that the addressee, under normal circumstances, has a variety of chocolate bars to choose from and therefore cannot be reasonably expected to show any particular familiarity with (or priority for) a specific brand, the use of presupposition in the advertisement goes a long way toward establishing addressee's favorable attitude to the very product which is advertised. It is namely quite clear (cf. Festinger 1957; Fishbein and Ajzen 1980; Bandura 1986; Noelle-Neumann 1991; Jowett and O'Donnell 1992, and others²) that an addressee will better accept a novel idea or develop a novel behavior which is in line with his/her predispositions. The presupposition made in the ad defines these predispositions. Furthermore, by imposing relationship

² The quoted works give a fair diachronic outline of one of the most influential theories in post-war studies in social psychology, usually referred to as "consistency theory". This theory provides a methodological basis for all psychologically-oriented claims made in the analysis of the presupposition in the Aero advertisement.

between the brand name and the consumer, it paves the way for perception of familiarity with the product and makes it possible for the product to fall within the addressee's latitude of acceptance, rather than rejection. Far from ruining the addressee's psychological need for *homeostasis*, it actually fosters his/her consistency in belief. In short, the use of the existential presupposition in the Aero ad seems to be a conscious strategy on the part of the slogan's author, a strategy of constructing a linguistic facilitator of acceptance and internalization of a novel behavior desired from the addressee.

As it seems, this last observation could apply to the whole category of advertisements carrying existential (as well as non-existential) presuppositions. Even though neither Lutz, Myers, nor Goddard approach presuppositions analytically (or, in fact, hardly ever use the very term "presupposition" in the first place), the examples used in particular analyses abound with them:

- (1) The wonder drug that works wonders (Lutz 1990: 101)

(Bayer aspirine ad, presupposing familiarity with Bayer aspirine tablets)

- (2) Your oil for life (Lutz 1990: 101)

(Puritan cooking oil ad, presupposing previous use of the oil)

- (3) A cocoa you can enjoy (Myers 1994: 30)

(Van Houten's cocoa ad, presupposing previous negative experience with other cocoa brands)

- (4) Amazingly pays in your glazing (Myers 1994: 35)

(Pilkington glass ad, presupposing existence of context for use of the product)

- (5) It can stop the pain (Goddard 1998: 33)

(Sinutab painkiller ad, presupposing addressee's condition)

The parenthesis explanations of particular presuppositions are missing from the studies by Lutz, Myers, and Goddard, while each of these explanations could signpost a larger functional domain in advertising in general. It is beyond the scope of the present work to develop these considerations further. The point has to be made, however, that it is the absence of metalanguage that hinders the analytic generalizations. And in turn, the use of metalanguage - as

has been argued before - is seriously constrained in a deductive, “top-down” approach to the analysis of advertising.

3.3. *Ratio of data amount to thesis amount*

Although previous subsections have offered several observations on how Lutz, Myers, and Goddard manage exemplifications of claims on the function(s) of advertising, some further comments need to be made on representation of thesis and data in statistical terms. Simultaneously, there are certain diachronically-oriented implications of this representation that deserve a separate comment. Assuming that thesis parts are those in which the analyst makes a point on the function and effectiveness of advertising, either in the case of an individual sample or in general (including hypothetically-put claims), and the data parts are those where particular text samples are presented and analyzed, a breakdown look at studies by Lutz, Myers, and Goddard reveals the following figures and regularities. Within the domain of commercial advertising, there are 35 thesis paragraphs vis a vis 105 data paragraphs in Lutz, 25 thesis paragraphs versus 40 data paragraphs in Myers, and, astonishingly, 5 (!) thesis paragraphs vis a vis 5 data paragraphs in Goddard. This doesn't, however, mean that Myers and Goddard offer pamphlet-like discussions. Quite to the contrary, there are as many as 30 data paragraphs which deal with *non-commercial* (e.g. by non-profit institutions) advertising in Myers (accompanied by no respective thesis paragraphs), and further 50 (!) non-commercial data paragraphs in Goddard (again, with no extra thesis parts). In the light of Lutz, Myers, and Goddard starting out their arguments with introductory claims adhering solely to *commercial* advertising, it seems logical to postulate the following hypothesis: analysis of advertising suffers from increasing overdetermination by ‘self-monitor of descriptive triviality’. Over time, analysts of advertising keep cutting down on self-evident claims and examples, but at the same time, finding themselves with less and less principal data remaining to support introductory thesis parts, they back up the latter with atypical data. In so doing, they invariably pursue analytic manipulation, stemming from proliferation of like studies of the analyzed genre and like attitudes to it.

3.4. *Radicalism of thesis*

This parameter of “top-down” determination has been remaining relatively stable over the past decade of advertising studies (at least in terms of its presence), though, as has been mentioned before, there is a tendency among ana-

lysts to postulate increasingly radical claims regarding nature, function, or effectiveness of advertising. The radicalism of these claims is manifested in the way particular points are made, how categorical they are (for instance, in terms of the economy of argument layout), how global or far-reaching they are, and what degree of illocutionary force they possess. First of all, (hypo)thesis claims are radicalized by virtue of being packaged as directives or strong, occasionally metaphorized, assertions, imposing ‘undeniable’ truths in limited language context within single-sentence space. This is readily seen from Goddard and Lutz:

- (6) Make no mistake: advertising works (Goddard 1998: 2)
- (7) Children eat, drink, and breathe commercials (Lutz 1990: 74)
- (8) Now comes the interesting part. Follow this closely [...] (Lutz 1990: 74)
(description of the mechanism of advertising industry follows)

Secondly, thesis claims are made radical by being presented as containing elements of threat to the addressee of advertising. Since there are also the ‘advice’ parts, attempting to help the addressee neutralize the threat, such structuring of thesis claims tends to produce slightly longer sentences:

- (9) The next time you see an advertisement for... [...], don’t rush out to buy it (Lutz 1990: 86)
- (10) Helpless audiences reconstruct advertisements in diverse ways, filling them in with their own meanings (Myers 1994: 7)

Coupled with the threat elements are, finally, lexical structures which radicalize thesis claims by pointing to the globality or macro-range of advertising industry. These are responsible for constructing the aura of overall advertising experience whereby not a single addressee remains beyond the effect of advertising. Again, the presence of such structures may affect length or complexity of argument undertaken within single-sentence space (cf. forthcoming examples from Myers and Lutz):

- (11) Advertisements offer a world-extensive relationship between the advertiser and all possible audience members, based on the associations of all possible meanings with all possible commodities (Myers 1994: 8)
- (12) Advertising is so familiar to modern readers that it may seem odd to inquire what an advertisement is (Goddard 1998: 5)

- (13) Studies such as... [...] offer a lot of information about the sheer size and influence of advertising, but a person usually maintains that, while others may be and probably are affected by advertising, he/she knows that he/she is not, and this is exactly what advertisers attempt to accomplish (Lutz 1990: 77)

On a somewhat digressive note, it has to be pointed that example (12) from Goddard is also quite indicative of what was called ‘self-monitor of descriptive triviality’ (cf. subsection 3.3).

However, the most important observation is that the overwhelming majority of suchlike claims will be inalienable property of introductory parts of the particular studies. Highly radical (hypo)thesis claims are made prior to actual data presentation and analysis. And the reason why these claims can hardly be called either ‘hypotheses’ or ‘theses’ is that the analysis itself is hardly ever profound enough to allow such distinction.

4. A “bottom-up” element in the analysis of advertising

Under specific circumstances, language of advertising may invite a minor dose of inductivist analysis. It can be seen from Goddard’s case that if hypothesis space is limited and/or if (hypo)thesis claims are, in analyst’s eyes, too evident to be reiterated after presentation of data, the analyst may choose to investigate data in a componential, linear manner, as well as treat the parameters of such investigation as mutually interactive rather than mutually exclusive. Though in Goddard this has meant merely illustrating conventionalized claims with atypical data samples, it seems possible to imagine a different analytic track, where the hypothesis is still clearly definable, but where the data gets to be thoroughly examined for derivation of a subsequent thesis claim. Consider the following slogan.

- (14) Up to 50% off!

There is little that can be postulated prior to the analysis of this ad other than that the author attempts to persuade the addressee into buying the product by making the addressee pick out a single, non-representative meaning of (exactly) *50% off*, out of the whole range of meanings which are less ‘acceptable’. This hypothesis naturally stays in line with the general hypothesis of the effectiveness of advertising as based on manipulative enactment of various linguistic and non-linguistic ploys. But at the same time the analyst might ask him/herself the following question: how come that with the initial conclusion being so readily available to *both* analysts *and* consumers (though a lay-

man-consumer will probably ‘skip’ the latter part of it), the slogan still seems to work? And the result of posing such question might well be an analysis whereby the apparently clear and evident hypothesis gets to some degree modified before it is reiterated in a thesis format.

The considerations that the analyst might want to undertake involve, namely, an essentially paradigmatic look at the occurrence and status of other *up to* advertisements. There are ads for medicines that work ‘up to ten times faster’, batteries that last ‘up to twice as long’, and soaps that get the skin ‘up to twice as clean’. They are all based on ideal situations for using those products, which the addressee is hardly likely to experience him/herself. But still, the addressee may and usually will aspire to find him/herself in such privileged position and it is the advertisement as a whole that fosters this aspiration. The point is that the effectiveness of *up to* slogans lies not so much in what the target of addressee’s aspirations (exactly) is, as in the very existence of a certain range of lucky options available to the addressee to make his/her aspirations fulfilled. It is at least doubtful the addressee should develop the same perception of quality of the sale products from a shorter, standardized *50% off!* slogan. Rather, he/she would question their quality on the very basis of this standardness. In that sense, the *up to* part is just as crucial to the effectiveness of the advertisement as is the *50% off!* part, or rather, what is really crucial is the swift interaction of both. To recognize this, however, one needs a paradigmatic look which takes into account the maximum manifestation of consumer behavior in a maximum number of situations, a look which builds up a social rule out of a range of individual cases.

5. Conclusion

The discourse of advertising seems to invite a substantial degree of “top-down”, deductive determination. Simultaneously, it offers relatively limited scope for “bottom-up”, inductive research. There are a vast number of analytic activities which are affected. The major and most typical manifestations of “top-down” determinism are the following:

- redefinition of the status and the role of hypothesis and thesis in construction of analytic argument; treatment of hypothesis and thesis in like terms and the resulting placement of most or even all hypo(thesis) claims prior to data presentation/analysis;
- selection of data adhering mostly to visual/sensory experience; underassessment of intralinguistic, autonomous data chunks;

- little or no concern for data interaction, i.e. derivation of larger functional units (of, for example, speech event format) out of individual data samples;
- occasional reliance on data atypical of the principal manifestations of the analyzed discourse genre, following from perception of the general hypothesis as 'too' objective or evident to yield interesting discussion throughout the development of the argument;
- ever-increasing radicalism of (hypo)thesis claims, manifested in sentence structuring, length, as well as their illocutionary load.

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HIPOTEZA I DEDUKCIJA U PROUČAVANJU DISKURSA REKLAMNIH PORUKA

U prilogu se pokušava pokazati da tip diskursa već sam po sebi može odrediti analitički postupak, tj. može stvarno diktirati kojim će ga se metodama istraživati. Tu se tvrdnju ilustrira na primjeru proučavanja reklamnih poruka, odnosno pokazuje se kako diskurs reklamnih poruka utječe na lingvistu pri izboru specifičnog smjera u analizi. Ističu se osobine diskursa reklamnih poruka koje dovode do deduktivnog postupka u analizi pri čemu analitičar a priori postulira neke funkcije teksta prije nego što je zapravo krenuo ispitivati jezični materijal. Takav postupak može rezultirati nizom analitičkih zabuda poput previđanja određenih podataka ili potkrepljivanja tvrdnji atipičnim ili čak irelevantnim materijalom.

Ključne riječi: analiza diskursa, lingvistička pragmatika, reklamne poruke, lingvistička metodologija, dedukcija, analiza „od-vrha-nadolje”, indukcija, analiza „od-dna-nagore”, persuazivnost, retorika