Thesis in Linguistics

Metadiscourse in advertising

*Persuasion in online advertisements of makeup brands.*
Abstract

E-commerce has exploded and with that also advertisements online. To get customers to stay as customers with your company, advertisements become more and more persuasive. To measure this persuasion metadiscourse has been used as a method for this investigation. The aim of this paper is to find out the ways companies use language and discourse to entice customers and keep them buying products. The material chosen for this investigation was advertisements extracted from web pages of make-up brands. Hyland’s categories of metadiscourse were used to extract the relevant features from the advertisements. The results were that all advertisements that had metalinguistic features were also persuasive. Persuasive language occurs as boosters, engagement markers and self-mentions. Also, the metalinguistic features that occur in this investigation are the three categories mentioned above. Further investigation into this topic would be to only view editorial parts of advertisements which most likely will broaden the results within all categories from Hyland’s view of metadiscourse.

Keywords

Metadiscourse, makeup, advertisement, e-commerce, pragmatics, persuasive language.
1 Introduction

In the last five years, e-commerce\(^1\) has exploded (statista.com, 2017). Because of this almost anything can be purchased online. The questions that all companies and brands need to consider is how to convince customers to choose their products and also how to make customers stay with them. Almost all markets benefit from having customer loyalty, persuasion is one way to bring customer to a company and keep them there (Tutaj, K. and van Reijmersdal, 2012).

The Make-up industry is an example of a market where loyalty is key (Chapman, 2017). Many customers create habits and rituals around certain products in the make-up industry so standing out and creating loyalty with a customer could be key to having a customer for a lifetime (ibid). The loyalty in the make-up industry is important due to the vast number of competitors in the make-up market. While it is an expanding industry that is experiencing a steady growth (Chapman, 2017; Statista.com, 2017), the make-up industry has large competition between different makeup brands. To keep customers on their webpages and make them continue shopping they use advertisements (Cook, 2001). These companies rely heavily on advertisements and although most advertisements today rely on pictures and sounds, the power of the word still has a big impact. The power of words is used in many different contexts and forms. We can see advertisements in almost all forms of media today (Halmari & Virtanen, 2005). The power of persuasion in advertisements becomes more and more important. As in many other industries, the online market has grown significantly. The question that then comes to mind is ‘how’. It is not an easy task to advertise online. You need to know how to stand out and make your advertisement as effective as possible (Ives, 2010). Being able to keep a customer on a certain webpage or using a certain product relies on persuasive language and its power (Bruthiaux, 2005).

The definition of persuasion is to convince someone to believe or do something (oxforddictionaries.com). In persuasive language, the receiver of a message is as important as the sender (Halmari & Virtanen, 2005; Bruthiaux, 2005). While many companies use advertisements and persuasion to attract and entice customers it is difficult to see where

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\(^1\) E-commerce is online based transaction of buying and selling items or services.
the persuasion of a message originates and what forms of persuasion are used. One way to investigate the relationship between the two is to use metadiscourse. In linguistic terms metadiscourse is a method used to describe what the underlying meaning of a text is (Hyland, 1998; 2017). By using Hyland’s categories of metadiscourse this investigation will look at different ways that is used to persuade and convince customers to buy a certain product or stay with a certain brand. It will consider language use and also persuasive language.

2 Aim and Research questions

2.1 Aim
The aim of this paper is to find out the ways companies uses language and discourse to entice customers and keep them buying products.

2.2 Research questions

- In what ways does persuasive language occur in online text advertisements today?
- What forms of metadiscourse occur in online text advertisements today?

3 Background & Theoretical framework

This section will consider previous research on advertisement, its form and design but also the purpose of advertisements. It will also present Hyland’s theory on metadiscourse and how it can be applied on advertisements. The idea of persuasion will also be covered and its presence in advertisements.

3.1.1 Design and form of advertisements
When considering advertising and marketing online there has been an extensive change in how they occur (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012). Electronic advertisements started as electronic mailings lists during the early 1990’s, in contrast to today’s electronic advertisements which can take several different forms and expressions Some examples are pop ups, videos and even sponsored content (ibid). However, advertisements today are harder to recognize than they were ten years ago (Brodie et al., 2013). Advertisements have gone from being something direct and hands on such as banners and blinking
billboards towards something more abstract and indirect (Chapman, 2017.; Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Van Niekerk, 2008). These abstract and indirect advertisements could be sponsored content or editorial texts that have hidden advertisements in them (Kim, Pasadeos & Barban, 2001; Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012). Furthermore, Tutaj & van Reijmersdal (2012) state that the customer pays more attention to the actual content on a webpage, such as articles or editorial parts than obvious advertisements. Because of this knowledge more and more brands with a webpage step away from the “obvious advertising” and focus on editorial advertising that is hidden in the text (Kim, Pasadeos & Barban, 2001). The difficulty with creating online advertisements is that you lack the subtle cues and visual body language.

In face-to-face communication there are facial expressions, body language and eye movement that applies on top of the words that are transferred to the other person (Cook, 2001). In online text advertisement you do not have facial expressions, body language and eye movement and therefore the undertone and meaning becomes even more important to be able to express the aim of the advertisements in words (Cook, 2001).

3.1.2 Purpose of advertisements
In e-commerce, one purpose for a webpage is to be a tool to interact with customers and encourage them to buy the product or services that the company provides. Kim, Pasadeos & Barban (2001) discuss the factor of choice in the matter of advertisements online and states that placement on a page is not the most important factor. The most important factor is to give the reader a feeling of free choice. The customer is not likely to click on advertisements that blink the most or have the biggest font. The customers are more likely to click on advertisements that they have a connection too. The connections between the customers and the advertisements are constructed by the companies behind them (Kim, Pasadeos & Barban 2001; Van Niekerk, 2008). Therefore, the customers are, in these cases, always exposed to the illusion of free choice (ibid).

The goal for the company or brand is not necessarily to get the customers to purchase an extensive amount of goods at one time. It is more likely that the company or brand wants to gain a returning customer (Brodie et al., 2013). Therefore, they encourage the customer to do smaller purchases more frequently and by that logic purchase more in the long run (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Kim, Pasadeos & Barban, 2001). To keep customers and
make them continue to do their e-commerce from that specific company or brand becomes very important. Therefore, convincing advertisements become even more important (Brodie et al., 2013).

3.1.3 Advertisements in context
Viewing advertisement and its discourse, according to Cook (2001) they must be viewed holistically and therefore have a significant impact on each other. What Cook (2001) means with this is in order to do a coherent and fair analysis of an advertisement, consideration of both context and discourse must occur. The importance of context in advertisements has been brought up by many (Bruthiaux, 2005; Brodie et al., 2013; Kim, Pasadeos & Barban 2001; Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001) and therefore a method that considers discourse and context is important (Hyland, 2017; Cook, 2001). Advertisement should be kept short and efficient (Bruthiaux, 2005) whereas metadiscourse is a way to describe the discourse used and the implied meaning that the author of the text wants the reader to understand (Hyland, 1998, 2005, 2017). Context and the usage of it is concerned with only the advertisement and its components; not for example the whole magazine or webpage where it occurs (Cook, 2001; Brodie et al., 2013; Kim, Pasadeos & Barban 2001).

3.2 Persuasion of language
Context is also important when looking at the persuasion of language. It becomes even more important when considering persuasive writing and therefore the power of persuasion and tools for persuasive writing are also an important matter (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001). In advertisement today, persuasion has an extensive impact on what is written and in what ways. Considering persuasion and advertisement, language becomes a crucial point (ibid). To successfully convince someone with complex linguistic features you must also understand the complex social relationship the customer might have to that specific product (Bruthiaux, 2005). Linguistic persuasion becomes important according to Halmari & Virtanen (2005) when using it in advertisement. Also stated is that, in the world of persuasion, advertisement and language creation, there is always a fight about being as clear and persuasive as possible while keeping things short and coherent (Bruthiaux, 2005). Persuasion according to Halmari and Virtanen is defined as:
“...those linguistic choices that aim at changing or affecting the behavior of others or strengthening the existing beliefs and behaviors of those who already agree, the beliefs and behaviors of persuaders included” (Halmari & Virtanen, 2005:13).

There is a fine line between informing and manipulating (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001) and that is why persuasion very easily becomes compulsive (Cook, 2001). Communication and advertisement are dependent on each other and because customers are much more aware today than before (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Cook, 2001) persuasive language and the skill to deceive become factors in the world of advertisements (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012).

3.3 Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse has been defined by many and in slightly different ways. It is something abstract that is used to describe what the speaker or in this case writer, tends to mean. It is not the words that are written; it is the discourse that describes the message that the writer wants to apply onto the reader (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Hyland, 1998, 2005, 2017). Metadiscourse is something that refers to the interaction between readers and writers, their interaction towards the recipient of the text. Metadiscourse has an important role when it comes to communication and interpretation of something that is written (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Hyland, 1998, 2005, 2017). Furthermore, the context is vital and when using metadiscourse to analyze text. Context is a major factor that always should be considered (Hyland, 2017, 1998; Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001). This means that the context, i.e. sentences or text in which the metadiscourse occurs, must be taken into consideration (Hyland, 2005). The concepts of metadiscourse is divided into two main categories (Hyland, 1998, 2005, 2017): Interactional resources and interactive resources. Interactional resources involve the reader in an argument in the text. This category invites the reader to be part of the text and is mostly used in advertisements or text samples that have arguments or where the writer wants to change the readers thoughts or how they feel about something. The second category, interactive resources, can be explained to be a help for the reader to understand a text. This is used more in texts with facts in, such as academic works, newspapers and so on (Hyland, 2017).
3.3.1 Interactional recourses
The first category of metadiscourse according to Hyland (2017) is interactional resources. This category has five subcategories. The first one is hedges. This category is explained as a way for the writers to distance themselves from the statement that follows and by doing so, make the statement more attractive to the reader. This is done by being humble about the statement so that the company is perceived as being reliable (Hyland, 2005). In example (1) (from Hyland, 2005:80) it is the underlined phrase ‘there is a good reason to believe that’ that is the hedge.

(1) Each of the above projects has resulted in significant increase of rent and there is a good reason to believe that future endeavors will produce similar results.

The second subcategory is boosters, and this is a certainty from the writer’s part of being right or express force onto the reader. In example (2) (from Hyland, 2005:79) the two words ‘clearly show’ are considered to be the boosters. This subcategory is “accentuating the positive” (Hyland, 2005:78) and gives the writer an authority in the text.

(2) As our HK$31,400 million worth of aircraft and equipment orders clearly show, we remain very confident about the future of Hong Kong.

The third subcategory in Hyland’s table of metadiscourse is attitude markers. These express the writers’ attitudes towards propositions, usually with an adverb as the discourse marker. Here, in example (3) (from Hyland, 2005:82) the word ‘fortunately’ is an attitude marker, because it gives the reader the idea that it is in fact fortunate that the company in this case has taken full advantage of the rising market.

(3) Fortunately, in the past few years we have taken full advantage of the rising markets.

The fourth subcategory is engagement markers and it can be explained to build a relationship with the reader. It is mostly directives (e.g. must, have to, should) that are used in this category (Hyland, 2005). The underlined words ‘must be’ in example (4) (from Hyland, 2015:82) become the engagement markers in this sentence.
This is because ‘must be’, and other engagement markers, express that something should be done and at the same time create a sense of urgency for the readers (Hyland, 2015).

(4) Customers must be offered a speedy response, flexibility, innovation value for money, and, above all, improved quality of service.

The last subcategory from the interactional resources is self-mentions. This subcategory could be explained to use pronouns that refer to the author of the text. It is the underlined word ‘I’ in example (5) (from Hyland, 2005:79) that is the self-mention in the sentence. However, when using this subcategory onto non-academic texts, it must be modified (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001). In self-mentions, when considering advertisements, the pronoun ‘we’ as a reference to a brand needs to be part of this category as well (Hyland, 2005). Also using company names becomes part of this category when it is modified to advertisements (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001).

(5) I am sure that our company will continue to grow in 1993.

A summary of interactional resources can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Interactional resources
First half of a model on metadiscourse according to Hyland (2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional Resources</th>
<th>Involve the reader in the argument</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition</td>
<td>might / perhaps / possible / about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>Emphasize force or writer's certainty in proposition</td>
<td>in fact / definitely / it is clear that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude markers</td>
<td>Express writer's attitude to proposition</td>
<td>unfortunately / I agree / surprisingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement markers</td>
<td>Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader</td>
<td>consider / note that / you can see that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-mentions</td>
<td>Explicit reference to author(s)</td>
<td>/ we / my / our</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Interactive resources
The second category can be divided into five subcategories. The first subcategory is *transitions*, and it can be explained as connections to main clauses with a link or a relation. According to Hyland (2005) this subcategory is actualized through conjunctions, sentential adverbs and prepositional phrases. In example (6) (from Hyland, 2005:76) the underlined word ‘therefore’ is the transition of the text. Transitions are used to denote what the writers want to say. In example (6) this category occurs as a sentential adverb.

(6) This view must be tempered by the continuing delay in bringing about a successful conclusion to the Uruguay round of the GATT talks which is so crucial to the word´s free trade talks and *therefore* the wellbeing of our core business.

The second is *frame markers* which refers to discourse acts or talking about something and then taking it to another level. In example (7) (from Hyland, 2005: 75) the frame marker is ‘I think there are three main reasons for this’ and ‘Firstly’. The reason for this is that it implies what the author wants. In example (7) you can see that the first *frame marker* ‘I think there are three main reasons for this’ is the first level of a *frame markers* features and the second one ‘firstly’ is the second one that refers back to the first statement and therefore concretize and takes the statement to another level. However, it is used so that the reader understands what the writer’s purpose is (Hyland, 2005).

(7) *I think there are three main reasons for this. Firstly* we have seen an upturn in overseas demand in the past twelve months.

The third category is *endophoric markers* that is used to refer to something in the text. This subcategory is explained like this: “*devices which refer to the reader elsewhere in the text for further information*” (Hyland, 2005:77). Hyland does not present an example from this marker more than the shorter examples expressed in table 2. These examples are: *noted above / see Fig / in section 2* (Hyland, 2017).

The fourth subcategory is *evidentials* that is a source reference. Hyland (2005) states that this subcategory is supposed to build credibility. In example (8) (from Hyland, 2005:78) it is the underlined words ‘*Other research indicates*’ that is an evidential marker. This
marker can be explained as discourse that refers to other texts or other forms of knowledge.

(8) Other research indicates that the overall satisfaction of merchants with American express improves dramatically in 1993.

Lastly there is **code closes** and this is used to explain something in other words to the reader (Hyland, 2005). In example (9) (from Hyland, 2005: 76) it is the underlined word ‘namely’ that is a code close. This category is used to help the reader understand or grasp meaning of what is written.

(9) The group is continuing to develop its three major housing estates, namely Laguna city, South Horizons, and Kingswood Villas, according to plan.

Because these markers are mostly used in academic texts, you would not expect this discourse to occur in the material chosen for this investigation. There were no results from this category. However, interactional and interactive resources are both part of Hyland view on metadiscourse and therefore both categories are part of this study. A summary of interactive resources can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Interactive resources
Second half of a model of metadiscourse according to Hyland (2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive Resources</th>
<th>Help to guide reader through the text</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Express semantic relation between main clauses</td>
<td>in addition, / but / thus / and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame markers</td>
<td>Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages</td>
<td>finally, / to conclude / my purpose is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endophoric markers</td>
<td>Refer to information in other parts of the text</td>
<td>noted above / see Fig / in section 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidentials</td>
<td>Refer to source of information from other texts</td>
<td>according to X / (Y, 1990) / Z states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code closes</td>
<td>Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material</td>
<td>namely / e.g. / such as / in other words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Metadiscourse and advertisements

Hyland’s categories of metadiscourse have been used when analyzing advertisements before (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001). The study was conducted on advertisements in a magazine and Hyland’s categories were used. When applying metadiscourse on different types of discourse in previous studies, for example academic texts and advertisements, the ‘criteria’ of the categories is adapted (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Hyland, 2005). For example, when applying the discourse marker of self-mentions onto an academic text, one only looks at explicit reference to the author. This includes the pronouns I, me, mine and we, our, ours (Hyland, 2005:53). At the same time, when applying self-mentions on advertisements, it becomes a broader discourse marker in the sense that it does not only include the pronouns that were just mentioned, but also the name of the company.

The conclusion of the study made by Fuertes-olivera et al. (2001) is that metadiscourse helps to balance advertisements in between informing and manipulating. This study proves that metadiscourse was used in the advertisements in the magazine investigated.

4 Material and method

This section will present the material that has been part of the investigation and how Hyland’s (2017) categories of metadiscourse have been applied onto the material.

4.1 Material

The material for this investigation has been chosen from companies that are big on using e-commerce. There should be a competitive market for the brands investigated. Due to these two factors makeup brands have been chosen for the material of this investigation. To narrow the material down to a reasonable amount, a webpage called ranker.com has been used. This is a webpage where people can vote for the best brands and it has a big crowd. The 30 most popular brands were considered and after having eliminated all companies that did not have an official webpage in English, 20 brands remained. Also, the companies that did not have any advertisement at all were eliminated which ended in 19 makeup brands with official webpages in English that had advertisements on their front pages.
The advertisements found on the webpage that contained of only a few words or less were excluded from the material. The reason for this is that the method chosen for this study needs discourse (written or spoken communication) to work properly. Also, all advertisements that were connected to or needed a picture to make sense were omitted from this study.

There are 74 advertisements that have been part of this investigation. The material has a total of 890 words where the longest advertisement has 25 words and the shortest advertisement has four words. The average amount of words in one advertisement is 12. All material has been analyzed in its original state in the form that it has been presented in the advertisements (bold, italics and capitals) and all advertisements that have been part of this study can be found in appendix B.

4.2 Method
Firstly, Hyland’s (2017) categories of metadiscourse was chosen for this study. His way of categorizing discourse has been used on advertisements before and are therefore suitable for this type of investigation. Secondly, the ten discourse markers that Hyland speaks about were searched for in the material chosen for this investigation. Then the material was analyzed and investigated in the terms of the discourse markers of metadiscourse. In an advertisement, several different discourse markers could occur. For example, one advertisement could contain of both a self-mentioned and a booster. However, words from one advertisement that fell under the categories of boosters did not fall under any other of the discourse markers.

5 Analysis and results
This section will present the results found in this investigation. The material investigated was analyzed according to Hyland’s categories to clearly display the findings of this investigation. Some examples from the results will be presented. The marker, that will be underlined, in the example will be discussed. Examples from each category will be presented. It is important to mention that some of the example sentences presented contained markers from other subcategories as well, however it was only the underlined word/s that will be talked about. For example, one example sentence may contain both a booster and an engagement marker – however if the
sentence is presented under the subcategory of boosters, only the booster will be mentioned. Out of the 74 advertisements investigated metadiscoursal features can be found in 51 advertisements. This means that 23 out of the advertisements investigated did not have any of the metalinguistic features that were looked for. In example (10) you can see one of the advertisements that did not occur in any of Hyland’s categories of metadiscourse. This does not fit any of the categories mentioned because it does not have any of the features necessary for Hyland’s view on metadiscourse.

(10) ALL THAT GLITTERS…

5.1 Interactional resources
Interactional resources had the most markers within its categories. This category’s purpose is to involve the reader in the text. This category consists of hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions, boosters and engagement markers. There were only two categories from interactional resources that did not occur in the results. These two categories were attitude markers and hedges. A summary of the results from interactional resources can be found in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional resources</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Advertisements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement markers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self- mentions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude markers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.1 Self-mentions
The marker of Self-mentions appeared 20 times in a total of 18 advertisements. This can be found in table 3.

(11) …and we’ll send you a mini on us.
In example (11), two self-mentions can be found. The first one, ‘we’ll’ is placed in this category since it is a pronoun that refers to the company. The second self-mention in example (11) is ‘us’ and this is categorized here for the same reason as above; it is a pronoun that refers to the brand.

(12)  We know brows

In example (12) the phrase starts with a pronoun that expresses that the company knows brows. This is a statement and since ‘we’ in this context becomes a clear reference to the company it falls under this category.

(13)  with our NEW FOUNDATION FINDER.

Another example from the category of self-mentions is in example (13) where the underlined word ‘our’ is the marker. This is a pronoun and refers to the author or in this case the company.

5.1.2 Boosters
The next subcategory is boosters. This specific marker appeared 27 times in a total of the 24 advertisements that has been part of this study. The booster category is not as clear to interpret as the former categories mentioned, due to that occur in different ways and in different contexts. One example from the results is this:

(14)  MUST-HAVE GIFTS

In example (14) the part of the clause that can be considered a booster is the underlined word ‘must-have’. This phrase communicates to the reader that the products that falls under this category of gifts are must-haves. Must-have boosts ‘gifts’ and therefore it is categories as a booster.

(15)  Don’t miss out!
In example (15) the booster becomes the whole phrase. The construction of this sentence is booster because it closes the alternative that are given to the reader. It is a booster because it implies that the customer should continue to shop so they do not miss out.

(16) We’ve created the **ultimate** stocking stuffers.

The clause of example (16) contains a booster. It is the underlined word **‘ultimate’** that is a booster in this clause. The reason that this word could be interpreted as a booster is that it gives the clause force in the sense of being the preeminent of products to give away.

5.1.3 Engagement markers

The last category from interactional resources is **engagement markers**. This had a total of 42 markers in 30 advertisements out of the 74 investigated.

(17) …that loves you back

In example (17) the underlined part is ‘loves you back’ and that is the engagement marker of the phrase. Example (17) could be interpreted as if the company has feelings for you. The advertisements build a relationship with the reader and is therefore the reason as to why this is an example of an engagement marker.

(18) **FIND YOUR PERFECT FOUNDATION**

In example (18) it is the underlined word ‘**your**’ that becomes the engagement marker as it involves the reader. Because of this involvement of the reader, a relationship between the company and the reader is built.

(19) **TREAT YOURSELF**

‘**TREAT YOURSELF**’ as seen in example (19) is another **engagement marker**. It is the whole clause in this case that becomes an **engagement marker**. One reason for this is the reference to the reader ‘yourself’ and the exhortation for the reader to ‘treat’ themselves.

(20) A special promotion **just for you**.
In example (20) the part of the clause that becomes an engagement marker is ‘just for you’. This is because the last word ‘you’, a pronoun together with ‘just for’ gives a powerful message that this is just for you who reads this.

5.2 Interactive resources
The results from this category were zero.

6 Discussion
Out of the ten subcategories investigated seven of them came up with the results of zero. The three categories with one or more hits where engagement markers, boosters and self-mentions. All these categories can easily be connected to persuasive language. The subcategory of metadiscourse that was most common among all advertisements was engagement markers which occurred in 30 advertisements out of the 74 investigated. In those 30 advertisements, engagement markers occurred 42 times. The fact that this subcategory had the most instances in this study was not surprising. Advertisements and their whole purpose is to engage the reader to buy a product. This marker persuades the reader by engaging them in the advertisements. When looking at advertisements today features such as design and form seem to occur in an appealing way for the reader both linguistically and esthetically (Brodie et al., 2013). The Engagement markers that are presented in the results of this investigation are advertisements that appears as if the company knows exactly what you need and how you look, this type of marker use is a way of persuasive language. An example is (21) where the marker is ‘just for you’. In this discourse the writer implies that this is only for the person who reads it and no one else. Here the linguistic features appeal to the reader and enchants them and therefore, this is also a way persuade the reader. With this said, engagement markers is clearly one way to use persuasive language in advertisements.

The second most common subcategory of metadiscourse among all advertisements was boosters which occurred in 24 advertisements out of the 74 investigated. In those 24 advertisements, boosters occurred 27 times. When discussing the discourse marker boosters, you must consider language in a broader sense. Hyland (20017) talks about boosters and how they emphasize force in discourse. In example (15) from the results, the word ‘must-have’ has been categorized as a booster. This statement could be said to
be part of persuasive language because it brings force to something that the customers ‘must have’. Moreover, the *boosters* and their specific features can also be connected to the illusion of free choice that is discussed by Kim, Pasadeon & Barban (2001). As mentioned above it is the word ‘must-have’ that becomes the booster in example (15), in example (16) the whole phrase is the booster, ‘Don’t miss out!’ and in the third example (17) the booster is ‘ultimate’. All examples mentioned above express an urge to not miss out on the great things that the company wants to sell. The companies lure the customers to think that their products are needed for them, hence illusion of free choice. The illusion of free choice could be considered to be persuasive language to the individual reader, that is to say, if said reader ends up buying the product that is advertised. If, however, said reader chooses not to purchase the product that is advertised, then the illusion of free choice is no longer persuasive language since the reader is not persuaded.

The third most common subcategory of metadiscourse among all advertisements was *self-mentions* which occurred in 18 advertisements out of the 74 investigated. In those 18 advertisements, *self-mentions* occurred 20 times. The markers for this discourse express explicit reference to the author or in the case of advertisements, the company (Hyland, 2005). Seen in examples (12), (13) and (14) where the self-mentions are ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ they are all pronouns that refer to the company or brand. Kim et al. (2001) talk about the illusion of free choice and this could be a reason for companies to use self-mentions in their advertisements. As previously mentioned the illusion of free choice could be said to be persuasive language in the sense that it lures the customer to purchase from that specific company due to their advertisements. When using pronouns as ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ the customer is very likely to feel the need to be a part of these expressions. Furthermore, *self-mentions* easily bring out a feeling of togetherness and wanting to be part of that ‘we’ or ‘our’ that is mentioned (Hyland, 2005).

The category from interactional resources that did not occur in the results were *hedges* and *attitude markers*. The reason that these specific discourses could not be found in the results is most likely because of their traits. A company that wants to sell their product would not want to withhold full commitment to the product that they want to sell. In fact, they want to do the exact opposite. As stated in section 3.1.2, the purpose of an advertisement is to get the customer to purchase from your company, and therefore convincing advertisement becomes important (Brodie et al., 2013).
7 Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to find out the ways companies uses language and discourse to entice customers and keep them buying products. The first question in this investigation was in what ways does persuasive language occur in online text advertisements today? and the second one where in what forms of metadiscourse occur in online text advertisements today?

After applying metadiscourse onto the advertisement chosen for this investigation there was shown that out if the ten subcategories mentioned only three of the categories had hits in the results. Another prominent result, was that of all advertisements that held metalinguistic features also included persuasion. Persuasive language occurs as boosters, engagement markers and self-mentions in this investigation, also the metalinguistic features, that occurs in this investigation is the three categories mentioned above. For future research within metadiscourse on advertisements an interesting approach would be to only look at advertisements that are hidden in editorial contents. There would be interesting to see if any of the categories from interactive resources would appear in this type investigation. These categories are easily applied onto running text and would therefore most likely occur in an investigation of that kind.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Makeup brands

Mac https://www.maccosmetics.com/ 2017-10-09
Urban Decay https://www.urbandecay.se/ 2017-10-09
NARS Cosmetics http://www.narscosmetics.com/ 2017-10-09
Maybelline https://www.maybelline.com/ 2017-10-09
Clinique http://www.clinique.com/ 2017-10-09
Smashbox http://www.smashbox.com/ 2017-10-09
Chanel http://www.chanel.com/ 2017-10-09
Bobbi Brown http://www.bobbibrowncosmetics.com/ 2017-11-11
Estée Lauder https://www.esteelauder.com/ 2017-11-11
Lancome https://www.lancome-usa.com/ 2017-11-11
Too faced https://www.toofaced.com/ 2017-11-11
NYX cosmetics https://www.nyxcosmetics.com/ 2017-11-11
Stila https://www.stilacosmetics.com/ 2017-11-11
Laura Mercier https://www.lauramercier.com/ 2017-11-11
Bare minerals https://www.bareminerals.com/ 2017-11-11
# Appendix B: Advertisements extracted from webpages

1. Tripping out… SHOP HOLIDAY SETS FIRST!

2. Don’t trip! FREE SHIPPING OVER $35*

3. Top Hit List FREE DELUXE SAMPLE TRIP WITH $60 ORDER*

4. Out of Sight Value SHOP NEW HOLIDAY SETS HERE FIRST!

5. Astonishing value! PACKED WITH BESTSELLERS & MORE!

6. We know brows BENEFIT BROW COLLECTION

7. LAYER UP When your skincare routine follows the right order, your skin wins.

8. The change up
   Look flawless for fall
   with these multitasking foundations.

9. ONE FOR HOME,
   ONE TO GO
   Buy the full size,
   and we’ll send you a mini on us.

10. SO MANY LIP COLOR SHADES,
    SO LITTLE TIME.
    WE’RE HERE TO HELP.

11. TAKE THE DAY OF CHALLENGE
    Take it all off.
    For a great cause.

12. SNEAK A PEEK
    What’s new, next and unexpected.

13. FIND THE PERFECT GIFTS
    Holiday cheers comes in all sizes.

14. FRAGRANCE UPLIFT THEM
    WITH A BEST-LOVED SCENT.

15. Glow creator.
    Spot corrector.

16. Holiday cheer is here.

17. OUR BEST AND BRIGHTEST
    Shop our customers’ holiday favorites.

18. MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY
    Shop by category to find gifts they’ll love.

19. Miss Dior AND YOU.
    WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR LOVE?

20. 40% off GOODBYES
    Grab them before they’re gone for good!

    Reward you.
    Privileged access and prestigious service
for the makeup obsessed.

22. MASTER PRECISE INK™
   METALLIC LIQUID EYELINER

23. GLASS TEARS EYESHADOW PALETTE
   Get the festivities started
   with soft-to-smoldering eyeshadow effects.

24. KISS, PLAY, MAN RAY.
   Get surreal
   with surprising shades inspired by the electrifying art of Man Ray

25. LOVE TRIANGLE Double you pleasure
   with mini duos lips and cheek.

26. Foundation Finder
   FIND YOUR PERFECT FOUNDATION

27. PRIMER FINDER
   FIND ONE THAT FEELS LIKE IT WAS MADE FOR YOU

28. SMASHBOB X ANA STRUMPF
   Celebrate the season with animated gifts!

29. DESIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED! Every set includes exclusive Ana
   Strumpf stickers.

30. LESS TINSEL, MORE GLOW.
    SHADOW + HIGHLIGHT PALETTE SET $39 ($77 VALUE)

31. DRAWN IN. DECKED OUT.
    GIVE PRESENTS THAT POP

32. SO MANY WAYS TO TURN UP THE HEAT
    (I WANT IT ALL)

33. HALLOWEEN 3 HALLOWEEN LOOKS
    GUARANTEED TO KILL IT
    Quit searching for ideas.
    We have the look you need right here.

34. WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
    Our friends and Benefits rewards program is the best friendship ever.
    (And it’s free!)

35. REFER A FRIEND
    Tell a friend about bareMinerals
    and you’ll each get 15% off.
    You know what they say about sharing…

36. HOLIDAY EXCLUSIVE:
    NEW CUSTOM KITS
    Build the perfect gift:
    Choose must-haves to fill
    a shimmering makeup bag or brush roll.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>37. YOUR FREE GIFT</th>
<th>Treat them to dazzling gifts and we’ll treat you. This one’s yours with any $75 purchase.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38. SHOP SKINCARE GIFTS</td>
<td>make every day a spa day: skincare sets are gifts that keep on giving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. SHOP COMPLEXION GIFTS</td>
<td>Perfect for self-gifting, or sharing the best of bareMinerals® with family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. SHOP BY PRICE</td>
<td>Gifts under $60: Oh-so indulgent and sure to impress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. PARTY READY</td>
<td>LOOKS FOR LIPS AND EYES…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. ALL THAT GLITTERS…</td>
<td>GIFTS WITH STYLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. GIVE GLOWING SKIN</td>
<td>LIMITED EDITION SKINCARE COLLECTIONS FOR RADIANT, BEAUTIFUL SKIN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. SCENTS OF STYLE</td>
<td>GIVE HER THE FRAGRANCE SHE LOVES IN AN EXCLUSIVE, LIMITED EDITION SET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. MEET THE STAR OF THE SEASON</td>
<td>One box with 13 products. Spend the holidays with only the best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Focus on beauty box 13 Lancôme’s must-haves for the ultimate holiday experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. MEET YOUR NEXT MUST-HAVE BEST SELLERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. CELEBRATE SINGLES DAY WITH AN INSTANT GLOW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. SNAP. TEXT. EARN. ELITE REWARDS</td>
<td>TEXT YOUR RECEIPTS TO EARN POINTS ON ALL LANCOME PURCHASES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. WôW! HOLIDAY SPECIAL OFFERS PROMOTIONS</td>
<td>Don’t miss out! A special promotion just for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. HOLIDAY ENGRAVING PERSONALIZE YOUR GIFT</td>
<td>Make your gift unique with a custom engraved message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. FIND THE PERFECT REGIMEN</td>
<td>SKIN CARE FINDER meet your skin care routine advisor for a personalized skin regimen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 53.  | SPOTLIGHT ON ARTISTARY  
The Flawless Face  
Cover with Concealer  
Set with the Best  
The Finishing Touch |
| 54.  | SET FOR THE SEASON  
#1 SETTING POWDER  
Limited Edition Translucent Loose Setting Powder |
| 55.  | GLOW TIME  
Illuminate, Accentuate, Celebrate.  
Limited Edition Exotique Face illuminator |
| 56.  | HOLIDAY GLAM SEDUCTIVE.  
DRAMATIC. RED. LIFE-OF-THE-PARTY LIPS |
| 57.  | ARTIST LIQUID MATTE  
MATTE COLORS.  
MAD WEAR.  
#MADABOUTMATTE |
| 58.  | THE LIPPI COUNTDOWN ADVENT CALENDER IS HERE.  
NEED IT |
| 59.  | MUST-HAVE GIFTS  
Shopping for beauty gifts?  
You’ve come to the right place!  
Start shopping |
| 60.  | ALL NEW glitter SETS  
Our best-selling glitter essentials,  
all in one package.  
LET’S GO |
| 61.  | ATTENTION: WE HAVE AN APP!  
Shop all the extras, including brushes, sets, pallets, and vaults.  
DOWNLOAD IT |
| 62.  | MEET YOUR MATCH  
Luminous or Matte?  
Sheer or full Liquid or Powder?  
Discover your ideal complexion product  
with our NEW FOUNDATION FINDER.  
LAUNCH FOUNDATION FOUNDER |
| 63.  | TREND LAB  
SAW IT  
LOVED IT  
MADE IT  
Get early access to shop these  
LIMITED-EDITION  
launches during our exclusive pre-sale!  
SHOP NEW |
| 64.  | Color voyage holiday 2017 collection  
SHOP HOLIDAY |
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| 65. | Get the look: monochromatic decadence  
A MODern twist on classic monochrome elegance. |
| 66. | Primed for perfection  
Put your best face forwards by starting  
with a flawless canvas. |
| 68. | CELEBRATE ALL WEEK LONG  
free shipping on all orders  
USE CODE FREESHIP |
| 69. | Wanderlust NEW Glitter & Glow Shade  
SHOP GLITTER &GLOW  
Available Exclusively at StilaCosmetics.com |
| 70. | Tarte rewards  
the loyalty program  
that loves you back |
| 71. | This weekend only!  
FREE SHIPPING!*  
ON EVERY ORDER  
TREAT YOURSELF |
| 72. | YOU’RE SO TOO FACED  
Tutorials, Inspiration and more! |
| 73. | “WE ARE THE UNABASHEDLY PINK, PRETTY AND FEMININE  
WITH A playful wink!” |
| 74. | Say merry Christmas WITH MAKEUP  
We´ve created the ultimate stocking stuffers &  
giftable sets for everyone on your list! |