

Original Research Article

The Semantic Roles as Hidden Messages in Advertisement Texts

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Abstract: Advertising has been analyzed by scholars presenting various branches of science: semiotics, stylistics, marketing, and, of course, text linguistics. Unlike other texts, advertisements have a target audience and correspondingly perform specific functions. The aim of any advertisement text is to make the reader/listener of the advertisement potential customers, buyers, or clients. The authors have chosen the object-matter of their research texts advertising cosmetics. The application of the theory of semantic cases or roles proposed by Charles Fillmore with the purpose of specifying their functions, helps visualize the target audience. The analysis of the semantic cases in advertisement texts shows a connection between the type of the semantic case, age group and price category of the cosmetic products. These semantic cases can be considered as signals of addressee-orientation; in our case the addressee are people belonging to different age group.

Keywords: Advertisement Text, Semantic Cases, Target Audience, Signals of Addressee-Orientation, Advertising Campaign.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements, which occupy important part of our life, are shaped by various factors and can reflect certain tendencies of the age. Economy, people's needs and wishes, development of technology – all influence the way advertisement is used and presented to the audience. By combining in itself both visual and textual elements, advertisement can be analyzed through the linguistic lens. Language, composition, functional-semantic types of speech, and stylistic devices are tools in the hands of advertisers, who use them in accordance with the target audience, the product or service they try to promote, etc. Finding and analyzing the reasoning behind their choices is key to understanding what creates a good advertisement text (AT).

To find new perspectives on business products promotion, specialists in marketing invent new techniques, which do not invite potential customers or clients to buy products or services directly. There are many hidden messages in advertisement texts, which can be considered as signals of addressee-orientation. Many achievements in modern linguistics, the latest and already-existing theories are successfully applied making advertisements informative and attractive.

If we consider the text of advertisement, we will see that its authors widely employ either linguistic or

extralinguistic means. Linguistic means include means of stylistic syntax, specific vocabulary, phonetic and semasiological devices. The extralinguistic means suppose a variety of colours, types of fonts, pictures and so on. The combination of these means definitely works as signals of addressee-orientation or hidden messages (for details see Panasenکو *et al.*, 2021) making advertising campaigns more successful (Kusa *et al.*, 2020; Panasenکو & Fillová, 2023; Uberman, 2023) bringing positive results and profits for companies.

The success of advertising campaigns greatly depends on the professionalism of marketing specialists. Various advertising methods are applied to different areas. Food, technology, and services cannot be advertised using the same methods. This can also be applied to the advertisements of cosmetics, which is the object-matter of our research. Cosmetics advertising is a heavily gendered sphere and is often targeted exclusively towards women. In this case, the main variability in approaches is based on the age of the target audience. Achievements of linguistics, most interesting theories and practices are already widely used in marketing, whereas some of them still need their application: gender studies (Stashko, 2017), stylistic analysis (Stashko *et al.*, 2022), frame analysis (Prihodko, 2016; Uberman, 2018), semiotic analysis (Panasenکو & Mudrochová, 2021), among others.

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Of all the popular theories we have chosen case grammar, whose author is Charles Fillmore, and with the examples presented below will demonstrate which semantic cases can be considered as signals of addressee-orientation, who their addressee is and how successfully these cases may be used in advertising cosmetics. By our research we visualise hidden messages by specialists in marketing and prove their effectiveness in advertising campaigns.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Semantic Roles Yesterday and Nowadays

Semantic roles, also known as thematic relations or cases, can be described as an underlying relationship that a participant has with the main verb in a clause (Semantic role, *s.a.*). Unlike the idea of general semantics, which claims that a word can exist on its own and have particular associations, frame semantics proposes the idea that words can only be fully understood through a larger context (Leverkuhn, *s.a.*).

This theory received the most attention during the 1960s and 1970s with fundamental works by Ch. Fillmore, J.S. Gruber and W. Chafe among others. One of the most acclaimed studies in the field belongs to Ch. Fillmore and his work "The case for case", in which the author introduces the term "deep cases" and proposes the following list of semantic cases:

- Agentive, performer of the act, usually animate.
- Instrumental, force or an object, that participates in the action.
- Dative, animate participant of the act, who is influenced by it.
- Factitive, something that is resulted from the action.
- Locative, a location in which the action takes place.
- Objective, neutral case that depends on the interpretation of the verb it is attached to (Fillmore, 1968: 46).

Fillmore was not necessarily the pioneer, for example, Jeffrey S. Gruber created the concept of thematic relations in his work "Studies in lexical relations" published in 1962, where he also describes the role of Agent in a sentence (1962: 56). As influential as it was, Fillmore's work was not fully comprehensive. The author himself stated in the book that more cases needed to be introduced (Fillmore, 1968: 46). Years later, he updated the case system. Now, Locative evolved into three cases, while Dative was taken away. The new list consisted of Agent, Instrument, Experiencer, Object, Location, Source, Goal, Time, and Benefactive (Cook, 1989: 39). Fillmore also published an additional work "The case for case reopened" (1977), in which he looked back at his original theory and addressed the critiques that were offered by other linguists. As a result, such cases as Agent and Dative were no longer defined only as animate, as they could be represented by any entity.

Semantic roles theory has its own nuances. To this day, there is no complete list of cases on which most scholars can agree. The number of cases or even their definitions are inconsistent due to the lack of concrete criteria for defining a case. Thus, scholars often create different cases with very similar meanings. For example, Fillmore's Factitive is defined as "the case of the object or being resulting from the action or state identified by the verb, or understood as a part of the meaning of the verb" (Fillmore, 1968: 46). Apresyan (1995: 125-126) proposes a case with a broader meaning – Resultative, which is an argument that works as a result of a predicate's action. Meanwhile other cases, such as Agentive, are more stable in their definitions.

However, despite the disadvantages of the theory, case grammar can be successfully applied to the analysis of AT, due to its unique structure, which combines in itself visual and stylistic devices, both of which are equally important for creating a fully realized product, while it also heavily depends not only on the author but the recipient (Panasenکو, 2016: 53).

In order to apply the semantic roles theory, we have to agree with the list of cases and their definitions, which are going to be used for the analysis and which we will mark in bold to make them more prominent. The purpose of the AT is to give information about the product, service, etc. and to demonstrate what a customer will receive upon purchasing it. It is especially common for cosmetics advertising. In order to sell it, the advertisement can provide information about its properties, ingredients and where they were sourced, the time it will take to reach the result as well as what or who will benefit from using it and how. Based on these criteria, the list of semantic roles would consist of the following cases:

- **Agent**: something or someone, which performs the act; it can be the product itself or the company that produces it.
- **Patient**: something that undergoes the action; in case of cosmetics it is a certain part of the body, to which the product is applied.
- **Experiencer**: someone who goes through the action. Commonly a potential customer, who looks at the text.
- **Instrument**: something by which action is carried out. Certain ingredients or the product itself that help reach the result.
- **Time**: Temporal description of the action, when the person using the product will receive the result or for how long the product should be used.
- **Locative**: The place of application, where the product can be used or the country of origin from where it was sourced.
- **Resultative**: The final result of the action. What the customer will gain from using the product.
- **Beneficiant**: Someone who will benefit from the action. Similarly to **EXPERIENCER** it can

be a person using the product (own processing after (Fillmore, 1968; Moumene, 1999: 55-56).

AT always exists in the context of where it is published, the context of surrounding visuals and most importantly the context of those who receive information from the advertisement. It means that words used in the text have more than one direct meaning. That is why semantic roles can be applied for analyzing the AT. If we clarify the connection between words, what semantic role they play in a sentence and how they can be interpreted by the perceiver, it will help learn and understand the tendencies that exist in writing an AT.

3. Advertisement Text, Its Structure, and Trends in Modern Advertising

Advertising is the promotion of goods, services, companies, and ideas, usually by an identified sponsor. Marketers see advertising as part of an overall promotional strategy. Kotler (1998: 756) describes advertisement as “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor”.

Generally speaking, advertisement is giving information about a certain product or service, etc. to the public in order to sell it. Advertisements can be found in printed media, radio, TV, and on the Internet (Zabuzhanska *et al.*, 2022).

There are many approaches to product promotion, but AT is definitely one of the most common tools. Usually, the text is the main source of information in an advertisement and that is why it is important to consider various factors, such as background knowledge, knowledge of language norms, speech situation and more, in order to create a perfect promotional material (Zimina, 2016: 36).

AT is a unique phenomenon that manages to combine the opposites: on the one hand, advertisement adheres to saving space, on the other hand, it implies a large number of stylistic devices (Panasenکو & Mudrochová, 2021; Stashko *et al.*, 2022). Creators of AT must select each word with precision, due to space restrictions, which forces authors to compose the text and choose their words in the most efficient way. Language in AT supports such advertising principles as the achievement of maximum expression in a minimum piece of text. It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that simple sentences prevail in ATs. Such format helps increase the dynamics and expressiveness of the text, which makes the process of reading and perceiving it much easier for the readers. AT can only be effective if it considers the way the human psyche works. One of the oldest and most well-known models for creating a successful advertisement was offered by Elmo Lewis in 1900. The AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model suggests that there should be four stages of

influence of advertisement on a viewer. According to the model, an advertisement should grab the attention, get the person interested in it, induce desire, and finally lead to the action of purchasing what is being advertised (Barry, 1987: 252).

3.1 Composition

As for the structure and composition of the AT, many advertising researchers break it into its component parts, for example: headline, sub-headline and body copy (Panasenکو & Mudrochová, 2021: 422). The headline is one of the most important parts of the text. The purpose of the headline in promotional material is to attract attention, to select the reader, to promise a benefit to the customer, to lead the reader directly into the body copy, to present the complete selling idea and to present product news of interest to the reader. The headlines and sub-headlines are followed by the body copy, which usually focuses on one main idea, demonstrates the benefits of the product, strengthens the name of the brand and defines the position of the product (Arens, 2020: 391-392). Another element of the AT worth mentioning is slogan (for detailed analysis of it see Stashko *et al.*, 2022). The main goal of a slogan is “to provide continuity to a series of ads in a campaign and to reduce an advertising message strategy to a brief, repeatable, and memorable positioning statement” (Arens, 2010: 395).

Advertising is a creative medium and therefore there are no strict rules of composition that need to be followed. The elements of the structure can be replaced or removed depending on the final goal of an advertisement. However, it is important to create a memorable, impactful and effective message that resonates with the audience.

3.2 Trends in Modern Advertising

Advertising has been an essential tool for business to promote its products and services to the public. Over the years, advertising techniques and strategies have evolved to keep up with the changing times and consumer behaviour. By understanding these trends, advertisers can stay ahead of the curve and create more effective and engaging advertising campaigns that resonate with their target audience (Kubovics *et al.*, 2021). Due to the progress in technology, a large amount of advertising is now published on the Internet. Moreover, consumers now have more control over what kind of content they want to see, including advertising. Therefore, people want to see more personalized, authentic, and socially responsible ads.

3.3 Online Advertising

Even though traditional methods of advertising are still effective, the younger generation prefers the new ways (Krajčovič & Čábyová, 2017: 15). Marketers need to consider that younger people are growing and acquiring more buying power. Online advertising has become a dominant force in the advertising industry,

with the increasing use of digital technology and the Internet. Among the advantages of online advertising is the ability to target specific audiences based on demographic, interests, and behaviour.

3.4 The Use of Description

The analysis of ATs from the functional point of view is another proof of the successful use of applied linguistics in marketing. In linguistics, scholars single out such functional-semantic types of speech as narration, description, and reasoning (Panasenکو, 2016). In advertisements they are not presented equally. Description is an important part of any AT. It can be used for more than simply listing the benefits and features of the product. To create an effective and memorable advertisement, the advertisers have to meticulously choose descriptive words that convey the essence of the product. Understanding your target audience and their language is vital for writing an AT, because in many cases, the description says less about the product or brand itself and more about the potential buyer.

Description can be divided into two categories: visual description and descriptions-characteristics (Panasenکو & Greguš, 2022: 84-85). In the context of modern advertising the use of visual description can be unnecessary due to the visual elements that go with the promotional texts, such as photos or illustrations. However, it is still important to characterize the product in order to evoke an emotional or even sensory response in the consumer. Deciding what words should be used depends on different factors like target audience, their demographic and the medium through which the product is advertised.

The use of description in modern ATs is an important tool for capturing the attention of potential customers and conveying the benefits of a product or service. When used effectively, descriptive language can help create a compelling advertisement that resonates with the target audience.

4. Aim, Methods, Language Material and Research Procedure

The main aim of our research consists of the application of the achievements of linguistics in marketing, namely revealing the most and the least common semantic roles used in the advertisement of cosmetic products. This goal is justified by the fact, that detailed comprehension of the structure and elements of AT helps with understanding what makes an advertisement successful, which is advantageous for the creation of an effective advertising campaign.

The first stage of our study was continuous sampling, which helped us select 40 ATs dealing with cosmetic products from various online resources, including social media, from the last five years. We divided the chosen examples into the following age categories:

Group № 1 – young people and young adults from 15 to 25 years old;

Group № 2 – adults from 25 to 35 years;

Group № 3 – early middle-aged people from 35 to 45 years old;

Group № 4 – late middle age and elder: 45+ years old.

We carried out a textual, contextual, and rhetoric analysis of sampled texts, which helped us analyze advertising in the context of its medium and to state how it affects the content of the advertisement. Moreover, with the help of the method of comparison, we were able to find similarities as well as differences in the functions of the semantic roles in the texts. We looked for tendencies regarding description as a functional-semantic type of speech and the most frequent cases that can be found in ATs, and compared their shift depending on the target demographic.

5. SEMANTIC ROLES IN ADVERTISEMENT TEXT

The creation of AT involves a careful choice of words that will set the mood for the entire advertisement, taking into account the target audience. Thus, the age, gender, and class of potential buyers determine whether the text is personalized, informal, or has a more serious tone. Many advertisers try to appeal to a wider audience, erasing the differences between generations to maximize the sales. Even though it is a great approach for some brands, cosmetic and skincare companies have to be more specific with their targeting, simply due to the fact that the products they manufacture must be adjusted to and consider the physical traits and needs of people of different ages. That is why cosmetic brands use generational marketing, which is “the practice of appealing to the unique needs of individuals within a specific generation group by offering the right product to the right person at the right time” (Walker, *s.a.*).

Most of the people in the age category 15 to 25 are part of Gen Z. Many of them have grown up with technology. Now, they spend a large percentage of their time on the Internet and are constantly surrounded by content, including advertising. Such audience is accustomed to ignoring advertising which is of no interest to them. As a result, advertising meant for younger audiences is often realized in the form of social media posts, such as Instagram. This format allows copywriters to step away from the usual AT structure and fit more text and therefore more information into the description of the product and its usage. Specialists in marketing should consider that Gen Z focuses a lot on self-presentation and wants to identify themselves through the brands and things they consume, making them more resistant to direct marketing (van den Bergh & Pallini, 2018). This demographic expects brands to act in a more friendly manner and approach advertising with more understanding. In the ad by Glowrecipe (see Figure 1) we can see exactly this.

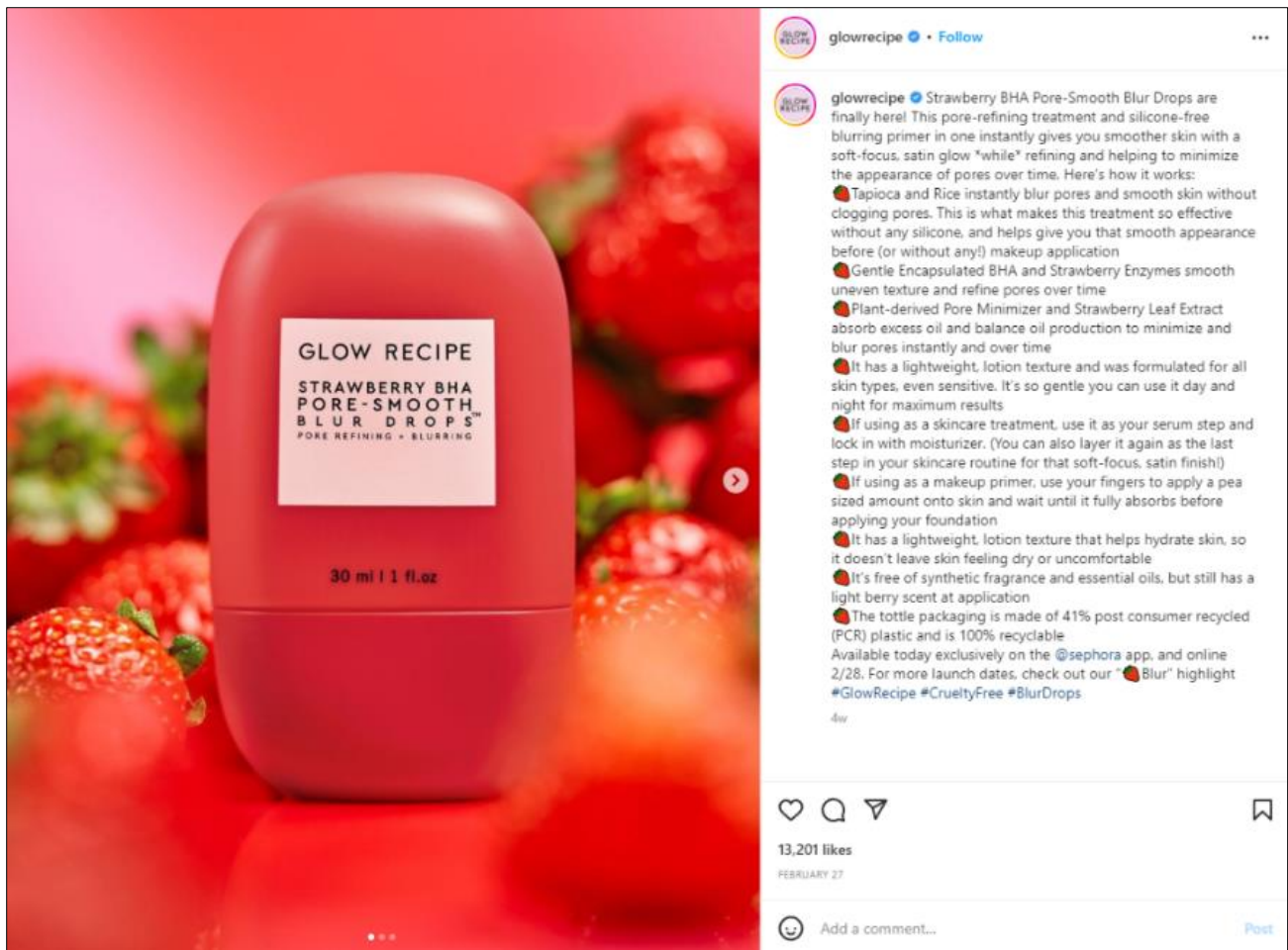


Figure 1: Strawberry BHA pore-smooth blur drops by Glow Recipe

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CpKytlwtvWP/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

The text is written in very simple language with the use of contractions (“*Here’s how it works*”, “*It’s so gentle...*”) and has a creative use of punctuation marks, such as asterisks, which are used to put emphasis (“*while*”), exclamation marks to point out some unique features of the product, and emojis that act as bullet points. An important feature of the text is personalization. The text is addressing the reader of the post repeatedly (“...*you can use it...*”, “...*your fingers...*”), making “you” to take the semantic role of **EXPERIENCER**. However, the most recurring case is **RESULTATIVE**, which appears 13 times throughout the text and which describes the benefits of using the product (“*helps give you that smooth appearance*”, “*balance oil production*”, “*doesn’t leave skin feeling dry or uncomfortable*”, etc.). **AGENT** is less common (9 times), which in this case is represented not only by the product or company itself (“*Strawberry BHA Pore-Smooth Blur Drops*”), but also by the elements and ingredients of the product (“*Strawberry Leaf Extract*”, “*Rice*”), which take on the active rather than the supporting role of the **INSTRUMENT**. **INSTRUMENT**, in turn, occurs only 4 times and is largely not directly related to the product, but correlates with recommendations for its use (“*use your fingers to apply a pea sized amount*”). **TIME** occurs 8 times and

describes the speed of obtaining results (“*instantly*”, “*over time*”), the time of the day at which the product can be used (“*day*”, “*night*”) or, typical of online advertising, an announcement about the product’s availability for purchase (“*Available today*”). **PATIENT** represents the elements affected by the product, whether it be biological processes (“*oil production*”) or body parts and their appearance (“*skin*”, “*skin texture*”). **LOCATIVE** in this advertisement occurs only 3 times. Instead of a place we are provided with links where the buyer can find information about the product or its purchase (“*Available today exclusively on the @sephora app*”, “*check out our “Blur” highlight*”). The text focuses on how simple, yet effective in many ways this product is, while also giving results as fast as possible. It all matches the energy of younger people, who do not want to complicate their life too much and desire something that can fit into their active lifestyle.

EXPERIENCER is not the only way of personalizing the advertising. In this more traditional example (see Figure 2), we can still notice proximity to the buyer. It is achieved by making **AGENT** not just the product but also the people behind the brand (“*our Pink Clay Mask*”). Similarly to the first text, this one shows the ingredients as active **AGENTS**, all of which lead to

different results. **RESULTATIVE** is again the most common case, followed by **AGENT** and **PATIENT**. **TIME** is used as part of the instructions (“Use 2-3 times

a week”), but also to demonstrate the simplicity of using the product, as you only need to use it for “4 minutes”.

DEEPLY CLEANSE SKIN IN 4 MINUTES
Try our Pink Clay Mask loaded with powerful, complexion-clearing ingredients to help reduce the look of blemishes*

clearskin BY AVON
BLEMISH CLEARING PINK CLAY
4 MINUTE MASK
2-3 weekly
Advanced Clearing Technology

JUST £3.50
NEW

HOW IT WORKS...

- **KAOLIN & BENTONITE CLAY** help to purify pores & gently remove oil & sebum which lead to breakouts
- **OATS** nourish, soothe & help calm irritated, blemish-prone skin
- **SALICYLIC ACID** helps reduce the look of further blemish breakouts
- **GLYCOLIC ACID** helps exfoliate dry skin

HOW TO USE
Smooth over cleansed face, allow to dry for 4 minutes and rinse. Use 2-3 times a week.

NEW Clearskin Blemish Clearing Pink Clay Mask 50ml
19125
Pack of 100613412
£3.50
*With continued use.

suitable for oily & combination skin

Figure 2: Clearskin by AVON

Source: https://www.kimbino.co.uk/avon/avon-digital-brochure-november-from-tuesday-01-11-2022-947185/#page_80

These examples prove that younger audience appreciate a more positive, down- to-earth attitude from brands. Everything in the advert is energetic: from bright colours in the supporting visuals to the text itself.

A similar approach is used for an elder demographic. People who are 25-35 years old fall under the category of Millennials. They share a lot with Gen Z, like skepticism towards big companies and a tendency to be more progressive (Williams *et al.*, 2010: 28-29).

Companies often target their advertising at more than one category of people and both generations tend to overlap. However, Millennials still need to be approached specifically, because even though they are still considered young, most of them have jobs and income that they do not want to waste. Advertisers need to be more convincing as this audience is more demanding, but at the same time not too serious. An Instagram ad by CLARK’s botanicals is a good example of this (see Figure 3).

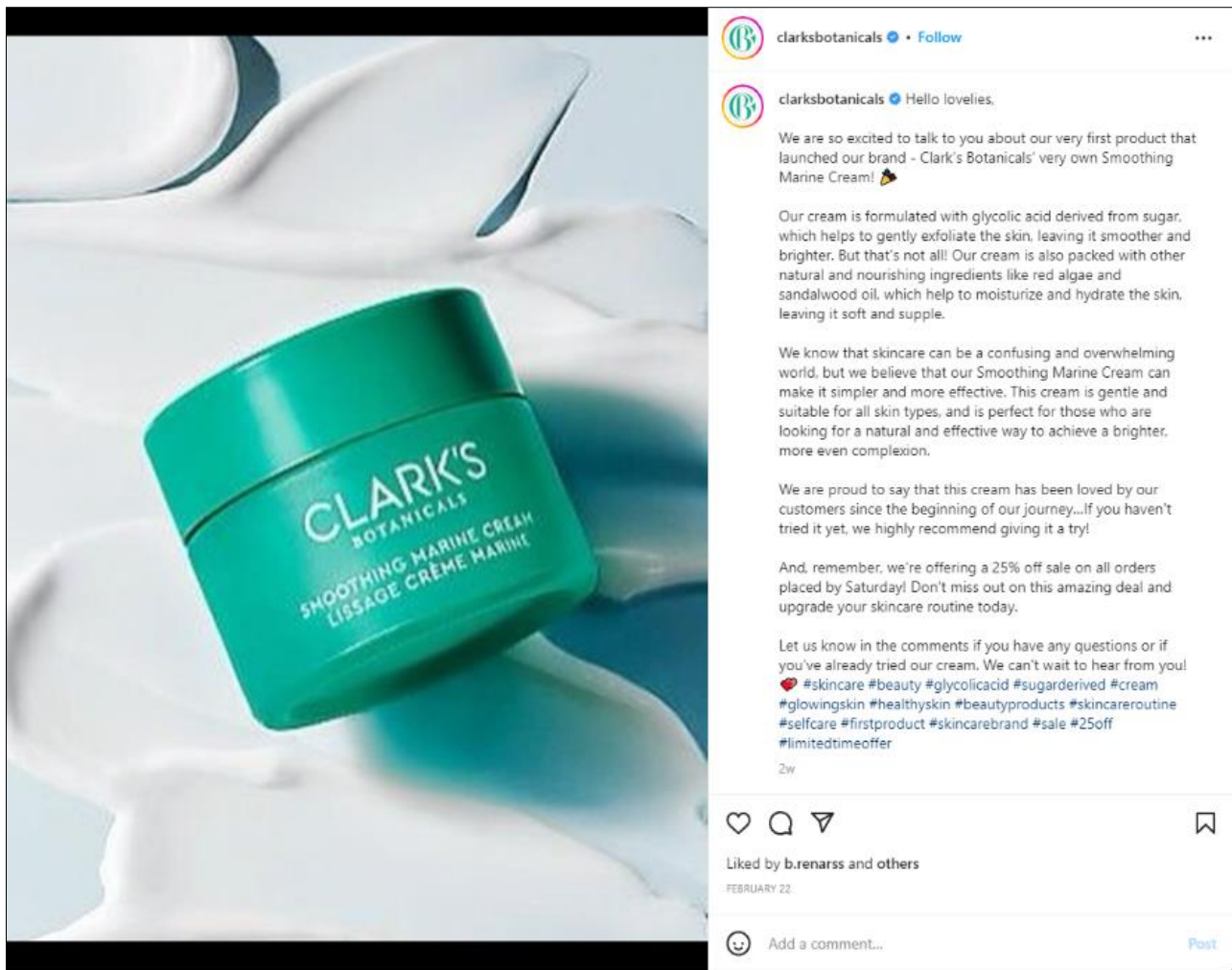


Figure 3: Soothing Marine Cream by CLARK’S botanicals

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Co8mJ-_twWS/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

This ad has many similarities with the posts for younger audiences as presented above. Specifically, the use of exclamation marks and such words, as “lovelies”, which give the text a very friendly feeling. In terms of semantic roles, this text is similar to those we have reviewed in the previous category. It is filled with personal pronouns, such as *we* and *you*. “We” acts as **AGENT** in some sentences: “*We know that skincare can be a confusing...*” or “*We are proud to say that...*” once again showing the human side of the brand. It also represents **EXPERIENCER** in two different ways: by the use of “you”, which addresses the audience and by mentioning the customers, who have already had experience with the product. While “you” is only used as **EXPERIENCER**, customers also perform the role of **BENEFICIANT**. The main difference from previous examples is that CLARK’S uses longer and more complex sentences to match the maturity of their audience.

So far we have analyzed texts by brands from the lower or medium price categories. Proceeding to adverts by more luxurious brands we may notice some differences. The ad by KORA ORGANICS (see Figure 4) is endorsed by the celebrity model Miranda Kerr, making her both the **EXPERIENCER** and **BENEFICIANT**, which we can see in her quote about her experience of using the sleeping mask. The main part of the text does not mention the audience or customers at all and consists of **AGENT** (*The NEW Noni Glow Sleeping Mask*), **INSTRUMENT** (“*natural Hyaluronic Acid*”, “*Certified Organic Silver Ear Mushroom*”, etc.), **RESULTATIVE** (“*boosts hydration*”, “*evening skin tone*”), **PATIENT** (“*boosts hydration*”, “*deliver smoother, plumper looking skin*”, etc.), and **TIME** (“*deliver smoother, plumper looking skin, while evening skin tone*”). The only cases that are left out in this part are **EXPERIENCER**, **LOCATIVE**, and **BENEFICIANT**, making this advertising non-personal.

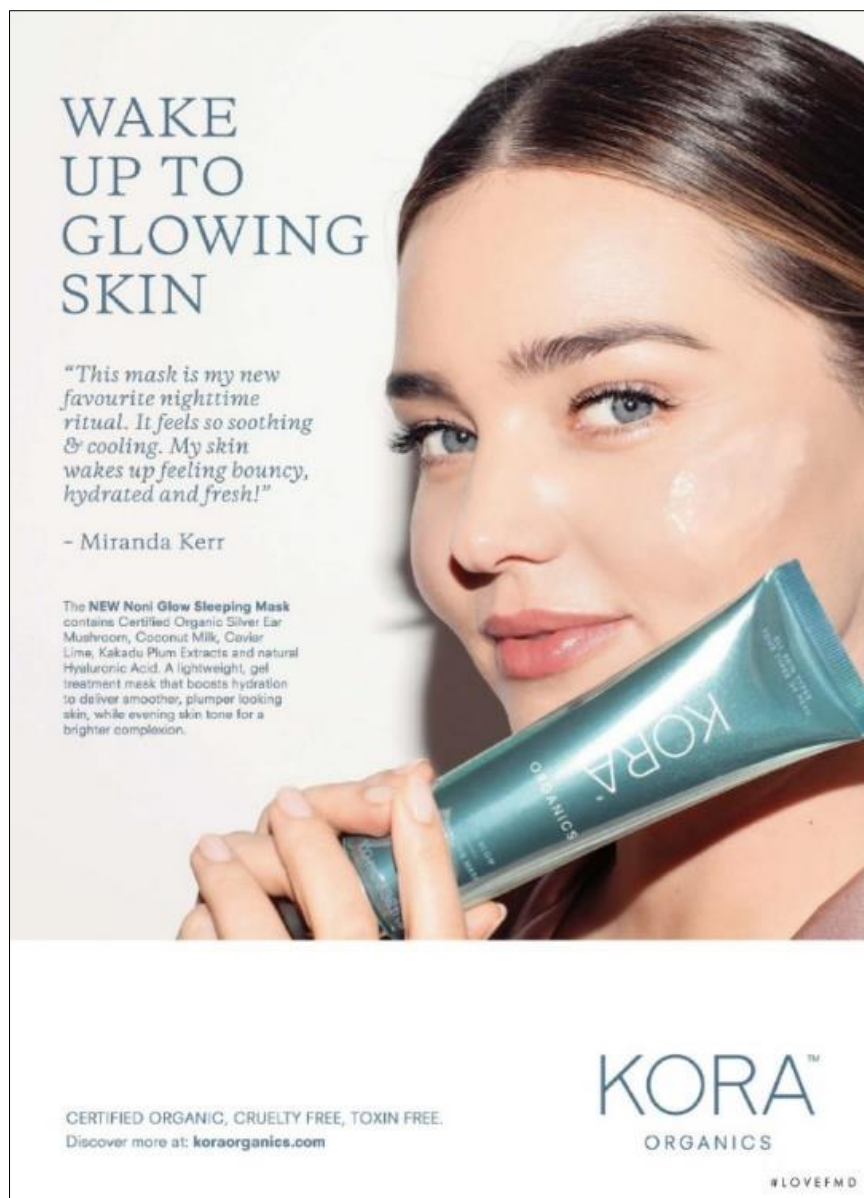


Figure 4: Sleeping mask by KORA ORGANICS

Source: <https://www.fashionmodeldirectory.com/brands/kora-organics/advertisements/2019/spring-summer/44079/miranda-kerr-990184/>

If we analyze an AT by another luxurious brand (see Figure 5) for more mature clients, we will see that the situation remains the same. It focuses on results (“*It visibly reverses structural and chromatic damages of photo-aging*”) but completely lacks personalization. Another interesting detail common to all ATs under our analysis is that despite leading the reader to purchasing

the product, providing them with links, etc., the text avoids the use of words that are related to spending or money. It is of course done on purpose (Verstergaard & Schroder, 1985: 68). Using synonyms or periphrasis, such as “*Discover the line*”, elevates the buying experience.

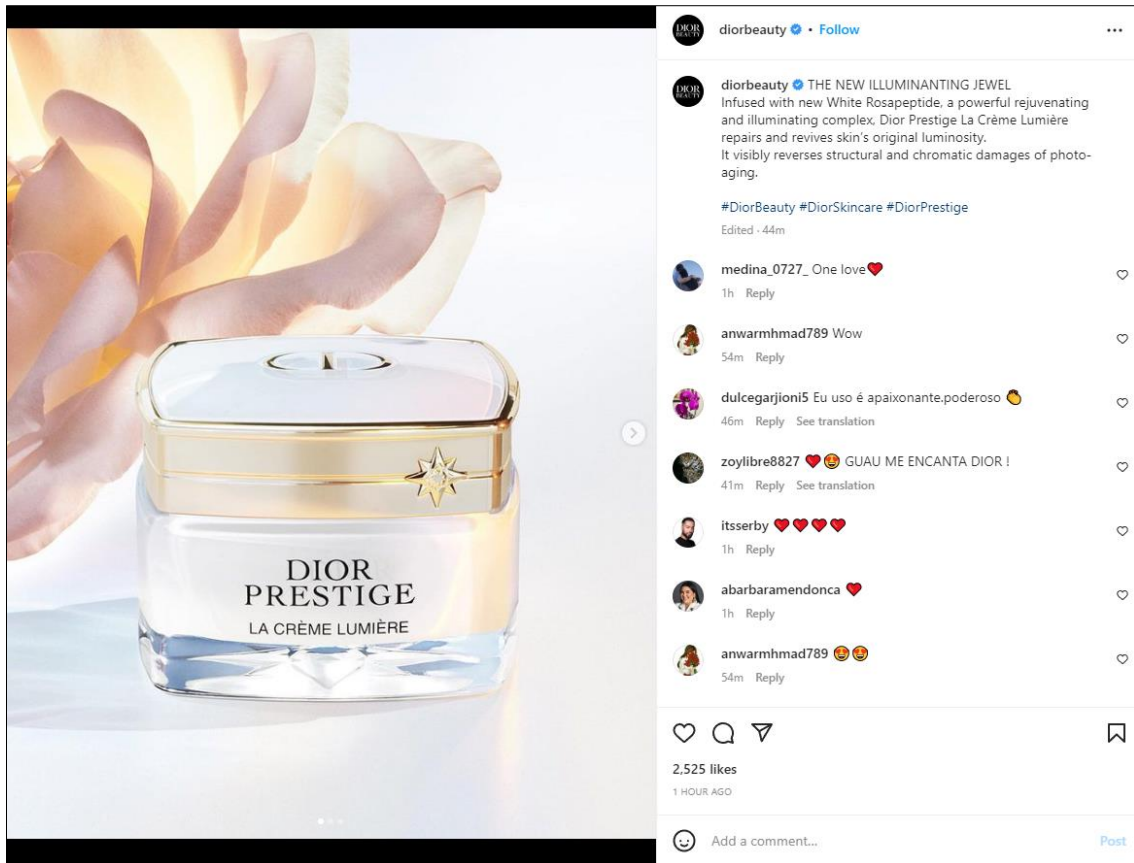


Figure 5: Cream by Dior

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/CpxXZ4SNlfn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

If we compare advertisements targeted at different age groups, we will see specific lexical organization of the text. E.g., in the cream advertising by ANEW (see Figure 6), the most noticeable difference

consists in the number of sentences used. Even though this example includes **EXPERIENCER** in the form of “you”, just like many ads for younger people, it still keeps the text very simple and straightforward.



Figure 6: Cream ANEW by Avon

Source: <https://eu.kimbidns.com/co.uk/data/42/5401/121.webp>

The Diamond Cellular advertisement stands out from others targeted at the same demographic (age category 35-45) (see Figure 7), though it has the same format. The ad is divided in two parts. The first one is more descriptive and emotive. We see the use of “you” as **EXPERIENCER**, exclamation marks, adjectives like

“luxurious” and “unique” that add character to the product and the brand. The second part on the other hand again consists of short facts describing what each ingredient can provide. It marks the source of an ingredient by **LOCATIVE** (“*WHITE TRUFFLE EXTRACT FROM SOUTHERN FRANCE*”).



Figure 7: DIAMOND CELLULAR by Oriflame
 Source: <https://www.offerstw.com/oriflame-catalogue-9-2020/>

The text follows the structure of **AGENT** (“*DIAMOND ELIXIR COMPLEX™*”) + **RESULTATIVE** (“*Helps reduce uneven pigmentation and improve skin complexion*”). It can be explained by the fact that it is fast to read and easy to process, which is a common feature of all texts from this category. It does not require much effort to read them and it is a perfect strategy with people of this age, since they do not have a lot of free time and they are busy with work and family responsibilities. For them it is important to see what the product does quickly without diving too deep into all the details behind the process.

The advertisement by Diamond Cellular is also an interesting example because it promotes a product for a transitional age, and it captures the interest of both age categories. With age, buyers tend to appreciate more

personal advertising, especially considering the fact that they are rarely acknowledged as people with buying power (Marketing strategy, *s.a.*).

The use of the narrative approach to AT shows a great strategy for creating a relatable and personalized experience for customers. VICHY does it by expressing the concern that women's bodies are changing with age. In this AT **PATIENT** is not just skin, but “*your skin*” specifically, making “you” both **EXPERIENCER** and **BENEFICIANT**. It also takes the focus away from the product giving it the role of **INSTRUMENT** (“*adapt your skincare...with Neovadiol’s youth reactivation routine*”), while “*your life*” becomes **AGENT**. **TIME** here is represented not by concrete numbers, as we saw in most of the previous examples, but rather by certain periods and states (“*During menopause*”, “*Now is the*

time to adapt”) (Source: <https://www.happy-shopping.ml/ProductDetail.aspx?iid=363855384&pr=57.88>).

StriVectin presents their product more pragmatically. **INSTRUMENTS** here are ingredients that are described in a scientific way with the use of terminology (“Powered by patented NIA-114 technology”). **TIME** is also very concrete (“in just 15 days”); it shows the period of time it will take to see the result (“dramatically reduce lines and wrinkles”), rather than some abstract period of time. At the same time, the ad has some personal elements like rhetorical question as a headline (“Want your Youth Collagen back?”), which not only grabs, but also addresses the readers and makes them **EXPERIENCER** (Source: <https://cfcx.net/post/76552992494/strivectin-sd-advanced-print-ad>).

Internet advertising is not as common for elder audiences. The most popular social media for them is Facebook, since it is the most used platform among people over 50 years old (Which social media platforms..., s.a.). If we compare this advertisement by Estee Lauder (see Figure 8) with the Facebook ad for cheaper and youth oriented products, we will immediately notice differences in how it communicates with the audience.

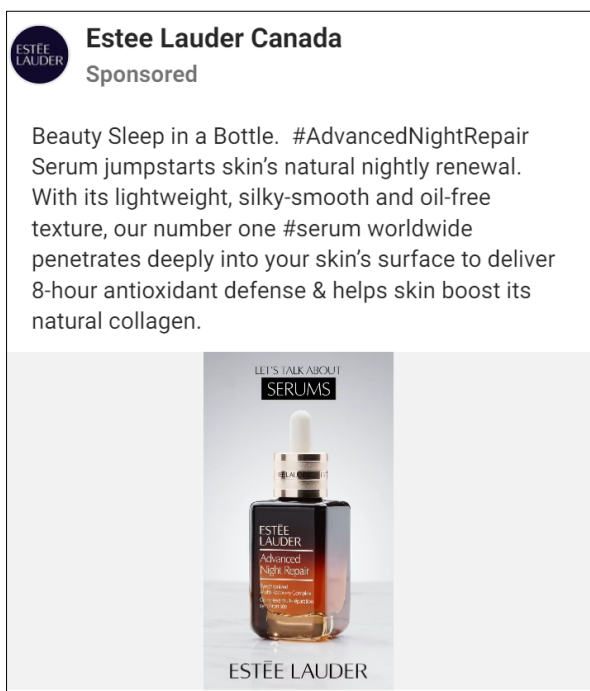


Figure 8: Night repair serum by Estee Lauder
Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/EsteeLauderCanada/>

Estee Lauder describes the features of the product, using epithets like “silky-smooth”, showing the result (“helps skin boost its natural collagen”) and how long it will last (“8-hour antioxidant defense”). It does not engage with the reader directly, but once again shows

proximity with pronouns (“our number one #serum”, “penetrates deeply into your skin’s surface”).

However, the price of the product does not always influence the content of the ad. With age, people appreciate a personal approach more than signifiers of status. The advertising by CLARINS proves that by openly and positively talking about the age of their customers (“At 50 you know your true beauty”), in which “At your 50” is **TIME**. We again see the use of rhetorical questions (“What if looking radiant simply means loving the age you are?”) and use of “you” as both **EXPERIENCER** and **BENEFICIANT**. The advertisement covers all the important information: what the results are, how they are achieved and with what ingredients. The ad does not provide us with scientific background or specific concrete numbers, but to prove the quality and status of the brand it uses the **LOCATIVE** (“Clarins, No.1 Prestige skin care brand in Europe”) (Source: <https://www.airparisagency.com/clarins/>).

6. DISCUSSION

We focused our attention on identifying the most common semantic roles used in texts advertising cosmetics considering different age groups. Semantic roles can be treated as hidden messages targeting these age groups and by the examples presented above, we tried to prove it.

Our analysis revealed that **RESULTATIVE** is the most common case for groups № 1, № 3, and № 4. This semantic case highlights the outcome or effect of the action, emphasizing the benefits of using the product or service advertised, which is a vital part of advertising. However, **RESULTATIVE** was used to a slightly lesser extent in the 2nd age group, in which it takes second place. Advertising targeted at 25–35-year-olds puts a lot of emphasis on the feeling of the product and what it affects rather than how and therefore **PATIENT** is the primary case in this category. For advertising targeting people aged 35+ it is the second most common case. If we examine ATs aimed at the youngest category, we will notice that the **AGENT** case occupies the second place, while the **PATIENT** case is only in the third place. Texts aimed at youth are of a more 'active' character. Products were described with feelings and sensations, but they were focused on action to a greater extent. Such elements as ingredients, which in other texts occupied a passive position of **INSTRUMENT** through which someone or something performs an action, or in some cases as **PATIENT**, become **AGENTS** and direct performers of an action. **RESULTATIVE**, **PATIENT**, and **AGENT** being the most recurring cases can be explained by the nature of AT. Despite slight varieties in the frequency of these cases depending on age, we can still see that they all form a certain pattern: **AGENT + PATIENT = RESULTATIVE**. It is a perfect formula for cosmetic advertising because it describes the product, ingredient, brand, etc., i.e., **AGENT**, to which it can be applied or

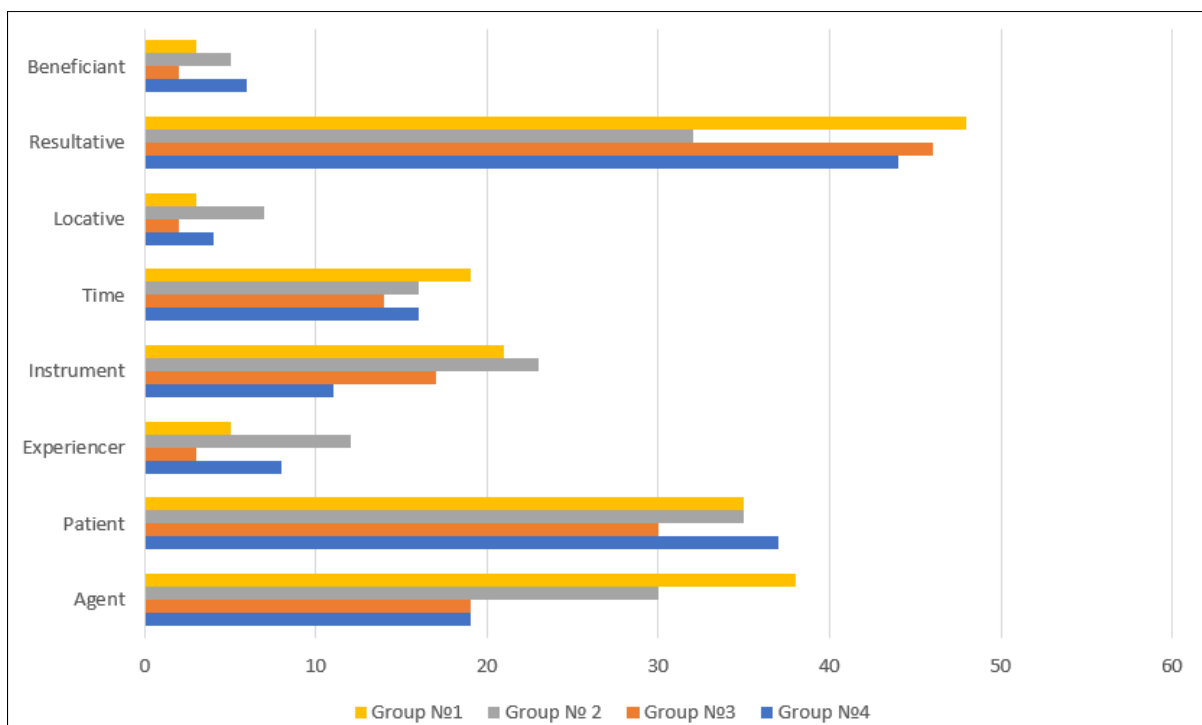
what it can change, i.e. **PATIENT** and what would be the result if those two interact, i.e. **RESULTATIVE**.

Other cases play rather a supporting role to the cases described above. **INSTRUMENT**, despite being one of the most common roles, is not part of the staple cases as we were able to find examples of advertising, which did not include it at all. Instrument is the fourth most used case for all of the groups with the exception of the most mature audience, which was the group with the most appearances of the **TIME** case. As we mentioned above, ATs for this age groups tend to focus more on stories and descriptions of personal experience, which explains the frequency of the **TIME** case. It creates the flow of the text.

When it comes to **EXPERIENCER**, it is not often found in the texts under analysis. However, it is important to mention that for groups № 2 and № 4 there are significantly more appearances compared to the amount of **EXPERIENCER** in other groups. **BENEFICIANT** and **LOCATIVE** are the two cases that are the least frequent, with almost the same amount of usage across the age groups. **BENEFICIANT** is an

especially interesting case, as it only exists in relation to **EXPERIENCER**. Every **BENEFICIANT** is an **EXPERIENCER**, because one needs to try the product in order to see the positive results. However, not every **EXPERIENCER** is a **BENEFICIANT**. There are few reasons for this. Firstly, not every experience described in advertising is a positive one. Sometimes we are given the example of someone experiencing the problem and how they overcame it with the help of the advertised product. Secondly, brands do not want to make promises in their advertising or push the customers too hard, meaning that they are encouraged to try the product by themselves and see if it works, giving them the idea that they consciously made this choice and were not convinced by an advert. The use of **LOCATIVE** is extremely rare and was rather an exception, appearing in only a few ATs.

The relationships between the age of the target demographic and the semantic roles used in advertising texts can be seen in Graph 1. It shows the general tendencies regarding age as well as the ratio between the cases.



Graph 1: Semantic roles and age groups.

Source: own processing

As is evident from the results of our research, **LOCATIVE**, **BENEFICIANT**, and **EXPERIENCER** are used the most with groups № 2 and № 4, even though they are still the least used cases in the category. **RESULTATIVE** in group № 2 is used significantly less than in other categories. The same goes for **AGENT** in groups № 3 and № 4.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results of our study are very vivid illustrations of the application of the most interesting linguistic studies in marketing. The more information and techniques borrowed from linguistics are applied in marketing, the more successful advertising campaigns will be, raising the level of profits. Of the numerous existing theories and techniques, we have chosen only

one – case grammar – and have concluded that certain semantic cases, such as **AGENT**, **PATIENT**, and **RESULTATIVE**, are essential for the successful creation of ATs for a cosmetic product. These cases were found to be consistently present in all sampled texts, regardless of the age of the target audience. On the other hand, other semantic cases, such as **INSTRUMENT**, **LOCATIVE**, **TIME**, **EXPERIENCER**, and **BENEFICIANT**, play more supporting roles and were used less frequently. Reviewing semantic cases in our texts, we see that they are carefully chosen for each age category and price gradation.

Overall, the findings of this research highlight the significance of understanding the importance of semantic cases in ATs and the role they play in creating effective and engaging content. The knowledge gained from this study also gives perspective on the structure of other texts advertising foodstuff, watches, cars, elements of luxury and the like. We find perspective to approach ATs from cognitive positions stating information processing channels, creating the frame of the AT filling its slots with semantic cases not to mention semiotics and phonosemantics. All this will foreground signals of addressee-orientation in ATs and make marketing strategies more prominent.

Abbreviations: AT(s) – advertisement text(s)

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