A Discourse Analysis of Companies' Self-presentation Strategies on the Web

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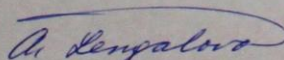   Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur
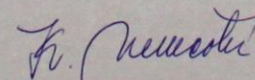
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou diskursu sebeprezentace společností na webových stránkách. Cílem této práce je prozkoumat rozličné jazykové prostředky zvolené k propagaci společností.

Teoretická část definuje diskurz a analýzu diskurzu, dále se zaměřuje na její využití v reklamě. Následně popisuje prostředí internetu a jeho vhodnost pro účel sebepropagace.

Praktická část aplikuje analýzu diskurzu na vybrané webové stránky a dává si za cíl zjistit rozdíly v tom, jakým způsobem se společnosti snaží prezentovat veřejnosti.

Klíčová slova: diskurz, analýza diskurzu, propagace, webové stránky

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with discourse analysis of companies' self-presentation strategies on the websites. The aim of this thesis is to investigate diverse language means which are chosen to promote company.

Theoretical part defines discourse and discourse analysis; furthermore, it aims to discover its purpose in advertisement. It also describes Internet as medium and its appropriateness for the purpose of self-presentation.

The practical part applies the discourse analysis to investigated websites and aims to discover differences in approaches to self-promotion.

Keywords: discourse, discourse analysis, advertising, websites

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INTRODUCTION

Today advertising is so common to modern reader that one does not even think about its nature form or language. Countless readers are unwillingly part of this conversation on a daily basis as advertising is all around us.

Internet happened to be a popular medium for advertisement as it allows the reader to control what information he browses. Almost every company has its own website which is used mainly for two purposes. First of all, to inform the visitor about the services company provides. Sometimes, it is possible to place eventual order online. Secondly, to promote in a way the company wishes to be presented.

This thesis is going to be concerned with the most persuasive, influential and omnipresent discourse of modern time. The main objective of theoretical part is to identify and determine what key terms such as discourse and discourse analysis mean. Furthermore, it is also going to describe Internet as medium and its appropriateness for the purpose of advertising and self-presentation.

Practical part investigates two selected companies from the same field of entrepreneurship. It analyzes their websites in order to determine whether there is some distinctiveness in approaches between the companies. The analysis is conducted based on the theoretical knowledge determined in previous part.

On the first sight the companies' self-presentation on the websites might seem to be alike. The purpose of this thesis is to discover whether there are some differences.

I.   THEORY

1   DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This thesis is going to be concerned with the discourse of the companies self-presentation strategies. Therefore, it is essential to be familiar with related terms such as text, discourse, discourse analysis, context, cohesion and coherence.

1.1   Text and Discourse

Widdowson (2007, 4) defines a text as an actual use of language compared to a sentence which is an abstract unit of linguistic analysis. The piece of language is identified as a text as long as it has been produced for communicative purpose. Whether the text is simple or complex it is produced in order to deliver message, express ideas and beliefs or to explain something. However, recognizing a text does not mean one understand its meaning.

Furthermore, Widdowson (2007, 7) states that the term discourse refer to both what a text producer meant by a text and how the receiver comprehend it. Generally producer's intention is to write text in a way it is understandable for reader. This complex of communicative purpose can be also refered as discourse. However, the receiving end readers or listeners have to interpret the text as a discourse that is comprehensible to them.

According to Cook (1989, 6) two different types of language can be defined as a potential objects for study. One targeted to teach a language or literacy or to study how the language work and another used for communication purpose. The language for communicative purpose is also called language in use and is connected with discourse. Discourse may be composed of one or more sentences and it happens to contain grammatical mistakes. It considers the grammar as a resource, applying the rules when it needs to, but not always following them. The point is not its conformity to rules rather the fact that it is coherent to receivers.

For Gee (2005, 30-40) the discourse is not only an analysis of grammar and vocabulary. For him the discourse also involves ways of performing and recognizing characteristic identities and activities, symbol systems, places and times. Moreover, he involved emotions, feelings, gestures and different ways of thinking.

1.2   Discourse analysis

Is a study of language in use. (Gee and Handford 2012) There are several different approaches towards discourse analysis. This field has become a very diverse area of study.

1.2.1   Approaches to Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough (1992, 12) discourse analysis can be divided into two groups based on the nature of their social orientation to discourse. He distinguishes two basic lines specifically critical and non-critical approach. However, the author recognizes that this division is not absolute. Fairclough himself is considered to be one of the most important critical discourse analysts along with Van Dijk and Ruth Wodak. Even though there are cases they tend to disagree with each other, they mostly agree that language is used abusively and they see the discourse as a way to control and persuade masses. (Van Dijk 2006)

On the other hand non-critical analysts such as Cook and Gee use discourse analysis as a study of language in use. It is more concerned with grammar, morphology and syntax. Cook (1989, 6) points out that discourse analysis makes discourse coherent. He is a representative of linguistic approach generally accepted in human studies.

Gee (2005) uses a term 'language at use in the world' instead of classical 'language in use' term. Language is used daily in order to communicate. Therefore, people use it positively to build things such as relationships, reputation, and companies. On the other hand it is also used to lie, advantage ourselves and harm people. Gee also argues that any theory of discourse analysis only provide a set of tools to analyze language-in-use. Furthermore, he explains that tool is a specific question used to ask for data.

1.2.2   Levels of Discourse Analysis

In addition to different approaches towards discourse analysis Crystal and Davy also study linguistic discourse in particular levels, specifically phonetic/graphetic, phonological/graphological, grammatical, lexical and semantic. It is not important in which order are these levels studied, however, it is essential to investigate them independently. Sometimes the features at one level may strengthen or justify features at another. (Crystal and Davy 1969, 15-21) Investigating these levels is essential for this thesis as it was chosen as the most suitable way to point out differences between websites. This will be further discussed on in following analysis.

1. Phonetic/Graphetic Level

This first level of discourse analysis is concerned with so called raw material of language. The term phonetic relates to spoken language whereas the term graphetic relates to written language. The purpose of phonetic level is to study characteristics and potential of human voice. On the other hand graphetic level is applied when it is necessary to analyze the choice of type-size, font and color of the text as well as spacing or paragraph distribution. In the past these eye-catching graphetic features were most important in advertising or newspaper articles. Nowadays it is essential part of the discourse analysis on the Internet.

2. Phonological/Graphological Level

Similarly to previous level of discourse analysis phonological level refers to spoken language, whereas the graphological level refers to written language. Language is more than simple separated sounds and shapes; therefore, one has to study this substance within particular framework or language group. English language constitute from limited number of letters which are used in predictable combinations to form bigger units such as words or even sentences. (Crystal and Davy 1969, 17-18)

3. Grammatical Level

According to Crystal (2003, 207) there are several types of grammar to be differentiate. However, usual and popular definition states that it is the way words combine to form sentence. (2003, 208) This interpretation refers to a level of organization which divides grammar into the morphology and syntax and should be studied independently of phonology and semantics. The purpose of grammatical level analysis is to determine internal and external structure of the sentence and their relationships.

4. Lexical Level

Lexical level might be also called study of vocabulary. It should be studied with no consideration of their grammatical form or function. Under this level of analysis one can find information about the choice of particular words, their relation to each other and their meaning. Moreover, the frequency of used words and formality of the text is also taken under consideration. (Crystal and Davy 1969, 18-19)

5. Semantic Level

As opposed to lexical level which studies the meaning of single lexical unit, the semantic level takes into consideration bigger units as the analysts are not usually curious about the meaning of single words. This specific level of discourse analysis is the least explicit one as there are usually more interpretations of the text.

1.3 Context

Context is an essential term for understanding language-in-use and the principle of discourse analysis. (Gee 1999, 100) It is knowledge of outside world which one uses to interpret text. Receivers are influenced by the situation in which they obtain a message and by their social and cultural relationship with the sender. Moreover, they are biased by what they know and what they assume the producer knows. The context is what gives a discourse its unity. (Cook 1989, 10)

1.3.1 Paralinguistic features

Context in written form is different than context in spoken form due to the fact the writer and reader are not physically encountering each other. (Gee 1999, 101) In spoken language people not only receive linguistic message but they also mostly unconsciously pay attention to many other factors apart from the language itself. (Cook 1989, 9) These factors such as facial expression, body language, gestures, speaker's voice and so on are called paralinguistic features. They also do exist in written language in form of handwriting, typography or punctuation marks.

1.3.2 Context and shared knowledge

When people talk to each other they spontaneously make reference to their perceived environment in a sense of both place and time. This context is constructed directly from immediate concrete situation. On the other hand, shared knowledge is a common knowledge of two or more people which has been established in their previous conversation or experience. This concept of shared knowledge is especially important in written text as there is usually no appeal to common situation. Producer of written text typically appeal to a common context of shared knowledge because mostly the place and time a written text is read is different from place and time it was produced. (Widdowson 2007, 19-21)

Cook claims (1989, 91) that apart the knowledge of office, status, role and personal details of receiver, the sender also needs to form hypotheses about the degree of knowledge they share with each other. This assessment projects into every level of discourse such as a quantity of information, cohesion and grammatical structure. Discourse which underestimates the level of existing knowledge becomes uninteresting. On the other hand, discourse which overestimates it becomes inexplicit.

1.4   Cohesion and Coherence

In grammar the linguists say that sentence which does not work is ungrammatical. However, in discourse analysis is such a sentence labeled as incoherent. One of the main reasons discourse analysis is made is to find what makes the text hang together, whereas other texts are incoherent. The instrument which links different parts of the text together is called cohesive devices.(Salkie 1995) These devices guarantee that text is cohesive, nevertheless, it still might be incoherent. (Widdowson 2007)

1.4.1   Cohesive devices

This chapter is dedicated to describe most frequent cohesive devices in order to fully understand the importance of cohesion and coherence.

1. Word repetition

Repetition of key words helps the text to be coherent. Many words such as *is* or *and* are used in most texts frequently. These words are called function words and are likely to be in any English text. On the other hand, there might be repetition of certain words one would not expect to find in every English text. These are called content words and they do help to make text coherent. (Salkie 1995, 4)

2. Using synonyms

Using different words with same or similar meaning is another possibility of making texts coherent. The synonyms are used in order to avoid repetition as it makes the text look boring. Sometimes the words are not exactly same in meaning. Nevertheless, they are called synonyms as they clearly refer to same thing. (Salkie 1995, 9-12)

3. Anaphora and Cataphora

Anaphoric pro-forms are cohesive devices that work retrospectively. That means they copy features from preceding expressions in text as it is indicated in the example (1). However, pro-forms can also work prospectively in a sense they can precede a more explicit meaning. These pro-forms then work as cataphoric devices as it is indicated in the example (2). Widdowson stressed that pro-forms both anaphoric and cataphoric are tokens of meaning. However, it is not always successfully achieved as the communication usually operates on the principle that one only use as much language as he needs to in order to acquire contextual connection. The problem Widdowson points out is to adjust the degree of co-textual explicitness and to estimate the level of reader's knowledge. (2007, 44-47)

(1) When the <u>president</u> was on his way to Portugal, <u>he</u> confused his advisers.

(2) When <u>he</u> was on his way to Portugal, the <u>president</u> confused his advisers.

4. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are countless words and phrases, that states relationship between one sentence or clause to another. They might be classified in many different ways, for example words that add more information (and, furthermore), elaborate or exemplify (for instance, in other words), contrast (or, on the other hand, however), relate new information to the old one (consequently, for this reason), indicate new departure or a summary (by the way, to sum up). Their application in discourse often amplifies the style and their misuse might change meaning completely. (Cook 1989, 21)

1.4.2 Coherence

Cohesive devices in the text allow reader to conclude a coherent discourse from it. Nevertheless the text might be cohesive and still be incoherent. This might happen in case the reader has no frame of reference; therefore, he is not able to understand the terms. While one reads text he unwillingly recalls some frame of reference or schematic knowledge. This process comes so naturally it is often taken for granted and it creates an illusion that the meaning is actually in the text. Obviously reader can be mistaken and unconsciously invoke inappropriate frame of reference or the author can intentionally misled them in order to twist their expectation. (Widdowson 2007, 28-31)

2 DISCOURSE OF ADVERTISING

Nowadays advertising is so common to modern reader that one does not even think about its nature form or language. Countless readers are unwillingly part of this conversation on a daily basis as advertising is all around us. (Goddard 1998, 5) Company self-presentation is a specific form of advertisement.

This chapter examines the basic features of the most persuasive, influential and omnipresent discourse of modern time. Cook states (2001) that the discourse of advertising explores the language of current advertising. He is focused on three main parts, specifically material, text and people.

2.1 Materials

Every written language is illustrated in a prepared surface such as paper, wood or nowadays computer screen. Choice of these primary substances matter and depends on the state of literacy and technological advancement of receivers. For the purpose of this thesis the primary substance is computer screen otherwise internet.

2.1.1 Internet

Studies of internet advertising remain relatively rare. Nevertheless, analysts tend to agree that it is the most popular new medium for advertising. While using the Internet user has greater control over the material they wish to browse. On the other hand, there are so many different ways to use this medium that it is harder for advertisers to target the right customers.

As Cook (2001) points out there are three basic means of communication called modes, namely music, pictures and language. One of the advantages of Internet is that it might contain all of them and usually does. Although this thesis is concerned mainly with language it also considers the influence of other modes as music and pictures are inseparable part of discourse of advertising.

2.1.2 Picture

In the past advertisements were more reliant on words and text. Today visual metaphors and puns become a frequent feature of advertising. (Forceville 1996) Authors tend to use more and more pictures for two reasons. First of all, relatively new media such as television and Internet allow them to drift away from language. Secondly, pictures when used correctly carry more than just a story. One can observe that current tendency is to use

language which interacts with picture in order to deliver complex message. (Cook 2001, 42-64)

2.2 Text in advertising

Communication produces the text to indicate intended meaning. According to Widdowson (2007, 77) text might be defined simply as a collection of linguistic elements. Advertising is no longer a simple written text to announce available product or service. New advertisements are based on persuasion and as such they have become significant part of social discourse and textual analysis.

2.2.1 Collocation

While one analyse text he might observe connections across linguistic items, specifically certain patterns of co-occurrence. Collocations consist of well-formed patterns which usually repeat in the same form as indicated in example (1). Moreover, he claims that usually the term links two-word combinations of both words and word classes. Furthermore, Widdowson (2007, 79) adds that collocation might be more than the relationship between two lexical items. As evidence he provides phrases as might be seen in example. (2) Dyer (1982, 32) points out that collocation and informal language are efficient rhetorical devices to draw customer's attention towards advertised product.

(1) feel free, save time, set a price, pay attention, catch a ball

(2) all things considered, for better or for worse, as a matter of fact

2.2.2 Denotation and Connotation

According to Dyer (1982, 128) denotation and connotation refer to first and second level of meaning. The term denotation stands for a literal meaning of word and to what objectively represents, whereas the term connotation refers to a meaning which exists beyond the denotative meaning. Connotation is widely used in advertisements as it often tries to invoke the urge to purchase advertised goods. Cook (2001, 105) examines connotations in advertisements by looking at the presentation of two different products. He considers cars as a product aimed for man, while perfumes are targeted to attract woman. These products are perceived as expression of both self-esteem and sexuality.

2.2.3 Prosody in discourse

Prosody is mostly associated with verse and poetry; however, one should not underestimate its importance in prose and discourse analysis. (Tannen 1989) As Cook states (2001, 125) prosody patterns sound which gives a text extra value, in order to reinforce, contradict or add to its meaning.

Every discourse uses prosody to some extent. There are genres where prosody has lower or minimal impact, such as bureaucratic prose. In this case both words and syntax are determined by semantic and pragmatic criteria rather than the prosodic one. (Cook 2001, 125-126) Advertisers often use prosody to make their slogans easily memorable.

2.2.4 Information structure

Known information tends to be at the beginning of the clause, whereas the new information is usually at the end, where it gets more attention. Widdowson (2007, 41) describes new information as a rheme or comment and known information as a theme which also signals the main topic the author intends to write about.

Cook states (2001, 173) that there is number of different options in English that allow the sender to shift the order of information for the purpose of creating different sentence perspectives. Widdowson provides examples of one sentence with the same meaning, yet with different theme and rheme.

(1) The police dispersed the demonstrators.

(2) The demonstrators were dispersed by the police.

The first sentence (1) is an example of active sentence with the 'police' being the subject in the first case, while the second sentence (2) is an example of passive sentence with 'the demonstrators' as subject. There are also alternative means of thematization to be considered (3) (4) as the use of passive and active sentence is not the only way to present rheme and theme.

(3) What the police did was to disperse demonstrators.

(4) It was the police who dispersed demonstrators.

2.3 People

In this particular case people are participants of discourse of advertising. The objective of this chapter is to determine the relationship between text, material and people. They are generally called senders and addressees.

2.3.1 Interaction

Senders aim to push product via diverse channels to consumers. An advertisement tries to accomplish enough contact between sender and addressee. They often address themselves as '*I*' or '*We*' who speak to '*You*'. Unfortunately, addressees might be distracted by the absence of identity. Receiver might be confused, in a sense he is not certain who exactly talks to him, unless the author is not mentioned. Therefore, the advertisement is only successful if one can identify himself as the targeted audience. (Cook 2001, 181)

Cook points out (2001, 180) that the illusion of conversation is even further developed on the Internet as the potential customers feels like they can interact with the sender. Nevertheless, the author of the text is not actually present or available to interact with you.

3 LANGUAGE OF THE INTERNET

According to Crystal (2001) there is a widespread opinion that the Internet will have bad influence on the future language. The technospeak will rule, standards will be lost and creativity decreased as globalization compel monotony. Crystal strongly disagrees as he states that the Internet enables a dramatic expansion of language and provides unique opportunity for personal creativity. It is a mass medium people use to express themselves linguistically. (Boardman 2005, 87)

3.1 Language

According to Cook (2003, 3) language is at the heart of human life. Throughout the history people used language without conscious analysis in every possible way. It seems that one does not need to possess the knowledge about language to use it effectively. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that language is natural phenomenon without the possibility of conscious control. However, people do not speak in abstract language but in particular languages instead.

3.1.1 Different languages

The most conspicuous feature of the language is that they are mutually incomprehensible. When one hears an unknown language, he cannot possibly comprehend it. It is possible to recognize symbols in written text. Nevertheless, if one is not familiar with particular language he is still not able to understand the meaning. (Cook 2003, 21) Moreover, different languages are not the only obstacle in order to understand text. There are countless divergent fields of languages with specific terminologies. For the purpose of this thesis it is essential to focus on the language of the Internet and the language of the websites.

3.1.2 Language of the Website

As mentioned before, Cook stated that language is at the heart of human life. Very similar statement was provided by Patrick Naughton, who claimed that language is at the heart of the Internet.

Boardman (2004, 41) admits that language of the Web might not even exist because anything that has ever been written might appear on the Internet using the exact same language. In fact notable proportion of texts is already present on the Internet in form of electronic text archives, digital libraries and data services. Therefore, language here refers

to all aspects of written language, including direct visual impression of text presented on the screen as well as graphic design. Websites are full of interrupted linear text which is a dominant feature of most graphic media. On the other hand websites are also full of non-linear text in other words a text which can be read in a multidimensional way. The lines of non-linear text are not read in fixed order rather the attention of the reader is focused on colored and flashing devices. (Crystal 2006, 195-200)

Every variation of written text one might possibly happen to find in paper-based world has its electronic equivalent on the Web. Crystal (2006, 198) provides as example British Library and Library of Congress whose websites are exactly the same as if one were to visit their locations in London and Washington, including their unusual spelling and punctuation. However, there is some distinctiveness of paper-based world. This will be further discussed on in the following chapter.

4 WEBSITE AND INTERACTIVITY

One of the differences between websites and printed media is its interactivity. However, interactivity is not always advantage as it might provide both, restrictions and opportunities.

4.1 Restrictions

As far as restrictions are concerned, language is displayed within the limitation of a screen. This is especially important since one might currently access Web via cell phone or portable devices in general. As a result, a user-controlled environment was created and is generally called scrolling. There are two different kinds of scrolling.

One is vertical which is used on daily basis while browsing the Internet. People usually scroll down and comprehend text simultaneously without any trouble; however, it tests one's ability to perceive, assimilate and remember the written language.

Second is horizontal which is mostly used on portable devices as the screen is not large enough to cover whole lines of text. Scrolling sideways is confusing as it is difficult to maintain reading continuity between successive lines. (Crystal 2006, 197-199)

4.2 Opportunities

Some fundamental properties of traditional written text are modified on the Web. For instance, it no longer has to be static. Text on the screen may now move, appear and disappear, change color and even shape as the reader move mouse around the screen. As a result new conventions had to be made to signal different types of functionality, for example the use of color and underlining for hypertext links and e-mails. (Crystal 2006, 201)

4.3 Hypertext

Hypertext links are jumps that reader can make in order to move from one page or site to another. Without this feature Web could not possibly exist as there is no central database of all documents. Even though hypertext links are very useful tool, one should be careful not to overuse them. (Crystal 2006, 202-203) Boardman (2004, 77) points out that Web is constantly changing. Therefore, the administrator should frequently check hypertext links in order to avoid dead links.

4.4 Text organization

Text organization matters because Web pages need to be coherent while making direct impact. They need structure and detail while they maintain clear and practicable. Words, pictures and icons need to be harmonized. Moreover, Pring (1999, 14) points out that colors of both, text and background are essential to meet communicative demands of the reader.

There are many different kinds of graphic organizations which help user to find or structure information. The Web might display sequences of pieces of information, ordered according to some principle for example alphabetic. Another system which is used to organize information is called Matrix system. This system is designed to be scanned both, horizontally and vertically. Whenever more alternatives need to be clarified one should find branching structure as it allows the user to click on relevant spots in order to display further or more detailed information. (Crystal 2006, 197)

II. TEXT ANALYSIS

5 SETTING OF ANALYSIS

The analytical part of this thesis is going to compare websites of two companies from the same field of entrepreneurship. Both of them are companies focused on transportation and logistics. Names of these enterprises are TNT Express and Parcelforce Worldwide. It is important to note that for the purpose of discovering self-presentation strategies the analysis is going to be only concerned with '*About Us'* pages and their subordinate pages in both cases.

Analyzed texts and examples are all taken from one of these websites. (www.tnt.com/corporate/en/site/home/about_us.html or www.parcelforce.com/help-information/about-us) Following chapters provide the reader necessary background knowledge about investigated enterprises.

5.1 TNT Express

Today TNT Express is operating in over two hundred countries around the world and is recognized as one of the leading logistics companies worldwide along with FedEx, UPS and DHL Express. However, the origin of TNT Express was very modest. It all started with a single truck Ken Thomas bought in Australia after the second World War. The expansion started in 1950s as Thomas decided to provide overnight logistics services as first transporter ever. The company becomes known as Thomas Nationwide Transport and acronym TNT was created. Over the next fifty years TNT Express has developed into a global enterprise with its own aircraft fleet that is capable to deliver parcel overnight anywhere in the world. (tnt.com)

5.2 Parcelforce Worldwide

Parcelforce Worldwide is part of the Royal Mail Group and is proud to be one of the top five UK logistics businesses. In comparison with TNT Express is Parcelforce Worldwide new logistics company as it was established in a year 1990. Even though the name of the company states worldwide, it is focused on British market while international delivery is provided by international partner network. The organizational structure consists of two main hubs which are located in Coventry and has direct access to the airport. These hubs are one of the largest buildings in the whole United Kingdom. Moreover, Parcelforce owns 53 depots strategically placed across the United Kingdom in order to process parcels efficiently. (parcelforce.com)

6 TEXT AND DISCOURSE

As stated in theoretical part in order to perform discourse analysis one has to identify a piece of written language as a text. This chapter is going to examine each website's '*History*' and '*About Us*' page, while trying to determine whether it is suitable for following discourse analysis. This might be accomplished by finding its communicative purpose as it is defining criterion to identify text.

6.1 Communicative purpose

Both websites are designed to inform their readers. This might be observed in examples taken from TNT Express (1) and Parcelforce Worldwide (2) websites.

(1) '*Our roots are in Australia. In 1964, Ken Thomas started his own company – Thomas Nationwide Transport – with a single truck.*'

(2) '*For over 14 years, Parcelforce Worldwide has provided a vital link for British businesses needing to send express shipments internationally and in the UK.*'.

Second communicative purpose of these websites is to promote themselves which might be seen in following sentences (1) and (2)

(1) '*Our history is noteworthy for decisive acquisitions and a drive for excellence.*'

(2) *'Our business is now set to prosper and we look forward with confidence to meeting and exceeding the needs of our customers in the future.*'

Preceding examples proved the existence of communicative purpose in investigated written language; therefore, it is possible to proceed with discourse analysis.

7 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As Crystal and Davy (1969) indicated text should be analyzed in five particular levels. This chapter is going to analyze all of them in order to find similarities or differences between both websites. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate whether the websites are cohesive and coherent.

7.1 Phonetic/Graphetic Level

This analysis is concerned with written language; therefore, it is essential to focus on graphetic level as there is no spoken language used on investigated websites.

7.1.1 Headlines

Generally it is recommended to use any kind of serif font for headlines as it is easier to read than san serif. In case of TNT Express website the creator used two different fonts to stress the magnitude of content. The main headlines are written in Times New Roman font and 24 point size as can be seen in '*History*'. Secondary headlines such as '*Our origins*' or '*Business Principle*' are written in Cambria font with the size of 13 points.

Parcelforce Worldwide uses for its headlines Times New Roman font which is different only in font size. Main headlines are written in 24 point size whereas secondary headlines are written in 18 point size. Examples can be found in '*Our company*' and '*Our aims*'.

Times New Roman as well as Cambria are both considered to be serif fonts; therefore, they match established paradigm in both cases. Furthermore, both websites use colored headlines. In both cases the color was not chosen randomly, rather it is companies' recognition sign. In case of TNT Express the color is orange while Parcelforce Worldwide prefers blue.

7.1.2 Body

Both companies use on their website Calibri font which is not generally recommended as it is san serif. This might be justified as Calibri is set to be default font in newer versions of Microsoft Word instead of Times New Roman.

Spacing is well-arranged with no unusual feature. Paragraphs are not indented, yet well-distributed. They fulfill their role to make the text more coherent for readers. TNT Express website sometimes uses very short paragraphs for instance paragraph concerning '*Listing of TNT in 1961*' consist of only one sentence.

7.2 Phonological/Graphological Level

Similarly to the first level this thesis is going to be concerned only with graphological level of discourse analysis as there is only written language available on the websites. Graphology is mainly used to analyze handwritten text; however, in case of websites it is possible to focus on capitalization and punctuation.

TNT Express Website uses some uncommon features of capitalization. This might not be obvious for casual reader as it is not apparent. Although all headlines start with upper case letter the consecutive words sometimes use different case. This disparateness might be well illustrated in following examples such as '*Humble beginnings*' and '*International expansion*'. This kind of capitalization is viable in most cases. On the other hand, there are few examples of different kind of capitalization, specifically '*Combining Post and Express*' and '*Mergers and Acquisitions*'.

In case of Parcelforce Worldwide all headlines are capitalized in the same way. First word is in upper case while the rest of the headline is written in lower case. Nevertheless, one exception was discovered in the headline '*Our Partners*'. One can reach to the conclusion that this occurrence is not accidental rather the capitalization was used as emphasis to honor them.

As far as punctuation is concerned no unusual features were discovered on the TNT Express website. On the other hand, examples (1) and (2) prove that Parcelforce Worldwide sometimes does not include space after punctuation mark.

(1) '*...no matter their size.Our business*'

(2) '*...step of the way.Everyone that works for us...*'

7.3 Grammatical Level

This level of discourse analysis is going to be focused on length of sentences, theme as well as tense and eventual grammatical errors.

7.3.1 Length of sentences

Parcelforce Worldwide website is written in long complex sentences as might be seen in example (1). Even though TNT Express website also consists of long complex sentences one might also find few examples of simple sentence which consists of only one clause. (2)

(1) '*The Network uses circa 400 Air & Road transport links daily to provide day certain guaranteed deliveries, which can be tracked from posting to final delivery, with over 12 million parcels handled annually within the network.*'

(2) '*Our roots are in Australia.*'

7.3.2 Theme

In examples (1), (2) and (3) is shown that Parcelforce Worldwide mostly uses to address itself in general notation such as 'We' or 'Our' instead of the name of the company. Possible explanation is that the company presents itself as a group of real people not as some inexplicit legal entity. On the other hand, TNT Express usually addresses itself directly with the company name as indicated in example (4) and (5). It possibly does so in order to promote its strong and well-known brand.

(1) '*<u>We</u> operate a hub and spoke collection and delivery system with 53 depots across the UK feeding two state-of-the-art hubs in the midlands.*

(2) '*<u>We</u> have a long history as part of the Royal Mail Group and pride ourselves on the dedication of <u>our</u> people to deliver high quality services for over 30,000 customers across the country.*'

(3) '*<u>Our</u> business is now set to prosper and <u>we</u> look forward with confidence to meeting and exceeding the needs of our customers in the future.*'

(4) '*<u>TNT</u> continued to grow throughout the 1960s, and following the company's success in Australia and New Zealand, international expansion was the next natural step.*'

(5) '*<u>TNT</u> also developed a keen social policy, understanding early on its truely positive impact on business, employees, customers, investors, communities and the planet.*'

7.3.3 Tense

Whole TNT Express '*History*' page, as one would expect, is written in past tenses. This is caused by a fact that this company has strong background with more than 50 years long history. They want to stress the deeds they achieved in the past. On the other hand, Parcelforce Worldwide '*Company history*' is brief with the focus on recent expansion. They want to stress how efficiently they reacted to recent changes. The usage of present perfect tense is omnipresent as depicted in example (1)

(1) '*Recent years have seen enormous changes in the market place and Parcelforce Worldwide has responded with major investments in technology and, in 2000, the opening of an impressive operational hub in Coventry.*'

7.3.4 Grammatical Errors

It has been said to many students that conjunction such as '*and', 'because', 'but'* and *'so'* should not be used at the beginning of the sentence. However, Chicago Manual of Style (2010, 257) claims that this has no historical or grammatical foundation. Nevertheless, instances of these questionable sentences can be found on both websites as illustrated in example (1) and (2). Furthermore, some spelling errors were discovered for example in word '*tru_e_ly*'.

(1) *'How we respond is a measure of our success. So we strive to meet and achieve your expectations every step of the way.*

(2) *'Today, TNT Express is a global company, operating in 200 countries around the world. But the company actually started from very humble beginnings, in Australia back in the 1940s, when Ken Thomas set up his own transport business with just a single truck.*

7.4 Lexical Level

As pointed out in theoretical part lexical level of discourse analysis studies the vocabulary. In this chapter the formality, the choice of vocabulary and the meaning of the words are investigated.

7.4.1 Formality

Professional website requires formal style of writing; however, one might find quite considerable distinctions in formality between compared websites.

Parcelforce Worldwide is written in friendly manner with no excessive emphasis on formal language. For example contractions as the omission of a letter '*a*' is used frequently as depicted in example (1) and (2). Moreover, it is written in colloquial style. In other words, the company addresses itself as 'We' and the reader as 'You'. This might be also observed in example (1). Example (3) indicates that there are some trails of empathy towards the reader which is another feature indicating informal writing style.

(1) '*We're also delivering a commitment to you and your businesses.*'

(2) '*At Parcelforce Worldwide, we realise that we're delivering more than parcels.*'

(3) '*Parcelforce Worldwide is always thinking ahead for you.*'

As opposed to Parcelforce Worldwide the TNT Express website is more likely written in formal style. There are no cases of contractions and the author uses word customer to address the reader in order to avoid colloquial style in form of '*You'*. Main points are stated confidently and supported by additional statement as shown in example (1).

(1) '*The business went global in the 1970s and 1980s. TNT gained an instant foothold in new markets by buying transportation companies in Europe, North America and Brazil.*'

Another feature of formal written language is a use of longer complex sentences. Surprisingly, the website of Parcelforce Worldwide uses in general longer sentences than its competitor.

7.4.2 Vocabulary

The choice of vocabulary plays a significant role when one creating a website. Both investigated websites chose the vocabulary that demonstrates their certainty and strength.

Parcelforce Worldwide mostly stress its ability to adjust to occurred changes and its willingness to expand. The vocabulary from website used for this purpose is sometimes exaggerated as depicted in an example (1).

(1) '*enormous changes, major investments, impressive operational hub, vital link*'

Second investigated company is confident enough to avoid any kind of exaggeration. The website simply states the facts leaving the results and rich history speak for themselves. The vocabulary is effective and complies with the maxim of quantity and quality.

7.5 Semantic Level

As stated before, the purpose of investigated websites is to inform and promote. In order to be successful the text must be easy to interpret and the meaning should be clear at first sight. Therefore, there are no hidden messages that need to be clarified by deeper semantic analysis.

7.6 Context and shared knowledge

Language needs to be presented under right contextual conditions in order to be comprehensible. In this particular case the context is firmly given as the setting is website. Entering the website the reader should be aware of the fact that the company's main business activity is logistics. Moreover, the visitor generally has some kind of reason to enter the website. Therefore, the context is immediately present. There might be some cases of visitors entering the website unconsciously, and therefore they have no background knowledge whatsoever. However, these random encounters are rare and still should not cause any confusion as both analyzed websites are reasonably straight-forward.

To illustrate the importance of context one should see example (1) as it is hard to fully understand without the knowledge of previous paragraphs.

(1) '*On Monday 29 June 1998, TNT Post Group (formed by TNT and PTT Post) separated from KPN. From that date, TPG stock was listed independently on the stock exchanges of Amsterdam, New York, London and Frankfurt.*'

7.7 Cohesion and Coherence

This chapter is going to investigate the inner connections in the text with the help of cohesive devices. Cohesive devices that will be analyzed are word repetition, synonyms, anaphora, cataphora and conjunctions.

7.7.1 Word repetition

While reading thoroughly one cannot overlook that Parcelforce Worldwide website constantly repeats word '*We*'. Example (1) clearly displays a paragraph that contains 103 words that includes this pronoun 6 times. This might not seem too much; however, by further calculation the conclusion is that word '*We*' is every 17th word. Moreover, if possessive form and objective case of this pronoun '*Our*' and '*Us*' is included the final count cease at number 12. Another event of word repetition might be observed on page called '*Our hub*' where the word '*hub*' is repeated in every sentence as might be seen in example (2). The possible reason behind this uncommon word repetition might be the company's pride about its new centre.

(1) '*At Parcelforce Worldwide, we realise that we're delivering more than parcels. We're also delivering a commitment to you and your businesses. Every single parcel you entrust us with is a confirmation of your confidence in us. How we respond is a measure of our success. So we strive to meet and achieve your expectations every step of the way. Everyone that works for us has the responsibility for creating a smooth and efficient service. Our intelligent use of technology also helps ensure we stay one step in front. In our determination to be the voice of the industry, Parcelforce Worldwide is always thinking ahead for you.*'

(2) '*We operate a hub and spoke collection and delivery system with 53 depots across the UK feeding two state-of-the-art hubs in the midlands. One hub is for UK parcels and the other for international parcels.*

This specific cohesive device seems to be unpopular on the TNT Express website. There are no frequent repetitions to be found. The only word that keeps on repeating is the

name of the company '*TNT*'. However, one cannot speak about excessive usage of this acronym as it is rarely used twice or more times in the same paragraph.

7.7.2 Synonyms

In order to avoid excessive use of word repetition as in case of Parcelforce Worldwide one should imbue the text with synonyms. This cohesive device makes the text appear professional and might enhance company image.

It is possible to find a lot of synonyms on TNT Express website. The author used rich vocabulary in order to avoid stereotype. Nevertheless, text remains easily readable and synonyms are distinguishable as illustrated in example (1).

(1) *global vs. worldwide, aircrafts vs. fleet, expansion vs. growth, business vs. company etc.*

7.7.3 Anaphora and Cataphora

Another two cohesive devices that are frequently used in written text are anaphora and cataphora. These two devices are closely linked together; nevertheless, there were only few cataphoric devices discovered on TNT Express website. On the other hand, both websites involve many examples of anaphoric cohesive devices.

Even though there are cases of anaphora on Parcelforce Worldwide website still the most frequently used cohesive device is word repetition. Nevertheless, some anaphora was discovered as might be seen in example (1).

(1) '*For over 14 years, <u>Parcelforce Worldwide</u> has provided a vital link for British businesses needing to send express shipments internationally and in the UK. <u>We</u> have a long history as a part of the Royal Mail Group and pride ourselves on the dedication of our people to deliver high quality services for over 30, 000 customers across the country.*

TNT Express website is richer in use of these cohesive devices than its competitor. Frequently used anaphora might be observed in examples (1) and (2) whereas the instance of cataphora is depicted in example (3). As far as example (3) is concerned the subject in first clause is covert.

(1) '*<u>TNT</u> also announces <u>it</u> is to exit the Logistics business.*'

(2) '*In the 1990s, <u>the</u> Dutch national post-and-telecoms <u>company</u> was looking to expand its business overseas. <u>It</u> had had a monopoly in the Netherlands for almost 200 years, but, with the arrival of modern communication technology, <u>it</u> needed to move with the times to protect its traditional mail business.*

(3) '(It*) *Founded in Australia after the second World War, <u>TNT</u> went Dutch in 1992 following rapid international expansion.'*

All these pro-forms should be explicit enough for common reader as the degree of co-textual explicitness is well-adjusted.

7.7.4   Conjunctions

As this might seem to be unlikely, there are not many conjunctions used on neither website. This is caused by the purely informative style both texts are written in. For the purpose of clarity author of Parcelforce Worldwide avoided the application of more complex conjunctions as shown in example (1).

(1) '*As we compete in an open market, we recognise that our customers have a choice and we aim to offer all our customers with high quality and fairly priced services, no matter their size.'*

In this case TNT Express website proved to be more likely the same as its competitor. Example (2) illustrates similar informative style as Parcelforce Worldwide applied on its website.

(2) '*It was also the first transport company to buy its own aircraft, creating the first pan-European overnight service using a dedicated fleet.'*

As conclusion it might be stated that in both cases the authors were not particularly creative while using conjunctions. On the other hand, this might be justified by the communicative purposes of both examined websites.

7.7.5   Coherence

Analysis in previous chapters proved that Parcelforce Worldwide as well as TNT Express use plenty of cohesive devices on their websites. However, as Widdowson (2007) stated the text might be cohesive and still incoherent.

Parcelforce Worldwide website can be considered as coherent since it is cohesive with no incomprehensible vocabulary that would confuse the reader.

Second examined website is also coherent; however, one might be confused with the excessive use of terminology and foreign words whose explanations are nowhere to be found. Example (1) illustrates one of these scenarios.

(1) '*After Jet Services in France, it acquired in quick succession TG+ in Spain, Hoau in China, Speedage in India, Mercúrio and Aracatuba in Brazil and LIT Cargo in Chile.'*

8   DISCOURSE OF ADVERTISING

As stated before, one of the communicative purposes of investigated websites is advertising. This analysis is going to follow Cook (2001) who divided discourse of advertising into three main parts, namely material, text and people in order to discover similarities or differences.

8.1   Material

Substance is firmly given as the website might only operate on screen. Nevertheless, material is not only the medium or surface the text is written on. It also represents the distribution of features such as pictures, video and music.

While entering Parcelforce Worldwide '*About Us*' page one is welcomed by small picture that states '*Helpful hints and tips'.* This does not violate any kind of rule as '*About Us'* page is subordinate to '*Help & Information'* page. However, the interactivity ends here as this picture is the only picture one is about to see in the whole '*About Us*' page with the exception of logos in the '*Our partners'* page and company's logo in the upper left corner.

On the other hand, while entering TNT Express '*About Us'* page one is welcomed by five different pictures that correspond to five particular subpages in order to deliver complex message. Moreover, every bookmark in the '*History'* page includes helpful picture that usually complement the written language. '*Our Business'* page contains a short video about the way parcels are distributed. This video does a good job at providing all the necessary information a customer needs to know about delivery process. Video is accompanied only with subtitles as the voice is absent.

8.2   Text in advertising

Following the theoretical part this chapter of the thesis examines whether investigated websites contain collocation or prosodic features.

Example (1) illustrates collocations that have been found on Parcelforce Worldwide website. However, no prosodic feature was discovered.

(1) '*vital link, high quality, metre square'*

Second website uses slogan '*Sure we can*' which is very similar to Barack Obama's slogan from year 2008 '*Yes we can*'. This slogan defines them as a strong company willing to overcome any kind of obstacle. It also contains prosodic pattern as it reinforce

company's corporate culture while being easily memorable. Some examples of collocation were also found as depicted in example (1).

(1) '*humble beginnings, around the world, first step, stock exchange*'

8.3 People

Written language on both websites was produced by unknown author. Generally the text with unknown sender loses its credibility; however, in this case it can be forgiven as the writer produced the text on behalf of the company.

Senders are people visiting websites for various reasons. Some of them want to use the service company offers some of them might only search for information. Nevertheless, their presence on the website is generally no coincidence. Therefore, they should not experience inconvenience browsing the websites.

9   LANGUAGE AND WEBSITE

Both websites are written in English. Nevertheless, Parcelforce Worldwide website uses British English. The British way of spelling might be observed in example (1). Surprisingly the website uses kilometers as a unit of length instead of miles as illustrated in example (2). Unfortunately, the abbreviation for kilometers is used incorrectly.

(1) '*recognise, realise, metre*'

(2) '*GLS consists of 23 parcel delivery companies covering 5 million <u>kms</u> in 30 countries across Europe.*'

On the other hand, TNT Express website is typed in unclear version of English. This conclusion was based on following evidence. Word '*favour*' is spelled according to British English; however, the usage of some vocabulary does not match British English. For example word '*freight*' in not commonly used in British English. Consequently, there are two possible explanations. As the author is unknown it is possible that the text is typed by more than one writer. Another possible explanation is that the website is written in Australian English as it is spelled almost identically to British English and the company started in Australia.

Parcelforce Worldwide website as well as TNT Express website are both well-arranged with no need for excessive scrolling or scrolling sideways. Standard computer screen is able to display most pages on the length of two screens.

Both '*About Us*' pages use Matrix system text organization which allows the reader to choose specific subpages he wishes to browse. The difference is that TNT Express uses colors and pictures which makes website more interesting and lucid; whereas, Parcelforce Worldwide writes in plain blue with no pictures available.

Hypertext links are rarely used in both cases. They were used only in few cases for example as reference to partner's website or external link to documents such as presentations or .pdf documents.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to discover whether there are some differences in a way companies' present themselves on the websites.

In theoretical part the key terms essential for analysis were identified and determined. Moreover, the medium of the Internet was described and its appropriateness for the purpose of advertising was cleared.

Based on the analytical part one might come to few conclusions. It might be confidently stated that there are differences in the ways companies present themselves on investigated websites.

TNT Express website is clear and professional. It addresses the visitor with well-arranged text distribution and user-friendly environment. The company is well aware of its position as one of the leading logistics enterprises worldwide. It is confident enough not to exaggerate. The website simply states the facts leaving the results and rich history speak for themselves. To summarize, it wants to be perceived as a strong, giant corporation with deep roots, clear vision and its own aircraft fleet while simultaneously cares about environment and society.

Parcelforce Worldwide website provides the reader with all essential information; however, the website has no pictures, no color and no sparkle that makes the visit enjoyable or memorable. One would expect that one of the top five express carrier businesses in the UK would have more dazzling website. Moreover, the website is full of spelling and punctuation errors whose make it to seem untrustworthy. As far as its message is considered, the company wants to be perceived as a modern, rapidly expanding company which is able to adjust to every upcoming situation.

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