The use of semiotics and pragmatics in printed advertisements

How consumers make sense of advertisements in relation to established theories

C-Essay English Linguistics - 15 hp

Halmstad 2018-11-21
Emma Månsson
Abstract

This essay is a study which is intended to explore how a well-known makeup company, M.A.C., uses semiotics and pragmatics in their advertisements and how the consumer’s reaction corresponds with what is proposed in the theories. Three printed advertisements were analyzed by the author and six qualitative interviews were conducted with Swedish women of different ages. The analysis of the advertisements identified semiotic and pragmatic features including linguistic and non-linguistic signs, cultural myths, metaphors, similes, pronouns, deixis, visual parallelism as well as the use of Relevance Theory such as enrichment.

The results revealed that M.A.C. Cosmetics marketing strategies correlate to, or can be explained by, key theories within pragmatics and semiotics. The results of the interviews show that the majority of the interviewees react correspondingly with what is proposed in the Theoretical Background chapter and the research has validated the theories and confirmed them as useful and effective analytical tools for examining advertising texts. It was also established that the advertiser appears to be aware, consciously or not, of the cognitive processes involved in the interpretation of advertisements which Relevance Theory explains, such as enrichment.

Keywords: Advertisement, Advertising, Printed Advertisements, Semiotics, Pragmatics, Swedish Women
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Abstract

0

## 1. Introduction

3

## 2. Theoretical background

4

2.1 Semiotics

4

2.1.1 Signs

4

2.1.2 Structuralist Semiotics: Saussure

5

2.1.3 Cognitive Semiotics: Peirce

6

2.1.4 Semiotic signs in advertisements

7

2.1.5 Cultural Myths

9

2.1.6 Features of Semiotics

9

- Denotation

9

- Connotation

10

2.2 Pragmatics

11

2.2.1 Features of Pragmatics

11

- Relevance theory

11

- Enrichment

13

- Metaphor

15

- Simile

16

- Pronouns

17

- Deixis

18

- Prosody and Parallelism

20

2.3 M.A.C Cosmetics

21

## 3. Methodology

22

## 4. Analysis and Results

24

4.1 Analysis of the advertisements

24

4.1.1 Semiotic features

25

- Photographic signs and cultural myths

25

- Linguistic signs

26

- Denotations and connotations

27

4.1.2 Pragmatic features

30

- Relevance theory and enrichment

30

- Pronouns and deixis

31

- Simile

34

- Metaphor

34

- Visual Parallelism

35

4.2 Results of the interviews

35

4.2.1 Advertisement 1

36

4.2.2 Advertisement 2

38
4.2.3 Advertisement 3 40

5. Discussion 42

6. Conclusion 44
   6.1 Future research 45

7. References 47
   7.1 Bibliography 47
   7.2 Appendix 1 53
   7.3 Appendix 2 54
   7.4 Appendix 3 55
   7.5 Appendix 4 56
   7.6 Appendix 5 60
   7.7 Appendix 6 63
   7.8 Appendix 7 66
   7.9 Appendix 8 69
   7.10 Appendix 9 73
1. Introduction

The research in this essay investigates how a well-known makeup company, M.A.C., uses semiotics and pragmatics in their advertisements and how the consumer’s reaction corresponds with what is proposed in the theories.

Following this introduction, there will be a theoretical background in which aspects of key theories from semiotics and pragmatics that can be applied to advertising texts will be outlined. This chapter will conclude with a brief description of the relevant company involved in the production of the advertisements which are analysed in this study, namely M.A.C Cosmetics, and its brand image and marketing strategies. After this background chapter, the Methodology chapter will explain in detail the methods by which the data was selected, collated and analysed, and the rationale behind this. Following the Methodology chapter, the Analysis and Results chapter will explain how the specific advertisements may be analysed and a presentation of the results produced from the interviews.

The penultimate chapter will consist of a Discussion, and the purpose of this will be to discuss the correlations and divergences between the theoretical approaches and the findings of the study, and to suggest answers to the research questions. After the discussion, there is a concluding chapter where the research process and findings will be summarized and suggestions for further research will be proposed. Bibliography and appendices can be found at the end of the essay.
The research questions for this essay will be as follows:

1. How does the consumer’s reaction correspond with what is proposed in the theories?

2. How does M.A.C. use semiotics and pragmatics in the advertisements analyzed in this particular essay?

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Semiotics

2.1.1 Signs

*Semiosis* is one phenomenon that differentiates life forms from lifeless objects. It can be described as an innate capability of living organisms to interpret and develop signs. Peirce defines a sign as follows: “I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediatelly determined by the former” (Atkin 2010). Signs are of great importance in, especially, human life. Signs are fundamental and can help people recognize patterns or they can also appear as predictive guides in different ways. Furthermore, without signs, different species would not be able to interact with the world, other species or even their own bodies. The English word *cat*, for example, is a human sign which is known as a verbal sign which represents a referent that can be explained as a “carnivorous mammal with a tail, whiskers, and retractile claws” (Sebeok 2001, 3)

According to Sebeok (2001), there are different kinds of signs produced and understood by each species.
These different signs can be innately produced and understood. Other signs have to be learned. Body signals and words are examples of signs which the human species produce and understand. Traffic signs are examples of signs which need to be learned, i.e. they are not innately understood. Signs can also make different species indicate their existence and correspond with the same, and other, species. Furthermore, signs help different species interpret and understand information from the outside world.

2.1.2 Structuralist Semiotics: Saussure

According to Saussure’s theory of the linguistic sign, a sign consists of two sides: a signified and a signifier (Rød 2004). Saussure claims that both the signifier and the signified are mental entities and are not dependent on external objects. A sign must also be arbitrary: in other words, there is not necessarily any logical connection between the signifier and signified. A sign must also be part of a system, according to Saussure (ibid). Saussure stated that a linguistic unit is a combination of a concept (or meaning) and a sound-image. A sound-image, according to Saussure, is not a spoken or written word; rather, it is the mental process that occurs within receivers. It is, therefore, the receiver's own perception of the concept and the sound system of the language that creates a sign (Lanir 2012). To illustrate a Saussurean sign, one can take the concept of Google. The impression formed in the mind of the receiver (the sound-image or the signifier) is the logo representing Google and the meaning associated with the logo (the signified) is that Google is a particular brand which is associated with a search engine on the Internet.

This connection between the sound-image and association is created mentally without having to utter or write down the word Google.
As mentioned above, the connection between the signifier (sound-image) and its signified (association with the concept) is arbitrary and the word Google is an example of this, since there is nothing in the word that suggests that it could be a search engine (Lanir 2012).

2.1.3 Cognitive Semiotics: Peirce

Peirce postulated a theory which comprised a three-part or triadic typology of signs (Nöth 2018). The interpretation of the sign can also be explained as the effect of the sign on its interpreter. There are three different variations of signs and these are as following:

“(b) Second trichotomy: the sign in relation to its object

(1) Icon: the sign is similar to its object;

(2) Index: the sign indicates its object, has a causal, temporal or spatial relation to it;

(3) Symbol: the sign is sign because of a habit; it must be learned; it is based on a convention” (Nöth 2018, 11).

An icon has a distinct likeness to its signified. A drawing is an example of an icon, according to Peirce, since its signifier (the drawing) is created to resemble the signifier, or referent. An index (signifier) has a relation to its signified. As an example, a footprint (signifier) is an index of a foot (signified). Symbols must be culturally learned since the relation between the signifiers and signifieds are arbitrary. Language and numbers are symbols since there is no logical relation between the word eight and what it represents, namely a number in mathematics (Atkin 2010). A sign can fit more than one of Peirce’s types simultaneously, as with the concept of smoke. A drawing of “smoke” is an icon.
Smoke may be interpreted as a natural index to indicate fire or that people are smoking a cigarette. Lastly, the spoken word “smoke” can be interpreted as a symbol if used to communicate. Additional examples might include the Native Americans use of smoke signals to communicate and the Cardinals at the Vatican when they wish to communicate to the outside world whether a new pope has been elected or not. The different uses of smoke as a symbol under Pierce show that the same signifier can function as more than one kind of sign (Nöth 2018; Foster 2018).

2.1.4 Semiotic signs in advertisements

Printed advertisements, as well as advertisements on TV, have been studied numerous times in the sense of how semiotic methods can be used in advertisements to capture the attention and influence the behavior of the reader. Linguistic signs in combination with photographic signs allow the receiver to question the ideas provided in the advertisement and to explore them beyond what is actually shown in the advertisement. An advertisement invites the reader not only to buy the product; it also asks the reader to engage in an imaginary world (Bignell 2002). Bignell (2002) states that “The semiotic analysis of advertising assumes that the meanings of ads are designed to move out from the page or screen on which they are carried, to shape and lend significance to our experience of reality. We are encouraged to see ourselves, the products or services which are advertised, and aspects of our social world, in terms of the mythic meanings which ads draw on and help to promote.”

Thus, advertisements are often tied to cultural or social myths and to denote an advertisement, and these myths need to be uncovered to know if they are being reinforced or challenged (Bignell 2002).
In printed advertisements, there are likely to be both linguistic signs (words) and iconic signs (visual representational) and both signs carry their own meanings onto the reader. The signifiers have both denotations and connotations contained within them. As an illustration of this point, one might consider the image of a beautiful woman in a lingerie advertisement. The signifier (the woman) is not only denoting a woman in a photograph: it has connotations such as youth, health and sexual allure. These connotations could be seen as positive which could make it a signifier for the cultural myth which may be referred to as “feminine beauty”. The concept of the myth comes from society’s view on sexually desirable women. Therefore, the advertisement has given the reader a sign (the photographed woman) which signifies a concept of a myth (feminine beauty). When applying a semiotic analysis to an advertisement, the sign’s denotative meaning is not as important as the connotative meanings of the sign (Bignell 2002).

The advertisement sends their message to the receiver by showing a sign which is easy to understand (such as the woman who is a cultural myth of feminine beauty) and places that sign next to another sign which often is ambiguous (the brand of the lingerie). The cultural myth of feminine beauty is transferred from the woman (photographic sign) onto the name of the brand (linguistic sign). The linguistic sign then seems to connote the same cultural myth, feminine beauty, as the photographic sign does (Bignell 2002). The mythic meaning of the advertisement often relates to the reader’s understanding of the real world and it is, therefore, informative to analyze the ideological function of the advertisement. Since the connotations of the photographed woman pass on to the brand of the lingerie, the brand becomes a sign of feminine beauty.
The brand may then be regarded as offering the buyer of the lingerie some share of the cultural myth of feminine beauty (Bignell 2002).

2.1.5 Cultural Myths

Barthes (1972) explains that myths are inherent within speech and that: “everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones” (p.107). Objects are not myths forever, but rather they can continue being myths for a while until others take their place but they are never eternal (Barthes 1972).

The concept of feminine beauty, described in Subchapter 2.1.3 Cognitive Semiotics: Peirce, is potentially a cultural myth according to Barthes. In the case of a glamour photograph of a woman, who the woman is, who the photographer is or where the photograph was taken was taken is immaterial. What matters is that the woman in the photograph has the significant characteristics in terms of physical qualities, namely that she is healthy, slender and attractive, and these are attributes which make the model depicted a signifier for the cultural myth of feminine beauty. The object of such a photographic sign is to enable the reader to comprehend the myth itself, in this case, feminine beauty, even though this might not be true or natural (Barthes 1972; Bignell 2002).

2.1.6 Features of Semiotics

Denotation

The denotation of a word is the definition one can find in a dictionary and refers to the actual concept it represents.
Therefore, denotation has nothing to do with the emotional associations a reader experiences when reading a word; it is only a suggested literal meaning of a word as may be represented in a dictionary definition. The denotation of a word can, however, vary depending on what kind of dictionary one refers to and when it was published, since a word’s denotation changes over time. Furthermore, a word (or phrase) may have two or more independent definitions in a dictionary which are unrelated. Those words (or phrases) can be either polysemes (Riebs & Reeves, 2004) or homonyms. A polyseme is a word which can be used in different senses but the meanings of the word have the same origin. An example of a polyseme is “wood”, which can refer to a material or the forest. A homonym, on the other hand, is a word that has more than one independent meanings. “Address” is an example of a homonym since it can mean either “to speak to” or “a location” (Riebs & Reeves, 2004; Cann, 1994).

Connotation

The connotation of a word, on the other hand, refers to affective associations likely to be aroused by a receiver upon encountering the word. Connotation goes beyond the word’s lexical meaning and the receiver can access three different kinds of connotations:

- Favorable connotation - words that convey positivity
- Unfavorable connotation - words that convey negativity
- Neutral connotation - words that do not convey any positive or negative associations (Riebs and Reeves, 2004)

Connotations can, in some instances, be subjective, i.e. the response they invoke varies according to the speaker and hearer.
The written word *childhood*, for example, can have a favorable connotation if the reader has had a happy childhood. If the reader has painful memories of their childhood, the connotations of the written word “childhood” may be negative (ibid). In advertising, “home” is a word that has one denotation as follows: “*the house, apartment, etc. where you live, especially with your family*” (Cambridge Dictionary). The connotations of the word “home” depend on the receiver’s own encyclopaedic memory and emotions regarding the word. These connotations may include safety, comfort, family warmth, family conflict etc., and so such connotations may be favorable or unfavorable (Riebs & Reeves, 2004; Foster 2018).

### 2.2 Pragmatics

Pragmatics can be described as the study of language in context and having regard to speaker meaning and can be applied to any theory within linguistics. Pragmatics itself does not create any additional element of a theory of language. It does, however, bring a new perspective to language studies by relating words spoken to external factors. Pragmatics focuses on how speakers use language and how hearers interpret utterances; as such, language is a form of social activity. The pragmatic perspective offers an opportunity to investigate “*the link between language and human life in general*” (Verschueren 1999, 6).

#### 2.2.1 Features of Pragmatics

**Relevance theory**

Grice postulated that relevance, which he referred to as "relation", was a maxim that speakers generally adhered to subconsciously and consequently hearers expected what a speaker said to them would be something relevant to them.
Sperber and Wilson (2002) developed this concept further, based on Grice’s maxim, claiming that relevance was the key to understanding implicature and thus they developed that notion into a comprehensive theory of their own, i.e. Relevance Theory. A central claim was, according to Wilson and Sperber (2002): "that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions”.

Grice stated that utterances create expectations which help the hearer understand the speaker's meaning and this happens automatically. Grice presented these expectations with his Co-operative Principle and the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner which feature within it. These are the four maxims that the speaker is expected to observe and not flout, violate or fail according to Grice. Quality represents truthfulness; quantity refers to informativeness; relation stands for relevance and manner requires clarity in what the speaker says (Wilson & Sperber, 2002).

Relevance is not only connected with utterances and other observable phenomena; it is primarily connected with thoughts, memories and conclusions of inferences. According to the relevance theory, “any external stimulus or internal representation which provides an input to cognitive processes may be relevant to an individual at some time” (ibid).

The search for relevance is a feature of human cognition and that is why expectations of relevance are raised by utterances (Wilson and Sperber 2002). The principle of relevance as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (2002) may be demonstrated simply in this fictitious exchange:
Example 1

A. Anna: “Will Carl be ready soon?”

B. Emil: “He is with Sandra now”.

Emil does not give a direct answer to Anna’s question; instead, he informs Anna that Carl is with Sandra. In this first example, one may assume that Sandra is known to be quick with people. Therefore, Anna would use her own knowledge (about Sandra being quick with people) in combination with the context (that Carl is with Sandra) and draw the conclusion that Carl will be ready soon. Conversely, the meaning of an utterance is a combination of its semantic content (what is actually said) and the context. In the sense of relevance theory, a context is not only information about the physical environment or the immediate utterances; it is also expectations of future, religious beliefs, cultural beliefs and the mental state of the speaker (Hickey, 1998). Context is organised and it affects the accessibility of certain contextual information at specific moments.

According to Hickey (1998), “An utterance is optimally relevant (a) when it enables the audience to find without unnecessary effort the meaning intended by the communicator and (b) when that intended meaning is worth the audience’s effort, that is, when it provides adequate benefits to the audience”.

Enrichment

Enrichment is an aspect of relevance theory and also refers to utterances and its implicature. To be able to interpret an utterance according to the principles within relevance theory (Wilson & Sperber, 2002), pragmatic enrichment is often essential. Enrichment refers to how hearers mentally augment what is said in an exchange when they do not have access to the whole context.
As an example, if one makes an utterance “He is ready now”, there is no context implying who it is that is ready or what he is ready for. To be able to make sense of that utterance, a hearer must supplement the words spoken with pragmatic enrichment to fill the gaps and recover the intended meaning. There is nothing definite being said and the receiver needs to make sense of the utterance by way of their senses and pre-existing knowledge. The identity of the referent for the pronoun “he” has to be resolved and is likely to be a present or previously mentioned male entity. The word “ready” is a predicative adjective and needs a noun or noun phrase to make sense without context, i.e. to determine "ready for what?". The word “now” is a deictic term in which the meaning is anchored to the moment in time that it is uttered and is also contextually dependent in terms of its extent (e.g. the word "now" in "Now we have modern technology" is not the same as in "Give him a drink of water now".

Thus, with the example above, "he is ready now (to get back to work)" can mean he is ready to go back to work after a long illness – and "now" might mean some time over the coming months. However, "he is ready now (to take a shower)" means immediately or in the next couple of minutes (Wilson & Sperber, 2002).

Another example of enrichment can be seen if a speaker utters “Clara went to Norway last week and she ran into Victor”. The hearer would automatically infer that Clara ran into Victor in Norway, even though it was not expressly stated that they met in Norway. While the most accessible interpretation would be that Clara met Victor somewhere in Norway, there are other possible interpretations available. For example, it leaves open the possibility that she encountered Victor at the airport as he was about to fly to Milan (Recanati 2010).
Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech which makes a comparison between two phenomena that have no natural relation, but share some common characteristics. The comparison can be implicit, implied or hidden (Goatley, 2011). There are also metaphorical concepts which are found in everyday language. “Argument is war” is an example of a conceptual metaphor which is reflected in a numerous of different expressions as follows:

- “Your claims are **indefensible**.
- *He attacked every weak point* in my argument.
- *His criticisms were right on target.*
- *I demolished* his argument.
- *I’ve never won* an argument with him.
- *You disagree? Okay, shoot!*
- *If you use that strategy, he’ll wipe you out.*
- *He shot down all of my arguments.*” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 p.4)

As can be seen in the examples above, people do speak about arguments using the same terminology as if they were talking about a war, and arguments can indeed be “won” or “lost”. In an argument or debate, one's interlocutor is positioned as an opponent and to win the argument strategies are used and attacks may be carefully planned. The concept of war is, therefore, to some extent structured by the concept of war (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Metaphorical expressions are closely connected to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way.
This gives an insight into the metaphorical nature of human cognition in everyday life when metaphorical linguistic expressions are studied. “Time is money” is another metaphorical concept, such as “Argument is war”, which is reflected in everyday life.

- “You’re wasting my time.
- This gadget will save you hours.
- I don’t have the time to give you.
- How do you spend your time these days?
- I’ve invested a lot of time in her (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 pp.7-8)

Time is a valuable resource and is not to be wasted in modern Western culture. Time is used to accomplish goals and is therefore regarded as a limited “commodity”. Human experiences with money can be related to the human experience of time in that there is only so much available for any particular purpose.

This metaphorical concept originates from the modern Western culture and is not a necessary way to create the concept of time (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

**Simile**

A simile shows similarities between two different concepts. Unlike a metaphor, a simile makes a comparison with the help of words as “like” or “as”. When similes are used, the speaker or writer is making it explicit that the statement is a comparison and the receiver does not have to figure out if the semantic meaning is literal or metaphorical. For example: “Peter is a pig” could mean that Peter is literally a pig, or Peter is a person who is dirty and repulsive (metaphorical meaning). “Peter is like a pig”, however, entails that Peter is not a pig: he is a person who is dirty and repulsive (Tyler, Kim & Takada 2008; Cambridge Dictionary).
A pronoun is used to replace a noun or noun phrase in a sentence to avoid repetition of the noun or phrase itself. Personal pronouns include “he”, “she”, “we”, “us”, “them” and “I”. An example of a sentence with a pronoun in it is “Kevin is a boy and he loves ice cream”, where “he” replaces the proper noun Kevin. The use of personal and possessive pronouns in printed advertising has been extensively studied since it is one feature often used (e.g. Cook, 2001). In advertising, both first, second and third person pronouns are used but in different ways to engage the reader. It has been discovered that pronoun choice can have a significant influence on the reader and how the reader responds to the advertisement (Gunelius 2016, Cook 2001). “It’s essential that you write copy that speaks to your target audience and not at them. And it should not be only about you either” (Gunelius 2016).

Advertisements have a greater influence on the receiver when the message in the advertisement is personal and speaks directly to the receiver. One might consider the sentences “We can deliver cars within 24 hours” and “You can drive your new car tomorrow”. The first sentence may be suggested to focus more on the actual business than the customers, while the second example may focus solely on the customer. According to Gunelius (2006), the second sentence is thus more efficient than the first sentence, since it is more personal and allows the reader to engage with the advertisement and connect to the product advertised.

In advertising, the words “you” and “we” are commonly used as personal pronouns. The use of such personal pronouns narrows the gap between the advertisement and the reader, since it provides a warm and friendly perception of the intended message (Linghong 2006).
The use of the personal pronoun “you” may be perceived as that the reader is the peculiar customer whom the company that provided the advertisement care about. The use of the personal pronoun “we” in advertising may be perceived as implying that the reader can enjoy the product or service and leave the work to the company. An example of this particular use of personal pronouns in advertising is as follows “We want to make flying an experience of excellence…. You’ll enjoy more legroom and our attentive service. And you’ll appreciate our unique lie-flats offering the ultimate in sleeping comfort” (Linghong, 2006 p.74). Advertisers try to persuade the reader that the services the company offers are tailored to meet the reader's individual needs and preferences, and they thereby maximise comfort and ensure a positive flying experience. Hence, the consumer is urged to choose the advertised airline when making a booking through the use of personal pronouns (Linghong, 2006).

“Them” is the object case plural personal pronoun and “they” is its subject case form. Both “them” and “they” are used in the same way in advertising. “Them” can refer to the buyer or the people surrounding the buyer in everyday life. The chosen pronoun “them” may distance the receiver from the advertisement in a negative sense since the advertisement does not speak directly to the buyer (Gunelius 2006).

Deixis

Deixis comes from the Greek word *deixis* and means "pointing out" and, as the translation suggests, the term is used for linguistically pointing to something relative to the speaker. Deixis relates to certain words and expressions whose references rely solely on the context of the utterance.
These expressions and the meanings they convey can, therefore, only be understood correctly in that exact context and circumstance (West 2013). The concept of a “deictic centre” is the key aspect of deixis. It is relevant where the meaning is contingent upon the exact situation in which the utterance occurs, including the time it is made, the identity of the speaker and where the speaker was when it was uttered. The “deictic centre” can also be described as an “anchorage point” from where the utterance is made. Deixis, therefore, goes beyond the spatial and temporal contiguity between the pointing finger and its object (signifier and signified). Deixis refers to physical objects absent from the signifier brought up by mental operations (West 2013). There are three most common categories referred to within deixis and these are person (me/you etc.), place (here, there etc.) and time (now, soon etc.).

An example of a deictic expression is “She could have been here an hour ago”, “she” is an example of personal deixis, “here” is an example of a spatial (place) deixis and “an hour ago” is an example of temporal (time) deixis (Foster 2018).

Personalization is related to deixis and the use of deixis is, therefore, often used in advertising slogans to minimize the gap between the advertiser and consumer, and to convey empathy. The deictic pronoun “we” places the addressee (the advertiser) and the addressee (the customer) within the same scope regarding the product or service advertised. “We are One” is an example of an advertising discourse which uses the deictic word “we” to simultaneously refer to the addressee and the addressee themselves and may help the advertisement to be perceived as more personal and friendly (Susinskiene, 2013). The deictic words “you”, “yourself” and “yours” refer to the intended customer in advertising discourse.
When such a deictic word is used in a slogan, the message is directly addressed to an individual (intended customer) (ibid). Susinskiene explains: “We may observe that the usage of pronoun you offers a number of advantages. Firstly, it is the most direct of addressees. Secondly, through this placement as a grammatical subject the consumer is given the main role in the action described in the slogan, which highlights our individuality. The consumer unintentionally pictures her/himself as the one depicted in the visual material provided in concert with slogan” (2013, 182).

Personalizing in advertising discourse is a common strategy, but third person deictic pronouns such as “it” have an impersonal effect and are still used commonly. “She” and “he” are more personal examples of third person deixis, but these deictics are used to indicate an entity where there is a shared knowledge between the advertiser and the customer that makes it possible to identify a certain or possible referent. The use of person deixis in advertising discourse invites the customer “to recognize him/herself as the individual being spoken to and about” (Susinskiene 2013, 183).

Prosody and Parallelism

Prosody refers to the sound patterns in a written, or spoken, discourse. The use of prosody can reinforce or add meaning to a discourse in advertising as well as in other genres (Cook 2001). Parallelism is a linguistic phenomenon, within prosody, and is of a general comparative significance. Parallelism operates at all levels of language, from phonemes (e.g. alliteration) to syllables (e.g. rhyme) to lexical (e.g. words like “wedding” and “cake” in the same semantic field) and higher concepts (i.e. metaphors). One kind of parallelism at the lexical level is epizeuxis, and this occurs where tokens of a word or phrase are repeated in close succession, and doing this can have a number of different effects.
An example of epizeuxis is the phrase: "like father, like son". The repetition of "like" is, in this example, used to emphasize the similarity. On the other hand, a beer advertisement which says "There's beer, and there's beer" carries an implication that the beer mentioned in the second instance is superior in some respect such as authenticity, quality and flavor, while that mentioned in the first instance is ordinary and therefore inferior (Foster, 2018). Parallels can also operate visually; an example of this may be found in an advertisement showing a photograph which is predominantly in black and white, but which has two or more coloured details, and the colouration then operates as visual parallelism while contrasting with the monochrome background. Parallelism is a widely understood phenomenon across all art forms.

It is often used in poems, for example, occurring when one or more sentences within phrases or clauses have the same grammatical structure or similar in their sound, meaning or meter, and this makes the key part of the message easier to discern. An example of three different kinds of parallelism in a poem is: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee” (Shakespeare). These two lines of Sonnet 18 has phonetic repetition, i.e. alliteration (long lives), rhyme (“see” and “thee”), and lexical parallelism - epizeuxis (So long… So long; can… can; this, and this).

2.3 M.A.C Cosmetics

M.A.C Cosmetics is one of the leading professional makeup companies in the world. The company was founded by make-up artist and photographer Frank Toskan and salon owner Frank Angelo (M.A.C Cosmetics).
M.A.C focuses on bold colours, outrageousness, individuality, self-expression and making a strong statement. Since 1994, M.A.C has been sold in over 120 countries all over the world (ibid). The reasoning behind the choice to focus on advertisements produced by M.A.C. Cosmetics is that it offers a contemporary example of mainstream cosmetics marketing and its style of advertising is not untypical of their competitors.

3. Methodology

The research outlined within this essay comprises two limbs. The first limb is an analysis which has been performed on a small number of cosmetics advertisements. These are printed advertisements appearing in magazines aimed at women and produced by on behalf of a high-end brand called M.A.C Cosmetics. These advertisements were selected on the basis that they are not untypical of cosmetics advertisements at the time of writing. The analysis has been conducted using the approaches to understanding the comprehension of texts using the theories and principles from semantics, semiotics and pragmatics described in the previous chapter.

The second limb of the research consists of a series of interviews with ordinary consumers. These consumers were Swedish women of varied educational and social backgrounds who understood English and were between the ages of 15 to 55 and, as such, they were deemed to be a representative sample of Swedish female adults and consumers of cosmetic products.
The interviews gathered predominantly qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data and, therefore, there were only six interviews performed since that number of interviews produced enough data to work with in relation to the size of the essay. The questions were asked to investigate how the consumers made sense of different signs and concepts in relation to the proposed theories in the Theoretical Background chapter. The questions were formulated as follows:

- Who is the woman in the photograph?
- What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
- Who is the “them” in the ad?
- Who is the “we” in the ad?
- What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?
- Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
- Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?

The interviews were conducted in person and the answers were recorded using an electronic audio recording device. The transcriptions of the interviews can be found in the Appendices. The primary data obtained in the interviews is summarized and analyzed in the next chapter of this essay. The analysis is undertaken by comparing and contrasting the findings with the theoretical approaches described in the previous chapter, and applied to the selected advertisements in the first limb of the research. Correlations and divergences are identified and highlighted and the implications of these will form the basis of the Discussion chapter and in order to provide definitive answers to the research questions.
4. Analysis and Results

4.1. Analysis of the advertisements

The first advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.2 Appendix 1, is in black and white, with a few purple colored details, and portrays a woman with long, dark hair. The model is wearing a purple eyeshadow, which is the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Adjacent to the image of the woman there is a caption that reads: “We’ll provide the twinkle that makes you a star”. The second advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.3 Appendix 2, is also in black and white, with a few pink colored details, and portrays another woman with dark hair and who is wearing pink rouge (blush), which is the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Next to the woman, there is a sentence as follows: “We’ll supply the rose that makes them blush”. The third advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.4 Appendix 3, is in black and white with a few details in dark pink and portrays a dark-haired woman with glasses. The woman is wearing a lipstick in a darker shade of pink and this is the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Next to the woman there is a sentence as follows: “We’ll be the cherry that gets you on top”.

24
4.1.1 Semiotic features

In all three advertisements, there are examples of both linguistic and photographic signs which are of interest in terms of Peirce’s typology, signifiers which can be aligned to distinct cultural myths, and what appears to be the intentional use of linguistic connotation.

Photographic signs and cultural myths

In all three advertisements there is a photograph which is considered a photographic sign and a sentence next to the photograph which is a linguistic sign with different linguistic signs within it (every word is a linguistic sign). Photographic signs in combination with linguistic signs allow the reader to question the message and explore it beyond what is shown in the advertisement, as described by Bignell (2002).

The photographic sign in the first advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.2 Appendix 1, displays signifiers of youth, beauty and confidence. In the second advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.3 Appendix 2, the photographed woman displays signifiers of youth, beauty and innocence. Lastly, in the third advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.4 Appendix 3, the photographed woman displays signifiers of youth, beauty and sex. All three of the photographed models have some signifiers in common; beyond those signifiers (youth and beauty), all three of the photographed models, likewise, seems to have flawless hair and makeup. These photographed women may, therefore, be suggested as presenting a classic exemplar of female beauty that is so perfect as to be considered culturally mythical as described by Barthes (1957).
The cultural myth of feminine beauty which the women signify may be passed over to the brand and this may convey an impression that the brand signifies a cultural myth of feminine beauty. The photographic sign in each advertisement (the photographs) and the linguistic signs (the lettering of the sentences next to the photographs and the brand’s lettering), thus, work together to provide a combined meaning whereby the consumer is not only buying into the appearance of the make-up product advertised, but rather is being enticed into believing that the product will confer upon the photographed model other qualities, such as the model’s beauty and youth and perhaps the lifestyle the model enjoys as conceived by Bignell (2002).

The cultural myth of feminine beauty is, apparently, intended to be comprehended by the receiver even though it might not be true or natural. This photographic sign of the cultural myth *feminine beauty* is reinforced, not challenged, since the message of the photographic sign combined with the linguistic sign invites the reader to mentally engage with, and imagine herself to be part of, the mythical and idealized world of feminine perfection and sexual desirability as described by Barthes (1972) and Bignell (2002).

**Linguistic signs**
The brand, M.A.C., is a linguistic sign and may be considered ambiguous since the letters M.A.C. has no logical meaning, thus the meaning of the lettering must be learned. Two of the linguistic signs, beyond M.A.C., in each advertisement are analyzed further and those linguistic signs are “twinkle”, “star”, “rose”, “blush”, “cherry” and “top”. The phrase “cherry that gets you on top” is, likewise, analysed further to investigate its semiotic features.
Pierce (1903) suggests three different classifications of signs, namely icons, which are signs that have a similarity to their referent; indexes, which are signs indicating their objects as they have a causal, temporal or spatial relation to them; and symbols, which are signs that are based on convention and so have to be learned (from Nöth, 2018). The linguistic signs in the advertisements mentioned above (“twinkle”, “star”, “rose”, “blush”, “cherry” and “top”) may be considered symbols since their meanings must be learned. They are, likewise, constituted as signs as described by Saussure (1916) because each word is arbitrary, part of the English language which is a system and there are signifiers (the sound-images created in the reader’s head) and signifieds (the printed words).

Denotations and connotations

Analyzing the semiotic features of linguistic signs may be accomplished by investigating the sign’s denotations and connotations. The denotation of a word is the definition one can find in a dictionary and refers to the actual concept it represents while the connotations refer to the emotional associations aroused in the receiver by the word, as described by Riebs and Reeves (2004).

The denotation of “twinkle” is as follows “(of light or a shiny surface) to shine repeatedly strongly then weakly, as if flashing on and off very quickly” (Cambridge Dictionary). The connotation of the word may vary but a couple of examples are excitement, being proud of something or a moment of pleasure. The word “star” has one independent denotation in a dictionary although, in advertising, the word “star” is mostly used as a metaphorical concept. The denotation of the word “star” is “a very large ball of burning gas in space that is usually seen from the earth as a point of light in the sky at night” (Cambridge Dictionary).
Another dictionary entry of the word “star” is “a very famous, successful, and important person, especially a performer such as a musician, actor, or sports player” (Cambridge Dictionary). It is used as a metaphor, but so commonly applied to a human entity that it has its own dictionary entry, although this is not to be viewed as an independent denotation. As with “twinkle” above, the connotations of the word “star” can vary, depending on the context and receiver. Different connotations of the word “star” may be a person who is likely to lead a glamorous lifestyle and associate with other famous people. The connotation of a famous person may be positive, or used in a negative and ironic context, to suggest the person is self-indulgent and out of touch with ordinary people’s lives.

“Rose” is an example of a word which is polysemic, and one of the denotations is defined as follows: “a garden plant with thorns on its stems and pleasant-smelling flowers, or a flower from this plant” (Cambridge Dictionary). Another denotation is as follows: “a pink colour” (Cambridge Dictionary). The connotations of the word “rose” can vary, depending on the context and receiver, but possible connotations may be the concept of love, representations of places or appreciation. “Blush” is an example of a polyseme and one of the denotations is as follows: “to become pink in the face, usually from embarrassment” (Cambridge Dictionary) or “a substance, often a powder, put on the face to add a slightly red color” (Cambridge Dictionary). Numerous potential connotations may be when a face turn red, the make-up product blush or the signifier of embarrassment. “Rose” may be more likely to have a favorable connotation in comparison with “blush” which may have a slightly more unfavorable connotation since the concept of embarrassment is often considered negative.
“Cherry” is another example of a polyseme and one denotation is as follows: “a small, round, soft red or black fruit with a single hard seed in the middle, or the tree on which the fruit grows” (Cambridge Dictionary). Another denotation of the word “cherry” is assigned to a hue, i.e. “bright red” (Cambridge Dictionary). The connotations of the word may vary, depending on the reader and context, it may be the ultimate in success or advantage. "Cherry", furthermore, has widely understood connotations that arise from metaphors. One is the use of the word to denote a first sexual experience for a female: “popped her cherry” (Urban Dictionary). The word “top” is an example of a polysemy, which is defined as multiple denotations with close associations with one another. One possible denotation is as follows: “the highest place or part” (Cambridge Dictionary) or “the most important position in a group or organization” (Cambridge Dictionary). Even though the second definition of “top” is metaphorical, since one cannot physically be “on top” of an organization, the two definitions mentioned are associated with one another. The word “top” may have connotations as follows: a high point or achieving goals in work life and, therefore, be “on top” of life.

“Cherry that gets you on top” is a phrase which includes the word sequence cherry on top that is a metaphorical phrase commonly used in everyday life. The phrase “cherry on top” is a metaphor of “Something good that follows a series of other fortunate events” (Urban Dictionary). Examples of connotations of the phrase “Cherry (that gets you) on top” may be used to mean to be successful at work or otherwise succeed in life. The connotation may be favorable when the speaker has that metaphor in mind and the hearer interprets them.
4.1.2 Pragmatic features

Analysing these three particular advertisements from a pragmatic point of view, there are aspects within the advertisements which are context-dependent and, as the reader is not present in the environment of the advertisements and does not know the models photographed, the reader has to make assumptions and also construct some context of their own.

Principles from relevance theory (RT) can be applied in order to expose the strategies used by the advertiser to generate context, such as enrichment. Similes are a kind of conceptual parallel and, as with other kinds of parallelism, they depend on the reader's ability to draw upon encyclopaedic knowledge to recognize the correlation of the concepts. Pronouns and deixis are other pragmatic features which are present within the advertisements.

Relevance theory and enrichment

Relevance theory and enrichment are applied and used by the reader in all three advertisements when the photographic and linguistic sign are observed together. To create a meaning of the particular advertisement observed and comprehend what the signs are communicating, the reader refers to their memory to add extra information, i.e. “enriching”, that the receiver decides is relevant to the advertisement, according to RT. One may make assumptions about the photographic sign (the photograph of the model) to enrich who she is, what kind of life she lives and if she is someone one may relate to as described by Recanati (2010). In the same way, the reader enriches the linguistic sign to make sense of what the advertiser is trying to mediate in the discourse of the advertisement.
The photographic signs in all three advertisements are denoting photographed women, but the signs have connotations such as youth, health, innocence and beauty among others. These connotations may be considered positive. Conversely, the connotations of the photographic sign may be negative, such as being self-indulgent, sexually precocious or a person difficult to relate to. This sign may be a signifier for the cultural myth of feminine beauty as defined by Bignell (2002), no matter if the connotations are favorable, non-favorable or neutral according to the perception of the reader.

The linguistic signs “We’ll provide the twinkle that makes you a star”, “We’ll supply the rose that makes them blush” and “We’ll be the cherry that gets you on top” invite the reader’s own personal interpretation and assumptions, i.e. using enrichment, as described by Wilson and Sperber (2002). The linguistic sign may be interpreted as a signifier of the cultural myth of feminine beauty, i.e. the connotations of the photographic sign are passed on to the linguistic sign. Therefore, the linguistic sign does seem to have the same connotations as the photographic sign. The linguistic sign then seems to offer the buyer of the eyeshadow an opportunity to obtain a share of the cultural myth of feminine beauty as described by Bignell (2002). The added information through the process of enrichment is used to expand the meaning of the advertisement and to help make sense of the message intended as described by Sperber and Wilson (2002).

Pronouns and deixis

Pronouns and deictic expressions are present in the advertisements in the choice of the words “we”, “them” and “you”.

31
Both pronouns and deictic expressions are used in advertising discourse to influence the reader in the same way: to be perceived as personal and speak directly to the reader as described by Linghong (2006), Gunelius (2016) and Susinskie (2013). In Advertisement 1 there is a sentence as follows: “We’ll provide the twinkle that makes you a star”.

In Advertisement 3 the sentence is as follows: “We’ll be the cherry that gets you on top”. “We” can be analyzed as both a personal pronoun and as a deictic expression. “We” used as a pronoun in advertising often refer to the company. In Advertisement 1, M.A.C. Cosmetics may seek to persuade the buyer into believing that if she were to purchase the eyeshadow, she will look like a star while in Advertisement 3 they want to convince the buyer that their lipstick will place them “on top”. As Linghong (2006) describes, “we” used as a pronoun may invite a perception that the receiver can enjoy the product instantly without having to do anything themselves beyond purchasing the product. “We” used as a deictic expression in advertising discourse is used to place the addressee within the same scope. Since the advertisements state that M.A.C. Cosmetics will make the buyer look like a star or get the buyer “on top” if they purchase the products, they may use the deictic expression “we” to minimize the gap between the company and the buyer. It may be difficult to relate to a star, the metaphorical concept and, to make it easier for the buyer to do so, the company seems to have chosen to use the word “we”. M.A.C. Cosmetics may have used the pronoun “you”, in both advertisements, to focus on the individual buyer and entice her into buying the products by making the advertisements more relatable.
The use of “you” in combination with the photographed woman who is looking straight into the camera may create a feeling of closeness between the advertisement and the buyer. “You” as a deictic expression in advertising discourse refers to an individual, the intended customer. By using “you” as a deictic expression in these advertisements, the customer would find it easier to imagine themselves as the intended customer of the advertisement.

In Advertisement 2, there is a sentence as follows: “We’ll supply the rose that makes them blush”. The use of “we” as a pronoun and deictic expression is most likely used to minimize the gap between the addressee and the addressee as described above in Advertisement 1 and 3. The use of the deictic expression “we” makes the advertisement easier to relate to and may convince a buyer into purchasing the blush. The use of the pronoun “them” can refer to the intended buyer or the people surrounding the buyer in everyday life. The pronoun “them” may create a feeling of distance between the buyer and the advertisement; however, the photographed woman in Advertisement 2 does look directly into the camera, which provides an intimacy with the advertisement as it mimics natural human eye contact. The combination of the distant pronoun “them” and the intimacy with the photographed woman may confuse the buyer, since it both creates a distance and a closeness. One may believe that the use of “them” instead of “you” in Advertisement 2 makes it more difficult for the buyer to relate to, and imagine themselves as, the intended customer. In Advertisement 2, M.A.C. Cosmetics refer to everyone around the buyer and not the intended buyer: i.e. if one purchases the blush, they will make everyone around them blush because the blush makes them more attractive.
Simile

The phrase “like a star”, in Advertisement 1, is a simile since it compares two concepts as described by Tyler, Kim and Takada (2008). As mentioned above, the word “star” has multiple meanings. The phrase “like a star” exploits the different qualities of the word “star”.

The most literal denotation of a “star” is a burning gas ball in the sky, but the metaphorical meaning may, as mentioned above, be a famous person. The wearer of the eyeshadow can “twinkle” because her eye shadow is brightly colored and lustrous (as a burning gas ball), or the meaning of the phrase refers to the photographed model who may be a star (famous person). If one interprets the phrase as the former example, it may be suggested that the phrase is offering the buyer a share of the cultural myth feminine beauty, since the viewer is seduced into imagining herself looking “like a star”, and enjoying the lifestyle associated with the glamour and status of a celebrity, as described by Bignell (2002).

Metaphor

(On) “top”, a phrase found in Advertisement 3, may be a figure of speech since a metaphor makes a comparison between two phenomena that have no natural relation, but share one or more characteristics as described by Goatley (2011). The phrase (on) “top”, may be an example of a metaphorical phrase, since one cannot physically be “on top” of a career. One can, on the other hand, be on top of a man and in that context the phrase (on) “top” is not a metaphorical phrase. The word “star”, from Advertisement 1, is used as a metaphor where the advertisers want to persuade the reader into believing that the reader will look like a “star” if she buys the product.
The word “twinkle” has both a metaphorical and a literal meaning (what real stars do). The metaphorical one implies a general demeanor of happiness, pride or lust. Relating this metaphorical meaning of “twinkle” with “star” may send the message that the buyer of the product will look like a star and, also, may become happier and prouder.

Visual Parallelism
Lastly, there are examples of visual parallelism in each of the advertisements. In the first advertisement, there is an identifiable parallelism between the purple colour of the lettering in the word “twinkle”, the colour of the eye shadow worn by the model and that it is the same as the eye shadow cosmetic displayed at the bottom of the image. Just as with Advertisement 1, there are examples of parallelism in Advertisement 2 between the pink colour of the lettering in the word “blush”, the colour of the rouge worn by the model and that it is the same as the rouge cosmetic displayed at the bottom of the image. Lastly, there is an example of visual parallelism in Advertisement 3 between the pink colour of the lettering in the word “cherry”, the colour of the lipstick worn by the model and that it is the same as the lipstick cosmetic displayed at the bottom of the image. Aside from these features (and the colour of the model’s eyes), the remaining parts of all three images are black and white. The manipulation of colour in this way foregrounds the product’s bold shade.

4.2 Results of the interviews
The original transcripts of the interviews can be found in Subchapters 7.5-7.10, Appendixes 4-9. The following results are a conclusion of the results collected.
4.2.1 Advertisement 1

The first advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.2 Appendix 1, is in black and white and portrays a woman with long, dark hair and she is wearing a purple eyeshadow, which is the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Besides the woman, there is a sentence as follows “We’ll provide the twinkle that makes you a star”.

Who the woman in the advertisement is and what kind of lifestyle she has was the first two questions and the participants answered: “she looks classy”, “confident”, “self-important” and “works either as a model or in the movie-business”. One of the participants described her as “physically there, but far away mentally”. Regarding her lifestyle, four women said that she lives an active and healthy life and is quite busy. They also answered that she likes to drink cocktails and party with her friends, one participant described her as a businesswoman and another one that “she cares about her looks” and “wants to look flawless all the time”.

When asked about who the “we” and “you” refer to in the sentence: “We’ll provide the twinkle that makes you a star”, three participants answered that “we” are the company M.A.C Cosmetics. One participant answered that “we” is the marketing team, another participant said that it is the people that produce or decide what makeup to produce and sell. There was one interviewee who said that she believed “we” is the store which sells the make-up. When asked about the “you”, five of the interviewees said that it included themselves and refers to whoever reads it. One participant did, however, say that it did not include herself, but it still refers to the readers.
Next, the interviewees were asked about the word “twinkle”, what the word evoked, why they thought the word was chosen and if the word conveyed positivity or negativity. The answers were quite different. “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”, “magic”, “shiny” and “glossy” were some of the answers.

One participant answered that she thought of something “magical” when she read the word, and another thought about flirting, and fluttering of eyelashes. All six of the interviewees said the word gave them a positive feeling and they thought they chose “twinkle” because it is associated with stars and the model photographed “twinkles” with her eyes and flirts with the reader. The word also inspires happiness, according to one of the participants.

The interviewees were asked the same questions about the word “star” and five of the interviewees answered that they thought about a famous person. One person thought about a star in the sky which, according to the interviewee, is a beautiful thing. When asked about why “star” was chosen in this advertisement, there were numerous different answers. One interviewee said it was because M.A.C Cosmetics wants the reader to believe that the makeup helps the buyer become or look like a star if the buyer wears it; it makes the buyer feel important. Another interviewee noted that “star” was a metaphor for a famous person. One interviewee said it was because “star” and “twinkle” go together and that is the reasoning for the choice of the word. All six of the interviewees stated that the word “star” conveys positivity. The last question about this advertisement was as follows: “What kind of person do you think would buy this product?” and all of the participants answered that it is a person who wants to “become a star” or “be famous”.

Two interviewees stated that “someone who wants to make a statement” and “not afraid to be seen” would buy this product.

4.2.2 Advertisement 2
The second advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.3 Appendix 2, is also in black and white and portrays another woman with dark hair and who is wearing pink blush, which is the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Next to the woman, there is a sentence as follows: “We’ll supply the rose that makes them blush”.

When asked about this advertisement and what kind of women she is and what kind of lifestyle she enjoys, the following adjectives were suggested: “friendly”, “innocent”, “kind”, “happy”, “shy” and “calm”. Some of the interviewees also said that “she looks like she is from Asia”, “a dancer” and “a career builder”. Two of the interviewees said she probably lives an active and busy life with an active social life and other answers were that: “she looks like she is into yoga”, “mindfulness” and “never stresses”.

Next, the interviewees were asked who they thought “them” and “you” refers to in the sentence: “We’ll supply the rose that makes them blush”. “Them” was a word the interviewees interpreted quite differently: the answers they came up with were men, the women wearing the product and those they want to attract and be noticed by, which included people both in their workplace and their romantic partners. “We” was interpreted by four interviewees as the company M.A.C Cosmetics, while one said the store which sells the makeup and one answered that it was the people who manufacture the makeup. The interviewees were asked about the word “rose” and the associations the word conveyed.
They were also asked to explain if the word gave them a positive, negative or neutral feeling - in this context. Their associations with the word were “the flower rose”, “love”, “the colour of someone’s face when blushing” and “rouge”. All of the participants had a positive feeling of the word. Different explanations were offered with regard to the reason that the word “rose” was chosen by the interviewees. One said that a rose is beautiful and, therefore, a rose is a metaphor because everyone wants to be beautiful. Another explanation was that blush (the product in the advertisement) has the same colour as a rose.

Next, the interviewees were asked the same questions about the word “blush”. Three participants said that they thought of someone who is blushing because they are uncomfortable, shy or embarrassed. Three of the interviewees said they thought of the product being advertised, namely blush. Why this word was chosen was, according to the interviewees, because the company is trying to sell blush. Another suggestion from the interviewees was that M.A.C. is trying to promote a product that makes the buyer look like they are blushing. Three interviewees said that “blush” conveyed positivity; one interviewee said that the word conveyed negativity and one interviewee was neutral about the word.

The last question asked was, “What kind of person do you think would buy this product?” and almost every one of the interviewees agreed that a person who needs some colour in their life would buy it. Someone who “wants to look healthy, fresh and innocent” was also mentioned as a possible buyer of the product.
4.2.3 Advertisement 3

The image presented in the third advertisement, which can be found in Subchapter 7.4 Appendix 3, is in black and white and portrays a dark-haired woman with glasses. The woman is wearing a dark pink lipstick and this is also the product advertised by M.A.C Cosmetics. Next to the photograph of the woman, the caption reads: “We’ll be the cherry that gets you on top”.

After a few minutes of observing the third advertisement, the interviewees were asked about the woman in the advertisement, who she is and what kind of lifestyle she has. Following statements was said about who she is: “a stereotype of a sexy teacher or secretary”, “attractive”, “strict”, “model”, “sexual” and “a woman who likes challenges”. Her lifestyle is “a busy life” and she is also “healthy” and “active”, “likes to drink champagne” and “does much dating”. Two of the interviewees said that she is smart and like to read books. She is a businesswoman and career chaser, according to the interviewees.

Following these questions, the interviewees were asked about the “we” and “you” in the text next to the woman. Two interviewees said that “you” refers to the reader and it included themselves. The remaining four said that “you” did not include themselves, the text spoke to someone else or those who actually wears the product. “We” referred to the company, M.A.C Cosmetics, according to three participants. One thought it was the actual people who create the makeup and another thought it referred to the store which sells the lipstick advertised. Another participant, on the other hand, said “we” referred to the lipstick, since it is when the buyer is using the lipstick that the buyer “get(s) on top” as the text says.
Next, the interviewees were asked about the word “cherry”. What the word made them think of, why they thought the word was chosen and if the word gave the interviewees a positive, negative or neutral feeling. Five interviewees said they thought about “cherry as a fruit” or “a cherry tree”. “Fruit cocktail” and the colour cherry-red also came to mind, according to the interviewees. The interviewees suggested different explanations as to why the word “cherry” was chosen. Three interviewees said it was because of the colour of the lipstick and one said it was because it is a sexually associated word. Another interviewee said it was chosen because there is a connection between the product and the word “cherry”. Five interviewees said that the word conveyed positivity and one said that the word did not convey any positivity or negativity.

The interviewees were also asked about the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”, what the phrase evoked and why they thought this phrase was chosen. Three of the interviewees said that the phrase made them think of a sexual act and two interviewees said that they thought of someone who goes their own way. One interviewee said she thought that the lipstick helps the buyer “get ahead” and “makes the way to the top easier”. Five out of the six interviewees had similar explanations as to why this phrase was chosen; they said it was because it made the reader think twice and creates a reaction, almost provoking the reader. One interviewee said she thought they chose this phrase because it makes women believe they are sexier with the lipstick and it will help them flirt with the man they want.

Regarding what kind of feeling this phrase mediates, five participants said it conveyed positivity and one said it did not convey positivity or negativity.
Next, the interviewees were asked about the word “top”, what “top” the advertisers referred to and if they had a positive, negative or neutral feeling when reading the word. Two of the interviewees thought they referred to on top of a man, in a sexual context, while four said they thought that they referred to the metaphorical “top” of a career. Five of the participants said that the word conveyed positivity and one said that “top” conveyed negativity.

As with the previous advertisement, the last question regarding the third advertisement was as follows: “What kind of person do you think would buy this product?”, and the answers were someone who is sexually active, someone who is bold and wants to be seen and someone who wants to make a statement. A woman who goes her own way, and wants to be successful without caring what others think of her, were also reasons suggested by some of the interviewees.

5. Discussion

The aim of this essay was to investigate the degree to which Swedish women’s reactions to make-up advertisements in English which is found in magazines correspond with what is proposed in pragmatic and semiotic theories.

This aim was reached through answering the following research questions:

1. How does the consumer’s reaction correspond with what is proposed in the theories?

2. How does M.A.C. use semiotics and pragmatics in the advertisements analyzed in this particular essay?

In order to answer the first question, six interviews were conducted with women of different ages.
The interviewees were shown three different advertisements and asked questions regarding their interpretation of the linguistic and nonlinguistic signs that had been identified by the author as being present in them. As this study only included six interviews, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from it regarding its applicability to all Swedish women, but it does provide indications. The results of the interviews indicated that Swedish women’s reactions correspond with what is proposed in the linguistic theories. The different signs in an advertisement, both linguistic and non-linguistic, allow the reader to interpret and enrich the advertisement by themselves. They enable the addressee to comprehend and make sense of the information provided, even though the addressee does not have access to all of the information. The majority of the women included themselves in the pronoun and deictic expression “you”; this offers convincing evidence that some readers are able to relate to the signs and imaginatively engage with the myths that the signifiers are invoking. If the same interviews were to have been conducted with male viewers instead of women, the results might have been different, since men may not relate to the signs and cultural myths as women tend to do.

Male viewers may observe the photographic signs in the advertisements and, as with the female interviewees, consider the photographed women as beautiful, attractive and sexually appealing. It is questionable whether they would empathise with the signs or cultural myths present in these advertisements in the same way as, or to the same degree as, female readers and they are generally unlikely to want to wear the products themselves. The male responses are beyond the scope of this essay and the assumptions are not definitive.
The second question: “How M.A.C. uses semiotics and pragmatics in the advertisements analyzed in this particular essay” was answered by collecting information about different key theories within pragmatics and semiotics. The advertisements were analyzed by applying the theories described in the Theoretical Background chapter. Lastly, the author compared the interviewees’ responses with the analysis. The result of the analysis has determined that M.A.C. Cosmetics uses approaches which align with certain key theories from semiotics and pragmatics to influence their readers into buying their products. The research also established that the majority of the interviewed women reacted largely in accordance with what is proposed in the theories. “Enrichment” is a feature of relevance theory within pragmatics and it is used extensively in the analysis of the advertisements studied in this essay to account for the implicature that has to be recovered in order for them to be fully understood. The research has shown that pragmatic enrichment occurs and this adds relevant information to make sense of the linguistic, and non-linguistic, signs and interpret the message as intended.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the advertisements analyzed in this essay reveal that M.A.C. Cosmetics’ advertising strategies correlate to, or can be explained by, key theories within pragmatics and semiotics. The results show that the majority of the interviewees react corresponding to what is proposed in the theories. Accordingly, the research appears to validate the theories and confirms them as useful and effective analytical tools for examining advertising texts.
The advertiser appears to be aware, consciously or not, of the cognitive processes involved in the interpretation of advertisements which Relevance Theory explains, such as enrichment. The addressee uses their own encyclopedic memory and experience to relate to the advertisement and decide if it is relevant to them. The use of personal pronouns and deictic expressions in these three advertisements is apparently successful in conveying personal warmth and empathy, intimating that they understand women's needs and desires in respect of cosmetics, and that their products will fulfill them. The cultural myth of what may be called “feminine beauty” is used to persuade the reader that the myth can become reality, and the key to achieving that reality is the purchase and use of the advertised product. Again, the responses from the interviewees appear to confirm that the myths invoked in the advertisements were at least partially manifest in the minds of the potential consumers who had viewed them.

6.1 Future research

As stated above, only limited generalisations can be made as to how Swedish women's reactions correspond with what is proposed in the theories since there were only six interviews conducted. A more extensive study on this topic would perhaps provide more robust results. If an extensive study of this topic were to be conducted, the questions contained within the questionnaire could be more precisely constructed to be able to analyze why the consumers react as they do in relation to the advertisement.
For example, one sequence of questions could be as follows: *What do you think of when you see the word [word]? Why do you think the word [word] was chosen, associations to the word? Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word? Why does the word convey positivity/negativity? Does the word [word] reinforce or challenge the message of the advertisement? Why do you believe it reinforces or challenges the message?* Framing the questions in this way would reveal what was present in a participant’s encyclopedic memory, and the enrichment process as accounted for in relevance theory, and might also explain how different semiotic signs in advertisements may affect people in different ways, depending on their life experience and familiarity with similar texts. A more extensive study of this topic may also include male participants in order to be able to establish how gender influences the results, how advertisements can cross gender boundaries and how this may impact on how they are interpreted. The interviews should be conducted with a larger number of people of different ages and of both sexes to provide a more representative sample of the adult population of Sweden, and thereby make the results more generalizable.
7. References

7.1 Bibliography

**Acheoah, John Emike, Adeoye, Adeyinka and Olaleye, Joel Iyiola (2015)**


[http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bib.hh.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=8&sid=cb7f88e7-f41c-43fa-a0dd-1b93ebaf8850%40sessionmgr4010](http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bib.hh.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=8&sid=cb7f88e7-f41c-43fa-a0dd-1b93ebaf8850%40sessionmgr4010) [Accessed 20th of April, 2018]

[Accessed 25th of May, 2018]


Foster, Stuart. School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences. Halmstad Högskola, 2018


Gunelius, Susan (2016) *Secrets to Use Pronouns in Copywriting and Boost Marketing Results*


[Accessed 20th of August, 2018]


[Accessed 28th of August, 2018]


**OXFORD Collocation Dictionary**


**Pomorska, Krystyna and Rudy, Stephen (1985) Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time.** Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press


**Riebs W. Karl and Reeves, Kalinda (2004) ASVAB Exam Cram.** Pearson IT Certification


**Shakespeare Online** [http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/18.html](http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/18.html) [Accessed 25th of September, 2018]


**Tyler, Andrea; Kim Yiyoung; Takada, Mari (2008)** *Language in the Context of Use: Discourse and Cognitive Approaches to Language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter


We'll provide the twinkle that makes you a star.
We'll supply the rose that makes them blush.
7.5 Appendix 4

Questionnaire #1

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
   Yes.

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
   Professional make-up and colour.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
   Yes, mascara and lipstick.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
   She is classy and beautiful, looks like a moviestar from the 50s-60s. She looks composed and almost a little "far away". It looks like she is there physically, but not mentally.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
   I think she is famous in some way, maybe a moviestar. She looks important and confident. She has a busy life.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
   The “you” is me. Yes it includes myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
   M.A.C but not the company as a whole, I believe it is the people that makes or come up with the make-up.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”?
   I think of “twinkle, twinkle little star”.
   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
      Because she “twinkles” with her eyes and she wears their eyeshadow.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      I have a positive feeling of twinkle.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
   A famous person, like a moviestar. Someone important.
   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
      Because M.A.C wants you to feel important and make you feel like you can look like a star if you wear their make-up.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Someone who is confident and wants to make a statement.

Advertisement 2

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She looks a bit shy but friendly. Almost like a dancer.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
I think she lives a busy life and she likes to have fun and meet people. I think she has a great social life.

3. Who is the “them” in the ad?
I think they mean men.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
Like I said before, the people who make the make-up.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?
I think of a big, red rose.
   a. Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
   Because rose is a type of colour.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?
I think of when a person blushes because they are uncomfortable.
   a. Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?
   Because they trying to sell a product which makes you look like you are blushing without actually blushing.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Negative.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Someone who wants some colour in their life. Someone who is not afraid to be seen.

Advertisement 3

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She looks like the stereotype of the “sexy teacher” or “sexy secretary”. Attractive, sexual and she knows it and is not afraid of showing it.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
I think she meet a lot of men and lives an active life. She works in a office and goes to a lot of “after works”. She feels like a tease.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
You does not include myself, this advertisement speaks to someone else.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The people who creates the make-up, not the M.A.C Company but the actual people.

5. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”?
I think of the berry and a cherry-tree.

a. **Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen?**
   Because the colour of the lipstick reminds of a cherry.

b. **Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?**
   Positive.

6. **What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?**
   In combination with that picture of the woman, I think of a sexual act where the woman is on top of a man.

   a. **Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?**
   Maybe they want to provoke some type of reaction in the reader to make them look at the advertisement one more time.

   b. **Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the phrase?**
   Neutral.

7. **What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word?**
   It feels like they mean on top of a man. Very degrading to women.

   a. **Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?**
   Negative.

8. **What kind of person do you think would buy this product?**
   Someone who is sexually active and lives the same life as that woman in the ad.

---

**How often do you wear makeup?**

- Every day
- 4-5 times a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Less than 2 times a week

**What gender do you identify yourself as?**

- Woman
- Man
- Other: ______________

**How old are you?**

- 15-25
- 26-35
Questionnaire #2

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
   No.

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
   Nothing special, make-up.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
   No.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?
   Have not heard of them.

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
   Well, she is a model obviously. With red hair.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
   She lives an active life and likes to show that she has money.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
   Yes, the “you” is me.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
   The company.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”?
   Someone who flutter with her eyelashes. I also think of the fairy.. what’s her name? Tinkerbell? Noo, Tingeling I mean.
   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
      Because it is a little magic in the word.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
   I think of a human, like someone famous.
   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
      Because it is a positive word, everyone wants to be famous.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
   A woman who wants to make a career for herself and become famous, a careerbuilder.
Advertisement 2

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
This woman is also a careerbuilder.
2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
She has a active and busy life.
3. Who is the “them” in the ad?
The career women.
4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The company.
5. What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?
The flower rose.
   a. Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
Because a rose is beautiful and everyone wants to be beautiful, like a rose. It is like a metaphor, is it not?
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.
6. What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?
Someone who blushes.
   a. Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?
Because you want to look like you are blushing, it is a sign of health to have a colourful face.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.
7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
A woman who has a lot going on at once and want to look healthy.

Advertisement 3

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She is a woman who likes challenges and lives each day like it is her last.
2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
She looks like she lives in the 60s and I think she is a dancer. Healthy and active life.
3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
Not me, someone else. Does not include myself.
4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The company.
5. Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen?
Because of the colour on the lipstick. It explains the colour, cherry-red.
   a. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”?
I think of a fruit cocktail.
b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
I think it is a funny phrase and I think of someone who goes their own way.
   a. Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
   It creates a reaction and forces you to think twice about what they mean.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the phrase?
Positive.

7. What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word?
The top of a career, because they want to portray that you will get to the top of your career if you buy this product.
   a. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

8. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
A woman who goes her own way and do not care what other people think of her.

How often do you wear makeup?
   Every day
   4-5 times a week
   **2-3 times a week**
   Less than 2 times a week

What gender do you identify yourself as?
   **Woman**
   Man
   Other: ____________

How old are you?
   15-25
   26-35
   **36-45**
   46-55
7.7 Appendix 6

Questionnaire #3

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
   Hmm, no.

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
   Make-up.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
   No.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?
   Have not heard of them before, at least not what I can recall at the moment.

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
   She is a model.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
   She cares about her looks very much and wants to look flawless all the time.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
   Whoever reads the ad, no it does not include myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
   The company.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”?
   Glow or maybe shiny, glossy.
   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
   Because it is a “funny” word and makes you happy.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Umm, positive I guess.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
   Someone famous, like a movie star.
   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
   Because they want to make the reader believe that you become a star if you buy their product.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
   People who want to be like her in the picture, a star.
Advertisement 2

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
An Asian woman, innocent.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
Like the first ad, she cares about her looks.

3. Who is the “them” in the ad?
Those you want to attract and make interested in yourself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The company.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?
I think of rouge.
   a. Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
   Because rouge has that colour, like a red/pink colour.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?
I think of when someone blushes because they are embarrassed.
   a. Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?
   To bring out the innocence in the women and ad.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
People who are pale and want to have more colour in their life.

Advertisement 3

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She is also a model.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
It looks like she has a busy life and dates a lot of guys, or maybe women. She likes to look sexy and bold.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
Them who wears the product. No.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The company.

5. Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen?
It is a sexually associated word.
   a. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”?
   I think of a berry.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.
6. What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
Ummm, I think of something sexual. Like a man and a woman. Together.
   a. Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
Because girls think they get sexier with the product and they will get the man they want thanks to it.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the phrase?
Positive.
7. What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word?
Well, I think they referring to on top of a man, sexually.
   a. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.
8. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Girls who want to bring out their inner sexy.

How often do you wear makeup?
- Every day
- 4-5 times a week
- **2-3 times a week**
- Less than 2 times a week

What gender do you identify yourself as?
- Woman
- Man
- Other: ______________

How old are you?
- 15-25
- **26-35**
- 36-45
- 46-55
7.8 Appendix 7

Questionnaire #4

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
   Yes, absolutely,

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
   Great make-up.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
   Yes.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
   She is in the movie-business.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
   Business-woman, busy. Like to drink cocktails, like a dry martini.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
   Yes, it includes myself. It is all the women who reads it.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
   The company.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”?
   I think of something magical. Beautiful.
   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
      Because it creates a magical feeling.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      Positive, of course!

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
   A famous person.
   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
      Because they want to make you think that you becomes a star if you uses their products.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
      Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
   Someone who wants to be a star.
Advertisement 2

1. **Who is the woman in the photograph?**
   She is kind and innocent. Happy but a little shy. It looks like she almost blushes for real.

2. **What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?**
   She is a ballet dancer. Active.

3. **Who is the “them” in the ad?**
   The women wearing the product.

4. **Who is the “we” in the ad?**
   The company.

5. **What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?**
   A flower.
   
   a. Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
   Because of the colour of the blush.
   
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

6. **What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?**
   Someone who is blushing because they are shy or embarrassed.
   
   a. Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?
   Because they are trying to sell blush.
   
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Negative, I hate when I blush. Makes me feel uncomfortable.

7. **What kind of person do you think would buy this product?**
   I do not know.

Advertisement 3

1. **Who is the woman in the photograph?**
   She works as a teacher or secretary.

2. **What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?**
   She is busy and likes to drink champagne.

3. **Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?**
   The person reading, yes it includes me.

4. **Who is the “we” in the ad?**
   The company.

5. **Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen?**
   I do not know.
   
   a. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”?
   A berry.
   
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Neutral.
6. What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
I had to think twice when I read it, first I thought of something sexual but then I thought of a woman who gets on top of her career.
   a. Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?
   Because it makes you think.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the phrase?
   Positive.

7. What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word?
Top of the career, because everyone wants to be on top of the world.
   a. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
   Positive.

8. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Someone who is confident and want to be seen.

How often do you wear makeup?
   Every day
   4-5 times a week
   **2-3 times a week**
   Less than 2 times a week

What gender do you identify yourself as?
   **Woman**
   Man
   Other: _______________

How old are you?
   15-25
   26-35
   36-45
   **46-55**
Questionnaire #5

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
Yes, I have.

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
Famous people use it a lot.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
No, not during the last two years. It was like four years since I last bought M.A.C products.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?
I like another brand better.

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She looks confident and sure of who she is.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
A active and healthy life. She likes to go to the gym and meet up with friends after work. She likes to party every weekend. She knows a lot of people, like she has a lot of friends.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
The person who reads it, yes it includes myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The company M.A.C but like the people who designed the ad. The marketing team.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”? 
Like, someone who blinks with their eyes. Like flirting.

   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
   Because they (M.A.C) want to flirt with the people who sees it to make them buy the product.

   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
Shiny, bright. A person who has a bright future, a star.

   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
   Because of the song “twinkle, twinkle little star”. Star and twinkle goes together, it matches.

   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

7. **What kind of person do you think would buy this product?**
Someone who wants to make a statement and believes that they will become a star if they buy it.

**Advertisement 2**

1. **Who is the woman in the photograph?**
She is an Asian woman, she looks kind.

2. **What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?**
She probably does a lot of yoga and mindfulness. She looks like she never stresses and does not like to make plans in advance.

3. **Who is the “them” in the ad?**
The women who buy the product.

4. **Who is the “we” in the ad?**
The company, but like the team that creates the make-up and decides what products to sell.

5. **What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?**
The flower. Love.
   a. **Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?**
   Because a rose is beautiful and everyone wants to be beautiful. But also because the colour of the rouge is in the shade “rose”.
   b. **Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?**
   Positive.

6. **What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?**
I think of the make-up, blush. Or rouge as it is also called.
   a. **Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?**
   Because they are selling a product called blush/rouge.
   b. **Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?**
   Positive.

7. **What kind of person do you think would buy this product?**
Someone who wants to look innocent and fresh, healthy.

**Advertisement 3**

1. **Who is the woman in the photograph?**
She is a teacher. She is strict and takes no bullshit from anyone.

2. **What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?**
Well, since she looks like a teacher I would say that she is smart and read a lot of books and papers. She likes to know more than anyone else, she wants to be the
smartest in the room and impress people. She uses the fact that she is attractive to get ahead.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself? The people who reads the ad, yes it includes myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad? The lipstick they are selling. Because it is thanks to the lipstick you get on top.

5. Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen? Because they are selling a lipstick and you eat cherries and you put lipstick on the lips and eat with your mouth. They are connected in some way.
   a. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”? I think of the berry.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word? Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”? I think that the lipstick helps you get ahead and makes the way to the top easier.
   a. Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”? Because the phrase can have multiple meanings and that makes people think twice about it. Creates a reaction.

7. What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word? Like, the top of a career.

8. What kind of person do you think would buy this product? Someone who is bold and want to make a statement.

How often do you wear makeup?

- Every day
- 4-5 times a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Less than 2 times a week

What gender do you identify yourself as?

- Woman
Man

Other: ______________

How old are you?

15-25
26-35
36-45
46-55
Questionnaire #6

1. Have you heard of M.A.C cosmetics before?
Yes.

2. What is your first thought when you think of M.A.C cosmetics?
Expensive but great make-up.

3. Have you bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years?
Yes, I have.

4. If you have not bought any products from M.A.C cosmetics during the last two years, why not?

Advertisement 1

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She is an important person and she knows it, almost a little self-important. Selfish.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
An active and healthy life. Does a lot of yoga.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
The reader, yes it includes myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The store who sells the make-up since they are the one providing the product.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “twinkle”?
Umm, like twinkle twinkle little star. It is the first thing that comes to mind.
   a. Why do you think the word “twinkle” was chosen?
Because it is associated with the word “star”.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “star”?
A star in the sky, a beautiful and rare thing.
   a. Why do you think the word “star” was chosen?
Because it is like a metaphor for a famous person. Everyone wants to be a star.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Positive.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Well, someone who wants to be a star.

Advertisement 2
1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
An innocent and calm woman.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
She definitely does like pilates or yoga. She likes mindfulness and to take it easy.
She lives in a house on a meadow. Alone.

3. Who is the “them” in the ad?
The people you want to attract and be noticed by. Not only in the love life, but also in
the career. If you want your boss to notice that you make a good job.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The store who sells the make-up.

5. What do you think of when you see the word “rose”?
In this case I think of the colour of when someone blushes.
   a. Why do you think the word “rose” was chosen?
Because of the colour of the product in the ad. They belong “together” or what you
should call it.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Hm, positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the word “blush”?
I think of the product, blush, the make-up product.
   a. Why do you think the word “blush” was chosen?
Because they are advertising blush, or rouge as it is also called.
   b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?
Neutral. I do not use blush so I have no feelings about it to be honest.

7. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?
Someone who needs a little extra colour in their life to feel confident.

Advertisement 3

1. Who is the woman in the photograph?
She looks like a model from the 80s with that hairstyle.

2. What kind of lifestyle do you think she lives?
An active and fun life. Like she has a busy life and a lot going on at once. A business
woman, she wants to make a career.

3. Who is the “you” in the ad? Does the “you” include yourself?
The people who read the ad, yes it includes myself.

4. Who is the “we” in the ad?
The store who sells the make-up.

5. Why do you think the word “cherry” was chosen?
Because of the colour of the lipstick, it is cherry red.
   a. What do you think of when you hear the word “cherry”?
A colour, cherry red.

b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?

Positive.

6. What do you think of when you see the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?

That it is a well-known phrase, I think of an sexual act.

a. Why do you think they chose the phrase “cherry that gets you on top”?

Because they want to create a reaction and make people think about what they really want to say with the ad.

b. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the phrase?

Positive.

7. What “top” do they refer to and why did they choose that word?

The top of a career.

a. Positive/negative/neutral feelings of the word?

Positive.

8. What kind of person do you think would buy this product?

Someone who wants to make a statement and be successful I guess. Someone who dares.

How often do you wear makeup?

Every day

4-5 times a week

2-3 times a week

Less than 2 times a week

What gender do you identify yourself as?

Woman

Man

Other: _____________

How old are you?

15-25

26-35

36-45

46-55