

SPEECH ACTS OF HYGIENE AND COSMETICS ADS  
IN THE *NAUJOJI ROMUVA* (1931–1940)

*S u m m a r y*

The object of study of this article is the speech acts of ads for hygiene and cosmetics products in the *Naujoji Romuva* (NR) (1931–1940). The empiric material, repetitive ads excluded, consists of 176 ads for hygiene and cosmetics products that are analysed in this article on the basis of the theory of speech acts. Although, taking into account the economic and cultural level in Lithuania of that time, the number of advertisements was limited due to the scarcity of supply and sceptical attitudes of the society (Jankevičiūtė 2015: 29), the scant empirical material from the NR publication showcases certain trends in hygiene and cosmetics ads in Lithuania between the two world wars.

The goal of the article is to identify the speech acts and micro acts that prevail in the NR hygiene and cosmetics ads from 1931–1940.

The study has showed the following categories of speech acts to be used in ads for hygiene and cosmetics: (1) representatives (82.7%); (2) directives (12.6%); (3) commissives (3.6%), and (4) expressives (1.1%). No declarative speech acts were found in the ad copy researched.

A qualitative analysis of the representatives has revealed that the more prevalent are the micro acts of assertion (50.2%), praise or boasting (25.5%), and information (18.7%), while the presence of the micro acts of assumption (3.3%), condition (1.6%), and cajolment (0.7%) is scarce. An analysis of the directives in the ads has showed that the micro acts of encouragement (76.2%) and instruction (19%) occur more frequently, and the micro acts of requesting (3.6%) and advising and recommending (1.2%) are very rare. The rare commissives (3.6%) in the ads appearing in the periodical that was in circulation between the two world wars are split into the micro acts of (1) promising (95.8%) and (2) assuring (4.2%). The expressives that make a seldom appearance (1.1%) in hygiene and cosmetics ads in the NR of the period

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between 1931 and 1940 can be divided into the micro acts of (1) emotions (60%) and (2) thanksgiving (40%).

It is evident that efforts were made to appeal to the reader in the ads for hygiene and cosmetics in the NR, employing a variety of methods to make the ads effective yet always maintaining a respectful, polite relationship with the addressees (the copy dominated by words in plural with singular only used to address children or young people in a familiar, friendly fashion; some syntactic constructions with polite words, etc., are present). The copy followed the principle of economy of language, with short, suggestive declarative sentences prevalent to highlight the qualities and advantages of the underlying product using a firm, sure intonation. Such sentences left no doubt as to the benefits of the products or services on offer. Various tools of linguistic expression were employed to affect the feelings and imagination of the addressee. The most common tool of grammatical expression was adjectives (superlatives as often as not), which were used to describe the qualities of the underlying product with a certain degree of exaggeration. The choice wilfully leaned towards adjectives that would only arouse positive emotions in the addressee (*soft, pleasant*, and so on). Obviously, the importance of speech acts in the hygiene and cosmetics ads in the NR is rather variegated. From the viewpoint of the motivation of communication, the speech acts and micro-acts aimed to respectfully inspire the addressee to buy the product on offer were the more prevalent.

KEYWORDS: linguistic pragmatics, speech acts, representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, hygiene ads, cosmetics ads, the *Naujoji Romuva*.

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