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**Multimodality and Genre Hybridism in
Online Advertising of Weight Loss
Supplements**

Master's Diploma Thesis

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2014

*I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.*

.....
Author's signature

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1. Introduction

The research of advertising has long been a topic discussed in many disciplines such as marketing, psychology, and linguistics. All points of view offer valuable information that helps one understand how advertising influences the world they live in. The present thesis will explore advertising as a multimodal genre that makes use of hybrid genres embedded in the discourse. While many studies of advertising have been carried out on the basis of multimodality, and genre hybridism has also been studied extensively (Bhatia, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Santini, 2007; Najafian, 2011), this work aspires to link these advertising features together in an attempt to comprehend meaning construction in a more complex way.

The thesis will explore the roles of multimodality and genre hybridism in online advertisements of weight loss supplements. It will focus on the issue of creating meaning through interaction of multiple modes. It is understandable that multimodality has always been part of written discourse, but it is particularly appealing to pay attention to it in digital age, when combination of different modes to create one whole was made much easier than ever before. Except for multimodality, it will be also concerned with the notion of genre hybridism in an effort to comprehend how different genres are incorporated into online weight loss advertising and how it relates to multimodality. The thesis will explore how multimodality and genre hybridism position the participants and what kinds of power relations are being established. Such analysis will help in understanding the manipulative principles of advertising that are able to exploit existing social values and create new values as well.

Except for the first introductory chapter, the thesis features nine chapters that consist of a theoretical background and an analysis of chosen materials. Chapter 2 is concerned with the genre of online advertising, its specifics, and participants. It provides a discussion on functions of advertising that will be important for the analytical part of the thesis. A comparison of online and print advertising is included in order to pinpoint changes that occurred over the past few decades. Chapter 3 discusses the concept of lifestylism that appears to be inherent to weight loss advertising. Chapter 4 offers description of the corpus and looks at two types of websites that appear in it. It also highlights the importance of target audience in the analysis of weight loss advertising. In Chapter 5, the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is proposed as the most suitable candidate for the analysis of multimodality and genre hybridism in relation to power. It also focuses on methodology that is later used to analyze the corpus. Chapter 6 proposes hypotheses for individual parts of the analysis in order to target the main features of multimodality and genre hybridism that are relevant for the research. As far as the analysis is concerned, Chapter 7 features findings from the corpus and offers examples to document them. The results are presented in Chapter 8 that verifies the aforementioned hypotheses. Last but not least, the conclusion discusses the findings and suggests possibilities for future research.

2. Advertising

Advertising seems to represent an inseparable part of human life. Whether one is listening to the radio during breakfast, driving to work passing billboards, researching on the Internet, reading newspapers after lunch, or watching TV in the

evening, advertising is present in different forms throughout the whole day. Even though people are likely to encounter an immense amount of advertisements, most of them do not stop to think of advertising as something worthy of detailed analysis. According to Cook (1992, p.181) advertising is held in low esteem compared to film or poetry. Its artistic values are, however, often considerably underestimated as advertising employs wide range of strategies that are frequently very attentively crafted. Negative reputation of advertising might be connected with notions of exaggeration, pretence, and even fraud in some cases. Despite these issues, advertising proved to be a foundation stone of marketing in consumer society and surrounds people on everyday basis. This is one of many reasons why advertising is worth of much deeper analysis than pausing to read an interesting ad while flipping through a magazine.

First and foremost, it is necessary to establish what the term advertising actually means. Advertising has been studied extensively over the past few decades, and researchers seem to have found a consensus that it is a type of communication. According to Dyer (1995), advertising is "a powerful form of social communication" (p. 9). Similarly, Angela Goddard (2002) suggests that advertising is an "act of communication" (p. 5). Other researchers such as Cook (1992) and Arens (2005) also emphasize the role of communication theory in advertising: "Advertising is the structured and composed nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services, and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media." (Arens, 2005, p. 4). The following subchapter provides a discussion on the communicative nature of advertising.

2.1 Advertising as Communication

Since advertising is being defined as communication, it is important to consider how communication works in general. The most basic model of communication was proposed by Shannon and Weaver (1949). This transmission model features two participants: an information source/sender and a receiver. The sender is the source encoding the message, while the receiver decodes the message (Figure 1). The message itself contains information that is being transmitted. The last important part of this model is channel representing medium through which the message is being transmitted. As Goddard (2002) points out, different terms for sender and receiver have been suggested over the years such as addresser and addressee, producer and consumer, or writer and reader depending on the point of view. With regard to advertising, persuader and persuadee are often utilized to highlight persuasive function. For the purpose of this thesis, however, the terms sender and receiver will be used as possibly the most neutral terms.

To demonstrate how this model works in practice, one could imagine a man who tries to pay compliment to his wife. In this case, the man is the sender who needs to encode his message (e.g. You look lovely today.). For the woman to decode the message, the man must send this message through a channel (speech). The woman hears the speech and must decode it on the basis of her communicative skills, attitude, knowledge, social system, and culture (Berlo, 1966). Only then can she understand the message as a compliment. Of course, this model is very simple and does not encompass all important features of communication such as feedback, but it is enough to highlight the significance of the participants.

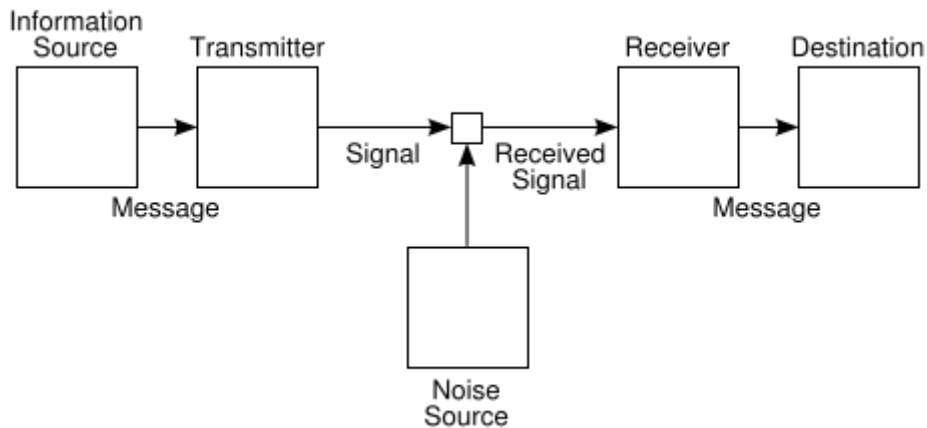


Figure 1. Diagram of a general communication system (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

Furthermore, this model can be adopted for advertising as well. The company that wants to promote their product, service, or idea is the sender. People who actually come across the advertisement are the receivers. Advertisement itself is the message, while channel can be a billboard, a magazine, a TV, the Internet, and other media. The communication principle remains the same. The company encodes their message into an advertisement and sends it through a channel. The receivers, who come across the advertisement, are ideally capable of decoding the message and decide what to do with this piece of information. It is important to note that there is no direct link between decoding the message and the next course of action of the receivers. Even if the receivers manage to decode the message correctly, they may decide that it is not relevant for their life, and the intended response will not be evoked. This, however, does not mean that the receivers are not aware of such intentions. In most cases, the receivers decode the message itself and also the fact that it is an advertisement that tries to provoke them into particular action. It might be difficult for the sender to further influence whether the receivers will purchase the

product in case they were not fully persuaded by the advertisement. Pelclová (2010), in her discussion of TV advertising, suggests that:

The persuadee can provide verbal feedback on what he or she sees on a TV screen, but the problem is that the persuader is deprived of this verbal reaction. This lack of verbal reciprocity is, however, compensated for by another reciprocal action and that is the purchase of the product, which, of course, takes longer than verbal reciprocity. (p. 36)

Cook (1992) builds on this simplified model of advertising by introducing the concept of four participants worlds (Figure 2).

- the world of the sender
- the fictional world of the characters
- the fantasy world of the receiver
- the real world of the receiver (p. 146)

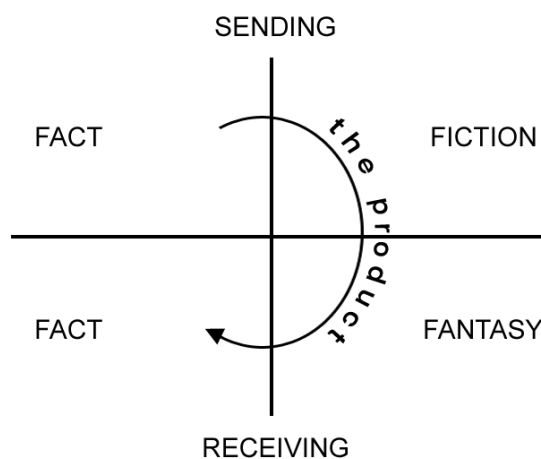


Figure 2. The four worlds of an advertisement (Cook, 1992, p.149).

According to him, the world of the sender is where products are manufactured and distributed, and the world of the receiver is where products can be purchased. The fictional world and the fantasy world are mediators between the real worlds. What is equally important is the fact that some participants may belong to more worlds than one: "Real celebrities and manufacturers appear in the fictional world, as do apparently real consumers; people speaking directly for the manufacturer appear in the fictional world too" (p.146). This creates a complex model in which the relation between participants seems to be much closer. If the senders intend to create a successful advertisement, they must try to bring these worlds together and diminish the distance between them and the receivers. Cook (1992) argues that "what the ad seeks to achieve is enough contact between reality and fiction, sending and receiving, characters and consumer, fantasy and fact, for the passage of the product to be feasible" (p.146).

In fact, advertisements use wide range of strategies to overcome this gap: gaze of the character, the product itself (it exists in multiple worlds and creates a connection), and the narrative voice. The narrative voice is particularly interesting as it is usually a mysterious participant of the communication. It speaks to the receivers: addresses them, appeals to them, asks them questions and urges them to take certain actions. The narrative voice communicates seemingly directly with the receiver but stays unrevealed. It possesses unique ability to bring together fiction and reality. One important quality that can influence this ability is tone of voice. As Dyer (1995) argues, "it is not only words that attract attention to an advertiser's product. Usually we are more inclined to listen to a speaker if the voice sounds pleasant or friendly." (p. 112). He continues to suggest that even though TV and radio certainly have considerable

advantage over print and written advertisements, the latter are not deprived of tone of voice either. Tone of voice can be expressed by the style of language used in the advertisement.

As mentioned above, the communicative model and the model of four worlds have a lot in common. They both include senders who try to get the message/product across to the receiver. The receiver of an advertisement must encode the message so that the product can enter the fantasy world and possibly the real world of the receiver.

2.2 Advertising as a Discourse Type

The previous section identified advertising as a type of communication. While this kind of definition is necessary for the purpose of this thesis, it seems equally important to categorize it in terms of discourse type. This discussion will be valuable later in the analysis of genre hybridism.

Before this discussion can go any further, it is necessary to establish that there is no single theory of genre that could be considered the correct one. Many researchers tried to define genre (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990; Biber, 1988; Martin, 1985; Santini, 2007), but the discussion is far from being exhausted. Even though that poses a significant problem, Boese (2005) manages to isolate the key components that appear to be repeated through most of the existing research on this topic: "The three underlying concepts that appear consistently in the definitions of the term 'genre' are: style, form, and content of a document. The purpose of a document is subsumed by these features" (as cited in Clugston, 2013, p. 15). Biber (1988) suggests that genres, in contrary to text types, "are determined on the basis of external criteria relating to the

speaker's purpose and topic; they are assigned on the basis of use rather than on the basis of form" (p. 170). Koteyko (2014) comments on the inhomogeneous nature of terminology connected to generic studies by suggesting that the term "discourse type" should be a preferred label because the term genre is contested (p. 49). In view of new digital genres, Boese reformulated his claim by saying that "a new definition for genre with respect to digital documents is necessary, incorporating the style, form, content and purpose of a document" (as cited in Clugston, 2013, p. 26). According to Clugston (2013), this addition of purpose originates from the fact that with the rise of new media such as the Internet people "draw on known genres reproducing those genres that they have experienced in the past as members of other communities" (p. 26). It follows that such manipulation with already existing genres can give rise to different purposes of the newly emerging genres.

Purpose, however, can be of multiple characters. On one hand, there is, of course, the purpose of the sender. On the other hand, as Swales (1990) points out "genres are the properties of discourse communities; that is to say, genres belong to discourse communities, not to individuals, others kind of grouping or to wider speech communities" (p.9). Considering discourse of advertising, discourse community would necessarily include the manufacturer, creative team, and the recipients. Cook (1992) argues that for each participant of the advertising process purposes can and probably will differ. He problematizes the notion of function by the fact that it can be viewed from two perspectives: "The function which the sender intends the discourse to have may not be the same as the function it actually does have for the receiver." (p.5). Even though the intended purpose was to persuade the receivers to buy a product, the receivers may find a purpose that is unrelated to that of the senders.

In response to this claim, Bex (1993) argues:

That the producers of ads may be fulfilling different personal needs is unsurprising since individuals are situated variously in relation to the discursive practices that constitute their culture. However, they all contribute to the primary function of advertising which is to draw attention to specific goods and services in order to increase their consumption. (p. 719)

An interesting claim that Clugston (2013) investigates in connection with genre and advertising is that both terms can be defined by function (p.15). If then the functions seem to correspond, it is a valuable indicator of genre. Cook (1992), in his definition of advertising as a discourse type, proposes fourteen characteristics and emphasises that these are not strict rules but rather prototypical features. The most important points for the present research are claims that "ads are multi-modal, and can use pictures, music and language, either singly or in combination, as the medium permits", and they are also "parasitic: appropriating and existing through the voices of other discourse types" (p. 176). These prototypical features will be subjected to analysis in order to understand how they interact to create meaning.

2.3 The Functions of Advertising

Up until now, the present discussion of advertising only barely touched upon an immensely important issue; what the function or rather the functions of advertising are. It has been mentioned earlier that the senders are trying to make appeal to their potential customers in order to make profit. Many researchers recognize persuasive/promotional function as the most important goal (Hopkins, 1923; Goddard, 2002; Bhatia, 2004; Dyer, 1995). Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to assume that it

is the only one. With discourse as complex as advertising, one must consider many more functions that become important factors in what an advertisement contains.

As Goddard (2002) mentions, the origin of the word "advertising" can be traced back to the Latin verb "advertere" which could be translated as "to turn towards". She argues that even though advertisements certainly try to attract attention, it is not the only function they possess. She presents an example of a road sign which is also designed to attract attention, but people would not perceive it as an advertisement (p. 6). It follows that attracting attention is certainly one function of advertising, but it is still not enough to define advertising as such. Another function that is often ascribed to advertising is informative. Again, adverts are likely to contain some kind of information about the product, service, or idea. Nevertheless, advertisements are more than just informative texts, and even texts that appear to be purely informative can contain other functions as well. Goddard (2002) argues that "central to our idea of an advert appears to be the factor of conscious intention behind the text, with the aim of benefiting the originator materially or through some other less tangible gain, such as enhancement of status or image" (p.7). It is equally important not to overlook the identification function of advertising, which tries to make the product or brand stand out between their competitors. Even though this is closely connected with the persuasive function they are not one and the same. The role of identification function is not to necessarily persuade the customer that their product is the best, but that it is in some way unique and differs from other similar products on the market.

An important issue connected to this topic is how functions of advertising change over time. Even though persuasive function remains in its leading role, other

functions that have never been so distinctive came into focus. Dyer (1995) claims that senders give preference to manipulation of social values over informative function:

The primary function of advertising is, we are told, to introduce a wide range of consumer goods to the public and thus to support the free market economy, but this is clearly not its only role; over the years it has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes, and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services. (p. 1)

Such argument suggests that not only are the functions of advertising diverse, but they can evolve. This discussion of advertising functions is far from exhaustive, and it would not be possible to cover this issue satisfyingly in a work of this length. It did, however, tackle the issue of multifunctionality of advertising. It will be evident later in the thesis that functions of advertising play an important part in composition of advertisements.

2. 4 Target Audience

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the primary aims of advertising is to persuade the receivers. In this respect, the senders might be labelled the persuaders, while the receivers would be the persuadees. It is quite understandable that a vast majority of persuaders would want to attract attention of as many customers as possible. There are indeed advertisements that are aimed at mass target audience. Dyer (1995) calls this type "commercial consumer advertising" (p. 3). This type of advertising focuses on general public and works only for products that are not

highly specialized. As Dyer observed, "commercial consumer advertising is perhaps the kind most visible in our society" (p.3).

It would be, however, incorrect to believe that such mass target audience is a homogenous one. Each individual has different experience, attitudes, and relationships that influence their perception of advertising and the world in general. Dyer (1995) suggests that people are much less passive and easily influenced than it was thought.

A member of the audience, some research has shown, cannot be affected by the media if they do not fulfil or gratify a need. For instance, if a person leads an active, happy life and is secure and stable, no amount of advertising which appeals to fears of loneliness or of being a social outcast, or to social snobbery will succeed. (p. 62)

This is an important notion in the discussion of target audience because it suggests that even if a product is supposed to appeal to large audience, there are certain limitations. This means that receivers must be at least partly open to the prospect of using certain product or service, and the advertisement only increases their interest. This is not to say that the receivers are always aware that they might develop a need for the object advertised; nevertheless, if it contradicts their lifestyle, beliefs or needs, it would be utterly difficult for the senders to persuade them. The concept of target audience is thus crucial for the analysis because it has a major impact on the overall form of the advertisement. There are, of course, advertisements that are targeted on much smaller audiences, and it is a considerable advantage for the sender to know them well. If they manage to assess their audience properly, they can tailor the advert exactly to their needs which is likely to cause increase in sales.

2.5 Contemporary Advertising and Changes in Media

As mentioned earlier, advertising is surrounding people every day. There is a variety of different types as well as media that serve as a platform for the advertisements. Advertising changed considerably over the past few decades; from printed ads and posters to online pop-up windows on the Internet. Janoschka (2004) categorizes contemporary advertising into traditional and online (Figure 3). This categorization is useful because there are important differences between these basic types. Nonetheless, it is certainly beneficial to look for some similarities as well.

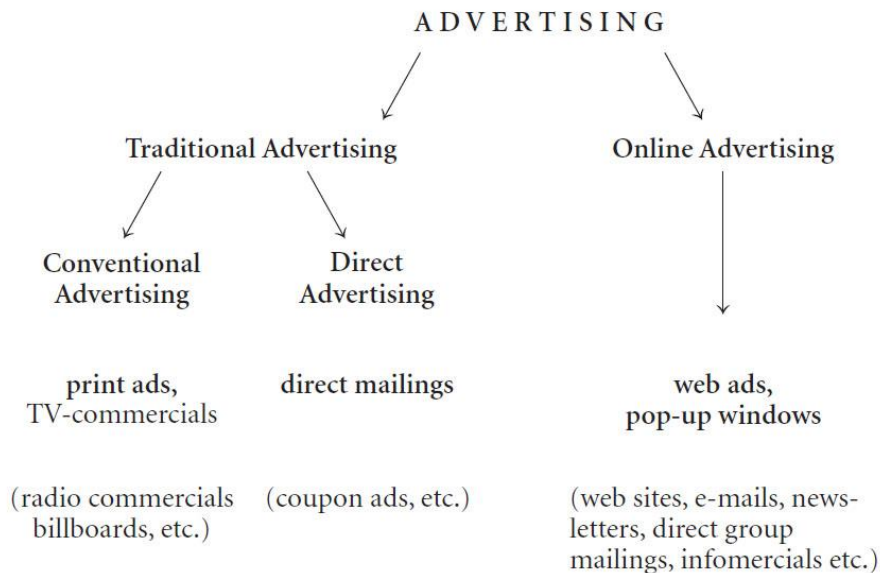


Figure 3. Categorization of advertising (Janoschka, 2004).

Even though traditional and online advertising may differ a lot, some functions remain the same; primarily to attract attention and persuade. They usually try to inform, make the product recognizable, and they are intended to arouse desire in the receivers. Janoschka (2004) points out that "online advertising generally follows the same principles as traditional advertising but develops its own communication strategies in correlation with the new technical and medium-based requirements" (p.

17). There are, of course, differences in how they achieve their goals, but some persuasive strategies remain the same. It is, for example, the use of questions that is so pervasive in printed ads which appears to be important in online advertising as well. According to Janoschka (2004), "online advertising uses these conversation markers as a means of interaction between the ad and the addressee" (p. 132). The same can be said about traditional forms of advertisements as well since the use of questions to attract attention and build a connection between the participants is one of the most effective strategies.

There are, however, many differences between online and traditional advertising; one of them being availability. While television advertisement lasts between thirty to sixty seconds (Cook, 1992, p. 154), online advertisements are available all the time. People can access websites of manufacturers at any time and can return to it later. TV ads, on the other hand, are restricted in time, and the receivers usually cannot watch it again whenever they want unless they record it. Apart from time restrictions, spatial availability of online advertising has changed as well. Majority of websites can be accessed from different parts of the world and products can be shipped worldwide. This fact immensely influenced the number of target receivers which increased considerably. Another change that occurred in respect to limitations is the actual space for advertisements. While Janoschka (2004) points out that "this spatial limitation is identical to traditional media advertising. Print ads also have limited sizes within their carrier medium" (p. 47), this claim is probably not valid for all types of online advertising. It will certainly hold for web banners and web ad traps, but it would be difficult to claim that promotional websites have the same limitations as printed ads. Even if there were no limitations on how much space

an ad could occupy in a magazine, the issue of limited space for the magazine itself would still remain. Websites, on the contrary, can be scrolled down, and the vertical limit is almost endless. It is, however, true that horizontal space is limited by the width of the monitor.

Another important difference is interactivity of online advertising. Janoschka (2004) argues that "online advertising is interaction-orientated. Digital ads are meant to be directly activated. This activation of advertising is a form of interaction, a kind of user response which provides evidence for the novel role of addressees" (p. 47). The receivers can click on hypertext links which lead them to another website or allow them to move between different levels of the website. They are often offered a choice to play a video which they can pause before it ends. As with print advertisements, the senders do not have absolute power over the content that the audience chooses to process, but online advertising gives the receivers even more freedom. One such aspect is giving feedback. As mentioned before, reciprocity might be difficult to establish with more traditional types of advertising. On the other hand, as Arens (2005) suggested, "with the growth of interactive media such as the Internet, they can give instantaneous, real-time feedback on the same channel used by the original message sender" (p.4).

As can be seen above, this subchapter outlined just a few of many similarities and differences between online and traditional advertising. For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to pinpoint the differences in time and spatial limitations and interactive characteristics on websites in order to understand the changing nature of advertising.

3. Lifestylism

In the past few decades, healthy lifestyle has become an ideal that many people strive to achieve. Even though opinions on what is a healthy lifestyle differ immensely, it is believed that lean, athletic body can be considered part of being healthy. Active lifestyle and healthy eating are often promoted as the best way to enjoy life fully. It is, of course, not presented as the only way to live, but those who differ are often excluded from this elite community. Skrabanek (1994) uses the term lifestylism to refer to "the view that most diseases are the result of unhealthy habits or behaviour" (as cited in Koteyko & Nerlich, 2007, p.28).

Such point of view goes hand in hand with advertising of health related products. Producers assume that their target audience is part of the community that strives to be healthy, and their manipulation is thus made easier since they are already open to the prospect of healthier lifestyle. If the product is advertised as a possibility to become healthier or healthy again, there is a chance that people will be tempted by these claims. The lean body ideal is particularly important in weight loss advertising as it is "connoted not only as a well functioning machine, but slender, attractive, and normal" (Koteyko & Nerlich, 2007, p. 29). Another significant concept connected to weight loss advertising is the ideal body image. Researchers from different disciplines such as psychology or sociology argue that exposure of thin body ideal in the media can shape social attitudes and values (Grabe, Ward & Hyde, 2008). Therefore, weight loss advertisements may take advantage of the present trend of lifestylism and lean body ideal to attract more customers.

4. Materials and Corpus Description

As mentioned in the Introduction, a corpus of online weight loss advertisements will serve as the material for the analysis. Since the Internet is overflowing with many types of advertising, only specific type of online advertising will be included in the analysis. The selection of material was influenced by two restrictions; type of product and type of advertisement. Firstly, the corpus contains only advertising of weight loss supplements. Secondly, only official websites of the producers can be part of the corpus due to the different nature of other types of online advertising such as banners, pop-ups, and web ad traps.

The corpus consists of a collection of 46 websites that promote a particular weight loss product. Most of these websites promote one product only, but several of them promote two or more. If this is the case, the analysis will concentrate on one chosen product on the website. The alphabetical list of individual products can be seen below (Table 1). The websites were accessed and stored on computer in October 2014.

LIST OF ADVERTISEMENTS			
1. 72 Hours	13. Fenphedra	25. Nuratrim	37. Slimor
2. 7-DAY	14. Fibretrim	26. Nutres	38. Slimquick
3. 7-DFBX	15. Fullfast	27. Phen375	39. Slimweight
4. Abidexin	16. Garnicia Ultra	28. Phenphedrine	40. Slym Magic
5. Abrexin	17. Hydroxycut	29. Phenterex	41. Superfriutslim
6. Accuslim	18. Lida	30. Phosphacore	42. TropicalGreenCoffee
7. Adapexin	19. LiDaDaidaihua	31. PoactolXS	43. Ultra90
8. Adiphene	20. Lipobind	32. Reduxcut	44. Unique Hoodia
9. Apidexin	21. Lipofuse	33. Relacore	45. Xenadrine
10. Avesil	22. Lipozene	34. Sea-thin	46. Zantrex3
11. Capsiplex	23. Meratol	35. Slim10	
12. Decaslim	24. MiracleBurn360	36. Slimextreme	

Table 1. List of advertisements.

Due to the size of the corpus it will be available as a separate appendix on a DVD-ROM. It is either possible to view the whole corpus in one PDF file or access the saved websites offline. Nevertheless, videos can only be viewed online as they are usually embedded in the website and cannot be downloaded. The appendix that will be part of this thesis will provide the contents of the accompanying DVD-ROM.

4.1 Types of Products

First and foremost, it must be stated that all of these products are over-the-counter supplements which means that customers do not need a prescription from specialists. As such, their claims are not certified by any sort of authority. They should be, however, tested for safety. Even this claim, unfortunately, cannot be guaranteed as the authorities are not able to control the content of the Internet at all times. Content on the Internet can change anytime, and it is thus the responsibility of customers to consider possible dangers. Most of these websites contain disclaimers such as "These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease" (Phenterex).

Even though all of these products are focused on weight loss, it is necessary to point out that not all of them are of the same nature. Vast majority of these weight loss supplements are pills, but there are two exceptions. The first exception is the product Slimweight which is a patch designed to gradually supply the body with ingredients that are supposed to help lose weight. The other exception is Slimquick which includes a supplement in form of pills, but it is advertised together with other products as weight loss system. Despite these differences, the purpose of these

websites is identical to those that promote weight loss pill supplements; therefore, they are suitable candidates for the corpus.

4.2 Types of Websites

As mentioned earlier, only official promotional websites of the product will be analyzed. There are many websites in the corpus that Clugston (2013) terms Long Scroll Web Advertisements (LSWAs). According to him, these advertisements offer various products for sale via the Internet and employ the functionality of scrolling. This type of websites has a unique structure. Most of the content on the website is actually concentrated on the homepage of the website, and it creates a long strip of discourse. That is the reason why such websites are often called single page websites. Since computer monitors are not technically capable of displaying the whole strip at once, the receivers need to scroll down the page in order to see the entire content of the website. According to Kress (2003), reading paths that were before closed and to a certain extent predetermined are now, in the era of new media, more open, non-linear, and less prescribed. It is, however, important to notice that while reading paths in LSWAs are more open than in densely printed texts, they are certainly more prescribed than websites which contain homepage and menus that redirect the receiver on other subpages on the website. On the other hand, LSWAs may and often do contain menus that redirect the readers on certain section of the homepage which means that they also allow considerable freedom. Websites function on the basis of hypertext that enables the reader to navigate through series of hyperlinks. Chiew (2004), in his discussion on multimodality in hypertext, argues:

The term 'hypertext', coined by Ted Nelson in the 1960s, was used to refer to a form of electronic text where the mode of publication was characterized by 'non-sequential writing'; that is, 'text that branches and allows choices to the reader' in the form of 'a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways' through an interactive screen interface. (Chiew, 2004. p. 131)

Except for LSWAs that are often used for weight loss advertisements, more traditional multi page websites can be found in the corpus as well. Even though such websites are more structured, they are composed of similar sections as LSWAs. This division implies that LSWAs are more interconnected, even though individual sections are separated by salient headlines. On the other hand, they include very similar content which allows for joint analysis of both types.

4.3 Target Audience

Weight loss advertising websites are a very specific field of online discourse. This is not only due to the features mentioned above but also because of its target audience. While weight loss products are certainly not desirable for everyone participating in online environment, the target group is considerably large. This is due to the fact that many companies offer the option of worldwide shipping which makes their target audience much wider than ever before. In addition, the growing issue of obesity in present-day society only increases this number. This, of course, does not mean that weight loss supplements are only targeted on people suffering from obesity. In fact, modern world is bombarded with idealization of lean bodies, and people who are not obese but do not fit this picture perfectly may feel the need to

search for help in form of weight loss supplements as well. As Goddard and Meân (2009) argue:

the images in the media are often manipulated to make the women appear even more beautiful and slim and the men more muscular and well defined [...], knowing these things does not always make us feel okay about our own weight and size. In fact many researchers argue that consistently seeing so many images of these narrow versions of beauty makes us feel bad, turning the body into a project that should be improved and made beautiful. (as cited in Šefčíková, 2013, p.34-35)

Another related issue the senders must consider is the fact that weight loss advertising is an extremely sensitive topic (Fahy, Smart, Pride & Ferrel, 1995; Waller, 2004). Even though they must address the lean body ideal in order to persuade their customers to buy their products, they must approach it cautiously. Neither of the advertisements accuses the receivers from excessive weight. They seemingly leave this decision to their potential customers, but they, in fact, predict their choice by headlines such as "Look skinnier and feel more comfortable" (Lipofuse). It is particularly interesting to notice that they decided to use the comparative adjective "skinnier" as if they were implying that the receiver is now skinny but can be even skinnier with their product. Such choices are probably made on the basis of flattery as well as sensitivity.

An important issue that cannot be overlooked in connection to target audience is gender. Since weight loss products are meant to improve the body and increase health, it would be easy to simply categorize them as products intended for women.

This would, however, be jumping into conclusion because the corpus suggests otherwise. One section of the promotional websites that is particularly telling is called testimonials or success stories. These will be later examined closely in the analysis. For now, it is important to know that they are usually photos and letters from satisfied customers. Whether these are authentic or not is not significant; the importance lies in the fact that the senders portray them in that way. They are very frequent on promotional websites of weight loss supplements making appearance on 40 out of 46 websites from the corpus. Since the people appearing in these testimonials are supposed to be real customers, it is very easy for the readers to identify with them. That is the reason why it is important to look at the testimonials and see whether they exhibit men, women or both genders. Even though women testimonials are more frequent in the corpus, 30 out of 40 websites with testimonials do in fact contain testimonials of men as well which suggests that men as well as women can identify themselves with the testimonials. The rest of the websites does not specifically mention that they are designed for women, but the testimonials are often missing photos, and it is not possible to identify the gender with certainty. Some testimonials show women only, but lean and fit men are part of the image mode of the website. Only one of the websites mentions product specifically designed for women (Relacore). Some websites, on the other hand, specifically mention that they are intended for both genders: "Lida Original Lida DaiDaihua Slimming Formula is for both men and women" (LiDaDaidaihua). Since most of these websites have the potential of identification with both genders, the analysis will not aspire to apply any sort of gender theory.

5. Three Modes of Persuasion

Persuasion has always been a topic discussed amongst great thinkers. Even in Ancient Greek, philosophers were aware of power that is embedded in discourse and tried to describe the rhetorical strategies that one can use to persuade others. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* argues that there are three types of appeals that can be utilized to persuade: appeal to ethics, appeal to emotions, and appeal to reason.

Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself. Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*)

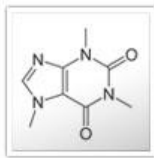
Aristotle constructed this theory primarily for speech and even though it dates back to Ancient Greek, there is still a lot of truth in it. What is more, these modes of persuasion can be applied not only to spoken discourse but written and multimodal discourse as well. Where advertising is concerned, the three appeals appear to be of the utmost importance because persuasion is the most important aim as discussed in the section on advertising functions. Even though it could be argued that advertisements use more appeals such as humour, sex appeal, or fear, it is still possible to perceive these as subcategories of the modes of persuasion proposed by Aristotle.

In advertising, emotional appeal is often used to win the receivers over. For example, TV commercials are full of characters that are smiling and satisfied because they own the product, while other characters who lack the product are often

portrayed as unhappy and in need of something to improve their life. Advertising of weight loss supplements is no different, but there seems to be an even more important factor and that is credibility. Huertas and Campomar (2009) discovered that "the general attitude towards slimming drugs is predominantly negative" (p. 85). Advertising alone is rarely seen as trustworthy source of information (Arrens, 2005), but weight loss advertisements can be particularly suspected of being deceitful. Many weight loss advertisements would promise miraculous result in span of a few days without dieting and exercising (Cleland, 2002, p.14). As tempting as it sounds, customers are often wary of such claims as they are flooded with information about healthy eating and exercise. For this reason, advertisers need to combine different strategies to maximize credibility of their claims. As Huertaz and Campomar (2009) demonstrated, the attitude of customers towards weight loss products is cognitive rather than affective. Their analysis confirmed the hypothesis presupposing that "when individuals are exposed to advertisements consistent with the predominant component of their attitudes (cognitive/affective), the advertisement is more effective" (p. 86).

This is where appeal to ethics and appeal to reason come into play. Credibility is a relation that the senders must strive to establish between them and the receivers. They use wide variety of tactics to show their trustworthiness. It would be almost impossible to distinguish clearly between appeals to ethics and reason in advertising as they overlap frequently. If an example from the corpus should be taken (Fenphedra), one can see (Figure 4) that chemical formula is presented next to information about an ingredient. Such choice on the part of the senders is certainly not accidental. The chemical formula points out that the manufacturer is an expert and suggests that

receivers can believe the claims about the product. It is also used as a proof that the product truly contains the ingredient. Appeal to ethics (expert character) and appeal to reason (proof) thus combine in an effort to establish credibility and persuade the receivers.



DiCaffeine Malate – Caffeine is a psychoactive stimulant that has numerous benefits. In regards to weight loss, it increases your metabolism and suppresses appetite. Additionally, it increases energy, focus and endurance. In once clinical trial at the University of Copenhagen, the average subject boosted energy metabolism by 6%. Caffeine is bonded with malic acid to make DiCaffeine Malate.

Figure 4. Chemical formula (Fenphedra).

This section outlined the reasons for importance of appeals in advertising. It is significant to explore if appeal to emotion or appeals to reason and ethics are both present in weight loss advertising in order to illuminate ideology and manipulation hidden behind the discourse.

6. Framework and Methodology

As stated in the previous chapter, the subject of the analysis is weight loss advertising on promotional websites. Since this type of advertising encompasses a vast amount of strategies that try to persuade the receivers to buy certain products, it would not be possible in a work of this length to analyze every aspect that contributes to this purpose. The thesis will focus on two phenomena that seem to be inseparable characteristics of online weight loss advertisements; multimodality and genre hybridism. Since both of these aspects are very complex issues they need to be studied beyond boundaries of sentences. This is one reason why Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) appears to be the ideal candidate for approach.

Another motive for choosing this approach is the fact that CDA allows for analysis of different modes and their cooperation in the construction of meaning. The colourful and multimodal world of online advertising requires equally complex approach; otherwise, there is a risk of an incomplete interpretation. It is, of course, possible to focus solely on the text presented on these websites, but the dimension of multimodality would be missing. Even though detailed textual analysis can reveal valuable information, the missing information about modes and genres can potentially offer one-sided view of the problematic.

Last but not least, not only does CDA allow for the analysis beyond sentence boundaries but beyond disciplinary boundaries as well. CDA can uncover how discourse can influence and shape society. Discourse is not something that exists in vacuum; it is created, mediated, and processed by society. Discourse not only involves power relations but can act as a manipulative power itself. Fairclough (1993) states:

Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (as cited in Najafian, 2011, p. 3)

Since advertising was previously marked as communication it is only fitting that CDA should be used for the analysis as it concerned with social interaction and the way it is implemented in context. It would be nearly impossible to list all methods that

critical discourse analysts employ to uncover meanings and relations, although there are many that can be valuable for such complex approach as CDA. In an attempt to describe CDA, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarized it with the following points:

- discourse addresses social problems
- discourse acknowledges power relations as discursive
- discourse constitutes society and culture
- discourse is historical
- discourse does ideological work
- a sociocognitive approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated
- discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory and uses a systematic methodology
- CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm (as cited in van Dijk, 2008, p. 353)

Since the aim of this research is to explore multimodality and genre hybridism, the following subchapters discuss methodology that will be utilized in the analysis. As discussed above, CDA allows for wide variety of tools for the analysis in order to understand the construction of social attitudes, values, and power relations embedded in the discourse.

6.1 Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

Although focus on multimodality in CDA has been mentioned in the previous section, it should be noted that it was not part of the approach from the beginning. In fact, CDA was primarily, even though not exclusively, focused on language (Fairclough,

1992). This view was extended by Kress (1993), who argued that CDA needs to acknowledge multimodality of signs that contribute to the development of meaning. According to Stein (2008), this view "arose out of inadequacy of current theories of language to account for the increasing complexity of contemporary electronic and digital communication systems, which combine sound, image, language and film" (p. 25) through various media.

This endeavour is partially reflected in the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Designs*. The second edition of this book is concerned with images, moving images, and importance of colour. In the preface, the authors mention their need to address multimodality for the sake of more complex understanding of discourse.

We had worked on the analysis of verbal texts, and increasingly felt the need of a better understanding of all the things that go with the verbal: facial expressions, gestures, images, music, and so on. This was not only because we wanted to analyse the whole of the texts in which these semiotic modes play a vital role rather than just the verbal part, but also to understand language better. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)

In their analysis of different modes, they discuss key concepts that are suitable for multimodal genres. These key concepts will be applied in the analysis of online weight loss advertising. Their work can be categorized under social semiotics; however, as mentioned earlier, CDA is not an approach with uniform methodology. It is rather an approach which critically studies discourse and often involves uncovering of hidden and implied meanings that can act as manipulative forces. Van Dijk (1995)

suggests that social power is a form of control of one group over another. He argues that if such control can influence actions and minds of the dominated group, and it is in favour of the dominant group, the dominant group gains control over relevant discourse (p. 20).

This notion is indeed important with respect to advertising. Advertising always contains a level of tension between the senders and the receivers. On one hand, the senders want to persuade the receivers to buy their product. On the other hand, the receivers are mostly aware of this, and they might feel certain restraint to believe in advertising claims. If they want to win them over, the senders need to exercise power over them in order to persuade the receivers that their product is what they need. Even if the receivers do not agree with certain steps that the senders make in an effort to sell, they do not possess enough power to defend themselves. The inequality of power distribution is even greater if manipulation is hidden, and the receivers do not realize that the discourse forces them to take certain position. For this reason, it will be very helpful to critically study the key concepts of multimodality that can help uncover some hidden meanings and ideologies embedded in the discourse of online weight loss advertising.

6.1.1 Still Image

Firstly, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) focus on still images. Their analysis includes images of drawings, magazines, websites, paintings, and others. They combine several concepts to analyze the images in order to cover the complexity of visual material. These concepts include what types of images are portrayed, placement of signs, modality, framing, social distance, power and angle, act and gaze, and last but

not least colours. These concepts will be applied in the analytical part of the thesis to online advertising of weight loss supplements in order to reveal underlying intentions, possible interpretations, and power relations.

6.1.1.1 Images

First and foremost, it is fundamental to consider what types of images can be found in the discourse. It is likely that some types will be more frequent than others. Even quantitative analysis of image types in certain discourse can unveil a lot of information about the motives behind displaying them. According to Dyer (1995), advertising is almost free of denotative meaning:

Although it is useful to distinguish between denotation and connotation for analytical purposes, denotation is not neutral or untouched by ideology. It may seem to be more fixed and taken for granted but it is still dependent upon a context of meaning and association. (p. 103)

In an analysis of newspaper advertisements, Najafijan (2011) describes an ad in which the main focus is on a famous actor. There is also a picture of a watch, but it is significantly smaller in comparison to the actor. She argues that the readers would recognize this picture as an advertisement even though the product is not the most salient picture. This suggests that readers would recognize the actor, but they would be able to associate him with advertising practises as well. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that images represent the relations between people, places, and things they depict and the complex set of relations that can exist between images and their viewers (p. 175). Each picture that can be found in discourse is meaningful, especially in advertising where spatial limitations are often significant.

6.1.1.2 Given versus New

The placement of signs may prove to be meaningful as well. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), part of the information value is transmitted through left and right distinction.

The elements placed on the left are presented as Given, the elements placed on the right as New. For something to be Given means that it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message. For something to be New means that it is presented as something which is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention. (p. 181)

While such distinction might seem quite clear-cut at first sight, it might be a little more complicated in reality. Ventola, Charles and Kaltenbacher (2004) question the accuracy of the compositional dichotomies and explain that the Given/New is "very much more abstract than that generally found in clause" (p. 66). Nevertheless, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that what is presented as Given does not have to be known by the receivers. The important thing is not whether the receivers recognize it, but the fact that it is presented as if they should. Kress and van Leeuwen claim that this Given/New dichotomy can be often found in magazines in which the layout is rather horizontal. They also mention that not every layout must necessarily correspond with this distinction. In fact, Najafian (2001) uses these concepts of the Given and New but finds that in some advertisements, the Given and New does not have to be structured left and right, but top and bottom (p. 11). Websites might be

such case because their layout is vertical. It is possible that websites rely more on the top versus bottom distinction rather than the left and right. This assumption will be tested in the analysis later.

6.1.1.3 *Ideal versus Real*

The top and bottom distinction is often called the Ideal and Real. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that what is placed in the top section of promotional websites seems to represent the promise of what may be, while the bottom section often shows the product itself providing information, details, and order options. These two sections can be visually separated to notify the reader that there is a distinction between what can be and what is. It is, however, connected in a way that the readers are aware of the possibility that what is ideal can become real (p. 168-188).

It is necessary to say that such divisions (Ideal/Real and Given/New) cannot always explain all layouts. Some layouts can be also realized as the Centre and Margins. The centre being the middle of the layout symbolizes the most salient and important element, while margins are formed around it. Such layout is, however, not very common in the Western world (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 197).

Nevertheless, they suggest that these dichotomies are often present all at once and form a triptych.

Dividing visual space according to these dimensions results in the figure of the Cross, a fundamental spatial symbol in Western culture (see figure 6.15). Just how marginal the margins are will depend on the size and, more generally, on the salience of the Centre. But even when the Centre is empty, it continues to

exist in absentia, as the invisible (denied) pivot around which everything else turns, the place of the 'divine ruler'. (p. 197)

Koteyko and Nerlich (2007) test this combination of dichotomy in their analysis of websites promoting probiotic products. They observe that images of probiotic products are often placed at the bottom which marks them as tangible, and their position in relation to the images of smiling active people marks them as new. It will be interesting to explore if the analysis of weight loss supplements shows the same placement of products as they are both health related products.

6.1.1.4 Framing

Another compositional feature that is significant in the analysis of images is framing. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that "the presence or absence of framing devices (realized by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense" (p. 177). Najafian (2011) agrees with this view and proposes that "the more the elements of the spatial composition are connected, the more they are presented as belonging together, as a unit of single information" (p.12). This implies that less framing means closer connection between individual signs. On the other hand, if more framing is involved, it signifies looser connection between elements, and they are likely to be interpreted as separate units, even though important relations remain between them.

Other important features Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) mention are vectors as well as repetition of colours and shapes. They call them "visual rhymes" (p. 204). Such devices are able to create connection and direct attention to particular elements on

the page. They argue that these are often used in advertisements to "stress the connection between the promise of the product and the product itself" (p. 204). Framing and connective elements thus represent important compositional features in advertisements as they can potentially change interpretation of the discourse.

6.1.1.5 Modality

Except for compositional features, other characteristics determine how visuals can be interpreted. One such characteristic is visual modality. The term modality comes from linguistics and allows one to express attitudes and obligation. According to Najafian (2001), "it was Kress and Hodge (1979) who first pointed out four decades ago that modality is a multimodal concept that can be applied to photographs or any kind of visual representation" (p. 11). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) described visual modality as an extent to which we consider something being realistic. They argue that "to the degree that the use of a dimension is reduced, it becomes, at least in one respect, more abstract, less than real. To the degree that it is amplified, it becomes more than real" (p. 252).

In this respect, it is possible to perceive modality as a matter of degree that could be put on a scale with one end being low modality and the other end signifying high modality. Images on the high modality end of the scale are those that are more realistic and seem to be depicted as if they were seen in real life. Pictures with low modality can be stylized, animated, or deformed and remind of reality. Modality in visuals can be influenced by several factors. According to Maier (2008), background, perspective, abstraction, illumination, brightness, and several colour characteristics are important in determination of modality level. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest

that different levels of modality are used in advertisements purposefully to convey specific meanings (p. 159). If the background is less saturated, it is positioned as a promise that the product can make true. The analysis will try to discover whether modality plays a role in weight loss advertisements as well.

6.1.1.6 Social Distance

As far as the interactive meaning of images is concerned, social distance can be considered very significant. Kress and van Leeuwen propose (2006) that "the choice of distance can suggest different relations between represented participants and viewers" (p.124). If a photograph features a close shot of a person, the social distance is close as well. It would be possible to imagine that the person from the photo and the person watching the photo were engaged in real-life conversation in which such closeness is common.

Such interpretation, however, is not reserved for people only. As Najafian (2011), in her analysis of advertisements for watches, concludes, if the image of the product is shown at close distance, "the object is shown as if the viewer is engaged with it" (p. 12). Such claim is useful for the analysis of weight loss advertisement as most of them feature images of the products.

6.1.1.7 Power and Angle

In cinematography, angles are seen as important means of delivering meaning. According to Martin (1968), "low angles generally give an impression of superiority, exaltation and triumph . . . high angles tend to diminish the individual, to flatten him morally by reducing him to ground level, to render him as caught in an insurmountable determinism" (as cited in Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 140).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), however, speculate that it leaves the viewers out of the interaction and since images are modes of communication, it is necessary to include them as well. They argue that the relation between characters and viewers is that of power.

If the represented participant is seen from a low angle, then the relation between the interactive and represented participants is depicted as one in which the represented participant has power over the interactive participant. If, finally, the picture is at eye level, then the point of view is one of equality and there is no power difference involved. (p. 140)

Such view is echoing the power relations that were discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Part of the analysis will take this concept into consideration and examine how receivers are positioned in relation to angles and what sort of power relations it implies.

6.1.1.8 The Image Act and Gaze

Another part of the interactive meaning is delivered by the image act and gaze. These interpersonal elements are capable of creating a contact between the image and the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) clarify that such connection is in fact imaginary.

When represented participants look at the viewer, vectors, formed by participants' eyelines, connect the participants with the viewer. Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. In addition there may be a further vector, formed by a gesture. (p. 117)

Cook (1992) in his discussion of advertising discourse acknowledges that "one connection between the fictional world and the real world of the addressee is the direct address or gaze of a character" (p. 147). Gaze is thus established as an important advertising strategy to attract attention of the receivers. This is, however, not its only function. Following Halliday (1985), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) use the term "demand" to describe direct gaze. It is believed that the character from the image demands something from the receivers: to establish connection and form a certain kind of imaginary relation with them. The type of relation depends on, for example, facial expression of the character (p. 118). If the characters are not connected with the receivers by gaze, such images are called "offers". In contrast to demands, they are not looking, but they are looked on. Kress and van Leeuwen claim that "it 'offers' the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case" (p. 199). Since demand and offer can be ascribed to advertising as well, it will be particularly interesting to study the gaze of the characters and learn how weight loss images position the receivers.

6.1.1.9 Colours

Last but not least, the relevance of colours needs to be addressed in the analysis of visuals. Not only are colours used to make something more interesting and eye-catching, even though these two functions are certainly important as well, but the possibilities of choosing a particular colour or colour scheme are much wider. Colours can actually become signifiers and may take on the role of language. It is necessary to stress that such interpretations are often culturally determined. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) observe that colour in advertising plays an important part.

The associations taken up in many of the communicative uses of colour, such as in advertising or the entertainment media, will usually be with substances, objects, etc. that carry significant symbolic value in the given sociocultural context. While the affordances of a colour may be wide in theory, in practice they are not when the context of production and interpretation is taken into account. (p. 233)

Dyer (1995), in his analysis of a TV commercial for cornflakes, agrees with this claim by arguing that the golden colour of the product is put together with shots of sunny sky and golden beaches. He argues that such repetition makes connection between these elements and brings about the feelings of happiness and energy which are meant to be associated with the product (p. 95). It is thus beneficial to search for patterns and colour schemes in the analysis of weight loss advertisements to explore what meanings colour can deliver.

6.1.2 Moving Image Mode

The framework described above can be also used to analyze moving images. There are, however, differences that need to be addressed, since this framework was originally developed for the analysis of still images. As Bednarek (2014) does not fail to mention, "characteristics of moving images that need to be taken into account include the fact that the unit of analysis is dynamic (a shot rather than a static image) and that this dynamism includes both the motion of the camera and of entities shown in the shot" (p.43). Such dynamism can include zoom-ins, movement of the characters, gestures, and others.

Movement is, however, not the only difference between still and moving images. Moving image is capable of incorporating sound. This means that text, which would have to be written in still images, can be reproduced as speech in moving images. Such advantage is even multiplied by the fact that moving image is capable of incorporating written text as well. Speech is framed by time and when something is said, there is a possibility that the hearers will not remember it. Since one function of advertising is to persuade, it is essential that some information is preserved. Combination of speech and text can be a powerful tool for achieving this goal.

The analysis of moving images in online weight loss advertising will adopt most of the features described in the image mode section. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note, the features of still image are usable for moving image if divergent properties such as dynamism are taken into consideration.

6. 2 Genre Hybridism

As mentioned in Chapter 2, advertising can contain several genres. These embedded genres serve to fulfil the advertising functions. According to Santini, Power and Evans (2006), "genres are not mutually exclusive and different genres can be merged into a single document, generating hybrid forms" (p. 2). Such view would agree with advertising discourse as well since Cook (1992) proposed that "ads are parasitic: appropriating and existing through the voices of other discourse types" (p.176). It is thus possible that the genre of online advertising of weight loss supplements can contain sub-genres that make up the dominant genre because Santini, Power and Evans (2006) suggest that genre hybridism on web "appears to be more extended" (p.7). As Bhatia (2004) argues, the notion of pure genres is attractive

but destined to fail in capturing the complexity of the present-day professional world (p. 80).

Genre hybridism echoes the distinction between primary and secondary advertising situations proposed by Leech (1966). Peclová (2010), in her discussion on TV commercials, states that primary advertising situation is a communication event between two participants. It has a topic (the product being advertised) and a function (to persuade the customers). Secondary advertising situation, on the other hand, is implemented in the primary situation. She argues that "the persuader 'borrows' a certain discourse type in order to illustrate the product, its usage, and social advantages, as well as to introduce the target consumer" (p. 37).

Bhatia (1993) argues that "the communicative purpose which the genre is intended to serve is the most important factor in genre identification" (p. 45). Since different functions were mentioned in the second chapter of the present thesis, it is only natural that different sub-genres should be used to contribute to the overriding function of persuasion. Peclová (2010) suggests that if the senders want to inform their audience about a product, such function is fulfilled in the secondary advertising situation as non-persuasive.

In other words, the persuader accommodates the persuadee to a non-persuasive situation, in which both participants perform different roles. For instance, the persuader usually performs a role of a product information provider while the persuadee has a rather nonresponsive role of a product information acceptor. (p. 42)

Following Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2004), genre can be defined by a set of communicative purposes. According to Candlin (2006), textual analysis alone cannot illuminate the issue of genre hybridism because discourses are not "distinctively identifiable and coded (textualised)", but "all discourses are concurrently in play at one and the same time" (as cited in Catenaccio, 2008, p. 13). This positions the concept of a set of communicative purposes as the starting point for the analysis of genre hybridism. For such analysis it is necessary to work in a frame of advertising structure. Even though such structure can be very difficult to establish, Bhatia (2004) proposes a model based on rhetorical moves in advertisements. He argues that "the copywriter makes use of a number of rhetorical moves, each of which contributes to the overall objectives of the advertisement" (p. 64). Since each stage is driven by certain objective/purpose, it will help in analysing sub-genres embedded in the advertisements.

The Move Structure in Advertisements

1. headline (for reader attraction)
2. targeting the market
3. justifying the product or service
 - by indicating the importance or need of the product or service and/or
 - by establishing a niche
4. detailing the product or service
 - by identifying the product or service
 - by describing the product or service
 - by indicating the value of the product or service
5. establishing credentials
6. celebrity or typical user endorsement

7. offering incentives
8. using pressure tactics
9. soliciting response (Bhatia, 2004, p.65)

This model of advertising structure was tested by Catenaccio (2008) in her article on genre hybridism in press releases. She reported that all of the rhetorical moves are realized in press releases except for "offering incentives" and "pressure tactics". She comments that "not all moves are present in all promotional genres, or in all the specimens of one particular genre" (p. 19). Such comment implies that this model of rhetorical moves should not be taken as strict rules for advertising structure but rather guidelines for recognizing the genre as advertising. It is thus possible to consider certain discourse as part of advertising genre even if some rhetorical moves are missing. The important function that advertising must preserve is to persuade.

In the analysis, the move structure model will be utilized to show how different sub-genres comply with the objectives of rhetorical moves and how it relates to multimodality as well. Bhatia (2004) points out that advertisements "have always been and in recent years are becoming increasingly creative in the use of multi-modality" and gives proof that multimodality can support or replace "moves which have traditionally been realized in terms of lexico-grammatical resources" (p. 65). Bhatia also acknowledges that hybrid genres can take more than one form. It is possible that two genres will be mixed, embedded, or otherwise exploited in order to fulfil their intended communicative purpose.

7. Research objectives

Since online weight loss advertising combines wide variety of strategies to achieve its goals, it would not be possible to cover all of them in an analysis of this length. The discourse of online promotional websites can be very complex and for that reason, multimodality and genre hybridism were chosen as research topics for this thesis. These two aspects of online advertising play significant role in the interpretation of such discourse. First of all, multimodality will be analyzed separately to establish patterns that reoccur in the corpus. After that, genre hybridism and multimodality will be analyzed together in order to see how these strategies cooperate in the development of meaning and how they position the participants of the discourse.

7.1 Multimodality

The analysis of multimodality will be performed using the tools and concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) described in Chapter 6. Such analysis will take into consideration still images, moving images as well as textual mode present in the advertisements. As mentioned earlier, the topic of weight loss can be considered as a very sensitive issue because it is closely connected with the concept of ideal body image and lifestylism. For these reasons, multimodality used in these advertisements must be carefully chosen; otherwise, it could discourage the receivers from reading the rest of the discourse. On the other hand, information and credibility must be delivered in order to persuade the receivers to make a purchase. On the basis of these assumptions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Photographs of products and people will be the most frequent images in the advertisements. If a website shows pictures of people they will be mostly lean and fit rather than overweight in order to offer a promise of the ideal body to the receivers. The exception would be testimonials/success stories in which both body types would be shown in order to highlight the transformation. The videos will show mostly commercials and testimonials/video diaries.
2. The distinction between the Ideal/Real will be more significant than the Given/New due to the vertical layout of advertising websites.
3. If products, images of lean bodies and claims are put close to each other, framing will be very subdued or missing altogether to highlight that they should be considered as a single unit of interpretation. On the contrary, the division between the top and bottom will be framed in order to differentiate between the Ideal and the Real.
4. Both still and moving images will have a high level of modality to present the possibility of heaving the ideal body as real rather than as a fantasy.
5. Social distance will be balanced as senders strive to establish close relationship with the receivers because of the sensitive nature of weight loss topic, but they must also prove that their product actually works by showing still/moving images of the whole bodies. If products are shown, their size will be disproportionate to the images of people.
6. Since senders strive to persuade the receivers that their products are capable of delivering on customer expectations, the angle of the camera will be primarily in eye-level to establish equality between the secondary characters and the receivers.

7. The advertisements will include both direct and indirect gaze to establish demand and offer.

8. Colour schemes of the websites will be used in accordance with the way in which the product is being advertised.

7.2 Genre Hybridism

Instances of genre hybridism seem to be very common in online weight loss advertisements. It is suggested that these genres that are embedded, mixed, or referred to in the advertisements can be employed to achieve different purposes. As mentioned before, purpose is one of the most important tools for genre identification. For this reason, selected rhetorical moves from the move structure of advertising proposed by Bhatia (2004) will be used to account for different genres used to fulfil the purposes of these rhetorical goals: detailing the product or service, establishing credentials, and typical user endorsement. Even though more rhetorical moves from the model are used in weight loss advertising, the selected moves are most prone to show signs of genre hybridism because their purposes of informativeness and establishing credibility invite the exploitation of other genres. On the basis of these arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

9. Since weight loss advertising is often perceived as deceitful, credibility must be supported as much as possible. Claims about the products will not be sufficient to prove its effectiveness, and other genres will be used to persuade the receivers that the senders are trustworthy.

10. If credibility is established between the participants, the sender must provide detailed information about the product, and they can use different genres to fulfil this purpose.

11. The embedded genres can strengthen their purpose when combined with features of multimodality. Such connection of genre hybridism and multimodality abounds in especially persuasive and manipulative powers.

8. Analysis

This chapter provides the results of investigation of online weight loss advertisements from the corpus. The analysis is divided into two subchapters: multimodality and genre hybridism.

8.1 Multimodality

The section on multimodality is divided into nine parts, each corresponding to one feature of multimodal discourse. As mentioned before, still and moving images can use the same characteristics, and textual mode will be analysed in combination with these features in an attempt to discover how the modes of advertising discourse of weight loss supplements interact and participate on meaning creation. Whenever necessary, a table with findings from the corpus will be presented to document frequency of the examined features.

8.1.1 Still and Moving Image Types

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the type of image that appears in the discourse is very significant and constitutes a part of the information load of the advertisement. Even though each company producing weight loss supplements can choose any kind of

image to support the textual mode, the analysis showed that there are prototypical types of images that appear on the websites. It is thus necessary to say that the choice of images is in no way accidental. The table below shows the most common types of images that accompany online weight loss advertisements (Table 2).

IMAGES	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Product	46
Logo	44
Lean Body	37
Testimonial	20
Guarantee seal	20
Ingredients	18
Measure tape/Bathroom scales	17
Doctor's photograph	14
Schema	12
Photos/logos of other media	10
Graphs	10
Produce	6

Table 2. Image Types.

Even though some websites rely on image mode more than others, all websites from the corpus contain at least a few still images. It is evident from the table that three types of images can be found in majority of the advertisements from the corpus. Product picture is actually present in all advertisements and points out that the primary focus is on the product itself. The same can be said about product logo which was present in all advertisements except for two examples (72 Hour, Unique Hoodia). These exceptions, however, compensated for missing logo by placing an image of the product in the upper left corner of the website. Such compensation shows the logo

and the product at the same time because logos are part of the product packaging.

These two image types highlight the advertising function of identification.

The third most frequent type of image in the corpus is an image of lean bodies. This finding is not unexpected as weight loss supplements are supposed to help lose weight. It is only natural that the ideal body type would be a frequent occurrence in advertisements of these products. It is, however, interesting that except for testimonials, images of overweight bodies were found only three times in the corpus (Phenterex, Slimweight, Nuratrim). Such immense difference would suggest that senders try to be sensitive about obesity in an attempt to be tactful to the receivers who might suffer from excessive weight. Another possible reason is that modern ideal of lean body is considered the only type of body that is worth having because it is considered beautiful and it possesses sex-appeal. Images of overweight people would not be considered appealing according to the current body ideal and might discourage the receivers from purchasing the product. Images of lean bodies thus stand for the ideal body type that can be achieved with the product. The senders strengthen the social value of current body ideal by exclusion of images of the other body types. Consequently, they can manipulate the receivers into thinking that if they do not correspond with the current trend, they are inferior to those in possession of the ideal. In this case, what is missing is equally as important as what is included in the discourse.

Another important type of image is the category of testimonials. Testimonials are stories of seemingly real people that successfully lost weight with the help of weight loss supplements. There are more testimonials in the corpus than the table shows, but some of them are only textual. Those with images most commonly show

two photographs: before and after weight loss. These photographs, even though they include photos of overweight people, will probably not offend the potential customers. The emphasis is not on the photographs themselves but on the change that occurred in between because they are often accompanied by numerals expressing how much weight the person managed to lose.

Another type, which occurred twenty times in the corpus, is a guarantee seal. At first, it might be fairly surprising that such random image should come up with so many examples in the corpus. In fact, it is one way in which the senders try to persuade the receivers that they do not risk anything if they decide to buy their product. They are often accompanied by catchy texts such as "You have absolutely nothing to lose, but weight" (Phen375) or "With a money back guarantee there is nothing to lose but stubborn fat and unwanted pounds" (Lipozene). The senders thus try to appeal to ethics and gain credibility by putting images of guarantee and security seals next to the products and claims. Other frequently used types include images of ingredients, photographs of doctors, schemas, and graphs that are also used to support credibility. These will be analyzed in greater detail in the subchapter on genre hybridism.

As far as moving images are concerned, there are twenty websites that make use of this mode. The most common types can be seen in the table below (Table 3). It is necessary to point out that some websites include more videos of the same type, and the table shows the number of websites on which such type occurs in order to avoid misinterpretation. In addition, some videos are composed of several types, and these types of moving images are included in the table.

MOVING IMAGE TYPE	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Testimonial	13
Commercial	8
Educational, Science	7
How it works	2
Product feature in TV	1

Table 3. Moving Image Types.

Testimonials can be seen as the most frequent type of moving image that appears on the websites of weight loss supplements. If other types of testimonials (still image, textual) are taken in consideration, it seems that they constitute significant part of this discourse. Another frequent type is a commercial. This type of moving image is often presented in TV, but with the rise of the Internet, commercials became part of promotional websites as well. This is an interesting phenomenon as commercials are advertisements themselves, and they are embedded in another type of advertising discourse. Such case of "double advertisement" allows for even greater persuasive force especially when imposing videos are involved. Imposing videos are those that start playing as soon as the webpage is loaded, and the receivers have little control over this issue. They can decide to stop the video afterwards, but the fact that the video starts right away tries to forcibly attract attention. Such videos can be found four times in the corpus.

Educational videos or videos about science behind the product can be found in the corpus as well. This type of videos tries to persuade the customers that the product is in fact backed by research, science, and proven ingredients. It is an instance of appeals to ethics and reason because the senders try to construct credibility and use logical arguments. Even though appeal to emotion can be found in the advertisements

as well, especially in the success stories (e.g. video testimonial Phen 375), the emphasis on credibility seems to be more significant.

8.1.2 Given versus New

The distinction between the Left/Given and the Right/New appears to be very inhomogeneous. Since the photos of products, lean people, and logos were identified as the most important elements, the analysis is primarily concerned with these features. It allows for exploring the way in which senders present the product and the benefits it is supposed to deliver. Composition is a powerful tool of manipulation since senders may present an item as given even if the receivers see it for the first time. Since most products and photos are presented on the homepage, the following table (Table 4) shows results from homepages only. It is also the first stimulus the receivers encounter on the website which creates the first impression of the product. As far as textual mode is concerned, homepages often include claims about the product. For that reason, the table shows how many times these images and claims were presented as the Given or the New in relation to each other. It is important to take into consideration that not all three components are always present.

GIVEN VERSUS NEW	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Product x Claims	6
Claims x Product x People	6
People x Claims	6
Product x Claims x People	5
Product Only	5
Product x People	3
People x Claims x Product	3
Claims x People	3
Claims x People x Product	1
Claims x Product	1
Product x People x Claims	1

Table 4. Given/New.

It is evident from the table that there is not one definite composition of these features. There is one exception that is almost always presented as the Given and that is the logo of the product. It was always presented on the left side of the website with only three exceptions that were centred. It could be said that the first five types of composition can be seen as slightly predominant, but there is not one type that would be exceptionally isolated from the others. Nevertheless, if one should decide to draw a comparison between images of products and people only, the difference would be significant. In such case, the ratio between Product x People to People x Product would be 15:3. This would suggest that products are usually presented as the Given in a situation where images of lean people are placed next to them. In the advertisement for Lipofuze (Figure 5), claims form the Centre, while the product and the photo of lean woman represent the Margins. The product is on the left which suggests that it is something that the receivers should know about. The woman on the right is presented in the New as a result of the product. Such findings imply that the senders are trying to

persuade the receiver that their product is something already established. Again, it increases the credibility of the product because it is presented as known. On the other hand, the woman is presented in the New as something that can be achieved if one buys the product. It represents the future promise of the already established product. There is an implication of time that passes between the two images ("If you start taking this product today, you will look like this in the future").



Figure 5. Given/New (Lipofuze).

Similar relationship can be found in Product x Claims, which is the third most frequent composition in the corpus. The time implication is present as well ("If you start taking this product today, it will do X and Y to your body in the future"). It is not a rule that the dichotomy of the Given and New necessarily involves passing time, but the emphasis on change with weight loss supplements invites such interpretation.

Nonetheless, there are still a lot of examples in which people appear on the left as if the senders tried to say: "We know that this is what you are looking for, here is the product that can deliver". It gives priority to the future promise rather than the present situation. The decision between present and future depends on the intended

message that the senders are trying to deliver. From the table above, it seems that most senders tend to prefer chronological order that can be easily processed by the receivers without much effort. In either case, the senders assume ultimate power over the composition, and they can use it to their advantage. Even though the receivers are not usually aware of it, the Given/New interpretation occurs on subconscious level, and the receivers can adopt the ready-made truths proposed by the senders.

As far as moving images are concerned, the previous chapter showed that most of the videos are either testimonials or commercials. Testimonials are not particularly interesting because they most frequently show a close distance shot of people. They are usually positioned in the middle of the screen which implies that they are supposed to be the centre of attention. The division between left and right is not significant since they are in the centre and their background is often blurred or nonexistent. Commercials, on the other hand, use the distinction between the Given and New. The product is usually featured on the left as the Given, while claims and photos of lean people appear on the right side as the New. Sometimes, products are put in the middle of the screen to mark the importance of the product in the commercials. Commercials often use still images as well, but they can be supplemented by bullet point claims that appear one after another. Therefore, the receivers gain the opportunity to pay attention to the individual claims rather than take it as one whole.

8.1.3 Ideal versus Real

As mentioned in the theoretical section, the difference between the Ideal and Real can be distinguished on the basis of elements that are placed in the top or the

bottom section of the website. Even though it might be difficult to distinguish between the top and the bottom on long scrolling pages, the Ideal and Real are often visually separated, or the Ideal can be perceived as the page that one sees before scrolling down the page. This being said, it is not always clearly defined where the Ideal ends and the Real begins. The following table (Table 5) summarizes the types of elements that can be found in the Ideal and the Real sections in the corpus.

IDEAL	NUMBER OF WEBSITES	REAL	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Logo	44	Details, Facts, FAQ	46
Product	36	Order	44
Claims	30	Product	37
Order, See Pricing	27	Testimonial	35
Lean People	26	Claims	32
Commercial	5	Ingredients	26
Testimonial	2	Lean People	25

Table 5. Ideal/Real.

The first important thing that can be found in the distinction between the Ideal and Real is the fact that the Ideal section contains smaller variety of elements that are frequently incorporated. It is possible to say that only five elements are used often: logos, images of products, claims, "order buttons" or "see pricing buttons", and photos of lean people. The bottom section of the website is much more diverse. In addition to the previously mentioned elements, it often contains various details about the product, ingredients, and testimonials.

Nevertheless, the table shows interesting results regarding repetition of certain elements. Some elements such as the image of the product, order button, claims about the product, and photos of lean people can be found in both sections. Other

elements such as details about the product, FAQs, and testimonials are almost exclusively found in the Real section. The proposed theory suggests that what is on the top is perceived as the Ideal, while the Real elements can be found on the bottom. The question is how people perceive elements that are present in both sections. More traditional print advertising will rarely deal with this issue because of spatial limitations. Websites, on the other hand, can be scrolled down indefinitely and are able to encompass more information about the product. Repetition of elements serves as one of the persuasive strategies on promotional websites, and there is no wonder that they should be present in the Ideal as well as in the Real section. An example can be found in the advertisement for Decaslim in which photos of the same woman appear in the Ideal as well as in the Real, and the product is shown in both sections as well. In the Ideal, products, lean bodies, and claims are presented as fantasy and something that the receivers are supposed to strive for. In this section, elements are presented as promises, possibilities, and dreams. The Real section can repeat all of these elements, but they are accompanied by details, testimonials, and other proofs that the product actually works. Thus, the product manages to travel from the world of the sender through the world of fiction into to the fantasy world of the receiver who can decide to shift it into the real world. The wider context, in which these elements are embedded in the Real, manages to carry over the elements from the Ideal into the Real.

There is, however, one exception that appears in both sections: an order button. This button often includes speech acts of command such as "Buy now" or "Order now" followed by an exclamation mark. There is no difficulty with integrating such elements into the Real because the act of buying must happen in the real world

of the receiver (even if is on the Internet). In the Ideal, however, such direct call for action can be hardly classified as a fantasy or a promise. This suggests that the upper section can be considered a promise that can become real immediately. The message of the senders is clear: "You can make this fantasy real by buying our product now". If the receivers are not persuaded immediately, they can browse the rest of the website knowing that the order button can be found on the top and return to it anytime. The power relations ascribed to the Given/New dichotomy are almost identical for the Ideal/Real. Compositional power resides in the hands of the senders who can shape the intended message. Nevertheless, meaning is constructed by all participants and the intended message can arrive transformed.

The distinction between the Ideal and Real in videos seems to be of lower significance than in the website as a whole. Testimonials usually do not show any distinction, but some do contain names and place of residence in the bottom section. Names are important for identification, and they increase credibility. If the testimonials were shown without names, it would possess lower persuasive force. Names in the bottom section impart a heavier touch of reality to the testimonial. Commercials often make distinction between the top and the bottom by placing disclaimers and additional details at the bottom.

8.1. 4 Framing

The compositional feature of framing is especially important in online multimodal discourse. In the environment where images, videos, and texts are combined, framing might clarify the relationships between these elements. Some websites from the corpus use an extremely framed discourse, while others are more

simple and unified. Framing, however, is present in some way on all websites in the corpus. Even when it is missing, it delivers important information about the meaning. It would be probably impossible to put all framing instances into one table and for this reason framing between the Ideal and Real will be explored as well as framing between the most salient elements (products, claims, photos of lean people). The salience of framing cannot be classified as present and missing. In fact, it is a matter of degree. The table below (Table 6) shows three categories (strong, middle and low framing), and each category contains part of the framing scale from the most subtle to the most prominent framing between the Ideal and Real.

TYPE OF FRAMING	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Strong	23
Middle	19
Low	2

Table 6. Types of framing between the Ideal and Real.

As far as promotional websites of weight loss supplements are concerned, it is evident that the senders often stress the division between the Ideal and Real. Some websites tend to have very strong division (Apidexin), while other websites make it less obvious (72 Hours). The strongest frames in the corpus make use of bold colours as the background for the elements in the Ideal and distinguish it from other elements on the website. The colour is then often used for other elements in the Real as a visual rhyme to connect the two sections. The red background colour of the Ideal in the advertisement for Apidexin (Figure 6) creates a prominent frame. The colour is repeated in the Real to emphasise guarantee and special offers.

Apidexin™ 380mg

Home 90-Day Guarantee FAQ Products Ingredients Help Buy Apidexin

Discover a THINNER, Happier You!

- ▶ Eat Less Food^{1,2}
- ▶ Reduce Body Fat^{1,3,4}
- ▶ Boost Metabolism^{3,4}

Apidexin
380 mg per capsule
ALL NATURAL WEIGHT LOSS FORMULA
• Clinically Tested Ingredients
• 100% Natural Ingredients
• Safe & Effective

The #1 Diet Pill 3 Years Straight!

See Pricing

#1 Apidexin Editor's Choice Diet Pill of 2013

#1 Diet Pill of 2013

2013 Editor's Choice AWARD

Can You Imagine Burning Fat and Eating Less Food Effortlessly?

We thought it was impossible too! The Apidexin Research & Development team set out to create the world's

Figure 6. Framing 1 (Apidexin).

The advertisement for 72Hours (Figure 7), on the other hand, uses the same white and green background for both section, but the Ideal section is accentuated by horizontal hatching. The green colour is reused for important information in the Real as well. The division of the Ideal and Real is also evident from the picture of a woman that is cut off below her waist. Even though no actual frame is placed below it, the difference between the background and the cut-off photograph creates a horizontal line that is supported by the horizontal text "YES YOU CAN" on the left. Even though this advertisement is less strictly separated than the ad for Apidexin, the division is still fairly obvious.

Home Ingredients Testimonials FAQ Contact Us Live Chat

90 DAY Money Back Guarantee

2012

Can You Lose 10 Pounds in ONLY 72 HOURS?

YES YOU CAN!

Secure Your Order with 128Bit SSL: TRUSTe, SSLLock

We Accept All These Forms Of Payment: VISA, MasterCard, American Express, PayPal, Google

Drop A Full Dress Size In 72 Hours!

Did you know that many slimming pills require nearly a whole year before you see "noticeable" weight loss? Even some prescription diet pills are often TOO WEAK to provide fast results. Luckily you have 72 Hour Slimming Pill - a slimming pill designed to deliver fast, safe, and undeniable weight loss that you can't miss in ONLY 72 Hours!

SAVE 38% WHEN YOU ORDER NOW

- 3 Bottles - \$59.99
- 2 Bottles - \$39.99
- 1 Bottle - \$19.99

Add to Cart >>

Figure 7. Framing 2 (72Hour).

The advertisements that showed the lowest degree of framing between the Ideal and Real did not include any type of dividing line or frame around the Ideal section. It was possible to separate these sections only on the basis of big headlines that created visual horizontal lines and fading background colour as in the ad for Adapexin (Figure 8).

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Have A Question? Call 1-866-585-0319 or Live Chat

ADAPEXIN [PHENYLETHYLAMINE HCL USP]

McAfee SECURE

Home | Ingredients | FAQ | Buy Adapexin | Contact Us

Burn More Fat, Eat Less Food, & **LOSE WEIGHT!**

- ✓ #1 Rated Diet Pill of 2014!
- ✓ Clinically Proven Ingredients
- ✓ 90 Day Money-Back Guarantee

SEE PRICING >>

What Is The Big Deal With ADAPEXIN™?

It works!

Appetite suppressants are a "dime a dozen" these days. Every company claims to be "the best" or promises an absurd amount of weight loss. The fact is no one has delivered. Until now...

Adapexin contains CLINICALLY PROVEN INGREDIENTS that will help suppress your appetite, making

Figure 8. Framing 3 (Adapexin).

That being said, it is interesting to look on framing between the most salient features. While framing between the Ideal and Real tends to be rather prominent, the salient features are often put together to form one unit of interpretation (Table 7).

TYPE OF FRAMING	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Strong	2
Middle	18
Low	24

Table 7. Types of framing between products, claims and images of lean bodies.

The absence or low degree of framing indicates that claims, products, and images of lean people are meant to be interpreted as one segment. In the advert for Lipozene (Figure 9), claims, products, and an image of a lean woman are presented without any dividing lines in between. The torso of the woman on the left creates a vertical layout along which other elements are distributed. They are subordinated to the most salient feature, but it is clear that there is a very close connection between them. The sentences "No exercise required" and "You can still eat your favourite foods" are quite clearly meant to be connected with the consumption of the product and the fact that it is possible to have such fit body without exercise and diet.

Lose weight without dieting!
Effortless weight loss with America's #1 Diet Pill.

- You can still eat your favorite foods.
- No exercise required
- Clinically proven to help you lose weight!

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR YOUR MONEY-BACK
View Details

OVER 20 Million SOLD!

FREE GIFT!

What you'll get

The advertisement features a woman's midsection in a pink sports bra and dark blue shorts. To the right, there are three bottles of Lipozene (1500mg and 1500mg per dose) and a box of MetaboUp Plus. A blue box highlights the satisfaction guarantee, and a red box shows sales figures. A 'FREE GIFT!' badge is placed over the MetaboUp Plus bottle.

Figure 9. Framing 4 (Lipozene).

Framing thus presents a powerful tool of manipulation because the elements can be interpreted as interrelated and dependent on each other. The senders pressure the receivers into believing that such interrelation is true in reality as well.

As far as videos are concerned, testimonials do not usually make use of any type of framing. This is predetermined by the purpose of such videos because they are supposed to look as authentic as possible. If the senders decided to frame the products next to the people, it would lower credibility because the receivers would be aware of the fact that the video was modified. The senders thus make choice to manipulate the viewer into thinking that the people from the testimonials are indeed satisfied customers. Commercials certainly make use of framing more often, but it is usually missing between products, claims, and lean people. However, there are some interesting frames in the corpus such as the one in the advertisement for Slimweight.

A cut-out shape of the US shows a view of overweight people on the streets. Such frame supports the voice-over claiming that "obesity and excessive weight have reached epidemic proportions in the US". This message creates a need for change in society; a change that can be brought about with the help of the product. The senders use the frame and the statistics to manipulate the receivers into thinking that there is a genuine need to lose weight and that the product is the best option. The receivers, who may have heard of the statistics before, can start to contemplate buying the product in order to live a healthier lifestyle.

8.1.5 Modality

Modality in weight loss advertisements proved to be quite high. Most websites show people, products, and other elements of the discourse as they would appear in reality. Some elements on the website can be a little less realistic than others, but the overall modality of the websites can be seen below (Table 8).

TYPE OF MODALITY	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
High	40
Middle	5
Low	1

Table 8. Types of modality.

The results show that weight loss advertising is dependent on the notion of credibility. That images of the products should be as close to reality as possible is not surprising because the senders want their products to be recognizable. High modality can be also found in photos of lean bodies; they are usually in sharp focus with no level of transparency. Such photographs imply that they display real people who experienced real results. The modality level of their background is often low as can be

seen in the Lipozene (Figure 9) advertisement. It is improbable that people would have white background behind them in real life. Therefore, the highest level of modality can be found in testimonials in which background is usually preserved. Such images possess the greatest potential to establish credibility between the senders and the receivers. Modality thus functions as yet another tool for manipulation. The senders can choose to promote the results as real or dreamlike depending on their intended message. In case of testimonials, the receivers are forced to accept that the secondary characters are in fact real customers who experienced great success with the product.

There are some examples of middle modality as well. Such images are usually transparent or present people in unlikely contexts. The advertisement for Fenphedra (Figure 10) is an example of the first situation. The woman in the Ideal section is not seen as she would be in real life. The opacity of the photo was reduced to emphasise other elements such as the claims and the product. The woman exists in the Ideal as fantasy that one can experience through the weight loss supplement, but the section is mainly focused on the product itself.



Figure 10. Modality 1 (Fenphedra).

The Fibretrim advertisement (Figure 11) shows different type of decreased modality. While the photo of the woman is opaque, it is very unlikely that she would stand behind a poster introducing "Fibretrim Advisory Board" in reality. In fact, the photo she is holding is another webpage on the Fibretrim website, and such combination is, of course, impossible in reality. The webpage suggests that the product was thoroughly researched and tested, and the woman assures the receivers that they can believe it because she does. This can be seen from the way she is grabbing the webpage as though she agreed with the claims. Her grasp on the webpage creates a vector and connection between the two elements and lets the receivers know that somebody already believes that this product is backed by science and poses no risks.



Figure 11. Modality 2 (Fibretrim).

The only website that does not show real people is SlimQuick which uses animated characters and possesses the lowest modality level. Such website is, however, an exception as it appears only once in the whole corpus. This website also

features a video with the lowest modality, while other websites feature rather high modality moving image. This applies to testimonials, educational videos, and partly commercials. Nonetheless, commercials also feature elements of lower modality such as schemas of how the product actually works. In the advertisements for Relacore, the schema shows stylized models of bodies that become thinner after ingestion of the product. It is clear that the product cannot take effect so quickly, and the receivers are probably aware of that. The low modality of such schema, however, allows the receivers to imagine what the product actually causes in the body, and the low modality, in this case, does not decrease credibility. How-it-works schemas can be found in the corpus quite frequently in form of still images as well. But the high modality of other, more frequent elements overrides the low modality of schemas.

8.1.6 Social Distance

The relationship between the senders and the receivers is mediated through characters from the secondary advertising situation. Social distance depends on the type of product being advertised. With weight loss advertisements the senders need to overcome the tension between sensitivity, the need to prove effectiveness of the product, and establishing intimate relationship with the receivers. The results from the corpus are summarized in the following table (Table 9).

TYPE OF SOCIAL DISTANCE	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Medium close shot	25
Close shot	19
Torso	14
Medium shot	9
Long shot	9

Table 9. Types of social distance.

The table clearly shows that there is a tendency towards establishing intimate relationship between the secondary characters and the receivers, but the need to prove effectiveness influences the overall social distance. Close shots are very frequent in weight loss advertisements because they evoke conversation-like situation. It would be possible to imagine that what one sees on the monitor is what they would see in real life during a conversation. In the advertisement for Phosphacore (Figure 12), a close shot of a doctor can be found next to claims about the products and a comparison with other similar supplements. It almost seems as if she was engaged in a conversation with the receivers and recommended the product because of its advantages over other products.

The advertisement features a close-up photo of a smiling female doctor in a white lab coat with a stethoscope. To her right is a comparison table of four weight loss supplements: PHOSPHACORE, Xenadrine, Alli, and Slimquick. Above the table are small images of each product's packaging. Below the table is a red banner with white text.

	PHOSPHACORE	Xenadrine	Alli	Slimquick
Clinically Proven Ingredients	YES	NO	YES	NO
Money-Back Guarantee	YES	NO	NO	NO
100% Natural and Safe	YES	NO	NO	YES
Long-Term Results	YES	NO	YES	NO
Attacks Fat Cells	YES	NO	NO	NO

**“LOSING FAT HAS JUST BECOME EASIER!
Your Total Body Makeover Begins with PHOSPHACORE!”**

Figure 12. Close social distance (Phosphacore).

Medium close shots are the most frequent type of social distance in the corpus, and they provide evidence of the need to mediate tension between credibility and intimacy. Medium close shots are still able to engage the receiver on a personal level, and they are capable of delivering proof of effectiveness as well. One such example can be found in the advertisement for LiDaDaidaihua (Figure 13). The woman on the photo is close enough to communicate with the receivers, but her lean body can be

seen as well. She can be considered a proof and a source of information that can be found on her left. Long shots of whole bodies are present in the corpus as well, but they are not as frequent as medium close shots due to its more impersonal nature.



Figure 13. Medium close social distance (LiDaDaidaihua).

One type of shot that is fairly common in promotional websites of weight loss supplements is a shot of torso. Such type of shot is very specific and differs considerably from other types. While it shows the body up close, the receiver cannot see the head and the conversation-like closeness cannot be established. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that intimacy is not established either. In fact, a very intimate relationship is created as the receiver is allowed to scrutinize the body of the character. This is also connected with absence of gaze that will be discussed in one of the following subchapters. In the advertisement for Zantrex3 (Figure 14), a torso of a muscular man is presented next to the picture of the product. The social distance between the character and the receiver is quite close, and the receiver can examine the body in detail. Such photos give the senders great power to present the advantages of the product. While in reality people would not be able to scrutinize his body from up close, the website offers much more intimate relationship.



Figure 14. Social distance (Zantrex3).

As far as testimonials are concerned, they seem to show similar results. The most frequent types are medium close and close shots. It is again generated by the necessity of balancing the aforementioned tension. The testimonials on FullFast website (Figure 15) represent perfect examples of close shots. They show only heads and shoulders of the people as if one was talking to them in person. What is more, the conversational nature of such photographs is strengthened by textual mode on the right. Text in quotation marks is put next to each picture as if the person was talking directly to the receiver. Such combination of a close shot and textual mode produces a strong percept of a real-life conversation which may persuade the receivers that the characters are real people who achieved great success with the product.



Figure 15. Close social distance in a testimonial (FullFast).

The same is true of testimonial videos. Close or middle shots are preferred rather than long shots of whole bodies. Since videos incorporate sound, text in quotation marks is usually missing. The act of conversation is evoked by the people talking in the video. Videos have even higher level of credibility since it is more difficult to forge them than still images with text in quotation marks. The people in the videos had to actually utter their testimonials, while the people from still images could have been assigned to texts in quotation marks by the senders. Since it is more complicated to forge videos, the receivers are more likely to be persuaded by them. This goes to show why testimonial is the most common type of video in the corpus, and close social distance in testimonials helps to establish contact between the quasi-real characters and the receivers. Commercials, on the other hand, use different degrees of social distance to engage the viewers and deliver proofs as well.

Furthermore, social distance is not connected to people only because images of objects can also be seen as close or far away from the receivers. Images of products in the corpus, for instance, seem to be disproportionate to the images of people. The image taken from the advertisement for 7-DAY (Figure 16) shows a woman in a bikini, who represents the ideal body type, and the product is layered on top of the first picture.



Figure 16. Social distance of products (7-DAY).

All things considered, both images appear to be very close to reality. Nonetheless, the proportions are inaccurate because the product seems to be displayed true to size, while the image of the woman is rather reduced in size. Such inaccuracy of proportions is present in most layered images from the corpus. The senders try to position the product as something real that is available immediately. The true size of the product invites the receivers to reach out as if they could grab the product and enjoy it right away. Since such action is impossible, the senders arouse false sense of reality in order to increase desire for the product. This could be also considered as an act of manipulation because the receivers might feel the need to purchase only after they see it as tangible possibility.

8.1.7 Angle

The theoretical part of the thesis explained the importance of camera angle in images. Angles can evoke sense of subordination or dominance. Advertising often takes advantage of this technical possibility to manipulate power relations in the discourse. Weight loss advertising, however, uses predominantly eye-level camera as can be seen from the table below (Table 10).

TYPE OF ANGLE	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Eye-level	44
High angle	6
Low angle	3

Table 10. Types of angles.

The results show that the senders usually try to develop equal relationship between the secondary characters and the receivers. They try to present the characters as having the same power as the receivers. Such equality may imply that the receivers have the same opportunity to achieve the ideal body, but there is one important difference. Even though the senders try to persuade the receivers that they possess the same amount of power, power relations are in fact unbalanced. While the receivers strive to reach the body ideal, the secondary characters already have it. This implies that senders exercise power over their receivers but conceal it by establishing seemingly equivalent relationship. The fact that all the websites that employ images of people use eye-level camera cannot be seen as accidental.

These covert power relations are present in all sorts of angles that the senders can incorporate. It has been shown earlier that pictures of lean bodies are extremely frequent in weight loss advertisements. The difference between the ideal body of the

character and that of the receiver remains unchanged by the angle of the camera. Even if the senders decided to empower the receivers by showing the characters from high angle, power relations would still not be shifted in favour of the receiver completely. It does, however, change the perception of such image. In the advertisement for Abrexin (Figure 17), the testimonial photo is taken from high angle, which would imply that the receivers have power over the represented participant. However, there is still the issue that the represented participant is portrayed as more successful than the receivers which gives him more power. In this power struggle, the message of achievable weight loss is intensified. Eye-level also delivers the message that it is possible to improve the body, but high angle emphasises that if somebody else could do it, there is no reason why the same should not be true for the receivers.

"45 days in, 20lbs down and 4" off and no, I have not been paid. However, the great results are enough for me. I feel better, I look better, and that's what matters to me. Thank you ABREXIN!"
-Mike Murphy

MIKE LOST
20
LBS



Figure 17. High angle (Abrexin).

Low angle photos are rather rare in the corpus, but they can be found as well. Their infrequency is probably caused by the sensitive topic of weight loss. People who strive to achieve the body ideal might in this respect suffer from low self-esteem, and it could prove ineffective to remind them of their weakness. As mentioned before, weight loss advertisements are rather oriented towards future possibilities rather than

present issues. The message of low angle photographs in the corpus does not stress the inferiority of the receivers per se. As can be seen from the advert for Slim10 (Figure 18), the photo of the woman is taken from low angle, but it can be seen as fantasy or an ideal rather than an attempt to diminish the receivers. Such photo is presented as something they can look up to and hope for. Power relations in this type of angle are noticeably shifted towards the senders.



Figure 18. Low angle (Slim10).

As far as moving images are concerned, eye-level in testimonials represents an overwhelming majority. Commercials do take advantage of eye-level as well, but they sometimes incorporate the aforementioned low angle. If the commercial for Lipozene is taken as an example (Figure 19), one can see that the schema is pictured from low angle. The same can be said about the commercial for Zantrex3 (Figure 19), in which the woman often looms over the receiver.

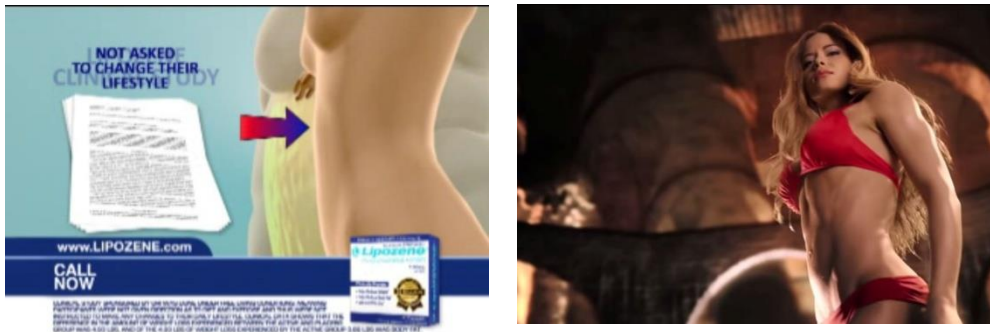


Figure 19. Low angle in videos (Lipozene, Zantrex3).

Again, the low angle portrays the characters as something superior that the receivers should look up to which empowers the senders to manipulate the receivers into purchase. Contrary to still images, angles in videos can change with camera movement. At first, the woman from the Zantrex3 commercial is shown from low angle, but the camera movement eventually levels the gaze of the character with the receivers. It allows the senders to initially portray the woman as superior due to her ideal body but relatable at the end. They manage to persuade the receivers that the ideal body is lean and toned and that it is possible to achieve it. Low angles force the receivers to accept the social value of lean body ideal and the balanced eye-level turns it into real possibility.

8.1.8 The Image Act and Gaze

The importance of gaze in images, especially in advertisements, was mentioned in the subchapter on social distance. Gaze or its absence is capable of changing meaning and delivering the difference between a demand and an offer. The corpus contains both direct and indirect gaze (Table 11). A special case of indirect gaze can be often found in the corpus and that is the aforementioned torso. Such

photographs are deprived of the possibility to engage the receivers by gaze. The important thing is that this type of connection is not established.

TYPE OF GAZE	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Direct	39
Torso	18
Indirect	16

Table 11. Types of gaze.

Direct gaze in promotional websites of weight loss supplements is very common, and majority of the websites in the corpus use this strategy to engage the receivers. Gaze creates a social relationship between the characters and the receivers and the nature of such relationship can be frequently revealed by extralinguistic features such as gestures and facial expressions. While advertising is known for variety of relationships based on gaze such as seductive, gaze in weight loss advertisements is mostly accompanied by smiles which invite the receivers to share the relation of social affinity. It stems from the effort to minimize the distance between the real worlds of the senders and the receivers. The following images (Figure 20) are taken from the advertisements for Adiphene and Unique Hoodia respectively, and they both show smiling people. Their smiles make the receivers enter into close relationship and challenge them to become equally happy and satisfied. Their positioning next to the claims about the product and the image of the product implies that the satisfaction can be brought about by the product itself. Their invitation thus extends beyond the worlds of individuals and promises inclusion into community of satisfied customers leading happy and healthy lives.



Figure 20. Direct gaze (Adiphene, Unique Hoodia).

As pointed out before, indirect gaze is present in the corpus in two types: indirect gaze of characters who choose to look out of the image and missing gaze of torsos. These images are equally as common in the corpus and represent offers. The viewers do not establish contact with the characters and can utilize them as source of information for contemplation. They are allowed to scrutinize the images to retrieve offered information. By doing so, they accept the offer and enter into an impersonal relationship of the viewer and the observed object. The advertisement for Slimweight can be considered an example of an offer (Figure 21). The images of torsos result in missing gaze, and the receivers can look at them as if they were watching objects rather than people. The claims on the left behave as Given and the New is realized by the images. The images represent proofs of truthfulness of the claims because each image is assigned to one claim to support its trustworthiness. Indirect or missing gaze thus functions as an effective strategy for increasing credibility.



Figure 21. Missing gaze (Slimweight).

The gaze in video testimonials depends on the fact how the testimonials were filmed. Some testimonials feel more like an interview with an invisible interviewer, and in such cases, gaze tends to be indirect as if the quasi-real characters were looking at somebody who asks them questions. If the testimonials feel more like home videos, the gaze is usually direct. Commercials and educational videos also make use of both types of gazes. Such combination gives them the power to make both an offer and a demand, which are equally important in advertising.

8.1.9 Colours

As mentioned in the theoretical section of the thesis, colours tend to constitute part of meaning of images as well as the whole advertising discourse. The Internet environment is especially suitable for using wide variety of vibrant colours since some loud colours are not printable (it is, however, necessary to mention that some colours such as gold or silver cannot be displayed on monitors). The weight loss advertisements from the corpus indeed abound in colours. Even though there is a wide variation from purple to black and red colour schemes, some colours tend to occur

more frequently than others. The most frequent colour schemes in the corpus can be seen in the table below (Table 12), and they are based on the most dominant colours on the websites. The colour scheme is, of course, a matter of degree, and some of the websites in each category may prove to be more reliant on colour than others.

COLOUR SCHEME	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Blue	18
Green	11
Red + Black	10
Purple	5

Table 12. Colour schemes.

The most common dominant colour in the corpus is blue. Blue is traditionally seen as colour of calmness, reliability and security. What is more, blue in connection with white is linked to medicine in Western culture. All of these characteristics are beneficial for weight loss advertising. As mentioned previously, credibility is a considerable concern, and blue colour serves as reassurance. Since weight loss advertisements often refer to extensive research that went into the development of the product, it is only natural that blue colour should be used on websites of this type. The advertisement for Adapexin (Figure 8), for instance, features blue-white scheme that comes across as very professional, medical and trustworthy. Colours along with other features of this website serve as appeal to reason and authority. If the blue colour was exchanged for yellow, the impression would certainly not be the same. Yellow can be seen as colour of activity and happiness and the appeal to authority would not be as strong. The blue-white scheme is additionally supported by claims ("Clinically proven Ingredients"), a photo of a doctor, and other features on the

website. Such combination of medical and scientific claims, colours, and images tries to establish an environment of trustworthiness in an effort to persuade the customers that the product is safe and effective.

The second most important scheme uses green as a dominant colour. Green has always been perceived as colour of balance, new beginnings, spring and nature. It is connected mainly to health and well-being. Many websites from the corpus lay great stress on using natural ingredients in their products. The emphasis on naturalness originates from the phenomenon of healthy lifestyle and distrust in chemicals that are often seen as harmful. The advertisement for Garcinia Ultra (Figure 22) can serve as an example of how green colour can deliver the meaning of naturalness. Even the product itself states that it is "100% All Natural", and it is accompanied by images of sliced fruit. The Ideal features green background with branches and leaves. A guarantee seal "100% Natural" can be found next to photos expressing weight loss. All of these elements support the intention of the sender to present the product as part of natural and healthy lifestyle. Even though not all plants are beneficial for humans and some can be even poisonous, plant based products are often considered as safe and healthy alternative to man-made chemicals. The social value of natural lifestyle is established as the best way to live, and the senders strengthen it by using the green colour scheme. Therefore, the receivers can be persuaded to buy the product as part of their improved healthy lifestyle.



Figure 22. Green colour scheme (Garcinia Ultra).

Colours in videos from the corpus depend on the moving image type.

Testimonials do not usually feature a dominant colour or colour scheme. As mentioned above, this is caused by the effort to give the impression of authenticity. If testimonials were stylized into the colour scheme of the website, they would lose some persuasive force. Commercials and educational videos, on the other hand, often make use of colours as bearers of meaning. The commercial for ProactolIXS, features a doctor who is dressed in white medical coat and a blue shirt. Such colour scheme is reminiscent of the Adapexin website, and the reasoning stays the same. The video tries to promote the product as a supplement approved by authorities and science. The commercial for Zantrex3, on the other hand, uses the dominant colours of the product and the website to highlight the uniqueness and identity of the product. As shown above, colour schemes can be utilized to present the product in a certain way. The senders have the power to establish it as part of science or nature in order to persuade the customers that their product is trustworthy. They can manipulate them into thinking that the product is approved by authorities and can be considered safe. In reality, such

presentation of over-the-counter products depends on the senders, and there is no actual guarantee that the claims are truthful.

8.2 Genre Hybridism

As mentioned in Chapter 2, weight loss advertising is driven by several purposes contributing to the main purpose of advertising, which is to persuade. The move structure of advertising was used in the analysis to uncover embedded genres in an effort to understand what purposes are important enough for the senders to employ genre hybridism in their advertisements. This will help to detect what tensions the senders must fight against to achieve their primary purpose, and what strategies are most often chosen to do that. Some of the moves in the structure of advertisements are not suitable for the analysis since they are rather straightforward actions that do not allow for genre hybridism: headlines, offering incentives and soliciting response. For this reason, detailing the product, establishing credentials, and celebrity and typical user endorsement were used in this analysis to explore power relations and manipulation in promotional websites of weight loss supplements.

8.2.1 Establishing Credentials

The purpose of this rhetorical move is to establish and increase credibility of the product, the sender, and the issue of weight loss need in general. The importance of credibility in weight loss advertisements was already shown in the analysis of multimodality, and this section of the analysis will explore it even further by identifying elements of genre hybridism that assist in increasing it.

The act of establishing credentials can be done by various strategies and genre hybridism does not have to be part of it. As seen in the analysis of image types, the

corpus, for instance, abounds in pictures of guarantee seals that promise money back guarantee. The following examples were taken from the advertisements for Reduxcut, Unique Hoodia and Phosphacore (Figure 23). All of these guarantee seals are used to persuade the receivers that the senders are certain that their product works, and they are willing to take complete responsibility which is often highlighted by numerals "100%". Guarantee seals and guarantee claims are indeed frequent in the corpus because seals are subconsciously associated with authority. Guarantee seals thus represent an example of appeals to ethos and reason, but the authority is in fact fabricated. The senders, in this case, do not appeal to external universally recognized authority, but they emerge as authorities themselves. This, of course, entails a risk of decreasing the credibility force as the senders are not believed to be the most reliable source of information. If the senders are trying to increase their credibility to higher levels, they must appeal to universally recognized authorities.



Figure 23. Guarantee seals (Reduxcut, Unique Hoodia, Phosphacore).

This is where genre hybridism comes into question. It was mentioned before that multimodality is capable of supporting credibility. There are fifteen images of doctors in the corpus that are used as an appeal to recognized authority. While these photos increase credibility on their own, they are frequently used on websites that claim that their products are scientifically proven and tested. As discussed before, genre hybridism is a matter of degree in advertisements. While some advertisements just mention the scientific background of the product, some incorporate research results or the studies themselves. The unifying force behind them is the purpose to establish credibility. While these elements present information as well, their primary purpose is not informative. In fact, the scientific studies usually present very specialized findings, and most receivers probably would not be able to appreciate it fully. What is more important about these studies is the fact that it makes the product a part of highly sophisticated, expert world, while the receivers are positioned as people from the ordinary world who are supposed to look up to the world of expertise. This is again connected to the issue of power relations. While the senders approximate themselves to the exclusive world of science, the receivers are made to revere and appreciate its knowledge. The senders are thus exercising power of the more educated and sophisticated participants in the communication. This leaves the receivers in rather passive role of acceptance. In reality, of course, acceptance does not have to take place. The receivers can decide that scientific research is not a criterion for their decision, or they can find that the studies are taken out of context. In such case, the power of the senders fails to manipulate the receivers into inferior position, but the initial effort of the senders remains as a reminder that power relations are of major significance.

As mentioned before, studies and research were present in three types: claims, research results and the actual studies themselves that were either downloadable on the website or accessible on external websites. The table below shows how many websites from the corpus make use of these strategies (Table 13).

TYPE	NUMBER OF WEBSITES
Claims	35
Results	11
Study	9

Table 13. Hybrid genre of studies.

It is evident from the table that majority of the websites try to appeal to authority by claiming that their products are thoroughly researched, but only one fifth of them supports it by hard evidence. This, however, does not mean that this type of genre hybridism is not significant. In fact, scientific studies are often inaccessible to general public, and it might be difficult to get permission to publish it on promotional websites. It is possible that for this reason, claims are far more frequent than evidence. The fact that almost 20% of the promotional websites do contain the actual studies is, in this point of view, an indicator of significance.

While studies and research results can be viewed as genres on their own because their primary purpose is to inform, it is also possible to see them as hybrid genres which can be uncovered by examining their purpose in the advertisements. In the advertisement for Decaslim, information about ingredients is supplemented by scientific studies (Figure 24). The studies are preceded by claims "It's Science", "Proven Weight Loss Ingredients" and "the science behind Decaslim's patented and trademarked ingredients". Since the individual ingredients are described in short

paragraphs to provide information, the primary purpose of the studies is not to provide additional information but to give proof and increase credibility of these claims. If no studies were provided by the sender, the informative value would persist. Credibility, on the other, would suffer from such absence because the claims could not be verified. It is the change of purpose that makes studies a hybrid genre in the context of advertising. It is likely that the senders do not expect that the receivers will read through nine full-text studies because it would be time-consuming. Since online weight loss advertising is based on pressure tactics to buy the product immediately such as "Buy now" and "Order now", it is highly improbable that the senders would want their receivers to read through all the materials because it could distract them from immediate purchase. If the receivers are interested in information about the ingredients, they can read the paragraphs dedicated to this purpose. There is, however, a possibility that they will not be sure of these claims, and the instant availability of proofs can make a considerable difference in the way the receivers accept the offered information. The fact that the studies are not meant to be read makes them a hybrid between academic writing (because of the form) and advertising (because of the purpose). The purpose shifted from giving information to supporting credibility of claims made on the promotional website.

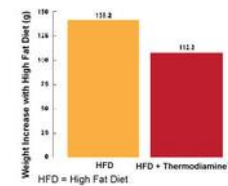


How can you know if this formula actually works? It's Science! DecaSlim is the only weight loss pills that work on the market created with:

- Proven Weight Loss Ingredients
- 100% Safe & 100% All Natural
- And Produce Visible Weight Loss Results!

THE SCIENCE BEHIND DECASLIM'S 10 PATENTED & TRADEMARKED INGREDIENTS:

ThermoDiamine™ The quinazoline alkaloid isolated from the unripe fruit of Evodia Ruteaecarpine ThermoDiamine™ is also known as Evodiamine. Recent Japanese studies found that ThermoDiamine™ supplemented in a high-fat diet for 3 weeks, can significantly help reduce body weight, overall fat percentages and epididymal fat weight. ThermoDiamine™ works by increasing the output of catecholamines, vital to the fat oxidation. By increasing the lipolytic (fat burning) activity through its effect on vanilloid receptors, ThermoDiamine™ significantly helps with weight loss. These receptors help adjust the regulation of body temperature.



[Download Clinical Research on ThermoDiamine™](#)

Figure 24. Hybrid genre of studies in advertising 1 (Decaslim).

This instance of genre hybridism is often supported by multimodality as well. It probably stems from the assumption that the studies will not be read by majority of the receivers. In the advertisement for Seathin (Figure 25), images of front pages of the studies are presented to emphasise the scientific research behind the development of the product. What is more, these images are in fact hyperlinks that lead to the full-text studies. It would suggest that the studies are in fact meant to be read, but the pressure tactics of commands such as "Buy now, click here" are employed as well. It is also interesting to examine what the senders recommend to do with the documents. The sentence above the studies says: "Click on the documents below to download the actual scientific studies supporting Sea-Thin". While the senders allow the receivers to download the studies, they do not specifically address the need to read them. It is quite possible that the studies are rather supposed to be

opened, flicked through and finally categorized as hard evidence of credibility. However, the senders are aware that many people would not consider reading the studies, and that is the reason for incorporating images of the front pages. The layout is typical of academic writing, and this fact alone is enough to increase credibility. Multimodality thus serves as intensifying and insuring factor of genre hybridism.

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Sea-Thin Science' website. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: 'FUCOXANTHIN & BROWN MARINE VEGETABLES', 'SEA-THIN BASICS', 'THE SEA-THIN DIFFERENCE', 'HOW SEA-THIN WORKS', 'SCIENCE', 'READING ROOM', and 'FAQs'. Below the menu are three boxes of 'sea thin' supplement and a 'BUY NOW! CLICK HERE' button. The main content area is titled 'Sea-Thin Science' and contains the text: 'Click on the documents below to download the actual scientific studies supporting Sea-Thin:'. There are two study thumbnails. The first is titled 'Fucoxanthin from edible seaweed, Undaria pinnatifida, shows antiobesity effect through UCP1 expression in white adipose tissues.' with a 'Download PDF >' link. The source is cited as 'Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications, Volume 332, Issue 2, 1 July 2005'. The second thumbnail is titled 'Molecular Biology of Thermoregulation' with a 'Download PDF >' link.

Figure 25. Hybrid genre of studies in advertising 2 (Seathin).

The claims about scientific research are often supported by other elements of multimodality as well. The images of doctors mentioned above fulfil the appeal to authority, and it is also possible to find videos in which doctors refer to scientific studies and research behind the product. They present excessive weight as a health risk that can be cured by weight loss supplements. While many sites include disclaimers in small print that the product is not certified to treat or prevent any diseases, the websites actually try to construct excessive weight as a disease that can be cured by the supplements. In the advertisement for ProactolXS, the doctor in the

video says "I recommend this to all my patients that are, or in danger of becoming overweight in order to prevent diseases related to excessive weight and body fat". In this way, the senders construct excessive weight as a disease and the character of the doctor gives it credibility.

An even more persuasive video can be found on the website of Garcinia Ultra featuring one part of a TV show. It is a talk show that features a host, Dr. Oz, and a guest of the talk show, Dr. Julie Cheng. Their conversation can be classified as an expert interview in which the guest doctor praises the active ingredient for its ability to help lose weight: "It's been actually seen in studies to help increase weight loss two to three times". This video combines the genre of expert interview and adds the element of results of scientific studies to establish and increase credibility of the main ingredient. The senders try to persuade the receivers that their product, which contains this ingredient, is approved by authorities, safe to use and indeed effective. Expert interviews and scientific studies, while being genres of their own, are exploited by advertising to persuade the receivers that the product was researched enough and the senders can be trusted.

8.2.2 Celebrity and Typical User Endorsement

Another rhetorical move that is used to establish credibility is celebrity and typical user endorsement. Typical user endorsement is present in form of testimonials in the corpus, and celebrity testimonials are no exception either. The task of describing the genre of testimonial is not an easy one. Most testimonials appear with inverted commas as if they were part of a conversation. They are, however, written and usually accompanied by names and sometimes place of residence as well. Since the genre of

testimonials possesses features of both spoken and written language, hybridism is inherent to it. This sort of hybridism between spoken and written is purposeful because it positions testimonials as authentic and trustworthy.

It is quite possible to imagine that one is talking to a friend about their weight loss and mentions the product that helped them to achieve their desired weight and body. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between a real life conversation and a testimonial. Testimonials involve a mediator who repeats and adjusts the utterance. The following example from the advertisement for Meratol (Figure 26) shows evidence of manipulation with the text. Firstly, quotation marks are added to indicate that the utterance was once spoken. Secondly, the name of the speaker is attached to the text to identify them as a real person. Last but not least, the name of the product is not only mentioned, but it is followed by trademark symbol which would not be possible in spoken language. Some features of the text bear similarity to normal conversation as it addresses the receiver ("if you're like me"), uses contractions ("didn't", "haven't" and "you're") and makes use of colloquial language as well ("I have lost a stone"). In contrary to normal conversation, there are no interruptions, the segment is quite long and there is no feedback from the receiver.



Figure 26. Typical user endorsement 1 (Meratol).

Testimonials function as a genre that can be embedded in advertising discourse to increase credibility of the sender and the product. The similarities with real life conversation are utilized to establish close contact with the receivers. The receivers have no direct possibility to give feedback, but it is present in form of attitude towards the testimonial. They can classify the testimonial as a proof of effectiveness or discard it as a forged statement.

As mentioned before, testimonials appear on 40 out of 46 websites which can be considered a substantial percentage that indicates significance of this genre for weight loss advertising. Since credibility is of great importance to the senders, it is no wonder that testimonials should be embedded in advertising discourse. They pretend to present real-life experience with the product that results in great success. The stress is on "real-life" because the receivers are given the opportunity to identify themselves with someone who went through the same situation. The difference is that the quasi-real characters were successful in their journey to achieve the body ideal, while the receivers find themselves at the beginning. This positions the secondary characters as real-life ideals; something that is perfect but can be achieved by anyone.

There are also celebrity testimonials in which famous people play the role of the secondary characters. Their relationship with the receivers slightly differs from typical user endorsement. At the beginning, celebrities are positioned as role models and people that should be looked up to. While they are constructed as ideal, it is revealed that they may struggle with the same problems as ordinary people. This brings them closer to the receivers who are allowed to peek into quasi-real life of the characters. They, however, remain authorities and the senders suggest that the

receivers should take their lead. The product is in this case constructed as a secret weapon that celebrities use to achieve the body ideal. The receivers are again positioned as inferior to the ideals, and the senders exercise external power provided by the authorities. They remove power from the receivers by inclusion of successful elite and manipulate them into believing that the elite use their product to stay successful. This implies that the receivers could approximate themselves to the elite if they started to use their secret weapon. In the advertisement for Capsiplex (Figure 27), a framed photo of a celebrity is titled by the words "CELEBRITIES secret weapon". The senders directly address the exclusivity of their product, but they approximate it to the readers by claiming that "Capsiplex isn't some out of reach expensive secret of the rich and famous, you can experience the same kind of results, starting THIS WEEK". In this case, they do not contradict themselves by saying that it is not just for celebrities, because they want their product to be viewed as luxurious but affordable. The product is thus approximated to the receivers, while the receivers are brought closer to the elite.

The image shows a composite advertisement for Capsiplex. On the left is a newspaper clipping with a photo of a woman in a black dress, labeled 'After', and a smaller photo of her labeled 'Before'. The headline reads 'CELEBRITIES SECRET WEAPON'. Text below the photos says: 'Celebrity & Model Nicola McLean used Capsiplex to help shed her post-pregnancy weight. Nicola was so impressed by her 4st loss she recommended it to all her friends!'. A red button says 'READ HER STORY' and a banner at the bottom says 'NEWSPAPERS'. On the right is a video player with the Capsiplex logo at the top. The video title is 'As You Can See, She's Thrilled With The Results... And Doesn't She Look Great?'. Below the video, text reads: 'And as Capsiplex isn't some out of reach expensive secret of the rich and famous, You can experience the same kind of results, starting THIS WEEK.' Below that is the question 'How exciting is that?' followed by: 'There are MANY weight loss products online but it's rare to find scientific proof and the [celebrity feedback that Capsiplex has.](#)' At the bottom right is a graphic that says 'NHS 'MIRACLE' FAT PILL SELLS OUT IN 3 DAYS'.

Figure 27. Celebrity user endorsement 1 (Capsiplex).

As can be seen from the subchapter on multimodality, testimonials are supported by different modes as well. In case of celebrity endorsement, photographs and videos of the successful elite are implemented into the discourse along with their stories and biographies which double as testimonials. The advertisement for Nutratrim (Figure 28) features a photograph and a video of a celebrity. The photograph is very salient as the background is white and the celebrity is wearing a bright pink dress. She is gazing and smiling on the receivers as if she was inviting them to enter into a relationship of social affinity. The placement of the picture next to the claims about the product makes her a testimonial of its effectiveness. Her name and signature is placed in the Real which signifies that the celebrity is completely devoted to the product. Signatures hold a lot of power as they are capable of, for example, making contracts valid. Her signature is implemented to validate the claims and increase the credibility of her testimonial.



Figure 28. Celebrity user endorsement 2 (Nutratrim).

Multimodality is also present in typical user endorsement. As discussed before, photographs and videos very often constitute part of the testimonials. Two photographs are commonly used to accompany one testimonial: the before and after. The testimonial for Phosphacore (Figure 29) is presented with two pictures. One shows a man before he starts taking the product, while the other shows the result of the dietary supplement. It was mentioned before that the change between these two pictures is very important. This change provides a proof for statements such as "after only two weeks, I was able to lose 21 pounds". Not only does the before and after serve as documentation of success, but it also insures credibility.



Figure 29. Typical user endorsement 2 (Phosphacore).

The genre of testimonial itself is used to establish credibility, but images and videos increase it even further. It could be argued that the receivers are put into equally powerful position as they are presented with ordinary people in the testimonials, but the fact that the quasi-real character achieved the goal already gives the senders power to claim that their product really works. If the quasi-real character was at the beginning of the journey with the receiver, this power would be lost, and

the senders would have to rely on other elements of advertising discourse to establish credibility.

8.2.3 Detailing the Product

The rhetorical move of detailing the product encompasses identification, description, and indication of value of the product. It is description of the product that seems to show the highest level of genre hybridism. Description of the product is usually presented by textual mode, but other modes can be implemented as well. While the moves of establishing credentials and typical user endorsement were primarily occupied with the purpose of credibility, description of the product is focused on providing information. This does not mean that credibility is not increased simultaneously. In fact, information carries the potential to trigger trustworthiness, especially if it is presented as expert knowledge. However, weight loss advertising uses so many strategies for increasing credibility that some elements must be primarily focused on providing information as well; otherwise, there would be nothing to support. The corpus features two types of genre hybridism connected to informative function of advertising: lecture and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

According to Deroey and Taverniers (2011), the discourse of lectures is driven, among others, by the following functions: informing, elaborating and evaluating (p. 5). While these functions are all important, the informative function takes precedence in lectures as persuasive function does in advertising. It was argued before that weight loss advertising depends on scientific research. This research is often connected to the effectiveness of ingredients used in the product. Since ingredients are of great significance in weight loss supplements, the senders feel the need to educate their

receivers on advantages of the ingredients chosen for their product. This is also the reason why most of the embedded lectures are concerned with ingredients. While these elements of promotional websites are similar to real lectures as they try to educate, give proof, elaborate, evaluate, and summarize, they also differ in the fact that they are written and lack interactivity. They in fact often remind of lecture notes that students would put down during the class. The advertisement for Slim10 (Figure 30), for example, makes use of bullet points to highlight the advantages of one ingredient in the product. Nevertheless, the voice of the lecturer is still present in it as if the sender did not want to lose close contact with the receivers. The voice of the lecturer is in fact the voice of the sender who tries to sell the product by saying that "you will burn the calories you eat 4% faster". While the rest of the bullet points pretend to be facts independent of the advertising discourse, the one point makes the receiver aware that there is still a product waiting to be purchased.

- Increasing the metabolism to burn more calories per day
- Enhancing weight loss
- Increasing lean muscle mass
- The "Thermic Response" (metabolizing of calories) to a meal is 4% greater. You will burn the calories you eat 4% faster
- Improving athletic performance
- Suppressing appetite

Figure 30. Hybrid genre of lecture 1 (Slim10).

Lectures can be found on 35 websites out of 46. This genre is most commonly used to provide information about the ingredients, or they can be how-it-works lectures. Since lectures often make use of visual aids to evaluate and give evidence about the claims, advertising lectures make use of graphs, schemas, illustrative videos,

and chemical formulas. For instance, the advertisement for Adiphene (Figure 31), shows a short educational paragraph about ingredients. It can be seen that there is a speaker/lecturer because it addresses the receivers ("your body", "we have"). It also features a lot of terms and specialized language ("chromium picolinate", "carbohydrate metabolism", "theobromine", "polyphenols"), which is a common feature in lectures. The senders are trying to impress the receivers with their knowledge of science to increase credibility but also provide information about how individual ingredients help to burn fat more effectively. The lecture is accompanied by graphs that present results of studies to prove the claims in the lecture. Giving proof in lectures is essential as the lecturer tries to persuade the receivers that what is being said can be supported by science. The senders appeal to reason by explaining, showing facts, and giving evidence. It is obvious that credibility of science is embedded in the lectures and provides proof for information that the receivers are supposed to acquire. It can be seen that the paragraphs are not usually exhaustive since only the most important facts are stated. This is due to the fact that the senders probably do not want to shower the receiver with large amount of incomprehensible data. They try to present information in comprehensible but sophisticated way. While the rest of the discourse on the website often makes use of informal language ("heavyweight stuff", "no nasty, nagging cravings"), lectures show signs of more formal/academic language ("banned", "increase the efficiency", "modulate", "inhibits"). The studies mentioned before also use formal academic language and terms, but the senders repeat the findings in the lecture because they assume that the studies will not be read. On the other hand, the lectures are supposed to be read as they are usually the most

important facts supported by evidence from the studies.

The 5 Stimulants

Bitter Orange, which many dieters turned to as a powerful alternative, when the Food and Drug Administration banned the herbal supplement ephedra. **Chromium picolinate** works to increase the efficiency of insulin, which is incredibly important, as insulin controls how much fat your body stores.

Then we have **Guarana extract** which helps to efficiently metabolize food into energy, burn excess stored fat and speed up metabolism to burn even more fat. **Ginseng panax root extract 10%** is thought to help modulate carbohydrate metabolism, which means it's potentially useful for managing blood sugar. And the theobromine in **Cacao extract** inhibits fat storage and the cocoa polyphenols increase fat metabolism.

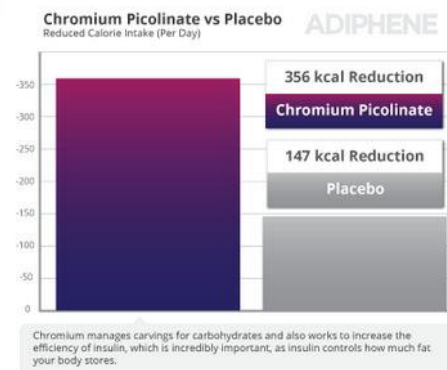
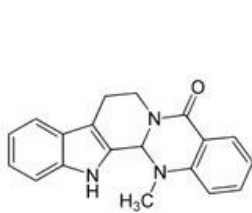


Figure 31. Hybrid genre of lecture 2 (Adiphene).

Except for graphs, schemas and chemical formulas are often incorporated in lectures. They serve the same purpose: to increase credibility of the information presented in the lectures. In the advertisement for Adapexin (Figure 32), chemical formula is presented as the Given next to the information about the ingredient. This goes to show that chemical formula is something that receivers are supposed to know and recognize as part of expert knowledge. Since it is presented as the Given, it justifies information on the right. Similar intentions can be found in the advertisement for Nuratrim (Figure 32) in which the chemical formula is expressed rather symbolically. Each of the colourful images was assigned to one ingredient as the Given. While the images certainly remind of chemical formulas, it should be noticed that they all show the same image but in different colours. Since the ingredients are different, it is not possible that they would all have the same chemical formula. In this case, the image of chemical formula is not authentic, but the purpose is the same as in the advert for Adapexin. The Given position of the stylized chemical formula implies that it is universally recognized expert knowledge which can validate the New in the

discourse.



Thermodiamine (98% Evodiamine)

Thermodiamine has been used for centuries in China as a weight loss supplement. It's recently been "discovered" in the US and Europe and is quickly becoming a popular weight loss aid (by itself). Studies suggest Thermodiamine may help you slim up in two ways. One, it increases body heat and raises your core temperature, which leads to calorie burning. Two, it reduces the body's uptake of fat and even burns it! Although studies are still confirming Thermodiamine's effectiveness, the preliminary results are excellent.

Benefits of Thermodiamine:

- Reduces fat uptake
- Burns fat

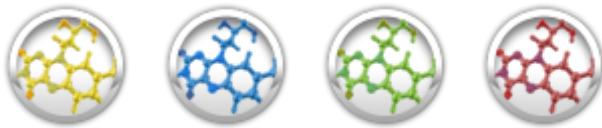


Figure 32. Chemical formulas (Adapexin, Nuratrim).

As far as schemas are concerned, they can be found in the corpus frequently as well. They usually show how the product works to reduce body fat. These images and videos are of low modality, but it does not change the fact that they possess high level of persuasive force. In the advertisement for Phen375 (Figure 33), a schema supplements a how-it-works lecture. While the input and output information is quite clear, the process will probably not be comprehensible from the schema. One would have to be aware of what the term "translocase" means and what it can do in the body. Since neither the schema nor the lecture explains the term, it could be argued that the schema fails its purpose to provide information. On the other hand, the schema is not used as a source of information but as a proof of credibility and appeal to expert authority. The senders manage to place the receivers into inferior position by incorporating expert knowledge that is not sufficiently explained. The receivers are

thus aware that there is information that is important but which they do not understand. This positions them as less educated and inferior to the senders who use similar schemas to manipulate the receivers into thinking that this is the way the product works.

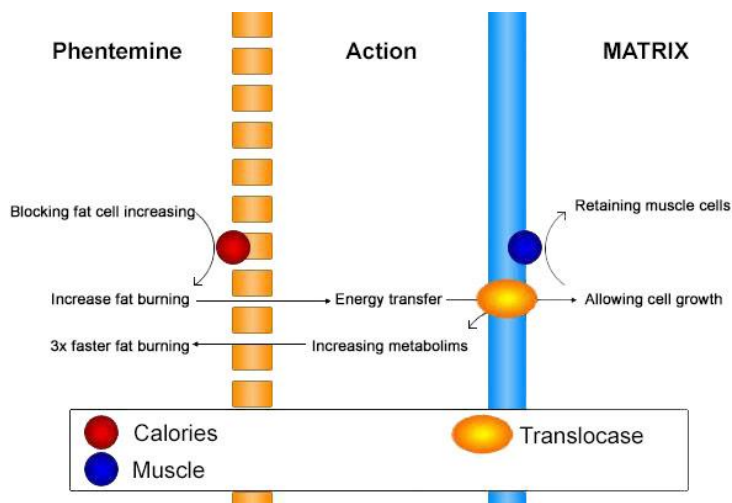


Figure 33. Schema (Phen375).

The second informative case of hybridism is the genre of FAQ. According to Santini (2006), FAQ constitute a novel genre (p. 703). Carter (2011) also presents FAQ as a separate genre that can be embedded into online discourse. FAQ is a conversation-like genre that is usually found on the Internet. It features a series of questions and answers that are related to the website. While FAQs can be found on many different websites, promotional websites of weight loss advertising seem to make use of this genre very frequently. There are 29 websites in the corpus that include FAQs, and some other websites such as Slimmor that use the same structure but do not clearly distinguish the section from other elements of the website. FAQs often serve as a recapitulation of the most important information on the website and additional information about delivery, guarantee, and pricing. The questions are

ascribed to the potential customer, but in reality, they are usually fabricated by the senders to point out significant facts. The questions are thus asked by quasi-real receivers, and they are answered by the senders. In fact, both ends of the communication are controlled by the senders. Since the role of the interviewer is wrongly attributed to the receivers, it leaves them in peculiar position. They possess no control over what is or what is not asked. They can read the FAQ, but they are not part of it per se. They are present as a third party; as someone eavesdropping on a conversation or rather an interview. For instance, FAQ in the advertisement for Decaslim features two questions that reveal 1st person voice: "Do I have to exercise to see results?" and "When will my order arrive? ". While these are questions that the receivers might ask themselves, they were formulated by somebody else. The quasi-real questioner does not allow the questions to be changed, but the receivers can read them as if they posed the questions. The receivers are thus partly projected into the conversation, but they stand outside of it at the same time. This is the reason why the receivers are put into disadvantageous position because even though they do get some answers that they might be interested in, other reassuring questions are left unanswered.

FAQ is the only hybrid genre in online weight loss advertising that does not tend to incorporate high level of multimodality. Sometimes a picture of the product can be present as a reminder, but no images or videos usually interact with the textual mode of this genre. There are, however, a few exceptions in the corpus such as the advertisement for Adiphene (Figure 34). The website presents a picture of a doctor in the top section, and the bottom section is reserved for the FAQ. The doctor suggestively tilts the product as if he were to take the pills out of the packaging. Such

act indicates that the doctor considers the product safe, and it also implies his recommendation. Similar images can be found many times in the corpus, but they are usually part of the homepage. In this case, the image of the doctor is put together with FAQ which indicates that he is one of the participants in this communication. Since the role of the questioner is already occupied by the quasi-real receivers, the role of the doctor is to answer the questions. His image gives credibility to the answers, while the questions activate him as a participant. FAQ is, in this case, a conversation between an ordinary customer and an expert. This is, however, rather exceptional use of multimodality, and as stated before, FAQ tend to primarily use textual mode.

Questions About Adiphene? Find The Answers Right Here.

Obviously you can now see that Adiphene can offer you serious help towards reaching your weight loss goals. However, we realise you might have a few questions before you order so you'll find the most frequently asked questions on this page.

[Click Here to order Adiphene and start moving towards your goals.](#)

Q: What is Adiphene

A: Adiphene is a multi approach fat loss supplement. Instead of focusing on one approach and limiting its power, it includes **12 of the most powerful natural fat fighters** known to science and helps you **tackle fat in FIVE DIFFERENT ways:**

- ✓ 3 fat metabolizers
- ✓ 1 fat binder
- ✓ 1 appetite reducer
- ✓ 2 thermogenic boosters
- ✓ 5 stimulants

Figure 34. Multimodality in FAQ (Adiphene).

Since all the other hybrid genres in weight loss advertising seem to have high level of multimodality, it is interesting to explore why FAQ should be an exception. The promotional websites are otherwise often supported by photos of people. They, however, rarely appear next to the FAQ. As discussed above, photos of people have

the opportunity to become active participant of the discourse, especially in FAQ in which the communicativeness is even more evident. If photos of people were implemented into it, it is possible that the receivers would identify them as the questioners. Since the senders want the real receivers to identify with this role, images of secondary characters are usually missing. This is the reason why multimodality is not abundant in FAQ. The doctor in the previous example can be part of the discourse because there is little chance that the receivers would perceive him as the questioner. He stands for authority that is supposed to provide answers.

In conclusion, the informative purpose of advertising is mainly supported by the aforementioned genres of lecture and FAQ. While the primary goal of both genres is to provide information, they simultaneously increase credibility of the advertisements. This is especially true of lectures in which results of studies are presented along with information. Lectures are also very prone to show signs of multimodality that increases both functions and contributes positively towards persuasive force of the discourse.

9. Results of Investigation

The following points discuss the extent to which the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 7 are valid for online weight loss advertisements:

1. Photos of fit and lean people are much more frequent than photos of overweight people. This is due to the fact that the receivers may identify with the promise of the ideal body and also due to the sensitivity of weight loss topic. It is, however, true that testimonials usually showed photos of the before and after in which photos of overweight people were present. The analysis suggests that it was caused by the focus

on change between those images rather than on the images themselves. As far as videos are concerned, testimonials are the most frequent videos due to their strong persuasive power which is determined by the fact that videos are more difficult to forge than image testimonials.

2. The distinction between the Ideal/Real and the Given/New proved to be of great significance in promotional websites of weight loss advertising. It is necessary to point out that the Given/New dichotomy analysis did not show one-sided results because similar elements tended to appear on both sides of the websites. It was proposed that such inhomogeneity was caused by the intended messages that the senders wished to deliver. The Ideal/ Real distinction proved to be of primary importance as the layout of the website is vertical, and the receivers are not able to see everything at once. First they see the Ideal, and only later do they continue to scroll into the Real. The top section arouses their desire for the ideal body, while the bottom section provides them with additional details and information. That being said, the same elements were found to be present in both section suggesting that what is ideal can become real if the receivers decide to purchase the product. The analysis documented how composition of multimodal advertising discourse can manipulate the receivers into accepting the product as trustworthy and into sharing social values with the senders.

3. The analysis showed that framing was of low or middle degree when images of lean bodies, products and claims were close to each other. This supports the idea that the senders invite their receivers to interpret such composition as a single unit of interpretation. Such interpretation increases credibility of the senders and their claims

about the product. On the other hand, the distinction between the top and the bottom was often visibly marked to differentiate between the Ideal and the Real.

4. Modality levels proved to be high in general which suggests that the senders try to promote the possibility of weight loss as real and achievable. The transparency of elements is rarely utilized as an advertising technique of weight loss supplements because it stretches the distance between the ideal secondary characters and the receivers.

5. Social distance that the senders establish could be described as medium-close.

While senders strive to have intimate personal relationship, they must provide evidence of effectiveness of the product. This is mainly achieved through three types of shots: medium, close and torso shots. Medium shots offer the view of lean bodies, while close shots evoke intimacy. Special type of photos proved to be shots of torsos that managed to bring about both attributes at the same time. As far as products are concerned, they were usually disproportionate to the images of people. It suggests that the product was advertised as real; as if the receivers could reach out for it and have it immediately which corresponds with the intention of the senders to pressure the receiver into instant purchase.

6. It was indeed shown that eye-level is the most common type of angle used in this type of advertising. The senders try to show that the participants are in equal position and possess the same amount of power. Nevertheless, it was discussed that such equality is an illusion as the secondary characters are in better position because they are already in possession of the ideal bodies, while the receivers still desire it. It was

also shown how manipulative low angles can be when the aforementioned attribute of the secondary characters is combined with the inferior position of the receiver.

7. Promotional websites of weight loss advertising make use of both types of gaze. The analysis showed that this is caused by the tension between demand and offer. The secondary characters often try to enter into a relationship of close affinity to establish intimate relationship, while indirect gaze represents the opportunity for the receivers to scrutinize the bodies to evaluate the effectiveness of the product. This is especially true of images of torsos, in which the gaze is missing altogether.

8. The analysis showed that colour is an important characteristic in the analysis of weight loss websites. It was particularly evident in the most frequent colour schemes. It was suggested that credibility can be increased if the right colour scheme is chosen. For instance, blue-white colour scheme is often used to promote weight loss supplements as clinically and medically proven products that were thoroughly researched. Green colour scheme, on the other hand, highlights naturalness and healthy lifestyle that can be supported by the product. The choice of particular colour scheme can also become a tool of manipulation since the actual products do not have to fulfil the claims. It can also exploit social values of authority and natural lifestyle and use them to validate the products.

9. Genre hybridism turned out to be of great significance in promotional websites of weight loss advertising. Credibility was primarily delivered through the genres of testimonials and studies. Studies were often embedded into advertising discourse to increase credibility by appealing to ethics and reason. It was also noted that the primary purpose of studies was manipulated from informative to trustworthiness

because the senders do not expect their potential customers to read the whole text. They exist in the discourse as evidence rather than information. Testimonials also proved to be very frequent in the corpus. They try to appeal to the need to identify oneself with people who are relatable and fight the same issues. The realness and recognisability of the secondary characters support credibility of the claims about the product.

10. Informative purpose of weight loss advertising was supported by two embedded genres: lecture and FAQ. While lectures are often supported by the genre of studies to establish trustworthiness, the primary purpose is to deliver information about the product. It was mentioned before that studies are not supposed to be read by the receivers, but lectures are usually short paragraphs that present the most important information, and the receivers are encouraged to read them. FAQ was found to be the most conversation-like genre in the corpus. It provides the potential customer with additional details and most important information.

11. It was shown that multimodality plays an important part in increasing the purposes of hybrid genres in weight loss advertisements. When multimodality was employed in the discourse of hybrid genres, credibility was considerably strengthened. It resulted in particularly persuasive force of such elements which were shown to possess manipulative potential. The senders were found to position themselves as superior and educated than the receivers. This allowed them to present information as expert knowledge that the receivers are supposed to believe.

10. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explain how multimodality and genre hybridism on promotional websites of weight loss supplements support the main function of advertising, which is to persuade, and explore how it positions the participants of the discourse in relation to power and manipulation. The thesis made use of the framework for multimodal interpretation proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) along with rhetorical move structure of advertising proposed by Bhatia (2004). It was shown that different modes interact with each other to compose a message intended to establish particular relationship with the receivers. Such relationships can be strengthened by combining multimodality with genre hybridism.

Power relations and manipulation are evident in all features of multimodality and genre hybridism. It was suggested that the senders try to exercise power over their receivers in order to increase credibility of their claims. While tension between close relationship with the receivers and strong persuasive force must be managed by the senders, the concepts of credibility and informativeness emerged as the primary aims of multimodal hybrid genres. Even though appeal to emotion is present in certain features of the discourse such as in testimonials, appeals to ethics and reason seem to prevail due to the close relationship with credibility and informativeness. The attempts of the senders to appeal to ethics and reason originate in their need to exercise power over the receivers. If they are positioned as superior to them, the receivers become particularly prone to manipulation. Such manipulation is especially dangerous if the receivers are not aware that they were put into the inferior position as is the case of eye-level gaze of the secondary characters. While the eye-level gaze implies equality of

power relations, the ideal achieved by the secondary characters positions the receivers who have not achieved the ideal yet into concealed inferiority. Such manipulation suggests that the senders do not want to promote themselves as superior too evidently in order to maintain close harmonious relationship with the receivers.

On the other hand, some embedded genres such as lectures or studies involve open exercise of power over the receivers in order to increase credibility. The power was, however, ascribed to external sources rather than to the senders themselves. The claims were often presented as words and findings of experts such as doctors and researchers. Even though the receivers can be aware that they occupy the inferior position, the senders never openly admit their role in the manipulative structure of the discourse because they direct it towards external sources of authority. The intended inferiority of the receivers helps to manipulate them into believing that the presented facts are true. While the manipulation does not have to be successful, it is important to consider the intentions of the senders in order to understand the power relations in promotional websites of weight loss supplements.

Multimodality and genre hybridism proved to carry especially persuasive force when combined together. Photos of authorities and front pages of scientific research are used to support credibility of claims, while research results, graphs and schemas were employed to increase trustworthiness of lectures. Even testimonials were shown to be more persuasive when photographs and most importantly videos were added to textual success stories. The only hybrid genre that partly resists incorporation of images and videos is the genre of FAQ that seems to primarily rely on textual mode. While multimodality is still present in form of font types, font sizes and colours, images

of people are rarely used in this genre. The analysis showed that the reason is in the conversation-like structure of this genre. The senders want their receivers to identify with the questioner, and the presence of secondary characters could endanger it. Therefore, it is understandable that employment of other characters would be counterproductive in this situation.

In conclusion, interaction of multimodality and genre hybridism proved to be very persuasive on promotional websites of weight loss supplements. Since some of these products are often considered ineffective, the senders must employ especially persuasive strategies to establish credibility. Credibility in this type of advertising is supported by various means out of which the combination of multimodality and genre hybridism seems to be the most complex. As far as future research is concerned, it would be beneficial to explore how these findings apply to other instances of lifestyle product and health product advertising. It is possible that similar strategies are used to promote the products and their credibility since weight loss supplements are part of this category. It would be equally useful to apply in-depth textual analysis that could uncover detailed information about genre hybridism. Nevertheless, the findings of the present thesis suggest that promotional websites of weight loss supplements make use of multimodality and genre hybridism in order to exercise power over the receivers; therefore, the senders gain advantage over the receivers in order to manipulate them into purchase. Since the decisive action depends on the receivers, the senders strive to employ the most persuasive strategies which include the combination of multimodality and genre hybridism.

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Resumé in English

The thesis is concerned with multimodality and genre hybridism that occur in promotional websites of weight loss advertising. The aim of this research is to explore how these two aspects interact in meaning creation and how it positions the participants of this type of advertising in relation to power.

The analysis of multimodality employed the framework of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen that enables to explore different modes and their interrelation. Genre hybridism was studied with the help of rhetorical move structure of advertising proposed by Vijay K. Bhatia. Since weight loss advertising is often seen as deceptive, it was proposed that the senders have to employ various strategies to increase credibility and informativeness in order to persuade the customers to purchase the product.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of the thesis and describes its structure. Second chapter is concerned with the genre of online advertising, its specifics, functions, target audience and participants. Chapter 3 discusses the concepts of lifestylism and lean body ideal that are important for the analysis of weight loss supplements. Next chapter describes the corpus and its target audience. Chapter 5 is devoted to persuasive appeals to ethics, emotions and logic that appear to be inherent to advertising. Chapter 6 provides theoretical background and proposes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the most suitable approach for analyzing multimodality, genre hybridism, and power relations. The following chapter formulates hypotheses that are verified in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 discusses the findings, and the last chapter summarizes them and suggests possibilities for future research.

The analysis showed that multimodality and genre hybridism can possess manipulative powers and shape power relations of the participants. Hybrid genres of scientific studies, testimonials, lectures and FAQ were uncovered and linked to multimodality in an effort to establish their relationship. The finding of the present thesis suggest that that promotional websites of weight loss supplements make use of multimodality and genre hybridism in order to exercise power over the receivers; therefore, the senders gain advantage over the receivers in order to manipulate them into purchase.

Resumé in Czech

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá multimodalitou a žánrovou hybriditou, které se vyskytují v online reklamách na potravinové doplňky na hubnutí. Cílem této práce je prozkoumat, jak se tyto dva aspekty podílejí na vytváření významu a jak tento druh reklamy ovlivňuje postavení jeho účastníků s ohledem na mocenské vztahy.

Multimodalita byla analyzována v teoretickém rámci Gunthera Kresse a Theo van Leeuvena, který umožňuje zkoumat různé módy a jejich vzájemnou provázanost. Žánrová hybridita byla studována za pomoci rétorické struktury reklamy, kterou navrhnul Vijay K. Bhatia. Jelikož reklamy na potravinové doplňky na hubnutí jsou často vnímány jako klamavé, odesílatel musí uplatnit rozmanité strategie podporující důvěryhodnost a informativnost, aby přesvědčil potenciální zákazníky ke koupi produktu.

Kapitola 1 obznamuje čtenáře s tématem a strukturou této práce. Druhá kapitola se zabývá žánrem reklamy, jeho specifiky, funkcemi, cílovou skupinou zákazníků a účastníky. Kapitola 3 představuje koncepty lifestylismu a ideálu štíhlého těla, které jsou důležité pro analýzu přípravků na hubnutí. Následující kapitola popisuje korpus reklam a skupinu zákazníku, na kterou jsou tyto reklamy zaměřené. Kapitola 5 je věnována přesvědčovacím apelům na etiku, rozum a city, které tvoří neodmyslitelnou součást reklamy. Kapitola 6 poskytuje teoretický rámec a navrhuje kritickou diskursivní analýzu (CDA) jako nejvhodnější prostředek pro společnou analýzu multimodality, žánrové hybridity a mocenských vztahů. V další kapitole jsou představeny jednotlivé hypotézy, které jsou ověřovány v Kapitole 8. Kapitola 9 nabízí

závěry zkoumání, zatímco poslední kapitola je shrnutím celé práce a navrhuje možnosti dalšího výzkumu.

V analýze se ukázalo, že multimodalita a žánrová hybridita jsou schopny utvářet mocenské vztahy a manipulovat. Tento typ reklam vykazuje hybridní žánry vědeckých studií, svědectví, přednášky a často kladených otázek (FAQ). Tyto žánry byly analyzovány ve spojitosti s multimodalitou ve snaze objasnit jejich vzájemné vztahy. Všechna zjištění napovídají tomu, že online reklamy na prostředky na hubnutí využívají multimodality a žánrové hybridity k tomu, aby získali mocenskou nadvládu nad příjemci. Tímto získávají odesílatelé výhodu nad potenciálními zákazníky, a je tak pro ně snazší je zmanipulovat k nákupu.

Appendix: Contents of the Accompanying DVD-ROM

1. Corpus of offline web pages (corpus.html)
2. Corpus of web pages exported to PDF (corpus.pdf)