GET A MAC:
Conversations in Apple's advertising campaign

Bachelor's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Mainontaa on nykyaikana lähes kaikkialla. Yksi yleisimmistä mainonnan muodoista on televisiomainokset, joita useat näkevät päivittäin. Tästä esimerkkinä on Applen televisio-kampanja, jota esitettiin vuosina 2006–2009. Sitä on tutkittu useasta eri näkökulmasta, mutta mainoksissa olevan keskustelun tutkiminen on jäänyt vähemmälle. Myös kampanjassa käytetyn keskustelun yhteyttä suostutteluun, joka on kaiken mainonnan tavoite, on tutkittu vain vähän.

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli tutkia mainosten keskusteluja keskustelunanalyysin avulla ja selvittää, miten ne suostuttelivat ihmisiä ostamaan Mac-tietokoneen. Kampanjassa oli kaiken kaikkiaan 66 mainosta, joista tähän tutkielmaan valittiin 12. Nämä mainokset litteroitiin ja analysoitiin keskustelunanalyysin periaatteita käyttäen. Näin ollen tärkeimpänä metodina oli keskustelunanalyysi, vaikka se yleensä keskittyykin luonnolliseen puheeseen.

Tämän tutkielman tutkimuskysymykset koskivat mainosten keskustelullisia piirteitä sekä niiden suostuttelevia ominaisuuksia. Saamani tulokset vastasivat molempiin kysymyksiin. Ensinnäkin, näistä keskusteluista voitiin huomata, että keskustelijat käyttäytyivät niissä hyvin samalla tavalla kuin luonnollisessa puheessa. Kaikki keskustelunanalyysin keskeisimmät käsitteet olivat löydettävissä mainoksista, ja näin ollen niiden avulla mainoksia voitiin analysoida. Toiseksi, mainosten rakennetuista keskusteluista oli erotettavissa hienovaraista suostuttelua. Näin ollen mainosten keskustelulliset piirteet ovat yhteydessä kuluttajien suostutteluun.

Tutkimukseni tarkoituksena oli antaa tietoa mainosten keskustelujen ja suostuttelun yhteydestä, sekä antaa lisätietoa Applen kampanjasta. Tätä aihetta voisi kuitenkin jatkaa myös tulevaisuudessa. 12 mainoksen sijaan voitaisiin, esimerkiksi, analysoida kaikki mainokset ja selvittää, pystytäänkö saamiani tuloksia yleistämään koko kampanjaan. Myös muiden multimodaalisten piirteiden vaikutus voitaisiin ottaa huomioon, sillä tässä tutkimuksessa keskityttiin pelkästään kielellisiin piirteisiin.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a large field that consists of numerous sub-genres. Television commercials are an example of this kind of a sub-genre, and they have a major role in modern advertising. Many people are exposed to them daily, which makes them a powerful tool to gain customers. The main purpose of all advertising is to attract and affect potential buyers, and thus the concept of persuasion is evident in all advertisements. People are persuaded with several means, some of which are more noticeable than others. This influencing can be seen also in the television commercials of Apple's *Get a Mac* campaign, since its main purpose is to make people choose Mac. This campaign relies on the use of structured conversations and also on the interaction between the participants. In addition to persuasion, the concept of conversation analysis is therefore closely connected to the topic. Both persuasion (Gass and Seiter 2011, Sedivy and Carlson 2011) and conversation analysis (Drew 2005, Wooffit 2005) have been studied extensively. Apple's campaign itself has also been studied from different aspects before; for example, Livingstone (2011) focused on consumption, identity and class, whereas Santa Maria and Knowles (2011) examined the representation of gender.

Previous research, however, has failed to consider two important issues. First of all, Apple's campaign has not been studied much from a linguistic and conversational point of view, which is the main aspect of the present study. Secondly, the connection of conversation analysis and persuasion has not been researched widely. In this study, I explore how the use of structured conversations influences consumers. By analysing the main conversational features and their connection to persuasion, one can have a better understanding of how the structured conversations are used and how they affect viewers. This knowledge, in turn, is important for all consumers.

The purpose of this study is to add information about the campaign and also about the connection between structured conversations and persuasion. Firstly, I observe the main theories and concepts related to this study: advertising, commercials and persuasion. Secondly, I state the research aim and questions. Thirdly, I discuss the campaign, transcribed commercials and the method of analysis in more detail. Fourthly, the transcriptions are studied in detail by examining the research questions. In conclusion, I summarize the main findings of the analysis and this study as a whole.

2 PERSUASION IN ADVERTISING

This chapter describes the main concepts related to the present study. To begin with, the attention is on the discourse of advertising and some of its main features. Next, I explore commercials as a sub-genre of advertisements, and this way identify what their main characteristics are. Lastly, the concept of persuasion is taken into consideration. I study its definition, and also how the concept is connected to advertising and commercials in general.

2.1 The discourse of advertising

In this section, I examine some of the main features of advertising discourse. Cook (2001) states that discourse analysis is usually associated with the study of language, even though it includes the study of context as well. The focus of this section is mainly on the context of advertising. The context of communication is discussed in terms of its main features, and then I observe the different participants in advertising communication.

2.1.1 The context of communication

Discourse includes both text and context. The attention is now on the context of communication. Cook (2005) divides this context into the following concepts: substance, music and pictures, paralanguage, situation, co-text, intertext and function. Firstly, the context of an ad includes the substance. This means the material on which the ad has been published, for example, paper or electronic format. These can be divided into primary substances, which mean the direct way of communication, and secondary substances that include, for example, cables and radio waves. Secondly, the context of communication includes music and pictures in addition to the linguistic features. Thirdly, the context contains paralanguage, which includes all demeanours related to language. These are, for example, tone of voice and pauses. Fourthly, the situation is another part of the advertising context. It includes all objects and people nearby the ad, which affect the interpretation of the participants.

According to Cook (2005), the fifth concept in the context of communication is the co-text, which means the surroundings of the advertisements. One has to evaluate whether they are a part of the advertisement as well. The sixth concept is intertext. This means that the text, which is in the advertisement, can be related to other discourses as well. They affect the interpretation of the ad. The seventh concept is the function of the ad. Advertisers intend the

ad to do something, and consumers perceive these intentions differently. Overall, the advertising context consists of several features, and not only of text.

2.1.2 Participants in advertising communication

The context of communication mentioned above includes the participants as well. Cook (2005: 202) discusses their role in detail. He claims that advertising communication consists of two participants: the sender and the receiver. The sender is, first of all, the authority behind an advertisement. Senders can be, for example, the manufacturer of the product or service, the writer of the ad, or even the actor in the ad. Thus a single advertisement may contain numerous senders who might not even be acquainted with the advertised product. These senders, then, acquire the voice of a narrator who sells the product or service. This participant of advertising communication is therefore the one who addresses the reader and does the persuasion. However, it has to be noted that all senders are not addressers, since some of them do not address the consumer directly.

According to Cook (2005: 4, 202), the receivers are the people who see the advertisement, and respond to the ad either by accepting or declining it. They are not always the addressees of an advertisement, however, since they might see the ad without belonging to the target market to which the ad was intended. In addition, Cook (ibid.) notes that the receiver can be an observer, who has a more impersonal perspective towards the advertisement. They can understand the persuasion behind the ad, and hence be more critical. Overall, each participant is a part of the advertising context, and these roles are not static. One person can be a participant in several ways.

2.2 Commercials as a sub-genre of advertisements

Bhatia (2004: 59-64) explores the genre of advertisements in detail. He claims that it belongs to the colony of promotional genres, which contains different genres in addition to advertisements. For example, book reviews, sales promotions and job applications belong to this colony. He adds that these different genres are, in turn, divided into sub-genres. The genre of advertisements contains, for example, print advertisements, television commercials and web advertising. Cook (2005) notes that the main purpose of advertising is to persuade people. This purpose is the same for all sub-genres, but it is achieved through different media. In short, television commercials are a sub-genre of advertisements. This sub-genre is now

discussed in more detail in terms of its main features, what requirements there are for memorable commercials and also how their structures can be analysed.

Television is a powerful way to market different products. One has the possibility to use multiple modalities at once, for example, text, images, speech and music. More importantly, the possibility to add body language is a major advantage, and this way commercials appeal to emotions easier. (Imbriale 2007: 161-162.) According to Vilanilam and Varghese (2004: 118-120), television commercials cost immensely to make, but they reach a great deal of people. Hence they are very cost-efficient. There are also numerous forms of commercials at present; their lengths and contents can vary notably due to technological developments (ibid.). In addition, Imbriale (2007: 162-165) notes that television advertisements can be very complex because they contain several modalities. The main challenge, however, is to make a television advertisement that stands out from others.

People see television commercials practically every day, and thus advertisements have to be good in order to be remembered. Vilanilam and Varghese (2004: 118-119) claim that some of the main features of memorable commercials are honesty, positivity, persuasiveness, simplicity, speciality, and unexpectedness. Furthermore, memorable advertisements also personalise the product. In short, a commercial should be honest about the product and the consumer should be able to believe the ad. Positivity makes the product and the company seem better, and persuasiveness makes the consumer buy the product. Commercials should be both simple and specific so that the consumers understand them and realise why these products are good for them. A memorable commercial is unexpected; thus it may not follow the structure of traditional commercials. A good commercial also personalises the product and repeats this persona constantly. This way people feel more familiar with the product, and may eventually buy it. In conclusion, there are many features that are characteristics of good and memorable commercials.

Commercials can be analysed by focusing on their structure. Janich (2001: 81) argues that advertisements contain text acts. These, in turn, contain sub-acts, which contain supplementary acts. These acts have different purposes. They, for example, name the product, describe it, show how it is used, give arguments why the product should be bought and try to appeal to the values and emotions of the consumer. Television commercials can be studied in

the same way as other advertisements. When analysing commercials, however, one can also consider the combination of different modalities and the role of body language.

2.3 The use of persuasion in commercials

Persuasion is the main function of advertising. Sedivy and Carlson (2011: 285) argue that consumers have currently multiple products and brands to choose from. This option to choose freely allows the possibility to be persuaded. This section explores the concept of persuasion in more detail. It is defined as a concept, and its connection to commercials and advertising is discussed.

Persuasion is an important part of everyday communication. It can be found in many fields, such as people professions, sciences and arts. One can also refer to it by using different names: convincing, alluring or advising. One definition of persuasion is that people are immersed in modifying or affecting the attitudes and beliefs of others in a given context of communication. The influence is always bidirectional; the one who is persuading influences the one being persuaded, and the other way round. Persuasion can be divided into pure and borderline cases. The pure cases include the incidents that almost everyone would agree to be persuasion, such as television commercials. Borderline cases, in turn, contain the cases that some people might not define as persuasion. They are therefore more obscure. In addition, the context for persuasion influences the essence of communication process. For example, in the advertising environment, the advertiser influences the consumer in a straightforward manner. To sum up, persuasion modifies people's attitudes in a subtle manner, which makes it a forceful device. (Gass and Seiter 2011: 4-31.)

The main function of advertising is to persuade consumers. This is done in several ways. Gass and Seiter (2011) claim that language, nonverbal influence, visual features and background music are all some of the features that persuade people. First of all, language is the main means of persuasion. Words carry meanings that affect consumer behaviour. These meanings can be denotative, which means the direct definition of a word, or connotative, which means the associations related to the word. Connotative meanings affect consumers stronger than the denotative ones. Secondly, nonverbal communication is also persuading customers. Eye contact and facial expressions can affect consumer behaviour. Hand movements can be divided into those that have precise meaning and to those that accompany speech. Both of

these ways influence consumers differently. Physical appearance is also persuasive; the body shape, face, hair and height have different meanings that can influence consumers. Thirdly, images can persuade as well. Messaris (1997, cited in Gass and Seiter 2011: 293-296) defines three different ways to do this. The first one is called iconicity. It means that an image is an icon and it resembles, for example, an idea. The second one is indexicality, which means that images can document issues that have occurred. The third is syntactic indeterminacy, which signifies the fact that images cannot transmit relationships between issues. Images, in fact, affect our behaviour more discreetly than words do. Fourthly, Gass and Seiter (2011) point out the role of background music. It persuades consumers through its lyrics and through its ability to give product information, to create favourable associations, and also to create a positive state of mind. Music can control the pace of shopping and it can also enhance the remembrance of the product. Overall, advertisers persuade consumers through several different modalities. All features discussed in this paragraph can be found in television commercials as well.

The purpose of this chapter was to examine some of the main theories behind this study. The context of communication is closely related to all advertising, and the participants of this context were observed in particular detail due to their part in Apple's campaign. Television commercials were also described as a sub-genre of advertisements. By exploring their main features, one can understand Apple's commercials better. Moreover, the concept of persuasion was inspected. In order to analyse the persuasion in Apple's commercials, one has to understand what persuasion is and how it is connected to advertising.

3 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

The aim of this research is to explore the main conversational features in the television commercials of Apple's *Get a Mac* campaign. These commercials rely on the interaction of its two participants, Mac and PC, and particularly on the conversation between them. In order to analyse how Apple persuades people to buy its products, one has to observe the structured conversations in these commercials. I also want to give additional information about the commercials and fill the research gap, since this campaign has not been studied much from a linguistic and conversational point of view. These aims are examined by focusing on the following research questions:

1. What kinds of conversational features can be found in Apple's commercials?

2. How do these features persuade consumers to get a Mac?

4 DATA AND METHODS

This chapter presents the data and methods used in this study. Firstly, the main features of Apple's advertising campaign are pointed out. Secondly, the transcriptions that I have made from the television commercials are taken into consideration, in addition to the data collection process as a whole. Thirdly, the attention is on the methods of analysis. I describe the main features of conversation analysis and also how the data was analysed.

4.1 *Get a Mac* advertising campaign

Apple's *Get a Mac* campaign has been studied from different aspects before. Livingstone (2011) discusses its main features in detail. He notes that the campaign consists of 66 television commercials that aired on television from 2006 to 2009. He also explores the participants of the commercials. The main characters of all ads are Mac and PC, and they are personified by Justin Long and John Hodgman respectively (images can be found in Appendix 1). Mac is portrayed as a relaxed, modern and confident figure with his casual attire and looks. PC, in turn, is depicted as work-oriented, old-fashioned and quick-tempered. He has an ill-fitting suit and a pair of simple eyeglasses, which emphasize his personality. The campaign concentrates on the interplay between these contradictory characters, and similar commercials have been made in, for example, the UK and Japan.

Livingstone (2011) argues that the campaign has been awarded for several reasons. To begin with, the commercials are simple and repetitive. The setting is completely white in all non-animated ads and the background music is the same in all commercials. The focus is therefore on the characters and on their interaction. Furthermore, the interaction between the main characters and occasional secondary characters is executed well. The dialogue is fast and humorous, and the commercials are not too straightforward. Livingstone (ibid.) also remarks that Apple removed the commercials from its webpage in 2010, which denoted the end of the campaign. All commercials are stored, however, on other websites where they can still be found. Overall, the reason for analysing this campaign in particular was that I found the commercials and the use of structured conversations interesting and worth studying.

4.2 Transcriptions

I started the data collection process by watching all of the 66 commercials that can be found on YouTube. The aim was to distinguish the main similarities and differences between the commercials in order to find the suitable ones for this study. However, I noticed that the commercials are structurally very similar. The setting, music and main idea of every ad are practically the same. The only real difference between the commercials is the topic under discussion. Some of the main themes of these commercials are, for example, the similarities and differences of Macs and PCs: Macs' abilities and PCs' flaws. Consequently, almost all of the advertisements could have been suitable for this study, and hence I decided to choose commercials that I find interesting and humorous. They also discuss different themes, which gives a more comprehensive image of Apple's campaign tactics. Moreover, I had to choose the number of commercials for the analysis. In the end, I decided to focus on 12 television commercials, each of which lasts for 30 seconds.

The last stage of my data collection process was to transcribe the commercials that I had chosen. Drew (2005) and Wooffit (2005) describe the main transcription conventions, which I used for the transcriptions. In addition, I used Sound Forge to make the transcriptions more detailed. With this program, I was able to calculate the stops and also to analyse the tone and loudness of voice. Examples of these transcriptions can be found in the second appendix. They indicate the level of accuracy of all 12 transcriptions that were made.

4.3 Method of analysis

Apple's television commercials rely on the conversation between Mac and PC. The main method of analysis in this study is therefore conversation analysis (CA). Drew (2005: 79-83) discusses its main features. He divided the methods of analysis into four concepts: turns at talk and turn taking, turn design, social action and sequence organization. In the analysis, I concentrate firstly on turns at talk, turn taking and turn design. Drew (ibid.) states that conversation consists of turns, which vary in terms of their size and grammatical units. These turns are taken alternately by the participants of the conversation. Speakers also design their turns at talk by selecting what the turn contains verbally and how it is said. This is done within the limits of what that specific action is designed to do. Thus I analyse the commercials in terms of what the turns are like, and how they are taken and designed. Next, I consider the concept of social action. Drew (2005: 86) claims that speakers do actions in their turns at talk,

for example agree, question or compliment. Hence I explore what kind of actions the turns are supposed to perform.

Furthermore, I discuss how sequences are organized in the commercials. Drew (2005: 89-96) argues that turns are linked together to form sequences in different ways. Examples of these sequences are adjacency pairs (actions are paired and they supplement each other) and preference organizations (initial actions to promote a desired response). I therefore describe how the turns are organized to form pairs and to create a desired effect. In addition, I study the concept of repair. Drew (ibid.) claims that repairs are needed when, for example, speakers want to correct their mistakes in order to achieve the desired effect. After analysing Apple's structured conversations from a conversational point of view, I observe their connection to persuasion. Drew (2005: 99) notes, however, that CA focuses on speech that occurs naturally. I do not analyse natural speech, since commercials are carefully planned in advance. Instead, I use the methods of conversation analysis to discover how the conversations are structured and this way to understand how they affect their viewers and why Apple has decided to use them.

5 THE USE OF STRUCTURED CONVERSATIONS IN APPLE'S CAMPAIGN

This chapter explores the chosen television commercials in more detail. The purpose is to examine their structured conversations by concentrating on the research questions that were mentioned above. I point out what kinds of conversational features can be found in the commercials and analyse how these features persuade consumers to get a Mac.

5.1 Main conversational features in the *Get a Mac* campaign

In this section, I study the first research question. The focus is on the structured conversations and particularly on their main conversational features. The aim is to analyse these conversations as if they were naturally occurring speech by using the main concepts of CA defined by Drew (2005: 79). I observe, first of all, the turns used in these structured conversations by pointing out their main features, how the turn taking takes place and also how the turns are designed. The attention is then on the social actions that can be found in the commercials. Next, I discuss the concept of sequence organization. Finally, I demonstrate different kinds of repairs that were made during the structured conversations.

5.1.1 Turns at talk, turn taking and turn design

According to Drew (2005: 80), speakers take turns in a conversation. This is noticeable also in Apple's television commercials. To begin with, all of the analysed commercials consist of turns at talk. However, the size and the number of units in these turns vary among the commercials. The following example is from the commercial *Box*:

```
(1)  4 Mac   ready to get started? (.)
     5 PC    ooh (.) not quite (.) got a lot to do. (.)
     6 PC    what's your big plan (.)
     7 Mac   I might a: make a home movie or (0.2) maybe create a
     8 Mac   website (.) try my built-in camera (.)
     9 Mac   I can do it all right out of the box so what about
    10 Mac   you. (0.2)
    11 PC    well I- (.) first I gotta download those new ↑drivers
    12 PC    then I gotta erase the trial software (.) that came on
    13 PC    my hard ↓drive. (.)
    14 Mac   sweet. (.)
    15 PC    then I've got (.) a lo:t of manuals to read.
```

This example shows how the turns differ. I concentrate now on lines 11-14, which illustrate this variation. In line 11 PC begins his turn, which is an answer to Mac's question. It is a long turn, since it lasts three lines. It also consists of numerous units composed of clauses and sentences, which vary in their length. In turn, Mac's comment in line 14 consists of only one word. Hence his turn is much shorter than PC's preceding turn, and also simpler grammatically. Overall, this example shows how much the turns can vary in terms of their size and the number of units. All commercials that I analysed followed more or less this pattern; most of them contained both short and long turns at talk.

The previous example can be analysed also by exploring how the turns were taken. I focus on the lines 9-15 because they demonstrate this issue well. In lines 9-10 Mac asks PC about his plan to get started. The use of an interrogative and a question structure indicates closure and requires PC to response. PC begins his answer in line 11 with the word *well*, which implies that he is thinking about what to say, and that his turn may be longer than a few words. In lines 11-13 PC explains what he needs to do. By using words such as *first* and *then*, PC indicates that his turn is continuing. The rising intonation at the end of line 11 also suggests that he continues his turn. In line 13, PC ends this turn with a falling intonation and a clear indication of a pause. This allows Mac to comment PC's turn in line 14. His turn is short and it consists of only one word. PC continues his own turn in line 15, after Mac's comment, by using the word *then*. The way he lengthens the word *lot* and lowers his intonation implies an

end. To sum up, the endings of most turns are indicated clearly and thus the turns are taken smoothly. There are almost no overlaps, and when there is one, it includes only laughter or words such as *yeah*.

Moreover, these turns can be analysed by examining their design. I concentrate now on lines 4-6. In line 4, Mac asks a question from PC. It is not, however, designed like a normal question. For example, it does not have an interrogative and the traditional word order of a question has also been left out. In this case, Mac says quite informally *Ready to get started?* and the rising intonation is the main indication of a question. Hence this turn is designed to be rather informal. PC's answer is in line 5. It is designed to be a casual reply, which can be seen from PC's word choices and sentence structures. All units in his turn are, actually, not finished grammatically. In line 6 PC returns the question to Mac. This turn is almost as relaxed and informal as the turns preceding it. It is a grammatically correct question, which can be seen from the word order. The intonation, which is too neutral for a question, and also the abbreviation of the verb *is* are indicating familiarity. This kind of informality continues throughout the example. In conclusion, most of the turns in the commercials are designed in a similar way. They indicate informality and familiarity. By observing the turns as a whole, one can understand these commercials and the interaction of the participants better.

5.1.2 Social action

Speech turns convey actions that the speakers want to achieve through their turns (Drew 2005: 86). One can, for example, inquire, agree, answer or invite in a turn. When analysing conversation, one has to concentrate on these actions in order to understand what the participants are saying and why. Social actions are visible also in Apple's commercials. First of all, most of the commercials contain both questions and answers. The following example has been taken from the commercial *Podium:*

```
(2) 3 Mac   why so ↑official? (0.2)
    4 PC    well some people are giving up on Vista Mac cause it
    5 PC    doesn't (0.3) work the way they wanted to (.)
```

In line 3, Mac asks a question from PC. This can be seen from the use of an interrogative at the beginning of the turn and also from the raising intonation towards the end. In turn, PC's following lines give an answer to Mac's question. Furthermore, most of the commercials

include social actions that can be interpreted as agreements or disagreements. Here is an example from the commercial *Time Machine:*

```
(3) 6 Mac6   so if I accidentally delete a ↑file (1.1)
    7 Mac6   I can always find ↓it. (.)
    8 Mac5   exactly. (0.2) plus it's part of Leopard
    9 Mac5   so it comes on every Mac. (0.6)
```

In this case, the fifth backup of Mac is showing agreement in line 8. By using the word *exactly* with a neutral intonation, he shows that he supports what Mac number six said in lines 6-7. He is also adding information to this claim in lines 8-9. Disagreement is visible in the following lines from the commercial *Referee*:

```
(4) 12 Referee after further review the ru:ling sta:nds (0.2)
    13 Referee Leopard (0.3) is better (.) and faster than Vista (0.2)
    14 PC      WHAT? (0.2) that's a ridiculous call what are you
    15 PC      blind what's the matter with you: (0.5)
```

One can see that in lines 14-15 PC is expressing his opinion on the referee's ruling. It is clear that PC is strongly disagreeing with the referee, since he is speaking quite loudly, emphasizing words such as *ridiculous* and *blind*, and also starting his line with the interrogative *what*, indicating disbelief and confusion.

Another type of social action that can be seen in Apple's commercials is complimenting. The following is an example from the commercial *Better*:

```
(5) 6 Mac   oh you should see what this guy can do with his
    7 Mac   spreadsheet (0.2)
    8 Mac   it's [insane] (.)
    9 PC         [ahah  ] oh su(h)sh
```

Here it can be seen that Mac is complimenting PC's skills with spreadsheets, referring to them as *insane*. PC is, in turn, replying to this compliment by laughing and trying to seem modest instead of thanking Mac for his praise. Moreover, some of the commercials contain social actions that are suggestions or commands. Here is an example from *Podium*:

```
(6) 11 PC   if your printer isn't compatible with Vista I ↑say (0.2)
    12 PC   buy a new ↓printer. (.)
```

In this turn PC is suggesting that people who are frustrated with Vista should buy a new printer. The turn could also be interpreted as a command because of the imperative *buy* in line 12 and the way it is emphasized. Overall, questioning, answering, agreeing, disagreeing, complimenting and suggesting are some of the main social actions that were visible in several

television commercials. The list of different social actions could, of course, go on; one could also analyse the reactions to previous turns, listings of different topics, greetings, repetitions, and so on. These specific actions were analysed because they represent the most common social actions and they are also an important part of natural conversation.

5.1.3 Sequence organization

One can study sequence organizations by exploring, for example, adjacency pairs and preference organizations, which Drew noted (2005: 90). Preference organizations were not utilized in the commercials and thus they are not discussed. In this section I focus entirely on adjacency pairs because they can be found in almost all of the commercials that I analysed. To begin with, most of the commercials contain different kinds of questions, which are then answered. This adjacency pair can be seen in the example (2), which was examined in section 5.1.2. It contains a question and an answer to that question, and hence it is a typical adjacency pair. Another type of question can be seen in the extract from *Podium*:

```
(7)  8 PC    other people are going back to XP.
     9 Mac   ↑really? (.) downgrading?
    10 PC    yes but we PCs won't give up (0.3)
```

In this example, Mac is asking for confirmation and correction in line 9. His rising intonation and the use of the word *really* are the reasons why this short turn can be seen as a question, even though it does not contain an interrogative. In line 10, PC answers to Mac's need for confirmation and hence the adjacency pair is complete.

The second kind of adjacency pair prominent in these commercials is complimenting and thanking. An example can be found from *Time Machine*:

```
(8) 10 PC    mmh (0.3) I have to say Mac that's (.) pretty (0.2)
    11 PC    pretty awesome. (0.7)
    12 Mac5  yeah thanks PC. (0.3)
    13 Mac4  yeah ↑thanks PC (0.4)
    14 MacX  oh ↑thanks PC (.)
    15 MacX  thanks PC (.)
    16 MacX  yeah ↑thanks PC
```

Here in lines 10-11 PC compliments Mac on his new backup feature *Time Machine* by using the combination *pretty awesome*. He does it with slight hesitation and uncertainty, which can be seen from the numerous pauses, the repetition of *pretty* and the need to include *I have to say* at the beginning. The different backups of Mac are all eager to thank PC individually in

lines 12-16, which completes the adjacency pair. In addition, another kind of adjacency pair is greetings, which can be seen from the commercial *Elimination*:

```
(9) 16 Mac    hi how are you? (.)
    17 Buyer  good (0.2)
    18 Mac    I'm a Mac (0.4)
    19 Buyer  I'm a Megan.
```

In line 16 Mac is greeting the buyer with the traditional *Hi, how are you?* and the buyer responds in line 17 with the word *good*. This adjacency pair is an important part of everyday conversation, and it commonly takes place when the participants meet. The subsequent turns are an example of an introduction. In line 18 Mac introduces himself by using his name, and in line 19 the buyer fulfils the pair by introducing herself. At the same time she is identifying herself with Mac, since she says her name with an article. Introductions can also be found at the beginning of each commercial, when Mac and PC introduce themselves (Appendix 2).

Some of the analysed commercials included adjacency pairs that did not contain the second pair. An example can be seen from *Better*:

```
(10) 15 PC    oh (0.8) oh that kind of ↓better (0.2)
     16 Mac   yeah.=
     17 PC    =I (0.8) I was thinking of the other kind. (0.9)
     18 Mac   what other kind?
```

Here Mac and PC are discussing the definition of better. In line 17 PC argues that he was *thinking of the other kind* of better, to which Mac asks an explanation in line 18. The commercial ends to this turn, and thus Mac's question is left unanswered. The purpose of leaving the second adjacency pair out is to create humour and to make the viewer question PC's opinions and claims. To sum up, adjacency pairs have an important role in expressing different social actions and creating the actual conversation and the interaction between the participants. All commercials that were analysed contained adjacency pairs, but the number varied considerably. Some commercials had only one pair, whereas some consisted only of them. This creates diversity throughout the structured conversations and makes the campaign seem less repetitive and also more interesting, since the viewers cannot predict the content.

5.1.4 Instances of repair

The need for repair arises, for example, when speakers want to correct their mistakes, make their turns more understandable and change the design of their turns in order to achieve the

desired effect (Drew 2005: 94-96). Levinson (1983: 340) discusses the concept of repair in more detail. He argues that a repair can be self-initiated or other-initiated based on who initiated the need for repair. He claims also that a repair could be seen as self-repair or other-repair, depending on who did the correction: the speaker or the other participant. I explore three kinds of repairs that were visible in the transcriptions of Apple's television commercials: self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair and also other-initiated other-repair. The following is an example from *iLife*:

```
(11) 20 Mac   sounds like – [seems] like hours of fun. (.)
     21 PC                  [yeah ]
     22 PC    yeah (0.4)
     23 Mac   or at least (0.4) minutes.
```

This example is a case of self-initiated self-repair, which can be seen from lines 20 and 23. In line 20 Mac claims that PC's features are *like hours of fun*. This claim, however, may not be totally true. In line 23 he corrects his own statement and admits that PCs' features may actually be *at least minutes* of fun. This correction is initiated and corrected by Mac himself, which makes this turn self-initiated self-repair. It also makes the commercial more humorous.

The following example has been taken from the commercial *Podium,* and it is a case of other-initiated self-repair:

```
(12) 15 PC   ask not what Vista can do for ↑you (0.3)
     16 PC   ask what you can buy for Vista!
     17 Mac  wow you're (.) really ↑committed to ↓this
     18 PC   °oh (0.2) not really I switched back to XP three weeks
     19 PC   ago° (0.3)
     20 PC   °so much happier°
```

The whole instance of repair starts from the beginning of this example when PC is trying to persuade people to choose Vista. Mac's reply in line 17 indicates that he believes in what PC has said, since he compliments his commitment. The actual repair occurs in line 18 after PC realises that Mac thinks that he is speaking truthfully, and corrects him. This repair is other-initiated because Mac's statement shows that he has not understood PC's turn correctly, and also self-repair because PC does the correction himself. This confession shows that PC is honest with Mac. However, it also makes him seem unreliable in the eyes of the viewer.

An example of other-initiated other-repair can be found from the commercial *Referee*:

```
(13) 7 Mac   PC (.) why is there a referee ↑here? (0.2)
```

```
 8 PC    to make sure you play ↓fair Mac so you don't go (.)
 9 PC    boasting about how Leopard is (.) better and (.) faster
10 PC    than Vista (0.2)
11 Mac   wh- I didn't say that the Wall Street Journal said ↓that.
```

In this example Mac and PC are discussing why PC has brought a referee into the situation. In lines 8-10 PC explains how Mac has been boasting about the superiority of his operating system. Mac reacts to this comment in line 11 by stating that the Wall Street Journal was behind the compliments. This turn is an other-initiated repair, since Mac is the one who notices and initiates the problem in PC's turn. It is also a case of other-repair because Mac is the one who repairs PC's original turn. In conclusion, these three examples are the main types of repairs that were found in the transcribed commercials. They show how repairs can be initiated and implemented by all participants involved in the conversation.

In short, all of the main conversational features can be found in Apple's commercials. Turns at talk, turn taking and design, social actions, adjacency pairs and repairs have an important role in creating the structured conversations and making them resemble natural speech. Hence they also have a significant part in persuading the viewers of the campaign. This issue is addressed next.

5.2 Persuasion in structured conversations

In this section, the second research question is discussed. The purpose is to explore how Apple uses structured conversations when persuading consumers to get a Mac. The focus is on the different conversational features that were analysed in the previous section. Firstly, I observe the role of different turns, turn taking and turn design when persuading viewers. Secondly, social actions are pointed out and redefined after connecting them to persuasion. Thirdly, I concentrate on the other conversational features, sequence organization and repair, which are studied briefly.

5.2.1 Turns at talk, turn taking and turn design

All of the structured conversations in Apple's commercials are based on different turns, which were discussed in detail in section 5.1.1. Now the focus is on how they affect the viewers of the advertising campaign. To begin with, the conversations consist of turns at talk, which differ in terms of the size and the number of units. This variation makes the structured conversations seem more natural. They are therefore easier to understand and remember. As

Vilanilam and Varghese (2004: 118-119) argued, simplicity is one of the main qualities of good commercials. This quality can be seen in the turns of Apple's commercials as well, and it makes the structured conversations seem like a real and casual encounter. This, in turn, makes the conversation more persuasive.

Furthermore, in most instances the turns are taken smoothly, and they are clearly indicated whether by intonation or word order. This makes the conversation easier to follow and comprehend. Information is not repeated either, since the commercials do not contain any serious overlaps. The turn taking is therefore well executed in Apple's commercials, which affects positively the way the viewers experience these commercials. Moreover, the turns in Apple's commercials are designed to be informal and familiar. These features make the commercials easier and faster to understand, and they also influence the viewers' perceptions of the commercials. By using these rather informal, fast-paced and seemingly friendly turns to construct the structured conversations, the advertisers want to attract as many new customers as possible. Hence they have used the kind of language that is appealing to the majority of people. In conclusion, all of the structured conversations in Apple's commercials consist of turns that affect the viewer subtly and make the commercials easy to understand. They are the basis for good and effective commercials.

5.2.2 Social action

All turns in Apple's commercials convey different social actions, which were examined in section 5.1.2. Some of the main actions that were discussed were questions, agreements and compliments. The commercials could be analysed, however, from another point of view as well. As Cook (2005: 202) argued, a single advertisement can have several senders. Thus the voices of the advertisers can also be found from the commercials. Now the focus is on what kinds of social actions their voices have and how they persuade viewers. The first kind of social action can be detected from the beginning of each commercial. The following extract is from *Box*:

```
(14) 1 Mac   hello I'm a Mac (0.2)
     2 PC    and I'm a PC (.)
```

In these lines Mac and PC are introducing themselves to each other and to the viewer. These lines, however, determine another kind of social action from the advertisers' point of view as well. They introduce the participants and, more importantly, define the advertising campaign.

By using these two turns in all commercials, the campaign is easily recognized and remembered from the beginning.

Moreover, one of the main social actions is to inform the viewers. This is done mainly through questions and answers. The following is an example from *Genius*:

```
(15) 1 Mac    hello I'm a ↑Mac (.)
     2 PC     and I'm a ↓PC (.)
     3 Genius and I'm a Mac genius
     4 PC     a what (0.3)
     5 Mac    oh see PC um (.) every Apple store has a thing called a
     6 Mac    genius bar it's a place where people like her who'll
     7 Mac    answer (.) hhh any questions you have about your Mac.
```

In line 4, PC asks a question from Mac. At the same time he relates to the viewer who does not know what a *Mac Genius* is. Mac's answer is in lines 5-6. He gives a proper explanation of what a *Genius Bar* is and what a Mac genius does. Through this answer, the advertiser is informing the reader that they can have help with every problem or question they have about their Macs. The advertisers can inform the reader also, for example, when one of the participants in the commercials states a new topic. Thus the informative part does not always have to be in an answer, though that is the most common way.

Furthermore, another kind of social action is connected to the fact that each commercial belongs to a certain theme, which were discussed in section 4.2. There are mainly two kinds of actions, one that highlights Macs' good qualities and other that showcases PCs' problems. The succeeding extract is from *iLife*:

```
(16) 3 Mac   oh hey (.) iPod (.) nice (.)
     4 PC    yea:h it's just little something to hold my slow jams (.)
     5 Mac   aha- oh ↑yeah? (0.2)
     6 PC    yeah and it works so seamlessly with ↓iTunes
     7 Mac   you should check out iMovie, iPhoto, iWeb because they all
     8 Mac   work like iTunes you kn[ow ] (.) iLife (0.4)
     9 PC                           [aah]
    10 Mac   comes on every Mac (.)
```

Here in line 6 PC compliments an iPod. Mac answers to this in lines 7-8 and 10 by listing some of his other features. The main social action of this turn is not to inform PC or the viewer about Mac's features. Instead, the main action is to explain the benefits of owning a Mac. Another example can be found from *Bake Sale*:

```
(17) 1 Mac   hello I'm a Mac
     2 PC    and I'm a PC (.) baked good ↑Mac? (.)
```

```
3 Mac   they look delicious yeah what's (.) what's the ↑occasion
4       (.)
5 PC    I'm trying to raise money to finally fix Vista (0.2)
```

In this extract, Mac's good nature is highlighted again. His answer to PC in line 3 shows that he is both friendly and confident, which is supposed to be appealing to viewers, who then prefer Mac to PC. In turn, PC's ill-tempered nature can be seen, for example, in *Referee* (Appendix 2). At the end of this commercial PC is rejected because of his bad behaviour, which is neither a desirable nor an admirable feature. Moreover, in *Bake Sale's* line 5 we can see how PC's problematic features are introduced. In this case, PC is having a bake sale to fix Vista. This indicates that the problem with his operating system is serious, even though it is not explicitly described. The problem is, in fact, taken for granted. The social action in this case is to remind that Vista is problematic and not worth buying. The advertisers are persuading the viewers to favour Macs in a discreet way. They are showing the favourable features of Macs, the problems of PCs, and also how the two operating systems differ in terms of their nature.

In conclusion, social actions can be identified in the structured conversations: they make the campaign distinguishable, inform the viewer, highlight Apple's products and diminish the competitor. These social actions persuade people in a subtle manner, since the viewers' attention might be on the conversation and what is said. Persuasion is the main purpose of these social actions and, as Gass and Seiter (2011) noted, the purpose of advertising as well.

5.2.3 Other conversational features

Further conversational features examined in section 5.1 are sequence organization and the concept of repair. When analysing persuasion, these features are not as relevant as the concepts of turns at talk and social action, and thus their purpose is discussed here only briefly.

Adjacency pairs make the conversation seem more natural and realistic. For example, instead of having long monologues about the product, the participants inform the viewer through questions and answers. Adjacency pairs are a way to introduce new topics quickly and logically. In addition, they have a role in creating the participants' personalities. By looking at how the participants react to questions and compliments, for example, one can see their nature. Overall, adjacency pairs have an important part in making the commercials good and

the campaign successful. They do not directly persuade viewers; instead, they convey other features that are more persuasive, such as social actions.

Instances of repair have been included in the structured conversations for a number of reasons. Their purpose is, first of all, to make corrections and this way to give correct information. If they were not made, the viewer might have false information about, for example, the product or the advertiser. Moreover, the commercials contain repairs because they are a part of natural conversation. They also create humour, which was visible in Mac's self-initiated self-repair in the commercial *iLife*. Furthermore, with the aid of repairs, the viewer can see the characters' true personalities. The other-initiated other-repair from *Referee* showed how Mac corrected PC's claim. This correction, in turn, shows how PC purposely exaggerated and distorted the truth. To sum up, repairs are an important part of interaction. The repairs seen in Apple's commercials are, however, not very persuasive. They only affect the viewers' perceptions towards Macs and PCs by showing their nature. Their main function is to inform the reader, which was one of the main social actions discussed in section 5.2.2.

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the transcribed commercials in detail by concentrating on the two research questions. Firstly, I observed the first research question and focused on the main concepts of CA: turns at talk, turn taking, turn design, social action, sequence organization and repair. It became clear that the structured conversations resemble natural speech and they can be studied in a similar way. By analysing these conversations, one can understand the whole advertising campaign better. Secondly, I discussed the second research question and explored how the structured conversations persuade viewers. This section showed that the concepts of turns and social actions were the main issues persuading viewers, whereas adjacency pairs and repairs did not affect the viewers as much. In conclusion, persuasiveness is one of the main qualities of good commercials, as Vilanilam and Varghese (2004: 118-119) argued. It is clear that Apple is persuading viewers in an indirect and effective way by utilizing structured conversations in their commercials.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore the main conversational features of Apple's *Get a Mac* campaign. This was done by analysing the two research questions. The first research question examined what conversational features could be found in the commercials. The following

concepts were found in the structured conversations: turns at talk, turn taking, turn design, social action, sequence organization and repair. These features make the conversation resemble natural speech. Hence by analysing what the structured conversations are like, one can understand the conversation and the interaction between the participants better. The second research question revealed how these conversational features persuade consumers to get a Mac. The main persuasive features were turns at talk, turn taking, turn design and social action. These features are persuasive because they make the structured conversations similar to natural speech, appealing to people and also easy to remember and understand. They inform the viewers and highlight Macs' good qualities and PCs' problems. The other conversational concepts, sequence organization and repair, did not persuade as much. Instead, they conveyed the other persuasive features. Overall, Apple's commercials persuade very subtly, and this influencing is closely connected to the use of structured conversations.

This study is connected to previous research on the topic. First of all, the data connects my paper to previous studies made on the advertising campaign. Even though the campaign has been researched from several aspects before (for example Livingstone 2011, Santa Maria and Knowles 2011), its connection to CA and persuasion has not been explored that much. Hence the data is the only conjunctive factor. Secondly, the concepts of CA, persuasion and advertising form the theoretical background of this study, and thus they are closely connected to it. They have also been widely researched both separately and together. The connection of persuasion and advertising has been examined by, for example, Gass and Seiter (2011) and Sedivy and Carlson (2011). However, as Drew (2005: 99) noted, the main focus of CA is on natural speech, and thus its connection to advertising and persuasion has not been discussed much.

The implications of this study are closely connected to the preceding paragraph. By describing how the present study connects to previous research, one can see its contribution to the field. To begin with, this study discusses Apple's campaign from a linguistic point of view, which has been disregarded before. The aim was to inform consumers about the campaign and Apple's persuasion tactics, and this was done through analysing the use of structured conversations. In addition, another implication is related to the connection of structured conversations and persuasion in advertising. This connection was the main issue of the second research question, which was explored in section 5.2. The purpose was to show how structured conversations could be used in advertising, particularly since this topic has not

been extensively researched. To sum up, these implications were made with the aid of previous studies and good transcriptions.

This study has limitations due to the scope of a bachelor's thesis, but research could be continued in the future. For example, instead of inspecting a small number of commercials, one could analyse all of them. This would give information about the whole campaign and one would not have to generalize the results. However, this would have made the present paper too long for a bachelor's thesis. Furthermore, one could have observed other multimodal features that can be found in the commercials, such as body language, music, physical appearance, hand gestures and images. The focus of this study was entirely on language, since it is one of the main means of persuasion. Moreover, one could analyse the connection of structured conversations and persuasion even more. One could examine other television commercials that rely on structured conversations, and see whether there are any similarities or inconsistencies with the results of this study. In conclusion, most of these issues would have made this study too long for a bachelor's thesis, and thus I concentrated entirely on the structured conversations of 12 television commercials. It is, nonetheless, obvious that much could be done on this topic in the future.

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- Box, 03:00-03:30 (June 2006)
- Security, 11:00-11:30 (February 2007)
- Genius, 13:30-14:00 (May 2007)
- Podium, 15:00-15:30 (November 2007)
- Referee, 17:30-18:00 (January 2008)
- Time Machine, 18:00-18:30 (January 2008)
- Bake Sale, 23:30-24:00 (October 2008)
- Time Traveler, 27:30-28:00 (April 2009)
- Elimination, 28:30-29:00 (May 2009)
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APPENDIX 1: IMAGES OF MAC AND PC

These images are partial screenshots that have been taken from the commercials.

Mac

PC

PC and Mac

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

Podium – November 2007

1	Mac	hello I'm a Mac
2	PC	my fellow Americans I'm a ↓PC (0.2)
3	Mac	why so ↑official? (0.2)
4	PC	well some people are giving up on Vista Mac cause it doesn't
5		(0.3)
6	PC	work the way they wanted to (.)
7	Mac	mmh (.)
8	PC	other people are going back to XP.
9	Mac	↑really? (.) downgrading?
10	PC	yes but we PCs won't give up (0.3)
11	PC	if your printer isn't compatible with Vista I ↑say (0.2)
12	PC	buy a new ↓printer. (.)
13	PC	if Mac's new Leopard operating system has dozens of new
14	PC	features I ↑say (0.3) ignore them. (.)
15	PC	ask not what Vista can do for ↑you (0.3)
16	PC	ask what you can buy for Vista!
17	Mac	wow you're (.) really ↑committed to ↓this
18	PC	°oh (0.2) not really I switched back to XP three weeks ago°
19		(0.3)
20	PC	°so much happier°

Referee – January 2008

1	Mac	hello I'm a Mac
2	PC	and I'm a ↓PC (0.4)
3	Mac	u- (.)
4	Referee	((blows to the whistle)) (0.4)
5	PC	aha[hah]
6	Referee	[you may] begin (0.3)
7	Mac	PC (.) why is there a referee ↑here? (0.2)
8	PC	to make sure you play ↓fair Mac so you don't go (.) boasting
9	PC	about how Leopard is (.) better and (.) faster than Vista (0.2)
10	Mac	wh- I didn't say that the Wall Street Journal said ↓that (0.3)
11	PC	well let's wait for the call. (0.3)
12	Referee	after further review the ru:ling sta:nds (0.2) Leopard (0.3) is
13	Referee	better (.) and faster than Vista (0.2)
14	PC	WHAT? (0.2) that's a ridiculous call what are you blind what's
15	PC	the matter with you: (0.5)
16	Referee	you're ↓ejected. (.)
17	PC	↑EJECTED? you can't eject me: (1.1)
18	PC	where am I supposed to go?

Time Machine - January 2008

1	Macs	hello I'm a Mac
2	PC	uuhh (0.4) what's (.) what's with all the (0.2) yous (0.4)
3	Mac	oh ye- this my new backup feature (.) time machine (0.6)
4	PC	oh (0.4)
5	Mac2	it automatically makes copies of me: every hour (.)
6	Mac6	so if I accidentally delete a ↑file (1.1)
7	Mac6	I can always find ↓it. (.)
8	Mac5	exactly. (0.2) plus it's part of Leopard
9	Mac5	so it comes on every Mac. (0.6)
10	PC	mmh (0.3) I have to say Mac that's (.) pretty (0.2) pretty
11	PC	awesome. (0.7)
12	Mac5	yeah thanks PC. (0.3)
13	Mac4	yeah ↑thanks PC (0.4)
14	MacX	oh ↑thanks PC (.)
15	MacX	thanks PC (.)
16	MacX	yeah ↑thanks PC
17	PC	[ok (.) you're] welcome (0.2) <u>all</u> of you (.)
18	MacX	[thanks PC]
19	PC	you don't have to (0.7) go down the whole line.