

LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS AND INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS HEALTH WARNINGS

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Abstract

The study incorporates the theory of linguistic functions (Jakobson 1960) and speech act theory (Austin 1962) to analyse the differences and similarities of the language used to produce health warning signs on tobacco-related products in Polish and English. The analysis is based on the premise that labels have a primary force of being a warning, when their social function is in focus. The texts proposed as health warnings are highly formulaic and despite the fact that they address a variety of issues, they seem to be inherently similar in form. This pilot study aims to analyse corpora of selected Polish and English health warnings in order to assess the level of their linguistic similarity.

Key words: tobacco health warnings, linguistic function, locution, speech act

1. Introduction

The present discussion focuses on the language of health warnings in Polish and English. Health warning labels are pieces of language with a well-defined function. They are designed in such a way that they should discourage potential buyers from smoking by referring to smoke-induced deadly diseases, disorders, and the general influence on the medical condition of the smoker and the ones around them. Hence, the issues tackled by health warnings cover primarily the domain of medical hazards. Given that the necessity of placing warnings on tobacco products has been imposed on manufacturers by the government, it must be remembered that it is the buyer who is the addressee of the message, but it can be supposed that it is the government that sends that message, not the manufacturer. In reality, manufacturers could hardly fail to obey the law of the distribution of tobacco products by labelling their packaging, but it is doubtful that encouraging smokers to quit is in their interest as their aim is to gain financially thanks to the people who indulge in their addiction.

The methodology used in the present analysis of the discourse of tobacco-related warnings involves a combination of John Austin's (1962) speech act-theoretic notions and the classification of language functions proposed by Roman Jakobson (1960). For the purpose of the study, a corpus of health warnings in Polish and in English has been compiled. Firstly, every health warning is analysed separately in terms of the linguistic function, or functions, it displays and the potential incongruence between the form and the ascribed illocutionary force. Subsequently, the conclusions drawn in the process will enable further discussion of the possible differences and similarities between health warnings in English and in Polish, as well as the variety of differences that can be observed between the two primary categories of tobacco-related health warnings. As proposed by both Tiersma (2002) and Vanderveken (1990), warnings can be classified as imperative or informative. The study will adapt both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to provide numerical data as well as some elaborated analysis of the characteristic features of the language used in health warning signs.

2. Jakobsonian linguistic functions

Being one of the few means of communication known to humanity, language needs to have a wide range of adjustments that allow expressing meanings of various kinds. Rarely do people speak just for the sake of speaking, and more often than not there is a message that tackles emotions, entities, events, actions and relations. The communicational reasons for using language are typically referred to as linguistic functions. Among the many models enumerating the functions of language, Jakobson's stands out as one that allows for a dynamic interplay of more than one point at a time.

Roman Jakobson (1960) notably enumerates six linguistic functions: expressive, conative, referential, phatic, poetic, and metalinguistic, which are associated with the existence of such communicational roles, or factors, as speaker, receiver, context, channel, message, and code. Each function encompasses a range of contexts in which it may occur and some sentential particles that allow categorisation, as explained below:

1. The expressive function – expressing the speaker's emotions through focusing on the self, e.g., using interjections, swear words and exclamations;
2. The conative function – giving the addressee commands, grabbing their attention, appealing to them;
3. The referential function – talking about entities in the world, depicting the reality, pointing to elements of the world;
4. The phatic function – establishing and maintaining a link between the speaker and the addressee, initiating small talk, expressing greetings;

5. The poetic function – using figurative language and special forms to enhance the attractiveness of the text and capture the audience's attention;
6. The metalinguistic function – discussing language via language.

Seldom does only one function occur. Most frequently, it is two or more functions that co-occur within one utterance, while for the purpose of the classification it is the prevailing one that would be taken into consideration. The texts that can be seen on tobacco products do not use a vast array of functions owing to the fact that they do fall into the domain of smoking, quitting, risks and smoke-induced diseases, which puts a constraint on the range of co-existing functions. They focus on strictly medical aspects. The metalinguistic function is expected to be rarely seen in this context as it involves talking about language by the means of language itself. Contrarily, it is the conative, expressive and referential functions that are likely to be recurrent in the context of tobacco-related medical issues and hazards.

3. The discrepancies between locutionary functions and illocutionary force in the context of Austin's theory of speech acts

The fundamental theory of speech acts advanced by John Austin (1962) is yet another model that can serve the purpose of analysing health warning signs in terms of their functions. Contrary to the Jakobsonian model of linguistic functions, Austin's concentration seems to be on unitary meanings, with emphasis on the underlying force in an utterance.

When it comes to speech acts, Austin's theory is complex and discusses the topic from many different perspectives. In this study, only a small portion of theory is used to reflect on what message is transmitted directly and explicitly, and what is conveyed indirectly, possibly as suggested meaning, e.g., through implicature (Grice 1975). Seeing as health warnings frequently display a sense of discrepancy between the conventionalised form and the purpose of the utterances, the speech act-theoretic notions of locution and illocution will be used in the analysis.

The multifaceted character of speech acts is seen in virtually every utterance. Austin (1962) has pointed to three aspects of a speech act: locution, illocution and perlocution. The locutionary form is what is said in the literal meaning. An utterance can be imperative (for imposition and giving orders), declarative (to make statements) and interrogative (for questions). The illocutionary force corresponds to what the purpose is, it refers to the social function of an utterance, to how it is to be taken within the speech community. It does not happen often that the form, i.e., the conventionalised form-related (sentence or grammar-related) function and the force are identical. For instance, not all declarative structures are produced to make statements, and not all imperative forms are produced to form orders, as can be seen in the examples below:

(1) I'd like to talk to you now.

grammatical form	(direct) locution	(indirect) illocution
declarative	statement	request or order

(2) Can you pass me the sugar?

grammatical form	(direct) locution	(indirect) illocution
interrogative	question of ability	request

The perlocutionary act is the effect that the utterance has on the interlocutor. For instance, if one is asked the aforementioned question ‘Can you pass me the sugar?’, they may understand what is meant and pass the sugar on to the speaker. However, they can also understand the utterance literally and simply confirm that they are able to physically move the container. It must be remembered that the abovementioned sentence is merely an example of the difference between the dictionary meaning of the grammatical form and the intended, speaker’s meaning. Normally, one’s most probable interpretation would be that they are asked to pass the sugar. Although the grammatical form suggests that one is being asked a question, it is normally understood that a request has been made, and it is difficult to even imagine a situation where one would understand the utterance solely literally, i.e., accordingly to the grammatical form.

The lack of congruence between the form and the force is frequent and used for various reasons such as enhancing the sense of politeness. Depending on the social context and the kind of one’s relationship with their interlocutor, it might be expected to refrain oneself from using straightforward language. For instance, while talking to a close friend, it is justifiable to say: ‘Pass me the sugar’, whereas a more suitable variant to use with a stranger or somebody of a higher social position would be asking them whether they ‘can’ do it.

The text messages that can be found in health warnings are also likely to express meanings seemingly incongruent with the proposed forms in order to appear more polite, deferential and impersonal, or to make such an impression on the audience that they are discouraged from smoking.

4. The need to enhance quitting and its form in discourse

Health warning messages are relatively well-defined pieces of discourse. They have a clear function as warnings and there are constraints on their form which is often regulated by law, as can be seen in the legal comment below:

Once a duty to warn is recognized, it is manifest that the warning must be adequate. It should be communicated clearly and understandably in a manner calculated to inform the user of the nature of the risk and the extent of the danger; it should be in terms commensurate with the gravity of the potential hazard, and it should not be neutralized or negated by collateral efforts on the part of the manufacturer. (Buchan V. Ortho Pharmaceutica, Ontario Court of Appeal as cited by Mahood 2003: 3)

These are the words in which the Ontario Court of Appeal reinforced the necessity of placing warning signs on tobacco products packages. Whether such warnings prove effective in preventing smokers from indulging their addiction is rather arguable; however, a great effort is being made so that they should produce the effect. Only in Canada it is believed that circa 45 000 citizens die of smoking-related diseases in the course of a year (Mahood 2003: 3; as of 2003), which evidently suggests how critical the situation can be.

To avert the problem from escalating, the obligation of placing warnings on the packages is imposed on manufacturers in a prevailing number of countries around the world and it is said that the warnings need to contain graphic images showing the effects of smoking on health (Online source 2). The World Health Organization (Online source 1) published a report which states the mandatory percentage of display area covered by health warnings at the front and back of cigarette packages. The data shows that in 2022, there were some countries where the obligatory percentage was rather low. It ranged between five to forty percent in Serbia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Mozambique and Libya. However, a significantly greater number of counties around the world is required to devote fifty to even ninety percent of display area. Among the countries with the highest percentage are Australia (82.5), Benin (90), Maldives (90) and New Zealand (87.5).

Hammond et al. (2006) carried out a study aimed at examining the effectiveness of health warnings in enhancing the awareness of smoking-induced diseases. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia. It must be remembered that at the time of the study, the health warning policies were less restrictive than they are now. To broaden the context, the data below shows the percentage of display devoted to health warnings in 2022 and in 2007 for the aforementioned countries (Online source 1).

Country	2022	2007
The UK	65%	35%
The USA	not specified	not specified
Canada	75%	50%
Australia	82.5%	60%

Table 1: The percentage of display area on health warnings compared (according to Online source 1; accessed 10-01-2024)

The percentage was not given in the case of the United States. However, Hammond et al. (2006) mention that this country's policies were one of the weakest so it can be expected that the percentage might not have been high.

The study has shown that smokers had a low level of knowledge about the risks and there were some diseases that were believed not to be caused by the addiction; for instance, less than twenty-five percent of all the respondents believed in smoke-induced impotence. On the other hand, the study defended the existence of health warnings as it was proven that smokers in countries with the strictest policies and higher percentage of display were more educated on the potential conditions caused by substances found in cigarettes. This being the case, it is possible that health warnings which are used contemporarily are more effective.

It is clear that virtually every country has some policies regulating health warnings on tobacco products. As it has been shown, the approach to such signs differs substantially across countries. The warnings come in a variety of forms and types, positioning themselves as a worthwhile objective of an analysis in terms of linguistic functions, speech acts and potential effectiveness on the addressees. The present study concentrates on warnings in English and Polish found on tobacco packages distributed in Poland and English-speaking countries.

5. Health warnings in English and Polish: a case study

5.1 Methodology

For the purpose of this analysis a corpus of official health warnings has been compiled. The warnings were produced in English and in Polish, and it is only the text without the graphic image that is provided in each case. The first section that follows provides an analysis of anglophone labels, whereas the discussion on Polish signs is found later in this paper. The study takes a qualitative approach and what is going to be analysed is the potential contrast between locutionary and illocutionary acts in particular utterances as well as the presence of Jakobsonian linguistic functions (1960). Furthermore, the study points to the existing linguistic differences and specific characteristics found in the corpus of health warnings. Finally, the study will attempt at answering the question whether there are any similarities between the structures and function of Polish and English health warnings.

5.2 A comparative case study of linguistic functions and speech acts in health warnings

Thinking of health warnings on cigarette packages and other tobacco products, one can easily visualise relatively short texts which inform about the risk in an emotionless and straightforward manner. Preferably, there would likely be startling pictures exhibiting the effects of smoking. Such have been in use for

decades and are still preferred today among manufacturers. However, one of health warnings proposed in Australia in 1985 was quite contrary to what is known contemporarily. The health warning in question, cited by Chovanec (2007), is presented below as (3).

(3) SMOKING IS ADDICTIVE

Nicotine, a drug in tobacco, makes smokers feel they need to smoke. The more you smoke, the more your body will depend on getting nicotine and you may find yourself hooked. It may be difficult to give up smoking once you are hooked on nicotine. For more information, call 13 2190.

Government Health Warning

(Schedule 1 to Trade Practices, Consumer Product Information Standards, Tobacco, Regulations 1994 No. 83)

This text does not resemble any of the conventionally used formulae discussed at the beginning of this paragraph. Obviously, it is much longer, which can potentially enhance the number of different functions exhibited by the text. Although it may seem that the level of effectiveness is higher in case of the traditional, short notifications that have been adapted by the tobacco industry, the prolonged form can also be effective because it clearly stands out from what has been acknowledged as a typical health warning and grabs attention more easily. It is possible that such forms will not go into the mainstream since the process of creating them is probably more time-consuming and they cover up a substantial amount of display devoted to the health warning label; however, the longitude enables a more defined representation of linguistic functions, which may not be so easily recognised in the traditional, one-sentence forms that are to be analysed later in this paper.

The poetic function is represented by the presence of idiomatic expressions and phrases that hardly ever occur in traditional labels, e.g. “hooked on” or “give up”. The text stands out from the variety of warnings and this is the primary feature that makes it possible to classify it as poetic. The excessive longitude of the text makes it less resemblant of a slogan, but adds to its uniqueness. Consequently, more viewers will potentially be interested in getting familiarised with the information. On the other hand, if there were more texts similar to the aforementioned one circulating within the tobacco industry, it could happen that they lose their attractiveness being too long for an average buyer to want to spend their time reading through it. It could be hypothesised that such a text is effective as an one-time thing, but would not be captivating for the brain as a commonly used label.

The phatic function is one of those which are hardly ever found in health warnings. It might be limited because of the channel through which the message is transmitted. It is exophoric, obviously written and directed towards no one in particular, but rather to anyone who could potentially see it while planning to buy a pack of cigarettes. As a result, the addresser cannot expect the addressee

to give a response, whether verbal or written. On the other hand, the answer to this can be the decision of buying or not buying cigarettes, continuing to smoke or quitting.

While it could be claimed that traditional warnings lack the sense of phaticity being too minimalistic, vague and deferent to build a kind of rapport with the reader, the aforementioned label present itself as a tie-bonding piece of text. The text is composed in a hearty manner, and it can be felt that the author cares about the physical and mental well-being of the buyer. They aim to establish a positive and close connection between themselves and the viewer in order to evoke the feeling of being understood and taken care of. The pronoun “you”, which can be classified in English as both singular and plural, makes an impression of being informed by somebody who is like a friendly figure who kindly explains the medical consequences and risks of smoking without being too strict about it or detached from the problem.

Additionally, allowing a more exhaustive text on the package may enhance the levels of comprehension in the audience since the warnings provides a more elaborate explanation of the issue in question. Unlike the more traditional variants of health warning signs, this one shows extensive, yet comprehensive, argumentation. Given that, the viewer may find the text more trustworthy, which resonates with the theory of epistemic vigilance described by Sperber et al. (2010). The theory says that people are generally willing to believe in anything that others claim if it does not seem to be suspicious; however, there may be attempts to give misleading or false information, which makes interlocutors watchful. There is a set of features that enhances the levels of trustworthiness of an utterance, one of them being the fact that the more comprehensible it is, the higher are the chances that it will be accepted by the audience. Hence, it could be said that the prolonged version of a health warning sign above is likely to seem more believable to the potential viewer since it displays a kind of an explanatory value in a non-superficial manner.

The use of the deictic pronoun “you” exhibits an occurrence of the conative function as well, even though the label is not imperative, but rather informative. The text reveals potential risks of smoking cigarettes; however, readers are given free will as to whether they will continue to smoke. Nothing is imposed on the reader, but they are addressed in a straightforward manner.

The expressive function does not seem to be prominent in this text. Mainly informative, it does not reveal the attitude of the addresser towards what is being conveyed in the message. It can be assumed that the content and purpose of the text may remotely indicate a sense of concern about the well-being of citizens, considering that health warnings are signed by the government. On the other hand, the concept of health warnings on tobacco products is an official regulation introduced by the government. Given that the manufacturers are in duty of placing such warnings on their products, it is rather arguable if it makes sense to seek the emotive function on the side of the addresser. On the other hand, it may potentially

inflict emotional reaction, such as distress or concern about their health, on the side of the addressee. It also can be a stimulus to seek help in quitting smoking.

The referential function has been partially discussed at this point as it collaborates with other functions in order to make the health warning clear and effective. However, it possibly is the most dominant, crucial function that can be traced in this text. It is so because of the specific purpose the text has - its illocutionary force. The illocutionary force of this text is the intention to inform about the possible threat posed by smoking addiction.

The linguistic functions observed in the aforementioned Australian health warning proved rather numerous. It is possible that the structure of the text – prolonged and more complex than regular texts serving the same purpose – enabled it to comprise so many. It cannot be stated, however, that conventional, short formulae have a smaller number of prominent linguistic functions. Therefore, to provide a bigger picture, this analysis would benefit from a comparison of such extended warnings against the shorter forms which are more acknowledged today. In terms of their forms, most of the labels resemble slogans. In this study the following health warnings will be taken into consideration:

- (4) ‘Smokers die younger’;
- (5) ‘When you smoke it shows,’
- (6) ‘Protect children: do not make them breathe your smoke’,
- (7) ‘Don’t suffer from addiction’, and
- (8) ‘Smoking is highly addictive, don’t start’.

Even though they explicate the same idea, they differ substantially in terms of their structures, which may prove significant in how they work.

As mentioned above, the pieces of text formally known as health warnings resemble the structure and purpose of slogans. “Slogans, together with a brand’s name and logo, constitute one of the three key elements of brand identity” (Kohli, Leuthesser, and Suri 2007). These are usually short, catchy and captivating pieces of discourse designed to enhance the level of curiosity in the viewers and hearers in such a way that they are interested in the message. Slogans are usually involved into the marketing process of products, material goods and services. Their purpose is to appeal to the audience’s sense of self or highlight the superiority of whatever is being advertised. Ultimately, they urge the audience to indulge themselves and purchased the product in question, trust the brand or contact the company providing the presented service.

Slogans are often discussed in terms of linguistic functions since they are a rich source of linguistic material that can be subjected to analysis. Based on the specific purpose of each slogan, they appeal to the customer’s desires, express the author’s feelings and emotions, establish a rapport with the audience and refer to objects and entities in the real world. The rule is that they need to have the powers of imparting

some knowledge on the audience (knowledge about the existence of a given wear brand, the discount in the nearest supermarket or the political issues) and encourage them to buy something or get involved in some actions.

Health warning signs are similar. They are extensively restricted in terms of their social function and the form, which is not true when it comes to slogans that are much more creative and there are few constraints put on them. However, their function is to inform and make impact on the mindset of the audience. Typically, a slogan encourages the viewer to buy a product, and, in the case of health warning labels, it should be discouraging in order to prevent the purchase. The language (and the graphic images that are frequently present in both) must be balanced, to-the-point and trustworthy to get the message through.

Such health warnings usually can be divided into two categories: informative and imperative, as noticed by Chovanec (2007), and earlier by Tiersma (2002) and (Vanderveken 1990). An informative warning is just as the one discussed previously. It conveys certain message, but it does not aim to impose anything on anyone. 'Smokers die younger' and 'When you smoke it shows' fall into this category. An imperative warning has a form of an order, even though it is still the smoker who makes the final decision of whether to continue smoking or not and no one is really able to impel them to quit. 'Protect children: don't make them breathe your smoke' and 'Don't suffer from addiction' exemplify the form. As Tiersma (2002), Vanderveken (1990), and Chovanec (2007) suggest, these two categories can be merged and one health warning which clearly illustrates this is 'Smoking is highly addictive, don't start', which is divided into two clauses, either of them in a different mode.

SMOKERS DIE YOUNGER (4) is clearly a statement, which makes it profoundly grounded in the referential function. The existence of the remaining functions is rather scarce. 'Smokers die younger' does not exhibit the conative function clearly, unless it is supposed that the word 'smokers' refers to the addressees of the message, the smokers. This could be the case; however, if it is not, the word becomes rather general and is used to reveal certain facts, but it does not address anyone in particular.

There is a discrepancy in terms of locution and illocution. It is obvious that the illocutionary speech act is that of a warning, whereas the surface structure does not exhibit it, the linguistic form being a declarative statement focusing on a seemingly different matter.

WHEN YOU SMOKE IT SHOWS (5) is richer in linguistic content. Similarly to the previously discussed text, the locutionary form is declarative, while the illocutionary act that was to be performed is a warning. The referential function is dominant, but not to the exclusion of other functions. The conative function is also a crucial element as the text is clearly referent to a 'you', the addressee of it. The attempt has been taken in order to appeal to the potential audience and convince them that the smoking habit exerts a pernicious impact on one's appearance. The text appeals to everyone's internal want to look presentable.

The conative function is a significant part of many of the analysed health warnings. In PROTECT CHILDREN: DON'T MAKE THEM BREATHE YOUR SMOKE (6), the pronoun 'your' exophorically points to the addressee of the message. It is the person looking at the warning, as smoker who intends to purchase a pack of cigarettes. The use of the possessive pronoun clearly shows that it is the addressee who shoulders the responsibility for harming people around. At the same time, the foundation of this text is a sense of having common values; taking care of the physical well-being or one's children should generally be a core of a person's moral standards. The message positions the smoker as responsible for potential smoke-induced disease of their child. Moreover, the warning has a form of a command, which also highlights the lack of discrepancies in terms of locution. The locutionary form is imperative, which is typical for warnings, orders and commands, while the illocutionary act that is desired is a warning. The locutionary form seems to exhaust what the aim is.

Similar in form, the health warning DON'T SUFFER FROM ADDICTION (7) resembles a command, an order or a straightforward piece of advice. To produce such a sentence, the imperative mode has been applied. It pinpoints the hazard of getting hooked on cigarettes and informs about such a possibility. As a matter of fact, a smoker is not able to actively control whether they get addicted to nicotine or not. The only way they can prevent the potential addiction is by quitting smoking altogether. In this case, it could be argued that while the locutionary form of this sentence is imperative, the actual illocutionary function is a warning or the act of conveying a piece of information concerning the hazard of getting addicted to cigarettes. As one cannot logically refrain themselves from the addiction while smoking, it seems more reasonable to perceive this sentence in terms of informing about the possible consequences and encouraging to look for some measures that can be taken in order to quit. Hence, the main Jakobsonian function here is the conative function as the structure clearly is the one of an imperative sentence that gives commands to the addressee; however, granted that it is understood as a mere piece of information, the text exhibits an informative value.

According to Tiersma's (2002) classification, SMOKING IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE, DON'T START (8) exhibits some features of both an imperative and informative category. The initial clause is a statement, whereas the latter part is purely imperative. It seems to address not the smokers, but those who might be willing to commence on the smoking addiction, advising them against such a pursuit. In terms of Jakobsonian functions, the conative function is prevailing, and explicated, as the text addresses some audience and commands them (not) to do something. Typically, the first clause uses the referential function. When it comes to the discrepancies between the form and the force, the form, as it has been noted, is mixed: it links the declarative and the imperative, which makes the message more complex as a speech act. The illocutionary force is to warn against a specific action that is based on a piece of evidence, thus discouraging readers from smoking.

5.3. A comparative case study of health warnings in Polish

Poland is among the countries with restrictive policies regarding the practise of health warning labelling. The government has imposed the necessity of placing warning labels accompanied by visual, and oftentimes - drastic, graphics that show the poor consequences of smoking. Despite of the intrinsic differences between Polish and English, it seems that the structure, form, and purpose of health warnings placed on the packages in Poland are inherently congruent with the English language ones, as can be seen in the following examples that have been translated into English to ease the comparison:

- (9) Rzuć palenie – masz dla kogo żyć [Eng. Quit smoking – you have somebody to live for]
- (10) Dym szkodzi Twoim dzieciom, rodzinie i przyjaciołom [Eng. Smoke harms your children, family and friends]
- (11) Palenie zmniejsza płodność [Eng. Smoking is detrimental to fertility]
- (12) Dzieci palaczy częściej zostają palaczami [Eng. Smokers' children are more likely to become smokers themselves].

At the first sight, it is clear that Polish health warning signs mention medical aspects and consequences of smoking for the smoker, but also appeal to common societal values, such as the family; similarly to the anglophone warnings that have been discussed above. Based on that, it can be hypothesised that Polish and English health warnings turn out to be highly convergent in terms of linguistic functions and speech acts.

RZUĆ PALENIE – MASZ DLA KOGO ŻYĆ (9) is an example of a slogan where the imperative and informative forms have been combined – the first clause conveys an imposition, whereas the second clause can be classified as a piece of information, providing motivation for the preceding command. However, it is noteworthy that it is not purely informational and is characterised by some emotional value. Additionally, such a statement can be regarded as an oversimplification. Moreover, the idea of referring to a smoker's hypothetical relatives and friends has a touch of persuasion, where the sender of the message attempts to invite the addressee to quit smoking by making them feel guilty about putting the relatives' health at risk. Consequently, the domineering linguistic functions here, according to the classification proposed by Jakobson (1960), are the conative and expressive functions. The text appeals to the viewer's sense of belonging and the family values trying to persuade them to quit smoking for the sake of their closest ones. Simultaneously, it could be argued that the text expresses a certain amount of care about the well-being of the viewer, which points to the presence of the expressive function. On the other hand, as it has been discussed previously, health warnings are directed by some anonymous entity to nobody in particular, or rather by the government through the channel of the manufacturers to the smokers, but it must be remembered that tobacco companies

do not really desire anyone to quit smoking. The more people smoke, the higher the income is, but the policymakers have imposed on them the necessity to put health warning signs on the packages. In conclusion, the notion that health warning labels are to express honest concern about the well-being of smokers can be true linguistically, but practically it is rather exaggerated.

In terms of Austin's (1962) definition of locutionary and perlocutionary acts, this stance is rather congruent. On the surface, the form is a blur of the imperative and the declarative, with the direct locution being an order, a command, a warning or a threat. Obviously, it is not feasible to order or threaten anybody into quitting, so in terms of the illocutionary force the first three possibilities are certainly undoable. Contrarily, the warning possibility is accurate.

DYM SZKODZI TWOIM DZIECIOM, RODZINIE I PRZYJACIOŁOM (10) displays a clearly informative format. Rather than issuing orders, this slogan refers to the important entities in the reality of each viewer, informing vaguely about the possible medical risks associated with smoking in the close surrounding of other people. This text is similar to the previously discussed one (9) in that it appeals to the reader's emotional sphere and family bonds in order to persuade them into quitting. This labelling has possibly been designed in such a way that it evokes the feeling of guilt in the viewer. It displays the presence of the conative and referential function. It is not congruent with the notions of Austin (1962). The form is declarative and the direct locution exhibits characteristic features of a statement. However, the sentence can be understood as an incentive "Quit smoking", which would be more typical of a warning. This example points to the fact that Polish health warnings have the same pattern as their English equivalents and may happen to be incongruent when it comes to their locutionary forms and illocutionary forces.

PALENIE ZMNIEJSZA PŁODNOŚĆ (11) is a clear warning against the possibility of decrease in one's fertility. On the surface, if the form solely is taken into consideration, the label is informative (or declarative, according to the definition proposed by Austin 1962) – it merely provides a piece of information that smoking causes a risk of becoming infertile. However, as it has been mentioned, the function of health warning signs is inherently to warn, therefore it can be argued that also in this case the illocutionary force is to express a warning. Given that, the label displays incongruence in terms of the locution and perlocution, with the former one being merely a statement and the former having some underlying features of a warning, which conventionally has a structure of an imperative sentence.

When it comes to the set of linguistic functions proposed by Jakobson (1960), the text is rather deferent in nature and does not display a vast array of varied functions. Definitely, it refers to the activity of "smoking" and the real-life phenomenon of "fertility" as well as the link between the two. There is scarce evidence that some other linguistic functions are present in the text; it does not refer to anyone, does not express anyone's attitude, and clearly does not attempt at establishing a rapport with the addressee, but emphasises the risk of falling into this smoke-induced medical condition.

Similarly to the previously discussed health warning label, *DZIECI PALACZY CZĘŚCIEJ ZOSTAJĄ PALACZAMI* (12) is structurally a declarative statement, informing about a confirmed fact that children of smokers tend to take up the habit of smoking themselves. It refers to only potentially existing entities in the reality, i.e. the smokers' children. It could be argued that the text attempts to influence the targeted audience of smokers using the argument of the harm that can be done to their potential children. This being the case, the label is conative as it is concentrated around the smoker's attitude that can be reconsidered after reading the text. The command, or advice, to stop smoking is not explicated as in some other slogans, but it can be felt as a natural consequence, a reasonable logical conclusion from what the slogan says.

Similarly to quite a number of other health warnings that have been categorised as informative in terms of their structure, the message discussed presently (Example 12) can be assumed to be incongruent when it comes to the locutionary and illocutionary dimensions of a sentence. Although the form of declarative behaves like a statement, it is clear that in order to fulfil its purpose of being a health warning, the slogan must in fact invite a directive illocutionary force.

In a nutshell, it can be argued that despite the variety of forms and structures on the surface, the intrinsic values of each tobacco product warning resembles the other ones. Following the traditional division into the categories of the informative signs and the imperative signs, it could be assumed that the two groups have their own remarkable features, and every label that falls into a given category will correspond to the set of these characteristics in terms of linguistic functions proposed by Jakobson (1960), as well as the notions of locution devised by Austin (1962). However, the ways in which health warning messages fulfil their function, and how they are phrased to satisfy the relevant legal requirements are much varied.

6. Conclusions

The study shows that only a few of the six Jakobsonian linguistic functions are present in health warnings, and this is true for both English and Polish slogans. The formulaic structure, their shortness, the way in which they are conveyed, and the purpose that these messages serve definitely prevent the emergence of extensive poetic, phatic, expressive or metalinguistic aspects. The channel of communication that has been offered to spread health warnings does not contribute to the favourable conditions for establishing a rapport with the audience as the addressee is a detached and quite an elusive figure, one that can be easily recognised as a smoker, but nobody in particular. Necessarily, exophoric reference is used. The expressive, poetic and metalinguistic functions can hardly be included either as there is no or little context for their existence as tobacco health warnings are not necessarily a domain where they could be expected. There may be occasional expressive touch, but in most cases it would arise as a background for others, e.g. where social values, such as love of family and children, are evoked. A table below summarises the interplay of linguistic functions for all analysed slogans.

Example	Grammatical form	Locutionary form	Illocutionary function	Jakobson's functions
(3) SMOKING IS ADDICTIVE	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative, poetic, phatic
(4) SMOKERS DIE YOUNGER	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative
(5) WHEN YOU SMOKE IT SHOWS	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative
(6) PROTECT CHILDREN: DO NOT MAKE THEM BREATHE YOUR SMOKE	mixed	order	warning	referential, conative
(7) DON'T SUFFER FROM ADDICTION	imperative	order	warning	referential, conative
(8) SMOKING IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE, DON'T START	mixed	statement, order	warning	referential, conative
(9) RZUĆ PALENIE – MASZ DLA KOGO ŻYĆ [tr. Quit smoking – you have people to live for]	mixed	order, statement	warning	referential, conative
(10) DYM SZKODZI TWOIM DZIECIOM, RODZINIE I PRZYJACIOŁOM [tr. Smoke harms your children, family and friends]	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative

(11) PALENIE ZMNIEJSZA PŁODNOŚĆ [tr. Smoking is detrimental for fertility]	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative
(12) DZIECI PALACZY CZEŚCIEJ ZOSTAJĄ PALACZAMI [tr. Smokers' children are more likely to become smokers]	informative	statement	warning	referential, conative

Table 2. Slogans and functions identified in the analysed warnings

There are some functions that are prevailing and easily discernible in every single health warning. Following the example set by Tiersma (2002), it has been concluded that warnings fall into two main categories: informative and imperative, and the subcategory where both categories merge. Using Jakobson's terminology, the functions should be labelled as the referential function and the conative function. It should also be mentioned that although they are present in a great number of warnings, in their majority, they do not necessarily occur in all of them, which comes contrary to Tiersma's (2002) claim. The warnings are directed towards the addressee and often appeal to their common sense, which may often be based on the informative input. It is the addressee who finally decides to be convinced or not. Therefore, the imperative character of some health warnings is only superficial, where they cannot be directly perceived as directives. The warnings cannot, in fact, make anyone quit; the only thing that can be done is to try to encourage smokers to make an informed choice.

The relatively 'hidden' functional meaning of selected warnings can be elucidated with Austin's notions of locution and illocution, by pointing to the difference between the conventional meaning of words, phrases, and sentences, and the conventions of use of such forms. In warnings that are imperatively formulated, it could be argued that the form and the purpose are corelated and mutually exhaustive. The imperative structure, which is typical of orders and commands, also fits into the framework of a straightforward warning, as in 'Don't open the window!', 'Stop petting that dog!'. Similarly, 'Protect children' or 'Don't suffer from addiction' point to a sense of risk that one can put themselves in. As a dog one pets can bite them, smoking can cause cancer.

The illocutionary force of a warning seems obvious and so it is not surprising that the analysis confirms it. The social role that health warnings and their slogans play, while spreading the message regarding smoking-related medical problems

makes it inevitable that the ultimate function of these signs and their illocutionary force is to be that of a warning. Hence, any label can be viewed as a multilayered piece of discourse that has an onion-like structure. The ultimate layer on every analysed message is a warning, but there are numerous underlying aspects, i.e., varied forms in different messages. In contrast to imperative signs, informative ones are likely to exhibit discrepancies between their form and their force. They are shaped as statements, pieces of information that point to often detrimental consequences and results of smoking, leaving the conclusion to the reader.

Ultimately, the study shows that the linguistic forms used in tobacco health warnings tend to be limited. Formally, the language of health warnings is rather restricted and lack creativity. There are patterns that are repeatedly used and all the texts operate within the formulaic, well-known framework. Consequently, just three Jakobson's function regularly recur, there is little place for catchy and surprising slogans, for overly emotional expressions or figurative language; the focus is on the message, information and the addressee. It might be that the lack of creativity in health warning messages arises at least partly from the fact that their senders, i.e. tobacco companies, are not really focused on influencing the target audience, but need to fulfil legal requirements.

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Online sources

Online source 1 : Percentage of principal display area mandated to be covered by health warnings - front and back of cigarette packaging (accessed 10-01-2024)

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/gho-tobacco-control-warnings-cigarettes-w2-pc-front-back-a>

Online source 2: Health warnings on cigarette packaging must include a photograph or graphic

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/gho-tobacco-control-warnings-cigarettes-w10-graphic-a> (accessed 10-01-2024)

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