This diploma thesis focuses on an analysis of crisis communication in food retail chains, using pragmatic linguistic methods. In the theoretical part I deal with speech acts theory from the viewpoint of John L. Austin and Emile Benveniste, Grice’s Cooperative Principles and the Theory of Argumentation. I use all these methods in analyzing press releases published by retail chains in the case of a negative food affair. I am therefore interested in the way those linguistic tools are used by the authors in the press releases in order to communicate most effectively in a time of crisis, so as to prevent the loss of either costumers or the good name of the company. I will also focus on the most frequent mistakes made by the authors of press releases.

The aim of my thesis is to find out whether it is possible to find some repetitive mechanisms used in the communication of different crisis topics. The main hypothesis is that although there are different crisis situations which need to be communicated, communication methods used in individual press releases are similar and they often recur.

Key words: pragmatics, speech acts, cooperative principles, argumentation, crisis communication, food affair, press release.