

The Building Blocks of Language and Creativity: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Toy Advertisements

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Abstract—This research aims to explore the verbal and visual resources and cultural aspects used in online toy advertisements. The data comprises 142 advertisements sourced from the official international Lego Facebook page. Three analytical frameworks were employed in the study. First, Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics was used to analyze verbal resources. Second, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotics was used to examine visual resources. Third, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions were applied to the aspects of culture. The investigation of verbal resources reveals three main ideational metafunctions: material, relational, and mental. Also, declarative mood and unmarked topical themes dominantly occurred in the clauses. For the visual analysis, the advertisements tend to use conceptual symbolic images with vibrant and contrasting colors to make the brand memorable and convey positive values. The positions of participants (RP) also reveal the significance of the brand. There is interconnectedness between visual resources and verbal resources for the advertisements to be cohesive. Remarkably, all six cultural dimensions were found aligned with the American cultural aspects, except for masculinity and long-term orientation. This suggests Lego's commitment to promoting equality, unity, and the attempt to construct more effective worldwide marketing.

Index Terms—multimodal critical discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, multimodality, advertisements

I. INTRODUCTION

In the world of trade and business, advertisements have become extremely crucial and competitive in recent years. To grab customers' attention, effective advertisements require creative and playful linguistic and non-linguistic features. In addition to employing persuasive strategies to influence intended viewers, advertisements, as noted by Cook (2001) and Danesi (2015), can also reflect people's attitudes, social positions, and ideological viewpoints.

As stated by Presbrey (2009), the most significant developments in the global advertising industry occurred in the 20th century. That is, there have been increasing innovations and technological advancements in the field of advertising. The rise in the use of social media and computer-mediated interactions has become popular in several societies around the world. Due to this reason, the forms of communication found in media and advertisements have changed from being one-dimensional and highly text-based to becoming significantly more multimodal.

Consequently, the term 'multimodality' has emerged. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), multimodality refers to the combination of multiple sensory and various communicative modes, such as print, image, text, graphics, animation, and so on, that create meaning in any message. Beach and Castek (2016) also stated that multimodality is the use of visual, auditory, textual, and image-based ways of representation for the purposes of communicating with and engaging customers.

Although there are many different advertising platforms, including those for newspapers, magazines, television, and social media, it should be noted that social media has become the most influential recently since it is considered the best way to reach targeted customers (Gibson, 2018). Facebook is considered a popular platform with around 2.9 billion monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2022, and it can be used for online communication. Additionally, it is an effective social media marketing tool for businesses because the content is available for everyone to access and share (Weber, 2007). One of the most common types of Facebook advertising is image advertising, which usually combines creative images with persuasive texts in order to attract viewers. Therefore, in this study, the researcher examines the discourse of online toy advertisements presented on a Facebook page.

As far as we know, many researchers have conducted studies in the field of multimodal discourse analysis of advertisements for various products, including cars, food, drinks, and beauty products (Kenalemang, 2022; Kuswandini, 2018; Suphaborwornrat, 2022). However, far too little attention has been paid to toy advertisements. Therefore, Lego was chosen as the data for this study. This is due to the fact that when people think of toys, Lego is the brand that typically comes to their mind. Lego specializes in designing sets that connect with its customers, employing creative marketing strategies. Hence, it appears that Lego Brick Play is accessible to customers of all genders and ages.

In recent years, the context of marketing has been significantly impacted by the coronavirus (Covid-19). The impact of this pandemic is very obvious and noticeable because of the social distancing regulations and the broad lockdown. Surprisingly, according to Lego Group's full-year report of 2021 from www.lego.com, Lego continues to achieve strong

growth in consumer sales and profit. Moreover, it won 7 Toy of the Year (TOTY) awards from the Toy Association and honors the year's best product launches. It is noteworthy to examine the company's strategy embedded in its online advertising images.

This study aims to investigate verbal and visual resources employed in online social media of toy advertisements to identify the metafunctions of language, the social semiotic perspectives, and the embedded cultural aspects presented in the data. These findings enhance our understanding of business marketing and education. First, they offer a better understanding of the discourse of advertising that persuades the intended customers. Second, they inspire advertisers to create interesting and creative online advertisements. Third, they provide guidelines for those in the field of education, including, teachers, students, and researchers.

There are three objectives in this study as follows:

1. To examine verbal and visual resources employed in online social media of toy advertisements.
2. To describe the metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics and social semiotics presented in online social media of toy advertisements.
3. To seek embedded cultural aspects in online social media of toy advertisements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Advertising

Advertising is a form of communication intended to promote products, services, brands, or organizations to viewers. Apart from this main target of advertising, advertisements are the key factors influencing people's lifestyles in different contexts. Also, they are crucial in capturing both the new and the old cultural meanings as they offer an area for experimentation, creativity, and play to create new cultural meanings and restructure and redefine current ones (Cook, 2001).

There are many different forms of advertising, including print ads, television commercials, online banner ads, sponsored content, and social media ads. The choice of these advertising forms depends on the target audience, the product, or the service being promoted. Nowadays, the use of online advertising especially social media ads is continually increasing (Appel et al., 2020). It has become one of the largest and fastest-growing parts of the online advertising market. According to industry reports such as GWI and Hootsuite, social media advertising accounted for 33% of all digital advertising spending in 2022, making it the second-largest market.

One of the most popular advertising platforms is Facebook because it is the most used social platform worldwide and provides a wide range of targeting choices, including demographics, interests, behaviors, and locations. In addition, Facebook is used by the vast majority of people who use the Internet (Greenwood et al., 2016). This present study thus chose Facebook as a platform for data selection. The most common and simplest type of Facebook advertising, image advertising, is being studied. To understand the effective and economical communication languages and symbols that play a crucial role in advertising, the present study focuses on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, which is presented in the next section.

B. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is based on the ideas of CDA, which examines how social power is constructed and maintained through the ways the language is used. MCDA, on the other hand, expands on this by analyzing the use of many modes of communication such as language, images, and gestures. Therefore, compared to CDA, MCDA is an approach that provides a more comprehensive understanding of how power functions and how it can be maintained, and challenged in society.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) stated that MCDA is the study of how the use of multiple communication modes contributes to the construction of meaning in social interaction. In agreement with this viewpoint, several researchers (Jewitt, 2009; O'Halloran et al., 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2005) provided a more precise description of MCDA, which involves the relationship between various semiotic resources, such as language, image, gesture, movement, gazes, sound, and camera angles.

MCDA has been used in many fields including, media, advertising, politics, and education. In media discourse analysis, it has been used to investigate the depiction of multimodal nature of advertising, social groups, political ideologies, and power relations to understand how they work together to create persuasive messages and consumer identities (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Therefore, this study employed the MCDA approach. Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics was used to analyze the verbal resources, and social semiotics proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) was used to analyze the visual resources. Additionally, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions were employed to analyze cultural aspects found in the advertisements.

C. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL), also known as systemic functional grammar, Hallidayan linguistics, systemic linguistics, and critical linguistics (Fairclough, 1992; Pennycook, 2001), is a school of thought that perceives language as a social semiotic system. Consequently, it explains the connection between language and its uses in social contexts (Halliday, 1994). In addition, it is oriented at functions and semantics rather than formal and syntactic structures.

In 1978, Michael Halliday proposed his book, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. He introduced three systems considered components of language: the phonological system, the lexico-grammatical system, and the semantic system. The core system among the three is the semantic one, which includes three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1994). To understand clauses' structure, these metafunctions combine various elements and systems that present different aspects of the world and constitute different modes of the meaning of those clauses.

(a). *Ideational Metafunction*

In the ideational metafunction, language focuses on creating and maintaining experiences. It involves both the experiential function and the logical function. Thompson (2013) supported the idea that this ideational metafunction is concerned with how we use language to describe events, states, and entities that exist in the world as we perceive it, including the worlds in our thoughts. In this metafunction, each clause is analyzed into processes, participants, and circumstances, with various participant types for different process types. It has been noted that transitivity is used to conceptualize our experiences in terms of processes (Halliday, 1994). There are six different process types based on the types of verbs: Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioral, and Existential. Table 1 illustrates types of processes and participants.

TABLE 1
TYPES OF PROCESSES AND PARTICIPANTS

Process Type	Category Meaning	Participants
1. Material	V. of doing	Actor, Goal
2. Mental	V. of sensing	Senser, Phenomenon
3. Relational	V. of being or having	Carrier, Attribute Token, Value
4. Verbal	V. of saying	Sayer, Verbiage
5. Behavioral	V. of behaving	Behaver, Matter
6. Existential	V. of existing	Existent

(b). *Interpersonal Metafunction*

The second metafunction is interpersonal. This metafunction covers the interaction between the producer and the perceiver because it is based on the belief that a speaker does not only talk about something but also to and with other people (Halliday, 2003). In other words, the interpersonal metafunction involves the interpersonal features of communication, such as expressing and negotiating social connections, conveying attitudes, and engaging in social activities. The interpersonal meanings are expressed lexico-grammatically through mood and modality systems. This system serves as the main resource for establishing interactions between interactants by making assumptions and allocating speech roles. As shown in Table 2, a clause is analyzed into mood and residue that are further examined in terms of subject and finite.

TABLE 2
MOOD AND RESIDUE ANALYSIS

The letters	are	delivered	last week.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood		Residue	

Mood is a grammatical device that reflects the speaker's or writer's intention to communicate with the audience or readers. Thus, mood tells whether the clause is declarative, interrogative, or imperative. The following clauses are examples of each mood. Mood can be analyzed through grammatical structures, particularly through the usage of mood elements in the clause, such as the use of finite verb forms. The examples of the three main moods in SFL are as follows.

- The sky is beautiful. (declarative)
- Is the sky beautiful? (interrogative)
- Look at the sky. (imperative)

To conclude, the mood element consists of two parts: the subject, which is realized by a nominal group, and the finite element, which is normally the verbal group. The remainder of each clause is then considered the residue, which typically contains elements such as predicators, complements, or adjuncts.

In terms of modality, it refers to the expression of the speaker's opinion of the clause's content and speech pattern. Also, to express ability, permission, probability, necessity, and obligation, modal verbs (shall, should, can, could, must, may, might, will, would, etc.) are employed in a clause. The following are some examples of modality.

- Alan can play piano. (ability)
- You cannot sit here. (permission)
- She might be in her room. (probability)
- You must do some work. (necessity and obligation)

(c). *Textual Metafunction*

Lastly, the textual metafunction, according to Halliday (1994), has the purpose of constructing a message. That means it helps organize the resources we employ to create consistency and flow in a text. “theme” and “rheme” are the fundamental forms of the arrangement of the clause. As for the theme, it is defined as “the point of departure” which refers to the beginning part of the clause where the speaker or writer introduces the topic of the remaining clause. The rheme is defined as “the remainder of the message” which typically includes a predicate (verbal process and additional information). The example of theme and rheme analysis is displayed in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
THEME AND RHEME ANALYSIS

The letters	are delivered last week.
Theme	Rheme

D. Social Semiotics

Social semiotics is an area of semiotics that studies how people make meaning in certain social and cultural contexts and aims to explain meaning-making as a social practice. The word “semiotics” is derived from the Greek word “semeion,” which means “sign,” the smallest unit in meaning-making. According to Saussure (1974), this word has been defined as the science of the life of signs in society. Thus, the term “social semiotics” involves all the signs and modes of communication employed within a culture (Hodge & Kress, 1988).

As mentioned previously, Halliday is the first to propose three metafunctions in systemic functional linguistics which focuses only on written language excluding the use of other semiotic sources. On the contrary, several researchers (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) believe that the term “multimodality” refers to various forms of human communication, including written, oral, visual, auditory, and spatial. Nevertheless, these resources help fulfill the metafunctions of the experiential world’s depiction. Therefore, they extend the three metafunctions proposed by Halliday to all available semiotic resources in a context to comprehend how all modes create meanings. As a result, Hodge and Kress in *Social Semiotics* (1998) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) are considered the pioneers in developing a framework used to analyze both verbal and visual semiotic resources. The social semiotics framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen is, therefore, widely accepted by many researchers that it is the most comprehensive framework for multimodal discourse analysis (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

The components of Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) social semiotics consist of three main metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional. Each function consists of various visual resources as shown in Table 4, Resources of Metafunctions, adapted from Harrison (2008).

TABLE 4
RESOURCES OF METAFUNCTIONS

Metafunction	Resource	Process
Representational	Structure Narrative: The viewers create a story about the RPs by themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action: The story is based on the RPs' actions - Reactional: The story is created amongst RPs, from eyelines
	Conceptual: The viewers make assumptions on what or who the RPs represent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classificatory: RPs are viewed as group members - Analytical: RPs are considered as parts of the whole concept - Symbolic: RPs represent themselves and some ideas.
Interactive	Feature Contact: Gazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demand: the RPs look at the viewers directly - Offer: the RPs do not look at the viewers
	Distance: An amount of space between RPs and the viewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intimate: Head only - Close personal: Head and shoulders - Far personal: Upper half of the body - Close social: Whole body - Far social: Whole body with space around - Public distance: Several people
	Subjectivity: Perspectives Horizontal perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front: The RP is a part of the viewers' group - Oblique: The RP does not belong to the viewers' group
	Vertical perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High: The RP looks small and are viewed from above - more power - Medium: The RP is at the same eye level - Low: The RP are awesome and viewed from the low angle – less power
Compositional	System Information value: Placements indicate various information roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given: The RPs are on the left half of the image - New: The RPs are on the right half of the image - Ideal: The RPs are on the top half of the image - Real: The RPs are on the bottom half of the image - Center: The RPs in the middle of the image are crucial - Margin: The RPs at the margin of the image are subordinate
	Saliency: The strategy employed by RPs to catch viewers' attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size: The big RPs present greater saliency - Focus sharpness: The focused RPs show higher saliency - Tonal contrast: High tonal contrast implies greater saliency - Color contrast: Strong saturated colors show greater saliency - Foreground/Background: The RPs in the foreground indicate more saliency
	Framing: The connections between RPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framelines: The framelines in the image show connections between the RPs. - Pictorial framing devices: The existence of pictorial framing devices RPs means the RPs are connected - Empty space: The emptier the spaces are, the more separated the RPs are - Colors: More continuity in colors suggests stronger connections between the RPs - Visual shapes More continuity in shapes indicates stronger connections between the RPs

E. Cultural Dimensions

Cultural dimensions are ways of describing how different cultural groups are regarding psychological aspects including values, beliefs, personality, personality, and behaviors (Smith & Bond, 2020). Its main objective is to discover differences and similarities between different cultural perspectives (Hofstede et al., 2010).

A pioneering study about cultural dimensions was introduced by Geert Hofstede, a Dutch professor and researcher, in the book entitled *Culture's Consequences* in 1980. In order to understand cultural differences, he studied cultural dimensions in many countries, including over 100,000 employees from a multinational computer manufacturing company (IBM) in 50 countries and 3 regions around the world. He employed two surveys in four years, and his survey consisted of 126 questions. Consequently, he initially proposed a framework of four dimensions: individualism vs. Collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity vs. femininity.

Later, an independent study conducted by Michael Harris Bond, a Chinese sociologist in Hong Kong, discovered a fifth dimension, long-term orientation with an attempt to address aspects of values that were not covered in the original framework (Bond, 1991). Finally, in 2010, a replication of Hofstede's study, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, confirmed the presence of the fifth dimension and introduced a sixth dimension. Therefore, the six dimensions are as follows: the power distance index (PDI), individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), masculinity vs. femininity (MAS), long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation (LTO), and indulgence vs. restraint (IND). Table 5 provides an explanation of the interpretation of each dimension's index (Hofstede et al., 2010).

TABLE 5
CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Low Index	←	Dimension	→	High Index
Egalitarian	←	1. Power Distance	→	Hierarchical
Collectivist	←	2. Individualism vs. Collectivism	→	Individualist
Open to change	←	3. Uncertainty Avoidance Index	→	Prefer Routines
Nurture	←	4. Masculinity vs. Femininity	→	Power
Traditional	←	5. Long-term Orientation vs. Short-term Orientation	→	Futuristic
Normative repression	←	6. Indulgence vs. Restraint	→	Free satisfaction

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

In this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach, a case study research design, to explore research questions and achieve the purposes of the study. A case study focuses on the uniqueness of individual situations, experiences, characteristics, and processes (Creswell, 2007). Thus, it is the most appropriate research design for this study due to its ability to provide an in-depth understanding and analysis of multimodality in toy advertisements.

B. Data

The data of this study were 142 online Lego advertisements purposively selected using criterion sampling from the official international Lego Facebook page (<https://web.facebook.com/LEGO>) from January 2020 - September 2022. Although there are many Lego's social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the Lego Facebook page was chosen since it is liked and followed by over 14 million people worldwide. Lego was chosen because it is the world's most popular toy ever manufactured compared to other toy brands, and it keeps growing in a saturated market according to surveys by Firebox and Toyology, the online retailers that provide many different products including toys and gifts.

Based on the sampling method, the data were collected based on the following criteria. First, only still images with both linguistic and non-linguistic features were selected. It should be noted that videos or other moving images were excluded. This is due to a lack of video resources available on the page. Moreover, the frameworks used in the present study are only appropriate for still-image analysis. Second, the selected images include all types of images considered marketing images, such as product images, store announcements, and memes. Other types of images that are not directly related to marketing were excluded. Lastly, as the researcher started conducting this study in 2022, and the study required the most recent advertisements, the selected data were published on the official international Lego Facebook page from January 2020 - September 2022.

C. Research Instrument

To investigate the multimodality in the online social media of toy advertisements, the researcher adopted three analytical frameworks. First, to analyze verbal resources, Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics was used. Second, to analyze visual resources, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotics was employed. Third, as for the cultural dimensions, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions were used.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures are as follows. First, the researcher gathered the advertising images published on the official international Lego Facebook page from January 2020 - September 2022. Second, selected images were separately codified (1-142) according to the year they were published for identification. Third, the verbal resources found in each image were analyzed using Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics. Then, the analysis was recorded in the table adopted from Matthiessen and Halliday (1997). Table 6 illustrates the simultaneous metafunctions in the structure of the clause.

TABLE 6
SIMULTANEOUS METAFUNCTIONS IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE

Metafunction:	System:	Sarah	liked	her birthday present.
ideational	Transitivity	Sensor	Process	Phenomenon
interpersonal	Mood	Subject	Finite	Object
textual	Theme	Theme	Rheme	

The verbal resources were divided and analyzed in text segments which consist of two types of structures: clauses and phrases. The clauses are groups of words that contain subjects and verbs or imperative verbs without a subject. The clauses were analyzed to identify all three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. On the other hand, the phrases, groups of words that do not contain subjects and verbs, were analyzed to investigate only textual metafunction. Fourth, the visual resources were coded based on the social semiotics framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The coding system is shown in Table 7 as follows.

TABLE 7
SOCIAL SEMIOTICS CODES

Metafunction	Resource	Code
Representational	Structure Narrative	Process - Action - Reactional - NA - NR
	Conceptual	- Classificatory - Analytical - Symbolic - CC - CA - CS
Interactive	Feature Contact	Process - Demand - Offer - CD - CO
	Distance	- Intimate - Close personal - Far personal - Close social - Far social - Public distance - DI - DCP - DFP - DCS - DFS - DP
	Attitude Horizontal perspective	- Front - Oblique - HF - HO
	Vertical perspective	- High - Medium - Low - VH - VM - VL
Compositional	System Information value	Element - Given - New - Ideal - Real - Center - Margin - IG - IN - ID - IR - IC - IM
	Saliency	- Size - Focus sharpness - Tonal contrast - Color contrast - Foreground/Background
	Framing	- Framelines - Pictorial framing devices - Empty space - Colors - Visual shapes

Fifth, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions were employed to enhance the interpretation. As mentioned earlier, the data for this study were obtained from the official international Lego Facebook page, which is managed by the headquarters in the United States. Therefore, it can be implied that the majority of advertisements on the page reflect American culture. Accordingly, for the cultural aspects, six indicators introduced in Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions were used to present a good overview of the fundamental factors of American culture found in the selected data (as seen in Figure 3). Contradictions imply an attempt to culturally adapt to each country's unique history to develop stronger marketing strategies globally.

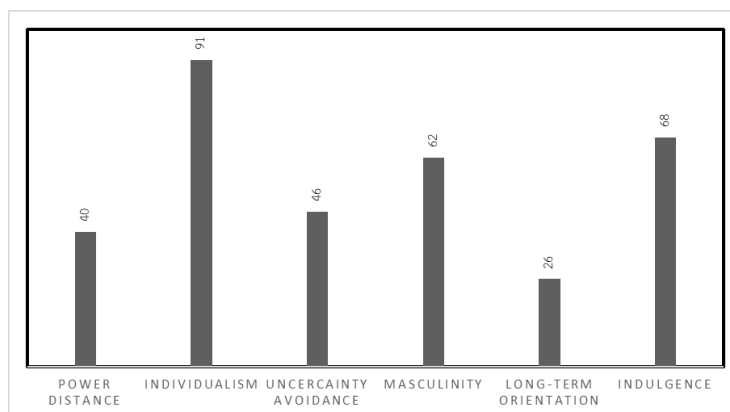


Figure 1. The United States Cultural Dimensions

IV. RESULTS

A. Verbal and Visual Resources

To answer the first research question of the study and achieve the purpose which was to examine verbal and visual resources employed in online social media of toy advertisements. First, the researcher investigated the number of samples of the study posted each year. The results were drawn from 142 online social media toy advertisements posted on Lego's Facebook page from January 2020 - September 2022. These advertisements contained both verbal and visual resources. Table 8 illustrates the number of advertisements employing both verbal and visual resources posted each year respectively.

TABLE 8
THE NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS EMPLOYING VERBAL AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Years	Advertisements employing verbal and visual resources
2020	35 (24.65%)
2021	50 (35.21%)
2022	57 (40.14%)
Total	142

As shown in Table 5, the year with the highest number of advertisements containing verbal and visual resources was 2022. There were 57 advertisements posted, accounted for 40.14% of the total selected advertisements, although it was the shortest data collection with a nine-month duration. The year with the second highest of advertisements containing verbal and visual resources was 2021. There were 50 advertisements, accounted for 35.21%. Lastly, the year with the least number of advertisements containing verbal and visual resources was 2020.

Second, in terms of verbal resources, both phrases and clauses were presented in the selected samples. Table 9 presents types of sentence structures found in the online social media of toy advertisements.

TABLE 9
TYPES OF SENTENCE STRUCTURES PRESENTED IN THE DATA

Sentence Structure	Frequency
Clause	148 (67.58%)
Phrase	71 (32.42%)
Total	219

The results show that the total number of all sentence structures was 219. The highest percentage of sentence structures found was clauses (67.58%), followed by phrases (32.42%). In terms of visual resources, various types of social media marketing images were discovered, including product images, store announcements, seasonal images, quote-oriented images, quiz images, and marketing memes.

In order to answer the second research question and describe the metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics and social semiotics presented in online social media of toy advertisements. Based on the analysis, the researcher's classification of metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics and social semiotics is described in the next section.

B. Systemic Functional Linguistics

As stated in the previous section, there were 148 clauses and 71 phrases appearing in the samples. Therefore, the analysis of systemic functional linguistics is separated into two parts: clauses and phrases. The first part involves ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, and the latter involves only textual metafunctions as shown in Table 10 and Table 11 respectively.

TABLE 10
FREQUENCY OF METAFUNCTIONS FOUND IN CLAUSES

Systemic Functional Linguistics (clauses)		
Metafunction	Type	Frequency (n=148)
Ideational	• Material	99 (66.89%) ***
	• Mental	9 (6.08%) *
	• Relational	34 (22.97%) **
	• Verbal	1 (0.68%)
	• Behavioral	3 (2.03%)
	• Existential	2 (1.35%)
Interpersonal	• Declarative	78 (52.70%)
	• Interrogative	2 (1.35%)
	• Imperative	68 (45.95%)
Textual	• Topical	133 (89.86%)
	• Textual	12 (8.11%)
	• Interpersonal	3 (2.03%)
Some clauses contained more than one types of themes, but only the first unit of each clause was counted.		

Concerning the ideational metafunction, Table 10 presents the three most frequently used metafunctions in clauses. The most frequently used metafunction in the clauses was the material metafunction, which occurred in 99 clauses and

accounted for 66.89%. The second frequently used metafunction was relational metafunction. It was found in 34 clauses which accounted for 22.97%. Finally, the third frequently used metafunction was mental metafunction. It occurred in 9 clauses with a frequency of 6.08%.

In terms of interpersonal metafunction, the results showed that the most presented mood was declarative. It was presented in 78 clauses, which was 52.70%. The second most presented mood was imperative, which occurred in 68 clauses and accounted for 45.95%. The least presented mood was interrogative. It is only displayed in two clauses and was considered 1.35% of all the clauses.

Lastly, the analysis of textual metafunction showed that the most frequently occurring theme in the clauses was topical. It occurred in 133 clauses and accounted for 89.86%. The second most frequently occurring theme was textual. The occurrences were 12 and accounted for 8.11%. The least frequently occurred theme was interpersonal, which occurred only in 3 clauses and accounted for 2.03%.

TABLE 11
FREQUENCY OF TEXTUAL METAFUNTION FOUND IN PHRASES

Systemic Functional Linguistics (phrases)		
Metafunction	Type	Frequency (n=71)
Textual	• Topical	71 (100%)
	• Textual	0
	• Interpersonal	0

For the analysis of phrases, the only type of metafunction involved was textual metafunction. As shown in Table 11, the only type of theme found was topical, accounted for 100% of the data.

C. Social Semiotics

Regarding the visual analysis, social semiotics involving the RPs' actions, colors, perspectives, or additional components of the advertising images was applied in order to examine the meaning conveyed through visual clues in images. The findings are presented in Table 12 below.

TABLE 12
FREQUENCY OF METAFUNCTIONS FOUND IN IMAGES

Social Semiotics (images)		
Metafunction	Type	Frequency (n=142)
Representational	Narrative	
	• Action	2 (1.41%)
	• Reactional	30 (21.13%) *
	Conceptual	
	• Classificatory	10 (7.04%)
	• Analytical	38 (26.76%) **
	• Symbolic	62 (43.66%) ***
Interactive	Contact	
	• Demand	39 (27.46%)
	• Offer	103 (72.54%)
	Distance	
	• Intimate	2 (1.41%)
	• Close personal	1 (0.70%)
	• Far personal	11 (7.75%)
	• Close social	24 (16.90%) *
	• Far social	53 (37.32%) ***
	• Public distance	51 (35.92%) **
	Horizontal perspective	
	• Front	85 (59.86%)
	• Oblique	57 (40.14%)
Vertical perspective		
• High	27 (19.01%)	
• Medium	114 (80.28%)	
• Low	1 (0.70%)	
Compositional (only RPs)	Information value	
	• Given	6 (4.23%)
	• New	7 (4.93%) *
	• Ideal	4 (2.82%)
	• Real	10 (7.04%) **
	• Center	98 (69.01%) ***
	• Margin	4 (2.82%)
	• Given & Ideal	2 (1.41%)
	• Given & Real	7 (4.93%) *
	• New & Ideal	0 (0.00%)
	• New & Real	4 (2.82%)

As shown in Table 12, the three most dominant representational metafunctions were conceptual symbolic (43.66%), conceptual analytical (26.76%), and narrative reactionary (21.13%) respectively. For the interactive metafunction analysis, The RPs primarily employed offering gaze, accounted for 72.54%. Additionally, the three most dominant social distances were far social (37.32%), public distance (35.92%), and close social (16.90%) respectively. The majority of the images employed front horizontal perspective (59.86%) and medium vertical perspective (80.28%). Lastly, in terms of compositional metafunction, the RPs were mostly placed at the center of the image, accounted for 69.01%.

D. Examples of Verbal and Visual Resource Analysis

Example 1



<https://www.facebook.com/LEGO/photos/a.10150175674793403/10159307519288403/?type=3&mibextid=l2hJHjNVOBSwHk4>

For the verbal resource analysis, example 1 shows the clause “Save the date”. To analyze the ideational metafunction, the clause contains the verb “save” which is a verb of doing indicating material process. As the clause begins with a predicator, it adopts an imperative mood and a marked topical theme.

For the visual resource analysis, the image displays same-sex marriage and portrays various wedding decorations made from Lego bricks, including a wedding cake, a bouquet of flowers, rings, and bow ties. As a result, it can be categorized as a conceptual symbolic image. The RPs are 2 brides showing an offering gaze and public distance because there are a lot of things in the frame. The use of oblique angles suggests a separation between the RPs and the viewers, signifying distinct perspectives. In addition, the high vertical perspective between the RPs and the viewers indicates that the RPs have more power than the viewers and are considering them as wedding guests.

Considering the compositional metafunction, the use of colors in the image is generally pastel, which creates a feeling of warmth and tenderness. Thus, it can be assumed that the advertisement aims to evoke emotions of warmth and affection in the viewers as if they attended an actual wedding ceremony. The overall RPs are in the middle of a frame, indicating their significance. It can be noticed that this image demonstrates a correspondence between the verbal and visual resources as they present the wedding atmosphere.

Example 2



<https://web.facebook.com/LEGO/photos/a.10150175674793403/10158518459053403/?type=3&mibextid=xfxF2i>

In terms of the verbal resource analysis, example 2 presents the word “pride” which is classified as a phrase. The word appears in the position of an unmarked topical theme, indicating that it is the main topic of the advertisement. Also, it is capitalized to emphasize its importance. Also, it aims to present the concept of the image “LGBTQ pride” which represents the advocacy and celebration of the self-affirmation, equal rights, dignity, and greater visibility of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.

In terms of the visual resource analysis, the image portrays a pride parade created from Lego bricks symbolizing an outdoor event that celebrates LGBTQ social and self-acceptance, achievements, legal rights, and pride. The main RPs

are several crossdressers (represented by Lego minifigures) standing on the parade float. This creates a conceptual symbolic image as the RPs represent themselves as a broader concept as previously mentioned. In terms of the representational metafunction, the results can be revealed through the RPs' gaze, distance, and perspectives. As shown in example 2, the RPs offer an offering gaze by not looking directly at the viewers. The public distance, portraying several people, indicates a spatial gap between the RPs and the viewers. The oblique angle suggests that the RPs are distinct from the viewers. Additionally, the high vertical perspective conveys the RPs' superiority over the viewers.

Concerning the compositional metafunction, the RPs are focused and placed in the middle of the image, which indicates their crucial role. The image employs vibrant and highly contrasting colors, featuring rainbow-themed alphabets and an LED flag. The rainbow colors, typically consisting of six colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet), symbolize LGBTQ pride and reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, the use of these intensely saturated colors enhances the image's visual impact.

Example 3



<https://www.facebook.com/LEGO/photos/a.10150175674793403/10159052251168403/?type=3&mibextid=12hJHjNVOBSwhk4>

Example 3 displays two phrases, “90s music” and “Buckets of hair gel.”. Additionally, there is a clause: “It is not a phrase, Mom!”. Thus, the analysis of these verbal resources is divided into three systems. The two phrases at the top of the image function as unmarked topical themes as they are topics of the sub-images above. The clause below contains the finite verb “is not”, which indicates the relational process in the ideational metafunction. The clause employs a declarative mood, following the basic sentence structure: subject followed by predicate.

Regarding the visual resource analysis, the two frames above highlight two main RPs: the green and the blue Lego bricks. The green one represents 90s music, and the blue one refers to Buckets of hair gel. The larger frame below displays the result when they are put together. This combination of teenagers' lifestyle or fashion choices then represents the expression, “It is not a phrase mom!”. This example presents a conceptual symbolic image, with each Lego brick symbolizing a different concept. Considering the RPs' gaze, distance, and perspective, they offer an inviting gaze. The close social distance suggests an intimate relationship between the RPs and viewers. The front horizontal and middle vertical perspectives imply a lack of power disparity.

To analyze the compositional metafunction, there are three colors used in the image: green, blue, and yellow. These colors are vibrant and highly contrasting, as green, blue, and purple are complementary to yellow. This enhances the salience of the RPs.

E. Cultural Dimensions

As mentioned in the literature review, the findings were assumed to be based on Hofstede's American cultural aspects because the advertisements examined in this study were sourced from the official international Lego Facebook page, managed by the headquarter in the United States. The United States exhibits low scores on power distance (40), uncertainty avoidance (46), and long-term orientation (26). It demonstrates high levels of individualism (91), masculinity (62), and indulgence (68). Surprisingly, the findings of this study reveal that most of the advertisements supported the idea of Hofstede's American cultural aspects in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and indulgence. However, some of them did not support the United States' scores on masculinity and long-term orientation. The examples of cultures illustrated in Examples 1-3 were described using Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural dimensions.

Regarding both verbal and visual resources, Example 1 shows individualism through the emphasis on a same-sex wedding celebration and the uniqueness of each couple's love. It clearly shows femininity through the themes of weddings, warmth, and tenderness. Also, challenging traditional gender roles symbolizes a willingness to embrace uncertainty and change and a lower power distance. Concerning the concept of marriage, it is related to commitment, family, and tradition. This aligns with long-term orientation. Furthermore, the advertisement aims to evoke happiness, affection, and positive feelings, which aligns with indulgence.

In Example 2, all cultural aspects are embedded in both verbal and visual resources. The emphasis on LGBTQ individuals' identity and values reflects individualism. Also, the use of a high vertical perspective may be related to power distance. This dimension deals with the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect

unequal distribution of power. The dimension of masculinity and femininity can be seen through the celebration of self-affirmation and dignity, as well as the depiction of multiple genders within the LGBTQ community. In other words, the values beyond traditional gender roles are highlighted. This could also be seen as challenging social norms and embracing uncertainty, implying a low degree of uncertainty avoidance. The concept of celebration helps encourage values that extend beyond short-term advantages, suggesting long-term orientation. Lastly, the vibrant and colorful depiction of the parade is related to indulgence, encouraging enjoyment and happiness.

Concerning Example 3, the verbal resource “It is not a phrase, Mom!” could be implied as a challenge to traditional authority, such as parental influence. This indicates a lower power distance, where younger people feel more comfortable expressing their opinions to their parents or other adults. In addition, the advertisement depicts individualism by reflecting individual preferences or interests and implying an individualistic attitude. The phrases “90s music” and “Buckets of hair gel” indicate a unique style and a willingness to try new things. This represents a lower uncertainty avoidance. Finally, the use of vibrant and contrasting colors (green, blue, and yellow) suggests indulgence in the expression of creativity and a celebration of uniqueness.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To conclude, the findings revealed the semiotic resources including both verbal and visual resources. The verbal resources were phrases and clauses used in advertisements, and the visual resources were diverse social media marketing images including product announcements, seasonal visuals, quotes, quizzes, and memes. Concerning systemic functional linguistics, the three main ideational metafunctions in clauses were material, relational, and mental respectively. The greatest appearance of material metafunction is supported by numerous researchers (Aisha, 2017; Amatullah et al., 2019; Pratiwy & Wulan, 2018). A possible explanation for this might be the material process serves to convince the audience to purchase the product. In other words, the audience can easily picture what is portrayed in the advertisement and be more persuaded about the products since action verbs are used in the advertising. However, this finding is contrary to previous studies by Pardi et al. (2018) and Sari (2021). Pardi et al. (2018) suggested that attributive, verbal, mental, and material metafunctions occurred the most frequently. Another interesting finding is the study of Sari (2021), which found that mental and relational metafunctions were the most dominant metafunction in the study.

For interpersonal metafunction, the most dominant mood was declarative. In textual metafunction, the most dominant theme was the unmarked topical theme. These findings in interpersonal and textual metafunctions reflect those of Amatullah et al. (2019), Pardi et al. (2018), and Sari (2021) who also found that declarative mood and unmarked topical theme occurred dominantly. For phrases, only textual metafunction was presented with the unmarked topical theme as the most prominent theme. The result suggests that using declarative sentences is the most common way to provide clear and correct information. Also, the audience can easily understand the messages in the advertisement when they are presented through the clauses.

In terms of social semiotics involving the RPs’ actions, colors, perspectives, or additional components of the advertising images, the three most dominant representational metafunctions were conceptual symbolic, conceptual analytical, and narrative reactional respectively. This finding was also reported by Ly and Jung (2015). It can be implied that symbolism is a powerful tool in marketing. It helps people from different cultures connect the product with something familiar, attributing the symbol’s qualities to the product. Using symbols is also crucial for sending a message and creating meaning that can grab the audience’s attention (Guang et al., 2019). For interactive metafunction, the RPs mostly employed offering gaze. The three most presented distances were far social, public distance, and close social respectively. Most of the images employed a front horizontal perspective and a medium vertical perspective. Concerning compositional metafunction, the RPs were mostly placed at the center of the image. Lastly, the advertisements tend to employ a variety of vibrant and contrasting colors to make the brand memorable and convey positive values such as fun, happiness, creativity, and playfulness.

Furthermore, various cultural aspects based on American culture were found in the advertising images. However, it is somewhat surprising that a few dimensions including masculinity vs. Femininity and long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation do not support the expectation. The study found that Lego has been using its advertisements to enhance the brand’s positive image by addressing social concerns such as gender equality and promoting harmonious relationships. Thus, a key factor that may explain Lego’s success is that the brand promotes self-expression, inspiring people to be creative without worrying about societal norms. It also creates values that are different from traditional cultures that promote openness and greater acceptance of differences.

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