A Multimodal Analysis of Print and Online Promotional Discourse in the UK

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

English Linguistics

by

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2017
Abstract

This thesis is concerned with investigating promotional discourse types in the UK from more than one medium with the aim of showing and comparing the characteristics (situational, generic, linguistic, and visual) of such discourse types, where such features also reflect the complexity of this discourse. For this purpose, a range of analytical frameworks, two integrated, were used for studying five promotional discourse types, namely adverts, posts, comments, reviews, and interviewees’ responses, where each model tackled an aspect of promotional discourse. Guided by Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) frameworks, the situational characteristics of the above first four discourse types were explained, which allow accounting for some of the linguistic patterns identified in the following analyses. Categorising these four discourse types as members of promotional genres was informed by Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) generic approach, where three moves were identified as common to all discourse types. Through this analysis, the different participants of this discourse were specified, and their different linguistic representations were scrutinised through adopting Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) representation framework. The representational category of inclusion indicated adverts to be product-centred, whereas customers featured as the prominent participant in the posts, comments, and reviews. With respect to the visual analysis, the informants’ responses generally demonstrated the diversity of individuals’ understandings of visual resources, where this goes against Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) interpretations. Examining these responses linguistically, first through applying Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) network, they were found to complement the findings of the above linguistic analysis of products as the prominent represented objects. Secondly, investigating the interpretations using Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, the evaluative nature of the informants’ responses was reflected through the attitudinal type of appreciation. The multi-analytical tools adopted succeeded in showing the diversity of the resources of promotional discourse.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my dear country, Iraq, and greatest thanks to the Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq (HCED) for granting me the opportunity to continue my doctorate studies in the UK. I am also very much grateful to my supervisors Dr Nicholas Smith and Dr Philip Shaw for their insightful advice and invaluable feedback on my work and to my previous supervisor Dr Ruth Page.

I am thankful to the English Department at the University of Leicester for their help with the venue and voice recorder used for the interviews.

My appreciation needs to be expressed to Toyota, Review Centre, Max Factor, Road Test Reports, L’Oréal Paris, Fiat, and Mercedes-Benz for allowing me to include their images or customer reviews in this research.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my whole beloved family for their continuous encouragement and support during the years of my study. Without them, I am sure I would not be able to finish my thesis. From the bottom of my heart, I have to say many thanks to you for being such a great family and for everything.
## Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 13

1.1 Why promotional discourse? Focus and aim of study .......................................................... 13
1.2 Methodological approaches .................................................................................................. 16
1.3 Thesis outline ......................................................................................................................... 18

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND CONCEPTS AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE ................................................................................. 20

2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 20
2.2 Key concepts .......................................................................................................................... 20
2.3 Approaches to advertising and other promotional discourse ............................................. 22
   2.3.1 Genre approaches ........................................................................................................... 23
   2.3.2 Corpus-based approaches ............................................................................................. 26
   2.3.3 Descriptive approaches ............................................................................................... 30
   2.3.4 Critical discourse analysis and socio-cognitive approaches ........................................ 38
   2.3.5 Visual and multimodal approaches ............................................................................... 42
2.4 Marketing and business perspectives .................................................................................... 46
   2.4.1 Overview ...................................................................................................................... 46
   2.4.2 Promotion on Facebook ............................................................................................... 49
   2.4.3 Promotion in online customer reviews ......................................................................... 49
2.5 Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 51

CHAPTER 3: DATA AND METHODOLOGY .................................................................................... 53

3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 53
3.2 Thesis research questions ...................................................................................................... 53
3.3 Rationale of the research questions ...................................................................................... 54
3.4 Why cosmetics and cars? ................................................................. 55
3.5 Product categorisation .................................................................. 55
3.6 Data collection .................................................................................. 61
  3.6.1 Overview of data collection methods and sampling ..................... 61
  3.6.2 Print adverts from magazines .................................................. 63
  3.6.3 Posts and comments from Facebook ....................................... 64
  3.6.4 Customer reviews from review websites .................................. 67
  3.6.5 Informants’ perception from interviews ................................... 68
  3.6.6 Ethical considerations ............................................................... 73
  3.6.7 Why decontextualise Facebook images? .................................. 76
3.7 Rationale for multiple analytical approaches .................................. 77
3.8 Explanation of adopted models ....................................................... 79
  3.8.1 Integrated framework for situational characteristics ................ 79
  3.8.2 Bhatia’s models of move structure ........................................ 83
  3.8.3 Van Leeuwen’s social actor theory ......................................... 91
  3.8.4 Martin and White’s appraisal theory ....................................... 102
  3.8.5 Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual framework ............................ 108
3.9 Summary and plan of the analytical chapters .............................. 119
CHAPTER 4: SITUATIONAL AND GENERIC ANALYSES OF PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE ................................................................. 122
4.1 Introduction ..................................................................................... 122
4.2 Generic studies on promotional discourse .................................... 123
4.3 Results and discussion of situational and genre analyses ............. 124
  4.3.1 Situational characteristics: Technological .............................. 125
  4.3.2 Other situational characteristics ............................................ 128
4.3.3 Generic analysis ................................................................. 131
4.4 Summary and conclusion....................................................... 153

CHAPTER 5: REPRESENTATIONS IN PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE ............ 156
5.1 Introduction........................................................................... 156
5.2 Social actor network in previous studies.................................... 157
5.3 Results and discussion.......................................................... 158
  5.3.1 Print adverts................................................................. 158
  5.3.2 Facebook posts............................................................. 172
  5.3.3 Facebook comments...................................................... 187
  5.3.4 Customer reviews.......................................................... 201
5.4 Reflection on the ideology of social media................................... 207
5.5 Summary and conclusion....................................................... 209

CHAPTER 6: A MULTIMODAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPRETATIONS OF VISUAL RESOURCES IN IMAGES ............................................. 211
6.1 Introduction........................................................................... 211
6.2 Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual design grammar.......................... 212
6.3 Reader-response theory.......................................................... 215
6.4 Rationale and limitations of data collection methods..................... 216
6.5 Image sample analysis........................................................... 219
6.6 Results of analysis................................................................... 224
  6.6.1 Relations in visuals.......................................................... 224
  6.6.2 Salience and reading paths............................................... 231
  6.6.3 Meanings of colour, light, and darkness............................... 245
  6.6.4 Social actor analysis......................................................... 249
  6.6.5 Appraisal analysis........................................................... 257
6.7 Comparison between images ................................................................................................. 262
6.8 Summary and conclusion.................................................................................................... 265

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................................................ 268

7.1 Main findings....................................................................................................................... 268
  7.1.1 Findings regarding research question 1:........................................................................ 269
  7.1.2 Findings regarding research question 2:........................................................................ 270
  7.1.3 Findings regarding research question 3:........................................................................ 274

7.2 Theoretical and methodological contributions ................................................................. 276

7.3 Limitations......................................................................................................................... 278

7.4 Directions for future research ......................................................................................... 279

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................ 281

REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 308
List of Tables

Table 2.1 Dimensions and linguistic features of advertising discourse ........................................... 28
Table 3.1 Brand price comparison of five-door hatchback cars ...................................................... 60
Table 3.2 Comparison of cosmetics brands by lipstick price .......................................................... 61
Table 3.3 Breakdown of collected datasets and their sources .......................................................... 63
Table 3.4 Summary of medium factors .......................................................................................... 81
Table 3.5 Integrated situational factors for analysis of online discourse ........................................ 82
Table 3.6 Moves adopted from Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) frameworks ....................................... 84
Table 3.7 Participation: roles and processes ...................................................................................... 94
Table 3.8 Social actor model categories used for participants’ analyses ......................................... 101
Table 3.9 Overview of analytical chapters ...................................................................................... 120
Table 4.1 Comparison of technological factors of Facebook and review websites ....................... 126
Table 4.2 Comparison of situational characteristics of adverts, Facebook posts and comments, and customer reviews ........................................................................................................ 129
Table 5.1 Inclusion of all represented participants in print adverts .................................................... 159
Table 5.2 Cosmetics’ functionalisation in print adverts .................................................................... 164
Table 5.3 Breakdown of celebrities’ and experts’ nomination by gender and product type ............... 170
Table 5.4 Inclusion of represented participants in Facebook posts .................................................... 172
Table 5.5 Breakdown of celebrity and expert endorsers’ inclusion by gender and product type ............ 184
Table 5.6 Inclusion of represented participants in Facebook comments ........................................... 188
Table 5.7 Breakdown of companies’ replies to comments ............................................................... 192
Table 5.8 Patterns of nomination for addressing customers in companies’ replies ....................... 196
Table 5.9 Inclusion of represented participants in customer reviews .............................................. 201
Table 6.1 Visual communication between viewers and model ......................................................... 226
Table 6.2 Celebrity model’s power .................................................................................................. 230
Table 6.3 Elements noticed and read first in Figures 6.1 to 6.6 ...................................................... 232
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Example of promotional discourse ................................................................. 14
Figure 2.1 Stylistic deviation in composition ................................................................. 33
Figure 2.2 Structural elements of adverts and their functions ........................................... 35
Figure 2.3 Visual anchorage of language ........................................................................... 37
Figure 2.4 Recontextualising art in a Mercedes-Benz advert page 1 ................................ 40
Figure 2.5 Recontextualising art in a Mercedes-Benz advert pages 2 and 3 .................... 41
Figure 2.6 Reading multimodal discourse ......................................................................... 45
Figure 3.1 Screenshot of move analysis ............................................................................. 88
Figure 4.1 Attracting-attention move across discourse types .......................................... 133
Figure 4.2 Showing qualification move across discourse types ........................................ 136
Figure 4.3 Detailing product move across discourse types .............................................. 139
Figure 4.4 Encouragement move across discourse types ............................................... 144
Figure 4.5 Soliciting response move across discourse types ........................................... 146
Figure 4.6 Suggestion/advice and addressed complaint moves across discourse types .... 151
Figure 5.1 Comparison by discourse type of how products are represented in terms of inclusion .................................................................................................................. 160
Figure 5.2 Comparison by discourse type of how products are represented in terms of functionalisation ........................................................................................................... 162
Figure 5.3 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of participation ....................................................................................................................... 166
Figure 5.4 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities and experts are represented in terms of nomination ............................................................................................................. 169
Figure 5.5 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion ....................................................................................................................... 173
Figure 5.6 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of inclusion ....................................................................................................................... 174
Figure 5.7 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of personalisation ................................................................................................................... 178
Figure 5.8 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of participation ................................................................................................................... 180
Figure 5.9 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities, experts, and media resources are represented in terms of inclusion ................................................................. 182
Figure 5.10 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities and experts are represented in terms of categorisation ................................................................. 186
Figure 5.11 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion .................................................................................................. 188
Figure 5.12 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of personalisation ................................................................................. 189
Figure 5.13 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of nomination ..................................................................................... 195
Figure 5.14 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities and experts are represented in terms of nomination ................................................................. 198
Figure 5.15 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of categorisation ............................................................................. 200
Figure 5.16 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion ......................................................................................... 202
Figure 5.17 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of personalisation .............................................................................. 203
Figure 5.18 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of participation .................................................................................. 206
Figure 6.1 Chanel Facebook image .................................................................. 219
Figure 6.2 Chanel magazine advert ................................................................... 220
Figure 6.3 Max Factor Facebook image ............................................................. 221
Figure 6.4 Max Factor magazine advert ............................................................ 222
Figure 6.5 Toyota Facebook image ................................................................... 223
Figure 6.6 Toyota magazine advert ................................................................... 223
Figure 6.7 Chanel Facebook image ................................................................... 225
Figure 6.8 Chanel magazine advert ................................................................... 226
Figure 6.9 L’Oréal Paris Facebook image .......................................................... 227
Figure 6.10 L’Oréal Paris magazine advert ......................................................... 228
Figure 6.11 Interviewee 8 reading path of Figure 6.1 ......................................... 233
Figure 6.12 Interviewee 4 reading path of Figure 6.4 .................................................. 235
Figure 6.13 Interviewee 13 reading path of Figure 6.2 ................................................. 236
Figure 6.14 Interviewee 18 reading path of Figure 6.2 ................................................. 237
Figure 6.15 Interviewee 12 reading path of Figure 6.3 ................................................. 238
Figure 6.16 Interviewee 17 reading path of Figure 6.5 ................................................. 239
Figure 6.17 Interviewee 20 reading path of Figure 6.6 ................................................. 240
Figure 6.18 Interviewee 15 reading path of Figure 6.3 ................................................. 242
Figure 6.19 Interviewee 9 reading path of Figure 6.4 .................................................. 243
Figure 6.20 Interviewee 10 reading path of Figure 6.6 .................................................. 244
List of Abbreviations

AoIR = the Association of Internet Researchers

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

SFL = Systemic Functional Linguistics
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Although advertising is a vast and well-recognised phenomenon of promotion and is normally taken to be represented by adverts, adverts are by no means the only promotional discourse type.\(^1\) Recent technological changes in communication media, which allow faster and broader dissemination of information, have opened up new promotional opportunities for companies and also customers. It has become possible to have product information not only from producing companies of goods and services but also from customers and not only in offline domains but also in online platforms through utilising the emerging media and their discourse for promotional practices as electronic ‘word-of-mouth’ (Mangold and Faulds 2009; Vásquez 2014), for instance. In this sense, the concept of promotion has diversified, where more new discourse types have become possible to be categorised as promotional genres. Today, in terms of promotional culture, nearly all discourse types tend to include some promotional features, as explicitly noted by Davis (2013, p.54) and Wernick (1991, p.186), in that ‘promotion is a condition which has increasingly befallen discourses of all kinds’ (Wernick ibid).

1.1 Why promotional discourse? Focus and aim of study

In recognition of such diversification, this thesis focuses on the promotional discourse of print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, customer reviews, and informants’ interpretations of visual choices, where two product types, namely cosmetics and cars, are investigated for six brands (three for each product type). The data were gathered from magazines for adverts and review websites for reviews for the years 2009-2013; from the companies’ Facebook pages for the posts and comments for the first half of 2013; and from interviews in the second half of 2014 for the informants’ responses. It is an exploratory study, where the generalisability of findings is not possible due to the imbalanced size of the datasets that were collated through probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques, based on the data required. The selected brands are classified according to their product prices, brand history, and previous studies on customer brand perception. However,

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\(^1\) Reference to adverts does not exclude hoardings, posters, leaflets, websites, and others, which tend to be studied as adverts or advertising discourse (e.g. Hermerén 1999; Koteyko 2009).
this categorisation is supported by current online searches for product prices, and all brands were also investigated in relation to the opinion of the current interviewed respondents, where the brands appear to be known to them. The brand segmentation includes expensive or prestigious (Chanel and Mercedes-Benz), moderate or affordable (L’Oréal Paris and Toyota), and low-priced or average (Max Factor and Fiat) brands.

The rationale for this study is the complex nature of promotional discourse such as that in Figure 1.1, which can be seen in terms of using not only language but also images and a less conventional layout. Thus, there seems to be a need to broaden the data types investigated to explore not only prototypical offline but also online promotional discourse types, i.e. less central. This suggests that online discourse types are likely to be heterogeneous, which also seems to require more than one framework for studying their various features. Another reason for expanding our research horizons is the increasing

2 The discourse types (mentioned in note 1 above) seem, more or less, to be the central examples that people typically think of (Rosch 1978; Taylor 1989). For example, the structural elements of print adverts tend to include, e.g. a headline, body copy, and signature line (Leech 1966, p.59).
popularity of social media (Facebook and review websites), whose economic role as promotional tools has been recognised in terms of content generated by users: clearly, many more voices are now involved in the production of promotional discourse than before. Added to the above are rare comparative studies on promotional discourse. Exceptions are Bruthiaux (2005), Jessen and Graakjaer (2013), and Kheovichai (2014). Bruthiaux (2005) mainly focuses on the syntactic features of classified ads and catalogues, whereas Jessen and Graakjaer (2013) study the visual design features of TV adverts and websites, and Kheovichai (2014) investigates job adverts from newspapers diachronically and those from websites synchronically using the Hallidayan transitivity and modality systems of Systemic Functional Grammar.

This study aims to:

- show that Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews as online discourse types are comparable with print adverts, and all can be included as instances of promotional genres.
- identify some aspects of the diversity of promotional discourse at more than one level, i.e. situational, generic, lexical, and visual.
- identify the participants involved in such discourse and their representations.
- adopt a multi-faceted framework for the study of the data.
- propose ways to deal with methodological issues when applying some categories of the selected models.

This thesis is designed to address the following research questions:

1. What situational and generic features characterise the sampled print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews of this thesis?
2. What does the analysis of the social actor model show about the representational patterns employed in these discourse types? And what does the variation in these patterns suggest about authority relations in terms of customers’ empowerment?
3. What does the visual-verbal analysis of the interviewees’ perception of some visual resources reveal about the meanings of these options and the characteristics of promotional discourse? And how do the linguistic choices in the informants’
interpretations compare with those found, particularly in the print adverts and Facebook posts?

The rationale of the above research questions is that each one highlights some aspects of the complexity of promotional discourse, where it becomes possible to investigate promotional discourse types in more detail based on their situational, generic, linguistic, and visual characteristics (these research questions are explained in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.3). This exploratory study will help further our understanding of an important discourse, promotional, through investigating its various features. However, it is significant to mention that changes to the results in the future and in studies of promotional discourse from two or three decades ago is largely possible because the findings obtained in this thesis from studying promotional discourse types (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews) were through focusing on a short time period in the modern era.

1.2 Methodological approaches

In view of the fact that promotional discourse is complex, clearly one analytical tool would not be enough to examine its various features in depth. Drawing comparisons among the various datasets through the use of multiple frameworks is made easier by the fact that the different data types are compared with the same frameworks each time. Accordingly, I have followed an eclectic approach, where each model enables me to show some features of such discourse and to highlight the complexity of promotional discourse. Thus, the frameworks can be seen as complementary. I have used a range of theoretical models, and two such frameworks, Herring (2007) and Biber and Conrad (2009), have been combined in order to help explain the situational characteristics of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews, that is situational aspects such as the channel of communication, participation, and purpose. Informed by other studies, especially Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) genre approach, these discourse types are generically investigated in terms of their structural moves, in order to establish the comparability of these discourse types, and thus to identify their genre membership as promotional. Moreover, the participants specified through genre analysis are then studied for the patterns in which they are represented using Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor network. Finally, audience interpretations of visuals are tested against
claims made by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual design, where the images presented to the respondents are also investigated in terms of image sample analysis as guided by these authors’ model. To complement the visual analysis, the informants’ answers are also studied using Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) representational framework and Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, where the results obtained from the first model are compared with the findings of the verbal representations in the adverts and posts.

With respect to the contributions of this study, the first contribution is generic. Three moves (attracting attention, detailing the product, and showing qualification) are found to be in common among adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews. Thus far, no previous research has drawn a generic comparison between print and emerging online promotional discourse types, particularly from social media. The move-structure analysis has allowed classifying the above online discourse types as members of promotional genres.

The second contribution could be thought of in terms of the identities constructed for some participants (celebrities, experts, and customers) in this discourse by representational resources. In the adverts, companies reflect the public personality of celebrities through semi-formal nomination, while in Facebook posts the professional character of experts is highlighted through classification and functionalisation. In contrast, as authors of their discourse, customers represent their personal identity through classification and relational identification. Endorsers’ identity does not seem to be an aspect tackled by previous linguistic research, which superficially points out the role of celebrities as product endorsers (e.g. Bhatia 2004; 2005) or relegates them to ‘secondary participants’ (Leech 1966). Here, more than one verbal/visual function is identified for endorsers: attention-catchers, promoters of products and companies (including companies’ events or news in online discourse), and interaction encouragers (i.e. engagement tools).

In addition to personalisation through pronouns found here and by other research (e.g. Pollach 2006; Skalicky 2013), another contribution is identifying other linguistic choices (activation, nomination, classification, and relational identification) through which customers as discourse authors can be seen as the centre of their online discourse. The last
contribution, although obtained from hand sketches based on the reading behaviour of the interviewees in this study, is that readers can be grouped into three types: skippers, moderate readers, and detailed readers. The importance of this categorisation is that it proposes individuals and image features as possible factors that could influence image reading. This finding reflects the perspective of reader-response theory, where readers are seen as varied and meaning is understood to be the result of reader-discourse interaction. This finding also differs from previous research on promotional discourse (e.g. Bergh and Beelders 2014), which tends to investigate the items mostly focused on as the centre of attention using an eye-tracker but without classifying readers.³

1.3 Thesis outline

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Some main concepts that lie at the heart of this study, such as discourse and promotion, which tend to cause confusion, are explained in Chapter 2. In addition, different approaches to investigating adverts and advertising discourse are surveyed, including discussion about promotional online discourse types and highlighting some limitations of previous research. In Chapter 3, the thesis design is presented in terms of the chosen product types, brand segmentation, the different datasets, and the techniques used in sampling them. The selected frameworks’ categories and their application (quantitative or qualitative), some evaluation of the frameworks, methodological issues, and suggested solutions are also pointed out in the same chapter. This is followed by three analytical chapters, where Chapter 4 is preliminary in terms of setting out the characteristics (situational and generic) of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews. Chapter 5 mainly tackles the language of the discourse types in terms of the representational patterns used for the different participants involved in the above discourse types. In contrast, the last chapter (Chapter 6) is multimodal, and it focuses on the interpretations of images in terms of the assumed meanings of image-producers and actual informants’ interpretations, where emphasis is given to the understandings of the latter group. The thesis closes with Chapter 7, where the research questions posed earlier in this

³ For readers’ types identified in newspapers, see Holsanova et al. (2006).
study are answered, and discussion is provided on implications, limitations, and proposals for further research.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND CONCEPTS AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE

2.1 Introduction

In spite of the pervasiveness of promotion to most domains of mass communication (including personal and business discourse) (Wernick 1991, p.195), the attention of research, especially linguistic, has mainly been paid to advertising discourse, particularly adverts as if they are the only significant promotional discourse type. This chapter seeks to redress the balance by building a case for a more diversified perspective on promotional discourse. The chapter starts by defining key concepts important for this thesis, which are then followed by a survey of the different approaches previously applied to advertising discourse. Then, the economic side of social media platforms as elements in the promotional process is explained, where studies on discourse from such media (Facebook and review websites) are reviewed. This chapter concludes that the complexity of promotional discourse can be construed in terms of the different linguistic and non-linguistic patterns it embraces. Thus, the features (linguistic and visual) of each semiotic mode need to be investigated when studying such discourse.

2.2 Key concepts

Before discussing the various perspectives from which advertising discourse is approached, it seems relevant to briefly clarify one point about ‘advertising’ and ‘promotion’ and some key concepts adopted here. This relates to how advertising tends to be easily mistaken as consisting of other promotional tools, which shows advertising as a macro-marketing element. Thus, it is of importance from the outset to clarify this overlap, especially in social sciences, between promotion and advertising.\(^4\) Promotion is broader than advertising; \(^4\) For Wernick (1991, p.181), ‘[p]romotion crosses the line between advertising, packaging, and design, and is applicable, as well, to activities beyond the immediately commercial’ (emphasis in original).
however, advertising is more widely known than promotion (Belch and Belch 2003, p.16). In fact, advertising is only one component of promotion or the ‘promotional mix’, which includes ‘advertising, direct marketing, interactive/internet marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations and personal selling’ (ibid). Promotion itself is one element of the marketing communication also known as ‘marketing mix’ (ibid, p.8), which consists of the four Ps, namely ‘product, price, distribution/(place) and promotion’ (Chunawalla 2008, p.17). In this sense, promotion is wider than advertising in scope, and thus promotional discourse cannot be construed as exclusive to adverts or advertising discourse. Likewise, Wernick (1991, p.195) notes that when discourse as a form of communication occurs in public media, which are promotional in essence, discourse becomes promotional. Davis (2013, p.51) also points out that ‘almost anything […] physical, cultural, virtual or human’ can be seen as promotional, and he clearly refers to products, the use of endorsers, and self-depictions in offline and online settings as promotional instances. Davis’ (ibid) and Wernick’s (1991) opinions are of significance here because the data of this thesis is media-based or, in Fairclough’s (2003, p.30) term, ‘mediated’, i.e. channelled through magazines, Facebook, and review websites. As discussed below, linguistic research does not seem to highlight the promotional aspect of discourse from such social media.

In the current thesis, one of the concepts used is discourse, which is understood as ‘a form of social practice in which language plays a central role’ (Cameron and Panovic 2014, p.5). This definition is adopted for its broadness. It refers to the linguistic and social nature of discourse (Baxter 2010, p.120), in that discourse is a representational vehicle and a way of doing things, i.e. its authority in terms of influencing readers or hearers using language, I would also add, or other semiotic modes. Thus discourse could be seen as ideological. As a means of control embedded in and conveyed through semiotic resources (Fairclough 2001, p.28), ideologies can be understood as representations or views that work towards sustaining domination and exploitation in society (Rose 2016, p.107). The term semiotic mode refers to language, visuals, gestures, and others as having choices for making meaning. The term image or images, henceforth, refers to visuals and multimodal discourse.
A *brand*, another important concept, is defined as a ‘distinguishing name and/or symbol’ through which products can be recognised (Aaker 1991, p.7). McDonald and Meldrum (2013, p.179) point out that a *brand* involves products, services, companies, places, and people. In the current study products, companies, and customers are studied as separate entities even though they can still be understood as related to the brand. Although institutions of or experts in promotion could be the producers of the print adverts and Facebook posts, here the companies, as goods manufacturers, are taken to be the authors of such discourse types since the product manufacturers’ brand name appears next to such discourse. The creators of comments and reviews can be assumed to be customers, as explained in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3.2). Additionally, this orientation seems to be in line with Goffman’s (1981, p.144) perspective of authors as the ‘sounding box’ or ‘animator’ of other speakers’ speech in discourse generated by companies and customers. In other words, the author is understood as the composer of discourse in terms of selecting the discourse content, although the actual ‘speakers’ or sources of words might be other persons. Thus, in authorship terms, there is company- and customer-authored discourse.

Finally, based on the analysis of the promotional discourse type of this study, in Chapter 4 six participants can be identified who are represented by discourse authors, namely products, companies, customers, celebrities, experts, and media resources. The latter refers to magazines, TV programmes, and events such as film shooting or release, the Oscars, or the London Fashion Week, for instance, in which products could be promoted. Companies are not human, but since Facebook has staff that could interact with customers, they can be treated as human. In other words, employees metonymically refer to companies and vice versa. In this sense, companies differ from products and media resources, which always seem to be objects.

### 2.3 Approaches to advertising and other promotional discourse

The following sub-sections discuss various approaches to advertising and other promotional discourse.
2.3.1 Genre approaches

By way of background, it is appropriate to give a short overview about genre and its schools before discussing genre approach to promotional discourse. Bhatia (2002, p.4) describes the study of genre as ‘multi-disciplinary’ and ‘multi-faceted’. It is ‘multi-disciplinary’ because genre analysis has been the focus of various fields of knowledge (e.g. literature, linguistics, media studies), and multi-faceted because the study of genre has been approached from different perspectives. The three main approaches to genre are those of new rhetoric, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and applied linguistics. Very brief definitions are given for terms from the first two approaches only, while the third approach is discussed in more detail for its relevance to the present thesis. The first is the new rhetoric or Miller’s (1994) approach, which describes genre as ‘social action’ and defines it as ‘typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations’ (ibid, p.31), where the emphasis is on the conventionality in the use of language. Unlike the other genre schools, Miller’s approach does not offer a framework, which could explain why it is not widely adopted in generic studies. The second major school of genre is that of SFL or the Hallidayan (1978) approach. This approach was developed later by Martin (1992), who distinguishes register from genre. Martin (1992, p.505) defines genre as ‘a staged, goal-oriented social process realised through register’. Register comprises the three situational components of field, tenor, and mode, which are realised by the three language metafunctions of ideational (experience/representation), interpersonal (relations), and textual (flow of information), respectively (Martin 2016, p.48; Martin and White 2005, p.7). Field refers to the subject matter, tenor to the relations between participants, and mode to the channel of communication (Halliday 1978, p.222). In SFL, while register represents the context of situation, genre relates to the context of culture (Martin 2014, p.15). However, field, tenor, and mode realise the genre schematic structure (Martin 1992, p.505).

Such separation between register and genre is similar to that of Biber and Conrad (2009), although not always taking the same perspective. For Biber and Conrad, register and genre are described as ‘varieties associated with particular situations of use and particular

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5 In this definition, mode has the same meaning as medium proposed by Cameron and Panovic (2014, p.32), although they differentiate between them. Here, mode differs from semiotic mode in Section 2.2.
communicative purposes’ (*ibid*, p.21). With respect to genre, Biber and Conrad’s (*ibid*, p.2) approach considers communicative purpose among other situational characteristics that have to be defined when analysing register and genre. Additionally, genre analysis must be applied to a full text and the emphasis is on the occurrence of certain linguistic elements that give the discourse its structure, e.g. openings and closings in emails (*ibid*, p.16). In contrast to Biber and Conrad’s approach, in the SFL approach, the communicative goal is seen as occurring in genre and the organisation of discourse manifests as ‘stages’ normally with a certain order, thus creating the genre structure (Martin and Rose 2008, p.6). In the SFL’s emphasis on the order of discourse structure, it seems similar to Biber and Conrad’s genre approach.

The third perspective on genre is that of Swales’ (1990) applied linguistic approach, further developed by Bhatia (1993). This approach does not make any reference to register, but rather it is genre-centred. Swales (1990, p.10) gives the communicative purpose an important role in structuring discourse and by which discourse can be identified as a member of a genre, i.e. the effect of the communicative purpose on the discourse structure, content, and style (*ibid*, p.58). Swales defines *genre* as

> a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style (*ibid*).

In prioritising the communicative goal, Swales’ genre perspective here seems to be, in a sense, similar to the SLF approach. In spite of Swales’ claim about the role of the communicative goal, Askehave and Swales (2001, p.200) admit that the communicative purpose is not always readily available to a researcher. Their research (*ibid*) proposes that the communicative goal(s) come last rather than first in the process of genre analysis and that the communicative purpose is only one element by which the categorisation of discourse could happen.

For Bhatia (2004, p.x), the difficulty of analysing genres comes from the fact that genres are increasingly becoming hybridised through the exploitation of features from other genres rather than existing in a pure form. A good example of this is the hybridisation of genres such as advertising with elements of non-promotional genres containing narrative or news report. Likewise, non-promotional genres, such as academic and public service discourse, tend to appropriate promotional features (Fairclough 2001, 1994). In this sense, it seems that promotional and non-promotional genres are influencing each other. What adds to this complexity is, as a consequence of technological development, the tendency of some discourse types to be combined together, resulting in the ‘chaining of genres’ (Bhatia 2004, p.x). In this way, media technologies seem to allow people, although separate in place and/or time, to act ‘at a distance’ (Fairclough 2003, p.34), for example through Facebook posts and comments. Another manifestation of genre complexity seems to happen in terms of using more than one semiotic mode, i.e. multimodality (Bhatia 2004, p.x).

Bhatia (1993) presented a seven-step model to carry out genre analysis. In relation to the step of linguistic analysis, he (ibid, pp.24-29) proposes three levels to conduct it: lexicogrammatical, text-patterning or textualisation, and structural interpretation. Bhatia (ibid, p.40) suggests the possibility of choosing one or more of these levels when analysing a genre. His (ibid) generic study of a sales promotion letter and job application letter, which on the surface seem different genres, finds a considerable similarity between these discourse types in terms of their communicative goals and move structure. Thus, Bhatia (ibid, p.74) identifies these discourse types as examples of promotional genres.

In addition, Bhatia (2004; 2005) analyses the moves in a restaurant advert. An instance of the moves identified in this discourse is the incentive move in ‘This voucher entitles the bearer to a discount of HK$200 when presented at the dinner at Riviera Restaurant Regal
Hong Kong Hotel’ (ibid). One of the strengths of Bhatia’s (1993) model is that it permits identifying discourse types as belonging to promotional genres to varying degrees. When comparing the moves of the advert in Bhatia’s (2004; 2005) research with those of the sales promotion and job application letters (1993), it is possible to see that these three instances use some similar moves and their communicative goals exhibit some similarity too. Thus, Bhatia (1993; 2004; 2005) appears to be justified in grouping these types as promotional genres. However, one of the limitations of Bhatia’s (2004; 2005) analysis is that unlike his detailed study of sales promotion and job application letters, he very briefly analyses the moves of the advert. He simply lists the moves that adverts are likely to include without showing the strategies for realising them, or comparing their moves with those of other promotional discourse types, for example. In this thesis, moves are analysed and compared across different promotional discourse types.

2.3.2 Corpus-based approaches

Leech (1966) and Koteyko (2012; 2015) study adverting discourse using a large corpora of adverts, i.e. 617 TV adverts and 364 press adverts, respectively. Leech’s (1966) English in Advertising is one of the oldest studies of consumer adverts. His research identifies the characteristics of the advertising register as informal, figurative, disjunctive, and innovative through breaking the norms of spelling, vocabulary, syntax, and context. In this sense, semiotic modes other than the written language are overlooked. Although his study is not genre-based, Leech admits that specifying the boundaries of advertising is not straightforward and that advertising is likely to include and overlap with ‘public announcements, public relations and public polemics’ (ibid, p.25). The difficulty of defining what advertising encompasses is also agreed on by Cook (2001, p.12) and Myers (1999, pp.129-130). In a similar vein, Myers (ibid, pp.5-6) clearly refers to the complexity of separating advertising from promotion, both of which, as Fairclough points out (2001, p.172), start to intrude into domains that are not largely expected to be commercial, such as the health sector or academia. Leech’s acknowledgement suggests that the term advertising is more complex than might be thought. The limitation with Leech’s attempt to delimit the scope of advertising seems to make it slightly problematic. He seems to conflate advertising with promotion on the one hand, and advertising with publicity (i.e.
announcements) on the other hand, where publicity is mainly related to media coverage such as news releases and photographs among others (Belch and Belch 2003, p.22). As mentioned above, advertising, publicity, and public relations are promotional means. However, advertising and publicity can also be employed by public relations to build an image for a company (ibid, p.23).

Leech (1966, p.57) argues that the categories of product type, media of communication, customers, and the purpose of an advert have an influence on the linguistic features of adverts, which all constitute the context of situation for this discourse. Leech (ibid, p.34) claims that TV, as a medium, and hence its adverts are characterised by the use of ‘secondary participants’ (e.g. celebrities or ordinary people) more than press adverts to ‘appeal to human interest’ (ibid, p.37). In this claim, Leech seems to overlook that apart from the medium, some product types might need to be verbally or non-verbally endorsed by celebrities or elite figures. In the present thesis, endorsements are treated as an integral aspect of investigation.

Leech (ibid, pp.60, 152) finds that print and television adverts differ in most of their structural elements. As regards the structural components of print adverts, he identifies the elements of a press advert as a title, image(s), main text, brand name and slogan, and a company’s contact details based in an advert layout (ibid, p.59). He stresses that the occurrence of all these elements is not necessary in an advert except for the title and the brand name. In this way, Leech’s identified components seem to be relative since he also indicates that in exceptional cases adverts might occur without a title or a brand name. For Leech (ibid, p.27), images are used to catch potential customers’ eyes, but he does not indicate what roles the other elements in an advert are supposed to fulfil. In this sense, Leech’s structural elements give an advert its prototypical format only, while the rhetorical moves (of which an advert could be made) remain uninvestigated.6

Another important corpus-based study is that of Koteyko (2012; 2015), whose approach is largely computational. Adopting a multi-dimensional analytical approach, she calculates all

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6 Prototypes are central examples whose features other elements can be compared with, and thus for these elements to be classified as members of a certain category based on the similarity they exhibit to the central examples (Rosch 1978, p.73), i.e. categorisation can occur through partial similarity (Taylor 1989, p.66).
the linguistic features that occur in her corpus of adverts automatically, using grammatical
analysis software and statistical software. Based on the frequency of the linguistic features
that cluster together as factors, she correlates and infers the communicative function of the
clustered features and names each group of features as a dimension. Shown in Table 2.1 are
the dimensions of Koteyko’s (2012) multi-dimensional model with some linguistic
elements. In spite of adopting a quantitative approach, Koteyko qualitatively studies and
compares adverts for products, services, corporations, mail orders, government, and
charities from magazines and newspapers by taking into account the situational components
of product, advertiser, purpose of the advert, and audience.\footnote{Some dimensions are re-named in Koteyko (2015).}

Table 2.1 Dimensions and linguistic features of adverting discourse (Koteyko 2012, p.183;
2015, p.267)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension label</th>
<th>Linguistic features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Involved
interpersonal  | 2nd person pronouns |
| versus          |                     |
| Highly integrated informational discourse | word length |
| Dimension 2:    |                     |
| Static evaluative description | intensifying adverbs (really) |
| Dimension 3:    |                     |
| Past time narration | past tense |
| Dimension 4:    |                     |
| Exhortative high-promise discourse (hard sell) | imperatives |
| Dimension 5:    |                     |
| Explanatory evaluative description | comparative and superlative adjectives |
| Dimension 6:    |                     |
| Disjunctive discourse | independent non-finite clauses (Introducing the new C-Class) |
| versus          |                           |
| Production focus | and phrasal coordinators |

The data of Koteyko’s (2012) study comprise more than ten product categories with various
subcategories, e.g. ‘vehicles’ include cars, motorcycles, and private jets (\textit{ibid}, p.278). In
addition, the adverts for a product category are for various brands, e.g. the subcategory of
cars includes adverts from eighteen different brands. Koteyko’s analysis, however, does not
consider any possible differences and/or similarities, however subtle they might be, among products for different brands. In the present thesis, two product categories for specific brands are examined to explore the aspect of variation.

On the other hand, Koteyko does attempt to differentiate product adverts from those of services in her corpus. She finds that product adverts tend to largely vary across the informational and interpersonal range, while service adverts are shown to be mostly interpersonal in terms of Dimension 1, i.e. involved interpersonal versus highly integrated informational discourse (2012, p.268). Koteyko’s (ibid, p.247) analysis shows that adverts for cars indicate ‘what the product is like’ in terms of the static evaluative description (Dimension 2). In contrast, cosmetics adverts are demonstrated to be concerned with ‘what the product does’ or ‘how it works’ through the explanatory evaluative description (Dimension 5) (ibid, p.233). What could be inferred from the results of cosmetics and car adverts is that adverts for such products are likely to be evaluative.

In terms of the informational-interpersonal distinction, Koteyko’s (2012, pp.253, 269) study concludes that adverts for tangible products are mainly informational, while intangible services, corporate, and non-commercial adverts are primarily interpersonal. Her study finds a strong likelihood for informative and persuasive purposes to be expressed through more than one factor, and that persuasion cannot straightforwardly be dissociated from information (2012, p.273; 2015, p.279). In addition, Koteyko (2012, p.178; 2015, p.270) admits that the factors of static evaluative description and explanatory evaluative description cannot be seen as purely persuasive since their clustered linguistic features could also encode description. In light of Koteyko’s (2012; 2015) results and what other studies (e.g. Fairclough 1994, p.257; Fairclough 2001, p.172; Hermerén 1999, p.11), note about the unclear distinction between persuasion and information, the present thesis does not attempt to distinguish the language of promotional discourse along the information-persuasion scale.

In relation to visuals, Koteyko’s (2012, p.28) study clearly treats language and visuals as semiotic modes through which the message of adverts is conveyed. However, like Leech’s (1966) research, her study pays little attention to visuals in comparison with language. For Koteyko (2012, p.28; 2015, p.261), the relevance of visuals is merely in terms of supplying
'exophoric reference’, where a pronoun or a deictic expression is referentially related to a visual. This perspective on visuals seems to a large extent brief and underexplored. Moreover, Koteyko’s visual-verbal reference appears somewhat to restrict the roles of both language and images, in that one semiotic mode is reproducing or specifying what is expressed through the other semiotic mode, i.e. ‘anchorage’ using Barthes’ (1977, p.38) terms.

2.3.3 Descriptive approaches

The main discussion focuses on the research of Hermerén (1999) and Vestergaard and Schröder (1985), with some reference to Cook’s (2001) and Myers’ (1994) studies. Although it might not be the best label, the reason for calling these studies ‘descriptive’ is that they do not come with a framework for analysing promotional discourse and they do not tend to distinguish clearly the features of discourse types such as (print/TV/radio) adverts, posters, brochures, and leaflets. Starting with Hermerén (1999), this approach does not move beyond indicating the general features that characterise the language of advertising, for instance the use of figurative language. Simply guided by Swales’ (1990) definition of genre, Hermerén’s research identifies adverts as a genre without showing the moves that an advert could comprise. In addition, Hermerén’s (1999, p.78-91) analysis shows that some advertising discourse tends to take the layout, vocabulary, or style of other discourse types, where he calls this phenomenon ‘advertising in disguise’ (ibid, p.78). Here, the reference is clearly to the interaction of the advertising genre with and its appropriation of features from other genres.8 His finding of the variant formats of adverts could be thought of as an indication that Leech’s (1966) structural elements of adverts might not be a sophisticated identifying parameter for adverts.

Unlike Koteyko’s (2012; 2015) and Leech’s (1966) work, Vestergaard and Schröder (1985, pp.146-147) investigate some ideological work in adverts. They note that in order for companies to achieve the purpose of promoting their products, ‘the freedom of choice’ in terms of the availability of various kinds of products that could suit consumers’ needs is presented as the equivalent to democracy and equal rights. Rather, it is largely the freedom

Fairclough (2003) describes such instances as forms of ‘genre mixing’ or ‘interdiscursivity’; see Section 2.4.3 below.
of product consumption. Although before the emergence of social media, from a critical position, Fairclough (2003, p.33) notes that, in their relation to marketing and capitalism, promotional genres are elements of control, capable of changing and shaping people’s views. In social media, ideology seems to work through projecting the freedom to express one’s self as synonymous with democracy. Some implication of social media is here discussed in relation to the patterns of representation.

Another manifestation of ideologies in adverts could be thought of in terms of using endorsers. Hermerén (1999, p.180) and Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985, p.155) argue that adverts ideologically work as mediators between admired qualities and products, through what Williamson (1978, p.25) calls transference of meaning. Hermerén (1999, p.178) indicates that the use of celebrities as verbal and/or visual endorsers in adverts is meant to give products the social meanings of status and prestige attached to the represented figures. This is the ideology of lifestyle from Fairclough’s (2001) perspective, where celebrities show people what and how they can be through consumption (Hermerén 1999). Meaning transference seems to work in two stages. The first, i.e. the process of ‘aestheticization of commodities’, happens through presenting a famous person or an entity with appealing characteristics next to a product where these features, through association, become perceived of as part of the product (Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985, p.154). The second phase occurs through acquiring the product, as the consumer is supposed to have the features connected to the product, i.e. the process through which customers are assumed to be aestheticised when buying a product (ibid). The latter stage of meaning transference is beyond the scope of the present thesis, and thus it will not be investigated further as it may require an ethnographic study.

Vestergaard and Schrøder’s (ibid, pp.28-32) study uses case grammar to analyse the roles of customers and products in adverts. They compare those roles with those of actors in narratives using Greimas’ (1966) model (cited in Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985, p.27). The limitation of this approach is that it does not interpret the sociological meanings of the actors’ roles. In addition, the roles of companies and endorsers as possible participants in adverts are completely excluded in Vestergaard and Schrøder’s model of case grammar.

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9 Hermerén’s (1999) research does not explicitly investigate ideologies.
The different participants involved in the promotional discourse types and their representations are the concern of the current thesis.

In contrast with Hermerén (1999), Koteyko (2012; 2015), and Leech (1966), who overlook visuals to a large extent, Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) analyse images in adverts. Nevertheless, their visual analysis suggests that they still give language the major role in conveying the meanings of adverts in comparison with a rather minor role for images. They (ibid, p.42) claim that ‘as a means of communication pictures are much more ambiguous than language and that therefore they [pictures] often have to be anchored by means of a verbal text’, a position similar to that of Barthes (1977, p.38). Their claim contrasts with Myers’ opinion (1994) discussed below. Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985, p.34) also claim that while images are ‘always neutral’, images with verbal content are not. Their claim cannot largely be sustained and contradicts the perspective of critical studies on language and multimodality, discussed in Section 2.3.4. It seems that Vestergaard and Schrøder understand that images are ideology-free and that language is the only ideological semiotic mode.

According to Vestergaard and Schrøder,

[T]he way in which we scan a picture has been influenced by the way we read a page. When we read, the eye moves from the upper left corner of the page to the lower right corner, and the upper left-lower right diagonal is indeed an extremely important dimension in much painting, as well as in advertising lay-out (ibid, p.44).

In their proposals on scanning adverts and the influence of the writing system on how adverts are designed and read, Vestergaard and Schrøder seem to be similar to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) in the subjectivity of their assumptions about the way multimodal discourse is structured and supposed to be read.10 Both Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid) and Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) argue that multimodal discourse is scanned by its image(s), i.e. readers first look at visuals then they read the verbal part. However, they do not test this claim. Although Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.204-205)

10 Note that Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) offer a framework for image analysis.
state that multimodal discourse allows readers more flexibility in reading than text-based discourse, they seem to regard the left-right and top-bottom reading directions as determined by the prominence of the depicted elements. Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) apply a top left-bottom right reading to some of their data, although the adverts are busy with writing and contain more than one image. It is not clear how Vestergaard and Schrøder arrive at their assumptions about reading and constructing adverts. It seems that the top left-bottom right diagonal reading is, to a large extent, Vestergaard and Schrøder’s own way of looking at adverts. They admit that some adverts might not follow the diagonal principle in their format for ‘stylistic reasons’ (ibid, p.46), as shown in Figure 2.1 below, and thus the design of the advert is not conducive to such a diagonal reading. It appears that Vestergaard and Schrøder focus on the position of images in an advert and disregard the overall organisation of the other elements in it, for example the title, main text, and so on. In this way, their approach seems to differ from that of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), who pay attention to the overall design of discourse in terms of their principles of composition (ibid), discussed in Section 3.8.5. An empirical investigation of how people read promotional visuals and multimodal discourse is conducted in the present thesis.

Figure 2.1 Stylistic deviation in composition (Vestergaard and Schrøder 1985, p.47)
Taking a step further from Leech’s (1966) categorisation of the structural components of an advert, Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985, p.49) match the structural elements of an advert with Lund’s (1973) model of attention, interest, desire conviction, and action, cited in their work. They apply these functions in pairs to adverts as they state that one component is not very likely to exhibit one function (1985, p.50). They propose that a potential customer’s attention and interest are drawn by the title, visual(s), and slogan (ibid, p.58); desire and persuasion are created through two parts of the main text, i.e. the ‘poetic’ and ‘informational’ language (ibid, p.65); and the customer is encouraged to buy the advertised product through the last part of the main text, i.e. ‘the directive language’ (ibid, p.67). Based on Vestergaard and Schrøder’s explanation, the advert parts and their functions have been annotated in Figure 2.2 below.11 In my opinion, these functions could be related to psychological attitudes and emotions, or in Chunawalla’s (2008, p.7) terms as representing ‘cognitive, affective and behavioural’ aspects. However interesting their mapping of adverts’ elements onto functions, the three suggested functions do not seem to be a very elaborate technique for identifying adverts. Today, not all adverts are expected to be heavy in writing or long enough to manifest all the functions suggested.

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11 The original version of this advert is not annotated.
Unlike the studies of Hermerén (1999), Leech (1966), and Vestergaard and Schröder (1985), which mainly highlight the role of language in expressing the message of adverts at the expense of other semiotic modes, Cook’s (2001) and Myers’ (1994) works stress that all semiotic modes exploited in producing an advertising discourse must be studied. According to Cook (2001, pp. 1-2), the notoriety of the advertising genre is attributed to the association of its discourse with marketing, i.e. the tendency of advertising discourse to encourage consumption. However, Cook (ibid, p. 10) argues that although adverts may have the superordinate purpose of selling, under this aim may come other subordinate functions such as entertaining, advising and so on, where all the secondary purposes contribute to the superordinate selling aim. He refers to two important points in his statement that ‘[a]dvertising is everywhere but nowhere’ and, in genre terms, that advertising discourse is ‘slippery’ and its characteristics are not easy to specify (ibid, pp. 1, 7, 9). First, he points to the proliferation of advertising discourse, and second, the tendency of this discourse type to take various forms or to draw on other genres, to the extent that advertising discourse is not always easy to notice, i.e. adverts are ‘parasitic’ (ibid, p. 219). His analysis specifies ways in which adverts may become hybrid, such as the occurrence of adverts with other discourse types and genres, e.g. in magazines with articles or on TV with programmes.
(ibid, p.39); and mixing authority with intimacy through the use of literary language and pronouns (I, we and you) (ibid, p.220).

In his chapter on language and visuals, Myers (1994, p.136) clearly states that visuals are not merely illustrative or supplementary in relation to the verbal content. Rather, images can foreground or background elements, include or exclude some entities, address readers, express opinions, and suggest meanings in a way comparable with, although not exactly the same as, language (ibid, pp.144-148). In this thesis, such a comparison is drawn between the patterns that occur in the verbal content and those in the interpretations of visuals. Myers (ibid, p.144) points out that both language and visuals may have a number of interpretations and that the message of a piece of multimodal discourse becomes complete when its meanings are derived from the semiotic modes that construct it. Myers’ (ibid, p.142) arguments that language is polysemous, where visuals could fix some of the meanings of the verbal content, and that ambiguity is not exclusive to images, contrast with those of Barthes (1977) and Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985), discussed above. It seems that, for Bathes and Vestergaard and Schrøder, the role of language is necessary in specifying the interpretations of images. In Myers’ discussion of a car advert for Volvo, displayed in Figure 2.3 with the title ‘Now this Volvo carries just as much as a Granada Estate.’ (1994, p.142), he argues that visuals can to some extent limit the interpretations of the verbal content.
Figure 2.3 Visual anchorage of language (Myers 1994, p.143)

Myers (ibid, p.142) assumes that the vagueness of the above title comes from ‘carries just as much. First, he interprets it as ‘the Granada holds more’ than the Volvo (ibid). Clearly, this interpretation sounds contrary to what the advert wants to convey since the Volvo is the promoted product. Second, he points out that carries has more than one meaning; however, he does not clarify these meanings. For Myers, it is the representation of a man holding a blowtorch next to the Volvo, which is depicted as if some of its back part (trunk) is cut, that conveys the implied meaning that ‘the Volvo doesn’t hold “as much” as the Granada - it holds more, and would have to be cut down to be the same’ (ibid). In this sense, for Myers it is through looking at the visual that a reader could explain the meaning of the verbal content. What Myers does not mention is that what an image (or verbal content) conveys for one person may not be the same for another person. I would also add to Myers’ explanation that without the verbal message, a reader might not know the specification (more space) of the Volvo, and might wonder what the visual is about. Likewise, the visual could make it easy for the viewer to see what the new Volvo model looks like and to
identify the referent of the deictic *this*. Put differently, the interpretation of multimodal discourse often relies on a two-way relation between language and visuals.

Based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual analysis and in terms of the horizontal placement of elements on the left and right of an advert, Myers (1994, p.140) observes that the left and right arrangements work well in adverts, where a visual appears on the left and the verbal message occupies the right part. For him, left and right suggest the meanings of ‘expectation’ and ‘surprise’, respectively, and so he claims that the reading of such multimodal discourse could be left to right. However, he acknowledges the difficulty of applying such a reading to adverts with multiple images or, in other words, visually-based adverts. In fact, it cannot be assumed that even in adverts with an image on the left and verbal content on the right that all viewers are likely to read elements in this order. Readers might be attracted to the colour or font of the text, for example, rather than to the image. Alternatively, readers might skip some elements or never read the advert at all.

**2.3.4 Critical discourse analysis and socio-cognitive approaches**

Both Koller (2012) and Bullo (2014) approach promotional discourse from a socio-cognitive perspective but in different ways and for different purposes. First, I briefly explain the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and then Koller’s study. Unveiling ideologies hidden in discourse is the concern of the CDA approach. Media of communication and their discourse cannot be claimed to be unbiased in how and what they represent. For critical researchers and multimodal scholars (e.g. Cameron and Panovic 2014; Fairclough 2001; Fowler 1991; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006; Machin 2013; Machin and Mayr 2012; Rose 2016), semiotic modes are never taken as transparent. Rather, Fairclough (2001, p.28) argued that ideologies are tools of ‘rule by consent’ in terms of constructing people’s attitudes and beliefs (Cameron and Panovic 2014, p.67). In terms of their relation to power, ideologies can help maintain the existing imbalanced relations in society (Fairclough 2001, pp.2, 70). In seeing ideologies as often working covertly in discourses made of any semiotic mode (spoken, written, visual or multimodal) and of any type (governmental, promotional or educational) and transmitted by any media,
Vestergaard and Schröder’s (1985) claim about the neutrality of images can be challenged. Although, in this thesis, CDA is not the main focus, this research still includes some aspects of ideological analysis and employs analytical frameworks, namely Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor system, Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, and Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model of image design, prominently adopted in this approach in order to uncover some ideologies in promotional discourse.

Koller’s (2012) research is critically concerned with uncovering how advertisers construct and represent potential consumers’ gender identity in promotional discourse.12 Her work combines corpus linguistics methods and CDA to show the socio-cognitive representations and mental models implicit in an example of this discourse, i.e. a catalogue. Although her study is corpus-based, the data are also qualitatively investigated. Koller’s study finds that advertisers tend to differentiate audiences in terms of stereotypical gender representations when targeting women and men as potential customers. She concludes that, in transitivity terms, women are represented as being interested in their outward appearance and their activation is devoid of dynamic meanings (ibid, p.32). The study suggests that not only material objects (products and services) but also identities come to be promoted in promotional discourse (ibid, p.35). Her study also notes that there is a correlation between the ideologies of representation and consumption implicit in the language and visuals of an instance of public media discourse that people are likely to encounter in their daily life, which could increase the possibility of adopting advertisers’ ideologies (ibid, p.23).

The strength of this study could be seen in terms of adopting and proposing a number of analytical and descriptive frameworks to show collective identity construction. Among these are Van Leeuwen’s (1996) social actor framework, Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, and Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) grammar of visual analysis. However, apart from using only one catalogue, one of the drawbacks of Koller’s analysis is that the study focuses on just one category of the social actor model, i.e. collectivisation. In terms of visual analysis, the layout of the catalogue cover page is minimally discussed, where the discussion is based on default meanings assumed by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) model to be relevant to various discourse types.

12 The term advertiser is used by Koller; see Section 2.2 for the one adopted in the current study.
Unlike Koller (2012), Bullo (2014) takes the perspective of potential customers by studying their perception of adverts. Bullo’s quantitative-qualitative study is not within CDA. Her research combines the attitude system of Martín and White’s (2005) appraisal model with some socio-cognitive analytical approaches to investigate audience interpretations of three advertising discourse types: one poster and two magazine adverts, referred to as ‘advertisements’ (2014, p.49). These three adverts, in her terms, recontextualise paintings, i.e. hybridised adverts, where she uses them as stimuli to elicit evaluative responses through the focus group discussion technique. As shown in Figure 2.4 below, the well-known painting of Whistler’s Mother is recontextualised on the first page of the Mercedes-Benz advert, which appears over three pages, i.e. Figures 2.4 and 2.5. For the purpose of showing the extent to which knowledge or non-knowledge of art could affect interviewees’ understanding of adverts as visuals, the participants are assigned to two groups, with five informants in each one. The members of one group have knowledge about art but they are not specialists, while the participants of the other group have neither knowledge of nor interest in art (ibid, p.62).

Figure 2.4 Recontextualising art in a Mercedes-Benz advert page 1 (Bullo 2014, p.55)
Figure 2.5 Recontextualising art in a Mercedes-Benz advert pages 2 and 3 (Bullo 2014, p.56)

Bullo’s research (*ibid*, pp.3-4) argues that evaluation is influenced by individuals’ shared socio-cognitive resources. In this sense, the appraisal analysis could be construed as a means to unveil the socio-cognitive representations underlying the evaluative language of the informants. The comparison of the evaluative language of the two groups (practitioners and lay people) shows that the same adverts could activate different socio-cognitive representations in each group (*ibid*, p.159). Sometimes, although the two groups have parallel socio-cognitive models, these models are reflected through different attitudinal meanings (*ibid*). The study arrives at the conclusion that there is a strong connection between appraisals and socio-cognitive resources, in that one feeds into the other in an ongoing way (*ibid*, p.161).

Doran (2016, p.543) criticises Bullo’s analysis of appraisals in terms of coding evaluative instances targeted at the adverts or other visual resources as metonymically evaluating the advertisers. Doran’s criticism seems reasonable, since this coding procedure results in featuring judgmental attitudes at the expense of the other attitudinal meanings, especially appreciation. Rather than showing the appraised entity, Bullo could simply have dispensed with this option because it seems rather hard to suggest that the informants want to assess the advertisers through their adverts, for example. Although in Bullo’s study the compositional categories of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) grammar of visual analysis are minimally used to explain the layout of adverts, the meanings of the visual resources...
proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen are not compared with those of her informants. Rather, appraisals are used as indicators of the interviewees’ opinions about the use of art in adverts. In the current thesis, by comparison, some of the claims made in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual design are investigated in relation to audience responses, where these interpretations are also studied using Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal model.

2.3.5 Visual and multimodal approaches

The multimodal approach to promotional discourse is widely adopted by scholars (e.g. Brookes and Harvey 2015; Ledin and Machin 2016; Machin 2007; Zuraidah and Ling 2016; Michelson and Valencia 2016). The focus in such research seems to be mostly on showing how the meanings conveyed by one semiotic mode tend to be conveyed by another semiotic mode. In my opinion, the issue with such studies largely seems to be that language is not deeply investigated and the interpretations of images seem to be based on meanings assumed that image-producers attempt to articulate. In this section, the focus is on Williamson’s (1978) and Oyama’s (1998) studies, which are mainly concerned with adverts. The reason for concentrating on these studies is that they are long studies of book-length or so. More importantly, Williamson’s (1978) work is prominent since it is a pioneer work in semiotics. In relation to Oyama’s (1998) research, it is primarily based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) visual framework, the model adopted here.

Williamson’s book *Decoding Advertisements* (1978) takes a semiotic perspective to magazine adverts. Her research is deeply interested in uncovering ideologies in such promotional discourse. She clearly states that adverts’ claims are never neutral and that what adverts promote is a package of a product and an ideally constructed self (*ibid*, pp.13, 17). Her theory deals with signs (linguistic and visual), using de Saussure’s terms, as signifieds and signifiers. Although she discusses language (mainly in terms of adverts’ titles and captions) in one section of her book, her approach is largely image-based. She highlights language as the most important semiotic mode in arriving at the meaning of adverts (*ibid*, p.84), especially when what is verbally and visually represented are contradictory. The most well-known aspect of her theory is that of meaning transference,
where a product takes the meanings or emotions associated with a person or object when both (product and person or entity) are depicted together in the same image (ibid, p.30). The meaning related to a product is assumed to give a product a unique identity that distinguishes it from other products (ibid, p.28). Although in Williamson’s examples meaning transference is mainly applied to famous models, this aspect of her theory is extended in the current study to interpret endorsements by celebrities and unknown models, especially in Chapter 6.

With respect to social semiotics, adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) grammar of visual design as a primary model, Oyama (1998) qualitatively analyses different English and Japanese visuals such as adverts, posters, signs, and a shot from a TV programme. Her study is concerned with investigating images as reflecting cultural meanings. Her opinion about the role of semiotic modes in communicating meaning is in line with that of Koteyko (2012) and Myers (1994), discussed above in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, respectively. Oyama (1998, p.285) states that language and visuals add to the overall message of discourse, in that each semiotic mode has its own affordances for meaning-making that could not be expressed in the same way by the other semiotic mode alone. Oyama’s multimodal study (ibid, pp.158, 183) argues that in British culture, the directionality and positioning of elements (verbal and visual) are influenced by the written English language, which is based on the Anglophone ‘underlying spatial semiotic system’ of left to right, dominant within most mainstream western cultures. Her perspective is very similar to that of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), as discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.6.2. But the reverse is true for Japanese society, where the right to left Japanese ‘underlying spatial semiotic system’ controls the right to left directionality and placement of verbal and visual entities (Oyama 1998, pp.158, 183). Her study (ibid, p.288) concludes that specific cultural meanings are communicated in the visuals of each society (British and Japanese).

Apart from using visuals of different types and for different product categories, and the rather concise analysis of the verbal content that is based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) visual grammar, there seem to be a number of drawbacks with Oyama’s (1998) analysis. The meanings suggested by Oyama in her analysis of social distance, the low

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13 The term *affordance* refers to what can and cannot be communicated by a semiotic mode.
angle of shot, and the qualities of colour (saturation, differentiation, and modulation) seem to be generally her own interpretations. Her readings of visuals seem to be rather invariable and tend to follow the direction of top to bottom and left to right, assumed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), in relation to her English adverts. When more than one element is depicted in a section, Oyama’s reading does not clearly specify the element that would be read first. Although in some instances her analysis refers to viewers’ interest or not in continuing or ceasing their reading at some point, this proposal is not followed for all adverts. Sometimes the readings tend to overlook Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) salience principles, such as size, eye contact, colour, and so on, and the readings mostly seem to be influenced by the way a piece of written discourse is assumed to be read. Additionally, no clear explanation is provided as to why a reader might follow a proposed reading path. In this sense, her readings and interpretations seem subjective and could not be claimed to be the same for readers from British or Japanese culture. An example of Oyama’s reading of an English advert, shown in Figure 2.6, is given below.
Figure 2.6 Reading multimodal discourse (Oyama 1998, n.p.)

Oyama’s reading of Figure 2.6, in which a model is depicted, assumes that vectors are formed by the model’s fingers. Thus, she suggests that for this advert the reading starts in the middle, with the model’s hand. For her, based on the vector formed by three of the model’s fingers, which are pointing down, the vertical reading goes down to the text at the bottom, then the reading goes back again to the model and finally it shifts up to the verbal element at the top (ibid, p.275). The other proposed reading assumes that the second read element after the model’s hand is the verbal part at the top, which in this case follows the model’s thumb and then the reading moves to the bottom part of the advert (ibid). According to Oyama, the first reading of going down then up is ‘the most plausible reading path’ due to the three pointing fingers (ibid). In Oyama’s analysis, the movement of up-down or down-up is claimed to give the advert an ‘intermittent meaning’ (ibid). It is not clear what the interpretation of this reading would suggest for a British reader or in British society. Similarly, the proposed vectors guiding the readings could not be assumed to be
arrived at by readers. The present thesis sets out to test some British interviewees’ interpretations of visual options in promotional visuals and multimodal discourse.

### 2.4 Marketing and business perspectives

In the following, the promotional orientation of social media platforms such as Facebook and review websites (a topic of the current thesis), a general overview on Facebook, and linguistic studies relevant to this thesis are discussed.

#### 2.4.1 Overview

In the current study, the content on Facebook (posts and comments) and review websites (customer reviews) are conceived of as promotional messages. From marketing and business perspectives, posts and comments on companies’ Facebook pages and online customer product reviews on review websites could be thought of as promotional messages for two reasons. The first could be explained in terms of Mangold and Faulds’ (2009, p.358) categorisation of various social media platforms such as Facebook and review websites as components of the ‘promotional mix’, explained earlier in Section 2.2. Since companies’ and customers’ communication occurs on such social media, the former on Facebook only, such online material could also be viewed as promotional. Mangold and Faulds’ classification is in line with Chen and Xie’s (2008, p.477) argument for review websites as promotional elements of the ‘marketing communication mix’, discussed in Section 2.2 above. Chen and Xie explain that since online product reviews tend to be based on users’ opinions about and experiences with products, customer reviews can be seen as ‘free sales assistants’ to help potential customers in their purchase.\(^{14}\) The second evidence of the promotional nature of the online published content of companies and customers is pointed out by marketing and business scholars (e.g. Buttle 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Kimmel and Kitchen 2014; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Petrescu and Korgaonkar 2011), who consider electronic word-of-mouth to be equivalent to offline word-of-mouth. Kimmel and Kitchen’s (2014) research reports that marketing and business studies seem to have no consensus on what can be called word-of-mouth. In the present research, I adopt

\(^{14}\) Here, the authors seem to exclude the possibility that negative evaluations might have an opposite effect.
Kim et al.’s (2001) definition of *word-of-mouth* for its broad scope to include both companies’ and customers’ produced-content. *Word-of-mouth* is ‘the interpersonal communication between two or more individuals, such as members of a reference group or a customer and a salesperson’ (*ibid*, p.276). This definition also reflects the business side of such interaction, in that since it occurs in specialised domains (Facebook pages and review websites) run by companies (product manufacturers and third-party companies, respectively), such content could be assumed to be in relation to products, i.e. promotional.

Mangold and Faulds (2009, p.357) argue that the hybridity of social media platforms comes from combining the conventional affordance of allowing companies to communicate directly with customers in company-to-customer interaction with the new potential of one-to-one communication in consumer-to-consumer relations. In addition, this hybridity is ascribed to the employment of various technologies for instant interaction and multimodality tools (*ibid*, p.359). Mangold and Faulds’ view about the hybrid nature of social media is similar to that of linguists such as Thurlow (2012), for example. Thurlow (*ibid*, pp.4-5) points out that one of the ‘mythologies’ of social media or Web 2.0 is its technological affordances, e.g. ‘networking, sharing, multimodality, user-generated content’, which in fact have their origin in Web 1.0, and thus such technologies are not completely new. However, he suggests that the technologies of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 are not exactly the same, but in Web 2.0 the technologies are more intensive and foregrounded than they are in Web 1.0 (*ibid*, p.18).

Before discussing some linguistic research on Facebook and review websites, a brief description of the social media platform of Facebook is given. Facebook is claimed to be the world’s largest social media platform in terms of the number of its users, which amounted to 1.71 billion for the first half of 2016 (Smith 2016; Statista 2016). Although Facebook has emerged as a platform for establishing and enhancing social relations among persons online, the promotional facets of Facebook manifest in a number of ways. Facebook could be thought of in terms of online visibility as a ‘me-marketing’ tool (Caers *et al.* 2013, p.988), i.e. for displaying one’s self through the information a user feeds into

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15 For the comparison of the technological affordances of Facebook and the review websites of this study, see Section 4.3.1.
her/his own profile. Thurlow (2012, p.4) sees social media platforms such as Facebook as a means for ‘stylization of Self and Other’. On this platform, presenting one’s self as interactive is described as a way of controlling fans through illusions of direct interaction, as in the case of celebrities or other elite figures, for example, which results in ‘pseudo-sociality’ (ibid, p.20). In this thesis, the communication between customers and celebrities is explored. Thurlow (ibid, p.18) advises against taking for granted claims celebrated by social media about interactivity, participation, and sociality. This point suggests that there is a good opportunity for social media platforms to be exploited for purposes that could differ from those for which they are initially introduced.

Another promotional side of Facebook could be thought of in terms of its movement into the business domain, which manifests through companies’ creation of fan or brand pages (Caers et al. 2013, p.992).16 In this thesis, such pages are called companies’ Facebook pages, to be distinguished from fan pages created and administered by ordinary users. On their Facebook pages, companies can post content (verbal posts and/or photos, videos) and encourage customers to interact. On these companies’ Facebook pages, when a user in a networked group likes or joins them, that user becomes a fan. What companies benefit from is that when that fan comments, likes, or shares any of the content of the companies’ pages, this user’s interaction will automatically be visible as ‘news feed’ to her/his networked friends (ibid, p.984). Thus, the content of the companies’ pages will disseminate to the members of that user’s group (ibid; Kwok and Yu 2013), who might not be members of a company’s or brand’s fan page. In addition, businesses such as the review websites of the current study also start to include the ‘Like’ button on their websites and to allow users to log into these review websites through a Facebook account (Kwok and Yu ibid). This strategy allows the networked friends and ‘Likers’ of companies or brands to come together on the same media platform. This also means that Facebook seems not to be confined to personal and social friend-to-friend relations and communication. Rather, Facebook has become a ‘business-to-consumer communication tool’ (ibid, p.86) for managing company-to-customer business and professional relations. In spite of the wide use of Facebook and

16 Naylor et al.’s (2012, p.108) study documents that ‘Likers’ of companies’ or brand Facebook pages were first named ‘fans’ and the pages were ‘fan pages’. However, after introducing the ‘Like’ button, ‘fans’ have become ‘Likers’.
review websites, linguistic studies on these platforms are rather rare, especially in terms of promotional discourse, as discussed below.

2.4.2 Promotion on Facebook

To the best of my knowledge, Hunt’s (2015) research is the most recent and seems the only study that investigates Facebook posts as promotional discourse. Hunt’s research is a qualitative study of posts from two health organisations’ (one commercial and the other charitable) Facebook pages on diabetes. He multimodally analyses the verbal and visual elements used for representing and constructing relations between these two health organisations and the users of their Facebook pages. The study takes a critical perspective on studying Facebook posts, where it equates the purpose of posts with that of adverts for their role in promoting the organisations’ social activities, for example fundraising (ibid). As stated earlier, describing posts as adverts is somewhat confusing because activities such as fundraising could be seen as aspects of public relations. The study finds that relationships are established with customers through address forms (second-person pronouns and names) and through gaze and gestures in images (ibid). It concludes that health companies’ Facebook posts are hybridised through verbal and visual features known to be characteristics of adverts, e.g. synthetic personalisation and problem-solution pattern, which are used to establish relations between the organisations and their subscribers (ibid, p.84). In the current thesis, the extent to which the interviewees’ perception of visuals realises synthetic personalisation is studied.

2.4.3 Promotion in online customer reviews

A recent work in the field of linguistics on online customer reviews, and to the best of my knowledge the only one thus far, is Vásquez’s book *The Discourse of Online Consumer Reviews* (2014), which adopts an eclectic approach. The positivity of this approach could be seen in terms of allowing Vásquez to tackle different aspects of customer reviews through combining methods of corpus linguistics, pragmatics, and narrative analysis. It is a quantitative-qualitative work, which studies online customer reviews of hospitality,

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17 See Section 5.3.3 for the definition of *synthetic personalisation.*
products, films, and recipes from different online review websites by classifying goods into two types: ‘search’, such as appliances, and ‘experience’, such as films. This categorisation is based on the tangibility and the possibility or not of assessing goods’ features before buying them (Vásquez 2014, p.7). Although in Vásquez’s study some reference is made to the different technological affordances of the review websites of her sampled data, her work does not apply any model to show the possible similarities and/or differences among the affordances of those review websites. In this thesis, the medium characteristics of Facebook and the review websites are studied.

Vásquez’s analysis of the different linguistic resources that reviewers use to construct their identity in their online reviews shows that reviewers tend to represent demographic and lifestyle identities (ibid, p.94). The discursive identity construction in promotional discourse is an aspect explored in the present thesis. Vásquez identifies the use of ‘intertextuality’, or what Bhatia (2010) and Fairclough (2003) call the internal relations between one text and other texts through reference or use of direct speech, for example. In terms of ‘interdiscursivity’ as a form of genre hybridity, Vásquez’s analysis demonstrates that some online product reviews tend to employ features of adverts, e.g. suggestions and slogan-like phrases (2014, p.124-126). Vásquez argues that

[T]he evaluative language that we (as private individuals and consumers) use is inevitably shaped by the discourses of media advertising that surround us. As endorsers of a product or service, individuals who write reviews appropriate elements of these advertising discourses and, in doing so, they “sell” their readers on the benefit of products which they support or believe in (ibid, p.125).

She adds that ‘some reviews sound like product endorsements or advertisements, since that is essentially what they are’ (ibid). Here, Vásquez clearly refers to the business and promotional side of online customer reviews. But the limitation of these arguments is that in adverts, public figures’ or even ordinary persons’ endorsements are mainly positive, while customer reviews as endorsements could be positive and/or negative. In addition, as customer reviews tend to be authored by ordinary people rather than by advertising experts, as discussed in Section 4.3.2, the language used in reviews could differ from that of
adverts, i.e. the language of adverts can be assumed to be more carefully crafted than that of customer reviews.

Vásquez’s work does not seem to be interested in exposing ideologies embedded in the use of social media platforms (review websites). This might explain why her study seems to be supportive of the idea that online customer reviews are empowering both review readers and reviewers through ‘the democratization’ of knowledge (2014, p.187). In Vásquez’s view, the authority of review readers seems to be expanded to include ordinary reviewers to their own circle of information, which tends to be largely restricted to a group of experts (ibid). Thus, readers could count on the expertise of their peers. In relation to reviewers’ empowerment, reviewers can write reviews and publically express their opinions and experiences (ibid). This perspective on social media platforms and their discourse seems encouraging. However, the question remains if textual authority in terms of articulating opinions and expertise is the same as economic and political power. Vásquez’s opinion could be thought of as only part of the story. From the viewpoint of social studies, the other face of social media seems ideological. Social media platforms tend to disguise their ideologies under notions of ‘participatory culture’ (Van Dijck 2009, p.42) and ‘active audience’ (Bird 2011). In contrast to Vásquez’s (2014) research, which disregards reviewers’ communication with their readers, the customer-customer and the company-customer interactions are examined in this thesis.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter shows the tendency of most studies to focus on language or images and to neglect the way audiences interpret the visual messages. I have explained some concepts that this thesis adopts, and that promotion involves advertising rather than vice versa. I argue that in addition to adverts or advertising discourse, the material on social media platforms should also be investigated as promotional discourse, since social media are viewed as promotional vehicles from marketing and business perspectives. This chapter surveys different approaches to advertising and promotional discourse including studies on the emerging discourse from social media, although they tend to be rare. In the current thesis, the analysis of the promotional discourse types does not use the information-
persuasion scale because it seems rather blurry. The focus of the present thesis is on the following main areas: genre identification, representational resources, and multimodal analysis of image interpretations.

Before generically analysing the four discourse types of the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews, explaining some situational features of these discourse types seems necessary for the analyses of the following chapters, especially for the interpretation of the use of the linguistic patterns. Because promotional discourse is likely to take different forms, attempting to show its structural elements in terms of the prototypical structure of adverts does not appear practical. This is because such layout does not allow the inclusion of other promotional discourse types such as online discourse types from social media. Rather, a genre approach, which manifests and interprets the moves that could occur in discourse, could show the comparability of various discourse types, and thus could indicate whether discourse types could be classified as examples of a certain genre.

Some implicit ideologies in promotional discourse and its hosting media could be revealed through investigating the representational strategies used for the various participants involved in the mediated promotional discourse types of this thesis. A study of promotional discourse arguably has to include viewers’ perception of visuals and their readings. This is because the attempt to impose one interpretation or reading on visuals and multimodal discourse does not seem to be plausible to material from different genres. In the current research, the meanings communicated by language and visuals are seen as complementary rather than in terms of main-subordinate. Therefore, the linguistic patterns identified in the discourse types are compared with the respondents’ interpretations of visual resources.

This chapter concludes that promotional discourse (offline and online) employs various features (lexical and non-lexical), which cannot be accounted for in-depth through studying only one semiotic mode (language or images). Rather, the patterns of each semiotic mode need to be studied. For this reason, it seems that using one analytical framework only is not enough to capture such different resources. Instead multiple models need to be combined to exhibit the diversity of the features of promotional discourse, and hence its complexity. The next chapter sets out to explain the different frameworks adopted in the current thesis.
CHAPTER 3: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with explaining the general research design of the thesis, including both data collection and analysis. It begins with the thesis research questions in Section 3.2. The rationale of the research questions is given in Section 3.3. The reason for choosing the product types is discussed in Section 3.4. Following this, the segmentation of the selected brands in the present thesis and the parameters that studies use in classifying brands are dealt with in Section 3.5. Described in Section 3.6 are the different types of datasets and sources, sampling procedures used for gathering the data, and ethical issues. The rationale for the various models adopted is presented in Section 3.7. Next, the multiple frameworks, along with their application, the challenges encountered in the analyses, and their resolutions are explained in Section 3.8. This chapter closes, in Section 3.9, with an outline of the next analytical chapters.

3.2 Thesis research questions

This thesis analyses the five promotional discourse types of the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, customer reviews, and interviews. The main focus of the study is drawing a comparison between these different discourse types and showing the complexity of this discourse. The following research questions are addressed in this thesis:

1. What situational and generic features characterise the sampled print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews of this thesis?
2. What does the analysis of the social actor model show about the representational patterns employed in these discourse types? And what does the variation in these patterns suggest about authority relations in terms of customers’ empowerment?

\[18\] Studies on Facebook tend to investigate posts only (e.g., Hunt 2015; Kwok and Yu 2013), and thus comments are excluded. It is for this reason that here, posts and comments are mostly investigated as a discourse in their own right, although they are still related to Facebook. The difference in authoring could be added as another reason for this separation (see Section 3.6.3).
3. What does the visual-verbal analysis of the interviewees’ perception of some visual resources reveal about the meanings of these options and the characteristics of promotional discourse? And how do the linguistic choices in the informants’ interpretations compare with those found, particularly in the print adverts and Facebook posts?

3.3 Rationale of the research questions

The rationale of the above research questions is that each one concentrates on some aspects of the complexity of promotional discourse, where these questions make it possible to focus more closely on this discourse in terms of its situational, generic, linguistic, and visual characteristics. Thus, more aspects of the diversity of this discourse can be investigated through these questions. Another reason is that, unlike previous studies that tend to investigate promotional discourse types from one medium or more without highlighting their similarities and differences, these research questions also focus on comparing more than one promotional discourse type from online and offline media, where this aspect allows for the inclusion of more discourse types such as those from social media.

In light of the studies surveyed in Chapter 2, one dimension of the complexity of promotional discourse is the different forms it can take. Thus, studying the structural components of online and offline discourse would not tell much about the comparability and genre membership of discourse types (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews). But these questions make it possible to identify the situational characteristics of these discourse types and to show their comparability in generic terms, and thus include more discourse types in promotional genres.

Moreover, the reason for the above questions is that, studies tend to concentrate mainly on customers’ representations, for example, and thus other participants’ representations, e.g. endorsers, remain backgrounded. In contrast, these research questions allow for studying the representational strategies used for the participants involved in these promotional discourse types in terms of discursive constructed roles, identities and relations, and thus manifesting another aspect of the diversity of this discourse. Additionally, in their relation to ideologies, presentational patterns allow some ideological meanings in this discourse to
be uncovered. Finally, although one aspect of the complexity of promotional discourse identified earlier is the multimodal (verbal-visual) characteristic of this discourse, research tends to focus mostly on one semiotic mode. These research questions allow investigating resources of language and images, and attention is also paid to audience perception, an aspect largely overlooked by other studies.

3.4 Why cosmetics and cars?

Two product types are the focus of this study, namely cosmetics and cars. These products are selected in particular for their high sales and advertising expenditure, according to the Advertising Statistics Yearbook (2005, pp.184, 201). This means that these products are salient in the market. Although cosmetics products tend to have an obvious gender association, being chiefly aimed at women, cars seem less obviously gendered. Here, both product types are not approached from a differential gender perspective, where gender ideologies lie beyond the central concern of this thesis.

However, this is not to claim that gender ideologies are not found in promotional discourse. Instead, scholars such as Cameron and Panovic (2014, p.76), Cook (2001, p.117), Koller (2012, p.32), and Thornborrow (1998, p.271) argue that gender still works implicitly through representations (verbal or visual) in this discourse, something that might result in reinforcing gender stereotypes in society. As Page (2003, p.211) puts it, ‘gender itself is seen as culturally constructed and related to contextual issues in a complex and multiple manner [sic]’. What matters the most, as explained above, is the prominence of these products in the UK marketplace. Thus, gender is sparingly referred to in this thesis, specifically in relation to products’ functionalisation and endorsement (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2).

3.5 Product categorisation

Although it would be extremely difficult to include all the brands of cosmetics and cars due to their very large number, there seems to be a necessity to categorise some brands as examples of cosmetics and cars so as to reflect, to a reasonable extent, the social spectrum of the market of cosmetics and cars. However, this thesis does not claim that the chosen
products are representative of the whole product categories or the brands of cosmetics and cars. To show some kind of diversity of brand types, a number of brands were selected. The six brands of Chanel, L’Oréal Paris, and Max Factor for cosmetics, and Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, and Fiat for cars have been selected. These brands have been in the market of cosmetics and cars for a long time. For example, Fiat was founded in 1899 (Rothacher 2004 p.226), Mercedes-Benz in 1901 (Strach and Everett 2006, p.112), L’Oréal Paris and Max Factor in 1909 (Tungate 2011, pp.56, 98), and Toyota in 1937 (Rothacher 2004, p.209).

The prices of the brand products, the history of a brand in the market (which is based on some other research), and what some studies show about consumer perception of a brand seem to be widely accessible data, which could also be thought of as reasonably objective criteria to classify the selected brands. This is more straightforward and clear than, for example, investigating the sentimental appeal of brands for consumers, or identity representation through brands, aspects that are out of the scope of this thesis. Thus, the brands are categorised into three classes: i) expensive and prestigious, ii) moderate and rather affordable, and iii) low-priced and modest. Chanel and Mercedes-Benz have been selected in the first group, L’Oréal Paris and Toyota in the second, and Max Factor and Fiat in the third. Segmenting brands could not be thought of as an anomalous procedure since this approach has been widely applied, although primarily in studies of marketing, business, and management, as explained further below.

Sampling brands purely on the basis of price does not seem to be completely straightforward, however, as Aaker (1991, p.121) has observed. Nevertheless, scholars tend to classify brands in terms of price and what brands signify to consumers. Aaker (1991, p.99) argues that consumers normally take the extrinsic marker of price as a major index of quality followed by the brand name. Similarly, Ding et al.’s (2010, p.79) and Gabor and Granger’s (1979, p.590) studies conclude that customers associate quality with price, i.e. the higher the price, the better the quality is assumed to be. In their analyses of car brands, Baltas and Saridakis also find that car brand prices are mainly attributed to the cars’ functional features, such as fuel consumption and airbags, for example (2009, p.149), and that the brand name is an additional factor that seems to affect car prices (ibid 2010, p.291). Furthermore, the car model also has some effect on price (ibid 2009, p.148).
According to an online brand ranking directory, Chanel was classified amongst the world’s luxury brands in 2009 (Brown 2009), and both Chanel and Mercedes-Benz occur among the ‘UK’s 100 most desired brands’ with respect to consumer satisfaction and aspiration to have products from these brands (Clear 2011). Riezebos et al. (2003, p.199) point out that prestigious brands such as Mercedes-Benz are high in price and perceived quality, while Toyota is a mid-range brand, which promotes itself as concerned with offering cars at ‘reasonable’ prices (Rothacher 2004, p.210). In contrast, Fiat is known for its ‘cute cheap’ image of cars (ibid, 236), i.e. a rather low brand image. In the market of cosmetics, Chanel has the image of an expensive brand (Tungate 2011, p.110), while Max Factor is described as a ‘mass merchandising brand’ (Kumar 2005, p.1265).

With respect to the interplay of price and quality as an element of brand association, Aaker (1991, p.120) classifies brands of shampoos, hotels, and beers across a number of categories, i.e. five or even more according to a product or service. Aaker’s five categories of beer brands are ‘prestige’, ‘super-premium’, ‘mainstream premium’, ‘economy or price brand’, and ‘store’ brand (ibid). The ‘prestige’ segment is characterised by the highest price and quality, followed by the ‘super-premium’ and ‘mainstream premium’, which are also of high quality and price. In contrast, the ‘economy or price brand’ category is described as lower in price than the previous three classes, and the ‘store’ brand is at the bottom end of the market. For Aaker, such segmentation can also occur in terms of brand names as implying price (ibid, p.122). The limitation of Aaker’s segmentation is that although he clearly states that quality is subjective, he does not support his classification with customer perception of brand quality through interviews or questionnaires, for instance (ibid, p.86). Moreover, if a brand name is not very recognised, categorising it into a segment would not be easy.

Based on the car brands in the European Union, Baltas and Saridakis (2009, p.148) investigate the difference in car prices using three aspects: car functional attributes, car model segments, and brand names. In terms of brand names, they classify cars in estimated price terms into the four categories of ‘economy and value’, ‘mainstream, mass-market’, ‘up-market’, and ‘luxury and high-end’, i.e. from the lower to higher in price. According to Baltas and Saridakis’ (ibid, p.148) study, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, and Fiat tend to occur in
different segments, i.e. the ‘luxury and high-end’, ‘up-market’, and ‘mainstream, mass-market’ sections, respectively. It is important to note that Mercedes-Benz has Smart as a brand of its own, which occurs in the ‘economy and value’ segment (ibid). Moreover, Toyota has Lexus as a luxury brand, and Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, and Maserati are all luxury brands owned by Fiat. However, each of these luxury brands seems to be perceived as if separate from the parent company (Toyota and Fiat) (Strach and Everett 2006, p.109). I prefer Riezebos et al.’s (2003) segmenting label for Toyota as ‘midrange’ to that of Baltas and Saridakis (2009). This is because Baltas and Saridakis seem to be the only authors who describe Toyota as ‘upmarket’. Additionally, based on Strach and Everett’s (2006) study, Lexus, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, and Maserati are seen as luxury brands; however, Baltas and Saridakis (2009) group the above brands including Toyota as ‘up-market’. Thus, Baltas and Saridakis’ research does not appear to distinguish clearly the segment in which Toyota occurs from that of these top-end brands. From the above research on brand categorisation, it does not seem clear how studies work out their labels other than taking price as a parameter for such segmentations. Although I use labels that seem comparable with those of the above scholars, I supplemented my categorisation with price search and also took audience perception into account through the interviews conducted for the dataset collected for Chapter 6, as explained below.

In the field of luxury markets, although luxury brands are known for products that are ‘unique and special’ in features, quality (Kang et al. 2014), and have high prices (Shukla 2012), luxury brands themselves are hierarchically sub-categorised into ‘charismatic’ or top, ‘elitist’ or middle, and ‘democratic’ or bottom (Kang et al. 2014, p.120). This classification of luxury brands relates to consumer assessment of the ‘benefit’, ‘experience’, and ‘physical’ values, respectively, that brands are perceived to offer to consumers (ibid, p.115), or in Shukla’s (2012, p.277-280) terms the ‘social’, ‘personal’, and ‘functional’ values, respectively. Based on previous research, Kang et al. (2014, p.120) describe the ‘physical’ value as relating to such characteristics as ‘practicality, quality and uniqueness’, the ‘experience’ value as referring to ‘hedonism, materialism, and sentimentalism’, and the ‘benefit’ value as showing the self, one’s authority, and status. Most of the features that relate to the three values in Kang et al.’s study are also used in Shukla’s research. But for Shukla (2012, p.581), the physical or the ‘functional’ value of
brands also occurs through having price and quality as one criterion, i.e. price-quality. Kang et al. (2014, p.129) conclude that consumers see Mercedes-Benz as occurring in the highest section as a ‘charismatic’ luxury brand.

From the above discussion, it seems clear that models and studies tend to segment brands using more than one category. However, none of them clearly specifies or makes reference to the approximate price range or the value difference between one category and another to allow researchers to position a brand in a specific segment. As stated above, based on the price, history, and other studies’ findings of consumer opinion about some of the selected brands of the current thesis, I decided to classify brands into top-end, middle-range, and bottom-end of the market. I am aware that a brand has products as only one of its components and that a brand involves other elements, as stated earlier in Section 2.2, which also relate to the financial shares of a company. Similarly, products of the same brand are likely to vary in terms of price, which relates to products’ ‘functional’ or ‘physical’ features, in Kang et al.’s (2014) and Shukla’s (2012) terms, and how consumers of a certain society would evaluate them. In relation to the British context, in the interviews carried out for the dataset of visual perception in Chapter 6 of the present thesis, the respondents were asked for their opinion about the six brands. Although the sample is very small, all 21 interviewees were able to identify the six chosen brands and to evaluate them. Out of the 21 informants, 15 of the interviewees’ answers (71%) show similarity to the above segmentation of the cosmetics brands, and 18 of their responses (85%) seem to be parallel to the above stated classification of the car brands.

To support the brand categorisation adopted in this thesis and to resolve the issue more practically, a search for a comparable product type for all three selected cosmetics and car brands was carried out online and, as far as possible, I tried to ensure that the chosen products matched those of the current data. It is of relevance to state that prices on websites are very likely to change as they could be influenced by certain occasions in different times of the year, for example product recent launch or New Year, the latter especially with cosmetics, and sometimes the online prices might differ from the actual prices in stores. Thus, price searches of the companies’ websites and those of retailers cannot be claimed to give a precise assessment of the brands themselves, but at least provide a perspective on the
price range of some products of these six brands. For cars, the comparison was done through browsing the online price range guide for each company, when possible, to specify a common product, and through consulting the prices on the car companies’ websites (Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, and Fiat). In contrast, the popular Boots.com online store was visited for the cosmetics brands since the companies’ websites do not directly sell their products online. At the time of searching, it seemed possible to identify the five-door hatchback cars of Mercedes-Benz as more expensive (£19,990-£32,670) than those of the same type produced by Toyota (£10,995-£26,995) and Fiat (£9,510-£17,925). Shown in Table 3.1 are the prices of the five-door hatchback cars based on the prices displayed on the companies’ websites. Although the prices of Fiat cars are a bit lower than Toyota prices, the product types of Fiat seem more varied than those of the other two brands.

Table 3.1 Brand price comparison of five-door hatchback cars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car brand</th>
<th>Five-door hatchback car type</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes-Benz</td>
<td>A-Class</td>
<td>£19,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-Class</td>
<td>£22,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-Class Electric</td>
<td>£32,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td>Yaris</td>
<td>£10,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auris</td>
<td>£14,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prius</td>
<td>£23,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-Seat Prius+</td>
<td>£26,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiat</td>
<td>Panda</td>
<td>£9,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punto</td>
<td>£11,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500L</td>
<td>£13,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panda 4x4</td>
<td>£14,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500L Trekking</td>
<td>£17,925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the price ranges of an example of a cosmetics product, namely lipsticks, shared by the brands, the researcher observes that Chanel lipsticks are the most expensive (£22.00–

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19 Car prices also seem to vary in terms of their functional features, for example horsepower, and the further sub-categorisation of some car models. Such prices are not presented here because they seem to be related to customers’ preferences. Car search does not yield worthy results through the BBC Top Gear website because car models for the three brands are not all shown, and thus its results are excluded.

20 The product prices presented are from the UK websites of the car companies and UK Boots for cosmetics.
£26.00) in comparison with L’Oréal Paris and Max Factor, as illustrated in Table 3.2.  

From the table below, the difference in the prices of L’Oréal Paris lipsticks (£6.99-£12.99) and Max Factor products (£5.99-£10.99) does not seem very high. But compared with the other two brands, L’Oréal Paris has diverse lipsticks, i.e. 23 different lipstick types.

Table 3.2 Comparison of cosmetics brands by lipstick price

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosmetics brand</th>
<th>Product count</th>
<th>Price range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chanel</td>
<td>14 lipsticks</td>
<td>£22.00-£26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Oréal Paris</td>
<td>23 lipsticks</td>
<td>£6.99-£12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Factor</td>
<td>13 lipsticks</td>
<td>£5.99-£10.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Data collection

**3.6.1 Overview of data collection methods and sampling**

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, promotion is a wide phenomenon and the range of its discourse is wider than being restricted to one discourse type. From my perspective, one discourse type from one media is not enough to give an insight into promotional discourse types and their linguistic and non-linguistic strategies. In this thesis, collecting data from various sources requires more than one sampling procedure (scientific and judgmental) that relates to the quantitative and qualitative research methods, where this can be seen as a limitation. However, based on the data types required and the exploratory perspective of this thesis, studies such as the current one could use these sampling techniques in complementary ways, even if generalisable findings are not ultimately possible. It is important to note that for consistency reasons, the focus is given to British data sources (magazines, Facebook pages, review websites, and interviewees).

With regard to sampling strategy, a variety of approaches are available. Page’s (2014) study of Twitter and Vásquez’s (2014) investigation of customer reviews use random sampling. Collecting data for some months is used in Zhou’s (2012) study on advertorials and Hunt’s (2015) research on Facebook posts. As recent time, I specified the years 2009-2013 for collecting adverts and customer reviews, and the first six months of the year 2013 for

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21 The results of the lipstick comparison are not displayed in the table because each company has several lipstick types.
sampling Facebook posts and comments. This strategy is followed in social science studies for collecting existing data of, for example, media discourse (Bryman 2012, p.293). Because studying the whole population of a certain discourse type seems impossible to carry out, especially in a study such as this thesis, this technique is used to make the data collection and analysis manageable and to focus on data from recent time. In addition, it would be costly for researchers with limited resources to study the whole data population. Stratified random sampling, as based on the unbiased probability of the occurrence of a certain phenomenon, aims at a representative sample (Black 1999, p.121); this sampling strategy tends to be mostly associated with quantitative studies whose goal is to generalise results (Dörnyei 2007, pp.97, 212). However, because the datasets of the present thesis are not very directly comparable and are imbalanced in data size, the main concern is not to attempt to create a representative sample and obtain generalisable findings from it. Rather, the aim is to explore and identify the patterns that occur in the different datasets and to show the comparative features among the collected datasets. This reason seems to be in line with Bauer and Aarts’ (2000, p.22) statement that ‘[t]he rationale of representative sampling is useful for social research, but it does not fit all research situations’. Factors such as time and money have a key role in data collection (Bryman, 2012, p.11), and to have a ‘perfect’ (i.e. precisely representative) sample is not always possible to achieve (Black 1999, p.117).

To study the actual or potential customers’ perception of visual resources in promotional visuals and multimodal discourse, this requires compiling a different dataset, collected through semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of investigating the extent to which culture could influence the participants’ interpretations of visuals and multimodal discourse, as claimed by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual analysis, the interviewees are all British English native speakers. The convenience sampling procedure, through which qualitative and quantitative research data can be collected and which is known for the practicality of collecting available participants (Dörnyei 2007, p.129), was employed in gathering the interview dataset. But, once again, the limitation of this non-probabilistic sampling procedure is the difficulty of having a representative sample, and so generalising the findings beyond the scope of a study is a challenge (Black 1999, p.125). Edley and Litosseliti (2010, p.173) argue that the data
collected from interviews can be described as ‘indicative’ through providing individuals’ understanding of a certain phenomenon, even though such data might lack the representative aspect. The researcher thinks the limitation of non-representativeness does not pose a serious problem, as the objective of the current thesis is to show the various opinions in relation to the perception of visuals and multimodal discourse, and therefore to indicate that people's interpretations are likely to differ even within a rather small group of informants. The five datasets of the adverts, posts, comments, reviews, and interviews, which were collected from print magazines, Facebook pages, review websites, and one-to-one interviews, are explained in the following subsections, and the total of each sample is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Breakdown of collected datasets and their sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium/Source</th>
<th>Collected material</th>
<th>Sampling method</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Cosmetics</th>
<th>Car</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Word count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print/ magazines adverts</td>
<td>stratified</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>11427</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/ Facebook pages posts</td>
<td>stratified</td>
<td>(January-June) 2013</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>13139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/ Facebook pages comments and replies from commenters</td>
<td>stratified</td>
<td>(January-June) 2013</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>10556</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/ review websites customer reviews and responses</td>
<td>stratified</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/face-to-face interviews interviewees’ responses</td>
<td>convenience</td>
<td>(August-December) 2014</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38928</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Print adverts from magazines

It is possible to obtain a complete sample in the sense of including all adverts from a single magazine over a specified period. Black (1999, p.119) points to this technique in terms of assigning a certain time to sample data from the whole population, which is a form of stratified sampling (ibid, p.121). In this thesis, all the print adverts for the previously six selected cosmetics and car brands were collected from the monthly fashion magazine ELLE UK and the monthly car magazine WHAT CAR?, respectively, from 2009-2013. The
rationale for collecting all adverts for that time was their manageable size for manual coding. In line with studies such as Oyama (1998) and Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985), which investigate adverts from print press and tend to focus on the circulation of publications, the circulation of these two magazines is taken into account. I have chosen these magazines because they are quite prominent in their respective markets, with high circulation figures. In other words, these magazines seem visible as they tend to sell well, which suggests a good number of people are likely to see their adverts. According to Press Gazette, during the first six months of 2012, *ELLE* had an overall circulation of 189,568, and the total circulation of *WHAT CAR?* was 72,384 (Ponsford 2012). The collected print adverts for cosmetics and cars result in 251 adverts in total. But sometimes an advertising campaign for a product might last more than one month, and in such situations the repeated adverts were discounted. As shown in Table 3.3 above, the outcome of this filtering results in a total of 212 print adverts for cosmetics and cars.

### 3.6.3 Posts and comments from Facebook

Discussed earlier in Section 2.4 are the promotional and economic manifestations of Facebook and its role for companies and brands. I also note that despite being a promotional domain, its discourse seems to be rather understudied from a linguistic perspective. The popularity of Facebook in terms of the huge number of its users over the world is the primary reason for gathering its discourse types (posts and comments).

Some studies (e.g. Laursen 2009) report the existence of fake Facebook pages, which could be due to the public nature of Facebook and its free accounts. To avoid any possible confusion between companies’ Facebook pages and fake pages, including communities and pages that are not officially managed by the selected companies of the six specified brands, a number of procedures were taken. The chosen companies’ Facebook pages have a white tick in a light blue circle on the cover photo of these selected pages, as an authenticity signal (Facebook Help Centre). For more confirmation, the ‘About’ section seems also necessary, since it includes information about a page’s official administration, the company’s foundation year, purpose of the page, and sometimes guidelines for interaction. Additionally, the details of the companies’ official websites, provided in the print
magazines, are also matched with the website addresses given in the ‘About’ section of the selected Facebook pages. Information in the ‘Timeline’, which indicates the regularity of posting, and more importantly the number of ‘Likers’, i.e. ‘Likes’ the pages had, which are noted by studies (e.g. Hunt 2015, p.74; Lam 2013, p.15), as a signal of the popularity of a platform, were also useful guide to a Facebook page’s activity.\footnote{Recently, the ‘Timeline’ on the selected Facebook pages does not seem to be available anymore.}

The Facebook posts and comments were gathered from the six official Facebook pages of Chanel, L’Oréal Paris, Max Factor, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, and Fiat for the first six months of the year 2013. The sampling period for these two datasets is slightly different from that of the print adverts, i.e. 2009-2013. This is because from 2009 until late in 2012, some of the selected brand companies did not have a Facebook page (e.g. L’Oréal Paris and Toyota first had a Facebook page in 2010, and Mercedes-Benz in 2012). The stratified sampling (Black 1999) of the cosmetics and car posts occurred through collecting every other post, i.e. half of the published posts on the pages from January to June of 2013. The reason for sampling half of the posts was their large number, which did not seem very easy to manage in manual coding. This resulted in a total of 511 posts. Although this sampling procedure is normally used for representativeness, here I am trying to remove biases in the selection of this dataset, where possible, and to give some sense of this data from an early time of this decade. Thus, this dataset could not be thought of as fully representative due to the recent technological improvements in Facebook facilities.

Because Chanel’s Facebook page is not mainly specialised in cosmetics, postings are not limited to cosmetics products. This Facebook page also tends to include posts on fashion, news of fashion shows, perfumes, accessories such as jewellery and watches. Thus, all posts from the Chanel Facebook page for products other than cosmetics were excluded, since cosmetics products along with cars are the data focus of this thesis, as mentioned in Section 3.4 above. This exclusion decreases the number of Chanel posts significantly, and therefore a fourth page, i.e. Chanel Cosmetics Facebook page, was included that also belongs to Chanel. Although this page is mainly concerned with beauty products, it cannot be used alone for sampling posts for the Chanel brand. At the time of data collection, Chanel Cosmetics Facebook page was rather new (created in 2011), and did not seem to be
very active in its posting in comparison with the other six pages explored in this thesis. The sampling procedures followed for the posts and comments from the six chosen Facebook pages in terms of time and strategy are also used for the material from Chanel Cosmetics Facebook page. From the seven selected Facebook pages of the six specified brands, the overall count of the post sampling resulted in 468 posts, as displayed in Table 3.3 above.

To make the manual analysis of the dataset of comments manageable, the Facebook comments with their attached replies were collected from one-third of the already sampled posts of the seven pages for the specified brands, i.e. sampling all comments of a post. This was followed because the comments were very large in number and the researcher did not use any software for automatic data gathering. This sampling resulted in 1042 comments and commenter replies. For consistency reasons, comments and replies that appeared in languages other than English; as promoting one’s own business or products; or asking other users to ‘Like’ a commenter’s Facebook page were discounted. Put differently, comments and replies other than opinions, advice, and actual interaction among customers and between customers and companies were deemed irrelevant in the current thesis. After this filtering, the resulting sample came to a total of 806 comments and commenter replies, given in Table 3.3 above.

Although posts, comments, and replies appear on the same platform (Facebook), i.e. they are of the same genre chain, unlike review websites, Facebook tends to include three layers of interaction. Genre chains are ‘different genres which are regularly linked together, involving systematic transformations from genre to genre’ (Fairclough 2003, p.31). This means that comments and replies would not occur without posts, as noted by Zhang and Vásquez (2014, p.56) in their analysis of hotel responses to customer reviews. However here, due to the different authoring and sometimes different exchanges that occur in posts, comments, and comment replies, I decided to deal with posts and companies’ replies as belonging to companies so as to be comparable with adverts, and comments and replies as those for customers so as to be compared with the customer reviews and their responses. There are 41 companies’ replies to customer comments on Facebook, which are not added to the comment or post total. Although treated here as being authored by companies, they are investigated with respect to nomination only due to the specificity of their address, i.e.
mostly targeted at one commenter (see Section 3.8.3 for statistical procedures used for companies’ replies).

3.6.4 Customer reviews from review websites

As explained earlier in Section 2.4, the role of review websites and their online customer reviews as electronic word-of-mouth has been widely recognised from marketing and economic perspectives. Based on the premise that ‘[t]here’s no such thing as bad publicity’ (Vásquez 2014, p.2), Vásquez reports some claims about sales increases even when customer reviews are seen as negative. Unlike some review websites, which seem to draw the attention of linguists and non-linguists, for example Amazon (Chen and Xie 2008; Skalicky 2013; Vazquez 2014), Epinions (Mackiewicz 2010; Taboada 2011), and TripAdvisor (Vazquez 2011; 2014), the review websites of the current thesis seem to be rather understudied. To the best of my knowledge, Pollach’s (2005; 2006) studies are the only research on reviewcentre.com, while no studies could be found on roadtestreports.co.uk. Consequently, these chosen review websites offer naturally-occurring data and their discourse could be investigated.

Reviewcentre.com and roadtestreports.co.uk are the sources for the dataset of cosmetics and car customer reviews, respectively. The main reason for selecting these review websites is the long and well-established history of these businesses in the market and, more importantly, they do not seem to be administered by any of the six brands of this study, as discussed below in Section 4.3.2. Reviewcentre.com claims to have more than 1.6 million reviews for different products, including cosmetics. At the time of data collection, although reviewcentre.com seemed to provide customer reviews for cars, car reviews on this website were rather rare and not diverse enough in type and time range to match some of the car models of the print adverts. Therefore, the car reviews were sampled from roadtestreports.co.uk, which does specialise in cars and vehicles. Based on the information stated on these review websites, there seems to be no indication that the reviews might not be written by customers.

Since not all cosmetics and car products that appear in the print adverts and Facebook posts would be expected to be reviewed on the two review websites, ten reviews for a searched-
for product that appeared in the results of the searching list on the two review websites were gathered sequentially for each of the six brands for the span of 2009-2013, similar to the time of magazines. This sampling was followed because the number of reviews for most of the cosmetics products, similar to those in the print adverts, was rather small. But this allowed selecting more than one product type for most of the cosmetics and car brands. Unlike cosmetics products, which would not normally be bought as used products, cars can be purchased as used and owned by more than one customer. For consistency and to increase the comparability of this dataset with the other datasets, in the car customer reviews, any information which indicates that a car has previously been used or possessed by a person other than the reviewer resulted in the omission of that review, including its attached responses. Each deleted car review was replaced by the next review on the result searching list for the same car model on roadtestreports.co.uk until ten customer reviews for each of the six specified brands were gathered. In essence, 60 customer reviews were collected, i.e. 30 reviews for cosmetics and 30 for cars. As shown in Table 3.3 above, the outcome of sampling reviews including responses resulted in 75 customer reviews and responses.

3.6.5 Informants' perception from interviews

This section deals with the dataset of the interviews, where the conduct of the interviews is also explained. Interviews are the last kind of dataset that the present thesis investigates. For gathering this dataset, two techniques are integrated, namely questionnaires and interviews (see Section 6.4 for the rationale). This dataset needs another kind of sampling (convenience), which differs from the sampling procedures of the previous four datasets (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews). I did not use random sampling for reasons of time, money, and the difficulty of accessing all people in Leicester, for example. Based on the composition of the participants of a group, Black (1999, p.125) argues for the representativeness of data collected through convenience sampling, in that the resulting group is consistent in terms of members with similar attributes, rather than data gathered through random sampling. In my opinion, sometimes, and especially in small projects restricted by time, controlling all factors, e.g. social class, consumption habits, and cultural

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23 Ten reviews only have responses.
background, might be rather hard. Rather, a sense of heterogeneity might remain among the
group of participants. However, in the current thesis, as mentioned above, the researcher
does not claim for the representativeness of the dataset of the interviews or its findings,
since these are not the focus of this study. Rather, the concern here is to show the range of
the attitudes of the participants, since customer opinion (or potential customer opinion) has
generally been overlooked in previous linguistic studies of promotional discourse.
Linguistic research tends to explain simply the assumed messages that image-producers and
multimodal discourse-authors seem to convey. One exception to this is Bullo (2014),
although her research is not aimed at investigating visual resources (see discussion in
Section 2.3.4).

The enrolment of interviewees was through a convenience sampling strategy. As given in
Table 3.3 above, responses were collected from 21 informants, who were individually
interviewed over the period August-December 2014. For this dataset, linguistic discourse in
British English was the target. The rationale for choosing this aspect was for compatibility
with the other datasets and also to show if people of the same culture, broadly speaking, are
likely to perceive visual resources in images in ways similar to those claimed by Kress and
Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), who highlight the influence of the western writing system on
the production and interpretation of visuals and multimodal discourse. All the interviewees
are British English native speakers and were students or staff at the University of Leicester
at the time of data collection. In this sense, the informants could be thought of as
manifesting a cultural group in two ways: they form a group of British persons who are
native speakers of British English on the one hand, and they are from academia, on the
other hand. This group includes both female and male respondents, however, imbalanced in
number: thirteen women and eight men. Since Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) do not
make claims about gender, this aspect is not further investigated. Rather than considering
gender as a major element in the interview sampling, this study finds it worthwhile to
involve stances of respondents of both genders to reflect the variation or similarity in the
visual interpretations and reading paths.

The interviews were semi-structured and were all conducted by the researcher herself,
where each interview lasted about an hour as a maximum. The interviews were recorded
with a voice recorder and the researcher took notes throughout the interviews. To encourage participation, each interviewee was given a five-pound book token in return for their time. The image sample contained six visuals and multimodal discourse types for cosmetics and eight for cars, which were all sampled from the already collected datasets of the adverts and posts, explained above (see Table 3.3 above). The sampling happened in such a way that all six selected brands were represented in the interview sampled material (see Appendix 3 for the image sample). As far as possible, some of the interview image samples were chosen in a way that the Facebook images and magazine adverts were counterparts, i.e. the same material was published in both media but with a different layout, namely remediated. This choice was made, especially for the material where the readers were asked to sketch their reading path. This procedure was taken for the purpose of showing the extent to which the participants’ readings exhibit similarity and/or difference with respect to the elements that might catch their eye first. Furthermore, one of the images was intentionally reproduced in black and white although it also appeared in its original colour. The rationale for this reproduction was to show the interpretations that might be associated with black and white. The collated Facebook comments and customer reviews did not consist of visuals and this explains why the comments and reviews are not part of the image sample. However, the interviewees’ responses could be thought of as representing the opinion of potential customers. Although not directly promotional, the informants’ interpretations were in relation to the companies’ promotional discourse of the adverts and posts.

Following Dörnyei’s (2007, p.75) recommendation, two pilot interviews were first conducted to ensure that the language of the questions was understood by the participants. Since the interviews were collected for qualitative research, and they provided satisfactory results, the advantage of this procedure is that the answers obtained from the test interviews can also be included in the interview dataset (ibid). Thus, the interpretations collected from these two pilot interviews become part of the interview dataset as well. In these interviews, the respondents were presented with a total of fourteen images (visuals and multimodal discourse). It is significant to point out that no special equipment, such as that used in eye-tracking studies (e.g. Holsanova et al. 2006) to measure the time readers spend looking at

24 For reasons of excluding videos from this sample, see Section 3.6.7 below.
and concentrating on certain elements in reading, was employed in the present informants’
image readings. Rather, the respondents manually sketched their reading paths on the
images with a pen (for reasons of excluding eye-tracking, see Section 6.4).

**Interview guide**

Since the interviews that combined with questionnaires were semi-structured, the same or
similar questions were asked to all the informants, although sometimes phrased differently
(see Section 6.4 for the limitations of these procedures). There was the opportunity for the
researcher to explore particular themes or responses further, depending on how the
interview developed (Bryman 2012, p.223). The interview questions of this thesis are
divided into three key sections: i) general information, ii) visual interaction and image
composition, and iii) interpretation of visual options (see Appendix 3).

In the interview, as an introduction, the participant was told about the chosen brands and
the source of the images (magazines and Facebook pages) so as to mitigate the effect of
decontextualising images (see Section 3.6.7 below). Formally, each interview started by
asking the respondent some general questions (see Appendix 3) related to assessing the six
specified brands of this study and whether the interviewee had previously taken a course in
photography or drawing. The rationale behind these questions is to see the extent to which
the brand categorisation used here matches the brand perception of the viewers as actual or
potential customers, as mentioned in Section 3.5. Another reason is to examine whether
participants with some knowledge about drawing or photography might read images in a
particular way, similar to that proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006). This
would be interesting to explore with the participants. The introductory questions were then
followed by giving the respondent a handout to look at the images based on the questions
asked.

As a result of the two pilot interviews, the researcher became aware that in some images,
particularly Image 2 (Figure A3.2 in Appendix 3), on which the interviewees were asked to
sketch their reading, the copyright logo of the British Library was conspicuous. Thus, the researcher asked the informants to ignore the logo in that image. Each respondent was shown the images in pairs, i.e. two images together at the same time, which could be realised as a limitation. However, this choice was taken to allow the informants to draw a comparison between each pair of images, since the six chosen images represent, more or less, the same elements but in a different layout. This also enabled the informants to express their stance about the design of an image, for example (see Section 6.7). The questions of the second and third parts of the interview primarily relate to the first noticed object in an image (visual or multimodal discourse); reading images; visual address; and meanings of visual choices such as smile, colour features, light, and darkness. The reason for selecting such elements was principally to test Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) assumptions about these aspects.

The first part of research question 3, stated earlier in Section 3.2 above, asks *what does the visual-verbal analysis of the interviewees’ perception of some visual resources reveal about the meanings of these options and the characteristics of promotional discourse? And how do the linguistic choices in the informants’ interpretations compare with those found, particularly in the print adverts and Facebook posts?* This is partly addressed by the two interview questions:

1. What draws your attention most in Images 1 and 2?

2. Draw a map/sketch on Images 1 and 2 for your reading path.

The rationale for these interview questions was to find out, for example, if the entity that the readers specify as the first eye-catching element is always the same element as the one with which they begin their reading. These questions were asked separately. After answering the first question, the viewer was asked to sketch her/his reading path and then to explain the followed reading.

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25 In Appendix 3, all the images appear with the label *Figure A* rather than *Image*, where A refers to *Appendix* and the image takes the number of the Appendix.
3.6.6 Ethical considerations

Because the print adverts are published in magazines, as mass media, their material is meant to be viewed by any person. Consequently, no consent seems to be required for using such public access adverts. As available on online open access platforms (Facebook and the two review websites), one might consider that studying online material is trouble-free. This case might be claimed if posts were the only studied content. Henderson et al. (2013, p.546) argue that, in online research, ethical issues are ‘complex, multifaceted, and resist simple solutions’. The changing nature of online platforms seems to result in what Whiteman (2012, p.13) calls ‘ethical instability’ of online research. In this sense, there seems to be no complete consensus or one comprehensive answer to ethics of research on online data, as also noted by Page et al. (2014, p.59). For Whiteman (2012, p.9), the nature and context of research may be taken as criteria for assessing the ethical requirements for an online study.

Because the current study includes user-generated content from Facebook (comments, replies) and review websites (reviews, responses) as quotations/excerpts for exemplification, Page et al.’s (2014) recommendations can be seen as helpful in this respect. They advise that online researchers check the guidelines of communities concerned with online research (ibid, p.63), e.g. the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), the terms of use of investigated platforms, and the practice of previous online studies in the field. Consulting the AoIR guidelines, Ess and AoIR broadly point out that ‘the greater the acknowledged publicity of the venue, the less obligation there may be to protect individual privacy, confidentiality, right to informed consent, etc.’ (2002, p.5, emphasis in original). Markham and Buchanan (2012, p.7) raise questions about harm for persons that could result from online research. With respect to form, the present study can be seen as focusing on the analysis of linguistic and visual patterns and the topic of the collected material does not seem to be sensitive, e.g. medical or political. As such, using Ess and AoIR’s (2002, p.8) terms, the risk to the commenters/reviewers could be thought of as ‘low’. Moreover, Allen et al.’s recommendation for material compiled for academic research from business

26 As discussed with the copyright advisors at the University of Leicester, the use of images from magazines and companies’ Facebook pages can be classified as ‘fair dealing’, i.e. for academic purposes. However, permission was gained in writing from some of the specified companies.
platforms, such as those of this thesis, is that ‘[m]anual, nonautomated access of information on publicly available web pages should be acceptable without special permissions or actions. Even though the web site may not expressly permit such access for research, the load on the web site is negligible’ (2006, p.607).

Nevertheless, the researcher examined the ‘Terms and Conditions’ or ‘Terms of Service’ of the online spaces under study. Although needed by reviewcentre.com only, the written consent of the moderators of the two review websites was granted to the researcher. In spite of gaining their approval, as suggested by Page et al. (2014, p.73), I realise that administrators (reviewcentre.com and roadtestreports.co.uk) could not be claimed to have the complete right to decide whether or not the reviewers accept their contributions to be part of this research. But having users’/individuals’ informed consent does not always seem easy in an online domain, as reported by Whiteman (2012, p.19). The reason for this here is that it does not seem possible to contact the reviewers directly, for instance through direct messaging. With the Facebook comments, the case seems less straightforward since the rules of the companies’ Facebook pages are chiefly concerned with posting material on the pages rather than using it. Despite consulting Facebook’s ‘Terms of Service’, obtaining consent seems more complicated. This could be explained in terms of the rather large number of the comments (see Section 3.6.1 above), which makes it a bit difficult to have the consent of each commenter.

Having said this, the above procedures do not generally address issues that tend to arise out of studying online data. Traceability is one such issue (Henderson et al. 2013; Zimmer 2010). As related to confidentiality, traceability refers to the possibility of retrieving and linking material to its source (person) due to the searchability and connectivity on the online medium, where a social media user can be associated with her/his content despite anonymisation, and thus an individual can be re-identified (Henderson et al. 2013, p.552; Zimmer 2010, p.316). Henderson et al. (2013, pp.552-553) highlight that this issue tends to happen when using images or direct quotations/excerpts from users of social media platforms, and therefore they advise paraphrasing the material used. However, they point out the issue that risks ‘remaining faithful to the original intent of the postings’ (ibid, p.552). In addition to the likelihood of data alteration however minimal it might be, in my
opinion this solution seems problematic for some disciplines, such as linguistics. Page et al. (2014, p.58) draw attention to the fact that linguistics does not largely tolerate such practice (paraphrasing). They go on to add that, in linguistic research, ‘it is commonly accepted as good practice to provide quoted examples from your data as illustrative material’ (ibid, p.75).

As practical guidance for future online studies, Henderson et al. (2013, p.557) recommend scholars to highlight ethical issues and how they address them. Therefore, to minimise ‘re-identification’ (Zimmer 2010) as far as possible, the following procedures were taken here. Firstly, following the practice of other scholars who have studied equivalent online discourse types from other social media (e.g. Page 2014; Skalicky 2013; Vásquez 2014), all users’ contributions to Facebook (comments and replies) and the review websites (reviews and responses) were anonymised. Secondly, with respect to referencing, in contrast to the adverts and posts that were documented by a company’s name-resource and year, the users’ content appears without a date (day-month-year). This procedure was followed in anticipation of regaining the ‘Timeline’ on the specified Facebook pages so as to decrease users’ re-identification (see below). Thirdly, the researcher has used, when possible, excerpts rather than full texts for exemplifying a point discussed.

Arguably, traceability seems less risky with reviewers than with Facebook commenters. This is because whether or not the two review websites offer users’ profiles, as far as could be seen from these websites, no options seem to allow reaching the reviewers directly, as stated above. As mentioned in Section 3.6.3, due to recent developments, the Facebook ‘Timeline’ has disappeared from the chosen companies’ pages. This change could be thought of as making the traceability of comments and replies, in particular, harder to some extent. But this does not mean that all previously published posts, including their attached comments, have completely vanished. The researcher noticed that comments themselves do not seem to be traceable even if they were used as direct quotations. However, they can be so through some posts to which comments are normally appended. This was observed through online manual searching for posts and comments on Facebook and the search

27 See reviewcentre.com for the difference of information in its users’ profiles compared with Facebook.
engines of *Yahoo* and *Google*. In other words, it is posts rather than comments that can be described as traceable. Thus added to the above procedures, fourthly, I decided to include comments whose posts I presumably found not to be searchable or posts different from those exemplified in the thesis body.\textsuperscript{28} Nonetheless, due to the changing nature of social media in general, the rationale for deciding to remove the dates of posts, stated above, could be seen as precautionary to reduce the chances of specifying the commenters by looking for posts if the ‘Timeline’ is reproduced or other similar features are introduced.

Finally, with respect to the interview data, the researcher has the University of Leicester’s ethical approval to conduct interviews. Although the respondents’ ages ranged from over 18 to the late 50s, they all gave the researcher a written consent to use their responses in this study, as required by the University. Thus, they were granted anonymity and protection of their content.\textsuperscript{29} The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and each respondent was given a number (e.g. Interviewee 1, Interviewee 21) when using their interpretations for illustration.\textsuperscript{30}

### 3.6.7 Why decontextualise Facebook images?

Some of the interview images, except for the cover images, were framed differently from how they look on Facebook. In the interviews, the verbal content of posts that accompany images on Facebook was omitted. This is because the verbal content normally appears above the images rather than superimposed on them, and some images are remediated adverts (published as print adverts with a different layout) that combine verbal and visual content. Thus, the researcher thinks that the verbal content of posts would be distracting for the interviewees if the posts were presented in their original format. I am aware that the omitted information could have helped the informants contextualise the images more. Therefore, as mentioned in Section 3.6.5 above, the interviewees were told about the medium of images and the companies of products.

\textsuperscript{28} It cannot be predicted if there will be tools that could locate manually irretrievable material in the short or long term.

\textsuperscript{29} The information sheet and consent form used for the interviews appear in Appendix 3.

\textsuperscript{30} Because some viewers draw their readings silently and, in order to indicate their reading path, I simply have to mention the sequence of the read elements. Otherwise, all the answers given are the informants’ actual words.
In the image sample, video data were not included. Thus, only some static images were used in the interviews. Videos were discounted for two reasons. The first one has to do with the lack of videos in the other datasets as comparable material, whereas this thesis is mainly interested in drawing comparisons among promotional discourse types. The second reason could be attributed to the fact that videos, as moving images, might require a special framework for studying them, and thus for their testing. The adopted model of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) concentrates more on static images (e.g. adverts, photographs, maps, drawings, paintings, and so on) than on videos. When Kress and Van Leeuwen apply their grammar of visual design to films, it is mostly through selecting just one or more static shot from entire films.\(^{31}\) Forceville (1999) rightly criticises Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) analysis of shots for overlooking the other semiotic modes such as the spoken language, paralinguistic cues, and music that accompany a shot and the scenes that precede and follow that shot. He points out that ‘[a] film frame tolerates even less decontextualization than static pictures’ (1999, p.172). In addition, Bezemer and Jewitt (2010, p.186) note that even a few minutes of a video might require hours of transcription. Therefore, it seems very complex to study videos and it would have to be done in a study on its own. Because the purpose of the present study is to show how real viewers perceive some visual resources in images (visuals and multimodal discourse), the researcher thinks that the results obtained from the analysis of images are still valid in the context of this thesis.

### 3.7 Rationale for multiple analytical approaches

From the outset, it is important to note that although the corpus approach is time saving due to the possibility of calculating frequencies of linguistic elements (Baker 2010, p.94), and therefore can be seen as suitable for comparative studies, it is not used in the current thesis. As mentioned earlier, my research is exploratory and it does not concentrate on generalising findings because the datasets are unevenly matched. In contrast, the corpus approach is known for its concern with generalising findings since it puts much emphasis on balanced samples and representativeness (ibid, p.96).

\(^{31}\) For some criticism on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) visual grammar, see Section 6.2 below.
In the current thesis, a multi-approach is adopted in the analysis of the data, namely combined categories from Herring’s (2007) faceted classification scheme with Biber and Conrad’s (2009) situational characteristics model, Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) generic move-structure approach, Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model, Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, and Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual design are used as analytical models to study the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, customer reviews, and interviews. The rationale for employing more than one framework here is that the researcher thinks that no single approach to the study of promotional discourse types sufficiently indicates their various features. Rather, the multiple frameworks adopted are complementary tools, in that they allow one to analyse different aspects of these discourse types, and thus to provide deep insights about promotional discourse. Although most prior research has tended to utilise just one, or occasionally two, of the chosen models, application of these frameworks in the analysis of offline and online media discourse has been prominent. Examples of promotional discourse (offline/online) that have employed one or more of the models, explained below, are spams (Barron 2006), Facebook posts (Hunt 2015), catalogues (Koller 2012), websites (Harrison 2008; Thompson 2012), corporate reports (Fuoli 2012), personal ads (Baker 2015), advertorials (Zhou 2012), magazine covers (Lirola 2006), leaflets (Lirola and Chovanec 2012), and adverts (Lick 2015; Wu 2013), where these analytical tools prove to be useful. Since the discourse types of this thesis are promotional and media-based, the selected models seem to be suitable analytical tools. Furthermore, some of the selected models seem to be compatible in terms of their origin, i.e. SFL, as stated below. Because some of the promotional discourse types (adverts and posts) use more than one semiotic mode (i.e. multimodal), the analysis of visual components from an audience perspective seems necessary to complement the linguistic analysis.

The rationale for using quantitative and qualitative approaches is that they seem to allow an in-depth understanding of the different examined aspects of promotional discourse. The analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 are mainly quantitative, while in Chapter 6 the analysis is largely qualitative. Scholars such as Biber and Conrad (2009, p.188), Bauer et al. (2000, p.8), and Leech (1966, p.7) argue for the complementarity of quantified and qualified analyses, where quantitative analysis can draw researchers’ attention to usage patterns that
could have been overlooked in a qualitative analysis. Because of the relative large data samples and for the purpose of drawing comparisons among these discourse types, the quantitative approach seems to suit this goal. However, this does not mean that some of the qualitatively analysed and identified patterns cannot be counted statistically (Dörnyei 2007, pp.38, 124). Thus, in Chapter 6 on the study of the interviews, sometimes numerical results of some categories are presented in tables rather than charts for the rather small size of this dataset. The multiple models adopted in the analysis of the data are explained in the subsections below.

3.8 Explanation of adopted models

3.8.1 Integrated framework for situational characteristics

Here, Herring’s (2007) classificatory model is combined with Biber and Conrad’s (2009) framework of situational characteristics. The rationale for combining these models in studying the situational factors of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews is that the situational categories of these frameworks are detailed, and thus their categories seem suitable to be integrated in this study. In contrast, in SFL the register components do not seem to be working at the same level of detail as offered by the above frameworks, where the concern of the current study is to show the complexity of promotional discourse. However, in Chapter 5 the SFL register factors (field, tenor, and mode) are used because they are brief and without much detail to simply relate the identified linguistic patterns to some situational characteristics investigated in Chapter 4. It is also significant to mention that the interview dataset is not investigated for its situational or generic characteristics because it is not naturally-occurring promotional data, unlike the other datasets.

Criticising previous genre and mode approaches which are devised for offline data and whose application has extended to online domains, Herring (2007) realises the need for a model that exhibits the features of various digital media discourse types. Another reason for choosing this model is that it is specifically developed to facilitate the job for linguists in their generic analysis of online media discourse, although the origin of Herring’s model belongs to the discipline of library and information science (2007, p.9). Her scheme (ibid,
p.11) encompasses a number of categories that come under two main factors: medium or technological, and situational or social. The strength of this model could be seen in terms of its various categories, which could selectively be applied to any discourse; however, the application of the categories to large samples is preferred to reveal as much as possible of the features of discourse. To avoid any confusion that might occur, Herring’s technological characteristics are discussed and analysed as part of situational characteristics. Here, I am following Biber and Conrad (2009), whose characteristics of situation involve medium as a situational element. In Chapter 4, the first phase of the analysis investigates the situational characteristics of the present data through the categories discussed below.

Herring’s (2007) technological factors comprise ten categories: synchronicity, message transmission, persistence of transcript, size of message buffer, channel of communication, anonymous messaging, private messaging, filtering, quoting, and message format. This thesis finds seven of the above categories of relevance to be adopted for comparing the technological features of Facebook and the review websites. Synchronicity (ibid, p.13) indicates whether the communicators are interacting together online at the same time on the media platform (synchronous) or not (asynchronous). Message transmission refers to how the content is sent and received, i.e. ‘message-by-message’, ‘line-by-line’, or ‘character-by-character’ (ibid, p.14). While the first two options seem to be related to asynchronous communication, i.e. unidirectional message sending and receiving, ‘character-by-character’ could be associated with synchronous interaction, i.e. bidirectional content transmission and receipt (ibid). Persistence of transcript pertains to the platform’s archiving or deletion of content posted on it (ibid, p.15). Size of message buffer refers to whether the platform limits a message to a certain number of characters (ibid). Channel of communication has to do with the facility of posting monomodal messages, i.e. only text, or multimodal content, i.e. the possibility of exploiting more than one resource (text, images, videos, or sound) (ibid). Anonymous messaging is related to the potential of publishing messages using false names or nicknames instead of the email address used for creating an account with the platform (ibid, p.16). Message format refers to how posted content, including, attachments are arranged (ibid, p.17), i.e. chronologically (old-new) or reverse order (new-old). A summary of the above-mentioned technological categories is presented in Table 3.4.
Although Biber and Conrad’s (2009) framework does not show medium dimensions in the same fine-grained way that Herring’s (2007) model does, with respect to the other situational characteristics as they are detailed, it is possible to combine some categories of these models together. In addition to the above rationale, another reason for selecting Biber and Conrad’s (2009) framework is that these authors have used their model extensively for the analysis of offline (newspapers, conversation) and online (e-forums, text messages) discourse. In the current thesis, the situational characteristics of the four datasets (print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews) are analysed using the integrated categories of Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) models.

Three categories are selected from Herring’s (2007) scheme: participation structure, norms of organisation, and purpose. Similarly, from Biber and Conrad’s (2009) situational characteristics, three features are chosen: participants, relations among participants, and specific communicative purpose. Participation structure indicates the form of communication, e.g. one-to-one or one-to-many (Herring 2007, p.19). Norms of organisation relates to who manages the community, and thus denies members access to and participation in the domain of interaction if they break the platform rules, for instance (ibid, p.21). Participants refers to the discourse authoring and readership (Biber and Conrad 2009, p.41). Relations among participants pertains to the extent to which the interaction between participants is direct or not, and also the social roles of the interactants (ibid, p.42), e.g. peer/equal or authoritative/unequal relations. However, in this analysis, the term participation is used for all the above situational characteristics. Purpose refers to the general community goals and what the community wants to achieve through their
interaction (Herring 2007, p.20), i.e. communicative purpose.\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Specific purpose} relates to the possible switches in a text that signal implicit aims, e.g. stating opinions (Biber and Conrad 2009, p.44). Rather than talking about purpose in terms of public/private or general/specific, here \textit{purpose} is construed as \textit{explicit} and \textit{implicit}. These terms are used because some goals tend to be clearly stated by a community, especially online platforms, while through these goals some other aims could also be attained, as explained in Section 4.3.2. The application of the analyses of the situational characteristics was based on the researcher’s knowledge guided by the information suggested from the collated data and their media. The situational categories adopted from Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) frameworks are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Integrated situational factors for analysis of online discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herring’s (2007) categories</th>
<th>Biber and Conrad’s (2009) categories</th>
<th>Integration of term used in this thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation structure: one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many</td>
<td>1. Participants: author, reader or viewer</td>
<td>1. Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Norms of organisation: with/without administrator</td>
<td>2. Relations among participants: interactive, social roles (relative status or power)</td>
<td>2. Purpose: Explicit, Implicit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An evaluation of Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) frameworks, from which the categories of the combined model are formed, is that they are detailed in terms of the categories they offer for studying the situational characteristics of complex discourse types such as promotional discourse. The selection of the characteristics is flexible and their application is largely straightforward. But involving as many characteristics as possible seems important because even if some factors are found to be irrelevant, they can be discarded later in the analysis, as also noted by Herring (2007, p.12). Moreover, integrating categories from both models can be seen as a solution to overcome the difficulty of having

\textsuperscript{32} Herring (2007, p.20) refers to individual purposes that some participants might seek to achieve through communication, which tend to differ from one person to another. However, personal objectives are beyond the scope of this analysis.
to analyse discourse types separately based on their medium (print and online), and thus this model makes it possible to compare different discourse types. However, studying the situational characteristics of discourse alone is not enough because these characteristics do not show how discourse is used. Thus, genre analysis can be used to complement this dimension.

### 3.8.2 Bhatia’s models of move structure

In addition to showing the situational characteristics of the four discourse types, Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) genre approach to promotional discourse informs the analysis in Chapter 4, as the second stage of the analysis, in terms of identifying discourse membership in a genre through its moves. The main reason for choosing this approach is that it offers a detailed framework for move-analysis, which suits the purpose of the current study. As discussed in Section 2.3.1 above, although Bhatia mainly applies these models to study print promotional discourse (e.g. adverts, sales, and job application letters), these models have also been adopted in the analysis of online promotional discourse, such as spams (Barron 2006) and websites (Koteyko 2009). Thus, Bhatia’s genre approach also seems to be a suitable analytical framework for this thesis because it also deals mainly with promotional discourse (the concern of this thesis), and this approach can be employed in the analysis of both print and online data such as that of the current study. Bhatia (2004, p.65) identifies a number of moves in his analysis of an advert. The move *justifying the product or service by indicating the importance or need of the product or service* seems somehow a repetition of the move: *detailing the product or service by indicating the value of product or service*. Additionally, *targeting the market move* does not seem applicable to all types of promotional discourse because some products could be seen as aimed at people generally (e.g. cars), where no clear reference to a certain age group or gender, for instance, is stated. Thus, the justifying the product and targeting the market moves are excluded from the current analysis. In the analysis of the data in Chapter 4, the moves adopted from Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) models are shown in Table 3.6.
Table 3.6 Moves adopted from Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Headlines and images (for reader attraction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Detailing the product or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. by identifying the product or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. by describing the product or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. by indicating the value of product or service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establishing credentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Endorsement or testimonials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Offering incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Using pressure tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Soliciting response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned in Section 2.3.1, Bhatia (2004; 2005) does not analyse the moves in adverts in detail. Nevertheless, the adopted moves are explained here.

1. **Headlines and images** are used to draw viewers’ attention (Bhatia 2004, p.65). This move seems to exclude other means of catching attention such as videos, vague words, or phrases that may occur in any part of a text, for example.\(^{33}\) Another label is adopted for this move, namely *attention-catching move*. As example 3.1 is largely image-based, the advert title (*Avoid turbulence the next time you take off*), the image of the car, or the whole advert seems to be elements by which readers could be drawn to this advert:

---

\(^{33}\) Because videos (on Facebook) are not the concern of this thesis, their occurrence as attention-catching elements was coded when a video was the only element used for realising the attracting attention move in a text. However, no examples and analysis are given for videos.
3.1

2. **Detailing the product or service move** is used to introduce products, and thus to tell readers about them. This move can be realised linguistically through identification, description, or evaluation and showing the product use (Bhatia 1993, p.51, 2004, p.65). Detailing the product move could also occur visually in images that show product details (Bhatia 2004, p.65; Lam 2013, p.25). In example 3.2, the car is identified by its model name/series as *S-Class*. It is also evaluated as *stunning*, i.e. in terms of its appearance and interior features based on the image of the post, and the technological feature of *fully equipped with the latest ground breaking technology*, where the appraisals seem to occur as appreciation using Martin and White’s (2005) attitudinal system.

3.2 Launching soon - the stunning new *S-Class* comes fully equipped with the latest ground breaking technology. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

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34 Copyright of Daimler AG/Mercedes-Benz UK.
35 Throughout, all the examples appear in their original form, i.e. no correction for grammatical or spelling mistakes is made.
Likewise, in 3.3, the product *Max Factor Flawless Perfect* is introduced through its name, evaluated as *very good foundation*, and *covers up spots* describes its use:

3.3 *Max Factor Flawless Perfect* is *very good foundation covers up spots.*

(Max Factor customer review-Review Centre)

From these examples, this move could be seen as highlighting the product and its qualities (for the application of the analysis of this model, see below).

3. **Establishing credentials move** is called here the *showing qualification move*, by which the author’s capabilities and skills seem to be brought to the fore in her/his attempt to give readers a positive impression about that discourse writer (Bhatia 1993, p.49). In instances 3.4 and 3.5, the authors try to project for themselves an image of qualification. In 3.4, this occurs in terms of showing readers that the commenter has actually used the product, which could give a sense of credibility to her/his opinion as a reason for why she/he evaluates the car as *great* and not changing to another brand, i.e. she/he is a reasonable person:

3.4 *I've had my fiat 500c for nearly 3 yrs now & I have to say it's been great, hence I'm sticking with Fiat.* (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)

Similarly, in 3.5 this move manifests in terms of presenting the company as working hard for the benefit of its customers through offering customers improved and clinically proven products by specialists, which could eliminate potential health concerns about their products:

3.5 *We collaborate with dermatologists worldwide developing products that undergo testing supported by scientists and that are evaluated by consumers.* (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2009)

4. **Endorsement or testimonials, offering incentives, and using pressure tactics moves** are Bhatia’s three moves, which are consolidated here and called *the encouragement move*. It is for reasons of brevity that the above moves are re-labelled, since these moves seem to be working, more or less, towards the purpose of boosting the appealing dimensions of what is promoted in the readers’ eyes (Bhatia 1993, p.55). The encouragement to purchase
products could be conceived in terms of representing products along with incentives, i.e. a 5 year warranty, as in 3.6:

3.6 We’ve introduced a 5 year warranty on all our new cars. (Toyota advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)

In example 3.7, this move occurs as incentives in on offer and you can now buy our products through Asda Direct, and through the pressure tactic currently, which suggests that customers need to take advantage of the offer available promptly. Such strategies might increase the desirability of products:

3.7 Great news! We are pleased to announce that you can now buy our products through Asda Direct. Our new CC Creams & BB Blush are currently on offer! (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

5. Soliciting response move functions as a means of connection between discourse authors and readers through providing the contact information of the author such as phone number, address (Bhatia 1993, p.54), websites, or social media platform accounts. In instance 3.8, the soliciting response move is realised through the website URL:


A website is also used in 3.9, and a phone number is provided for text messaging, respectively:

3.9 Why settle for an estate car when you can own an E-Class? Visit eclass.co.uk or text ‘pleasure’ to 64500 (Mercedes-Benz print advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)

Through such information, customers can contact companies to know about their promoted products, for example.
Application of move analysis and resolving methodological issues

This analysis was performed manually using Microsoft Excel Software, shown in Figure 3.1 below. Unlike with the social actor analysis (in Section 3.8.3 below), information about products other than those of the six brands of the data of the thesis that sometimes occurred in the comments and reviews were included as strategies for realising the showing qualification move (discussed above as establishing credentials) only when they could be thought of as manifesting authors’ expertise and where no other strategies occurred in a text for realising this move, as explained below. I decided to include information about other brands because excluding them would result in overlooking an important aspect of online datasets, i.e. showing expertise. However, it is important to state that information about other brand products was not coded as detailing the product or other moves, for example.

Figure 3.1 Screenshot of move analysis

One limitation of Bhatia’s generic move structure, mainly developed for offline promotional discourse, is that applying it to online discourse results in disregarding some instances from this analysis, namely general information, e.g.

3.10 Happy New Year! Hope you're having a good 2013 so far. (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

3.11 Cheryl is stunning!!!!! (Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)
However, I decided not to introduce a move for such instances because they generally did not give information about products or customers, for example. Excluding them could be seen as an advantage, since they did not seem to be very relevant to this analysis, as given in the above examples (for new introduced moves, see Section 4.3.3).

One of the methodological issues with Bhatia’s adopted framework is that since the attention-catching move can be realised not only by titles or images, for example, but also by other strategies as explained above, this poses a problem as to whether the coding needs to be by every strategy (e.g. title, endorser, product, word, and others), or by the move occurrence at the text level. The researcher decided to consider this move to be realised by any strategy, and thus to code it once. This is because the strategies are various and it is hard to predict to which element in particular readers would be attracted. In addition, even titles can be thought of as occurring, especially in adverts, as part of the image rather than as being separated from it. The same procedure is applied when videos on Facebook posts can be thought of as fulfilling the function of grabbing attention.

Another challenge with applying this generic framework, which seems to be relevant to the above mentioned one but does not seem to be raised by other studies (since the frameworks are mainly adopted in qualitative studies), is whether to code a move by all its strategies, e.g. linguistic, visual, or to select one from each, for example. This is because more than one linguistic and/or non-linguistic strategy can realise the same move. The researcher decided to code a move as realised once, regardless of whether its realisation is linguistic or visual and apart from the number of times strategies would occur for realising that move in a piece of text. First, this seems consistent with the analysis of the attention-catching move above. Second, and more importantly, coding each strategy would result in augmenting the move results, which could conceal the fact of whether or not a move is realised in each text of a discourse type, where the emphasis in Chapter 4 is on the comparability of the discourse types. In other words, this procedure was to avoid coding multiple occurrences of a move in one text while it was absent from other texts. This coding procedure was followed for all the moves identified in this study. The following examples illustrate the points made above:
3.12 Once you get the hang of it, this Chanel mascara is a wonderful product and well worth the price. It makes lashes look mega long and it stays in place without easily smudging (Chanel customer review - Review Centre)

3.13 It's really electrifying (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

In 3.12, the product Inimitable Mascara is identified by the pronoun it more than once, its brand and product type in this Chanel mascara; evaluated as a wonderful product and well worth the price; and its value is highlighted as it makes lashes look mega long and stays in place without easily smudging. All these strategies seem to realise detailing the product move. In contrast, the commenter in 3.13 simply refers back to the Gloss Cube, mentioned in the post, by the pronoun it and evaluates it as electrifying. Thus, in both instances, detailing the product move was coded once. It also appears that although the label detailing the product move suggests that a product’s characteristics are given in detail, this is not always the case.

However, when an image included both a product and an endorser, where any of them is not represented linguistically, there seems to be a need to follow different procedures. Depending on which entity is visually represented, the image was coded as realising: 1) the attention-catching and detailing the product moves in the case of a product alone; 2) attention-catching and encouragement moves for an endorser only; and 3) attention-catching, detailing the product, and encouragement moves for both a depicted product and endorser. The rationale for this coding was to ensure that a move was realised. But, for example, if a multimodal text included a verbal incentive and a product name, the encouragement and detailing the product moves in that text were coded as being realised linguistically alone by an incentive and product identification. In contrast, regardless of what it depicts, the image strategy in that multimodal text was coded as realising the attention-catching move only. This procedure was taken to avoid multiple coding of a move in one discourse, as explained above.

The results of this analysis were obtained as percentages by calculating all the moves in each dataset and then dividing them by the move total in each dataset separately. Finally,
unlike other genre approaches that concentrate on the order of the structural elements that form a genre (e.g. Biber and Conrad 2009; Martin and Rose 2008), the strength of Bhatia’s approach can be seen in its flexibility, in that the sequence of moves is not given much emphasis for categorising genre membership of discourse and that the moves identified in a discourse type are not all obligatory for identifying discourse as a genre member.

3.8.3 Van Leeuwen’s social actor theory

The third model adopted here is Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor theory. It is concerned with the representation of participants, and thus it relates to the Hallidayan ideational metafunction of language and, in addition, some categories (e.g. role allocation) are built on Hallidayan grammar. Fairclough (2003, p.124) understands discourses as domains of representation through which worlds are constructed. Representation is a topic of interest to studies on media discourse, such as Fowler’s (1991) study of press news, for example. Fowler (1996b, p.7) argues that readers’ understanding of the world and their ideological perspectives are constructed through the ‘reading positions’ offered by discourse, whose meanings are made using semiotic resources, e.g. verbal, visual, or others.

As discussed in Chapter 2, almost all types of discourse (including adverts as promotional and media discourse) incorporate ideologies that tend to work for the interest of the powerful parties (Cameron and Panovic 2014; Fairclough 2003; Vestergaard and Schröder 1985), i.e. the companies of products. Language and other semiotic modes are seen as ideological. Interpreted from Fairclough’s (2001, p.2) perspective, the ideological aspect can be attributed to the fact that ideologies are representations that exist in discourse, and it is through discourse that ideologies are reproduced and control is exercised. In other words, it is through the semiotic choices that certain representations are established.

Van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) offers a theory that mainly investigates the representation of social actors through ‘sociosemantic’ categories. The model representational categories can be realised linguistically through lexicogrammar, semantics, and morphology. This framework has been largely applied to discourse from textbooks and newspapers that deal with, for instance, dominance and gender (e.g. Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh 2010; Zuraidah and May 2013). Exceptions to such research are three studies on promotional
Hunt’s (2015) and Koller’s (2012) studies on promotional discourse adopt one representational category only (i.e. nomination and collectivisation, respectively), and Baker’s (2015) research uses two elements of categorisations: functionalisation and physical identification. Van Leeuwen (2008) later developed a counterpart model for visual analysis, based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) visual framework (discussed in Section 3.8.5 below), specified for racial and ethnic representations.

The rationale for choosing this model is that it is a systematic and detailed framework, whose diverse categories make it possible to study roles, identities, and relations using the same model and in a focused way. Moreover, as it is related to CDA, it allows a researcher to show some ideological meanings that could be conveyed through representing participants by a certain strategy. However, my work does not deeply investigate ideologies, as mentioned earlier. This model is mainly used in Chapter 5 and partly in Chapter 6, where the latter is primarily based on visual analysis. This thesis expands the application of this model to promotional discourse from different media and uses this framework to show the representations of not only human participants but also products and the other participants involved in such discourse. Unlike the studies above on promotional discourse, more than one category is used in this analysis.

In this study, the adopted categories of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) model are inclusion, role allocation, nomination, categorisation, and personalisation. While all these categories are applicable to human participants, inclusion has been applied to products and media resources too. Additionally, functionalisation has been applied to customers, celebrities, experts, and products. In this study, the rationale for employing other categories along with inclusion could be explained in terms of Van Leeuwen’s (1996, p.42) argument that representation through inclusion alone might not always be enough, and that inclusion needs to be complemented by studying the other categories used for participants’ representation. The above five categories with their sub-categories adopted in the analysis of the participants’ representations in the promotional discourse types of this thesis are explained below.

1. **Inclusion** is the strategy that deals with the number of times participants are mentioned in discourse. Inclusion can be understood as a resource that gives participants prominence
through making their visibility apparent. However, Van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) does not list any specific linguistic resources for realising this category. Inclusion could be thought of as a category and a macro-category or system that comprises all categories of this model. In an attempt to remove, as far as possible, the sense of repetition associated with this category (see the application and methodological issues below), the researcher thinks that specifying the included participants in promotional discourse is still necessary, since participants could be included to achieve certain benefits (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.38). Here, inclusion is taken to be realised by any reference made to the participants in terms of lexical items and pro-forms, e.g. nouns, pronouns, demonstratives, or phrases. In example 3.14, the company refers to itself three times (we, Toyota, and a World leader) and to customers once (you):

3.14 We’ll show you what makes Toyota a World leader in manufacturing. (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

Here, we and you realise personalisation, as discussed below.

In instance 3.15, three participants are included, i.e. a media resource, customers, and a product through Car and Driver, you, and SLS AMG GT, respectively:

3.15 This new video from Car and Driver puts you behind the wheel of the SLS AMG GT. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

2. Role allocation is another category used in the analysis of the representation of companies and customers. This category comprises two subcategories: activation and passivation (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.43). The emphasis is given to role allocation through participation, which can be realised through Halliday’s (1994) transitivity system of process types. The above participants are activated when they are represented as the ‘forces’ that perform actions (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.43). A participant is activated, for instance, when she/he is represented as the Actor in the material processes of doing, creating, changing, and happening or as the Senser in the mental processes of feeling, thinking, and seeing (Halliday 1994, p.108) (see the Table below for the other roles). Based on Van Leeuwen’s (1996) roles and Halliday’s (1994) meanings of the processes, Table 3.7 summarises the participation roles.
Table 3.7 Participation: roles and processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Process/ Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Material/ doing, creating, and changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaver</td>
<td>Behavioural (physiological and psychological)/ behaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senser</td>
<td>Mental/ feeling, thinking, and seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayer</td>
<td>Verbal/ saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigner</td>
<td>Relational/ action initiator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In any of the above roles in Table 3.7, the participant can be seen as the source of action or responsible for it. Thus, activation seems an important resource through which the agency of a participant is foregrounded. In example 3.16, the company, Chanel, comes to the fore through representing itself in the role of the Senser in the mental process of wishing:

3.16 **CHANEL** wishes you a happy New Year 2013 (Chanel Facebook post 2013)

In 3.17, the commenter through *we* is presented as the Actor and Senser in the material and mental processes of picking up and loving, respectively:

3.17 *We* have just picked ours up today, and *we* love it !!!! (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)

In contrast to activation, participants are passivated through two of the subcategories of *subjection* and *beneficialisation*. In subjection, the participant is represented as being acted upon (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.44), while the beneficialised participant is the one for whom something is done (Benwell and Stokoe 2006, p.183). Once again, the agency of a participant is at stake: passivation is a means by which a participant’s agency can be downplayed or obscured. Here, passivation differs from grammatical passivation, where the former can be realised by some transitivity processes. The linguistic resources used for subjection can be realised through the occurrence of a participant as the Goal or Phenomenon in material and mental processes, respectively (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.45). In example 3.18, customers are subjected as they are implicitly represented through the flaws of their skin as the Goal in the material process of covering:
3.18 A foundation that instantly covers the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2011)

In 3.19, Chanel is the Phenomenon in the mental process of loving:

3.19 I love Chanel xxxxx (Comment on Chanel Facebook post)

Because there is no clear reference to the promoted product in the post in 3.19, such instances are taken to refer to the company throughout the thesis.

Passivated participants can also be beneficialised when they are the third party that is construed as the done-to participant, receiving the positive or negative benefits of an action (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.44). Beneficialised participants occur through participation as the Recipient or Client in a material process or the Receiver in a verbal process (ibid, p.45). The Recipient is the one to whom goods are given, the Client is the one for whom services are done, and the Receiver is the addressed person (Halliday 1994, p.145). Put differently, the beneficialised is grammatically the participant that occurs as the indirect object. In examples 3.20 and 3.21 below, customers (you) are beneficialised since they occur as the Client and Recipient in the material processes of bringing and giving, respectively:

3.20 Awards season is in full flow and we will be bringing you gorgeous looks from the red carpet to try at home. (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

3.21 Press a button on the new E-Class Cabriolet and a wind deflector pops up above the windscreen, giving you a quieter, more comfortable ride. (Mercedes-Benz advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)

3. Nomination represents (human) participants through their proper names. Within nomination, there are sub-categories according to the difference in the formality of nominating participants. The three degrees of formality are formal (last name with or without title), semi-formal (first and last names), or informal (first name) (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.53), where the social status of a participant can be suggested through such representational options. Based on culture, the formality degree of nomination varies between Eastern and Western societies. In the promotional discourse of the present thesis,
the importance of the patterns of nomination could be thought of in terms of the role they could play in reflecting differential attitudes towards the participants in such discourse, i.e. distinguishing their social rank. In example 3.22, the commenter is informally nominated through her/his first name:

3.22 Hi First Name, have you been behind the wheel of a GT86 yet...?
(Company reply to comment on Toyota Facebook post)

But in instance 3.23, the famous F1 driver, Nico Rosberg, is represented with his first and last names, i.e. semi-formally:

3.23 Congratulations to Nico Rosberg on winning the British GP!
(Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

4. Categorisation is of two types: functionalisation and identification (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.54). Categorisation, especially identification, is interpreted as ‘transportable identities’, which tend to be permanent identities assigned depending on physical or cultural bases (Zimmerman 1998, pp.90-91). In categorisation, participants can be represented according to what they do or what they are (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.54). When participants are referred to in terms of their occupations or what they can achieve (the latter in the case of products), they are functionalised. For humans, functionalisation can be realised by the morphological structure of lexical items through endings such as –er to a verb or –ist to a noun, for example, or by compounding nouns with words like ‘person’, ‘woman’, or ‘man’ (ibid). Lexical items such as ‘model’ or ‘head of design’, for example, are socially accepted functions, although they are not classified as such in Van Leeuwen’s framework. When human participants are represented through functionalisation only, their personal identity is concealed and the importance given to the participants seems to come from the jobs in which they are represented. Meanwhile, products are functionalised through what they can do when they are used, and thus the benefits of products are highlighted. In 3.24, functionalisation occurs through the lexical item driver, which refers to the reviewer:

3.24 I would be an experienced driver as I drive for a living (Response to Toyota customer review-Road Test Reports)
In contrast to human functionalisation, the product in example 3.25 is represented in terms of what it could presumably deliver to customers, i.e. defines the essence of luxury:

3.25 The S-Class interior defines the essence of luxury. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

In identification, (human) participants are represented through classification, relational identification, and physical identification (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.54). Participants are classified when they are represented by social categories such as age, gender, nationality, and expertise, or in terms of ‘belonging to a company’ (ibid). In example 3.26, the reviewer is represented in the classificatory category of provenance, asian:

3.26 This is one of the best thing that can easily applied to my asian face.
(Max Factor customer review-Review Centre)

In instance 3.27, besides being functionalised as a make-up expert in make-up artist, Caroline Barnes is classified as a member of the company, Max Factor:

3.27 Max Factor make-up artist Caroline Barnes wants to know your biggest CC Cream questions… (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

Participants can be relationally identified through nouns that indicate family, kinship, or work relations (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.56). Relational identification can be realised by relationship nouns with a possessive pronoun, genitive ‘s, or of as a postmodifying prepositional phrase (ibid). In the examples below, the participants are represented in terms of their relation to a family member and friendship, respectively:

3.28 Need the perfect gift to give your Mum on Sunday? (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

3.29 My friends keep saying that I look younger (Response to L’Oréal Paris customer review-Review Centre)

Participants are physically identified through features that refer to their outward appearance (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.57). Physical identification can be realised by nouns and adjectives that refer to physical attributes (ibid). In instances 3.30 and 3.31, the customers represent
themselves physically in terms of the length of their eyelashes and their height, respectively:

3.30 My eyelashes are quite long so I get mascara all over my eyes.  
(Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

3.31 Tell you what Fiat. I am 6 foot 7 (2m 1cm) - why not give me a Fiat 500L for a year to see whether it can actually cope with what people need. (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)

5. **Personalisation** occurs through representing participants in terms of pronouns (personal or possessive) (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.59). Although Van Leeuwen includes proper names as a choice for realising personalisation, the researcher decided to discount proper names from personalisation so as to avoid duplication, since proper names realise the nomination category, discussed above (see below for more detail). In the examples 3.32 and 3.33, customers’ personalisation is realised through the pronouns you and your, respectively:

3.32 On selected models you can choose between two navigation upgrades (Mercedes-Benz advert-WHAT CAR? 2011)

3.33 Post your question below and Zarra will answer the top questions in a series of posts very soon. x (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

Here, the analysis of personalisation is mainly concerned with the representation of companies and customers through pronouns, while other participants’ personalisation is analysed as a form of inclusion.

**Application of the social actor model categories and resolving methodological issues**

As stated earlier, inclusion seems to be serving both as a category within the social actor model and as a system that encompasses all the framework categories. But Van Leeuwen does not offer a way to overcome this drawback and does not specify certain linguistic options for realising inclusion. To overcome this limitation, which does not seem to be
highlighted in the literature, in the current analysis inclusion was construed as a category, where it was employed in the analysis through certain resources that realise it (see inclusion above), and as a macro-category or system that comprises all categories and results of this model. This means that, using Microsoft Excel Software, the manual analysis was applied in two phases.

First, the four datasets (adverts, posts, comments and reviews) were analysed using all the selected categories (role allocation, nomination, categorisation, and personalisation), where representations of other product brands were not coded. Thus, the representations must be of the six participants, namely companies, customers, products, celebrities, experts, media resources, and anything associated with these participants, where these were taken to be representations by the discourse author. The reason for these procedures was to focus more closely on the chosen brands and participants in question. Additionally, the entity must be mentioned in the text, where this procedure allows for the exclusion of personalisation through ellipsis (see example 3.35b below). The first stage of the analysis is exemplified in the following:

3.34 I love **this product**!!!!!! It has made a huge difference in my skin.

(L’Oréal Paris customer review-Review Centre)

In this instance, the reviewer represents her/himself through personalisation (*I* and *my*) and participation as the Senser in a mental process (*love*), while the product, *Youth Code Rejuvenating*, is functionalised (*has made a huge difference*).

Second, the datasets were analysed using the inclusion category because it was not possible to code *this product* and *it*. Thus, their analysis was carried out in this stage. This procedure was taken to ensure that other verbal resources, which did not occur in the realisation of the chosen categories but can be seen as forms of inclusion, were involved. Next, the results obtained from the two analyses were added up and divided by the result total for all categories (as well as inclusion) in each discourse type individually to exhibit the inclusion system as a whole. Calculating the results of the two analyses could not be seen as result duplication because inclusion is concerned with how many times a participant is referred to in discourse, as mentioned above. In this sense, the results of inclusion (through combining
the results of the two analyses), could be called the overall representational results and are presented in the first table for each discourse type.

Moreover, the results of each main category, i.e. role allocation, nomination, categorisation, and personalisation (from the first analysis), except inclusion, were calculated for all participants represented by a certain category and then changed to percentages through dividing the results of each category by its total in a discourse type individually to allow comparison with the participants in the other discourse types. The procedure of the second calculation was then followed to make certain that the results of inclusion were not part of those of the other categories. Thus, the reason for separating the resources of nomination from personalisation, mentioned above, was to keep their results separate. In this way, the results of each category were specific to the representations of all participants that occur in a discourse type. For comparisons among participants, the results of the participants represented by a category in each discourse type are presented in charts (see Chapter 5).

Another issue that emerged in this analysis was in terms of personalisation, as illustrated by the following examples:

3.35a. My daughters love the roof too xx (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)

3.35b. Love this car.. (Comment on Mercedes-Benz Facebook post)

In 3.35a, my daughters was coded as personalisation through my and relational identification in terms of the commenter’s relation to a family member. This coding was enabled through adopting the definition of authors as the sounding box, explained in Section 2.2. In 3.35b, the pronoun I was omitted, and thus it was not coded as personalisation. However, through participation (since the authors were already specified) the commenter was coded as the Senser. This could be seen as a positive aspect of this model.

As another limitation of this framework, sometimes it was possible for two participants to be represented in a single phrase: Fiat 500L as product inclusion and owner as customer functionalisation, e.g.
Since in the above instances the coding was in different categories (e.g., 3.35a) or for different participants (e.g., 3.36), the results of the main categories were not influenced. I followed the above coding techniques because they seem to show aspects of the complexity of this discourse, where one coding for one category would not show such diversity.

It seems important to mention that since the 41 companies’ replies occurred in response to comments, the companies’ replies were analysed for their patterns of nomination only. But their results were not added up to the total of the post results (see Section 3.6.3 above for the reason). Rather, they were presented separately in Section 5.3.3. Table 3.8 is a summary of the participants’ analysed and representational categories using the social actor system.

Table 3.8 Social actor model categories used for participants’ analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Participants analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>products, companies, customers, celebrities, experts, media sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role allocation (participation)</td>
<td>companies, customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomination</td>
<td>customers, celebrities, experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorisation</td>
<td>products (functionalisation), customers, celebrities, experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalisation</td>
<td>companies, customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a general assessment of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) framework, the social actor model tends to be positively criticised by scholars (e.g. Rashidi and Rasti 2012; Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh 2010), for the comprehensiveness of its categories. However, it is only negatively criticised in studies on representations in foreign languages (e.g. Zuraidah and May 2013), for the difficulty in applying it to discourse from other languages. I would add that due to the fact that various participants are included in the discourse types of the current study, the negative criticism of this model is that the analyses and calculations need to be carried out more than once (see Section 3.8.5 for the analysis of the interview dataset using this model).
Finally, it is noteworthy that I did a pilot study of the thesis data, where both Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model and Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory were adopted. The results of the appraisals were promising in terms of the attitudinal meanings and the appraised object. However, because of the limited word count of this thesis, I decided to leave the appraisal analysis to a future study since it is a whole chapter. However, the appraisal analysis is covered in the multimodal chapter with respect to the interviewees’ responses. The next section discusses this appraisal model.

3.8.4 Martin and White’s appraisal theory

Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework, used as an analytical tool to expand the study of the interview dataset in Chapter 6 on multimodal analysis, is explained before Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of image design, because thus far the adopted frameworks tend to investigate mostly the linguistic aspects of discourse. Martin and White’s model is applied to the respondents’ interpretations of the visual options of model’s smile, colour, black and white, light, and darkness. Unlike Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor theory, which is mainly interested in representations (discussed above), Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory deals with another aspect of language, i.e. its interpersonal metafunction in Hallidayan terms. Although ‘appraisal’, ‘evaluation’, and ‘stance’ deal with the evaluative language, evaluation is taken to be a broader term that encompasses the other two terms (appraisal and stance) (Thompson and Hunston 2000, pp.2, 5).

Martin and White’s framework has recently begun to gain critical attention. One of the concerns of this theory is to show the evaluative dimension of language (White 2001, p.1) through focusing on the author’s/speaker’s perspective. Thus, it is in line with the concern of Chapter 6, which focuses on audience perception as speakers. Another reason for adopting Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework is because this model offers a detailed system for investigating evaluative language, which allows for focused analysis. The model has been used in the analysis of promotional discourse such as design proposals (e.g. Shaw 2006). It is more likely for this model to be adopted in qualitative rather than quantitative research (e.g. Martin 2000). However, similar to the present approach taken
here, scholars (e.g. Bullo 2014; Fuoli 2012; Page 2012; Wu 2013) have also carried out quantitative and qualitative studies of appraisals.

This model allows for the identification of explicit and implicit evaluations, or in Martin’s (2000, p.142) terms, ‘inscribed and evoked appraisal’, where it is possible to categorise appraisals into the attitudinal meanings of affect, judgement, and appreciation rather than simply describing instances as evaluative. Thus, these attitudinal resources offer a systematic means to indicating the kind of appraisals that characterise a discourse type. Moreover, unlike other models on evaluation, in this theory appraisals can be identified not only as individual lexicogrammatical items and phrases, but also at a level larger than a clause, or what is called ‘discourse semantics’ (Martin and White 2005, p.9). However, the latter case is not unproblematic (see evaluation of this theory below).

The appraisal theory consists of the three systems of attitude, graduation, and engagement. Attitude and graduation are applied in this study only. The reason for excluding the engagement system is because of the relative fragmentary nature of the language of the promotional discourse of the current data and the brevity of some of the texts of the discourse types analysed, factors that make the applicability of this sub-system of appraisal rather difficult.

In this analysis, the interviewees were understood as the evaluators, while the appraised entities were not only the visually represented models, products, and brands (logos) but also the visual resources of colour, light, darkness, black and white, the images themselves, and potential customers that feature in the interviewees’ interpretations. All the above-mentioned participants were seen as the evaluated object, but due to their diversity and not being largely analogous to the participants identified in the discourse types of this study, the appraisals were not categorised for each participant. The researcher decided not to exclude the evaluative instances targeted at these objects because, as stated above, the emphasis in Chapter 6 is on the interviewees’ perspective, and therefore exploring them seems worthy.
1. **Attitude system**

Martin (2000, p.144) points out that what other systemic functional approaches to the study of evaluation overlook is the ‘semantics of evaluation’, i.e. classifying the evaluative appraisals into attitudinal resources. The attitude system models feelings into the three meanings of affect, judgement, and appreciation. Each category of the attitude system is explained below:

1. **Affect** relates to the positive and negative emotional reactions or states undergone by a person (White 2001, p.1). Affect involves the sub-categories of dis/inclination, un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction (Martin 2000, pp.150-151). *Dis/inclination* refers to intentions as ‘irrealis’ emotions realised by ‘desire’ and ‘fear’ as desiderative mental processes (Martin and White 2005, p.49). In other words, in dis/inclination the focus is on the futurity of the emotional response as something not yet realised (Martin 2000, p.150). In example 3.37, the appraisal is expressed as inclination through the desiderative mental process verb of *want* that encodes desire:

   3.37 Interviewee 14: I *want* to know what the rest of the car looks like.

*Un/happiness* is construed in terms of emotions that relate to the ‘affairs of the heart’ as ‘misery’ and ‘antipathy’ for unhappiness and ‘cheer’ and ‘affection’ for happiness (Martin 2000, p.151). In instance 3.38, the feeling of happiness is made through affection in the attribute *happy* in a relational process:

   3.38 Interviewee 1: She is genuinely *happy*.

In *in/security*, the emotional responses relate to ‘ecosocial’ well-being in terms of ‘disquiet’ and ‘surprise’ for insecurity and ‘confidence’ and ‘trust’ for security (Martin and White 2005, p.50). In example 3.39, the attitudinal meaning of insecurity is expressed as disquiet in a relational process through the attribute *safe*:

   3.39. Interviewee 19: If I was in that carpark with that car on my own, I do not know I do not feel *safe*. 
The ‘pursuit of goals’ is dealt with through *dis/satisfaction*, where dissatisfaction is expressed through ‘ennui’ and ‘displeasure’, while ‘interest’ and ‘admiration’ convey satisfaction (Martin 2000, p.151-152). For example, in 3.40, satisfaction is realised as interest in a relational process through the attribute *interested*:

3.40 Interviewee 7: I am quite *interested* in colour I associate colours with things a lot.

2. **Judgement** deals with the positive and negative moral evaluations of human behaviour, where the judgmental evaluative stance can be made in terms of ‘social esteem’ or ‘social sanction’ as ‘normality’ (how special?), ‘capacity’ (how capable?) and ‘tenacity’ (how dependable?) for the former, and ‘veracity’ (how honest?) and ‘propriety’ (how far beyond reproach?) for the latter (Martin and White 2005, pp.52-53). In examples 3.41 and 3.42, the appraisals are judgmental of the participants’ behaviour as epithets in terms of tenacity in *serious* and capacity in *experienced*:

3.41 Interviewee 3: Mercedes is for *serious* people.

3.42 Interviewee 18: In black and white, it looks a bit more classy and like a bit more, for not older people but for a more *experienced* person.

3. **Appreciation** is concerned with the positive and negative aesthetic assessments towards humans (not behaviour) and things, where appreciation can be expressed through ‘reaction’ as ‘quality’ and ‘impact’; ‘composition’ as ‘balance’ and ‘complexity’; and ‘valuation’ (Martin 2000, p.160; White 2001, p.1). The appreciative instances are made through valuation in the epithets *powerful* and *good* in example 3.43; reaction as impact in the attribute *exciting* in instance 3.44; and in example 3.45, composition is expressed in the attributes *simple* and *classic* as complexity and valuation, respectively:

3.43 Interviewee 11: It has this sort of *powerful* effect because it is a *good* car.

3.44 Interviewee 16: The red probably makes it more *exciting*.

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36 Generally in the current data, judgmental attitudes tend to be rare and no examples of social sanction are found.
3.45 Interviewee 9: It is quite simple. It is sort of quite classic.

The attitudinal resources can be expressed not only explicitly, as in all the instances above, but also implicitly, as units longer than single lexical items. Instances 3.46 and 3.47 are forms of evoked appraisals, where the articulation of affect is made through insecurity as disquiet, and appreciation is conveyed in terms of reaction as impact, respectively:

3.46 Interviewee 19: Someone might come and just drag me into the car and murder me.

3.47 Interviewee 21: I look at it (Figure 6.6) and wonder why they are trying to make it kind of like cartoon.

From all the above examples, it is clear that appraisals can be positive or negative. However, some instances, such as example 3.47, are not clear-cut in their polarity.

2. Graduation system

The second system of the appraisal framework is graduation. Through the graduation categories of ‘force’ and ‘focus’, the strength of the positive and negative attitudinal instances is conveyed (Martin and White 2005, p.137). In the current thesis, the analysis concentrates on the category of force for upgrading and downgrading the attitudinal meanings. The reason for the emphasis on force rather than focus is because the former could be realised by certain lexical and grammatical items that signal intensification and quantification, for example maximisers (totally, completely), boosters (really, greatly), comparatives (less, more), superlatives (-est, least), and quantifiers (a lot of, some). In contrast, focus is more implicit and depends on the semantic value suggested by the evaluative instance (ibid). Thus, force is more tractable and the principles of identifying it are more well-established by the appraisal theory than those of focus. The analysis follows studies that document force resources, e.g. Bauer and Bauer (2002), and Page (2003; 2012), whereas focus is less documented in the literature. The examples below illustrate the use of force in evaluative instances. The appraisals good, classy, and relatable are amplified by
the intensifier *very* and the comparatives *-er* and *more* in 3.48 and 3.49, respectively. In 3.50 in contrast, *dangerous* is downscaled by *a little bit*:

3.48 Interviewee 6: This (Figure A3.14) I think, it does not look *very good* [-**Appreciation**: valuation].

3.49 Interviewee 5: (Black and white) It seems *classier* [+**Appreciation**: valuation] and *more relatable* [+**Appreciation**: valuation].

3.50 Interviewee 14: This is *a little bit dangerous* (Figure 6.6) [-**Appreciation**: valuation].

In Section 6.6.5, following Martin’s (2000) and White’s (2001) coding notation, the symbol ‘t’ indicates that the evaluation is evoked, + refers to a positive appraisal, – indicates a negative appraisal, and +/- means an unclear polarity of appraisal. The appraisal instance is underlined for distinction and the graduation element is italicised. The annotation of an appraisal appears in bold type and in brackets that immediately follow the underlined evaluation, as illustrated above.

**Application of appraisal theory and resolving methodological issues**

This analysis was qualitatively conducted in Chapter 6 to the interviewees’ interpretations in relation to the image resources of smile, colour, black and white, light, and darkness to show the kind of the evaluation that featured in the respondents’ answers. But rather than coding the appraisals directed at any of the above entities in terms of evaluating the companies (Bullo 2014), I decided not to code the targets of appraisals because they do not seem to match totally the six participants identified linguistically, mentioned earlier. The analysis of evaluation is generally known for its subjectivity (Thompson and Hunston 2000, p.14; White 2001, p.1). However, this aspect comes to the fore with evoked appraisals (Martin and White 2005, p.62). For this reason, the researcher decided to mostly focus on inscribed rather than evoked appraisals to overcome this shortcoming. Nevertheless, Martin and White’s (2005) framework can positively be evaluated for the various attitudinal meanings it offers whose realisations are not restricted to adjectives, for example.
3.8.5 Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual framework

Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model of visual analysis is based on the Hallidayan SFL in its showing that visuals, as other semiotic modes, can realise the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions through representation, interaction, and composition, respectively (2006, p.15). Thus, as mentioned earlier, this framework is in line with the just explained models (social actor and appraisal theories). In its orientation to CDA and thus interest in uncovering ideological implications in visuals (ibid, p.14), Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) visual framework seems parallel to Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) system of linguistic representations. Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual analysis mainly focuses on images rather than on language. The visual grammar is adopted in the analysis of offline and online promotional discourse, for example leaflets (Brookes and Harvey 2015) and brochures (Ledin and Machin 2016). This model does not provide an in-depth analysis of linguistic features, and therefore in this thesis other models are used for the analysis of the verbal content. The visual model analysis is applied to the interview dataset in Chapter 6.

As aspects that could somehow be phrased as questions and thus be tested, the focus here was mainly given to two aspects of the visual grammar, namely those on positioning readers in relation to represented participants, and the composition system. Additionally, colour, light, and darkness were also scrutinised but not as ‘modality markers’ (see discussion on colour below), in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.160) terms. Rather, they were seen as visual elements. The rationale behind adopting this model, in addition to the above-mentioned reasons, is its currency in the field of social semiotics, its relative non-discriminatory perspective on the role of semiotic modes (language and images), and the various categories it comprises. Likewise, the lack of linguistic studies that investigate some of this model’s assumptions rather than simply apply its interpretations could be seen as another reason.

Bateman (2009, p.56) highlights that the analysis of multimodal discourse is not straightforward due to the multiple semiotic modes it utilises. What adds to this is the rather limited understanding of meanings made through different semiotic modes due to claims that ‘the same’ meanings are expressed in various semiotic modes with no actual testing
(ibid, p.57). Cameron and Panovic (2014, p.106) and Forceville (1999, pp.163, 169) realise the importance of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) visual grammar. However, Forceville (1999, pp.163, 169) points out that some of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s explanations of images seem ‘one-sided’ rather than interpersonal. Scholars’ (e.g. Bateman 2009; Bateman et al. 2004; Cameron and Panovic 2014; Caple 2013; Forceville 1999; Rahm 2006) main criticism of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model of visual analysis could be attributed to the meanings of Given-New and Ideal-Real, explained below, that Kress and Van Leeuwen associate with the placement of elements in a spatial design.

Bateman et al. (2004, p.67) claim that in the field of newspapers, which could also be extended to magazines and other media, the Given-New concepts are not attached any value per se, and that the design of discourse needs to be investigated from an audience perspective and diachronically. Note that diachrony is beyond the scope of the current thesis. However, attention is given to audience response, as discussed in Section 3.6.5, by conducting interviews about their perception of visual options. Bateman et al. (ibid) call research that simply uses Kress and Van Leeuwen’s interpretations as ‘impressionistic interpretive’ studies. Bateman (2009, p.65) argues that readers cannot be assumed to understand the same intended messages that image-producers want to convey. In order to validate Kress and Van Leeuwen’s claims, Bateman (2009, p.60), Bateman et al. (2004, p.68), and Forceville (1999, p.173) propose empirical investigations. Forceville (ibid) calls for studies that take the role of, mainly, genre and audience into account as possible elements in offering different interpretations of visual choices. In the current thesis, as mentioned above, the emphasis is given to the genre of the images (visuals and multimodal discourse) that belong to promotional discourse as well as to the language of the interviewees, i.e. British English, as a cultural factor. The selected categories from Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual analysis for the present thesis are explained below.
**Interpersonal metafunction**

In visuals, the interpersonal metafunction could be conveyed through relating viewers to represented participants (human or non-human) and using colour, light, and darkness, for instance, where social relations, although imaginary, could be communicated (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, pp.43, 116). The model’s categories are discussed in the following:

**1. Positioning viewers in relation to represented participants**

Positioning viewers in relation to depicted participants actually realises both the ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions, in terms of representing and establishing a relation between these parties (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.115). Positioning viewers can occur through the three resources of *eye contact, size of a shot, and the angle from which an image is taken*. A represented participant’s gaze suggests a form of social interaction with the viewer(s) through the ‘image act’ (*ibid*, p.117). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (*ibid*), the direct eye contact and gestures create vectors that imaginarily connect the represented participant with the viewers. When the eyes of a represented participant(s) directly meet(s) those of the viewers, the image is described as a ‘demand’, where the demand image is assumed to ask the reader to have a virtual relation with the represented participant (*ibid*, p.118). In example 3.51, the demand image is realised through the eyes of the celebrity model, *Gwyneth Paltrow*, which are depicted in both images as directly gazing at the viewers with a relatively neutral gesture:
Similarly, the gestures of a depicted participant, e.g. smile, frown, a waving hand and so on, are supposed to suggest a demand image that can also facilitate the meaning that the image-maker wants to express (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, pp.117, 123). In other words, the eye contact, smile, or raised hand, for example, all realise a demand image. In contrast to the demand image, when a represented participant does not look at the viewer, the interaction between the viewer and the depicted person is indirect or does not occur, and the image is called an ‘offer’ (ibid, pp.119-120). In such images, the viewer stares at the represented participant as if the latter is only an entity for observation (ibid). The following example is an offer image since no eye contact is assumed to occur between the model and the viewers.
The size of the frame option through the close, medium, or long shot is said to express the social distance between the represented participant and the viewers (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.124). In images, the relation between the represented participant and the audience is imaginary and a shot can convey a personal, social, or public distance (ibid, p.125). Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, pp.124-125) cite Hall’s (1964) different meanings of the size of the shot: a ‘very close’ image that shows the head or face of a person suggests an ‘intimate distance’, a ‘close image’ through which a person is represented by her/his head and shoulder conveys a ‘close personal distance’, whereas a ‘far personal distance’ is communicated through a ‘medium close’ image that shows a person up to the waist. ‘Close social distance’ is conveyed through depicting the whole person in a ‘medium long’ image, but when the person is shown as surrounded by space in a ‘long’ image, this conveys ‘far social distance’. In representing a number of people by their trunk in a ‘very long’ image, ‘public distance’ is suggested. In examples 3.51 and 3.52 above, the models’ images seem to represent the close personal (head and shoulder) and intimate (face) proximities, respectively.
In images, the perspective realises social relations through the horizontal and vertical angles from which a participant is shown. In the horizontal angle, images may be frontal or oblique, where a frontal image means ‘involvement’, in that ‘[w]hat you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.136). In contrast, an image from an oblique angle suggests ‘detachment’, in that ‘[w]hat you see here is not part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with’ (ibid; emphasis in original). In the examples above, the right-hand image of 3.51 appears as a frontal image, whereas the oblique angle is used in the left image of the same example, although slightly, and is more conspicuous in 3.52.

In an image from the vertical angle, three meanings can be communicated through three choices of representation. A person can be depicted through the options of a high, eye level, or low angle, which suggest hierarchical social relations (ibid, p.140). The high angle tends to suggest that the reviewer is more powerful than the represented participant, i.e. the viewer looks down on the depicted participant (ibid). Representing a participant at eye level suggests that the relation between the represented participant and the viewer is equal (ibid). An image from a low angle is likely to convey that the represented participant’s power is more than that of the viewer, i.e. the viewer looks up at the represented person (ibid, pp.132, 140). Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.140) claim that the low angle is usually used for depicting the ‘symbolic power’ of famous figures over ordinary people. In examples 3.51 (the right image) and 3.52, the models seem to be represented at eye level, i.e. equality with the viewers, while in the left image of 3.51, the model’s representation suggests that she is slightly looking down on the viewers.

2. Colour, light, and darkness

Rather than confining colour to interpersonal meaning, Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, pp.229-230) argue that colour is a semiotic mode that can realise the three Hallidayan metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual). However, colour tends to combine with other semiotic modes rather than occurring on its own (ibid, p.231). The interpersonal aspect of colour, light, and darkness is discussed as these are the visual resources.
investigated in the current thesis. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.155, 160, 233) distinguish in scalable terms some visual resources such as colour and light as ‘modality’ factors. However, modality and its markers, as suggesting visual truth value, have not been investigated here. The challenge of testing visual modality is that it seems a rather abstract and subjective dimension, in that for Kress and Van Leeuwen, ‘what is regarded as real depends on how reality is defined by a particular social group’ (ibid, p.158). In addition, it is a limitation to associate these indicators, in terms of more/high and less/low, with four coding orientations (technological, sensory, abstract, and naturalistic) (ibid, p.163). The modality cues seem to be relatively imprecise and inconsistent techniques for assessing image credibility since, as Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.167) note, an image could suggest more than one coding orientation simultaneously. Thus, only one definition of the term is given. Modality refers to how real an image is taken to be (Machin 2007, p.46). In this current research, these cues have been taken as visual elements and were studied for the meanings they could convey to the viewers so as to compare them with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) and Machin’s (2007) interpretations.

The features of colour tested here are saturation, modulation, and differentiation. Saturation runs from the full saturation of colour to the lack of colour, i.e. black and white (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.160), where saturated colours convey meanings such as ‘positive, exuberant, adventurous’ (ibid, p.233), and emotional intensity, boldness, and engagement (Machin 2007, p.70). Differentiation ranges from the highest variation of colours to the use of a single colour (monochrome) (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.160) and the differentiated colour meanings are ‘adventurousness or energy’, ‘lack of restraint’, and ‘excitement’ (Machin 2007, p.78). Modulation runs from the complete modulation of colour through various shades to the use of a plain colour (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.160). The meanings attached to modulated colour are ‘subtle and doing justice to the rich texture of real colour, or as overly fussy and detailed’ (ibid, p.234) and ‘specific’, ‘complex’, and real (Machin 2007, p.77). With respect to light and darkness as investigated here, illumination is the scale that ranges from the maximum use of light to the absolute absence of light, i.e. darkness (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.162) and the meanings associated with light are ‘the divine, illumination, hope’ (ibid, 192) and ‘optimism’ (Machin 2007, p.54).
Textual metafunction

It is through composition that the meanings of representation and interaction are linked together, where composition creates a coherent whole (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.177). The three principles of composition, namely information value, salience, and framing, apply to images as well as any multimodal discourse that utilises language and visual resources (ibid).

1. Information value relates to the horizontal and vertical distribution of elements (human or objects) in a visual or multimodal discourse. In a horizontal placement, an element that appears on the left of a structure is the ‘Given’, i.e. something known to the viewer and an ‘agreed-upon point of departure for the message’, while the ‘New’ is the entity that occupies the right part of a composition as the important element that requires the viewer’s attention and ‘the information at “issue”’ (ibid, p.181). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.180), the horizontal composition of left to right connotes movement or continuation. The left-right organisation occurs in examples 3.51 and 3.52, above.

In vertically structured compositions, the ‘Ideal’ is the ‘generalized’ entity that is allocated the upper part of a layout, while the ‘Real’ indicates that this information is ‘down-to-earth’, and therefore is placed in the lower section of the composition (ibid, p.187). For Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.186), the vertical organisation of entities suggests the meaning of ‘opposition’ or ‘contrast’ between what appears at the top and the bottom. Example 3.51 above utilises the top-bottom structure, where the black part is (brand name and image descriptions) shown as the Ideal and the model’s images appear in the realm of the Real. A centred composition is the layout in which the ‘Centre’ as ‘the nucleus of the information’ and the ‘Margin’ as the ‘Given-New’ and ‘Ideal-Real’ occur together (ibid, p.196). In addition in a horizontal triptych, the ‘Centre’ appears in the middle as the ‘Mediator’ between the ‘Given’ on the left and the ‘New’ on the right, i.e. as Given-Mediator-New (ibid, pp.199, 201). The vertical triptych is formed through the occurrence of the ‘Ideal’ above the ‘Centre’ and the ‘Real’ below the ‘Centre’, i.e. vertically as Ideal-Mediator-Real (ibid). The right part of instance 3.52 above, reproduced below as 3.53 with dividing lines, seems to occur as a vertical triptych, i.e. large font writings for product
description, product image, and product use and brand name. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.4, 192) claim that the placement of elements in a composition in Western societies, and hence the way discourse is likely to be read, are culturally influenced by the writing system. They also add that ‘reading directions may be the material instantiations of deeply embedded cultural value systems’ (ibid, p.192).

3.53

(L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2013)

2. **Salience** is the system through which elements are meant to attract the viewers’ eye (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.177). Salience can be realised through size, focus, colour, light, distribution of elements in the visual space, foregrounding, and representing humans or cultural symbols (ibid, p.202). Most of these prominence components seem to occur in examples 3.51 and 3.52 given above, namely sharp focus, colour contrast, high use of light, and models as beauty symbols who are brought to the fore. According to Kress and Van

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37 Although triptychs tend to be formed of three images, based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.198), a triptych could also be made of both verbal and visual elements. Here, the vertical triptych realisation is only an assumption based on the empty space between the represented objects. Thus, there could be other forms for realising this structure but the presented one appears to allow a rather symmetrical allocation to the depicted entities.
Leeuwen, it is through prominence that entities are given significance, and thus the reading of visuals and multimodal discourse is guided by the salient elements (2006, pp.202, 205). The more prominent an element is, the more it is likely to be noticed and hence read by the viewers (ibid, p.202).

3. **Framing** refers to the extent to which elements in a composition are linked together or demarcated in a sense that they are represented as one informational unit, for the former, and a ‘separate unit of information’, for the latter (ibid, p.203). Connection or cohesion is realised through the absence of frame lines, the repetition of the same colour or shape, and vectors, whereas demarcation occurs through the use of the lines of the frame, empty space, and colour discontinuation (ibid, pp.203-204). Separation appears as the empty black space between the two images in example 3.51, the blank spaces highlighted in the right part of 3.53 above, and the colour contrast between the background and the displayed entities in both examples.

**Application of analysis of interviewees’ visual perception**

I now move on to explain the qualitative analysis of the image in the present thesis, which was carried out in three phases. First, utilisation is made of grounded theory (Bryman 2012; Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Longhofer et al. 2013; Thornberg and Charmaz 2012) in analysing the respondents’ answers. Thornberg and Charmaz (ibid, p.41) argue that grounded theory approach employed for studying qualitative data is ‘inductive’. This approach is used here because it offers deep analysis of a phenomenon as it is based on the discovery of patterns from empirical evidence (Dörnyei 2007, p.262). Following Longhofer et al.’s (2013, p.42) proposal for small projects and since the number of respondents is not very large (21 interviewees), the researcher decided not to use any specialist software (e.g. NVivo) for the qualitative analysis. Rather, the analysis was mainly performed manually through close reading, except for some simple quantifications (raw frequencies). The purpose of this analysis was to test the similarities and differences between Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) assumptions about positioning viewers in relation to depicted models, reading paths, composition principles, and meanings of colour, light, darkness, and
black and white against those of the interviewees’ interpretations. As discussed in Section 3.6.1 above, the current interview data could be seen as ‘indicative’, in Edley and Litosseliti’s (2010, p.173) terms, since there seems to be little knowledge from a linguistic perspective on how people perceive visual resources in images from promotional genres. Guided by Charmaz (2006) and Thornberg and Charmaz (2012), the coding of the dataset of the interviews in this thesis occurred first, through ‘initial coding’, which was carried out through naming each statement or sometimes a paragraph in the dataset. Second, in ‘focused coding’, related codes identified in the first stage were grouped together under a ‘core category’, and finally ‘theoretical coding’ happens through integrating the related codes and categories, resulting in what is called ‘coding families’.\(^{38}\) For example, first, all the cases of visual options were identified, then the visual choices were linked to different categories such as address, readability, ways of depicting entities, noticeability, meanings, viewers’ opinion about images, and others. Finally, a coding family of *viewers’ reading paths* was given through combining categories such as noticeability, their reasons, readability, and their reasons together. Through this analysis, it was possible to identify other themes such as viewers’ reading behaviour and factors affecting the interpretation of a visual resource and reading images, for instance. Grounded theory approach can positively be assessed, in that in its focus on grouping things together, it allows for a detailed analysis of the data. Consequently, noticing some elements of comparability between language and images was easy, to some extent.

Second, guided by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) framework categories, discussed above, I explained the composition of the first six images of the image sample and highlighted the cases of the difficulty of assuming the element that might attract viewers, given in Chapter 6 (for the images presented to the participants in the interviews, see Figures A3.1-A3.6 in Appendix 3). The analysed six images can be called a sample analysis conducted for the purpose of clarifying Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.204) claim that the most visible entity is the one read first, which in reading path terms is the first element with which the reading commences. Thus, this analysis was used to compare

these authors’ assumptions with the actual informants’ responses and reading paths, whose results were obtained through the first phase of the analysis.

Although the dataset of the interviews was mainly collected for studying the visual perception of the respondents, it seems possible to analyse this dataset using linguistic models. In the third step of the analysis, some of the categories of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model (explained in Section 3.8.3) were adopted, i.e. inclusion, personalisation, and social relations. Unlike in Chapter 5, where Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model was quantitatively applied, in Chapter 6 the application of this model was qualitative to show the extent to which the interviewees’ responses exhibit similarity to and difference from the representational patterns identified in Chapter 5. In this case, the analysis was based on the featuring of a participant in the interviewees’ answers through eye-contact, smile, angle of the image, and prominence factors rather than on the number of the linguistic occurrences of a category used for representing a participant in a piece of text. Finally, to complement the analysis of this dataset in Chapter 6, Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework was qualitatively applied to explore the appraisals used in the smile, black and white, colour, light, and darkness to show the characteristics of the evaluative language used in the interviewee’s interpretations.

3.9 Summary and plan of the analytical chapters

This chapter has discussed some fundamental terms, and the various aspects of the thesis design in terms of its multi-perspective on data type, sampling, and analysis. The analytical frameworks, the methodological issues that occurred when applying the adopted models (or some of their categories), and how these issues were resolved were also highlighted in this chapter. The next analytical chapters and their themes are summarised in Table 3.9.
Chapter 4 focuses on genre analysis, where the situational characteristics of the thesis data (adverts, posts, comments, and customer reviews) are first identified. In genre analysis, the moves in these discourse types are investigated through identifying and explaining the verbal and non-verbal devices that realise the moves and their functions in these discourse types. The patterns used for representing the different participants in these promotional discourse types are the concern of Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, guided first by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) framework, a sample analysis of six images of the interviews is presented as exploratory comparison with the results of the analysis of the interview dataset that adopted grounded theory. In this chapter, the interviewees’ responses are tested against some of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) assumptions about
visual resources. Additionally, the interview data are analysed using the social actor framework of Van Leeuwen (1996; 2008). The analysis here is mainly interested in showing how participants feature in the interviewees’ answers in order to compare the findings of this chapter with those of the four discourse types, namely the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews, in Chapter 5. Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework is also used to investigate the interview dataset, where the analysis focuses on the evaluations used by the interviewees in their responses to images. The next chapters (4, 5, and 6) report and discuss the results of the analyses.
CHAPTER 4: SITUATIONAL AND GENERIC ANALYSES OF PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I argued that promotional discourse is a complex phenomenon that employs various elements (linguistic and non-linguistic) that need to be investigated. Thus far, no previous study has attempted to draw a comparison between various promotional discourse types such as those of the present study (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews). To achieve this, there is a need to first establish the comparability and genre membership of these discourse types. This is carried out through studying the situational characteristics and generic move structure of these discourse types. Thus, these analyses set out the basis for the next analytical chapters. First, this chapter identifies the situational characteristics of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews, where the technological characteristics of Facebook and the review websites from which three datasets of this thesis were sampled, are investigated too so as to compare the affordances of these two online platforms. Here, the term *affordance* refers to the technological potentials and limitations of digital media (Cameron and Panovic 2014, p.39). Integrating some categories from Biber and Conrad’s (2009) framework with those from Herring’s (2007) model, the situational factors are analysed to help interpret the occurrence or lack of linguistic/non-linguistic options in the promotional discourse types studied in the subsequent analyses. Next, informed by Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) generic approach, this chapter generically analyses the four discourse types to uncover their moves and functions, in an effort to determine how far these discourse types can be viewed as comparable, and hence be categorised as members of promotional genres. This chapter starts with a brief overview of generic studies on promotional discourse. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the conducted analyses and finally, a summary of the conclusions.
4.2 Generic studies on promotional discourse

In spite of the utilisation of promotional features across a wide range of discourse types (Bhatia 2005, p.213) and in discourse types from different media, generic studies on promotional discourse seem to be rather rare. Bhatia’s generic (1993; 2004; 2005) frameworks seem to be the main models adopted in the analysis of promotional discourse. These models have been employed in the study of, for example, sales promotion and job application letters (Bhatia 1993), adverts (Bhatia 2004; 2005), spams (Barron 2006), websites (Koteyko 2009), and advertorials (Zhou 2012). Although Askehave and Nielsen (2005) also investigate promotional websites, their study is based on Swales’ (1990) model of genre structure, mainly developed for academic discourse. Taking a further step, Lam (2013) studies online group buying deals using multiple approaches, where corpus linguistics methods are combined with genre analysis and multimodal analysis. All the aforementioned studies tend to identify qualitatively the moves of such promotional discourse types. A move is a textual component whose function accomplishes the goal(s) of a genre (Bhatia 1993, p.29). In contrast to these studies, Barron’s (2006) and Lam’s (2013) research is both quantitative and qualitative. Comparing the findings of the above previous studies suggests that these promotional discourse types exhibit some similarity in their move structure. The common key moves identified in the promotional discourse types of most of the above-stated research can be summarised as capturing attention, displaying the addresser’s qualification, product detailing, and constructing relations through further contact.

Generic approaches to online reviews vary but there seem to be few generic studies on online reviews, especially of products. To show the moves used in the reviews and their purpose, guided by Bhatia’s (1993) and Swales’ (1990) models, De Jong and Burgers (2013) study online professional and non-professional film reviews, and Skalicky (2013) investigates the online ‘most helpful’ positive and critical customer reviews for different products. Skalicky’s (ibid, p.91) analysis concludes that in the positive and critical product reviews, ‘user information’ and ‘evaluation’ moves (i.e. those based on reviewers’ experiences with products) feature the most. This finding is similar to what Pollach’s (2005) content analysis shows about online camera reviews: her results suggest that
information that relates to reviewer’s expertise widely occurs in reviews. De Jong and Burgers’ (2013) research finds that evaluative moves such as criticising and recommending a film are the characteristic features of non-expert reviews by customers. Taboada (2011), who investigates online film reviews using systemic functional approach to genre (e.g. Martin 1992), identifies the structural organisation of reviews in terms of ‘stages’, in Martin and Rose’s (2008) terms, and their goals. Her study likewise arrives at the conclusion that evaluation is the essential stage in film reviews. The results of the above studies suggest that customer reviews largely utilise information based on product use, i.e. moves that show authors’ qualification and evaluation.

This chapter attempts to address some of the shortcomings in the aforementioned studies. First, while these studies do not analyse and compare moves in customer reviews with those used in other promotional discourse types, in the current chapter the moves employed in the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews are analysed and compared to show the aspects of similarity and difference among these discourse types in genre terms. Second, to the best of my knowledge, no study has analysed Facebook posts and comments from a generic perspective. In addition, although on Facebook comments cannot exist without posts, i.e. they are chained (explained earlier in Section 3.6.3), it seems rather simplistic to consider that the posts and comments would always occur in a question-answer form. Thus, this study seems to be the first attempt at identifying the move structure of the posts and comments and the membership of the posts, comments, and reviews to promotional genres.

This chapter addresses research question 1:

What situational and generic features characterise the sampled print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews of this thesis?

4.3 Results and discussion of situational and genre analyses

The following sections report the results of the analyses of the situational and generic characteristics of the discourse types. The medium aspects of Facebook and the review

39 Stages are the equivalent of moves.
websites of the current thesis are first discussed as a special kind of situational characteristic. Then, other situational characteristics of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews are explained. Finally, the generic move structure of these discourse types is discussed. The methodologies adopted in this chapter are explained in Sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2, above.

4.3.1 Situational characteristics: Technological

One of Herring’s (2007, p.13) medium factors is synchronous/non-synchronous communication, which relates to the extent to which interactants need to be simultaneously present online for the interaction to occur. The content transmission indicates whether the medium allows ‘character-by-character’, ‘line-by-line’, or ‘message-by-message’ transmission (ibid, p.14). The first one is ‘two-way’ as the screen shows the addressee the addresser’s written message and vice versa, while the latter two transmission types are ‘one-way’ (ibid). This factor must not be confused with the affordance of online media, i.e. the two-way communication on Facebook and review websites, explained in Section 4.3.2. Durability of the message, or what Herring (ibid, p.15) calls ‘persistence of transcript’, refers to the system’s automatic archiving or deletion of previous interactions (ibid). Message size has to do with the maximum number of characters a message can contain (ibid). Communication channel indicates the extent to which a message is language-based only or multimodal (ibid). Message anonymity relates to whether a sender is allowed to communicate anonymously or not (ibid, p.16). The format of a message refers to the order in which messages are displayed and the element attached to them (ibid, p.17). In these frameworks, medium can be seen as analogous to mode in SFL. Table 4.1 classifies the characteristics of Facebook and the review websites at the time of writing this thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium Factor</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Review Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synchronicity</td>
<td>asynchronous</td>
<td>asynchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message transmission</td>
<td>one-way</td>
<td>one-way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence of transcript</td>
<td>annual durability</td>
<td>durability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of message buffer</td>
<td>not limited</td>
<td>not limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel of communication</td>
<td>multimodal</td>
<td>language-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous messaging</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message format</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from Table 4.1 that Facebook and the review websites (reviewcentre.com for cosmetics and roadtestreports.co.uk for cars) mostly have similar features but they also differ with respect to other factors. Facebook and these review websites share the feature of asynchronous communication, in that any written or visual material (the latter on Facebook only) can be published on these platforms without the requisite for having other users logged into Facebook or using the review websites at the time of sending that material. Although messaging, video, and voice callings are also affordances of Facebook, they are not studied here since they are not part of the data of this thesis. Linked to their asynchronous interaction, any material on Facebook and the review websites is transmitted ‘message-by-message’, i.e. the transmission is one-direction. When in the process of writing a post, comment, or reply on Facebook, or a review or response on the review websites, other users would not be able to see a sender’s message before it is actually sent. Both the asynchronicity and one-way transmission might have an effect on receiving responses, i.e. dialogic communication.

In relation to the durability of contributions, generally at the beginning of every New Year, the archiving system of Facebook deletes some posts including their appended comments and replies while keeping others. Annually, it is not predictable which posts are likely to be kept and appear in the Facebook ‘Timeline’. Unlike Facebook, the review websites of the current thesis tend to archive all the posted reviews and interactions that occurred on them. The archiving factor seems to have an effect on the availability of all the published content, which is not stable on Facebook compared with the reviews’ persistence on the review websites. This implies that as a source for product information, the review websites can
easily be consulted. This dimension should not be confused with the authority of the page/website administrator to delete posted material for insulting other members, for example, or to block participants accordingly, as explained in Section 4.3.2 below.

Another aspect of similarity is that Facebook and the review websites do not specify a maximum for the characters of the verbal content, which suggests a varying length for the messages and more possibility of expressing opinions. While Facebook enables users to post and comment monomodally and/or multimodally, where both posts and comments may include written language and visuals (images and videos) or either of them, on the review websites the reviews are language-dependent only. But the built-in architecture of the review websites is multimodal, as the two websites automatically show colour in the title and star rating of reviews, for example. Thus, the use of multimodal resources in discourse implies that customers could be drawn to it.

Both Facebook and the review websites of this thesis permit a sense of anonymity, in that they do not disclose users’ identity overtly. Facebook allows users to choose a nickname after registration. The car review website (roadtestreports.co.uk) simply requires that a reviewer provides a name in the reviewing template, while the cosmetics review website (reviewcentre.com) encourages anonymity, as this website reminds reviewers to post anonymously. The cosmetics review website provides an anonymity checkbox that works in two ways. When a reviewer clicks that box, the website will create an automatic random name for the reviewer or, alternatively, she/he can publish the review as a ‘Guest’, i.e. no name is associated with it. Otherwise, the review is published in the username used for registering with that website. Although Facebook and the review websites verify the emails or phone numbers (the latter on Facebook only) provided for registration, anonymity could have a bearing on the trustworthiness of the posted material. Seen from Vásquez’s (2014, p.85) perspective, since no offline relation might be between the comment or review authors and readers, authors need to create such a relationship through constructing trustworthy identities for themselves in texts. Anonymity could also account for posting strong negative attitudes in terms of giving authors more freedom or encouraging them to express such opinions (Vásquez 2011, p.1716).
Finally, with regard to the message formatting, both Facebook and the review websites follow the reverse order, in that the most recent posts and reviews, respectively, are exhibited at the top. However, the position of the Facebook comments and replies to comments, and the responses to the reviews is always below the post and review, respectively. This might increase the possibility of comments, replies, and responses not being eye-catching.

4.3.2 Other situational characteristics

Some of Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) situational characteristics are incorporated to illustrate the social characteristics of producing adverts, Facebook posts and comments, and customer reviews. Combining Biber and Conrad’s (ibid, pp.41-42) characteristics of participants and their relations with Herring’s (2007, p.18) ‘participation structure’ and ‘norms of organisation’, the term participation is adopted, as previously mentioned in Section 3.8.1. It refers to the author(s) of the discourse and their audience (Biber and Conrad 2009, p.41), the exchange kind (e.g. one-to-many; see Herring 2007, p.18), interaction administration (ibid, p.21), and interactants’ relations (Biber and Conrad 2009, p.42), also known as tenor in SFL. Purpose of interaction (equivalent to field in SFL) indicates the aim(s) the discourse seeks to fulfil, which could be explicit or implicit (i.e. communicative purpose). Table 4.2 is a summary interpretation of the situational dimensions of the discourse types of this thesis.
Table 4.2 Comparison of situational characteristics of adverts, Facebook posts and comments, and customer reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational characteristic</th>
<th>Adverts</th>
<th>Facebook posts and comments</th>
<th>Customer reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. company-customer</td>
<td>1. (posts) company-customer (comments) company-customer company-customer</td>
<td>1. customer-customer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. one-to-many</td>
<td>2. (posts) one-to-many (comments) one-to-one</td>
<td>2. one-to-many one-to-one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. authority</td>
<td>3. (post) authority (comments) equal but moderated by brand companies</td>
<td>3. equal but moderated by third parties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose(s): Explicit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promotion</td>
<td>building of communities for expressing stance</td>
<td>assisting of others in purchase through reviewing products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implicit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhancing company’s image</td>
<td>promotion, self-presentation</td>
<td>promotion for/against products, self-presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.2 and in terms of participation, adverts tend to be the result of the work of experts or businesses concerned with advertising and promotion in co-operation with the goods-manufacturing companies. The same could be said about posts, since some of the print adverts are remediated in the Facebook posts. Because the print adverts and Facebook posts normally carry the brand names of the manufacturing companies of the advertised products, especially in adverts, or occur on Facebook pages run by those companies, the sender of the advertising message seems to be the goods-producing companies. Thus in this thesis, the authors of the adverts and posts are simply called *companies*. By contrast, the Facebook comments and customer reviews are often written by ordinary people, i.e. actual or potential customers. As these company- and customer-authored discourse types are published in public media, their audience might not be easily defined in number but they
can be assumed to be large, maybe in the thousands. The audience includes ordinary people as potential customers but the companies might not be excluded as audience of reviews, i.e. ‘overhearers’ in Goffman’s (1981) terms.

In the print adverts, the communication is one-to-many as it is initiated on the companies’ part, i.e. company-customers. However, the inclusion of websites and social media platforms in the print adverts could be thought of, at least, as attenuating the unidirectionality of the print adverts. Likewise on Facebook and the review websites, communication can also be one-to-many; however, the facility of commenting on posts and responding to reviews projects interaction on these platforms as dialogic, since it can be one-to-one. As stated above, since the comments and reviews are normally expected to be produced by ordinary persons, the relation among the participants is assumed to be equal. Unlike in the print adverts and Facebook posts, where companies are interaction initiators and can be conceived as a form of authority, reviews seem to be initiated by reviewers only, while the owners of the review websites never interact with the reviewers. But on both Facebook and the review websites, authority seems to manifest itself in terms of moderation: on Facebook, the companies are the moderators of their own Facebook pages, whereas the gatekeeping of the review websites is by third-party businesses. Thus, as moderators the companies on Facebook and the third-party owners of the review websites have the exclusive right to delete or block contributions made to their platforms, e.g. in cases of breaching the regulations of these communities.

With respect to goals, the primary aim of an advert is to draw people’s attention and make them aware of the availability of a product through promoting the product in the hope of selling it (Bhatia 2005, p.214). However, adverts can also be used to build a positive image for the company as an implicit purpose. Based on the companies’ Facebook pages of the present thesis, the goals of these pages can be summarised as allowing the pages’ users to

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40 I am speculating the audience number based on the circulation of the magazines (ELLE and WHAT CAR?) and the overall ‘Likes’ the selected Facebook pages and review websites received at the writing time.

41 There is no indication that the chosen review websites work on behalf of any of the selected companies. The two review websites do not even sell products and they claim to be independent businesses. But as on many websites, banners and links to other websites may appear on the selected review websites of this research.
have domains of interaction with others, articulating opinions and to be kept up-to-date on product launching and companies’ news. In this sense, the covert aim of these Facebook pages could be assumed to promote products and to enhance the companies’ reputation. In other words, these Facebook pages can be thought of as domains for companies’ and users’ self-presentation as well. The communicative purpose of the two review websites of this study is to express and share attitudes about products to help other potential customers make the best decisions possible in their purchase. Offering opinions about products might imply promoting for or against a product and a means for presenting one’s self as knowledgeable. Hence, the review websites might also be platforms for promoting one’s self.

4.3.3 Generic analysis

The results of the move analysis are not a claim that the moves identified would occur in the order in which they are presented here, nor that one advert, Facebook post, Facebook comment, or customer review would include all the identified moves. The analysis of the above discourse types shows these types to have both similarities and differences. Each discussed move is highlighted in its first use and numbered for convenience.

1. The first move is the attention-catching move, which could be used to draw readers to promotional discourse. This move can be realised through means such as colour, font size, boldness, and underlining of a title, word or phrase, product name, or brand name (the latter in adverts), and the use of vague words. This move can also be realised through images (in adverts and posts) and videos (in posts) through any represented entity. The examples below illustrate some strategies of the attention-catching move:

4.1 “at long last a mascara that does what is says, lashes…” (Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

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42 For quantitative results from all move analyses of each promotional discourse type of this thesis, see Appendix 1.
43 Throughout the thesis chapters, each relevant discussed feature is underlined in the provided example. The texts appear as in their original form, i.e. no correction is made to misprints or grammatical mistakes.
In example 4.1, the review title in its colour (purple), font boldness, and being put between inverted commas can be taken as elements that might grab readers’ attention, since the font colour of the review body appears in black and its font size is smaller than that of its title and is not in boldface. This title becomes underlined and clickable when touched by the mouse cursor, which might add to its visibility. Some Facebook posts also have underlined titles similar to those on the cosmetics reviews. Such titles, as in 4.1, could be construed as a type of intertextuality, realised by a hyperlink. In online domains, *intertextuality* could be seen as the connection between texts or pages and other texts or pages of the same website through hypertextuality, e.g. hyperlinks, icons, or buttons (Adami 2014, p.136), where this hypertextuality is ‘site-internal’ (Lam 2013, p.14). But when the forms of hypertextuality connect a website to pages from other websites, i.e. outside that website, this is ‘site-external’ hypertextuality (*ibid*) or interdiscursivity (another distinction between the hypertextuality in titles and that in the soliciting response move is explained below). In instance 4.1, readers are simply transferred to another page within the *reviewcentre.com* to read the full review. In example 4.2, although the brand name appears at the bottom of the advert, viewers might notice it because its font size is larger than that of the rest of the advert.

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44 On Facebook, clicking a title could transfer readers to the Facebook photo album, for instance.
45 Intertextuality, explained in Section 2.4.3, can occur in offline and online texts.
46 *Hypertextuality* could occur via ‘hyperlinks, interactivity and availability of multimedia’ (Tereszczkiewicz 2010, pp.19, 22). They all require action on the part of the user to be activated, such as clicking a link to access information or share material with other users, or typing in a field to put feedback (Adami 2014, p.136).
The results of the analysis in Figure 4.1 indicate the almost equal distribution of the eye-catching move in the print adverts, Facebook posts, and customer reviews. In the adverts and posts, this move amounts to more than a quarter of the moves in these discourse types (26% and 29% of the total moves, respectively) and about a quarter of the moves in the customer reviews occur as the attention-catching move (24% of all moves). However, there are only 60 instances of this move in the customer reviews in comparison with 204 and 270 cases in the print adverts and Facebook posts, respectively. The results of the attracting attention move could be explained by the aim of drawing customers’ attention to the company-authored discourse so that the promoted entity (i.e. products) would be noticed, and attracting readers to read reviews on the review websites. Although the customer reviews are demonstrated to be mainly language-dependent, as discussed in Section 4.3.1, the inherent features of the review websites through the title font size and colour show their utilisation of the attention grabbing move. The results of this move could also be conceived as an indication of the multimodality of these promotional discourse types. The examples below illustrate the attention-catching move in the print adverts and Facebook posts:
In instance 4.3, the possible components that might catch readers’ eyes are the model, the word *PERFECTED* due to its large bold font, the product image, the brand name, or the use of a different colour for *INTRODUCING*. In example 4.4, the rather large blue title of the post or any of the four displayed visuals might be attention-catching elements. However,  

47 Copyright of Daimler AG/Mercedes-Benz UK.
we can only speculate on the objects that readers might notice, since people could be attracted to different units in a visual or multimodal discourse, as discussed further in Section 6.6.2. While example 4.3 seems to have three functions, instance 4.4 could be thought of as performing a double function (see the discussion below on detailing the product and encouragement moves).

The reason why the Facebook comments do not employ this move could be attributed to their appended position to the Facebook posts, mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.1, their built-in lack of a title, the inability to use a font size and colour other than the standard ones provided by Facebook, and the absence of images in the dataset of this research. In this sense, the commenters on the chosen Facebook pages do not seem to use the visual affordance of Facebook, although sometimes they tend to use paralinguistic cues (e.g. emoticons or kisses) in their comments.

2. Another move is the showing qualification move, through which discourse senders tend to give their audience a sense that the authors are experienced and that the products can satisfy the audience’s needs, the latter especially in the company-authored discourse types (adverts and posts). This move can be realised through mentioning the improvement made to a product for customers’ comfort, as in instance 4.5, or collaborations with business partners, for example. In the customer-authored discourse, the realisation of this move can occur through information that reflects the author’s knowledge about a product, stating that the writer has used or owned a product, the length of time for using a product or brand, or comparing a product with other competitive ones, as in example 4.6. This move is exemplified below:

4.5 Impeccable craftsmanship is tough to improve upon, but that was our task when we reimagined the E-Class for 2014. Now it’s sharper and more aggressive, and even more elegant than ever before. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

4.6 Got a 51 Avensiss had it four years this year and never let me down Not once the most reliable car iv ever had and it still runs Quiet not a sound (Comment on Toyota Facebook post)
These instances can be conceived of as a form of self-presentation and building the discourse writer’s positive persona through projecting the companies as caring for customer satisfaction in 4.5 and presenting the commenter as qualified in 4.6. In this sense, this move appears to reflect the implicit objective of constructing or enhancing reputation in the print adverts, Facebook posts and comments, and customer reviews discussed in Section 4.3.2.

Figure 4.2 Showing qualification move across discourse types: % of all moves

The quantitative comparison across the four discourse types in Figure 4.2 indicates that the showing qualification move is employed in all discourse types. It also appears that this move occurs in the customer-authored discourse types more than in those produced by companies. However, in the customer reviews this move is used the most. It occurs more than twice as much as in the Facebook comments, the second highest result. In the customer reviews, there are 63 examples of this move, which constitute a quarter (25%) of the move total in the reviews, whereas 93 instances of this move occur in the Facebook comments, which amount to 11% of all moves in this discourse.

The result of this move in the customer reviews supports the findings of previous studies, where reviewers are found to provide information that indicates their actual use of products (Pollach 2005, p.295; Skalicky 2013, p.92). The result of this move in the customer reviews could be interpreted in terms of durability and anonymity, explained in Section 4.3.1, in that reviews appear on sites that are likely to be consulted for information and the
anonymous posting of reviews might require that reviewers present their qualification. Mackiewicz (2010) argues that, in terms of reviewers’ credibility, showing credentials online is significant because review readers associate them with reviews’ reliability. Thus, construed in Mackiewicz’s (ibid) ‘expertise’ terms, the result of the showing qualification move could be understood as an element of highlighting ‘credibility’ online, in that reviewers want to project themselves as knowledgeable persons who are familiar with products, i.e. self-presentation (ibid, pp.14-15) (see the discussion on the suggestion/advice move below for another form of credibility). This result might also explain why some customer reviews tend to be much longer than comments.

The rather low occurrence of this move in the Facebook comments could be explained by the fact that Facebook is not primarily a domain for reviewing products, as discussed in Section 4.3.2 above, and thus commenters’ expertise might not be at stake. Rather, Caers et al. (2013, p.988) argue that Facebook is a domain of online visibility, in that Facebook is a platform for sharing and expressing opinions and maintaining relations. One possibility for the low frequency of the showing qualification move in the print adverts and Facebook posts could be that promotional discourse types, such as company brochures (Askehave 1998 cited in Askehave and Swales 2001, p.204) or company websites (Askehave and Nielsen 2005, p.129; Koteyko 2009, p.116), allow companies to construct more freely their credentials through allocating a section for this aspect, for example. Another interpretation is that on Facebook, companies could mention such information in the ‘About’ section of their Facebook page. The showing qualification move in the customer reviews is exemplified in:

4.7 I tried a lot of other brands such as, Clarins, Clinique, E. Lauder and others but none of them proved successful. Eventually I tried Chanel and came across their crître de Chanel automatic eyeliner pen. I found it relatively easy to apply, the liquid was not too thick or ‘gloupy’. (Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

4.8 The Hybrid Synergie Drive uses a CVT transmission which doesn’t have any gears. It simply has forward backwards and neutral. So it’s not surprising that the reviewer found the gear changes smooth, because
there aren’t any. My personal experience of the Auris Hybrid is that it is a joy to drive (Toyota customer review—Road Test Reports)

In examples 4.7 and 4.8, the reviewers represent their competence by stating they have experienced the reviewed products, comparing the products with others from different brands as in 4.7, and giving their personal assessment of these products.

3. Another move identified in the promotional discourse types of this study is detailing the product, which can linguistically occur as identifying a product, describing or evaluating it, and indicating its use or value (Bhatia 1993, p.51; 2004, p.65). Identifying products may occur through referring to their name, type, or in pronouns, for example. The second means of detailing the product is through describing or evaluating them in terms of showing their characteristics. The third way is indicating the use or value of products by stating what products can do for customers. However, Bhatia (2004, p.65) argues that detailing the product move can also be realised visually. Products can be displayed visually in images or videos in such a way that might help customers see what a product looks like. In this sense, detailing the product move could be assumed to help readers construct a mental image of a product through the linguistic and non-linguistic strategies of what the product can achieve and how customers would look or feel when acquiring that promoted product. According to Fairclough (2001, p.170), such linguistic and visually constructed images show the ideology of consumption in promotional discourse such as adverts. In this way, visuals seem to have two functions since they occur in the attracting attention move to capture readers’ eye, as discussed earlier, and in detailing the product move, as shown is example 4.4 above. The following examples illustrate detailing the product move:

4.9 The Fiat 500 comes with the TwinAir turbo 85 BHP engine, which as well as being a blast to drive, is the lowest CO2 emission petrol car engine in the world. (Fiat advert—WHAT CAR? 2011)

4.10 I’m very pleased with it [Max Factor Cream Puff powder]. It provides a complete coverage and lasts all day. (Max Factor customer review—Review Centre)
In instance 4.9, the product is identified through its name (i.e. 500). The Fiat 500 is also described and evaluated. In 4.10, the product’s identification happens through the pronoun it, and Cream Puff powder is appraised and its results are highlighted.

It seems relevant to indicate that on Facebook, unlike in the print adverts, products tend to be associated with events or occasions (e.g. Valentine's day in 4.11) or competitions (e.g. parenting tricks, tips, truths, and tales in 4.12). This means that the Facebook posts are not simply specified for product launches. Rather, the companies seem to keep customers informed about any activities relevant to the companies or their products, maybe to sustain interest in the brands.

4.11 Whatever you’re doing this Valentine's day, heat things up with our red hot shades! (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

4.12 The Fiat 500L competition is on http://on.fb.me/Wh3pX1 Spill your parenting tales to win. (Fiat Facebook post 2013)

Figure 4.3 Detailing product move across discourse types: % of all moves

The above figure summarises the results of detailing the product move, where it appears that this move occurs in all four discourse types. The results of this move in the above discourse types are higher than the results of the other identified moves in this study. The high occurrence of detailing the product move in all discourse types could be understood in
terms of its reflecting the purpose of these discourse types. It is through this move that
people are informed about products, which is the goal of the company-authored discourse,
especially adverts. Likewise, through conversing about products in the Facebook comments
and reviewing products in the customer reviews, customers could express and hence
present themselves. However, it seems clear from the results that this move is employed the
most in the Facebook comments. This move constitutes over three quarters of the moves in
the comments (77% of all moves), which is more than double their amount in the print
adverts, Facebook posts, and customer reviews (27%, 32%, and 30% of the move total in
each discourse, respectively). Products are identified 628 times in the Facebook comments
in comparison with 208, 299, and 75 times in the print adverts, Facebook posts, and
customer reviews, respectively. As mentioned in Chapter 3 in relation to the comments, the
realisation of this move could simply be in terms of evaluating a product rather than giving
its full details.  

The examples below indicate detailing the product move in the Facebook comments:

4.13 CLA will change everything. Amazing car. (Comment on
Mercedes-Benz Facebook post)

4.14 Really want to try it! (Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

As the examples show, in 4.13, while the car is introduced, its value is mentioned and
evaluated, in 4.14 the product is identified through the pronoun it, which refers back to the
False Lash Flutter mascara, and is also evaluated. In both cases, the products are presented
without detailed information.

4. In an attempt to induce customers to buy promoted products, companies tend to employ
the encouragement move. What Bhatia (2004, p.65) identifies as the moves of
‘endorsement’, ‘offering incentives’, and ‘using pressure tactics’ in print adverts are all
called here the encouragement move, as stated in Section 3.8.2. This move can be realised
through the endorsement of famous people, experts, non-famous models, ordinary
customers, press, TV programmes, statistical details, surveys, and awards in a way that

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48 A move was coded once, although it can be realised by more than one strategy (verbal and/or
visual) in a piece of text (see Section 3.8.2).
might add positive features to products. In addition, offering discounts, free product samples, coupons, and showing that a product offer is available for a limited time can also be strategies for realising the encouragement move, for instance:

4.15 Bounce around town to your favourite sounds with a FREE Beats™ by Dr. Dre in car sound system and wheel upgrade when you pre-order the fiat 500L (T&Cs apply). (Fiat Facebook post 2013)

4.16 Top Gear said that you'll "Arrive at that horizon sooner than you ever imagined possible" with the power of the all-new SL 65 AMG. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

In example 4.15, customers are offered an incentive with a pressure tactic, i.e. the free music system on the condition that the car is ordered in advance, in an attempt to increase the chances of selling the car. Instance 4.16 is a case of product endorsement through a TV programme, which seems to add a sense of authenticity to the product value (i.e. the endorser seems an esteemed entity).

Endorsers, especially celebrities, could be seen as a widely used promotional technique to catch customers’ eye so as to be enticed into products (Erdogan 1999, p.295). Endorsements can also be explained, in Williamson’s (1978, p.25) terms as stated earlier in Section 2.3.5, as meaning transference, a semiotic marketing technique largely associated with prominent public figures’ endorsements (Banister and Cocker 2014; Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta 2010). But for Williamson (1978), the transference of meaning seems to be mainly restricted to the visual representation of celebrities (for the discussion of meaning transference in visuals, see Section 6.6.4). Endorsements can be lexical and non-verbal. A visual with an endorser seems to have a double function, in that, as explained above, it is a means of the attention-catching move to attract readers and it can also realise the encouragement move too. When an endorser and product are displayed in one image, the visual may achieve a triple function, i.e. capturing attention, detailing the product, and encouragement: 49

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49 For these three functions, see example 4.18.
4.17 Prof. Gorden Wagener, Head of Design at Mercedes-Benz Cars. "For me, our cars are a work of art."

"The best or nothing" is Gottlieb Daimler's fundamental principle that drives each and every employee. It's an aspiration that is expressed in the shape and contour of every Mercedes-Benz. (Mercedes-Benz advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)

4.18

![L'Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2013](image)

In the instances above, in addition to being visually displayed next to and/or wearing a product (the latter in cosmetics), where the visuals realise the attracting attention, detailing the product and encouragement moves, the endorser is directly quoted in example 4.17. In 4.18, Claudia Schiffer’s image and the overt statement that Claudia is wearing Color Riche Eyeshadow Quad E8 Bleu Marinière at the bottom of this advert, especially in the

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50 In 4.17, the image was coded as realising the attention-catching move only, while the verbal endorsement was coded as realising the encouragement move, and the product, as mentioned by its name and its characteristics, was coded once as realising detailing the product move (see Section 3.8.2). Due to the rather small font of the verbal endorsements in adverts, as copied versions, I presented one example only.
cosmetics adverts, can also be interpreted as a form of endorsement, suggesting that through acquiring this product, buyers could look as beautiful as this product endorser.

While famous characters tend to be product endorsers in the print adverts, as explained in Section 5.3.1, in the Facebook posts such figures can endorse not only products but also competitions, events, news, social occasions, or anything relevant to the company that the well-known endorsers represent:

4.19 Visit our Lewis Hamilton Welcome Competition to wish him luck at the Australian Grand Prix this weekend and you could win a signed windscreen from Lewis’ car or an AMG Driving Experience: http://apps.facebook.com/welcomelewis (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

4.20 Eva Longoria’s wish to all women on this International Women’s Day is for every woman to follow their dreams. Have you shared your wish yet? http://bit.ly/wweva (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

Libai et al. (2010, p.270) and Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011, p.219) call customer’s communication on Facebook ‘amplified’ since the companies, as the moderators of their Facebook pages, tend to prompt it through various means. From the above examples, the endorsers and incentives (the latter in 4.19) seem to be used to boost the likelihood of users’ feedback on the companies’ Facebook pages (here the incorporation of links to websites, images, videos, and social media platforms into Facebook posts along with endorsers is described as post enhancement; see Section 5.3.2). Encouraging attitude expression manifests the purpose of the companies’ Facebook pages of establishing platforms of interaction.
As demonstrated in Figure 4.4, the encouragement move occurs in the company-authored discourse of the print adverts and Facebook posts only. This is presumably because commenters and reviewers would not normally be expected to push readers to buy a particular product. However, the Facebook comments and customer reviews might be thought of as endorsements for a product (Vásquez 2014, p.125) or against it. The frequency of this move in the print adverts is nearly twice as high as in the Facebook posts, where it constitutes less than a quarter of all moves in the print adverts (19%) in comparison with 11% of the move total in the Facebook posts. The frequent use of this move in the adverts can be interpreted in terms of the purpose of this discourse, which is mainly devoted to promoting products so that people would purchase them. There are 145 and 104 instances of the encouragement move in the print adverts and Facebook posts, respectively. The examples below illustrate the means that realise the encouragement move in the print adverts:

4.21 92% OF WOMEN FIND THIS FOUNDATION ADAPTS TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL SKIN TONES. (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2012)

4.22 0% APR Representative only available from no deposit ordered between 1 December 2012 and 31 March 2013 and registered and
financed by 30 June 2013 through Toyota Financial Services. (Toyota advert-WHAT CAR? 2013)

The examples above use the encouragement move through endorsement, pressure tactics, or incentives. In instance 4.21, the statistical percentage of 92% gives the impression that a survey of consumers has been done, and that readers can expect a very high chance of similar results if they use the Colour Adapt Foundation too. In example 4.22, the encouragement move manifests in terms of pressure tactics as giving deadlines for the offer to induce customers to seize the opportunity available, in ordered between 1 December 2012 and 31 March 2013 and registered and financed by 30 June 2013 through Toyota Financial Services. Additionally, in 4.22 the encouragement to buy the Auris exhibits as incentives, i.e. the zero annual percentage rate and the deposit-free purchase.

5. In order to increase the engagement of interested potential customers with a promoted product or offer, there seems to be a need for companies to use the soliciting response move. The strategies of this move can occur through providing a company’s contact details such as contact numbers (in adverts), email addresses, websites, and accounts of social media platforms (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others). The soliciting response move manifests in the form of inviting customers to contact a dealer, know more information about a product through websites or other social media platforms, and to give, especially on Facebook, their input as comments, photos, shares, or likes on the companies’ posts. Although social media icons such as Facebook tend to be embedded in the cosmetics print adverts, this embedding might be thought of as the print adverts supporting the companies in achieving the goal of their Facebook pages, i.e. enhancing interaction, for instance. What distinguishes the hypertextuality of titles, previously discussed in the attention-catching move, is that the clickable titles are rarely associated with an invitation to act. In contrast, the contact details or embedded links to other media seem to realise the soliciting response move in the company-produced discourse, since they occur with imperatives. Although in a print medium, hypertextuality (intertextuality) also tends to occur in adverts as links to websites or icons to social media, as illustrated in the following:

4.23 Malgosia is wearing Colour Elixir in Ruby
To find out more about this product visit maxfactor.co.uk. (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2011)

4.24 For a chance of winning our brand new Giant Pen Stick, email your full name and postal address to MFcompetition.im@pg.com along with the name of the shade you would like to win. (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

In the instances above, the soliciting response move occurs as a website in 4.23, while in the Facebook post it appears as an email address in 4.24. Each strategy realises the soliciting response move and is accompanied by an imperative, e.g. visit or email, respectively. These examples may be seen as a form of text/'site-external’ hypertextuality (Lam 2013, p.14), since the connection is made to material from a different medium in 4.23, or a page outside Facebook in 4.24.

Figure 4.5 Soliciting response move across discourse types: % of all moves

The results in Figure 4.5 show that the soliciting response move occurs in the print adverts and Facebook posts only (company-authored discourse), whereas it is absent from the customer-written discourse (Facebook comments and customer reviews). This move is almost equally distributed in these above discourse types, where it constitutes less than 25% of all moves in each discourse, i.e. 22% and 19% of the move total occur as the
soliciting response move in the print adverts and Facebook posts, respectively. There are 176 instances of this move in the Facebook posts and 168 examples in the print adverts. In the print adverts, the soliciting response move tends to occur through the means of websites instead of social media icons. The major dependence of the print adverts on websites could be explained by the fact that non-interactive websites, as a form of Web 1.0, have a rather long history as domains of reading (Thurlow 2012, p.4). In contrast, Web 2.0 or social media platforms such as Facebook were emerging media during 2013. The following examples illustrate the realisation of the soliciting response move through a phone number and a website in the print adverts:

4.25 To experience the outstanding performance and value of the new E-Class, take a test drive at your local Mercedes-Benz Direct retailer today. Over 1,000 models available. Call 0845 092 0239 for a test drive.
(Mercedes-Benz advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)

3.26 The fun starts from just £22.595. To find out more visit www.toyota.co.uk (Toyota advert-WHAT CAR? 2013)

Another explanation for the occurrence of social media platforms in the Facebook posts more than in the print adverts could be understood in terms of medium affordance. As an online medium, Facebook easily allows accessing any embedded link and direct communication too, while in the adverts that occur in magazines it is impossible to do such activities on a print medium, e.g.

4.27 Introducing the new Toyota Verso. Read the latest reviews here, on the Toyota blog: http://ow.ly/hi0cy. (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

4.28 Click LIKE if Crème Puff is in your make-up bag! x (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

In the above instances of the soliciting response move, users are invited to do something, i.e. reading or clicking, where both seem to be for the benefit of the companies. In 4.27, by clicking the given underlined link, users are taken outside the Facebook homepage to the Toyota blog, where they can find information from experts’ reviews of the Verso. Thus, the
companies’ goal of informing customers about products seems to be realised. This link can be seen as ‘site-external’ hypertextuality. In 4.28, Facebook visitors are asked to give their feedback as ‘likes’ using the ‘Like’ button, through which the company’s post could be disseminated, and hence could increase the likelihood that other users see the Crème Puff. This action is in line with the companies’ aim of enhancing interaction on their pages. Here, this interactivity button appears to manifest ‘site-internal’ hypertextuality.

6. In genre analysis terms, a distinctive move for the online media discourse types is the **suggestion/advice move**. This move is realised through information that indicates how to make the best of a product or it highlights product problems to other customers, which could help them reflect on the appropriateness of a product for their needs. The rationale for including this move can be ascribed to various reasons. Firstly, social media platforms such as Facebook and review websites are viewed as influential elements that could affect consumers in terms of searching for goods information, purchasing habits, and after-purchase assessments (Mangold and Faulds 2009, p.258). Secondly, as a stage of sales talk, the suggestion/advice move confirms or disconfirms the suitability of a product. Consequently, this move is still part of the complex promotional discourse, in that such information could influence companies’ profits (Fitzsimons and Lehmann 2004, p.82). Thirdly, as explained in Section 2.4.1, as electronic word-of-mouth with a promotional role recognised in marketing terms, customer reviews, Facebook comments, and Facebook posts could be seen as parallel to offline word-of-mouth. Normally at customers’ request in offline one-to-one communication in stores or even by phone, suggestions and advice tend to happen between customers (Baron et al. 1996, p.75; Libai et al. 2010, p.270) or between customers and salespersons or advisors (Baron et al. 1996, p.75). Baron et al. (ibid, p.86) find that customers frequently provide information comparable with that of service staff. In online platforms, companies could also publish similar information in their Facebook posts. Exemplified below is the suggestion/advice move:

4.29 ZARRA’S TIP: "For a fun fashion-forward look, apply Max Factor's Max Effect Mini Nail Polish in Red Carpet Glam to your nails, then paint

51 The differences between the offline and online word-of-mouth are not discussed here due to space limits. See, for example, Libai et al. (2010) and Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011) for this comparison.
the tips with the Cloudy Blue shade. It’s a fab take on the French mani
trend and is the perfect look for the new season.” (Max Factor Facebook
post 2013)

4.30 You have to be quite vigourous with the accelerator so the car
‘springs’ forward; this helps it to shift up (Toyota customer review-Road
Test Reports)

The instances above can be seen as proposals for customers to have the best results of a
product. When such information comes from customers, as in 4.30, it may alert other
customers to possible limitations of a product or to avoid a product altogether. Such
proposals are usually unsolicited, especially in the customer reviews (i.e. not in response to
other reviewers’ posed questions).

7. The last move identified is the direct addressed complaint move. Unlike most of the
discussed moves that could focus on positive and negative aspects (the latter in customer-
authored discourse), the direct addressed complaint move points to negative affect only.
This move can occur in the form of directly reporting issues to companies or expressing
dissatisfaction, for example. Vásquez (2011, p.1709) calls a complaint ‘direct’ because the
complaint-receiver and the party that can deal with the complaint are the same.52 However,
my perspective is a bit different from that of Vásquez. I am interested in the possibility of
having a reply to a complaint from the same platform moderator (companies) more than
simply the direct naming of or reference to that party. But this is not to suggest that all the
addressed complaints would be responded to by companies. In this chapter, the customer
reviews are not dealt with as ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ complaints (see Vásquez 2011). This is
because, as shown in Section 4.3.2 above, customer reviews tend to occur on third-party
websites, i.e. in moderation terms they are not on websites managed by product
manufacturers. Thus, the likelihood of reviewers receiving a response to their complaints
might be extremely rare. Negative stances in the reviews could be understood as complaints
but in a broad sense.

52 On the companies’ Facebook pages, companies’ employees are the source to resolve problems.
The direct addressed complaint move could be thought of as a reflection of the accessibility of companies online and customers’ ability, at least, to voice their opinions textually, especially when negative. This move can also be an instance of customers’ actual interaction with companies which, as argued by Vásquez (2011, p.1714), reflects the online medium affordance of enabling customers to contact companies directly (see discussion in Sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 for the dialogic potentiality of Facebook and the review websites). The direct addressed complaint move is illustrated in the following examples:

4.31 Dear L'oreal, I hope you had a chance to investigate what the problem is with my coupon. Its just one particular coupon for £2.50 off any L'Oreal skincare that I'm having problem with. I am hoping for your help soon. Kind regards (Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

4.32 With a possible 2 month delay in delivery and only told this a week before mine is due. I wont be following through with that order. Thanks for nothing Fiat. (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)

As in 4.31, some complaints tend to appropriate features of emails, as found in Biber and Conrad’s (2009, p.189) study, through having greetings and/or closings that are forms of social affinity (Page 2014, p.41). In examples 4.31 and 4.32, the companies’ names, L’Oréal and Fiat, are clearly stated and the commenter also uses the second-person pronoun you in addressing the company. Sometimes, a company’s reference is absent from the direct complaint move. However, the company can still be inferred as the target of the complaint as the comment occurs on the Facebook page of the company, as in the following:

4.33 Very smart way of getting peoples emails and addresses to send marketing junk... (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

This comment is in response to Max Factor’s announced contest to win samples of their product. This direct addressed complaint move can be understood in terms of articulating the companies’ practice of harvesting users’ contact details, which might be deemed unacceptable by some users. However, Max Factor does not reply to this comment.
The reason for displaying the suggestion/advice and direct addressed complaint moves together in Figure 4.6 is that these moves seem to be exclusive to the online discourse types. From the comparison in Figure 4.6, the suggestion/advice move is shown to occur in the Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews. As stated earlier, although suggestions and advice are not always requested by authors of already published reviews, this move features in the customer reviews the most. In the customer reviews, this move amounts to more than three times as often as in the Facebook posts and more than double their frequency in the Facebook comments. The result of the suggestion/advice move in the customer reviews could be explained in terms of its fulfilling the purpose of the review websites of reviewers who are helping other customers make informed purchases through offering information about products. In the customer reviews, nearly a quarter of the moves occur as the suggestion/advice move (22% of all moves) in comparison with 7% and 8% of the move total in the Facebook posts and comments, respectively. There are 63 instances of this move in the Facebook posts, 62 in the Facebook comments, and 56 in the customer reviews. The following instances illustrate the suggestion/advice move in the reviews:

4.34 No matter what I did it would not drive smoothly and had no power to set off from scratch which made for dangerous driving.  (Toyota customer review-Road Test Reports)
4.35 I highly recommend sitting the mascara in a cup full of hot tap water for 5 min before applying. This will make any mascara application easier. (Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

As based upon product use, the advice and suggestions in the above examples seem to represent reviewers as experienced. Therefore, the suggestion/advice move can be seen as another source of reviewers’ credibility along with the showing qualification move previously explained in this chapter.

The results exhibited in Figure 4.6 above show that the direct addressed complaint move occurs in the Facebook comments alone. It amounts to 5% of the move total in this discourse, where 37 cases of this move are found, as exemplified in the following:

4.36 Hi,, who do I write to regarding my 2000 calorie mascara,, the fat tube 1,, i bought 2 in December, i only apply once a day and not massive amounts I might add,i have had to buy another 3 weeks ago, not happy. (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

4.37 I wish you wouldn't take over my facebook the way you do. I just wish I cud delete you but I don't know how (Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

In these examples, the companies are addressed through hi and you, respectively. The examples illustrate that in the direct addressed complaint move, products are not the only complained-about objects, as in 4.36. Instead, commenters could complain about anything pertinent to companies, as in 4.37. In this example, the ‘Liker’ of L’Oréal Paris’ Facebook page displays her/his displeasure with the company’s control of her/his personal page, presumably through promotional practices. At the same time, companies could benefit from complaints to improve their products and services. In the comments, the use of the direct addressed complaint move could be understood in terms of the anonymity made available to customers online, whereby they become able to post their negative opinions to companies directly.
The reason for the non-occurrence of the direct addressed complaint move in the company-authored discourse could be that it would not serve the commercial interest of companies to highlight such an aspect in their discourse. This is because for companies, the main goal is product promotion to increase their revenues. Similarly, the absence of the direct addressed complaint move from the customer reviews seems to be in line with the main concern of the review websites, i.e. reviewing and evaluating products rather than resolving problems. The lack of this move might also show customers’ awareness. In moderation terms, on the two review websites of the present thesis, the companies (goods manufacturers) are not the websites’ moderators, and thus the chances for the companies seeing the reviews and responding to them could be somewhat low.

4.4 Summary and conclusion

Having studied the situational and generic characteristics of the four promotional discourse types (print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews), the analyses show that despite the heterogeneous nature of the data of the current thesis, these discourse types tend to exhibit similarity in some of their features. The analysis of the situational features indicates that in medium terms, Facebook and the review websites have common technological characteristics. The communication on them is found to be asynchronous, of message-by-message transmission, and with an unrestricted size of the textual material. Facebook and the review websites are found to allow anonymous interaction and varying arrangement for the published content, where responses to posted material are appended. However, Facebook appears to differ from the review websites, in that the Facebook content (posts and comments) is annually and automatically deleted, while the material on the review websites seems more durable. Another difference is that the messages on Facebook can be multimodal, whereas the review websites permit language-based reviews only.

With respect to the other situational aspects of the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews, these discourse types are also shown to share some features. The interaction in the above discourse types can be one-to-many. Nevertheless, on Facebook and the review websites, the communication can also be dialogic due to the
commenting (Facebook) and responding (review websites) facilities. In the print adverts and Facebook posts, the interaction appears to be company-initiated, thus the companies seem to have a sense of authority and control. In contrast, the relation among the commenters and reviewers seems more equal as the interaction is largely customer-to-customer. In relation to the aims of the above discourse types, for Bhatia (1993, p.59) the goal of promotional discourse is ‘to promote something’, be it ‘ideas, goods, or services’ (ibid 2005, p.214). From this analysis, it is fair to say the four discourse types (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews) share the goal of promotion but at different levels of directness. In the print adverts, the purpose of the companies is to promote products. In the Facebook pages, the companies’ goal is enhancing interaction on their Facebook pages, which are communities built around products/brands. In the Facebook comments and customer reviews, commenters could become visible on Facebook through interaction and reviewers might aid other customers through voicing their positions about products, and hence representing themselves.

In relation to the generic analysis of the four discourse types, this analysis manifests the overlapping nature of the discourse types examined, where it appears that these discourse types employ a number of moves that work towards fulfilling their communicative purposes. This analysis also shows that the company-authored discourse (print adverts and Facebook posts) on the one hand, and the customer-generated discourse (Facebook comments and customer reviews) on the other, manifest similarity in their moves, which could also be ascribed to discourse authorship. What suggests the importance of detailing the product, showing qualification, and the attention-catching moves is that these moves are found to be the only moves that occur in all four discourse types. However, the other moves identified in these discourse types also appear to reflect the goals of each discourse. Askehave and Nielsen (2005, p.123) note that rather than having ‘a fixed set of obligatory moves’, move structure is likely to vary even in genres that are conventionalised. Moreover, in line with Bhatia’s (2005, p.215) argument that moves which occur in one example of a promotional discourse type (e.g. advert) would not be likely to all occur in

53 Since Facebook posts and comments are chained in essence, the eye-catching move can also be construed as a shared generic feature among the discourse types analysed.
other adverts, I categorise the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews as members of the class of genres known as ‘promotional’.

Thus, through this analysis, the comparability and genre membership of the discourse types are demonstrated. This analysis also indicates that six participants are involved in the discourse types of this research: products, companies, customers, celebrities, experts, and media resources. The suggestion/advice and direct addressed complaint moves are introduced as possible new moves in the online discourse types of this study. However, investigating the situational and generic characteristics of promotional discourse can be seen as only one stage in showing some aspects of its complexity, where such diversity features here in terms of purpose, authors, different semiotic modes, and various participants represented. The move analysis does not show in a fine-grained way the verbal and visual choices of promotional discourse. In order to complement this analysis, other frameworks need to be adopted to explore the resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) of promotional discourse. The next chapter sets out to study another aspect of this discourse, i.e. its representational patterns.
CHAPTER 5: REPRESENTATIONS IN PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the situational and generic analyses of the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews have shown these discourse types to be comparable since they are categorised as belonging to promotional genres. However, these analyses indicate only part of the diversity of promotional discourse. Because these two analyses, as I argued, cannot be construed as detailed enough to investigate all aspects of promotional discourse, and in order to be able to capture other features, another framework needs to be adopted to explore the linguistic elements of the above promotional discourse types. This chapter focuses on another dimension of this field: representational strategies used for the different participants (identified in the previous chapter) in the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews. The interpretation of some representational strategies is also investigated to elucidate some ideological implications that might underlay the participants’ representations in promotional discourse. To carry out these objectives, some categories from Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model are studied and related to the already specified situational characteristics in Chapter 4. But rather than using the terms purpose, participation, and medium, I use Halliday’s (1978) register elements field, tenor, and mode, as they do not involve much detail and seem more common than my labels (purpose and participation) adopted in Section 4.3.2, which are based on the detailed categories of Biber and Conrad’s (2009) and Herring’s (2007) frameworks.

The term authority can be applied with different meanings. It refers to foregrounding or grammatical agency with products, and authoring discourse as having the right to express and represent textually one’s self in relation to customers. Authority also can be construed as social power in terms of status with respect to celebrities and experts. In terms of economic or social power with respect to companies and social media owners, authority can be interpreted in terms of controlling what can appear in discourse (i.e. participants’ representations) and the domains in which discourse can be published. The authority of
companies and social media owners, in this sense, seems closely related to capitalism, where politics seems to be relevant to some extent. This chapter, first briefly explains the topics that Van Leeuwen’s model has been adopted to analyse. Then, the results of the current study are reported in Section 5.3. Following this is a reflection on social media practices in Section 5.4, and the chapter concludes with Section 5.5.

5.2 Social actor network in previous studies

As stated in Chapters 2 and 3, ideologies as representations cannot be seen as neutral. Since ideologies generally work covertly in language or other semiotic resources, and it is through discourse representations that people’s attitudes towards the world can be shaped, this suggests that ideologies need to be uncovered. But, as mentioned earlier in Section 2.3.4, CDA is not the main focus of this study. In its relevance to CDA, Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model is used as an analytical tool to help interpret the ideologies permeated in some instances of promotional discourse. Mainly, studies on social issues such as immigration (ibid), class difference (Van Leeuwen 2009), gender inequality (Karimaghaei and Kasmani 2013; Koller 2012; Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh 2010), ethnic conflict (Polovina-Vukovic 2004), and political issues (Rashidi and Rasti 2012; Zuraidah and May 2013) adopt this model. Thus far, as mentioned in Chapter 3, only three studies that have used the social actor model can be found on promotional discourse: Baker’s (2015) research on personal ads, Hunt’s (2015) study on Facebook posts from health organisations, and Koller’s (2012) work on a promotional catalogue.

Unlike these previous studies on promotional discourse, this chapter adopts more than one category in the analysis of the representations of the various participants – not just potential customers – involved in offline and online promotional discourse generated by both companies and customers. Furthermore, when possible, the identified representational strategies are linked to field, tenor, and mode, with the aim to uncover ideologies underlying the socio-economic practices of social media platforms that might have affected some participants’ representations.
This chapter addresses research question 2:

What does the analysis of the social actor model show about the representational patterns employed in these discourse types? And what does the variation in these patterns suggest about authority relations in terms of customers’ empowerment?

5.3 Results and discussion

The following four sub-sections deal with the analysis, comparison, and interpretation of the results of the four discourse types of this study (print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews). For the application and statistical procedures of this analysis, see Section 3.8.3. For differentiation, each discussed category is numbered and appears in bold type for its first occurrence.

5.3.1 Print adverts

1. One of the representational strategies employed in the promotional discourse of this study is inclusion. As stated in Chapter 3, although still referred to as a category, inclusion here is presented as the macro-category that comprises the results of all categories of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model in each discourse type. In inclusion, participants are represented by being mentioned in texts. The following examples from the different discourse types illustrate inclusion:

In instance 5.1, the reviewer includes different participants, i.e. her/himself (I), the company (Toyota), the car (the wheel of this car), and two media resources (What Car and Top Gear, the latter sarcastically called Bottom Gear, whose members are represented as they and those, respectively). Media resources here refer to magazines, TV programmes, and events such as film festivals and Fashion shows, through which products could be endorsed:

5.1 What has ‘What Car’ got against Toyota? They should join up with those on that Bottom Gear tv programme. I feel very satisfied when I get behind the wheel of this car (Toyota customer review-Road Test Reports)

54 The results of all representational categories compared with inclusion appear in Appendix 2.
In example 5.2, the product is included by its name, *CLA*:

5.2 Introduced to the world this morning at the 2013 NAIAS Detroit Motorshow, *the stylish new CLA*. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

The ideological interpretation that seems to underpin inclusion in Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) analysis of print press is that in terms of authority, the more included a participant is, the more authoritative that represented participant is assumed to be. But this ideological meaning might not be the only relevant interpretation of inclusion with respect to promotional discourse. Inclusion could also be construed as showing the field, i.e. the subject matter of discourse (Halliday 1978, p.222), mentioned in Section 2.3.1. In this respect, not only does the category of inclusion show the participants included in discourse but it could also indicate what the focus of discourse is.

Table 5.1 Inclusion of all represented participants in print adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experts</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media resources</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1870</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.1, different participants are included in the print adverts. Products are the most included participant in this discourse. Nearly half the inclusion (48%) is accounted for by the products in the print adverts, where the next most frequent participant is customers whose representation amounts to a third of the inclusion (33%) in this discourse. However, the difference in the inclusion results between products and customers is relatively low (15%), yet compared with companies’ inclusion, products’ inclusion is more than four times the amount of the companies’ inclusion (11%). Products’ inclusion could be thought of as showing the field of the print adverts, i.e. products as the main focus of this
discourse. A comparison is drawn in Figure 5.1 to illustrate the frequency of products’ inclusion across the discourse types of this thesis.

![products' inclusion](image)

Figure 5.1 Comparison by discourse type of how products are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants

From the comparison in Figure 5.1, it appears that products’ inclusion in the print adverts is the highest (48%) in comparison with that of the three discourse types, namely Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews. While included products constitute nearly 50% of the included participants in the adverts, their inclusion amounts to almost a quarter of the included participants in the Facebook posts (24%) – the discourse type produced by companies, and more than a quarter in both the Facebook comments and customer reviews (29% and 30%, respectively). The result of products’ inclusion in adverts differs from the finding of genre analysis in Chapter 4, where products do not feature in terms of detailing the product move in this discourse type (note that genre analysis is not concerned with the exact number of occurrences of participants, as previously explained in Chapter 3). The examples below illustrate products’ inclusion in the print adverts:

5.3 **A Roll’On Revolution! Ultra-even, flawless coverage foundation.**
New Roll’on true match (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2009)

5.4 **The new Fiat 500L** has all the loveliness of the little Fiat 500, but there's more of it. (Fiat advert-WHAT CAR? 2010)
Looking at examples 5.3 and 5.4, as explained above, the products are included by their name (*Roll’ on true match, 500L* and *500*), a pronoun (*it*), or what they might result in when used (i.e. covering flaws). In authority terms, the premise that if a participant is more included in a discourse, that participant would be more authoritative could not be sustained in the context of promotional discourse (adverts). However, the companies, as in instance 5.4 (Fiat), metonymically tend to associate their name with their cars. This association could be interpreted in Leech’s (1966, p.130) terms as a form of identification. Another way of explaining the use of companies’ names with products is that through companies’ names, products could be endowed with ‘reputation, status, aesthetics, and heritage’ (Baltas and Saridakis 2010, p.285). This strategy might be thought of as a means of differentiating a product from other products in the market through the image of its company. But generally, the above premise of authority might be questioned because these qualities largely seem to depend on what customers attach to a product. In addition, discursively, companies (discourse authors) could be construed as the authoritative party since they can involve and represent participants in this discourse type. The results of the analysis of products’ inclusion in the print advert suggests that the meaning of authority in terms of inclusion could not always be supported by the highest percentages in quantitative patterns without considering the context in which authority is interpreted.

2. As pointed out in Chapter 3, Van Leeuwen (1996, p.42) proposes that the category of inclusion be investigated along with the other choices used for representing participants in texts. Indeed, rather than simply mentioning products, companies also seem to categorise their products. One of the sub-types of categorisation identified in the promotional discourse of this study is products’ functionalisation, explained in Chapter 3 above. In functionalisation, products could be categorised in terms of what they could achieve for their users. In this way, functionalisation could be thought of as a promotional strategy. As illustrated in examples 5.5 and 5.6, in functionalisation, the emphasis is given to what products can do, i.e. products’ capabilities or final results that could be obtained when customers use them. Products’ functionalisation is exemplified by instances from the various discourse types:
5.5 Absolutely love this product, don't need a brush to apply because it 
gives better coverage when applied by fingers & a little gentle tap of 
powder over (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

5.6 The original full hybrid.

Arriving soon, a full-sized family car that can deliver an astonishing 72.4 
mpg. (Toyota advert-WHAT CAR? 2009)

Functionalisation thus seems to highlight the most favourable aspects of products to 
potential customers. In this sense, making products prominent could be thought of as a 
means to attract customers to the represented products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>products' categorisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print adverts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facebook posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facebook comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer reviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.2 Comparison by discourse type of how products are represented in terms of 
functionalisation: % of all categorised participants

The quantitative comparison of products’ functionalisation across the four discourse types 
(as summarised in Figure 5.2) shows that this category occurs most often in the print 
adverts, where 77% of the categorised participants in the print adverts are products through 
functionalisation; more than twice as much as those in the Facebook posts, also authored by 
companies. In the customer reviews, more than half of the categorisation occurs as 
products’ functionalisation (60%), the next closest percentage to that of the print adverts. 
But the extent to which functionalising products occurs seems to vary according to product
type, where functionalisation occurs most frequently in the print adverts for cosmetics. Products are functionalised 226 times in the print adverts for cosmetics, which constitutes 80% of products’ functionalisation in this discourse compared with 57 occurrences for cars, making up 20% of products’ functionalisation in the print adverts. In other words, in the print adverts, cosmetics are functionalised four times more than cars. The analysis of functionalisation helps show that in the print adverts, cosmetics more than cars are represented as being able to do something for their users. This result might be explained by the fact that linguistically depicting the outcome of using cars might not always be easy. Cars seem to require some sense of imagination on the part of customers. The following examples indicate products’ functionalisation in the print adverts:

5.7 NEW COLOUR ELIXIR LIPSTICK

SMOOTHER LIPS IN JUST 7 DAYS ‘Get the most from your lipstick, without compromising on colour. The Elixir MOISTURISES AND CONDITIONS from the moment you apply, smoothing your lips day by day and visibly transforming their appearance within 7 days. Enjoy rich and gorgeous colour on smooth beautiful lips’ (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2011)

5.8 Read my lips: Intense hydration for a re-plumping effect

NEW COLLAGEN FILLER DOUBLE ACTION LIP (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2009)

In the instances above, cosmetics products seem to be represented as forceful entities able to change and transform their users’ look into a better condition, i.e. by being able to smooth, or moisturise lips. In such representations, the emphasis is given to the distinctive characteristics of products, something that could be constructed as being in line with the companies’ goal of showing their products’ functional features as unique or special, for instance. Products’ functionalisation seems to accord with the objective of adverts in terms of detailing the product move, discussed in Section 4.3.3. The result of functionalising products is in line with Koteyko’s (2012, p.258; 2015, p.274) argument that products such as cosmetics tend to be emphasised and their performance becomes salient. The high
functionalisation of cosmetics seems to be afforded by the nature of the products themselves, since cosmetics need to be worn on skin, lips, and so on, as noted by Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p.183). In addition, in the cosmetics print adverts published in ELLE, a women’s magazine, the target audience are likely to be the potential customers of these adverts. Although no clear reference to gender is made, if women were taken as the addressed customers, representing cosmetics as forceful objects seems consistent with earlier observations on stereotypical gender ideology. Women as customers could be constructed as being concerned with their outward appearance (Koller 2012, p.31) and seem to be construed in somewhat passive terms as participants ‘who have things done to them’ (Benwell and Stokoe 2006, p.183).

However, it should be noted that this trend is more emphasised by some cosmetics brands than by others. As displayed in Table 5.2 below, L’Oréal Paris uses functionalisation the most, as 77% of products’ functionalisation in the cosmetics print adverts occurred in L’Oréal Paris, more than three quarters of cosmetics’ functionalisation.

Table 5.2 Cosmetics’ functionalisation in print adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chanel</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Oréal Paris</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Factor</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Karimaghaei and Kasmani’s (2013) and Van Leeuwen’s (2009) studies of gender and class differential representations in English as a Foreign Language textbooks and print journalism, respectively, functionalisation is interpreted as signalling the relative status of participants as inferred from the occupations in which they are represented. In other words, the higher the occupation in which participants are represented, the higher the status of those participants might be. In the print adverts, functionalisation does not necessarily indicate social rank. Rather through functionalisation, products seem to be represented as entities capable of changing customers’ life and physical appearance. Because this category is applied here to an object, this suggests that the question of what ‘status’ actually entails
does not neatly fit products, while it seems to work better for other participants (e.g. experts), as explained in Section 5.3.2.

3. Linguistically, to examine the question as to whether customers are active or passive recipients, raised in previous studies of print media adverts (e.g. Benwell and Stokoe 2006, p.166), the category of role allocation through participation is analysed here. Role allocation, as explained in Chapter 3, refers to whether social actors are represented in terms of their agency as active participants who perform actions (i.e. activated) or as passive participants who are acted upon (i.e. passivated through subjection or beneficialisation) (Van Leeuwen 1996, pp.43-44). The instances below that indicate participation come from the different datasets:

In example 5.9, both customers and L’Oréal Paris are activated. Customers’ activation manifests in relation to pick (material process), and thus customers are the Actor, and the company in we is the Senser in a mental process, think:

5.9 Which one will you pick? We think we’re in love with the Confetti Effect! (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

By contrast, customers are passivated in example 5.10 in terms of participation, in that they occur as the recipient in the material process of giving, i.e. beneficialised:

5.10 The TwinAir engine has super low emissions, and it's a hoot to drive because it gives you more torque at lower revs. (Fiat advert-WHAT CAR? 2012)

The category of role allocation through participation helps to show the participants whose agency is in the foreground (i.e. activated) and those whose agency is downplayed (i.e. passivated). A quantitative comparison of the role allocation for customers across the different types of promotional discourse is shown in Figure 5.3.
The comparison of the pattern of participation used for representing customers across the different discourse types (illustrated in Figure 5.3) shows that in the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts), companies passivate customers more than activate them. However, in the print adverts, this difference is greater (45% passivation compared with 32% activation) than the Facebook posts, where the difference is more modest, and nearly equal in proportion (28% passivation compared with 26% activation). In Facebook comments and customer reviews, this pattern is reversed as customers are more often activated than passivated. Thus, the print adverts (as a mainstream form of advertising authored by companies) seem to be characterised by passivating customers (198 instances of customers’ passivation), where customers’ agency is backgounded.

But when the results of customers’ passivation in the print adverts are disaggregated according to product type, further differences appear. Customers’ agency is passivated 140 times in the cosmetics print adverts (71% of customers’ passivation) compared with 58 instances in car adverts (29% of customers’ passivation). In other words, customers are passivated in the cosmetics adverts more than twice as often in comparison with their

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55 The percentages in each figure add up to 100% when the results of all the participants represented by a category are added up together, i.e. adding up the percentages here with those of companies’ participation in Figure 5.8.
representation in the car adverts. The passivation of customers’ agency in the print adverts for cosmetics might be thought of as the corollary of presenting products as forceful entities in terms of functionalisation. In addition, the highest passivation for customers in the cosmetics adverts could also be attributed to the product type, as mentioned earlier, since customers of cosmetics need to put them on their lips, eyes, and so on. In example 5.11 below, customers’ represented agency is backgrounded, since customers occurred as the Goal in a material process. For example, in the following extract, the functionalised product (the brush metonymically the mascara) is the Actor in a material process, *lengthens*, that is used on the impersonalised, somatised goal of customers’ body parts, represented by the phrase *your lashes*: 

5.11 Their longest brush ever LENGTHENS YOUR LASHES CORNER TO CORNER (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2010)

Similarly, in example 5.12 customers are passivated as being the Goal in the material process of saving and are also impersonalised by reference to their body part in *your skin*:

5.12 NEW HYDRATED FORMULA DEMI-MATTE FLAWLESS COVERAGE SAVE YOUR SKIN FROM DRYING FOUNDATION (Max Factor advert-ELLE 2013)

In the instance below, customers’ passivation could be thought of, covertly, in terms of *every lash*, which occurs as the Goal of a material process, i.e. *captures*:

5.13 THE NEW GLOBE-BRUSH CAPTURES EVERY LASH TO LOOK LONGER, FANNED OUT (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2009)

It is clear from the above examples that customers’ passivation occurs in relation to products, which are represented as working on customers’ body parts. In passivating customers, the functionalised products seem to come to the fore. This aspect could be understood as being in line with a company’s goal of making products prominent. The

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56 Somatisation is a form of impersonalisation by which a person’s representation occurs through their body parts (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.60), but is not one of the categories investigated in this study and so is simply used for explaining the pattern.
interpretation of role allocation in terms of agency (Fowler 1991, p.98; Van Leeuwen 1996, p.44) as suggesting authority (activation) or a lack of it (passivation) appears to be linguistically supported in the customers’ representations. However, as mentioned above, a company’s influence remains greater than that of these represented participants, in this case products.

4. As discussed in Section 4.3.3, endorsements could be thought of as an engagement strategy in promotional discourse. The practice of using product endorsement in advertising is well established and assumed to influence customers’ purchasing behaviour, especially by famous characters (Erdogan 1999, p.294). In marketing terms, endorsers are seen as elements of attracting audience attention (ibid, p.295; Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta 2010, p.452) and promoting consumption (Marshall 2010, 36). The role of these characters (particularly celebrities) can be seen in terms of the assumed meanings they associate with products by serving as connectors between products and customers (Banister and Cocker 2014, p.2) (meaning transference is discussed in relation to visuals in Chapter 6). Similar participants (celebrities and experts) are found to be represented in the data collected for this study.

As explained in Chapter 3, based on Van Leeuwen’s (1996, p.53) work, nomination refers to the representation of participants in terms of their proper names, as recognised by the degree of formality: formal nomination occurs in the form of [last name +/- title], semi-formal as [first name + last name], and informal as [first name only]. The examples of nomination are from the different discourse types.

In instance 5.14, the interactant addresses the reviewer informally through her/his first name:

5.14 Hi First Name, I know where you’re coming from with the problems you are having. (Response to Toyota customer review-
Road Test Reports)

The example below is a form of semi-formal nomination, where the company nominates the customer through her/his first and last names:
5.15 First and Last Names Can you please DM your full details so we can look into this with the Customer Relations team. Let's get you at that Fiat 500L's wheel! (Company reply to comment on Fiat Facebook post)

Due to its variation, the importance of nomination can be conceived of in terms of indicating similarities or differences in how authors (companies and customers) represent other participants (customers, celebrities, and expert figures) and what the patterns of nomination suggest about the relations constructed between participants. The representation of celebrities and experts as endorsers in the print adverts is particularly marked by the category of nomination. In Figure 5.4 below, a comparison is drawn between the nominations of these participants among the different discourse types.

**Figure 5.4** Comparison by discourse of how celebrities and experts are represented in terms of nomination: % of all nominated participants

The comparison of the frequency of celebrities’ and experts’ nomination across the discourse types (displayed in Figure 5.4) indicates that two nomination patterns, semi-formal and informal, are used directly to identify endorsers to varying degrees. The results show that in the print adverts, celebrities’ semi-formal nomination by the companies occurs proportionately more often than the other nomination types in the Facebook posts and Facebook comments (in the adverts, celebrities’ semi-formal nomination is double the amount of their informal nomination). More than half of the nomination used in the adverts
occurs with celebrities as semi-formal (62%) compared with less than 50% in the Facebook posts. Generally, experts’ nomination in the adverts is very low (5%) compared with that of celebrities. In the print adverts, when the results of celebrities’ and experts’ semi-formal nomination together are disaggregated in terms of the product type, other differences appear (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Breakdown of celebrities’ and experts’ nomination by gender and product type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Semi-formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>experts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>experts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomination Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Count: 74</td>
<td>Percentage: 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in the above table indicate that the companies appear to nominate their female celebrities semi-formally (64%) in cosmetics adverts more than double the amount of their informal nomination (31%) in this discourse. The results above also show that while female celebrities tend to occur exclusively in cosmetics adverts, the companies seem to endorse cars very sparingly (4%), and with male experts only. However, all the instances of semi-formal nomination occur in L’Oréal Paris, whereas Chanel does not name its models, who do not seem widely famous. In the cosmetics adverts, the use of female celebrities could be attributed to the product type, where celebrities’ physical appearance might well reflect the purported results of cosmetics or that their appearance could be highly salient to cosmetics more than it could be with cars (for the visual use of models in cosmetics, see Section 6.6.4). In this sense, in the print cosmetics adverts, the companies seem to combine the representation of products with the aspirational status of distinctive celebrities (Banister and Cocker 2014, p.17). This might be explained in terms of adding desirable values to products through associating products with celebrities, as suggested by Hermerén (1999, p.180). However, irrespective of gender, in terms of technology the above results do not highly support Biswas et al.’s (2006, p.27) argument that cars, classified as high technology
products involving a financial risk as big purchases, require experts whose role due to their knowledge is found to be more effective with such products than that of celebrities. Nor do they completely conform to their argument that non-technology products, such as cosmetics, can be endorsed by both celebrities and experts (ibid). The following examples illustrate celebrities’ semi-formal nomination in the print adverts:

**5.16 COLLECTION PRIVÉE LES NUDES BY COLOR RICHE**

“I NEVER KNEW A NUDE THAT FELT MORE ME. IT’S MY COLOR RICHE.” Freida Pinto & Julianne Moore. (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2013)

**5.17 Let your glam shine through NEW GLAM SHINE REFLEXION**

Cheryl Cole wears Sheer Cassis 180. (L’Oréal Paris advert-ELLE 2010)

In instances 5.16 and 5.17, the endorsers are film/TV stars (actresses and/or presenters) and are nominated semi-formally, i.e. Freida Pinto and Julianne Moore, and Cheryl Cole, whose literal words seem to be quoted (5.16) or reported to have used a product (5.17), respectively. Van Leeuwen (2009, p.287) conceives the category of nomination as a means of reflecting participants’ identity as private or public. The ideological interpretation of nomination, in Fowler’s (1991, p.99) terms, seems to exhibit the status and relations of the nominated as that of ‘power, distance, formality, solidarity, intimacy, [and] casualness’. A similar perspective is taken by Hodge and Kress (1988, p.48) who, in terms of social relations, see formal nomination as an index of power and informal address as suggesting solidarity and hence equality. Nevertheless, these interpretations tend to be context-based (Fowler 1996a, p.124). In the print adverts, since the celebrities are semi-formally nominated, this suggests that the emphasis is on their public identity. In social distance terms, this could be construed as neither very close nor very far, i.e. ‘social’ in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996, p.125) terms. However, celebrities tend to be recognised as media figures (Taylor and Harris 2008), admired by fans (Alperstein 2013), and their status – described as ‘indisputably high status’ (Erdogan 1999, p.304) – is claimed to come from their being actors, TV presenters, or singers, for example, in addition to being product endorsers (Marshall 2010, p.39). Although it is not very clear-cut, nominating celebrities
semi-formally might be consistent with their status as public figures. However, this aspect requires a dataset that nominates both ordinary people and stars to specify clearly the meanings of nomination as reflecting social ranks.

5.3.2 Facebook posts

1. Stated earlier in Section 3.6.3, the datasets collected from the companies’ Facebook pages consist of two elements: posts and comments. This section discusses the first element of Facebook pages (posts). In contrast to the print adverts discussed in Section 5.3.1 above, the analysis of the macro-category of inclusion (outlined in Table 5.4 below) shows that in the Facebook posts, the inclusion of customers is higher than that of the other participants, i.e. more than one third of the inclusion in the Facebook posts occurs with customers (36%). By contrast, companies’ and products’ inclusion is relatively of the same quantity, i.e. more than a quarter of the inclusion is used with companies (27%) and about a quarter occurs with products (24%). The result of customers’ inclusion in the Facebook posts might be explained by Shen and Bissell’s (2013, p.629) argument that on Facebook, companies’ practices have to some extent changed from concentrating on products to focusing on customers and from offering information to exchanging it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion in Facebook posts</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experts</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media resources</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2469</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In examples 5.18 and 5.19 below, the companies represented customers as the centre of the posts through including customers by pronouns (personal and possessive) and encouraging them to communicate:
5.18 What have you always wanted to know about nail art and nail colour? Post your questions below to get expert tips & tricks! (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

5.19 Thanks for all of your submissions. Vote for your favourite and you could get your hands on some exclusive MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS merchandise [in relation to a competition] (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

It is clear from these instances that although customers are included, their inclusion seems to be in relation to products manufactured by these companies, i.e. beauty products or car parts/accessories that Max Factor and Mercedes-Benz tend to produce, respectively. In this sense, the focus on customers’ communication in terms of commenting (posting and voting) seems to accord with the aim of these companies’ pages, i.e. promoting products but through the channel of customers’ interaction, as discussed in Section 4.3.2.

![customers' inclusion](chart.png)

Figure 5.5 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants

However, a comparison of the frequency with which customers are included in the four discourse types (in Figure 5.5) shows a rather different picture. The results suggest that unlike the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts), the commenters and reviewers appear to be the main centre of their Facebook comments and customer reviews. The
comparison also shows an almost equal distribution of customers’ inclusion in the posts and adverts (35% and 33%), i.e. roughly a third of the inclusion in these discourse types applies to customers. By comparison, customers’ inclusion in the Facebook comments and customer reviews is more than 50%. In this way, the finding of customers’ inclusion in the posts does not seem to support Shen and Bissell’s (2013, p.629) argument, stated above, about the companies’ new technique of focusing on customers in their Facebook pages, since the above results of customers’ inclusion in the posts and adverts do not suggest a big difference in this respect. Perhaps it is possible to argue that Facebook posts appear to have become more customer-inclusive and, in doing so, this discourse type is ‘catching up’ with other promotional discourse types.

Recall that the quantified results in Section 5.3.1 above show that products are not the most included participants in the Facebook posts (around 25% of the included participants) in comparison with those of the print adverts (nearly 50% included as products). Thus, a comparison is now made in relation to companies’ inclusion, displayed in Figure 5.6.

![Figure 5.6 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants](image)

Unlike the other two comparisons, where products and customers do not appear to be the primary focus of the Facebook posts, the results in Figure 5.6 suggest a different picture. The quantitative comparison of companies’ inclusion across the four discourse types shows that companies are more often included in the Facebook posts than in the print adverts,
Facebook comments, and customer reviews; i.e. more than twice as much as their inclusion in the print adverts (27% compared with 11% of the included participants). Companies are included 671 times in the Facebook posts, in contrast with customer-authored discourse, where companies’ inclusion constitutes a very low percentage (8% and 4% in the Facebook comments and customer reviews, respectively). In this way, the Facebook posts differ from the print adverts, in that companies tend to represent themselves in their posts more than they do in the print adverts. In the Facebook posts, the highest inclusion of companies could be thought of in terms of tenor. This is because the posts, as afforded by Facebook (discussed in Section 4.3.1), are at least on the surface (see Section 5.3.3) more interactional or dialogic than the print adverts, which are a form of one-direction communication:

5.20 We’re proud to announce that Mercedes-Benz is now one of three global sponsors of the legendary Masters tournament. [video Adam Scott’s Thoughts on Mercedes-Benz Contract Announcement] (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

5.21 We’re pleased to announce that Toyota has joined the London Hydrogen Partnership, bringing hydrogen and fuel cell-powered vehicles like the FCV-R a step closer. Read our exclusive interview with Toyota's 'Mr Hydrogen', Katsuhiko Hirose, here: http://ow.ly/johbp

Find out more about the partnership here: http://ow.ly/jogX4 (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

In instances 5.20 and 5.21 above, the companies (Mercedes-Benz and Toyota) include themselves by using a pronoun (we, our), and in their announcement of the companies’ news, they refer to themselves by their name. In an attempt to establish a relation with their potential customers, these companies may address them in offers or directives, e.g. read and find out. The companies may also include endorsers in embedded videos, for example the famous Australian golf player, Adam Scott, in example 5.20, or links to blogs featuring an expert’s (Katsuhiko Hirose) opinion and Toyota’s activities, in instance 5.21. Such ways
might draw potential customers to interact with the companies’ posts, i.e. as strategies of the encouragement and soliciting response moves, discussed in Section 4.3.3.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, Van Leeuwen argues that including participants serves certain goals (1996, p.38). In the Facebook posts, the inclusion of companies, products, and customers could be understood in terms of the discourse authors’ (companies’) purpose of targeting audience and promoting products and companies. In Chapter 4, in the Facebook posts, the purpose of companies seems not just to promote products as companies also want to encourage their potential customers to interact with them and to construct the companies’ image, which might explain the inclusion of customers and companies in this discourse. In this respect, the interpretation of the category of inclusion seems to suggest two things. First, since Facebook pages are dialogic in medium terms, the inclusion of customers suggests companies’ aim to interact with their customers or rather to encourage customers’ communication (discussed in Chapter 4 above), thus highlighting the different possibilities for tenor in this discourse type. This goal of interaction could explain the companies’ tendency to address their customers directly, as shown in examples 5.20 and 5.21 above, through speech acts of different types such as statements, offers, and requests. The direct address of customers might suggest the potential for direct interactions between companies and customers, even if customers rarely receive a response from companies, as discussed in Section 5.3.3 below. In this way, including customers seems also to align with the companies’ purpose of self-promotion and constructing a positive personal image (previously discussed in Chapter 4), as explained in relation to personalisation below.

Second, in the Facebook posts and in terms of field, although the posts appear slightly different from the print adverts in terms of including customers more than the other participants, on Facebook companies continue to represent products, as part of their goal is to promote products. In the print adverts, this principle seems to hold true as products’ highest inclusion reflects the centrality of the entities that companies want to sell. In the Facebook posts, the inclusion of products is not the highest but including products among other things (endorsers and interactive material, as discussed below) in their posts might be a means to encourage customers to talk about products and interact with these pages, and thus for the products to be promoted despite the heterogeneity of the content of posts.
Therefore, in terms of field, the print adverts and Facebook posts could still be seen as doing relatively the same thing, i.e. promoting products in these discourse types, although in a rather different way. But with the print adverts, the simplistic reading that equates the quantity of inclusion with the quantity of authority could not be sustained here. And in discursive terms, the companies retain more influence than customers as they control the production, content, and moderation of these posts.

2. In line with the interactive potential of Facebook, the discursive representation of the companies is characterised by **personalisation**. Personalisation refers to how participants are represented through linguistic options such as personal and possessive pronouns (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.59).57 The instances that illustrate personalisation are from the different datasets.

In their interaction with the commenter in example 5.22, the company, Max Factor, personalises themselves by the first-person plural pronoun, *we*:

5.22 We put new Clump Defy Volumising mascara to the test and here are the results! (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

In contrast to the above personalisation form, in 5.23 the reviewer identifies her/himself using the singular first-person pronoun:

5.23 I have just purchased the new e350 sport coupe. I loaded up with all the gadgets and paid just under 40k. (Mercedes-Benz customer review- Road Test Reports)

Pronouns, as those given in the above examples, are known as markers of identification (varying in the degree of their specificity). In addition, both first- and second-person pronouns are recognised as elements of involving or engaging listeners or readers in discourse (Leech 1966, p.81; Vásquez 2014, p.98), through which discourse is signalled as interpersonal (Koteyko 2012, p.193).

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57 As stated in Chapter 3, although Van Leeuwen (1996, p.59) considers proper names an option of personalisation, I tried to avoid result duplication. Thus, proper names are taken to realise nomination only. Note that personalisation is calculated for companies and customers only and the results presented are for their first and second persons only. However, the results of other pronouns used in the representations of customers and companies are given in Appendix 2.
Figure 5.7 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of personalisation: % of all companies’ and customers’ personalisation

The quantitative comparison of the resources used in personalising the companies across the discourse types (presented in Figure 5.7) shows that in the Facebook posts, companies are more often represented through the use of plural first-person pronouns (personal and possessive) as compared with the companies’ personalisation in the print adverts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews. In the Facebook posts, there are 285 instances of first-person pronouns, i.e. less than half of the personalisation (43%) occurs with the companies in comparison with more than a quarter in the print adverts (28%). However, the companies do not appear to be much personalised in the customer-authored discourse (comments and reviews, especially the latter), and when this happens in the comments, the companies’ personalisation is through second-person pronouns. The lack of companies’ personalisation in the reviews could be interpreted in terms of the moderation of the review websites by third parties, explained earlier in Section 4.3.2. In this way, the Facebook posts and print adverts seem to be similar since in both these discourse types, companies refer to themselves by the plural first-person pronouns of *we, us, our,* and *ours.*

Ideologically, Fowler (1991, p.35; 1996a, p.124) takes pronouns to be comparable with nomination patterns, discussed in Section 5.3.1 above. In terms of distance or proximity, Kamio (2001, p.1115) argues that although *we* could have a generic meaning, it might have different ‘degrees of genericness’. The *we* used by companies could be interpreted as
having a specific meaning, in that its reference is likely to be to the companies and their staff. In other words, we could be interpreted as involving a group, where the companies form the key member or the speaker of the referent group (Kamio 2001, p.1116), for instance:

5.24 Did you know…we’ve got a trunk full of accessories for you to make your Fiat stand out (even more)? (Fiat Facebook post 2013)

5.25 Which StudioLine hairstyle would you most like to learn to create? We’ll post a how-to for the most popular one on Monday... (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

In instances 5.24 and 5.25 above, the companies represent themselves through we, which could not be understood as referring to customers. However, the companies’ we seems to represent the companies as personal, as argued by Myers (1994, p.82). In addition, the posts take a conversation-like form, where the customers are represented by you and your in questions, i.e. the posts appear interactive.

Following Kamio’s (2001, p.1116) approach to we, plural first-person pronouns (us, our, and ours) could have generic and specific references. Although these pronouns could be interpreted as referring to the companies and their members, the specific reference of us, our, and ours could also be expanded to include customers, i.e. they imply vagueness:

5.26 Who deserves to be our #SocialReporter at the exclusive AMG party? (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

5.27 This is the Rouge Allure Velvet Matte Lipstick! Which shade is your favourite? Please tell us. (Chanel Cosmetics Facebook post 2013)

In the examples above, the plural pronouns us and our might signal a sense of solidarity between companies and customers. Thus, plural first-person pronouns (we, us, our, and ours) utilised by the companies could be interpreted as creating a sense of closeness between them (companies) and their potential customers in the context of promotional discourse. The category of personalisation might well contribute to the interpretation of
tenor, since it helps show the purpose of companies on Facebook pages, i.e. interaction, discussed in Section 4.3.2.

3. In addition to the category of personalisation, companies also tend to passivate themselves, i.e. they background their own agency.

![Diagram showing companies' role allocation](image)

Figure 5.8 Comparison by discourse of how companies are represented in terms of participation: % of all companies’ and customers’ participation

The quantitative comparison of role allocation as participation used for representing companies across the discourse types (represented in Figure 5.8) shows that the companies’ representation is passivated in all four discourse types. However, in the Facebook posts, companies appear to passivate themselves more often when compared with their passivation in the print adverts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews. Companies’ passivation constitutes over a quarter of the participation in the Facebook posts (29%), i.e. more than twice as often as their passivation in the print adverts (13%), the next highest passivation result. In the Facebook posts, companies are passivated in 222 occurrences, as in the following instances:

5.28 People always ask us how to distinguish a real AMG from a fake.
(Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)
5.29 For advice about getting the most out of your hybrid, read our 'hybrid driving tips' here> http://ow.ly/l5wpv. (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

In instances 5.28 and 5.29, Mercedes-Benz and Toyota are passivated in us and our 'hybrid driving tips'. Mercedes-Benz occurs as the Receiver in the verbal process of asking and Toyota as the Goal in the material process of reading.

The ideological meaning of passivation, mentioned earlier as participants having reduced authority if their agency is backgrounded, seems to be borne out textually and only in theory. However, as stated above, although companies’ agency is downplayed in the above representation, companies are economically and in authorship terms more influential than the other participants involved in the Facebook posts. Again, this finding suggests that authority could not always be interpreted in terms of quantitative linguistic patterns without taking account of the context that affects its interpretation.

4. With respect to celebrities’, experts’, and media resources’ inclusion, similar to the print adverts, celebrities and experts appear as endorsers in the Facebook posts. The frequency with which these figures – together with media resources – are included appears in Figure 5.9.
Figure 5.9 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities, experts, and media resources are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants

As illustrated in Figure 5.9, the comparison of the frequency of the category of inclusion by which celebrities, experts, and media resources are represented across the discourse types shows that unlike in the other discourse types, the inclusion of celebrities and experts is evenly distributed in the Facebook posts. The inclusion of each participant amounts to 6% of the inclusion employed in the Facebook posts, i.e. 139 instances of inclusion occur with celebrities and 140 with experts. In this way, both the print adverts and Facebook posts seem similar in their use of celebrity endorsers. However, rather than relying mainly on celebrities, the posts also tend to have experts’ endorsement (in Chapter 4, the endorsers are noted to promote not only products but also any aspect related to the companies and their activities):

5.30 Dry, rebellious hair? Expert stylist Peter Gray shares some top tips on how to use our new and top rated hair care range EverRiche from Hair Expertise: http://bit.ly/NTEverRiche (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

5.31 With her natural elegance and beauty, Diane Kruger is one of the most famous faces of international cinema. Now an ambassadress for CHANEL, Diane Kruger will be the face of a new beauty advertising campaign, due to be unveiled in 2013. (Chanel Facebook post 2013)
In instance 5.30, the expert stylist Peter Gray features as the endorser of L’Oréal Paris’ product, *EverRiche*, and in example 5.31, the well-known actress Diane Kruger features as the promoter of Chanel. But unlike in the print adverts, in the Facebook posts the companies tend to represent celebrities and experts in posts that embed links not only to websites but also online content, such as other social media, videos, and multiple images, where embedding such material could be interpreted as an attempt on the companies’ part to engage customers with their posts, as exemplified in the following:

5.32 Here’s the ToyARTa Hilux, designed by Pop Bang Colour for XCAR at Toyota HQ today. This is the same model Tom Ford from Top Gear drove to Hungary: [http://ow.ly/hvOjs](http://ow.ly/hvOjs). What do you think of this unique Hilux? (Toyota Facebook post 2013)

5.33 Exclusive Preview: Our new Revitalift SPF30 TV ad featuring Tess Daly debuts tonight at 8:25pm on ITV1! Watch it now & discover our most powerful shield against premature skin ageing. [video] (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

In examples 5.32 and 5.33, Toyota and L’Oréal Paris tend to include not only famous TV presenters (Tom Ford and Tess Daly, respectively) as endorsers of these companies’ products but they also embed a link to a website (5.32) or a video on YouTube (5.33). In the above instances, customers are invited to give their feedback on the post and to interact through watching the product advert, respectively, aspects that seem to accord with the goal of the companies’ pages of creating environments of interaction.

In this way, the affordance of Facebook has allowed companies to enhance their posts through the use of such online (interactive) material (e.g., links to videos, images, social media, and websites), resulting in what is called here *post enhancement* (discussed in Section 4.3.3 in the encouragement move), where products could also be thought of as amplified. In the posts, 61 and 34 instances of interactive material are found to co-occur with celebrities and experts, respectively, i.e. 49% compared with 27% of the interactive material used with the celebrities, experts, and media resources. In this sense, and as I argued in Chapter 4, in addition to being used as elements that could visually draw viewers
to promotional discourse (attention-catching move) and as promoters of products or anything related to companies in terms of the encouragement move, in the Facebook posts, endorsers also appear to be used as tools for encouraging diverse engagement.

In the Facebook posts, the further disaggregation of celebrities and experts in terms of gender (indicated in Table 5.5 below) shows that both female and male celebrities and experts occur in this discourse type. However according to product types, it seems that female celebrities and experts tend to occur almost exclusively in the cosmetics posts (29% of celebrities’ inclusion and 54% of experts’ inclusion occur with female endorsers). But the opposite pattern seems to occur in the car posts (50% and 39% of the inclusion occurs with male celebrities and experts, respectively), i.e. males tend to be exclusively used as car endorsers.

Table 5.5 Breakdown of celebrity and expert endorsers’ inclusion by gender and product type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Out of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>cosmetics</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>celebrities’ inclusion total (139) 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cars</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>cosmetics</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>experts’ inclusion total (140) 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cars</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results might suggest companies’ preference for promoting their products in a rather stereotypical sense, i.e. cosmetics by female and cars by male endorsers. Regardless of gender, these results contrast those of celebrities and experts as mentioned in Section 5.3.1. The results of cosmetics could be explained in terms of Biswas et al.’s (2006, p.27) argument that celebrities and experts can promote non-technology products (e.g. cosmetics), since they are less expensive than high technology products. But this is not to claim that companies may not emphasise the scientific technological basis of their products (Koteyko 2015, p.277). Another explanation for the use of celebrities with products, especially cosmetics, could be to make customers aspire to look like celebrities, to some extent (Cameron and Panovic 2014, p.74). However, because cars are found to be endorsed
by celebrities more than experts (57% and 39% of celebrities’ and experts’ inclusion total occurs with cars, respectively), this result goes against Biswas et al.’s (2006, p.27) argument that high-priced technological products (cars) need experts’ endorsements due to their knowledge.

5. In the Facebook posts, the celebrity and expert figures are most often included using the strategy of categorisation. In contrast to the functionalisation used by companies to represent products in the print adverts, in the Facebook posts, companies draw on two other sub-types of categorisation for celebrity and expert figures’ representations: classification and physical identification. As defined in Chapter 3, classification refers to identifying social actors by social categories in terms of provenance, age, class, and ethnicity, for instance, and to which reference to social actors’ corporate or institutional roles could be added (Van Leeuwen 1996, pp.54-55). In example 5.34 below, the expert, Zarra Celik, is classified as being a member of Max Factor and she is also represented in terms of her profession as a nail artist:

5.34 Check out this British tennis inspired nail art from Max Factor nail artist Zarra Celik! (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

In physical identification, social actors are identified in terms of their outward physical features (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.57). In example 5.35, Beyoncé, the famous singer and actress, is represented in terms of her beauty as stunning. In addition, she is classified as multi-talented and by reference to the company to which she belongs, L’Oréal Paris, in our. She is functionalised as a spokesmodel as well:

5.35 Our stunning and multi-talented spokesmodel Beyoncé made a breath-taking live performance at the Halftime Show of the Superbowl this week. (L’Oréal Paris Facebook post 2013)

Categorisation is analysed in more detail in order to explore if there is any difference in how celebrities and experts are represented in the company- and customer-authored discourse types.
As shown in Figure 5.10, the comparison of the sub-types of categorisation by which celebrities and experts are represented across all discourse types indicates that in the Facebook posts, experts are functionalised and classified more than they are in the other discourse types (17% and 16% of the categorisation in the Facebook posts is used for experts’ functionalisation and classification, respectively; four times as much as their functionalisation and classification in the print adverts). In the posts, there are 42 and 40 cases of functionalised and classified experts, respectively. As discussed above, although celebrities and experts appear to be equally included in the Facebook posts, companies tend to functionalise and classify their experts more than twice as much as they do their celebrities in this discourse. What these representational categories suggest is that there seems to be an emphasis on the professional personalities of the expert figures in this discourse. In this sense, unlike with products in Section 5.3.1 above, the experts’ rather hierarchical status seems to manifest through categorisation, as a way that might add importance to their endorsing words, for instance.

3.36 “The A-Class is completely new, down to the last detail. In automotive development, it’s not often you get the chance to start with a clean sheet of paper. Our engineers have made the very most of that opportunity.” Dr Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management
of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars. (Mercedes-Benz Facebook post 2013)

5.37 Did you know Lashfinity 3-day mascara has a special remover at one end? Watch our video for some expert removal tips from Max Factor make-up artist Mel Arter. x (Max Factor Facebook post 2013)

In example 5.36 above, the expert, Dr Dieter Zetsche, is functionalised as a Chairman of the Board of Management and Head, and classified by reference to Mercedes-Benz, the company of which he is a member. In addition, he is semi-formally nominated and given the academic title Dr. In a similar vein, in example 5.37 the expert, Mel Arter, is represented through her profession as a make-up artist, classified in relation to Max Factor and nominated by her first and last names as well.

In terms of gender, in the Facebook posts the female experts appear to be functionalised twice as often as the male experts (67% compared with 33% of the total experts’ functionalisation occurs with female and male experts, respectively, i.e. 28 instances of functionalised female experts compared with 14 instances for males). As stated above, these figures’ functionalisation seems to be related to the product type, i.e. women with cosmetics and men with cars. In this way, there seems to be a gender differentiation in the endorsement strategies of these products, although further research would be required to confirm this.

5.3.3 Facebook comments

1. The second element of a Facebook page is its comments. Comments are one of the affordances that allow users to send feedback to companies or reply to their posts, or for customers to communicate with one another on pages moderated by companies, previously discussed in terms of situational characteristics in Chapter 4. Thus, unlike the print adverts and Facebook posts produced by companies, in the Facebook comments the customers become the authors of their own discourse.
Table 5.6 Inclusion of represented participants in Facebook comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td>1441</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experts</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media resources</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2456</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the category of **inclusion** in the Facebook comments (displayed in Table 5.6) shows that customers are the most included participants in comparison with the other participants or entities (customers amount to more than half of the included participants in this discourse, i.e. 59%).

![customers' inclusion](image)

Figure 5.11 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants

The Facebook comments appear different from the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts), in that the comments do not focus on products but rather customers appear to be the centre of this discourse. Likewise, the quantitative comparison with which customers are included across the discourse types (illustrated in Figure 5.11) shows that customers are
more often included in the Facebook comments than in the print adverts and Facebook posts, where the difference between the inclusion of customers in the comments (59%) and the company-authored discourse (34% in the adverts and 36% in the posts) is almost a quarter. In examples 5.38 and 5.39 below, the commenters include themselves by the singular first-person pronoun *I*:

5.38 *I* Love it .. *i* have one & it’s the Best (Comment on Chanel Facebook post)

5.39 *I* work in the paint shop and even *I* don’t see it from a steel roll to fully built :( (Comment on Toyota Facebook post)

2. In this way, the generic address by second-person pronouns allows for individual and collective references and by which potential customers are addressed in the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts), or ‘synthetic personalization’ in Fairclough’s terms (through which simulated individuality is established). In contrast in the Facebook comments, commenters (potential or actual customers) tend to represent themselves individually through *personalisation*, i.e. singular first-person pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*, and *mine*).

![customers' personalisation chart](chart.png)

Figure 5.12 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of personalisation: % of all companies’ and customers’ personalisation
Comparing the frequency of customers’ personalisation across all four discourse types, the results (summarised in Figure 5.12) show that in the Facebook comments, the occurrence of singular first-person pronouns is similar to the customer reviews. However, in the comments, customers’ personalisation is higher than that in the print adverts and Facebook posts, as customers account for over three quarters of the personalisation in the Facebook comments (79%) with an occurrence of 592 times. In examples 5.40 and 5.41 below, the commenters individualised themselves by the first-person pronouns I and my:

5.40 I'm a huge fan of Mercedes, but to be honest the front end does resemble a C Class, and I've never really liked the tail lights on the E Class either. (Comment on Mercedes-Benz Facebook post)

5.41 Unfortunately, it's too powdery for my liking. (Reply to comment on Chanel Facebook post)

In the Facebook comments, the high frequency of the singular first-person pronouns might be explained in part because customers, as the authors of the comments, can express their own attitudes about and/or experiences of the products (the latter to a lesser extent, as shown in Chapter 4). In this sense, authority, as textual representation, seems to lie in the customers themselves as the evaluators of products. Another interpretation of the frequency with which the singular first-person pronouns occur in the comments is the interpersonal nature of commenting, as the customers respond to interactions initiated by companies (posts) or other commenters. In this way, the use of pronouns, in terms of voicing views, seems to support the goal of these companies’ pages of constructing platforms of communication, as stated in Chapter 4. In examples 5.42 and 5.43, the singular first-person pronouns I and my occur in comments, where the commenters directly address their interactants using questions (5.42) or compliments (5.43):

5.42 I like the 500 : ) my mate has an S reg Fiat Coupe 20v Turbo which in my opinion is one of the best Fiats ever made and are very quick and I was wondering do you guys at Fiat have any plans to bring out a new Fiat Coupe and Barchetta? (Comment on Fiat Facebook post)
5.43 I like this [The New RAV4]. […] Good work Toyota! (Comment on Toyota Facebook post)

The examples above suggest that, as with the companies’ discourse strategies in their posts, commenters also want to initiate a dialogue with the companies or other potential customers through two-direction interactions. Thus in the Facebook comments, personalisation could be thought of as showing the tenor of this discourse by which the purpose of Facebook seems to be realised. Although customers author their comments and thus voice their personal experiences and attitudes, the fact is that these comments appear on pages owned by companies. Hence in moderation terms, as discussed in Chapter 4, companies’ authority seems more than that of commenters, apart from the companies’ economic authority. This suggests that the ideological interpretation of first-person pronouns as reflecting authority in terms of individuality (Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh 2010, p.85) seems to be supported linguistically only.

However, very often neither companies nor other potential customers seem to always interact with the posted comments. The rather low interaction on Facebook might be explained in terms of asynchronous communication, where the message sender and receiver do not need to be online at the same time (see Chapter 4). As mentioned in Section 3.6.1, out of a total of 806 Facebook comments and replies, there are only 41 instances of actual interactions between companies and customers as replies to customer comments (in other words, only 5% of the Facebook comments’ dataset has replies). In example 5.44, the customer and the company interacted in a question and answer sequence:

5.44 Commenter: Do you do factory tours to the public? , Thanks.

Toyota: Hi First Name, yes, you can take a public tour of the factory.
Follow the link for more details: http://ow.ly/lZR7B. Many thanks!
(Comment on and company reply to comment on Toyota Facebook post)

Likewise in example 5.45, the interaction occurs but this time between two customers. The first commenter addresses another communicator with a question using second-person pronouns:
5.45 Commenter 1: Did you order any extras with yours?

Commenter 2: No just the lounge model. My mum ordered the lounge with heated seats as an extra on exactly the same day as mine. She was told yesterday hers should be about 10 days. (Comment on and reply to comment on Fiat Facebook post)

In the dataset of the Facebook comments, in contrast with Chanel and Mercedes-Benz that do not have any one-to-one responses with their customers even when commenters positively evaluate their products, Chanel Cosmetics, L’Oréal Paris, Max Factor, Toyota, and Fiat do sometimes communicate with commenters. However, it is impossible to say whether the pattern of a company’s interaction reflects its status, as categorised by product price (i.e. brands classified here as being in the top-end of the market do not highly communicate with customers). Examining the context in which companies interact with their customers, it appears that Chanel Cosmetics, L’Oréal Paris, Max Factor, Toyota, and Fiat tend to respond to comments that occur as general queries about product suitability, availability, or price; opinions about products; and issues with products or dissatisfaction with companies’ published posts. However, these companies’ replies do not seem to occur with all comments. Thus, the interaction between companies and customers does not seem very high, as suggested by Table 5.7, in comparison with the total of this dataset (see Chapter 3, Table 3.3).

Table 5.7 Breakdown of companies’ replies to comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chanel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanel Cosmetics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Oréal Paris</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Factor</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes-Benz</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiat</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 5.7 show that while there is an almost complete absence of follow-up interactions between Chanel Cosmetics and its customers, less than a quarter of the total replies by companies to comments occurs on the part of L’Oréal Paris, Max Factor, and Toyota. Moreover, Fiat accounts for more than one third (41%) of these replies, e.g.

5.46 Ohhh can't you do tutorials of all of them??? :( (Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

5.47 Does it work on dry skin?# (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

Discussed in Chapter 4 as a realisation of the direct addressed complaint move, in example 5.46, the commenter articulates in an emoticon her/his unhappiness with L’Oréal Paris’ post, which offers to publish one video only about how to use the Elnett product. Nevertheless, the commenter does not seem to receive a response from the company. Similarly, neither Max Factor nor other customers reply to the question in example 5.47 about the suitability of CC cream for the commenter’s skin type.

What the above examples suggest is that although Facebook is dialogic in nature, allowing for two-way communication, the extent to which this potential is utilised by companies and commenters seems rather limited. This could be attributed to the situational characteristics of asynchronous communication and the unidirectional message transmission, discussed in Section 4.3.1. In the cases where such exchanges do occur, the dialogic affordance for interaction is indeed realised. But the contextual nature of Facebook as a publically available platform with one-to-many interactions means that other kinds of interactional patterns are possible too. In this way, sometimes the companies’ posts seem to be acting in a rather similar way to the print adverts, and the synthetic nature of personalisation is exposed.

3. Although in the Facebook comments, commenters represented themselves through personalisation, other linguistic options are employed for representing these actual or potential customers, i.e. nomination. The dialogic nature of Facebook seems to be reflected through the category of nomination as a representational choice. In Section 5.3.2 above, two patterns are identified in the celebrities’ nominations in the print adverts (semi-
formal and informal), which also occur in the comments but in a rather different way. First, in contrast to the print adverts, where companies nominate celebrities, in the Facebook comments the commenters represent other commenters and celebrity figures through nomination as well. Second, although in principle the choices for nomination in the print adverts and Facebook comments are the same, in the Facebook comments nomination could be further distinguished into tagged usernames and typed names. Tagging is a sharing potential by which Facebook users are notified when a user links their profiles to posted material (verbal or visual), where tagging occurs through adding usernames from her/his list of friends (Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar 2015, p.243). On Facebook, the significance of tagging could be thought of in terms of facilitating information dissemination and inviting other users to be part of a community and its discussion, hence tagging can acquire a promotional function (ibid). In the context of this study, these aspects could be seen as contributing to the circulation, and thus the visibility of the content of the companies’ pages and the commenters’ generated content. In this respect, the resources of personalising and nominating interlocutors in comments could be conceived as realising the purposes of companies’ Facebook pages (communication, presenting the self, and disseminating the pages’ content), explained in Chapter 4.

In the comments, tagging occurs when users address their interactants in terms of their usernames, which could be thought of as more or less equivalent to the semi-formal nomination, whereas typing in a person’s first name could be seen as similar to the informal nomination pattern. In example 5.48 below, L’Oréal Paris addresses the commenter informally by typing her/his first name:

5.48 Hi **First Name**, You'll find our new mascara in all high street beauty retailers. (Company reply to comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

In contrast, in examples 5.49, the commenter tags another commenter by her/his username which seems semi-formal, i.e. in the form of first plus last names:

5.49 **Username** I’ve been getting 56-58 mpg which is good for this size car & the stop / start system saves fuel round towns & city’s (Reply to comment on Fiat Facebook post)
Figure 5.13 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of nomination: % of all nominated participants

The quantitative comparison of the category of nomination with which customers are addressed across all discourse types (displayed in Figure 5.13) shows that in the Facebook comments, commenters informally address other potential customers or type their names more often in comparison with customers’ nomination in the print adverts, Facebook posts, and customer reviews. Customers amount to more than half of the nominated participants in the Facebook comments, as 36% of the nomination occurs with customers as typed names (20 times), nearly double the amount of their tagged nomination (11 occurrences) in this discourse. Therefore, rather than using the tagging facility, the commenters tend to type their interlocutors’ names instead, as illustrated in the following:58

5.50 Commenter 1: anyone got advice on how long you should wait between coats?

Commenter 2: First Name you only need a min between coats (Comment on and reply to comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

5.51 Commenter 1: We used to have one of these [500L] in red when I was growing up… wish we’d kept it!

58 Only one instance of nomination, specifically informal nomination, occurs in the dataset of the customer reviews.
Commenter 2: I had the station wagon version in 1961 and one like this in 1967, both red of course. Perhaps I’m old enough to be your dad First name? (Comment on and reply to comment on Fiat Facebook post)

In examples 5.50 and 5.51 above, the interaction occurs as format tying, where, in Goodwin’s terms (2007, p.103), one’s conversational utterance is built using some words previously uttered by the other interlocutor. In the above instances, the first commenters ask a question and make a statement, respectively, and in response, the second commenters address the first ones through their typed name, and use some of the first commenters’ words.

In this sense, similar to the personalisation evident in the Facebook posts and comments, the occurrence of nomination in the comments seems to arise as a result of customers’ dialogic interactions with other commenters and companies. Whilst in the print adverts, semi-formal nomination is used for participants of relative high social status (celebrity figures), in the Facebook comments, informal nomination (typed names) is used for normal participants (e.g. customers). And because the person writing the comment is usually a customer, this suggests a more equal social relationship between peer interactants too, as mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.2.

However, in the Facebook comments, informal nomination does not exclusively occur in customers’ communication. In spite of the somehow rare one-to-one exchanges between companies and commenters, as shown above, when the companies do reply, they tend to nominate their customers by typing their first name. A quantitative comparison of the nomination strategies used in companies’ replies is given in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Patterns of nomination for addressing customers in companies’ replies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tagged usernames</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typed names</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 In Section 3.8.3, I explained that companies’ replies to comments were analysed for their patterns of nominating customers only, and thus their results were not shown as part of the post results.
As shown in Table 5.8, companies tend to use informal or typed names more often than semi-formal or tagged names (customers’ typed names occur nearly twice as much as their tagged names). Therefore, in addressing interactants (customers) with their first name, companies seem similar to commenters. Companies informally nominate their customers in exchanges that include various speech acts such as questions, requests, statements, apologies, compliments, and suggestions, for instance:

5.52 Excellent choice, First Name! See the latest from a What Car? review of New RAV4: http://ow.ly/hVQVv. (Company reply to comment on Toyota Facebook post)

5.53 Hello First Name. La créme jeux is specified for skintypes. We're sorry about your bad mood about it. On Chanel.com you can make a test which skintype you are and maybe it can help you to find the perfect cream for you. (Company reply to comment on Chanel Cosmetics Facebook post)

In examples 5.52 and 5.53 above, in their replies to their customers, Toyota and Chanel Cosmetics informally nominate the commenters through typed names. In 5.52, Toyota appraises the product and suggests further information on their product to the commenter, and in 5.53, Chanel Cosmetics expresses their apologies and gives advice to the commenter, which might help her/him avoid disappointment with their product in future. The informal nomination here could be seen as projecting a rather close relationship between companies and their commenters.

In addition to nominating customers in the interactions with companies and between customers, commenters also tend to name celebrities (nomination) in their Facebook comments.
Figure 5.14 Comparison by discourse of how celebrities and experts are represented in terms of nomination: % of all nominated participants

The comparison across all discourse types, given in Figure 5.14, indicates that in contrast to the semi-formal nomination used for celebrities by companies in the print adverts and Facebook posts, in the Facebook comments the commenters represent celebrities through informal nomination. There are 22 occurrences of celebrities’ informal nomination, as 39% of the nomination occurs informally with celebrities in the Facebook comments (i.e. more than a third of the nomination in this discourse, as compared with more than a quarter in the adverts). For instance, in 5.54 below, the informal address is used for Cheryl Cole, the famous British TV presenter and model:

5.54 Happy birthday Cheryl, you don’t look 30, you look awesome.
(Comment on L’Oréal Paris Facebook post)

Similarly, in example 5.55 the commenter addresses Lewis Hamilton, the well-known British racing driver of Mercedes-Benz and Formula One champion, by his first name:

5.55 Lewis for the championship. (Comment on Mercedes-Benz Facebook post)

Thus in the Facebook comments, both customers and celebrities are informally addressed. However, the use of informal nomination for representing these participants could be
conceived as having different effects. The use of informal nomination for customers suggests a close and equal relationship among customers (commenters), or familiarity in Hunt’s (2015, p.79) terms, occurring in actual interactions as format tying (as seen through replies made to comments). But in the Facebook comments, the informal nomination of celebrity figures does not occur in comments that are part of adjacency pairs. One possible explanation might be that the comments are not posted on the celebrities’ Facebook pages. Instead, the relationship established between customers and celebrities seems parallel to ‘parasocial interaction’ (Rubin and McHugh 1987, p.280) found elsewhere, by which an audience constructs a sense of connection with mediated public figures (ibid). Therefore, the asymmetrical nature of parasocial interaction could be regarded as similar to Fairclough’s (2001, p.52) ‘synthetic personalization’. But whereas synthetic personalisation tends to occur when the more authoritative participant is seeking to project conversational interaction with an unknown audience, in parasocial interaction the audience is projecting conversational interaction with a known but out of reach idol. The assumed informality and lack of social distance in the context of Facebook seem only a superficial democratisation of social relations. This suggests that the ideological interpretations of nomination in terms of formality degrees, suggested by Van Leeuwen’s (1996) nomination patterns, might need to be rethought.

4. Van Leeuwen (ibid, pp.53-54) proposes that participants’ representations in terms of nomination and categorisation be examined together. Indeed, in the Facebook comments, customers use both nomination and categorisation. But whereas in the Facebook posts it is experts that are categorised, in the Facebook comments it is customers who are represented using this strategy. In addition to the sub-types of functionalisation, classification, and physical identification found in the Facebook posts (discussed earlier in Section 5.3.2), in the Facebook comments relational identification also occurs. Relational identification refers to representing social actors in terms of their relations to family members, relatives, or colleagues (Van Leeuwen 1996, p.56), as stated in Section 3.8.3. In example 5.56 below, a customer represents her/himself by a familial relation in *My mums*:
5.56 *My mums* always done thin coats and built them up for as long as a can remember, doesn’t look so cloggy either. x (Comment on Max Factor Facebook post)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>print adverts</th>
<th>facebook posts</th>
<th>facebook comments</th>
<th>customer reviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>functionalisation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classification</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relational identification</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical identification</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.15 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of categorisation: % of all categorised participants

From Figure 5.15 above, the comparison of customers’ categorisation across all discourse types indicates that in the Facebook comments, customers tend to represent themselves equally through classification and relational identification more often than they are represented in the print adverts, Facebook posts, and customer reviews (almost twice as often as customers’ classification and relational identification in the customer reviews, the next high percentage), where 31 instances for each category occur in the Facebook comments. Classification and relational identification seem to be centred on the personal representation of customers, as exemplified in the following:

5.57 At **81 years old** my late husband regularly bought me Chanel No.5 along with other products from the same range and I absolutely adored them (Comment on Chanel Facebook post)

5.58 I am also a **Yorkshire man** and race motocross in my spare time (Comment on Toyota Facebook post)
In example 5.57, identification occurs in terms of age, *81 years old*, and family relation *my late husband*. The commenter in 5.58 also classifies himself as *a yorkshire man*, i.e. in provenance terms. In this sense, in the Facebook comments, the commenters seem to build themselves a personal identity.

In this way, in the promotional discourse types of Facebook (posts and comments), two types of identities seem to be constructed: the authoritative professional identities that companies establish for experts in the posts, which seem to emphasise the high status of these figures, and the personal identities that customers produce in their comments. Companies, through their Facebook pages, appear to succeed in bringing in celebrity and expert figures (endorsers) and potential customers together on the same page. But what companies seem to be seeking is to draw their customers to their Facebook pages to present their attitudes as feedback on the companies’ posts, as facilitated by the various affordances of Facebook. In voicing their attitudes, commenters seem to help companies promote and thus spread the content of their Facebook pages to other customers.

### 5.3.4 Customer reviews

1. In contrast with the print adverts, where companies include products, in the customer reviews, similar to the Facebook posts and Facebook comments, the highest included participants (in terms of representation) are the customers themselves. The two discourse types (comments and reviews) are authored by customers (potential or actual), while the posts are company-authored discourse.

Table 5.9 Inclusion of represented participants in customer reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>companies</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>products</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1346</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 5.9, **customers’ inclusion** is more than twice as often in comparison with that of products in this discourse, i.e. over half of the inclusion is used with the customers (66%).

![Bar chart showing customers' inclusion across different discourse types](chart.png)

Figure 5.16 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of inclusion: % of all included participants

Likewise, the comparison of the quantities of customers’ inclusion across all discourse types, illustrated in Figure 5.16, shows that in the customer reviews, customers’ inclusion is higher than in the print adverts, Facebook posts, and Facebook comments, with the most dramatic difference being in the representation of the customers in the reviews. In this discourse, customers’ inclusion occurs twice as often as their inclusion in print adverts. Again, this comparison suggests a similarity between the customer reviews and the customer-centred representation in the Facebook comments, as exemplified in the following instances:

5.59 I had gorgeous eyelashes but tried false eyelashes and pulled out all my natural lashes taking the extensions off. I’m not used to having bare eyes and it’s been awful but this mascara really makes my eyes look full again (Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

5.60 I’d like to give you all a warning about the jack that comes with this car. I know all about how to use a jack and always on a level surface etc.
What I did not expect was that the jack would come apart in use, dropping the car suddenly… (Mercedes-Benz customer review—Road Test Reports)

In examples 5.59 and 5.60 above, as product evaluators, customers tend to emphasise their personal experiences with and stance on products (cosmetics and cars). In this way, their expertise and views are brought to the fore in the reviews, and hence reviewers’ authority seems to be highlighted, as mentioned with the Facebook commenters above (focusing on actual experiences with products relates to the showing qualification move in terms of reviews’ reliability, discussed in Chapter 4).

2. The high use of personalisation through singular first-person pronouns could be explained in terms of enabling reviewers to express and represent themselves, as shown in Figure 5.17.

![Figure 5.17 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of personalisation: % of all companies’ and customers’ personalisation](chart)

Figure 5.17 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of personalisation: % of all companies’ and customers’ personalisation

The comparison of frequency with which customers are personalised across all discourse types (given earlier and summarised in Figure 5.17) indicates that, similar to the Facebook comments discussed above, reviewers’ personalisation occurs through singular first-person pronouns. Reviewers’ personalisation through these pronouns accounts for 78% of the personalisation in the customer reviews, which is very close to that in the Facebook
comments (79%), as mentioned in Section 5.3.3. There are 334 tokens of singular first-person pronouns employed by reviewers in the reviews.

Although review websites, as social media platforms, are not widely viewed as sites for interaction but rather as domains that offer information about products (Vásquez 2014, p.4), the use of first- and second-pronouns could be thought of as an attempt to communicate with other reviewers. Personalisation could be interpreted as showing the tenor of the reviews. In the review dataset of this study, sometimes the reviewers try to contact other reviewers or readers in dialogic exchanges. Thus reviews seem, in a sense, similar to the Facebook comments, although the purposes of these communities are not the same (discussed in Chapter 4). In order to initiate exchanges with other customers, reviewers tend to address their readers with you, your, everyone, believe me, trust me, or they ask questions in their reviews, for example:

5.61 Reviewer: My fourth Mercedes C Class and this is the best so far, the only fault is the flasher switch is faulty, when returning from left hand turn the right hand indicator comes on making both flashers working together. I have had a new switch fitted two months ago but to my disappointment the fault has returned; has anyone else experienced the same fault the car is less than 3 months old?

Response: Not quite the same fault but the Flasher Control unit is the pits. Mine won’t work properly 100% of the time but according to MB and my dealer it’s OK, I’m not using the switch properly!!! (Mercedes-Benz customer review and response-Road Test Reports)

The reviewer in example 5.61 generically addresses the review readers with anyone and poses a question concerning a certain issue with the car flashers. The interaction also uses format tying, explained in Section 5.3.3 above, where some of the reviewer’s words occur in the communicator’s response as not quite the same fault, won’t work, switch, and flasher.

The infrequent interaction among reviewers and other reviewers or readers is consistent with Pollach’s (2006, p.8) finding of the general tendency of reviews to ‘remain in isolation’. In the dataset of the customer reviews, 10 out of the 60 reviews (17%) have
responses from other potential customers. Indeed, companies do not respond to any review in this dataset. Similar to the communication on Facebook, the infrequent interaction may be attributable to the asynchronous communication and one-way message transmission on the review websites, explained in Section 4.3.1. Thus unlike the somehow scarce dyadic interaction between companies and commenters on Facebook pages, no instances of contact between reviewers and companies (product manufacturers) are found in the dataset of the reviews here. One reason why companies fail to respond to reviewers might be because companies are not directly addressed in the reviews. Another explanation is that companies might not even be aware that reviews have been published on their products since the review websites of this research are maintained by third parties, i.e. in moderation terms, as explained in Section 4.3.2. In spite of the rare actual dialogic communication in this dataset, through stating the positive and/or negative aspects of products, promoting for or against a product seems to happen, and thus reviews could be interpreted as fulfilling the goals of the review websites, discussed in Chapter 4. In this way, despite the dialogic affordance of the reviews, reviewers and companies do not seem to make high use of this potential, similar in a sense to the case of the commenters and companies on Facebook. As with the companies’ Facebook pages, since the reviews appear on websites run by third parties, this suggests that the websites’ owners, in terms of deleting some contributions for instance (discussed in Chapter 4), seem to have more authority than reviewers by their discursive authoring of reviews.

3. Authoring their own reviews means that as customers, reviewers may also allocate various roles to themselves. In contrast to how companies represent customers through passivation in the print adverts and Facebook posts, in the customer reviews, the reviewers foreground their agency, where they are represented as active participants. In this way, the customer reviews appear similar to the Facebook comments in highlighting the agency of their authors.
Figure 5.18 Comparison by discourse of how customers are represented in terms of participation: % of all companies’ and customers’ participation

As illustrated in Figure 5.18, the comparison of customers’ participation across all discourse types shows that in the customer reviews, the reviewers give salience to their agency by activating themselves more often in comparison with their downplayed agency as customers in the company-authored discourse (65% of the participation in the reviews is used for customers’ activation; more than twice as frequently as their activation in the Facebook posts). It seems that the pattern of activated agency is used in the customer-authored discourse (comments and reviews). Crucially, in the reviews, customers tend to be activated in relation to their role as consumers and evaluators of products: the roles that are central to and in line with the purpose of the review websites. In the reviews, customers’ activation recurs 305 times. In instance 5.62 below, the reviewer’s agency is highlighted because she/he represents her/himself as the Senser in the mental process of liking. In addition, in examples 5.62 and 5.63, the reviewers are activated as the Actors in the material processes of buying and purchasing, respectively:

5.62 I also liked the fact that I could buy it in a few different colours (Chanel customer review-Review Centre)

5.63 Purchased by someone with chronic low back pain, this car is a pleasure to drive (Mercedes-Benz customer review-Road Test Reports)
The ideological reading of participation in terms of agency, based on Fowlers’ (1991) and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) studies (discussed in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above), suggests that this interpretation is in principle supported by the linguistic patterns used for representing customers as authors of their discourse, as illustrated in the examples above. However, a simplistic equation of foregrounding with all kinds of authority does not seem to hold true in promotional discourse. The textually foregrounded agency of customers as authors does not mean that customers hold the same economic influence of the websites’ owners, who have control over capital and the websites on which the reviews appear.

5.4 Reflection on the ideology of social media

Since this model does not explain the difference in customers’ representations in the customer- and company-author discourse, social research on social media seems helpful. Reflecting on the ideologies of social media, in recent years several studies (e.g. Cohen 2013; Fuchs 2012; Kuehn 2013; Pierson 2012; Retberg 2014; Van Dijck 2009) have criticised social media platforms, including Facebook and review websites, for disempowering and exploiting their users rather than empowering them. These critics argue that the practices of social media do not largely seem to be different from those of traditional media. Both these media are notorious for making money at the expense of their audience. In traditional media, customers’ attention is given to advertisers, as noted by Fairclough (1995, p.42), while in social media, customers’ online habits and feedback are given to advertisers in return for money (Fuchs 2012, p.145).60

Fuchs (ibid, p.147) points out that Facebook is a large promotional platform making profits from its users’ content and data. Likewise, Kuehn (2013, p.608) notes that review websites tend to combine ‘capitalism and democracy’ through establishing users’ domains, where evaluating products and expressing stances are presented as if contributing to democratising society. On such social media, customers are described as entering into two commodification processes, or what Cohen (2013, p.179) calls ‘double commodification’. In the first process, users (actual or potential customers) gain free access to media

60 The use of ‘advertisers’ here is in the broadest sense, in order to include product manufacturing companies, retailers, or any party that could benefit from buying allocated time or space on such media.
platforms, purchased by parties interested in promoting their goods or services. In the second process, these users’ feedback (e.g. textual comments/reviews, likes, tags, shares, uploaded images, and videos) and information (e.g. personal information in profiles, online searching, and typing) become a commodity as well, sold as data for their mining value (Cohen 2013, p.179; Van Dijck 2009, p.47). In this form of commodification, users are seen as ‘content providers’ and ‘data providers’ (Van Dijck *ibid*). Based on the mined data, targeting promotional activities at a certain audience (Cohen 2013, p.179) and tracking them (Pierson 2012, p.109) seem rather easy. In addition to being commodified, customers seem to be transformed, in ‘prosumption’ terms, into producers and consumers simultaneously, i.e. ‘prosumers’, as unpaid media users doing work for media owners, where media owners and promoters benefit from users’ produced content (Cohen 2013, p.183; Fuchs 2012, p.145). Thus, rather than eradicating social relations, social media platforms seem to help in perpetuating the current imbalanced relations between customers and product manufacturers (companies). It is for this reason that the examined ideological interpretations of some representational patterns in the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews are sometimes questioned and a rethinking of these interpretations is suggested.

In light of this, the contrasts in the representations of the customers’ roles in the discourse produced by companies (print and posts) and those generated by customers (comments and reviews) could not necessarily be an indication that authority relations cease to exist. Fairclough (1994, p.263) rightly argues that claiming customer’s authority discursively through conversationalising public discourse, for instance, seems to disguise the current unequal relations. Thus, Van Dijk’s (1996, p.85) claim that access to discourse and the linguistic choices for representing discourse participants could be ‘rather faithful’ evidence of whose social authority is prevalent (ordinary people or institutions), seems to some extent blurry. This is because today, due to technological development, access to discourse and hence representing one’s self have largely become easier than before. Indeed, Fairclough (1994, p.266) warns against taking for granted that authority relations are equalised simply because customers are voiced or some changes in linguistic patterns occur, for example. In line with Fairclough’s warning, Bird (2011, p.512) suggests that both online and offline practices be examined in order to decide if any difference has
actually happened in social relations as the result of using social media. However, this aspect is beyond the concern of this chapter but it is a point that could be raised. The linguistic analysis of promotional discourse types (adverts, posts, comments, and reviews) here, at least, succeeds in showing some ideological work implicit in the representations of companies, products, customers, and endorsers involved in such discourse. It is hoped that this chapter can help to increase customers’ awareness of representations circulated in similar examples of promotional media discourse, and further research thus seems necessary in this respect.

5.5 Summary and conclusion

Similar to the findings of Chapter 4, the analysis of the representational strategies identified in the promotional discourse of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews suggests that there are some similarities between these discourse types although their authorship (companies and customers) is different. Thus, the above discourse types can be classified into company- and customer-written discourse. In relation to the similarities and differences in the representations of the participants in the company- and customer-produced discourse types, companies tend to personalise their discourse through plural first-person pronouns, whereas they generically address their customers with second-person pronouns and they passivate them. However, there are important differences between these discourse types in terms of participants’ representations. The print adverts and Facebook posts still appear to promote the same entity (products), but they tend to do this rather differently. In the print adverts, products are found to be the centrally foregrounded participant in a monologic broadcast. In the posts, the companies continue to include products, but along with other participants and interactive material (videos, images, websites, and social media). This might suggest the likelihood that products could become entities about which customers might express their opinion. Similarly, while products in the print adverts are principally promoted by celebrities, in the Facebook posts the companies promote their products through celebrities and experts but in enhanced posts that contain links to interactive material, and where the companies foreground the professional identities of their expert endorsers.
With respect to the similarities between the Facebook comments and customer reviews, as the authors of their discourse, commenters and reviewers seem to be the authoritative participants through the use of singular first-person pronouns (individuality) and playing up their agency (activation). Additionally, customers’ experiences with and evaluations of products and personal connections seem to foreground their personal identities in their generated discourse. Commenters and reviewers are found to have the purpose of communicating with companies and other customers (the former in comments only). Where customer-to-customer interaction happens, it suggests the communicators’ equal status as peers. Sometimes, reviewers’ and commenters’ relationships with companies (the latter on Facebook only) and other customers tend to operate in a way that might be comparable, to a lesser extent, to ‘synthetic personalization’ (Fairclough 2001, p.52) in the print adverts, or ‘parasocial interaction’ (Rubin and McHugh 1987, p.280) with respect to public media figures. However, unlike the reviews, the commenters appear to categorise themselves and informally nominate their addressees (customers and celebrities).

In this sense, customers seem to be given the discursive authority to become writers of their own discourse, and thus to represent themselves textually, foreground their opinions and experiences, and engage in one-to-one interactions. However, there could be further exploitations of this discursive authority, in terms of customer-created content (comments and reviews), to serve other ends, for instance companies’ profit-making through ‘prosumption’ (Fuchs 2012, p.145). Thus, linguistic changes could not be taken as equivalent to democracy and equal social relations. In this sense, rethinking some ideological interpretations that tend to be associated with the investigated representational patterns is largely needed. Finally, although the analysis of the linguistic options helps to show the focus of each discourse, some roles, identities, and relations constructed for the participants in promotional discourse, it does not seem sufficient to study the resources of language only and leave the messages of other semiotic modes (images) in promotional discourse types. Therefore, multimodal analysis is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6: A MULTIMODAL PERSPECTIVE ON
INTERPRETATIONS OF VISUAL RESOURCES IN IMAGES

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, through studying the situational, generic, and linguistic features of the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews, some aspects of the diversity of these promotional discourse types are captured. However, another important characteristic of this discourse, i.e. images, is not investigated in detail through any of the previous adopted frameworks in this study. To explore another dimension of the complexity of this discourse, rather than using default meanings assumed by some scholars, this chapter multimodally studies actual audience perception of images. For this purpose, visuals and multimodal discourse collated from the previous datasets of the adverts and Facebook posts were used in interviews in order to gain in-depth understanding of actual audience readings and interpretations of images from promotional discourse. Thus, unlike the previous analytical Chapters 4 and 5, which mainly examine the linguistic features of promotional discourse, the current chapter takes a multimodal approach to the analysis of the interview dataset, which, as another difference from the datasets of the previous chapters, was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

The aim of this chapter is to test some assumptions made by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) grammar of visual design about the readings and interpretations of some visual choices against the empirical dataset of actual viewers. For this objective, the analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of some visual resources is guided by grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; Thornberg and Charmaz 2012). In addition, based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s framework, an image sample analysis is carried out to be compared with the results of the interviewees’ perceptions. Moreover, Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model, adopted in Chapter 5, and Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory are applied to the verbal content of the interviewees’ answers. Thus, this chapter is complementary in its perspective.
This chapter takes the following structure: the next section discusses some criticism of the visual grammar model and the studies that apply it. Reader-response theory is covered in Section 6.3. Section 6.4 is concerned with the rationale and limitations of the techniques adopted for collecting informants’ interpretations. In Section 6.5, the image sample analysis is explained. This is followed by Section 6.6 on the results of the visual and verbal analyses of the interviewees’ perception of images. In light of the informants’ interpretations, a comparison between images is given in Section 6.7. Finally, the conclusion is presented in Section 6.8.

6.2 Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual design grammar

Currently, there seems to be an increased tendency to use images, where different discourse types have become multimodal rather than language-dependent (Bateman 2009; Hiippala 2012; Lirola 2006). Based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.177) work, a discourse that utilises two or more semiotic modes (e.g. spoken/written language and images or other semiotic modes) to convey its meanings is ‘composite’ or ‘multimodal’. Hiippala (2012, p.316) argues that, in fact, forms of communication are all multimodal, in that even discourse that uses only language is multimodal in terms of its layout and colour or font type, for instance (Machin 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 3, adopting the Hallidayan language metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual), Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) developed a grammar of visual design for analysing visuals and multimodal discourse types in Western societies. A large number of studies use this framework as an analytical tool for investigating multimodal promotional discourse from various media genres, such as adverts (Lick 2015; Machin 2007; Starc 2014; Zuraidah and Ling 2016), direct mails (Rahm 2006), magazine covers (Lirola 2006), leaflets (Brookes and Harvey 2015; Lirola and Chovanec 2012), and websites (Lam 2013; Machin and Mayr 2012; Thompson 2012). Bateman (2009, p.57) calls studies that simply apply Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) visual grammar ‘running commentaries’ and superficial in their analysis. Forceville (1999, p.172) critiques Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) model for the various genres of their visuals and multimodal discourse types, e.g. magazines, books, paintings, films, maps, and others. He (ibid, p.171)
criticises the widely overgeneralised and vague assumptions of the applicability of this model to different genres without explaining, on the part of the model’s authors, the possibility of the concepts’ inapplicability, for instance information value (Given-New). Likewise, in his application of the concept of Ideal, Bateman (2009, p.58) points out the difficulty of specifying what exactly could be seen as Ideal if more than one component occurs close to each other or in the same part. Forceville (1999, p.172) highlights the roles that genre and readers could play in interpreting the visuals that Kress and Van Leeuwen largely tend to overlook. In light of the problems raised in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) tool of image analysis, Bateman and Forceville recommend studies that empirically investigate this model, as mentioned in Chapter 3.

What these previous studies do not critique are (in addition to the information value concepts and reading visuals and multimodal discourse) the concepts of visually relating a viewer to a represented participant and the meanings of visual resources, such as colour, light, and darkness. Such concepts also need investigation in order to show how far readers could understand images and perceive meanings in a way similar to or different from that assumed by Kress and Van Leeuwen. For example, adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) suggested reading paths combined with salience features and the visual contact of represented participants, White (2010) subjectively presents reading paths for adverts without testing the readings of actual viewers. It is not clear how he works out such readings, and the extent to which his proposed readings could be followed by readers is largely questionable.

In spite of Forceville’s and Bateman’s recommendation, thus far studies do not seem to adopt a practical approach to this model. An exception to this is Lick’s (2015) work, which adopts the content analysis approach to studying cultural variations in terms of the structure of adverts through examining a corpus of English and French Canadian adverts. His study (ibid, pp.238-239) points out the possible differences of adverts’ layout within the same culture and raises the question as to whether an audience could perceive the meanings implied through different adverts’ constructions. Lick’s study (ibid, 238) also highlights the difficulty of applying Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) concepts of ‘involvement’ and ‘detachment’ in terms of specifying the precise angle of the image as frontal or oblique.
Studies within psychology, such as those of Janik et al. (1978), Henderson et al. (2005), and Rayner et al. (2008), tend to concentrate on tracking the eye while reading. Exceptions to such research are Bergh and Beelders’ (2014) and Holsanova et al.’s (2006) studies, which are within the domain of multimodal research and that test eye movement in the readings of adverts and newspapers, respectively. To the best of my knowledge, as a linguist, Koller’s (2008) multimodal analysis of the meanings of pink, as collected through questionnaires and complemented by studying the functions of pink in different promotional discourse types, is the most recent empirical research on colour as a visual resource.

The current research differs from the above previous work on multimodal promotional discourse that tends to explain the meanings suggested by representing elements in a certain order on a space, e.g. a page, or the meanings conveyed through some visual choices, for example. The objective of the present study is to investigate empirically some claims of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) framework of image analysis against interpretations collected by interviewing a group of 21 persons. Grounded theory was used as a method for analysing the dataset of the informants’ interpretations of images with respect to relations represented in visuals, composition principles, reading paths, and the meanings of colour (the latter is also studied with respect to Machin’s (2007) meanings). To compare the results of the above analysis with these authors’ assumptions with respect to the first noticeable element in images, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model is applied to the interview images as an image sample analysis. Moreover, to develop this study and link this chapter to Chapter 5, the respondents’ answers to eye-contact, smile, angle of the image, and prominence are analysed using Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model. Likewise, the interviewees’ interpretations of smile, colour, light, darkness, and black and white are further investigated in terms of Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal model, stated in Section 3.8.4, in order to highlight another part of the complexity of promotional discourse, its evaluative language. Thus, this chapter is a multimodal analysis of both language and images based on interviewees’ responses. As stated in Section 3.6.5, the elements that attracted the attention of the viewers and the reading paths of the images are based on the interviewees’ answers and their hand-sketched readings with a pen.
This chapter addresses research question 3:

What does the visual-verbal analysis of the interviewees’ perception of some visual resources reveal about the meanings of these options and the characteristics of promotional discourse? And how do the linguistic choices in the informants’ interpretations compare with those found, particularly in the print adverts and Facebook posts?

6.3 Reader-response theory

Reader-response theory is mainly established in literary criticism and literature. However, marketing and economic research has also adopted this theory in studying adverts. However, the concern of such studies (e.g. Mikkonen 2010) tends to be on the gender identity construction of subcultural groups, for instance. Because gender is not explored in the interviews of this current research, work on gender is not further discussed (see Section 3.6.5 for the rationale for excluding gender). Reader-response theory was developed in the 1980s from ‘reader-response criticism’ or ‘reader-oriented criticism’, which first emerged in the 1920s (Bennett 1995, p.3). It is a conceptual model based on the opinions of various scholars (Tompkins 1980, p.x), concerned with ‘moving from theories of text to the study of reading’ (Scott 1994, p.463).61 As put by Bennett (1995, p.3), this theory deals with ‘Who makes meaning?’ or ‘Where is meaning made?’ and so it is interested in the site of meaning (readers and/or discourse).

Although reader-response theory shifts from the analysis of discourse (form and structure) to highlighting readers’ interpretations (i.e. reader-focused), it varies with respect to its concentration on readers. Based on Bennett (ibid, p.4), three main trends can be identified in this theory: a) total attention is paid to readers’ identity (psychological), b) discourse guides readers’ meaning, where authors as discourse creators are emphasised, and c) both readers and discourse have a mutual role in the interpretation process. Seen from Rosenblatt’s (1982, p.268) viewpoint, in the third approach, reading can be described as ‘a two-way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances’. In this sense, interpretation is understood as collaborative, occurring through readers’ interactions with discourse.

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61 See Bennett (1995) and Tompkins (1980), for example, for different critics’ approaches.
The broad perspective of reader-response theory is of relevance to the present study in four respects. Firstly, this theory highlights the active role of audience. Secondly, it generally adopts the position that readers differ, and therefore discourse readings are likely to be various and no reading is given priority as ‘correct’ (Scott 1994, p.463). Thirdly, some similarities can nevertheless be identified in the diversity of readings (ibid). Fourthly, the third perspective of reader-response theory is particularly pertinent here, in terms of conceiving meaning as being produced through readers in their interaction with discourse. In other words, the interviewees’ experience, along with images (genre and visual choices), could influence interpretations. Thus, meaning seems to exist neither in discourse (individual words of texts and/or visual options of images) nor in the readers. Rather, the reader-discourse interplay allows meaning to happen (for the above dimensions, see Sections 6.6.1-6.6.5).

6.4 Rationale and limitations of data collection methods

As mentioned in Section 3.6.5, the interview dataset was gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The rationale for using questionnaires is that they tend to be classified as a ‘systematic and disciplined’ technique for collecting data (Dörnyei 2007, p.101), in terms of remaining focused on the topics investigated. Another reason, pointed out by Kronberger and Wagner (2000, p.300), is that questionnaires are typically used for comparisons. Therefore, this method matches the aim of this thesis, i.e. drawing comparisons. Moreover, the research question of this Chapter (see Section 6.2) is mainly concerned with showing similarities and variations among the informants’ interpretations of images, how far their responses to images conform to or contradict with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) assumptions, and the extent to which the results of the informants’ responses are linguistically comparable with those of the representational patterns in Chapter 5.

Here, the interview questions vary in their type. Although open-ended questions are in line with the exploratory objective of this study (Dörnyei 2007, p.107), Kronberger and Wagner (2000, p.301) recommend that a questionnaire contain no more than three open-ended questions. This is because in order to be answered, such questions normally require more
time than closed-ended questions and that responses to open questions allow for variation (Kronberger and Wagner *ibid*). Thus, if all questions were open-ended, this means that the results would not be very systematically comparable. Nevertheless, in the interview guide, some questions present closed choices, while the majority of the questions require elucidation on the part of the informants. Questionnaires are also used for ‘consistency of meaning across respondents’ (Black 1999, p.204). However, because the items of a questionnaire require simple wording for reasons of brevity and easy comprehensibility, one of the limitations of a questionnaire identified by Dörnyei (2007, p.115) is that it does not allow for an in-depth investigation of a certain phenomenon. To overcome this shortcoming and following Dörnyei and Taguchi’s (2010, p.10) advice, I combined questionnaires with another tool, semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were employed because they are largely used to elicit informants’ opinions about interesting aspects with the possibility of asking ‘the same questions of all of the participants’ although not the same wording (Dörnyei 2007, p.136). In its concern with audience perception, the current research is interested in giving the informants the freedom to express their attitudes. In contrast, the researcher has to be focused, and thus the use of an interview guide (see Appendix 3) is necessary. Here, probing into details occurred through asking the respondents for explanations for or elaborations on some points, for example reasons for a followed reading path or chosen element. In other words, the questions were not so fixed that they did not give further thoughts. Rather, they gave answers longer than those that could be obtained from a questionnaire only. Thus, through the researcher’s interaction with the informants, the interviewees were allowed to say whatever came to their mind. The intuitive natural responses and spontaneity of the interpretations are of particular interest here. These aspects could be endangered if the researcher had, for example, trained the respondents using Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model or asked them to read something about images.

To avoid any factors that could influence the respondents to produce what the researcher ‘wants to hear’ (Edley and Litosseliti 2010, p.173) or, in Dörnyei’s (2007, p.141) terms, ‘social desirability bias’, the instructions were kept to a minimum. The questions were
designed not to be leading in an attempt to elicit views without guiding or assuming some interpretations. But as a limitation, question (1), Part III could be leading by implying that something is brought to the fore in Images 7 and 8. Retrospectively, this question could have been better if it had been phrased as, for example, ‘What effect does the use of such backgrounds have in Images 7 and 8?’ Or if the question ‘Is there anything brought to the foreground with such backgrounds?’, for instance, was added before the one in the interview guide. Another limitation to be acknowledged here is that the methods of data gathering (integrating questionnaires and interviews) were found to be time-consuming (see Table 3.3). Thus, interviews contrast with questionnaires that are largely known to be time- and effort-saving in terms of enabling researchers to gather large data in a relatively short time, as noted by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010, p.6).

Moving on to eye-tracking, the non-use of eye-tracking equipment is acknowledged as a limitation in Chapter 7. One reason for excluding eye-tracking is that not all aspects investigated in this exploratory study require this device. It is largely one dimension, i.e. reading paths, that does need it. I think that, for its importance, eye-tracking is worth studying on its own, where other research can utilise such devices for accuracy. Another reason is that using eye-tracking would need a lab with specialised apparatuses (e.g. see Bergh and Beelders 2014; Holsanova et al. 2006). Given that it is a three-part interview guide with different items and probes, this suggests conducting more than one session for an informant to collect their interpretations. Because recruiting informants required time, mentioned as a limitation above, and since the respondents were staff and students, it could not be guaranteed that the interviewees would be able to attend more than one session. Furthermore, what could be inferred from previous work on eye-tracking is that more than one scholar is needed to carry out such research (e.g. Bergh and Beelders 2014; Henderson et al. 2005; Holsanova et al. 2006; Janik et al. 1978; Rayner et al. 2008). Thus, using an eye-tracker would entail having a specialised helper to operate and monitor the equipment, as noted by Holsanova et al. (2006, p.75) and Rayner et al. (2008, p.699). Hiippala (2012, p.326) specifically proposes that two researchers, one from psychology or brain sciences skilled in designing such experiments and statistical data analysis, are needed to conduct such a study. Carrying out research jointly did not seem plausible here, because a thesis
must be the work of the researcher herself. For the above reasons, eye-tracking was deemed impractical for this interview data collection.

6.5 Image sample analysis

This section presents an exploratory analysis applying Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) approach to the design of images, such as those sampled for the current interviews (see Section 3.8.5 for the discussion of this framework). This section serves as a point of comparison between what the above authors would assume the first noticed entities to be with the interpretations of actual informants in Section 6.6.2. In this way, the composition of the first six sampled images, for which the interviewees were required to sketch their reading path, is explained based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) principles of composition: information value, salience, and framing, discussed earlier in Chapter 3.

Figure 6.1 Chanel Facebook image

Figure 6.1 is a Chanel Facebook image, which in terms of information value uses the vertical layout (Ideal-Real), where the upper part is occupied by the portrait of the model, as the Ideal, and the text is at the bottom, as the Real.62 The product acts as the linking element between these two objects since Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.186) claim that there is a ‘contrast’ or ‘opposition’ between the elements placed in the upper part

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62 The images presented in this chapter are reduced or amplified in size. For the actual size of images, see Appendix 3.
(representing ‘what might be’) and those allocated the lower part (showing ‘what is’) \(\text{(ibid, p.187)}\). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s assumptions, the model at the top is the element most likely to catch the readers’ eye. In terms of salience, the model is the largest element and occurs in the centre of the image. In addition, she takes the whole length of this visual and occupies most of the top section, the most noticeable place in which ‘heavier’ elements would be placed \(\text{(ibid, pp.187, 202)}\). Moreover, the model, as a human, is staring at the viewer, acknowledging the viewer through her eye contact \(\text{(ibid, p.117)}\). However, two bold black lines, above and below the model’s eyes, are in the foreground since they overlap the model’s face \(\text{(ibid, p.202)}\). These stripes are also very prominent, in that in terms of framing, the model’s eyes could be thought of as being separate from the lower part of her face due to these lines. The black stripes complicate Kress and Van Leeuwen’s expectation as to whether the entire model’s face or just the black lines would attract the readers’ attention.

![Figure 6.2 Chanel magazine advert](image)

Figure 6.2 Chanel magazine advert

The double-page print magazine advert for Chanel (Figure 6.2) depicts the same elements that appear in Figure 6.1, but Figure 6.2 has a different layout. Rather than only using the vertical position of top and bottom, on the left side of the image, the vertical and horizontal structures are combined. The upper element of the left page includes the product as the Ideal and the text at the lower part as the Real, where both are the Given as they occur on the left. To the right of this image, the portrait of the model takes the entire length of the page and is more salient, Kress and Van Leeuwen \(\text{(2006, 181)}\) would claim, because the
right, as the New, is the part ‘to which the viewer must pay special attention’. The model is more likely to be noticed because she is represented as gazing at readers and occupies a page on her own. But again as with Figure 6.1 above, the black lines seem to be raising an issue as to whether the centre of attention would be the model’s face as a whole or just the black bands that delimit the eyes.

Figure 6.3 Max Factor Facebook image

A Facebook image for Max Factor appears in Figure 6.3, which takes the form of a horizontal triptych, in that the centre as the Mediator links the Given on the left with the right as the New (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p198). Although Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, pp.196-197) assume that an element in the centre of a composition is the ‘nucleus’ message, they (ibid, p.202) relate the prominence of the central element to its size, i.e. the bigger the centre, the more eye-catching it would be. In this figure, the Mediator is the text and the mascara tube with the applicator, although the latter is rather pushed to the bottom. The model is the Given and the bubbles appear as the New in this polarised left-right triptych. In Figure 6.3, the text and/or the mascara could be the element(s) that would grab the readers’ attention. The noticeability of the text and the mascara could be explained in terms of their position as occurring in the middle of this multimodal discourse and their big size. Furthermore, most of the pink and white in this visual are used with the mascara and the text. The font size of the central text is also larger than that of the bubbles. This indicates that these two elements (middle text and mascara) could be noticed first by readers.
Figure 6.4 Max Factor magazine advert

Unlike Figure 6.3, Max Factor’s magazine advert (Figure 6.4) is structured vertically with a top and a bottom, where the lower part appears as a triptych in which the left (the text) and the right (the mascara tube and the applicator) are also connected by the centre (the brand name) as the Mediator through their white colour. In this figure, the face of the model is supposed to be seen first as it is placed in the centre of the upper part, i.e. the realm of the Ideal. In terms of salience, apart from being a human figure looking at people, the model covers the full length of the visual. In particular, her face is the largest element as it occupies more than half of the space in Figure 6.4. The face is also in focus as it is in the centre of the top part and has much light projected on its left side.
Figure 6.5 Toyota Facebook image

A Toyota Facebook visual in which the car mediates between the Given, an almost empty space except for the scaffold, and the New, a dark background, is exhibited in Figure 6.5. The car might be noticed first as it occurs in the centre of this composition. It is the biggest element and appears in the foreground, and thus it is close. This car also has a lot of light on it and its whiteness contrasts with everything immediately around it.

Figure 6.6 Toyota magazine advert
The last magazine multimodal discourse is a centred composition, represented in Figure 6.6, which comes from Toyota. This advert appears as a Centre-Margin layout, where the car, in the centre, mediates between the top and the bottom. Both the upper and the lower sections have their elements horizontally organised as the Given and New. However, the small writing at the very bottom of this image does not seem easy to label using Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) framework of visual analysis. The image frame could be thought of as separating the very lower part from the rest of this advert, i.e. in their terms of ‘framing’. Unlike the other images above, Figure 6.6 has a title in its top left section. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.205), the title or the car (the latter an image-based component) could be noticed first. The car is in the centre and is the biggest element. It is also close as it is brought to the fore. Likewise, its red is rather bolder than that of the other objects, such as the title, brand name, specifics box, and warranty. With respect to the title, it appears at the top left-hand section, or the zone of heavy components (ibid, p.202), and it is in a very bright red, which contrasts with the dark background against which it is depicted. This headline also has the largest and boldest typeface in comparison with the fonts of the other texts.

6.6 Results of analysis

The first three sub-sections report the results of the analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of some visual resources and their reading paths of visuals and multimodal discourse, and show the extent to which Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) model of visual analysis is supported. In the latter two subsections, 6.6.4 and 6.6.5, the informants’ responses are analysed in terms of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor framework and Martin and White’s (2005) theory of appraisal.

6.6.1 Relations in visuals

As explained in Section 3.8.5, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.116-148) argue that readers could pictorially be positioned in an ‘imaginary relation’ with represented participants by three principles: eye contact realises interaction; size of the image refers to
social distance; and angle of the shot suggests social relations.⁶³ This perspective is also adopted by Van Leeuwen (2008, pp.137-141) in his framework of visual representation. Applying these principles to Figures 6.7 and 6.8 below, the model’s gaze is directed at the viewers, and thus it is a ‘demand’ image (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.118). The shots are close, where the model is represented at ‘close personal distance’ (ibid, p.125) since she is depicted nearly to the level of her shoulders. In these figures, the model is also represented in a frontal image, from a horizontal perspective, which suggests the interest of readers in the world of the model, i.e. ‘involvement’ (ibid, p.136), a world that could be construed as being of glamour and beauty.

Figure 6.7 Chanel Facebook image

⁶³ The word image, which appears in the question sheets of the interviews (see Appendix 3), is changed here to figure for consistency.
The results of the analysis of the interviewees’ responses to how the model communicates with them shows that the readers give priority to the model’s eye contact more often than the size and angle of the image. The model’s gaze alone is noted 10 times, by about half of the interviewees, in comparison with the other factors, as summarised in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Visual communication between viewers and model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaze</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaze and close shot</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaze, close shot, and frontal image</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the factors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviewees’ interpretations of the model’s eye contact are exemplified in the following.⁶⁴

6.1 Interviewee 14: Perhaps eye contact seems to be slightly more in the first one (Figure 6.7) just because it is the whole picture rather than just half of it (Figure 6.8). Eye contact, the model is staring straight out which engages the audience so that is important.

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⁶⁴ For the actual order of images in the interviews, see Appendix 3. In the interviews, the words image, advert, and advertisement were interchangeably used by the interviewees.
6.2 Interviewee 4: The eye contact would be the first thing. In fact that is probably the main thing really. And the fact there is a face, the face of the person. This advert is striking because the model is looking at me.

As explained in the examples above, the respondents’ answers suggest that the informants construe the resource of the model’s eye contact as a form of visual engagement between them (as viewers) and the model. In this sense, the meaning of the direct gaze seems to be in line with the ‘imaginary relation’ assumed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.117). Thus, it can be said that these authors’ interpretation of the gaze is partly supported. However, in contrast to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (ibid, pp.125, 136) interpretations of the size and angle of the shot, as indicating ‘close personal distance’ and ‘involvement’, respectively, these choices do not seem to be often interpreted by the respondents as forms of address. Therefore, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s claims do not seem to be supported with respect to the interviews’ interpretations.

In addition to the eye contact, Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.118) treat the smile, a gesture, as an element of address in combination with the direct gaze in a ‘demand’ image. Machin (2007, p.111) claims that ‘[w]hen we see a smile in an image we know what is being communicated’. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.118 123) conceive a smile in terms of ‘social affinity’, as a visual invitation. Depicted in Figures 6.9 and 6.10 is the smiling L’Oréal Paris’ celebrity model, Cheryl Cole, who acts as an endorser of this brand and its products.

Figure 6.9 L’Oréal Paris Facebook image
The analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of the visual choice of the smile indicates that the respondents tend to give more than one meaning to the model’s smile. The smile interpretation results in 25 different meanings, which seems consistent with the view of reader-response theory of interpreting discourse/images differently (see Section 6.3). ‘Friendly and open’ are more often used (10 times), and ‘happy’ is the second most frequent interpretation (eight times). Illustrated in the instances below are the frequent meanings of the smile along with some other interpretations:

6.3 Interviewee 8: Happy, it is kind of inviting smile to just engage with the advertisement. The smile is more warm, is more attractive.

6.4 Interviewee 10: Friendly, happy, attractive. A person smiling with teeth seems a lot more open, inviting in a friendly manner.

The examples above make it clear that the meanings of the model’s smile are in keeping with the rapport suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.118). However, unlike what Machin (2007, p.111) claims about the clarity of the meaning of a smile, it appears that interpreting the message conveyed by the model’s smile, especially in Figure 6.9, is not an easy task for the viewers, as exemplified in instances 6.5 and 6.6. Indeed, some viewers’ responses attribute the model’s smile to the product or its effectiveness, particularly in Figure 6.10, as illustrated in examples 6.7 and 6.8:
6.5 Interviewee 16: I guess it is meant to be friendly and welcoming.

Researcher: ‘welcoming’ you to what?

Interviewee 16: Unless you understand, this (Figure 6.9) could mean anything. It could just be a portrait, whereas this (Figure 6.10) has the context.

6.6 Interviewee 7: (In Figure 6.9) her smile, she is happy in herself kind of thing but I would not know what she is advertising.

6.7 Interviewee 11: The model is happy, happy with the product, happy with herself.

6.8 Interviewee 5: In (Figure 6.10), it is obvious that she (the model) is advertising this spray tan product.

From the answers above, it appears that the respondents translate the message connoted through the model’s smile into what could be thought of as the ideology of commercialisation but only when the product is explicitly shown in the image.

In terms of the vertical angle, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.140) claim that in images, authority or power of a depicted figure is symbolically conveyed through taking an image from a low angle. They (ibid) note that models and celebrities are widely shown from a low angle, in such a way that viewers would look up to those depicted figures, suggesting that the power of such represented participants is more than that of the readers. Machin (2007, p.115) claims that representing models, or women in general, as being almost naked with much of their bodies displayed suggests their ‘vulnerability’. However, he assumes that this ‘vulnerability’ is decreased because the image is taken from the powerful low angle (ibid).
As outlined in Table 6.2, the results of the analysis of the interviewees’ ranking of the celebrity’s authority suggest that the model’s power is taken to be high by almost half of the interviewees (10 occurrences), while equal occurs eight times. However, rather than giving power to the celebrity in terms of the image angle, other factors seem to be involved in assigning different power relations to the represented model (*Cheryl Cole*) (for the social relations suggested by the interviewees’ interpretations of the model and her smile, see the discussion in Section 6.6.4 below). The following instances explain the kind of power the respondents associate with the model:

6.9 Interviewee 19: I can see people as equal, but I would say they are trying to represent her in mine (power) as being higher.

6.10 Interviewee 17: I would say it is high power.

6.11 Interviewee 7: She is quite equal. She is not given any power. She is not wearing many clothes. She is trying to be equal.

6.12 Interviewee 3: Equal, it is quite an open just friendly smile.

The cases above indicate that the viewers do not seem to construe the celebrity model as looking down on them. In examples 6.11 and 6.12, the interviewees interpret the celebrity’s smile as a signal of equality, where in example 6.11, the smile is also combined with the model’s semi-nakedness. In this respect, the current finding seems to contradict Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.140) claim about the power of the low angle. Likewise, there seems to be not enough evidence to support Machin’s (2007, p.115) assumption of the rather low power attached to persons not covering much of their bodies.

Table 6.2 Celebrity model’s power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank of power</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between high and equal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between high and low</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6.2 Salience and reading paths

As discussed in Section 3.8.5, in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) framework of image analysis, the reading of images (visuals and multimodal discourse) seems to be related to the three principles of composition (placement, salience, and framing, briefly discussed earlier in this chapter). The following claims are examined here. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.178, 205) argue that the layout of images and their readings imply important meanings for the culture at whom they are targeted. They (ibid, pp.4, 192) also add that Western cultures tend to weigh horizontal and vertical structures, which relate to the directions of reading discourse, based on the writing system of left-right and top-bottom. They (ibid, pp.186, 202) assume that the top, as the Ideal, is the ideologically loaded part since it contains generic information and is the most prominent section to which readers are likely to be drawn, whereas the bottom is the Real. Additionally, they (ibid, p.181) state that an element on the left is the Given with which the viewers are familiar, while the New occurs on the right as the problem on which readers largely focus. Likewise, they (ibid, pp.196-197) suppose that in Western societies, the centre does not seem to have importance but rather an element in the middle of a composition carries the most significant information, and its size indicates its prominence. Because of this, they (ibid, p.197) argue that ‘the relative infrequency of centred compositions in contemporary Western representation perhaps signifies that, in the words of the poet, “the centre does not hold” any longer in many sectors of contemporary society’. In media discourse, triptychs are likely to be employed, where the centre mediates elements in vertical or horizontal organisation (ibid, p.198). They also highlight (ibid, p.204) that reading images is based on the prominence of their elements, where the most noticeable object would be first read, followed by the second eye-catching element and then the third one in prominence, and so on. Although Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.205) point out that images (visuals and multimodal discourse) might allow various reading paths, they assume that images are scanned before they are actually read. For them, ‘the most plausible reading path is the one in which readers begin by glancing at the photos, and then make a new start from left to right, from headline to photo, after which, optionally, they move to the body of the verbal text’ (ibid).
Based on the frequency of the first element read and the element that catches the readers’ attention most in Figures 6.1 to 6.6 (see the image sample in Section 6.5 above or Appendix 3), the results of the analysis, exhibited in Table 6.3, indicate that the viewers do not all notice the same element in an image. Thus, there seems to be no consensus that one element would attract all the readers. Rather, in the same image different objects are likely to grab the viewers’ eye.⁶⁵

Table 6.3 Elements noticed and read first in Figures 6.1 to 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure no.</th>
<th>Eye-catching element</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>First read and eye-catching element</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>eyes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>lines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>brand</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eyes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>text</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bubbles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>face</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eye</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>headlight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>title</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>colour</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the readers in Figure 6.1, the model’s eyes seem to be the prominent element 12 times, and both the noticed and the first read element 10 times. In Figure 6.2, the black lines occur six times as the attention-grabbing element and in two cases only as both first seen and read unit. These results do not highly support the image sample analysis presented in Section 6.5 above, where the model or the black bands are expected, based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s framework, to be the first noticed and hence read objects in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

In Figures 6.3 and 6.4, it is found that the text in the centre draws the readers’ attention 14 times and the model has 10 occurrences, and as the first observed and attention-catching objects simultaneously, the text and the model have 13 and nine instances in Figures 6.3 and 6.4 sequentially. Again, the results do not seem to suggest a sense of unity in the

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⁶⁵ The total number of the attention-grabbing and the first read elements do not add up to the total of 21 because the results are for the common frequent instances.
respondents’ answers. Finally, the cars in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 appear in 16 and 10 interpretations as the salient component, respectively, and as eye-catcher and first read object, the cars recur in 15 and 10 answers in Figures 6.5 and 6.6, respectively. Once more, the assumptions of the image sample analysis do not hold true since the cars do not appear to be the only elements looked at and/or read.

What these findings indicate is that the most eye-catching element is not necessarily the element with which viewers start their reading, and that people are likely to respond differently to the same thing. The latter point seems parallel to the perspective of reader-response theory discussed in Section 6.3. In light of the analysis of the interviewees’ answers of the most salient and the first read element in an image, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.204) proposal that reading an image is always based on the salience of its elements does not widely seem to be borne out here. The following instances illustrate the most attention-grabbing element with some examples of the interviewees’ hand-sketched readings.66

Figure 6.11 Interviewee 8 reading path of Figure 6.1

66 Throughout this section only, the term figure occurs twice, where the first is for ordering, while the latter specifies the read figure.
6.13 Reading explanation of Figure 6.1 by Interviewee 8: (First) with the model’s eyes because it is just what draws your attention. It is the light and the dark. Here the eyes are very striking. There is not much text. So I was drawn to that (the eyes) straight away.⁶⁷

6.14 Reading of Figure 6.1: First the eyes, and second the bottom part of the advert: the model and the text.

Reading explanation of Interviewee 16: (In Figure 6.1) I think the writing is less prominent. But what you are drawn to, I think that is more of an imposing photo where the eyes are more prominent and also you have the shading. So it is that one eye that stands out.

As explained in the instances above, it seems that in contrast to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.202) expectations that foregrounded elements are more prominent than those in the background, the interviewees’ responses suggest that the eyes of the model, although they are rather backgrounded, appear to be the eye-catching element in Figure 6.11. This result seems to be in line with the findings of eye-tracking studies, such as those of Bergh and Beelders (2014, p.22), Henderson et al. (2005, p.103), and Janik et al. (1978, p.857) which also find that eyes are objects that grab viewers’ attention. Since the eyes occur in the upper section of Figure 6.11, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.202) claim about the noticeability of the top part seems to hold true; however, it needs further testing due to the small consensus in the informants’ responses (12 recurrences).

Another example of the salience of the upper part is Figure 6.12 below, where the prominence of the top section is also evidenced in the interviewees’ responses. But in contrast to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (ibid, p.187) meaning of information genericity in the upper part of a structure, the respondents’ interpretations suggest that the model is the communicative element in Figure 6.12, as given in instances 6.15 and 6.16. The readings appear in instances 6.17 and 6.18:

⁶⁷ The instances of reading paths are the interviewees’ actual hand drawings and the explanations are the readers’ own words, as in example 6.13. However, as mentioned in note 30 in Section 3.6.6, when a respondent carried out her/his sketching silently, the researcher simply showed the followed reading path, while the explanation was given by the viewer only, as in instance 6.14.
6.15 Interviewee 9: more the model because she is bigger and her pose.

6.16 Interviewee 12: it is the face (of the model).

Figure 6.12 Interviewee 4 reading path of Figure 6.4

6.17 Reading explanation of Figure 6.4 by Interviewee 4: The first thing definitely the image of the model because it is the most striking image by far. Then you have got the contrast in colour with the colour of the image of the product or everything else draws my attention to it (product) next. Then after the model’s image, the most central image is this larger text (‘I am uncompromising’) after that because of the closeness of the smaller bits of text to that (larger text). And then finally, Max Factor because it is the last part of the image that I did not really look at.

6.18 Reading explanation of Figure 6.4 by Interviewee 9: First the model because it is so big. Second the mascara because it is colourful. And
finally the text but it is quite small. ‘Clump defy’, it does not grab your attention very much.

The results of the analysis of the interviewees’ answers to Figure 6.12, where the model’s face features as the first seen object, seem to be in line with Bergh and Beelders’ (2014, p.22) eye-tracking study, which concludes that human faces are one of the elements to which readers tend to be most drawn.

Although the model, in Figure 6.13 with another image design, appears in the right-hand section, the respondents are attracted to other components, such as the black lines, the brand name, and the model’s eyes rather than to her whole image:

![Image of Figure 6.13 with Interviewee 13 reading path of Figure 6.2]

Figure 6.13 Interviewee 13 reading path of Figure 6.2

6.19 Reading explanation of Figure 6.2 by Interviewee 13: (First) the black lines are quite bold. And then you see her eyes. But because the mascara is surrounded by so much white, you then jump over to there (to the product). But the text is sort of near to the last thing that I read. I think you do not need to read the text to know what it is advertising.
6.20 Reading explanation of Figure 6.2 by Interviewee 18: I think in this image I see the left half of the image to where the focus is (the brand name). Definitely the Chanel brand name would be number one. I think actually on this one the product itself would be number two. And then I would go to the black stripes on the face. So see the product more and the brand name more in the second advert. And also because you have got the contrast of the pale background and the dark product and writing, whereas on the right hand side of the page with the two lines, and the model’s image I think it is not as eye-catching as the other half.

From the interviewees’ interpretations of the objects and their readings of Figures 6.13 and 6.14 above, it appears that the element on the right (the black lines) gets the attention of the readers in a way similar to the element at the bottom (the brand name). Thus, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.181) assumption about the things placed on the right ‘as something to which the viewer must pay special attention’ does not appear to be totally supported.
With respect to the components in the centre of the composition in Figures 6.15, 6.16, and 6.17, the interviewees’ responses show that the central elements, i.e. the text, the white car, and the red car, are the ones to which the readers are drawn first, for instance:

Figure 6.15 Interviewee 12 reading path of Figure 6.3

6.21 Reading of Figure 6.3: First the text in the centre, second the mascara, third the model, and fourth the bubbles.

Reading explanation of Interviewee 12: Because in this one (Figure 6.3), the text is like centrally problem ed and is being framed by all the other elements. So it is more like this is what we want you to look at. And here are some other items while you can look at that.
6.22 Reading explanation of Figure 6.5 by Interviewee 17: I think I would be drawn into the car. It is just what my eyes were drawn to. And then I would probably look at the shape of the car and I would say sleek and smooth. And then I would probably look at the number plate. And then I do not know why but I would look at the headlights. I do not know why I looked at the headlights but my eyes were drawn to it. And then I would probably look at the wheels. And then once you have looked at everything up to 5. Then you look at it ‘oh this is an unusual photo’. So that is why then lastly, you look at the background because that is trying to work out what is the meaning of this photo, why is this photo taken? where is it taken? It is unusual. It is unusual because it is a casual background.
6.23 Reading explanation of Figure 6.6 by Interviewee 20: It (the car) is just because it is the focal point. It is like in the middle of the whole thing. And so the second would be the lighting behind the car because it makes it (the car) like speeding or something. And three would be the floor. It is this bit here because it is sort of slightly out of focus. It looks like it gives the impression that the car was going very fast. And then four would be the writing at the top ‘Officially the REAL DEAL’ because that looks like the main like the text. And then five would be the writing at the bottom. I think because it is quite an exciting advert and then at the bottom it is just like how to pay for and stuff like that. For quite an exciting advert, it is the bit (the price) you want to look at last and also it is quite just slightly a bit boring.
As illustrated by the examples above, unlike what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.197) claim about the centre in Western compositions, the image layouts and the interviewees’ responses suggest that the element at the centre of Figures 6.15, 6.16, and 6.17, still seems a location for readers’ attraction, at least. Moreover, in Figure 6.15, the analysis of the interviewees’ responses indicates that the text in the centre is the most communicative unit in this image. The result of the centre as message conveyer seems in agreement with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (ibid, p.196) assumed meaning of the centre as ‘the nucleus of the information’.

However, in their proposed reading stated earlier in this section, Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.205) mention that texts might allow for various readings, and they claim that images (visuals and multimodal discourse) tend to be scanned/glanced at before they are read. Moreover, there seems to be a sense of opposition between Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (ibid) proposal that connects the reading of an image to its salience on the one hand, and on the other hand their own assumption about the relation between culture and its effect on the reading directions due to the value conveyed by a reading. They suggest readings such as circular, diagonal, spiral, and linear, which seem to be more or less mechanical and restricted reading paths, and it is not clear what their meaning is. What Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) seem to overlook is that even within the same culture, what might be salient for one reader would not necessarily be for another viewer. The reading could be influenced by what viewers are interested in or want to find out when they look at images. Rayner et al.’s (2008, p.706) study concludes that whether viewers read texts or photos in adverts, this aspect is strongly linked with the readers’ interest, advert’s product type, and the purpose of viewing, e.g. buying or evaluating products.

Based on the interviewees’ readings given above, there seems to be no clear indication that the readers do separate scanning from reading, as claimed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.205). Rather, the viewers appear to be doing both activities interrelatedly by going back and forth between the elements represented, in Bezemer and Jewitt’s terms (2010, p.193). Merging scanning and reading conforms to the findings of an eye-tracking study on reading newspaper pages by Holsanova et al. (2006, p.88). Based on a number of psychological studies, Hiippala (2012, p.318) concludes that reading and scanning occur as
one activity. It is important to note that in the present study, no difference seems to be found between the readings of the interviewees who have taken a course in photography or drawing and those who have not. In other words, it is not found that the readers with knowledge about photography or drawing read in the same way proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). In this sense, it could be concluded that reading images is not a very straightforward action in the same way suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen. Rather, reading seems to be influenced by what the readers are personally attracted to, how salience features draw them to the depicted elements, and their interest in what they look at. In addition, Kress and Van Leeuwen seem to overlook the possibility of segmenting an object into different parts or even combining more than one item when reading an image.

Following Holsanova et al.’s (2006, p.87) study, where readers of newspapers are classified according to their reading, in the current study the interviewees’ readings suggest that the readers appear to be of three types: skippers, moderate readers, and detailed readers. This finding matches the general stance of reader-response theory, outlined in Section 6.3 above, that although readers and readings are various, similarities can still be shared. Each kind of reader is briefly defined below with an example.

1. **Skippers** are readers who are likely to ignore represented elements:

   6.24 Interviewee 15: First the text in pink, second the white text, and third the text in the bubbles.

![Figure 6.18 Interviewee 15 reading path of Figure 6.3](image)

In this example, the viewer appears to skip the product and the model although they are clearly depicted.
2. **Moderate readers** are those who read most of the salient elements:

6.25 Interviewee 9: First the model, second the mascara, and third text.

![Image of a model with mascara]

Figure 6.19 Interviewee 9 reading path of Figure 6.4

This example illustrates a moderate reader who reads the prominent things in the image without breaking objects into separate items, i.e. without reading the model’s face by looking at her eyes, lips, nose, or eyeshadow.

3. **Detailed readers** tend to read elements by focusing on nearly every aspect of what is represented:

6.26 Interviewee 10: First the fire, second the wheel of the car, third the shown side of the car, fourth the headline, fifth the barcode and text in the bottom right side, sixth the text in the red box, and seventh the very small text at the bottom.
Figure 6.20 Interviewee 10 reading path of Figure 6.6

This instance is of a detailed reader who is inclined to look at almost every specific detail of the car, as well as the background and most of the texts. This type of reader could be thought of as having consequences for companies because the aim of promotional discourse is to attract viewers to what is advertised in the hope of selling the promoted product. However, reading an image in detail or responding positively to it does not suggest that purchasing a product would happen, for example. Nor could that be an indication that readers would be detailed only when they consider buying a product, as explained further in Section 6.6.5. This is because these aspects are out of the scope of the present chapter.
6.6.3 Meanings of colour, light, and darkness

In addition to the role of colour in making objects salient in terms of composition, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.229, 231) argue that colour is a semiotic mode that realises the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions; however, colour tends to be used with language and/or visuals or other semiotic modes. Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid, p.229) and Machin (2007, pp.63, 66) claim that colour is mostly interpreted in terms of the interpersonal meaning rather than the other two metafunctions, i.e. in terms of what colour could do to viewers by drawing them to where it is used, and thus encouraging emotional interpretations. Colours could be classified into different features. In this chapter, the colour categories dealt with are monochrome, saturation, differentiation, modulation, and the use of black and white, where these characteristics (along with light and darkness examined here) are not taken as criteria of image modality (for reasons of excluding modality, see Section 3.8.5).

Based on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) model of image analysis, Machin (2007) analyses the use of colour in different types of multimodal discourse, e.g. posters, adverts, and newspapers in terms of the various colour characteristics mentioned above. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, pp.233-235) and Machin (2007, pp.70-78) tend to associate the above stated values of colour with a number of meanings that could briefly be summarised as follows (see Chapter 3 for more details on the meanings of these features): i) Saturated colours refer to the strength of feelings; ii) Modulated colours suggest specificity, genuineness, and detail; and iii) Colour differentiation means pleasure, while monochrome and black and white express ‘timelessness’, ‘seriousness’, ‘classiness’, ‘containment’, or ‘symbolic power’ (Machin ibid, pp.56, 78). Black and white also connotes nostalgia and fantasy (Machin and Van Leeuwen 2007, p.112). Darkness and light, studied here as visual resources, are also associated with meanings, where light is interpreted as ‘optimism’ and darkness as ‘concealment’ (Machin 2007, p.54).

The analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of colour in terms of monochrome, saturation, differentiation, modulation, and black and white indicates that the respondents use over 30 different meanings for each colour category. In this sense, the informants’ meanings are dramatically more than those suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006).
and Machin (2007). In the respondents’ answers, the frequent interpretation of silver, as a single colour (see Appendix 3, Figure A3.10), is ‘business users’ or ‘businessmen’, which occurs six times:

6.27 Interviewee 12: (Silver as monochrome) It is meant for business users. More it conforms to one sort of theme, one colour.

6.28 Interviewee 11: (Silver as monochrome) It looks a lot more mature because I think this is typically a car and they actually say ‘for business users only’. So they want professional business users to buy this car, to have this car. So they wanted to look professional, and therefore to use monochrome. It looks a lot more professional than if they had colours. This is professional and refined.

The interpretations above suggest that the interviewees understand silver, as a monochrome, to signify the identity of the potential customers of the Mercedes-Benz car in terms of their profession. It seems that the brand name, product type, and setting all play a role in associating certain meanings with monochrome. Monochrome is also interpreted as making the image coherent. In this way, the meanings of business users or businessmen do not seem to conform to the interpretations of monochrome, stated above, as ‘timelessness’, ‘seriousness’, ‘classiness’, ‘containment’, or ‘symbolic power’ claimed by Machin (2007, pp.56, 78).

The interviewees’ interpretations of both colour saturation and differentiation seem to connote ‘fun’ 17 times and eight times, respectively (see Appendix 3, Figures A3.11 and A3.12):

6.29 Interviewee 5: (Saturated colours) Fun brand, youthful, does not take itself too seriously. Colours evoke happiness.

6.30 Interviewee 7: (Saturated colours) Fun, it is kind of a lot of colours, a lot of fun. It catches your eye. It is interesting.

6.31 Interviewee 19: (Different colours) It does look fun. But that one (Figure A3.11) I do not know if I am looking at the models though as
well, it looks kind of student, young, youth of today, economical but fun and free spirited.

6.32 Interviewee 15: (Different colours) This is more fun, pastime, sort of going on holiday.

As illustrated in the viewers’ meanings of colour saturation and differentiation above, \textit{fun} seems to support the interpretations, especially of saturation as rich feelings, proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.233). However, it seems that the employment of models along with the different saturated colours results not only in affective meanings but also in identifying the type of the potential customers at whom the images are thought to be aimed.

The interviewees associate ‘fast or speed’ seven times and ‘excitement or exciting’ six times with colour modulation (see Appendix 3, Figure A3.13):

6.33 Interviewee 2: (Colour modulation) Speed and importance, especially because of smoke that gives this interpretation.

6.34 Interviewee 18: (Colour modulation) Only because reds colour that in car terms, I have related red to like a boy racer or like fast cars or things like that.

The interpretations of modulation in the above examples seem inconsistent with the meanings, given above by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.234) and Machin (2007, p.77), of specificity, genuineness, and detail. The respondents’ meanings of modulation could be ascribed to the colour itself, red, which according to Machin indicates ‘energy’ \textit{(ibid, p.79)}. It also seems that the product type (car) and the context in which and how the product is depicted all result in meanings that differ from those identified by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Machin (2007).

In the interviewees’ answers (see Appendix 3, Figure A3.14), black and white are found to convey ‘attention to details’ four times and ‘classiness’ three times, for instance:

6.35 Interviewee 10: Black and white is a more classic look. I can pick up more features in black and white than in colour.
6.36 Interviewee 2: Black and white is old fashioned and gives attention to details.

6.37 Interviewee 18: In black and white, it looks a bit more classy and like a bit more, for not older people but for a more experienced person.

As the examples above indicate, it appears that not only colour but also its absence helps readers to some extent to engage with the different aspects of the shown car. The meaning of classiness in the interviewees’ responses represented one of the meanings that Machin (2007, p.78) proposes for black and white. Interpreting black and white as attention to details is the meaning suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.234) and Machin (2007, p.77) for modulation. In light of the respondents’ interpretations, it seems that the interviewees understand black and white and monochrome as different resources. This result seems inconsistent with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) and Machin’s (2007) interpretations of black and white and monochrome colour as being the same.

What the analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of colour suggests is that all three metafunctions of textual, ideational, and interpersonal meaning seem to be realised in the interpretations of colour but to different degrees. In this analysis, the interpersonal meaning features more than the other metafunctions. This result is in line with Koller’s (2008, p.418) finding, where colour is found to represent the above three metafunctions.

In relation to the visual choices of darkness and light (see Appendix 3, Figures A3.9 and A3.10), each seems to have about 30 interpretations. In this analysis, ‘mysteriousness or mysterious’ appears to be the frequent interpretation of darkness, with an occurrence of eight times, while light is translated into ‘clear’ five times and ‘stand out’ four times, as in the following:

6.38 Interviewee 12: (Light) It is much more clearly it is the product to buy it.

6.39 Interviewee 8: The light shows the car. The light draws you to the car because the car is lighter than the background so that stands out.
6.40 Interviewee 5: (Darkness) More mysterious, sense of a spy mission. But it does not show the car well. I only see the headlights. So it is an advert that might give an impression rather than information.

6.41 Interviewee 18: In darkness, I would say that is a bit more mysteriousness trip which also makes me think of like an underground carpark for like, maybe a film or something. I think it makes it mysterious. But, maybe also a bit like removed from describing a long normal road like every day.

The respondents’ interpretations of darkness as mysterious or mysteriousness, although relatively small, accord with Machin’s (2007, p.54) meaning of ‘concealment’. However, the interviewees’ responses to light do not conform to Machin’s (ibid) assumption of light as suggesting ‘optimism’. In the informants’ interpretations, light seems to give prominence to products in terms of making them noticeable, where this interpretation is likely to change if light is employed in another image, for example. Generally, what the above results suggest is that they are analogous to the viewpoint of reader-response theory (see Section 6.3) in terms of interpreting discourse/images and their resources in different ways.

6.6.4 Social actor analysis
To expand the analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of visual options, the respondents’ answers are studied in terms of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) model of social actor representation (see Section 3.8.3 for the framework categories). This section concentrates on the categories of inclusion, personalisation, and the resources of authority realisation. The importance of these categories comes from the relevance of inclusion to prominence, personalisation to visual address, and social relations to visual power/authority. Rahm (2006, p.193) notes that promotional discourse, like other media discourse, aims at attracting potential customers’ attention to promoted products or services. As shown in Chapter 4, attracting attention is one of the moves identified in the promotional discourse types of this study and it could be realised verbally and/or visually. Grabbing attention could be achieved visually through Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) salience factors, discussed earlier in Sections 3.8.5 and 6.6.2 above. One of the features that
characterises the verbal content of promotional discourse, identified in Chapter 5 on the social actor analysis, is the centrality of products, especially in the print adverts and to some extent in the Facebook posts, as company-authored discourse. Unlike the linguistic patterns of representation that relate here to different participants, the analysis includes social actors that occur in the informants’ interpretations as products or their parts, models, and companies’ logos only, which are investigated for their comparability with those in the linguistic part. Thus, the interviewees’ responses are used to explore the extent to which the images in the company-authored discourse might achieve similar effects of foregrounding for particular readers (i.e. the interviewees in this study). In this chapter, it seems that the respondents’ interpretations of the visually eye-catching elements and their readings of images in relation to the organisation of objects and salience factors suggest that these visual resources could also fulfil effects comparable with linguistic foregrounding, for example:

6.42 Interviewee 9: First (I look at) the model because it is so big.

6.43 Interviewee 3: You immediately notice the Chanel logo because I suppose, because the logo is sharp standing out on the black and white and that is where your reading eyes are naturally drawn. I think it is because the black and white is striking in there.

6.44 Interviewee 18: The front of the car is first because it is where you have got the bright red and also with the headlights, the headlights and the number plate. That is where my focus is drawn. Also because the car is kind of facing a bit towards the photo.

For the readers, as the examples above suggest, the models, companies’ brand names, and products are the foregrounded entities through their relative size, colour, or position. The rather limited number of prominent objects in the interviewees’ answers, as compared with the diverse participants involved in the verbal content in Chapter 5, could be seen in terms of the visually represented participants in the present sampled images, i.e. the components that companies depicted. The products and models appear to be the elements that tend to be brought to the fore in the interviewees’ interpretations, as illustrated below:
6.45 Interviewee 20: The first thing that I looked at was the car as a whole. It is just because it is the focal point it is like in the middle of the whole thing.

6.46 Interviewee 5: I think the face (of the model) is in the middle of this large advert. It did make me look at it first and it does take up at least half of the advert page. Itself, the face so, it is the most prominent feature.

Models and products, as the emphasised components in the interviewee’s interpretations, do not seem surprising, given that most of the images feature products and models (see Appendix 3).

The interviewees’ answers also show that in cosmetics images, models are the foregrounded participants, while in car images the salient objects are cars. The analysis of the responses indicates that, as with the social actor analysis of verbal content, where products tend to be most frequently included in the print adverts, the products also appear here to be the often mentioned items in the interviewees’ interpretations of the elements they read first, i.e. based on how salient the interviewees consider these entities to be. These results suggest that the effects of the visual strategies employed in arrangement and salience to attract potential customers’ attention to what is promoted appear complementary to the effects of foregrounding products in the respondents’ interpretations. However, the different product types (cars and cosmetics) indicate that foregrounding could be achieved in different ways.

In the case of cosmetics, the importance of the cosmetics product itself seems to be visually transferred to the model, who shows the (assumed) effect of the cosmetics when applied, acting, in Machin’s (2007, p.132) terms, as ‘the cultural symbol of beauty’. Thus, the companies’ aim of drawing potential customers to products appears to be achieved through positioning models and products in the same images (Williamson 1978, p.25). The models do not seem to be all celebrities, but they are all attractive in a conventional western sense of not having any obvious flaws in their skin and facial features. They all have high cheek-bones and appear to be young and radiant. A study by Baker and Churchill (1977, p.553)
concludes that good-looking models are a strategy to catch potential customers’ attention. Additionally, all the attractive models in the images of the current analysis are themselves depicted as wearing the promoted products. Drawing viewers to the models, who wore cosmetics (mascara) around their eyes, could be explained in that since the models who use the products are attractive, customers who would purchase and use the promoted products could presumably have some resemblance to the attractive models in terms of using similar products or they could have product results equivalent to those of the depicted models:

6.47 Interviewee 13: That is all say how eyes look fantastic, perhaps because they (the model’s eyes) are bordered by the two black lines. I would want my eyes to look like that.

6.48 Interviewee 17: The first thing you think that is a nice picture and then you like, ‘oh it is an advert, oh what it is advertising’. I would probably look at the lady’s face and I would probably say that it is pretty first, and then (second) I would probably look at her eyes. [...] I looked at the eyes just because also they are quite pretty. You can tell like the eye makeup is interesting because when you see a pretty lady, you want to see why she is pretty. And then probably because of the mascara because you want to know, ‘ok what, how she has done that’. So then you look at the product and then you like might say, ‘ok that product looks really good on her, how do I get it?’

From the examples above, the companies’ purpose of attracting attention to products seems to be accomplished visually through the models. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, studies tend to discuss primarily meaning transference in relation to celebrities (Banister and Cocker 2014; Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta 2010; Williamson 1978). However, the positive meaning of the models’ attractiveness associated with the promoted products could also be construed as a form of meaning transference, although the models are not all celebrities. This result indicates that, unlike the print adverts and Facebook posts, where products and customers tend to be the prominent entities, respectively, the models themselves come to the fore through the respondents’ interpretations of images.
It would seem, then, that although models are only linguistically represented in promotional discourse (cosmetics adverts through nomination) when they are celebrity endorsers (explained in Section 5.3.1), companies also employ models as endorsers within the visual components of their discourse, as an important element that could engage potential customers, with the end-purpose of selling products. The visual use of models (celebrities or not) in cosmetics could be explained by the fact that cosmetics results might not be easily imagined, as compared with cars. One could imagine her/himself behind the wheels of a car, whereas looking at a lipstick tube, for instance, largely says nothing about how it will look on the viewer. Thus, it seems harder to visualise a cosmetics outcome if there is no model than it is with cars.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.117) see the eye contact of humans in visuals, where readers can be directly addressed by the models’ eyes, as ‘a visual you’. The analysis of the interviewees’ interpretations of the model’s gaze, as a form of sociality in terms of personalisation, suggests this is indeed born out for some readers at least, for example:

6.49 Interviewee 11: As a reader, you are caught by the eye contact because she is looking directly into the camera that is at you. So when you are opening the magazine, you immediately see the eyes looking back at you. As a human, you look for faces and things. So you immediately see the eyes.

6.50 Interviewee 7: The eye contact definitely because as human, you are drawn into eye contact. So I think you look at it straight away and it is quite a close shot. It makes you look at her eye lashes. Maybe, the lines cut off the face. You just see the eyes. It kind of makes you look straight at the eyes because her nose even disappears and her forehead. So it is all to do with the eyes.

In these instances, the interviewees tend to perceive the model’s eye contact in terms of the second-person pronoun you. This result seems to be parallel to Thompson’s (2012) interpretation of the gaze in images as ‘visual synthetic personalization’ (discussed earlier in Section 5.3.3 in terms of ‘synthetic personalization’ with respect to the linguistic
representation of customers by companies). In the examples above, you might refer to the respondents themselves, the researcher who is present at the interview, or it might also imply all potential customers at whom the images might be targeted. Thus, the reference of you is rather ambiguous. This result is similar to the finding of Bullo’s (2014, p.134) study, where you also suggests the possibility of including the interviewees along with the general audience. The use of the second-person pronouns features in the analysis of the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts) in Chapter 5 as a means of establishing a relation between addressers (companies) and addressees (potential customers). In interpreting the eye contact in terms of generic you, the interviewees’ responses to the model’s gaze appear to be similar to the address used in the adverts and posts through which potential customers are personalised. However, the interviewees’ you could be seen as a form of peer-to-peer address, where the respondents’ you could be thought of as inclusive, in Kamio’s (2001, p.1119) terms, which contrasts with the you used by companies for customers only.

A widespread phenomenon that characterises promotional discourse is the employment of celebrities, where a celebrity acts as a product endorser, discussed earlier in Chapters 4 and 5. Celebrities, as well-known figures, tend to be ascribed a high social status, which might enable them to construct a relation with potential customers (Erdogan 1999, p.304). Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) find the symbolic relation between celebrity endorsers and endorsed products to be ‘reciprocal’, where one party affects the other. Erdogan (1999, p.305) assumes that meanings first move from celebrities to products and then the meanings associated with the endorsed products move to potential customers through consumption. A similar perspective is taken by Vestergaard and Schröder (1985) in terms of the processes of aestheticising products and customers as ideologies implicit in promotional discourse (discussed earlier in Chapter 2). The transference of meaning could be seen, in Williamson’s (1978, pp.25, 31) terms, to be visually working through depicting products next to models, to the extent that these two elements seem to be connected, i.e. the possible (product) is combined with the out of reach (the model’s beauty). As discussed in Section 6.6.1 above, the interviewees’ responses to the celebrity model (Cheryl Cole) indicate that the informants do not perceive the authority implied through the visual resource of the shot angle, interpreted by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p.140). Rather, it
appears that the interviewees understand the model’s social or economic authority to be relatively high through other aspects of her appearance, as illustrated in these instances:

6.51 Interviewee 5: Because she is a model, she is more beautiful than an average person. So she has a little more power because she has this unattainable aspect to her.

6.52 Interviewee 20: Maybe, higher because it is sort of like I think it is saying like, ‘girls if you use that product, you could be like Cheryl Cole’ and that sort of thing. She looks like she used it (the product) and she is all happy.

6.53 Interviewee 9: Even though she looks friendly because she is a celebrity and I know who she is, I probably say that her power would be high because she is a celebrity. […] because she is a celebrity, I think she has more power even though she looks friendly. She is Cheryl Cole.

As indicated in the interviewees’ answers, Cheryl Cole’s assumed socio-economic status appears to be conveyed through other features such as her current fame as a TV figure, her beauty, her use of the product, and the way she is shown. This aspect could be thought of in terms of reader-response theory as indicating interviewees’ interaction with images. In Chapter 5, I suggested that the semi-formal nomination used by companies in relation to celebrities could reflect their status as famous figures. In the current chapter, the respondents’ interpretations of the visual representation of a celebrity (Cheryl Cole) show the celebrity’s somewhat elite status in a way that might be comparable with that of semi-formal nomination.

Although Cheryl Cole, as a celebrity model, is described as powerful, the interpretations of the visual option of the smile suggest quite a different relation between that celebrity and the informants:

6.54 Interviewee 21: Equal I think this, the idea of like the smile is friendly and is engaging, is not like cold and distant. It is more girly, friendly, next door- all in this together.
6.55 Interviewee 18: I would say equal. I think when you see photos of people who are smiling I think it makes it more approachable, more quite friendly. And I think it is something that you more want to come and contact with. So if they are smiling then you would think they are on the same level as you. It creates an interaction like a linking to the image that you are looking at.

As given in the above instances, the celebrity’s smile seems to make her approachable and someone to whom the viewers could relate. This can clearly be understood from the expression next door in 6.54, which suggests that this model is down to earth, someone who is at the viewer’s level and someone who is around, i.e. familiar. Thus, the projected relation between the celebrity and the readers could be conceived as relatively close. The respondents’ interpretations could be thought of as a celebrity model acting as an identification point for potential customers that links them with the product (Banister and Cocker 2014, p.2). In this sense, the viewers’ interpretations of the smile show a more equal projected solidarity associated with the celebrity, Cheryl Cole, in relation to the viewers. This relation could be seen as analogous with Rubin and McHugh’s (1987, p.280) ‘parasocial interaction’, also identified in the communication between the commenters and celebrities in terms of informal nomination on Facebook in Chapter 5.

Not only do some of the interviewees interpret the eye contact of the unknown model as you in terms of personalisation, discussed above, but it also appears that some of the respondents’ interpretations of the smile of the celebrity, Cheryl Cole, are construed in terms of second-person address, for example:

6.56 Interviewee 10: Equal in terms of the smile. It seems very inviting. She is inviting you to be in her level.

6.57 Interviewee 13: I think she looks happy and that makes you want to contact with her, perhaps. It makes you want to know more about her and you want to know why she looks happy.

In these examples, the smile as a visual gesture could also be understood in terms of Thompsons’ (2012) ‘visual synthetic personalization’. Thus, the social distance between the
viewers and the celebrity, perceived by the parasocial relation, seems to be decreased, at least, through the evident intimacy in the respondents’ interpretations of the celebrity’s smile. In construing the smile in terms of second-person pronouns, the relation between the viewers and the model could be thought of as close. Thus, it seems that Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.118) interpretation of the gaze and smile as ‘social affinity’ is borne out, to some degree, in the interviewees’ answers.

6.6.5 Appraisal analysis
The importance of the evaluative language in promotional discourse can be explained in terms of Bhatia’s (2005, p.216) argument about evaluation as a strategy through which companies could distinguish their products or services from those of their competitors. Additionally, it shows another dimension of this discourse, i.e. its evaluative nature. This importance can also be understood in terms of enabling people to articulate their opinions about different entities (Thompson and Hunston 2000, p.10), where audience perspective is the concern of this chapter. Although the interviewees’ answers do not directly seem to be promotional, they are in response to promotional images and they come from people who could be thought of as potential customers. As discussed in Section 2.3.4, Bullo’s (2014) study also investigates audience responses. However, this chapter differs from Bullo’s work, in that her adverts are used to elicit evaluative reactions from ordinary people and practitioners to the use of art in adverts, where her purpose is to investigate socio-cognitive resources through appraisals.

In the present study, although the informants’ responses were collected for studying audience perception of visual resources, through the analysis of this interview dataset, the informants’ interpretations are found to be evaluative. In this section, the interviewees’ interpretations of the visual components of colour, black and white, light, darkness, and smile are broadened to be studied in terms of Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal model to show the evaluative dimension of this discourse (for this framework, see Section 3.8.4). The general pattern of the attitudinal resources (affect, judgement, or appreciation) is discussed. However, the appraised entities include not only the visually represented participants (models, products, and brands), comparable with those identified in Chapter 4
(and earlier mentioned in Section 3.8.4), but also visual choices or the images themselves. Therefore, the appraisals are not presented here per participant.

In addition to being interpreted as an element of equality in terms of the social actor analysis (discussed in Section 6.6.4 above), the respondents’ interpretations of the celebrity’s smile suggest that the meanings associated with this visual option are similarly evaluative:

6.58 Interviewee 7: It is quite an alluring [+Appreciation, reaction: quality] smile. It is trying to kind of make you look at her, turning her head. It is very posed [-Appreciation: valuation].

6.59 Interviewee 4: I would be attracted to that image because the smile is more attractive [+Appreciation, reaction: quality] and more appealing [+Appreciation, reaction: quality].

From the examples above, it seems that the model is the evaluated participant through the respondents’ interpretations of her smile. Most of the responses tend to occur as appreciation. As the above instances indicate, most of these appreciative meanings are likely to be positive and amplified, except for posed in example 6.58, which is a negative appreciation. Again, the importance of these qualities could be understood in relation to the idea of meaning transference – that the qualities associated with the model’s smile might also be associated with the intended effects for customers buying the product.

Not only are appraisals used in the responses to the visual resource of the smile but the interviewees’ various interpretations of colour and its lack (black and white), light, and darkness are also found to be evaluative. The attitudinal meanings that the interviewees relate to these visual choices largely appear to function similarly to generating particular types of responses. Koller (2008, p.419) argues that associating affective meanings with colour could be explained in terms of the genre itself, seen as trying to make an entity noticeable. Thus in the current analysis, the use of appraisals in relation to colour, black

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68 In the coding notation adopted here (previously explained in Section 3.8.4), the appraisals are underlined and followed by annotation in bold. The symbol t indicates an evoked appraisal, + stands for the positivity of the appraisal, – for its negativity, and +/- is for unclear instances of polarity.
and white, light, and darkness could also be attributed to the genre of the present images as being promotional. The examples below illustrate some of the meanings that the viewers in this study associate with the above visual choices:

6.60 Interviewee 9: (Silver as monochrome) It is sort of quite classic [+Appreciation: valuation]. I think because Mercedes-Benz, they are really nice [-Appreciation, reaction: quality] cars. They do not need loads of colours and stuff. They just need, it is just one statement and that is it [+Appreciation: valuation].

6.61 Interviewee 18: Black and white, it is quite edgy [+Appreciation: reaction: impact], I think. It is potentially more sophisticated [+Appreciation, composition: complexity].

6.62 Interviewee 19: I think with darkness, it looks a bit unsafe [-Appreciation, reaction: impact] kind of. If I was in that carpark with that car on my own, I would not feel very safe [-Affect, insecurity: disquiet].

6.63 Interviewee 13: It is light. It is bright [+Appreciation, reaction: impact]. This is the product. The steel in the background as well sort of makes it, this is a strong [+Appreciation: valuation] car.

As suggested by the examples above, most of the interpretations could be related to the attitudinal resource of appreciation, with the exception of instance 6.62, where negative interpretations occur as appreciation, unsafe, and affect, not feel very safe.

Although the interviewees express both their positive and negative attitudes about the effects of colour, black and white, light, and darkness as visual options, it appears that the respondents tend to interpret darkness negatively more than the other resources, which are positively evaluated. Moreover, the evaluative meanings appear to be amplified more than

\[69 \text{Edgy was coded as a positive appraisal because the viewer drew a comparison, where she/he expressed negative attitudes towards the use of red in Figure 6.6 above.}\]
mitigated. Instance 6.64 illustrates the negative appreciative meanings of darkness, while examples 6.65 and 6.66 show the positive appreciative interpretations of light and colour:

6.64 Interviewee 10: (Darkness) looks evil [-Appreciation: valuation], very evil [-Appreciation: valuation] eyes almost which are the lights of the car. I just see the outline. It is not very trustworthy [-Appreciation: valuation].

6.65 Interviewee 19: (Light) I think the reflection (of the light) on the car, the car looks shiny [+Appreciation, reaction: impact], it looks new. It looks expensive [+Appreciation: valuation]. It is good [+Appreciation: valuation].

6.66 Interviewee 8: (Colour saturation) It is quite fun [+Appreciation, reaction: impact] that you engage with it straight away, very striking [+Appreciation, reaction: impact]. The contrast obviously is very interesting [+Appreciation, reaction: impact] between the car and the background.

In terms of the appraisal theory, the analysis of the respondents’ interpretations of visual choices (smile, colour, black and white, light, and darkness) suggests that the visual resources of images from the adverts and posts carry meanings that can be described as being in the attitudinal resource of appreciation, as positive, and upscaled. This result contrasts with Bullo’s (2014) finding, where judgement is found to be the attitudinal resource that features in her study. However, the results of the negativity of darkness in comparison with the positivity of light found here is also pointed out in Bullo (ibid, p.135).

It seems relevant to mention that, based on the findings of a number of studies, Erdogan (1999, p.301) notes that there is no clear evidence that the positive opinions of potential customers about promotional discourse or models would actually result in buying products. In the current analysis, although the viewers’ interpretations of the visual resources tend to be mostly positive, some of these responses, at least, seem to suggest that purchasing decisions could not be guaranteed:
6.67 Interviewee 13: It (the car) does not make me want to buy the car. Although it has a lot more information which if I was looking to buy a car, I would want the information. I do not connect with it properly. Partly, I do not have a particular interest in cars. In general, I do not drive.

6.68 Interviewee 9: I think it (the car) is nice but first of all I do not have the money. But two, even if I did have the money, it (Figure 6.5) is a bit boring.

As suggested from the examples above, there seems to be a difference between the discursive and the actual socio-economic authorities, discussed in Chapter 5. The textual interaction with promotional discourse and the actual intention of buying appear to be two completely different actions. Thus, making promotional discourse eye-catching in its language and images could only be one step in the process towards the purchasing action. Just because images have a certain layout for their entities does not necessarily mean that all readers would respond in the same way. This is because viewers could be of different types (explained in Section 6.6.2 above), such as skippers, moderate readers, or detailed readers, and the interactions with discourse might suggest different consequences for purchasing potentials, factors that companies need to consider when producing their discourse.

The respondents’ interpretations of a represented model, colour, light, and darkness seem to be affected not only by the visual resources themselves. Rather, other elements also appear to be playing a role in the meanings associated with these resources. In this analysis, factors such as the brand and its reputation, interviewees’ everyday personal experiences and background knowledge, the setting against which objects are depicted, and how entities are represented are identified in the viewers’ responses as determining how visual components might be interpreted:

6.69 Interviewee 3: I cannot really see the car at all. Because it is Mercedes-Benz, they are confident in how good their product is, though not showing it in light.
Interviewee 14: These are not business vehicles. This is about fun, this is designed to be exciting, something relaxing, energetic. This is a car, well the way it is presented, this is a car as you go out with, out with your friends. This is not something to present yourself seriously or at work necessarily. And I think they are aimed at younger market.

In the above examples, the interviewees’ interpretations of a visual option seem to be influenced by the brand name, in example 6.69, or the viewer’s background knowledge, in instance 6.70, for instance. In addition, although the products are the same, i.e. cars, and the smiling celebrity is one person, Cheryl Cole, the sets of meanings given in this chapter would not be the only possible interpretations that could be attached to any of the visual resources tested here. Instead, it would be very likely for the meanings of the visual choices to vary according to products, informants, and the genre of the images, such as being from promotional discourse, books, newspapers, and others. This result is consistent with Davis’ (2013, p.62) argument that ‘[e]ach reader brings their own knowledge and conceptions to what they read, thus imposing their own meanings too’. Additionally, it agrees with the position of reader-response theory previously discussed in Section 6.3, in terms of foregrounding readers’ role, the reader-discourse impact on arriving at meaning, and the diverse readings despite some commonalities.

6.7 Comparison between images

In terms of the respondents’ interpretations of the resources used in the images from the print magazines and Facebook posts, this analysis demonstrates that there seems to be little difference in the visual components of the images investigated here, which could explain why the viewers treat and respond to the images as if they are nearly the same. However, the interviewees tend to express their attitudes about the overall composition of the images, i.e. factors that might influence image reading. In light of the respondents’ answers, a comparison could be drawn between the images from Facebook and the print magazines. In the interviewees’ responses to the Facebook images, although the readers were told about the companies of products, as mentioned in Section 3.6.5, some viewers refer to the lack of
the actual brand name, an element that would make it easier for the viewers to know from where to buy a product, as exemplified in the following:

6.71 Interviewee 17: This (Figure 6.3) you do not know the brand name. You would not know how to buy that (product).

6.72 Interviewee 5: (In Figure 6.1) I think having ‘LE VOLUME DE CHANEL’ is not clear. I think it is just the word ‘Chanel’ you would get sense of the brand better.

The absence of the brand names in the Facebook images could be construed in terms of the fact that the visuals appear on the companies’ Facebook pages. Thus, representing a company’s logo might make this information redundant.

In their answers, the interviewees state that the Facebook images have little or no writing, which makes it a bit difficult to know about the specifics of a product or what is promoted, for example. This reason could be attributed to decontextualising the images from the accompanying verbal post; however, some of the images are cover photos, i.e. with no verbal content (see Section 3.6.7 for image decontextualisation). When the verbal information occurs in the Facebook images, the informants think that the texts are too much or some words do not clearly identify the promoted product, as in the following:

6.73 Interviewee 16: (Figure 6.5) The picture of the car only, the product is good but no information.

6.74 Interviewee 4: I find that (Figure 6.3) a bit confusing. There is lot of text on there for an advert which is a bit distracting. In a way, it muddles the message.

Although the images from the magazines do not seem to be heavily print-based, the viewers’ responses indicate that the images are cluttered because they have a lot of writing. Furthermore, the different font sizes of the texts, especially those in small fonts, and sometimes the big claims about the promoted products make the viewers skip reading some elements, as in these examples:
6.75 Interviewee 13: It (Figure 6.4) is not a great advert anyway, in my opinion, because you do not realise to start off where. You do not automatically see what it is advertising.

6.76 Interviewee 16: There is sort of stuff you can filter out (in Figure 6.6). I think this (the title ‘Officially the REAL DEAL’) is nonsense. It could kind of be marketing speech for me. This (the text in white ‘Experience Top Gear Magazine’s car of the year for less than you think’) is saying it is the most amazing car in the world. It is all very subjective, is not it? So it is all, it is just marketing gimmick speech sort of. This sort of stuff I think to me is massive, this big tagline. (So the reader ignores the title, the text, and the specifics of the product)

In the cosmetics images from magazines and Facebook, the readers’ answers indicate that the products’ placements, especially at the bottom of the images, make the mascaras not clearly noticeable, for instance:

6.77 Interviewee 1: (Figure 6.1) The product is not that clear to me. It is easy to turn the page and not look at that (the product). This one is not of interest, maybe. It (the product) is a bit hidden.

6.78 Interviewee 13: (Figure 6.4) The mascara, the negative thing to me is the position right in the corner.

The relative invisibility of mascaras could be explained in terms of their small size compared with that of the models. Additionally, the prominent models might be the elements that the companies want the readers to notice, since the pretty models show the end result of the promoted products, with their eyes represented as wearing mascara (as explained above). Perhaps the companies think that potential customers might engage with the promoted products by seeing how they are used on the models’ eyes more than they would be interested in looking at the actual tubes of the mascaras.
6.8 Summary and conclusion

This chapter shows another dimension of promotional discourse, namely its multimodality and appraisal. In light of the multimodal analysis of the interviewees’ readings and interpretations of some visual resources utilised in images from company-authored discourse, this chapter concludes that attracting potential customers’ attention and the use of appraisals, as characteristics of promotional discourse, are clearly manifested in this analysis. Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) grammar of visual design seems a good starting point, or ‘innovative’ as Forceville (1999, p.175) states. However, in these authors’ attempt to map out certain meaning potentials for visual resources of images from different genres, their visual approach seems a bit narrow and subjective, since their interpretations might not be applied in the same way to all kinds of images with the same meanings and to all readers.

Comparing the actual answers of informants with some of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) interpretations of visual options and with the image sample analysis, which is based on these authors’ assumptions about composition principles, the current results show these authors’ claims to be largely unsupported. The informants’ interpretations and readings suggest a tendency for significant variation in their image understanding and the components that might grab them. In this sense, the interviewees’ responses contest the idea that a visual component could be explained in a single way by all viewers, even in images from the same genre. Rather, it appears that interpreting a visual choice is more complicated than what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Machin (2007) assume. The complexity of interpreting images could be affected by various factors, such as image genre, product type, context, how the visual resource is used, viewers’ interest in what is promoted, and their purpose of viewing. These matters suggest that being part of a certain cultural group, i.e. English society and academia, is not enough to yield similar image perceptions, where individual differences among the readers could also be added as a reason for different understandings of images. These results accord with the viewpoint of reader-response theory.

This study seems worthwhile because it enables me to demonstrate that even within a small group like the current one, diversity is very likely for reading images and interpreting their
visual choices. However, it is not clear whether the results obtained would differ had the interviewees been different. This result opens up the question as to whether the interviewees themselves as educated people have influenced the findings of this study, which might have differed if the informants had little education or their jobs did not entail viewing images daily, for instance. Alternatively, the results raise the question as to whether lay people’s visual understanding might differ from that of specialists such as Kress and Van Leeuwen. But since the present group of informants is rather small, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model needs more nuanced investigation with a more representative sample of the population. In this way, I propose that in order to gain a more authentic set of image interpretations, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual grammar be developed through further examination of image interpretations by actual readers of promotional discourse. More research on this theory might help refine some of these authors’ assumed meanings, where further work might indicate that their interpretations are applicable to images from a certain genre, for example.

In terms of the linguistic analysis of the interviewees’ responses that relate to the strategies of visual contact and composition principles, three categories of Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor framework feature in the respondents’ answers: inclusion, personalisation, and social relations. The category of inclusion is found to be comparable with the visual principle of prominence. This category shows the means of foregrounding participants, in this case products and models who promote the outcome of using make-up products, which is in line with the result of Chapter 5 about emphasising products in the adverts. Personalisation through you is the translation of the eye contact and the smile into Thompson’s (2012) ‘visual synthetic personalization’, which is comparable with the you by which customers are found to be personalised in the company-authored discourse (adverts and posts). In terms of social relations, the status of a celebrity, Cheryl Cole, seems to be reflected through her popularity, attractiveness, and having the endorsed product within her reach, which could be seen, in a sense, as the equivalent of semi-formal nomination used by companies in the adverts. On the other hand, in contrast to the somewhat high rank of the celebrity model, the positive meanings attached to her smile and conceiving the smile in terms of second-person pronouns could be construed as conveying the relatively equal status of the celebrity in relation to the viewers.
The other form of linguistic analysis adopted in investigating the informants’ answers to the visual resources (smile, colour and its absence, light, and darkness) is analysing the meanings of these options, since they are evaluative, in terms of Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory. It is found that the appraisals used in the interviewees’ answers tend to be in the attitudinal resource of appreciation and are characterised by their positivity and augmentation, where these features seem to be, implicitly, adding value to the promoted products. However, drawing potential customers and the positivity of appraisals could only be the first stage that might lead to the second goal of promotional discourse, i.e. buying promoted products, although the latter cannot be taken for granted. The next chapter presents the conclusions of this thesis.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to study both verbal and visual resources utilised in different promotional discourse types, to investigate their characteristics, and to highlight their similarities and differences. To fulfil these objectives, I have linguistically and, when possible, visually studied the print magazine adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, customer reviews, and interviewees’ responses using a number of frameworks. In Chapter 4, the situational characteristics of the above first four discourse types were examined using a blend of Herring’s (2007) classificatory and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) situational characteristics frameworks, while the genre analysis was mainly informed by Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) move-structure approach. For an in-depth examination of the language and images of these discourse types, which were not captured through genre analysis, Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor framework was used in Chapter 5 to investigate the representations of the participants involved in the adverts, posts, comments, and reviews. Chapter 6 was a multimodal one, in that the informants’ interpretations of visual resources and their readings of visuals and multimodal discourse were scrutinised through testing them against assumptions made in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) visual grammar, while the linguistic patterns in the interviewees’ interpretations were analysed by Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model and Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework. This chapter summarises the main findings of this thesis and highlights its theoretical and methodological contributions in exploring discourse within promotional genres. It also considers some limitations of the current thesis and offers suggestions for further studies.

7.1 Main findings

It is worth noting that what I have found about the adverts, posts, comments, reviews, and interviews as promotional discourse types is from data at a particular time (contemporary). Thus, the findings could change in the next twenty years and might also be different from results obtained through studying promotional discourse such as adverts from the last thirty years, for instance. This complexity of promotional discourse was found to be reflected through its purpose, different linguistic and visual resources, the various participants,
authoring, the moves it can include, and how products can be promoted. In line with my argument that promotional discourse is a broad phenomenon, which cannot be restricted to adverts or other advertising discourse, I found that no single framework is sufficient to indicate its various patterns (situational, generic, linguistic, and non-linguistic). Thus, the multiple methodologies of this thesis have allowed me to show the complexity of promotional discourse, in that each adopted model reveals some features of this discourse that would not be easily captured by the other analytical tools in much the same detail. However, the results obtained through the different models seem complementary, in that the visual analysis showed some findings comparable with those of the linguistic analysis.

7.1.1 Findings regarding research question 1:

What situational and generic features characterise the sampled print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews of this thesis?

As the first step of genre analysis, the situational characteristics of the analysed promotional discourse types were explored in Chapter 4. It was found that, despite the heterogeneity of these discourse types, Facebook and the review websites share most of the situational (technological) characteristics but with different bearings, and that more than one factor can explain the occurrence of a move. The asynchronous communication and message-by-message transmission; the durability of the published material, anonymity of communication, and published material size; and the content format and channel of communication were seen as influencing the use of the rhetorical moves. For example, the durability of the published content, anonymity of communication, and the size of published material were interpreted to have an effect on the showing qualification move in the customer reviews more than in the Facebook comments.

With respect to the other situational characteristics, although different in their authorship and hence relations (companies/authority vs customers/peer), all discourse types appear to share the objective of promotion to different degrees (explicit or implicit). The companies’ aim is to promote the products in their adverts. On Facebook, products appear to be promoted through encouraging commenters’ interaction, where such communication can also be understood as presenting one’s self, i.e. commenters promoting their online
visibility. Similarly, on the review websites, promoting products (positively or negatively) seems to occur through reviewers as they articulate their stances on products, which covertly means promoting one’s experiences.

With regard to the generic analysis (the second analytical step), the move-structure analysis provided an initial stage on which the other analytical chapters were built. It was found that the discourse types employ different moves. However, the attracting attention, detailing the product, and the showing qualification moves were shown to be shared by all the analysed discourse types. The moves are in keeping with the goals of these discourse types in terms of drawing readers’ or viewers’ attention to what is promoted, promoting or criticising a product (the latter in the comments and reviews), and constructing the discourse sender’s image. Based on these moves, this analysis allowed for indicating the comparability of these discourse types and hence categorising the print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews as members of promotional genres. All the aforementioned moves are in agreement with the moves found by scholars in other online and offline promotional discourse types, e.g. online group buying (Lam 2013, p.17), spams (Barron 2006, p.889), websites (Askehave and Nielsen 2005, pp.131-132), and adverts (Bhatia 2005, p.214). Similarly, emphasising experience with and use of products understood in terms of the showing qualification move corroborates other research findings of customer reviews, (e.g. Pollach 2005, p.295; Skalicky 2013, p.92; Vásquez 2014, p.95).

Another finding of this study is the different participants involved in the current promotional discourse types, namely products, companies, customers, celebrities, experts, and media resources. However, this analysis provided some dimensions of the diversity of this phenomenon, promotional discourse.

7.1.2 Findings regarding research question 2:

What does the analysis of the social actor model show about the representational patterns employed in these discourse types? And what does the variation in these patterns suggest about authority relations in terms of customers’ empowerment?

The analysis of the linguistic representational patterns, in Chapter 5, showed another element of promotional discourse, i.e. the various identities, roles, and relations constructed
for its different involved participants. In terms of discourse authoring (companies and customers), the similarity of these discourse types was demonstrated to be in their focus. It was found that, in line with the companies’ purpose of promoting products, the print adverts are centred on products as the most often included entity. Products’ inclusion was revealed to be paired with functionalisation, especially cosmetics, in terms of presenting what customer wants or needs products can fulfil. This finding is consistent with Koteyko’s (2012, p.258; 2015. p.274) argument about emphasising product capabilities. It was also found that cosmetics endorsements were by celebrities who are semi-formally identified, which could be understood as showing the public identity of these figures and that the appealing features of products could be described as coming from relating products to admired characters. Given that endorsers such as celebrities seem to be taken as secondary participants (Leech 1966, p.34), there seems to be little attention paid to how they are represented in promotional discourse. This study identifies one resource of representing such characters, i.e. semi-formal nomination.

The focus of the Facebook posts was demonstrated to differ slightly from that of the adverts. In the posts, customers were found to be the centre of this discourse, while products were promoted along with other participants and interactive material. However, this suggests that products remain the focus of the posts, to some extent. The inclusion of customers and products realises the goals of Facebook in terms of building communities that encourage customers to interact, where products are the objects about which customers might converse. Construed within the context of Facebook, the finding of customers’ inclusion seems to accord with Shen and Bissell’s (2013, p.629) argument about highlighting customers at the expense of products on Facebook. In terms of categorisation, experts as endorsers were found to be functionalised and classified apparently to demonstrate their professional personality. The role of experts as endorsers has not previously been paid much attention in promotional discourse (including in genre studies) in comparison with celebrities. Presenting their professional identity through the above categories could be one form. Further research could identify other choices for their representation.
Similar to the Facebook posts, the Facebook comments and customer reviews were shown to be customer-based, i.e. as authors, the commenters and reviewers were found to be the most frequently included participants. These authors came to the fore through personalisation as first-person singular pronouns. This result is consistent with Pollach’s (2006, p.7) and Skalicky’s (2013, p.92) findings of reviews as author-centred. As a means of identification, personalisation could be construed as offering the commenters and reviewers a chance to voice themselves rather than being generically represented by the companies in adverts and posts through you, i.e. synthetic personalisation. Customers’ agency was also indicated to be played up through activation, which distinguishes the customers’ representation in these discourse types from their passivated representation by the companies in the adverts and posts. Thus, in addition to personalisation, activation could also be seen as a realisation of discourse authoring and experiences with products. Another way to look at personalisation is as a means of interaction, i.e. to establish a relation with interactants. The reciprocity in the comments was exhibited by the informal nomination for addressing other commenters and celebrities. In terms of formality, the commenters’ informal nomination to other commenters and celebrities suggests intimacy, in that commenters seem to conceive their interlocutors as peers. But the commenter-celebrity relation happened to be parasocial, as it was found to be initiated by the commenters to whom celebrities did not respond. This was attributed to the fact that the comments appear on the companies’ Facebook pages rather than on the addressed celebrities’ pages. The interpretations of personalisation (identification and communication) seem to realise the goals of Facebook (mentioned in Section 7.1.1 above).

In relation to identity, commenters were shown to classify and relationally identify themselves, i.e. projecting the commenters’ personal character. This finding conforms to that of Vásquez (2014, p.94), although in the context of reviews, in terms of highlighting personal identity in online discourse through demographic categories such as gender, nationality, or family relations, for instance. The importance of the above findings is that they show the different patterns by which customers (commenters and reviewers) can represent themselves on Facebook and the review websites, and thus they can become the centre of their discourse rather than by pronouns only.
On the surface, the above findings of customers’ representations in their discourse compared with those in the adverts and posts seem to suggest that due to social media, changes have occurred in society as customers can freely express themselves, i.e. they have access to media. As a reflection on social media, scholars such as Cohen (2013), Fuchs (2012), and Rettberg (2014) tend to critique widely Facebook and review websites as platforms of disempowerment, exploitation, and surveillance. It is through such platforms that customers are seen as commodified (Cohen 2013, p.179). Cohen (ibid) argues that this exploitation features in two processes: 1) through making social media platforms accessible to all users, where these platforms are invested in promotions, and 2) selling users’ produced content and data of online behaviour to promoters for mining and other interested parties so as to track and direct promotions at users, based on their online activity (Pierson 2012, p.109; Van Dijck 2009, p.47). Through these processes, social media users are called ‘prosumers’ (i.e. producers and consumers) and seen as free workers for the advantage of Facebook and review websites (Fuchs 2012, p.143). In this way, social relations between companies and customers do not seem to become equal through such platforms, since companies remain economically in authority. Although it belongs to the pre-social media age, Fairclough (1994, p.264) doubts that customers are truly given authority, and argues that power relations appear equal simply because, for example, public discourse has widely become conversationalised. This suggests that changes in verbal representations such as the findings in the comments and reviews of customers’ authority as prominent agency and centrality through inclusion, personalisation, and grammatical activation, do not negate the socio-economic authority of the companies that continues to exist in the adverts and posts. In light of this, the authority given to commenters and reviewers by virtue of discourse authoring could generally be seen as a misconception, using Fairclough’s (2001, p.30) term ‘simulated egalitarianism’. The pseudo-democratisation of online media (including promotional) discourse seems an aspect that genre studies, for example, do not largely highlight.
7.1.3 Findings regarding research question 3:

What does the visual-verbal analysis of the interviewees’ perception of some visual resources reveal about the meanings of these options and the characteristics of promotional discourse? And how do the linguistic choices in the informants’ interpretations compare with those found, particularly in the print adverts and Facebook posts?

Using the interview dataset in Chapter 6 to investigate the multimodal dimension of promotional discourse, visually it was found that the virtual relations assumed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to be created in images through positioning a viewer in relation to a displayed participant(s) in terms of eye contact, image size, and its low angle is generally unsupported in the informants’ interpretations. With respect to these authors’ composition norms of information value, prominence, and framing, the analysis of the image sample mostly indicated the complexity of applying these authors’ meanings to all the visuals in this sample and deciding on one element that might catch the viewers’ attention. Based on the informants’ answers to the eye-catching element, this study found that the viewers could vary in what attracts their eye. Despite the small number of informants, their answers showed that it is unlikely that all readers would be drawn to the same item in one image. It was also found that the first seen object is not always the one with which all the respondents commence their reading. In this way, these findings do not widely conform to Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006, p.204) claim about the first attention-grabbing element as being the first read one too. In light of the interviewees’ reading paths, the present study found that viewers could be categorised into skippers, moderate readers, and detailed readers.

In relation to other visual choices, the overall construal of colour characteristics (saturation, differentiation, modulation, and black and white) in the informants’ responses was shown to vary and is inconsistent with the majority of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) and Machin’s (2007) proposed meanings. Therefore, the meanings of these choices could not be claimed to be completely the same for all readers. This study identified the brand image, image background, the way of displaying an item, and the interpreters’ knowledge as factors that could influence the interpretation of a visual option. This finding reflects
Bullo’s (2014, p.139) observation about the effect of the brand on visual perception and Davis’ (2013, p.62) perspective on the impact of readers on decoding discourse. All the above results support reader-response theory with respect to the diversity of readers, their understandings, and reader-discourse joint contribution to construing discourse/image. In light of the above findings, it seems reasonable to raise the question as to whether Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) model applies to experts only, and whether ordinary people such as the interviewees here would differ in their visual perception from experts.

To develop the visual analysis of the interviewees’ meanings, it was found that the informants’ responses to the visual options can linguistically be investigated through Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) representation model and Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal framework. The visual centrality of products and models was demonstrated in the informants’ readings and answers to the most attention-capturing items. This finding indicated one characteristic of promotional discourse (attracting attention), a finding of the generic move-structure in Section 7.1.1. The visual salience of products (through depicting them alone or as being used by models) complements the linguistic finding, given in Section 7.1.2, of products as the focus of the company-authored discourse (mostly adverts). Personalisation is another category of the representation framework, which was identified in some of the interviewees’ responses to the depicted models’ eye contact and smile, where these choices were found to be understood as ‘a visual you’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p.117). The meanings of these resources are in good agreement with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (ibid) interpretation of the gaze and smile and Thompson’s (2012) finding of ‘visual synthetic personalization’. The reference of you in the informants’ interpretations was found to be not clear, where it could be generic. This result echoes what Bullo (2014, p.143) found in terms of the ambiguity of the second-person reference, you, used by respondents. In this sense, the visual you can be described as parallel to the verbal you employed by the companies to identify customers in the adverts and posts except that the you of the respondents comes from peers and has an inclusive reference, which suggests closeness, rather than the exclusivity suggested by the companies’ address to customers, found in Chapter 5. Additionally, in terms of ‘parasocial interaction’ (Rubin and McHugh 1987, p.280), comparable with the relation identified in the commenters’ address of well-known characters through informal nomination, found in Section 7.1.2, the positivity of
interpreting the celebrity model’s smile by the informants along with construing her smile as the equivalent of you suggested the celebrity model’s closeness to the viewers.

Finally, with respect to Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory, most of the meanings of colour, black and white, light, darkness, and smile in the interviewees’ interpretations occurred as appraisals and were indicated to be in the attitudinal resource of appreciation. This finding showed another characteristic of promotional discourse, i.e. use of evaluation. It was also shown that the appraisals in the interviewees’ responses to the above-mentioned visual resources (except for darkness) are positive and accentuated. The finding of appreciation as the characterising attitudinal meaning of my interviewees’ evaluative language does not accord with that of Bullo (2014), who indicated judgement to be the attitudinal resource that occurred in her informants’ answers.

7.2 Theoretical and methodological contributions

This study contributes both theoretically and methodologically. In the present study, promotion is understood as a broad phenomenon, where adverts or advertising discourse are/is taken to be only one among numerous promotional discourse types. Having critically reviewed previous approaches to promotional discourse in Chapter 2, I pointed out that previous research has tended to focus mostly on advertising discourse as the main promotional discourse. I have argued that promotional discourse from other media, especially social media such as Facebook and review websites, has been paid comparatively little attention in linguistic research, although business and marketing studies (e.g. Chen and Xie 2008; Mangold and Faulds 2009) emphasise the importance of social media platforms as promotional vehicles and their discourse as electronic word-of-mouth (e.g. Kimmel and Kitchen 2014; Mangold and Faulds 2009).

One of the contributions of this thesis has been showing more aspects of the diversity of promotional discourse, which have not been largely highlighted by other studies, through adopting more than one framework. Another contribution has been to expand the range of promotional discourse types investigated by encompassing and comparing magazine adverts along with Facebook posts, Facebook comments, customer reviews, and audience responses as discourse types with the potential for promotion. In other words, attention has
been paid here to the emerging online discourse. I have also noted that even studies that examine more than one promotional discourse type, such as TV/print adverts, posters, or billboards, for example (Cook 2001; Myers 1994), do not clearly highlight the similarities and variations among them.

A principled categorisation of the brand market of cosmetics and cars into three main sections (top, midrange, and bottom-end) was based not only on brand image and findings of marketing studies on brand perception. Rather, it was also complemented by carrying out current comparable product price searches and considering, although in a small group of respondents, actual audience perception of brands in the United Kingdom. This segmentation is useful because studying all the brands of cosmetics and cars in a small-scale study such as this thesis would be impossible. The suggested brand categorisation can also be used by research that compares brand reputation in terms of pre- and post-assessments of product use.

In Chapter 3, this thesis methodologically contributes through proposing ways to tackle some issues with the analyses such as the counting of moves in Bhatia’s (1993; 2004; 2005) generic approach, identifying and coding inclusion and other model categories in Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) social actor model, and coding appraised objects in Martin and White’s (2005) appraisal theory (see Sections 3.8.2-3.8.4). Combining some factors of Herring’s (2007) and Biber and Conrad’s (2009) frameworks to study online and offline discourse using one integrated model can be seen as another contribution of this study. Additionally, new moves are included in Bhatia’s generic approach.

Thus, in addition to different types of promotional discourse, this study has adopted a mixed methods approach and multiple analytical tools. Again, this is in contrast to most previous studies of promotional discourse, which tend to adopt one or at most two analytical frameworks. Thus, the application of the categories of the selected models has extended to new data from offline and online media (promotional), where online discourse, especially from Facebook, is indicated to be clearly overlooked in linguistic studies. Although Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2008) model is primarily concerned with human representations, adopting it in promotional discourse entails investigating how products and what media resources are shown in such discourse. Instead of overlooking product
endorsers’ role in this discourse, in the present study, some attention is paid to their representation, however more linguistic research seems useful in this respect.

Furthermore, most studies tend to investigate only one semiotic mode, namely language. Alternatively, multimodal studies that do analyse images tend to base the meanings of visual options upon Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) visual grammar without considering audience stance, and where language is not deeply investigated. Here, another contribution comes from highlighting not only the role of language for conveying meaning but also that of images, where actual persons’ interpretations and readings of promotional images are specifically collected and explored, and thus arguably a richer view is obtained.

7.3 Limitations

Having explained the findings this thesis arrives at, it is important to remember that what I have gathered as discourse types from magazines, Facebook, review websites, and interviews are not representative of all promotional discourse types, due to the limited range, imbalanced size of the discourse types (adverts, posts, comments, reviews, and informants’ responses) investigated, and using more than one sampling procedure. On the one hand, there seems to be a need for diversity when studying promotional discourse as promotion is a phenomenon of broad relevance. But even the current thesis does not capture all the varieties of this discourse range since I have limited my examination to two product types (cosmetics and cars) and six brands only (three for each product kind) out of the large number of products and brands in the market. Moreover, I have not considered promotional discourse outside the British context. Although this study has at least captured some of the scope of the promotional discourse through involving discourse kinds from offline and online media, it cannot be exhaustive in this respect. On the other hand, the studied discourse types are not the only types that can be called promotional. Rather, they can just be described as examples. Including other discourse types, such as discourse of institutions (academic and non-commercial) or individuals (ordinary or public figures) from Twitter, LinkedIn, or other social media, under the umbrella of promotional genres is very plausible.
With respect to the limitations of the analytical chapters, in Chapter 4 the genre analysis disregarded general information in online discourse. In Chapter 5 on the representation of participants, CDA was not the central focus of this study, which can be seen as a limitation. The pronouns used for personalising experts and celebrities were not investigated very closely because of their rather low occurrence in this data. Clearly, much larger data would be required to make statistical claims on this usage and to interpret the patterns of their nomination. Furthermore, I have not analysed the roles allocated to the endorsers since my main concern was to indicate whether customers and companies are activated or passivated and in what discourse type. Another limitation is in the dataset of Chapter 6, in that the image sample included decontextualised Facebook images and the interviewees were shown the images in pairs, where the results might differ if the images were shown separately. The rather small group of British English native informants from academia could be thought of as another shortcoming, where no focus was given to control demographic details, such as gender balance, and therefore the perspective of non-academic viewers was excluded. Finally, when investigating the interviewees’ reading paths in images, no apparatus for eye-tracking was used. Such equipment would give accurate results about scanning and actual reading of multimodal discourse.

7.4 Directions for future research

Further studies might be conducted with more controlled sampling quantities and data types in terms of, for example, promotional discourse types, informants, brands, and products, where the same adopted models can be applied to indicate the extent to which the obtained findings in the present thesis are echoed. If the discourse types in such studies were to be of more equal size, this would allow for more reliable quantitative investigations of lexical and non-verbal categories. By making adjustments, the dataset could more properly be considered a representative corpus of promotional discourse. In addition, research might focus on discourse for products that can be seen as more gender-neutral such as electrical appliances, electronic devices, or food, for instance, and the linguistic and visual choices employed for such products can be compared with those identified in the cosmetics and car discourse of the current thesis.
In brand classification terms, more work is needed to investigate product discourse in the same brand class, e.g. prestigious brands, in order to compare the findings of the rhetorical devices used for such brands with those of brands that belong to other segments (midrange and bottom end). These studies would be even more useful if they were supplemented by customers’ opinions after experiencing products. My work on appraisal analysis is in progress, where new insights about the language of promotional discourse could be gained.

Up to now, little research attention (linguistic) has been given to the perspective of audience. Therefore, other scholars can develop further studies so as to present images to the informants in the actual context of Facebook, such as on a screen with a possibility of scrolling up and down the page. In addition, future research can use a large image sample and instead of showing images in pairs, each image could be presented separately to see if different responses might be yielded.

An additional potential area for related research is cross-culturalism, where interviewees from different societies (eastern and western) can be investigated for their perception of promotional visuals and multimodal discourse. In such research, it would be possible to determine more broadly whether informants would interpret and read images in similar or different ways. Finally, there is scope for research that draws comparisons between image types from promotional and other genres. Such research can investigate the extent to which different genres could influence the meanings attached to visual choices, which could also indicate the applicability of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) meanings to images from some genres, as suggested in Chapter 6.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Comparison of move analysis results in each discourse type

Figure A1.1 Move results in print adverts
Figure A1.2 Move results in Facebook posts

Figure A1.3 Move results in Facebook comments
Figure A1.4 Move results in customer reviews
APPENDIX 2

Comparison of representational categories in each discourse type

Figure A2.1 Representational patterns of all categories and inclusion in print adverts

Figure A2.2 Representational patterns of all categories and inclusion in Facebook posts
Figure A2.3 Representational patterns of all categories and inclusion in Facebook comments

Figure A2.4 Representational patterns of all categories and inclusion in customer reviews
Comparison of personal pronouns in each discourse type

Figure A2.5 Personalisation in print adverts

Figure A2.6 Personalisation in Facebook posts
Figure A2.7 Personalisation in Facebook comments

Figure A2.8 Personalisation in customer reviews
APPENDIX 3

Ethical Application Ref: mmhaa1-8560

Interview material: information sheet, consent form, interview guide and image sample

Information Sheet

- I am Maryam Mahmood Hikmet Al-Attar a PhD student from the Department of English at the University of Leicester. I am studying the language and images of promotional discourse types from print and online media.

- I would like to interview you to know your understanding of images of these discourse types. There is no right and wrong answer in this interview.

- I selected you as a British English Native Speaker to know if your perceptions accord with a model I have selected to apply to the images from the data of my study.

- The interview would normally take 45 minutes.

- Your answers will be kept confidentially for at least two years from now until I finish my PhD thesis in 2016.

- I assure you that your identity will remain anonymous in this study and that no reference will be made to your real identity in any part of my study.

- You can withdraw your participation from this study at any time even though you have given me your permission to use your answers for this study.

- You can also contact my supervisor Dr. Ruth Page on rep22@le.ac.uk if you have any questions or concerns.
Please contact me on mmhaal@le.ac.uk to send you an electronic copy of my thesis if you are interested in it or if you have any further questions.

Thank You Very Much
Consent Form

- I have given Maryam Al-Attar permission to use my answers for her interview with me to be part of the data of her PhD thesis. I understand that any data I submit will be anonymised and will be stored separately and safely from this document.

- I understand that I have the right to withdraw my contribution from this study at any time.

- I am over 18 year old.

- Name:

- Date:

- Signature:
Interview Questions

Image Perception

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. Please fill in all the items below as honestly as possible. Remember there is no right and wrong answer and all answers will be taken into account.  

Instructions

Some of the items below require circling or ticking (at your preference), while the items with dotted lines require your elaboration. Please have a look at the specified image number in the handout to help you answer the questions.

I. General Information Questions

1. How would you describe the following brands (e.g. what do you associate with them)?

   Chanel ...........................................................

   L’Oréal Paris ...................................................

   Max Factor ....................................................

   Mercedes-Benz ..............................................

   Toyota ...........................................................

   Fiat .............................................................

2. Have you taken a course on photography or drawing?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

---

70 The word Image used in the interview questions is changed to Figure in the Image Sample below and Chapter 6 above.
II. Please Look at the Handout to Answer the Items below:

1. What draws your attention most in Images 1 and 2?
   - In Image 1 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   - In Image 2 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Draw a map/sketch on Images 1 and 2 for your reading path.

3. Specify which of the features in the model’s representation make you feel that Images 1 and 2 are aimed at you as a reader.
   - (a) Eye contact                   (b) Close shot                (c) Frontal image
   - (d) All of them                   (e) None of them           (f) Other (Please Specify)

4. Which part draws you most in Images 3 and 4?
   - In Image 3 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   - In Image 4 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Which element is the most important in Images 3 and 4 for conveying the image’s message?
   - In Image 3 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   - In Image 4 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Choose the factors that help you decide on the importance of parts in Images 3 and 4:
   - (a) Size                  (b) Focus                  (c) Colour                  (d) Position
   - (e) Foreground            (f) Light                  (g) Others (Please Specify)
7. Draw a map/sketch on Images 3 and 4 for your reading path.

8. Comparing Images 5 and 6, which elements in Images 5 and 6 catch your eye most?
   
   In Image 5 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   In Image 6 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

9. Draw a sketch to specify your reading path for Images 5 and 6.

10. How would you interpret the model’s smile in Images 7 and 8?

    In image 7 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

    In image 8 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

11. In terms of power, the model in Images 7 and 8 is represented as……………… in power in relation to yours (the viewer).

    (a) High  (b) Equal  (c) Low

III. Please Refer to the Handout to Answer the Following Items:

1. Comparing the backgrounds in Images 7 and 8, what is brought into the foreground in each image?

   In Image 7 ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   In Image 8…………………………………………………………………………………………………….
2. What do you think the effects are of showing the product in Images 9 and 10 as covered in darkness and in light?

In Image 9 .............................................................................................................

In Image 10 .............................................................................................................

3. The dominance of silver as a monochrome in Image 10 gives the image the meaning of

.................................................................................................................................

4. The saturated colours in Images 11 and 12 evoke the meanings of ......................

.................................................................................................................................

5. The use of different colours in Images 11 and 12 suggests ......................

.................................................................................................................................

6. The different shades of red in Image 13 give the image the meaning of

.................................................................................................................................

7. Black and white in Image 14 convey .................................................................


Thank You
Image Sample

Figure A3.1

Figure A3.2
Figure A3.3
Figure A3.6
Figure A3.7
Figure A3.8
Figure A3.9\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{71} Copyright of Daimler AG/Mercedes-Benz UK.
The E-Class Saloon.
From just £319* a month.

With 16" alloy wheels, comfort suspension, LED daytime running lights, Parktronic and heated front seats, it's big on luxury.
And at just £319* a month, it's small on price. For more details, visit mercedes-benz.co.uk/offers

*For Business Users only. Advance payment applies. Official government fuel consumption figures in mpg (litres per 100km) for the E-Class Saloon range: urban: 20.5(13.8) - 65.7(4.3), extra urban: 37.7(7.5) - 67.3(4.2), combined: 28.8(9.8) - 65.7(4.3). CO2 emissions: 230-111g/km. Model featured is an E 220 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY SE Saloon at £29,770.00 on the road with optional extras priced at £4,165.00 (total price inc. V/A, delivery, 12 months' Road Fund Licence, insurance, petrol). Price includes Road Fund Licence for the contract duration. Guaranteed and indemnity may be required. Orders/costs approvals are subject to selected E-Class Saloon models between 1 October and 31 December 2015, registered by 31 March 2016, subject to availability, offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Some combinations of features/applied may not be available. Credit provided subject to status by Mercedes-Benz Financial Services (UK) Ltd, MB Group UK. Prices correct at time of going to press 19/1/16.

Figure A3.10 (Copyright of Daimler AG/Mercedes-Benz UK)
70s POOL BALL GEAR KNOB
FAR OUT

The Fiat 500 has taken a trip to the 70s. So the new Colour Therapy range is available with a stylish pool ball gear knob, white and white mirror covers, white alloy wheels, as well as a choice of four 70s colours. Under the bonnet you’ll find the sophisticated TwinAir engine with emissions so low you can lay no claim on it. It’s the best bits of the past wrapped up in today’s technology. Watch your.

IN 70s COLOURS

Fiat, the car brand with the lowest average CO2 emissions in Europe. Fiat 500 TwinAir, the lowest CO2 emissions petrol car engine in the world. Fuel 118 – 90 g/km. Under current OML regulations there is no charge for Vehicle Excise Duty in the first year of registration and every subsequent year. Vehicle Excise Duty rates and increased annually by the government and are subject to change. "Black" TwinAir. Based on European average CO2 emissions. Figures are derived from real driving and may differ from those published by DEFRA. According to DECC data.

Figure A3.12
Figure A3.13
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Websites consulted and resources of data collection

Boots (Beauty, Health, Pharmacy and Prescription): http://www.boots.com

Car Review Website: http://www.roadtestreports.co.uk

Chanel Cosmetics Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/chanel.cosmetics

Chanel Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/chanel

Cosmetics Review Website: http://www.reviewcentre.com/

Fashion Magazine: ELLE UK

Facebook Help Centre: https://www.facebook.com/help

Facebook’s Terms of Service: https://en-gb.facebook.com/legal/terms

Fiat Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/FiatUK

Fiat Website: https://www.fiat.co.uk

L’Oréal Paris Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/LOrealParisUK

Max Factor Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/MaxFactorUK

Mercedes-Benz Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/MercedesBenzUK

Mercedes-Benz Website: http://www.mercedes-benz.co.uk

Toyota Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/toyotauk

Toyota Website: https://www.toyota.co.uk

Car Magazine: WHAT CAR?