

**A Multimodal Analysis of Car Billboard Advertisements:
Audi/BMW Rivalry**

Abeer El Attar

Faculty of Al-Asun, Ain Shams University

Abstract

Within the plethora of advertising media, billboard advertising is gaining precedence due to its high visibility and accessibility to all viewers. This study explores the multimodal nature of billboard advertising by focusing on the interplay between the verbal and visual modes employed by BMW and Audi advertisers. It accounts for the meaning potentials and affordances of the semiotic resources and uncovers the advertisers' persuasive strategies. In doing so, the study draws on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) systemic functional grammar and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar to examine five billboards and a zeppelin. The study examines the headlines in terms of the grammatical structures of Theme/Rheme, Mood, and transitivity. It also explores the advertisers' choices of visual semiotic resources to orchestrate representational, interactive, and compositional meanings. The study concludes that the two rivals: BMW and Audi succeeded in deploying the visual semiotic resources to communicate signified messages, except for one image. Regarding the verbal mode, Audi successfully manifests manipulation of the meaning-making metafunctions to convey verbal messages; BMW conveys messages via lexical items only. The multimodal approach to the analysis of billboard advertisements offers an insight into the integration of the verbal and visual modes to create signified meanings.

Keywords: Car billboards advertisements, multimodal analysis, Systemic Functional

Grammar (SFG), semiotic resources, visual grammar

1. Introduction

People are continuously bombarded with mediated images from various types of advertising. Billboard advertising, as a prominent type, is highly visible and accessible by a large number of viewers. Advertisers (image producers) co-deploy multiple modes such as the visual and verbal to create multimodal texts and enhance the visual reception of the ad. Accordingly, advertisers compete in drawing on a wide range of semiotic resources available within each mode for shaping the processes of making-meaning, grabbing the target viewers' attention, and persuading them to purchase the product. Semiotic analysis of visual images uncovers the underlying meanings. Hence, this study provides an analytical framework, which employs a visual social semiotic approach to image analysis in billboard ads. Moreover, it offers insights into the messages conveyed in the advertisements (ads) by employing the Hallidayan metafunctions.

1.1 Aim of Study

In an attempt to bridge the gap in the previous studies in the field of multimodality, this study adopts a multimodal analysis of five billboard

advertisements and a zeppelin promoting brand cars: BMW and Audi. The study explores the meanings encoded in the visual images and accounts for the contribution of the visual and verbal modes to the realization of meaning. Accordingly, it addresses the following questions:

- 1) How does the application of the three metafunctions convey the linguistic messages inherent in the ads?
- 2) What are the implicit meanings communicated by the visual semiotic resources?
- 3) How do the visual and verbal semiotic resources convey meaning? Is it through converging or diverging?
- 4) Which car manufacturer has succeeded in employing both modes in billboard advertising?

2. Review of Literature

Different studies adopted visual social semiotics, as a tool of analysis, either individually or in tandem with other linguistic theories. Alderton (2005) draws largely on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar to examine the semiotic resources and strategies employed by billboard liberators in an attempt to investigate their ongoing practices. The study attempts a multimodal analysis of three billboards modified by activists to reflect their discourses that are increasingly important to their lives. The findings convey that subvertisements is a medium for young people's opinion and creativity.

Concerning media ads, Adham's (2012) study applies Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual semiotic analysis to eighteen western and Arab media ads to reflect media portrayal of women. The study accounts for the way semiotic resources are utilized to convey social, political, and aspirational messages to Saudi women. The findings of the study assert that Arab media is dominated by the presence of the two different advertising agendas. Western ads in the Arab media promote an aspirational agenda; Arab ads promote a socio-aspirational agenda.

Other studies worked only within the framework of Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar, such as Ayoola (2013) who investigates the interpersonal metafunction in terms of mood and modality in eight selected advertisements representing two political parties. The study sets to unveil the language which politicians use in expressing their opinions. Ayoola concludes that the imperative mood dominates the advertisements of one political party while the declarative dominates the other. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the interpersonal meaning of the clause and the lexicogrammas such meaning depends on the contextual factors.

Similarly, Sujanta (2013) adopts the Hallidayan framework to investigate the mood system and transitivity in 54 national and regional airline slogans. The mood system revealed that all sentences are declarative and imperative clauses. The major process type is relational and the major mood type is declarative.

Regarding posters, Abdeen (2015) investigates the verbal and visual modes in two presidential election campaign posters in Egypt, applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual semiotic approach in addition to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) metafunction principle. Her findings demonstrate that both modes integrate to create meanings, reveal ideologies, and communicate persuasive messages. The two posters are demand images seeking the viewer's support. The two modes interact to manipulate and direct the viewer's judgement towards the candidates.

In her attempt to explore ads, El- Kalla (2015) adopts a socio-pragmatic approach in her analysis of 25 English ads that were published on the internet. Her eclectic analytical framework incorporates Kress and van Leeuwen's dimensions of semiotics, Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech act theory, and Grice's (1975) cooperative principle. The study adopts a qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine the verbal and non-verbal signs employed in ads. She conducts a questionnaire and interviews 100 male and female informants to comprehend the relation between gender and decoding the semiotic features of ads. She concludes that females observe the nonverbal semiotic features more than male informants. In addition, she concludes that advertisers use verbal and nonverbal signs as persuasive tools enticing viewers to buy the products.

As for billboard ads, Pan (2015) examines the visual elements in four billboard ads in Hong Kong in relation to headlinetranslation. She applies Sperber and Wilson's (1986) notion of context in relevance theory. She focuses on the role of the translator in examining the multimodal nature of billboard advertising in order to contextualize the linguistic messages in such ads while translating. Her findings attest that the visual elements contributed to the contextualization of the translated headlines.

El-Nawawy and El Masry (2016) employ semiotic analysis in tandem with discourse analysis in the study of Al-Sisi's presidential campaign posters in 2014. This study incorporates two key models as its analytical framework: Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) systemic functional grammar (SFG) and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic model for visual communication. The study attempts a thorough presentation of the major and relevant parts only. The semiotic analysis investigates the sign system in two of Abdelfattah Al-Sisi's campaign

posters; the discourse analysis reveals the prevalent discourses in Al-Sisi's eight minute campaign video. Their semiotic analysis shows that Al-Sisi is a familiar figure; their discourse analysis reveals that he is presented as a patriot and a strongman.

To conclude, the previous studies differ either in media, focus or tools of analysis. Some analyze billboards, others posters, or slogans, or online ads. In an attempt to bridge a gap in previous studies, this study attempts to provide an in-depth understanding of the multimodality in billboard ads by incorporating Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) metafunctions.

3. Review of Related Models and Theories

3.1 Social Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs (Cook, 2001; Kress, 2010). Signs, being the core unit, have meaning (signified) realized through a form of representation (signifier) (Cook, 2001; Kress, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Van Leeuwen (2005) maintains that when signifiers and signifieds combine, messages are conveyed. Van Leeuwen (2005) refers to semiotics as the study of semiotic resources, which he defines as "the actions, materials, artefacts we use for communicative purposes" (p.284). Semiotic resources as a term originated in the work of Halliday (1978) on social semiotic theory. He claims that "language is not a set of rules" for producing correct sentences, but a "resource" for making-meaning (192). Thus, the term became a key term in social semiotics. Kress (2010) clarifies that the main concern of the social semiotic theory is "sign-making rather than sign use" (p.54). As a result, social semiotics accounts for the "available choices of signs" in order to understand how people use them within a social context to convey ideas and attitude (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.17).

3.2 Visual Social Semiotics and Multimodality

Visual social semiotics is a new branch of semiotics that emerged due to the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006); it focuses on visual representations and their meanings. Machin and Mayr (2012) explain that visual social semiotics attends to the choices of visual elements and features which represent the world and shape social ideologies. Believing that meaning can be communicated via other semiotic modes than language, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) draw on Halliday's systemic functional grammar as a framework to describe and analyze visual representation. Their social semiotic approach to visual communication (or visual grammar) emphasized the importance of embracing the visual aspect in analyzing how semiotic resources create meaning.

Their work marks a shift from monomodal to multimodal communication (Abousnnouga&Machin, 2008). They endeavored to develop a theory of multimodality. Multimodality is “the combination of different semiotic modes-forexample, language and music- in a communicative artifact or event” (Kress, 2005, p.281). Consequently, meaning is the product of the co-deployment of various semiotic modes such as the language, image, gestures, music (Machin&Mayr, 2012; O’Halloran, 2011;van Leeuwen, 2015). Van Leeuwen (2015) explains that multimodality, as a field of study, explores how different semiotic modes “are integrated in multimodal texts and communicative events”(p.447). O’Halloran (2011) uses the two terms: semiotic resources and modes interchangeably to describe the resources that integrate in multimodal texts “across sensory modalities (e.g. visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic)”(p.121). Conversely, Kress(2010)and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) claim that a semiotic mode has its own resources (means) for making-meaning. Similarly, van Leeuwen (2015) underpins the difference in visual and verbal realizations of the same meaning and stresses the importance of comparing and contrasting such realizations. A multimodal analysis accounts for the interaction between the linguistic and visual semiotic resources (O’Halloran, 2004). Cook (2001) stresses the multimodal nature of ads as they can incorporate “pictures, music and language” (p.219). Similarly, Pan (2015) points out that multimodality is an indispensable feature of modern advertising, where different semiotic resources interact in a single ad.

3.3 Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar

Halliday’s (1994) systemic functional grammar explores the three broad meaning-making functions, termed metafunctions, through which the language based on human use is realized. These metafunctions are the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual which represent, exchange, and organize experiences respectively. The three metafunctions, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) claim, realize three different types of meaning “embodied in the structure of a clause” (p.83) as follows:

- a) Ideational examines the clause as representation
- b) Interpersonal examines the clause as exchange
- c) textualexamines the clause as message

3.3.1 The textual metafunction. The textual function, as Thompson (1996) points out, is oriented to the creation of a text accounting for the way messages are constructed and organized. The textual meaning is described through the Theme /Rheme structure which is the grammatical system that represents the clause as a message (Halliday&Matthiessen, 2014).

3.3.1.1 Thematic structure. One of the functions of a clause, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) maintain, is carrying a message which is achieved by the thematic structure. The first part of the clause is the Theme; the rest of the clause is the Rheme. The Theme /Rheme structure delivers a message and reveals the text organization. The Theme, functions as “the point of departure of the message” (p.88) as it carries the viable part of the message. Different types of clauses reveal different Theme choices. The unmarked Theme choice in a declarative clause is the subject. However, if the Theme choice is not the subject, i.e. adjunct or complement, it is a marked Theme as shown in the following table:

Unmarked Theme [subject]	
Multimodality	integrates different modes
Theme	Rheme
Marked Theme [Adjunct]	
Last night,	the storm destroyed our house
Theme	Rheme
Marked Theme [Complement]	
All the presents,	I'll buy for you
Theme	Rheme

Table 1. (Un)marked Themes in declarative clauses based on (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)

However, in non-declarative clauses, WH-interrogatives, WH-word is the unmarked Theme if it occupies an initial position. In yes/no (polar) interrogatives, the unmarked Theme includes finite verbal operator + subject; unmarked Theme is rare. In imperatives, the unmarked Theme choice is the predicator (verb which expresses action). The marked Theme choice is the use of explicit ‘You’ as addressee or the use of adjunct.

Unmarked WH interrogative		Unmarked Theme in imperatives	
What	happened to Peter’s father ?	Leave	the books here
Theme	Rheme	Don’t leave	the books here
Unmarked yes/no interrogative		Marked Theme in imperatives	
Did she	announce the winner?	You/ Don’t you	raise your voice
Theme	Rheme	For a better taste	add olive oil

Table 2. (Un)marked Themes in imperatives & interrogatives based on (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)

It is evident that major clauses that have a predicator have a thematic structure. Conversely, minor clauses such as exclamations (congratulations!), greetings (hello!), vocatives (Sue!), and idiomatic expressions (what about the other two?) are not analyzed for Theme-Rheme, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) clarify, because they lack a

predicator. Egging and Slade (1997) subsumed ‘thanks’, a formulaic expression, under the category of minor clauses. In case of elliptical clauses, Theme or Rheme may be missing from a clause, yet the meaning of the omitted structure can be presupposed from a previous message or retrieved from the context. Sometimes the elliptical clause is reduced to words such as Yes, No, of course. Such examples lack thematic structure (Halliday&Matthiessen,2014; Thompson, 1996).

3.3.2The interpersonal metafunction.Halliday andMatthiessen (2014) maintain that the interpersonal metafunction attends to establishing and maintaining human relationships in addition to enacting social roles. The interpersonal meaning of the clause focuses on its organization as an exchange. The speech roles, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) claim, are of two main types:demanding and givinggoods and services or information from/to the speaker in a context. When the two speech roles are correlated with thecommodityexchanged, the result is four main speech functions presented as follows:

	Commodity exchanged	
Role exchanged	a) Goods and services	b) Information
(i)giving	Offer	Statement
(ii) demanding	Command	Question

Table 3. The four main speech functions (Thompson,1996, p.40)

The speech functions are realized by the different mood choices of the clause: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. However, any of the three mood choices can realize an offer as it has no unmarked representation(Halliday&Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 1996). The interpersonal meaning of the clause is realized grammatically via Mood and modality. According to Thompson (1996), Mood carries out “the interpersonal functionof the clause as exchange in English” (p.41).The structure of Mood combines two parts subject (a nominal group) and the finite operator.The finite verbal operator is either realized by a temporal operator expressing tense (e.g. did, was) or a modal operator (e.g. can, may) expressing modality.The overall clause structure involves the Mood + the Residue, which is the remainder of the clause. The residue includes the predicator, the complements, and adjuncts as the three types of functional elements (Halliday&Matthiessen, 2014, p.151).

He	Was	playing	Tennis	in the backyard
Subject	Finite	Predicator	complement	Adjunct
Mood		Residue		

Table 4. Mood/ Residue example

Modality is a “cline between positive and negative polarity”, as defined by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p.73). In such a way, it offers the speakers various ways to mitigate or qualify the message they convey (Eggins & Slade, 1997). Modality has two main types: modalisation and modulation.

3.3.3 The ideational metafunction. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) maintain that the ideational metafunction focuses on construing human experience of the world. It is divided into two components: the experiential and the logical. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the experiential metafunction is represented via transitivity structure of the clause. Thompson (1996) describes transitivity as a “system for describing the whole clause”, in addition to “a way of distinguishing between verbs” (p.78). Transitivity structure reveals the representational meaning of the clause in terms of processes, participants, and circumstances. Processes are realized by verbal groups; participants by nominal groups, and circumstances by adverbial groups and prepositional phrases.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) stress the importance of process as the most central component in transitivity; hence, they distinguish six process types: material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, and existential. Such variety in process types plays key role in the construal of experience as the text unfolds. The six types of process, the participants, illustrative examples, and function are presented in a tabular form as follows:

Type of process	Participants & examples			Function
1-material	The policeman Actor	was chasing process	the thief Goal	Processes of doings and happenings
2-mental	No one Sensor	liked process	Her Phenomenon	Processes of cognition, emotion, & perception
3-relational	The food Carrier	is process	Fresh Attribute	Indicate class membership
	Her name Identified/Value	Is Process	Sue Identifier/Token	Indicate identity
4-verbal	She Sayer	repeated process	the question verbiage	Verbs of saying
5-behavioural	She Behaver	Laughed Process		Psychological/or physiological behaviour
6-existential	There	Is Process	a storm existent	Indicate existence or happening

Table 5. Presentation of the 6 types of processes, participants and function
(derived from Halliday&Matthiessen, 2014; Machin&Mayr, 2012; Thompson, 1996)

3.4 Kress and van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar

Working within the framework of Halliday’s systemic functional grammar (SFG), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adapt and modify Halliday’s metafunctional approach to incorporate the visual mode. They develop a social semiotic approach to visual communication which extended Halliday’s three metafunctions. The three metafunctions are replaced by Kress and van Leeuwen’s representational, interactive, and compositional meanings. Jewitt and Oyama (2008) point out that any image incorporates the three meanings: representing the world, participating in social interaction, and constituting “a recognizable kind of text (a painting, a political poster, a magazine advertisement, etc.)” (p.139). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) attempted to explain “how the available resources of visual grammar form a potential for the representation and communication of meaning through spatial configurations of visual elements” (p.266).

This study attempts no exhaustive presentation of Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar, as it does not tackle further subtypes of many of the processes they distinguish, yet it highly focuses on the major types and relevant parts only.

3.4.1 Representational meaning. The representational meaning in images, which corresponds to Halliday’s ideational metafunction, depicts the represented participants (people, places, and things) in terms of visual syntactic patterns. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) classify the visual syntactic patterns, according to their function, into two types: narrative and conceptual. The representational structure is presented as follows:

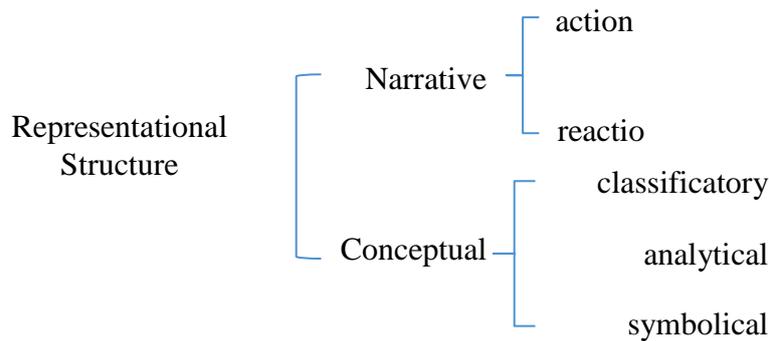


Figure 1. The main types of visual representational structure
(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.59)

3.4.1.1 Narrative representations. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), narrative processes “present unfolding actions and processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements” (p.59). Accordingly, by depicting actions and events, visual representations (i.e. images) “can

represent the world narratively” (p.73). Narrative processes encompass action processes and reaction processes which are realized by different types of vectors. Jewitt and Oyama (2008) define a vector, the key distinguishing feature of narrative structures, as “a line, often diagonal, that connects participants” (p. 141). Vectors can be formed by arrows, “bodies or lines or tools” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.59). Vectors express relations in terms of ‘doing’ or ‘happening’ (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008).

3.4.1.2 Conceptual representations. Conceptual patterns represent participants in terms of their “class, or structure or meaning”, in other words “in terms of their generalized or more or less stable and timeless essence” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.79). Conceptual processes reveal no dynamic activity in the image like narrative processes. Conceptual structures can be realized via three processes: classificational, analytical, and symbolic. Hence, their role is to classify, or analyse, or define participants (people, places, and things) in an image (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008).

Classificational process. It indicates a ‘kind of’ relationship (i.e. taxonomy) between the participants on account of a common feature. The superordinate represents the overarching category which encompasses the subordinates, i.e. different participants having compositional symmetry and belonging to the same class (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain that classificational processes can be represented by a tree-structure where the superordinate can be inferred in a covert taxonomy, or directly mentioned in an overt one.

Analytical process. In an analytical process, participants are related to each other in terms of a part-whole relationship, as Jewitt and Oyama (2008) claim. The two key participants, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain, are the carrier (representing the whole) and any number of possessive attributes (representing the parts). The parts “fit together to make up a larger whole” (p.50). Moreover, such processes have no vectors and no compositional symmetry.

Symbolic process. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2008), such a process pinpoints “the meaning and identity of a participant” (p.144). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) underline that symbolic processes are realized by two structures: symbolic attributive structure and symbolic suggestive structure. In a symbolic attributive structure, there are two participants: the carrier and the symbolic attributes which bestow “symbolic significance” (p.249) on the carrier and establish his meaning and identity. On the contrary, symbolic suggestive processes represent meaning and identity as inherent qualities of the carrier, the only represented participant. They also maintain that symbolic suggestive processes lend more emphasis to

“‘mood’ or ‘atmosphere’” at the expense of details which seem “to be de-emphasized” (p.106). Such emphasis is realized via blending colours, soft focus, and extreme lighting.

3.4.2 Interactive meaning. Images can constitute imaginary relationships between viewers and what they view inside the image (Jewitt&Oyama, 2008). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), participants involved in images are of two types: represented participants and interactive participants. The former type includes “the people, the places and things depicted in images”; whereas the latter type attends to “the people who communicate together through images, the producers and viewers of images”(p.114). Accordingly, three types of relations are distinguished: those occurring between the represented participants themselves; those occurring between interactive and represented participants; and those occurring between interactive participants in terms of what they do for each other in images. To examine the interactive meaning created via the relation between the represented participant and the viewer (the interactive participant), some key semiotic resources should be considered: contact, social distance, perspective, and visual modality.

3.4.2.1 Contact. Contact is established when the represented participant (human, human-like, animal) directly gazes at the viewer. As a result, vectors emanating from the represented participants’ eyelines connect them with the viewer. This is termed a ‘demand image’ according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Jewitt and Oyama (2008) point out that the represented participants seem to “symbolically demand something from the viewer” (p.145). However, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also maintain that the represented participants are not always human or animals, as “the headlights of a car can be drawn as eyes looking at the viewer”(p.118).

Conversely, an ‘offer image’, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out, lacks direct gaze, so “no contact is made”(p.119) and no response is anticipated from the viewers. In addition, their role is confined to detached onlookers. The represented participants are offered to the viewers as “the objects of contemplation” or “specimens in a display case”(p.119).

3.4.2.2 Size of frame and social distance. Machin and Mayr(2012) point out that “distance signifies social relations” in real life and images (p.97). Social distance is realized by “size of frame of shots” in images (Jewitt&Oyama, 2008, p.146). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), explain that the image producer’s choice of size of frame –whether close-up, or medium, or long shot–can express different relations between the represented participants and viewers, which are more or less imaginary

relations. They point out that “size of frame can also suggest social relations between the viewer and objects, buildings and landscapes” (p.127). The following table indicates social distance and representation of objects:

1	Close distance	Object is shown as if viewer is using it
2	Middle distance (used in advertising)	“Object is shown in full”, “without much space around it”(p.128), yet it is “within the viewer’s reach but not actually used”(p.129)
3	Long distance	object is beyond the viewer’s reach but only displayed for his contemplation

Table 6. Social distance and the representation of objects(Kress& van Leeuwen,2006)

3.4.2.3 Perspective. Kress and van Leeuwen(2006) state that image producers adopt a certain perspective, ‘point of view’ as a semiotic resource to express the relation between the represented participants and the viewer. Such point of view can express “subjective attitudes towards represented participants” or express objective attitudes(p.129). Subjective images, as Kress and van Leeuwen(2006) point out, have central, built-in, perspective, where the image producer arranges everything for the viewer and positions him to view the image from a certain perspective. On the other hand, in objective images, “the image reveals everything there is to know...about the represented participants”(p.130).

Subjective images are depicted using either vertical angles or horizontal angles. A vertical angle defines the nature of power relation between the viewer and the represented participants in the image. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain that the image producer can manipulate the vertical angle in terms of three angles: high, eye-level, and low, implying different symbolic relations of power between the represented participants (whether people or objects) and the viewer. A high vertical angle indicates the viewer’s symbolic power over the represented participant. Conversely, a low angle signifies the represented participant’s symbolic power over the viewer. However, an eye-level angle implies symbolic equality between the two.

In case of a horizontal angle, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) illustrate that there are two types of relation: involvement and detachment. Involvement is illustrated by a frontal angle, where the viewer directly looks at what is depicted in the image. Conversely, detachment is illustrated by an oblique angle which asserts that “what you see here is not part of our world”(Kress& van Leeuwen,2006,p.136).

On the contrary, objective images tend to “disregard the viewer” as he is no longer involved with the represented participants in the image (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006, p.131). The objective images mark a shift from naturalistic representation to signification. Kress and van Leeuwen

stress that objective images mainly focus on “scientific and technical pictures, such as diagrams, maps and charts” (p.143).

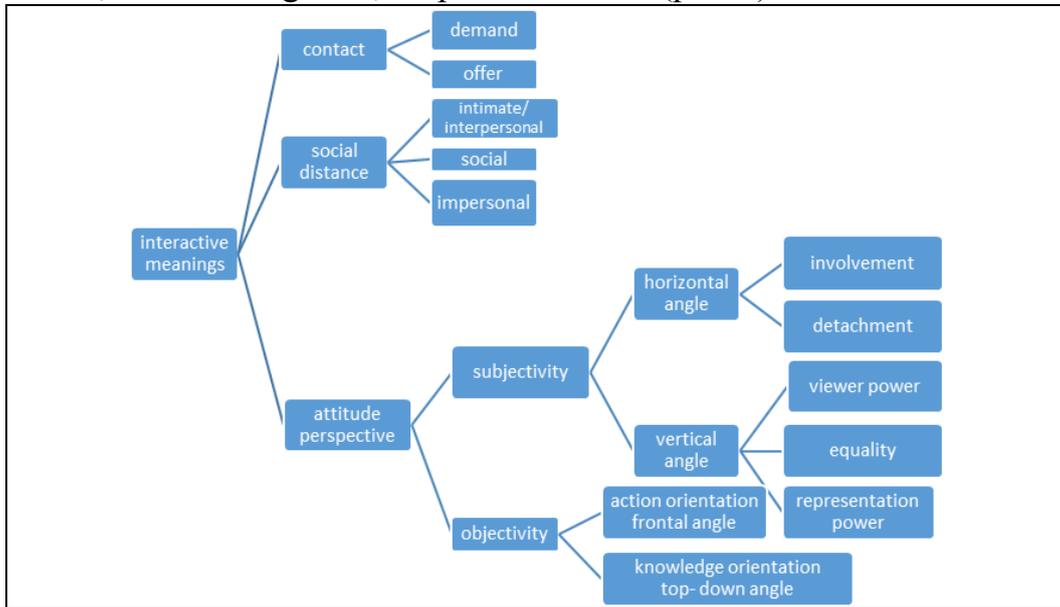


Figure 2. Interactive meaning in images (based on Kress& van Leeuwen,2006, p.149)

3.4.2.4 Visual modality. Van Leeuwen (2005) points out that modality refers to “semiotic resources for expressing as how true or as how real a given representation should be taken”(p.281). Modality is not confined to language but can be examined in images too. Visual modality expresses the degree of credibility or truthfulness ascribed to images (Kress&van Leeuwen, 2006;Machin&Mayr, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2005). Kress and vanLeeuwen (2006) state that visual modality is graded from the lowest degree (least real),as in sensory representation to the highest degree (most real), as in naturalistic representation, the dominant type of modality. They maintain that reality from a naturalistic perspective is defined on account of the congruence between image of the represented object and what is normally seen of that object in reality.

Consequently, there are eight markers that serve to determine modality (i.e. reality) in images:colour saturation,colour modulation,colour differentiation, contextualization,articulation of detail,articulation of depth, illumination, and brightness. The firstthree are related to colour as a marker of naturalistic modality (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Kress and van Leeuwen (2002)maintain that colour as a semiotic mode interacts with other modes in a multimodal environment.This study examines two visual modality markers: colour differentiation and articulation of background (contextualization) as tentative analysis of the data revealed their significance.

3.4.3Compositional meaning.Van Leeuwen (2005) stresses that composition means “arranging elements- people, things, abstract

shapes, etc. - in or on a semiotic space” (198). Spatial composition endows such spatially arranged elements with “coherence and meaningful structure” (p.179). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain that spatial composition integrates the representational and interactive meanings in an image via three systems: information value, salience, and framing.

3.4.3.1 Information value. Spatial positioning of the elements in the image whether left and right or top and bottom, or centre and margin “endows them with specific informational values” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.176). It simply means that the role of the elements depend on their placement in the image (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008). The placement is either polarized or centralized.

Polarized placement. It includes spatially organized elements on the left/ right along the horizontal axis of the image or top/ bottom along the vertical axis, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain. They explain that when elements in an image are polarized in terms of left/ right arrangements, they form the “Given-New” structure. The elements positioned on the left are presented as Given, i.e. “already known information to the receiver” (van Leeuwen, 2005, p.204). Conversely, the elements positioned on the right are presented as New, the important information that is still unknown to the receiver.

In a vertically oriented composition, the elements placed in the upper section of the image are presented as the Ideal. Those placed in the lower part of the image are presented as the Real (Jewitt & Oyama, 2008; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Ideal signifies the most salient part of information, i.e. “the idealized or generalized essence of information” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.186). The Real, on the other hand, presents ‘down-to-earth’ information such as photographs (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). In advertising, the ideal-real structure is aptly utilized by the image-producers who position their advertised products in “the realm of Real” which “visualizes the product itself”; whereas the Ideal “visualizes the promise of the product” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.186).

Centralized placement. Elements in a spatial composition can be placed along the dimensions of Centre-Margin, as van Leeuwen (2005) explains. Thus, they are gathered around the Centre which holds them together, as he elaborates. The element positioned in the middle is termed the Centre; the elements that surround the Centre are termed, the margins. The Centre is the “nucleus of information”; the margins are subservient (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.196). The Centre-Margin can combine with Given-New and/ or Ideal/ Real in so-called triptychs.

3.4.3.2 Salience. Salience renders some elements in a composition more important and more eye-catching than others, whether they are presented

as the Given, the New, the Ideal, the Real, the Centre, or the Margin(Kress& van Leeuwen,2006).However, sometimes the elements are equally salient. Hence, salience bestows “central symbolic value” on the elements in the composition (Machin&Mayr, 2012, p.54). However, there are various ways through which elements can have greater salience and stand out: size, sharp focus, tonal contrasts, colour contrasts, positioning in the visual field (top or left positions render elements salient), foregrounding and overlapping, cultural factors(appearance of a human figure), and amount of detail (Jewitt&Oyama, 2008;Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin&Mayr, 2012; van Leeuwen,2005).

3.4.3.3Framing.Elements in an image can be presented as visually connected, i.e. belonging together or visually disconnected as a separate unit (Jewitt&Oyama, 2008;Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen,2005).Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) claim that elements “may be strongly or weakly framed” (p.203).Van Leeuwen (2005) defines framing as “a common principle, realized by different semiotic resources in different semiotic modes”(p.14).

Frame-lines, blank spaces between elements, discontinuities of colour, and framing devices can disconnect elements in a visual composition (Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Such disconnection means framing, asvan Leeuwen(2005) explains. However, connectedness of elements in a composition can be achieved through vectors, absence of frame-lines, through similarities of colour, and visual shapes (Jewitt&Oyama, 2008; Kress& van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). Connectedness in advertisements is manifested in the use of repetition of colour and shapes in a visual composition; thus, “the connection between the ‘promise of the product’ and the product itself” is highlighted (p.204).

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Selection

Cook (2001) claims that advertising is a dominant genre of discourse in society. He classifies ads into product ads that sell a variety of products or offer services and non-product ads as those promoting “charities and political parties” (p.15). Advertisement is a powerful persuasive tool that targets the consumer audience to sell a product, or promote services or ideas. The persuasive power, as Beasley and Danesi (2002) explain, is manifested in the advertisers’ ability to “tap into unconscious desires, urges and mythic motifs embedded in the human psyche” (p.15). Accordingly, advertisers display their ads via a plethora of media such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, internet banners or outdoor ads (e.g. posters, wall paintings, and roadside billboards).

This paper attends to one type of outdoor advertising, namely billboard advertising. Being enormous in structure and erected in public spaces and highways, billboards can be visible by the society members, as Cronin (2008) asserts. She maintains that car advertisements on billboards “are thought to speak in direct ways to ‘consumers on the move’” (p.105). To attract the attention of target viewers, billboard advertising depends on multimodality as a persuasive tool which integrates the verbal and visual semiotic modes. The verbal mode is embodied in the headline, which Pan (2015) defines as “the linguistic element and acts as the most explicit mode of communication” (p.207). She explains that the headline reinforces the visual mode which conveys implicit message. The visual mode serves to infer the headline and realize the KISA principle. To sell a product, billboard advertisers tend to use appealing, persuasive, and brief linguistic messages (headlines), following Ding’s (1995) linguistic principle, KISA, “keep it short and appealing”(as cited in Pan, 2015, p.208). To apply the KISA principle, advertisers integrate visual images with the headlines to make the ads more appealing. The eye-catching images grab the viewer’s attention before the headlines do in the displayed billboard (Pan, 2015).

The data selected for this study incorporates billboard ads downloaded from the internet. The selected billboard ads reveal the car rivalry brewing between two top-notch German car manufacturers: BMW and Audi. The war started in 2009 when Audi placed its billboard in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, mocking the ad campaign BMW has released for promoting its 35th motorbike rally (chess tournament). BMW did not respond; Audi replaced its billboard by a more challenging one which provoked a brilliant response from BMW. Quite irritated, Audi put up another billboard, which forced BMW to respond by tethering a zeppelin to Audi’s billboard announcing its victory. Totally rejecting the idea of defeat, Audi responded with a billboard to claim superiority. The war abated; the rivalry never ended.

The reason behind selecting billboard ads as the data for this paper resides in the fact that billboards constitute an unavoidable powerful medium visible to the public. This incites advertisers (image producers) to create arresting multimodal billboards, employing various semiotic resources. This eventually tempts researchers to scrutinize the way visual and verbal modes interact to persuade the target viewer to purchase the product. Hence, this study investigates 5 billboards and a zeppelin to unmask the underlying meanings conveyed by these modes.

4.2 Procedure of Analysis

The study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) visual grammar and Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) three metafunctions. This study

incorporates a qualitative approach for analyzing the five billboards and the zeppelin. Concerning the verbal mode, the headlines of the six images are linguistically analyzed in terms of the grammatical structures of Theme/Rheme, Mood, and transitivity which encode meanings. The analysis of the visual mode follows, focusing on the visual semiotic resources depicted in images, such as the conceptual structures, contact, size of frame, attitude, visual modality, information value, salience, and framing. The tools of analysis are summarized as follows:

Linguistic analysis of headlines using Halliday and Matthiessen's(2014) metafunctions			
Metafunction	Experiential	Interpersonal	Textual
Grammatical structure	Transitivity (process type)	Mood- Residue	Theme-Rheme
Clause as	Representation	Exchange	Message
Visual analysis of images using Kress and van Leeuwen's(2006) visual grammar			
Types of visual meaning	Representational meaning	Interactive meaning	Compositional meaning
Areas of focus	Conceptual processes	Contact, size of frame, attitude, & visual modality	Information value, salience & framing

Table 7. Tools of analysis used in the study

5. Analysis

5.1. Linguistic Analysis of the Headlines

5.1.1 Textual metafunction [Theme/Rheme]

The headlines in **images 1, 4, and 6** are declarative clauses showing unmarked straightforward thematic structure. Audi image producers employ declarative clauses in three billboards, where the subject and Theme are conflated signifying unmarked Theme choice. The advertiser uses a common unmarked structure, where the subjects (I, your pawn, It) represent the prominent part of the message. The pronoun 'I' refers to the Audi owner; 'your pawn' refers to the BMW M3 coupe. The Theme 'your pawn' signals Audi's negative evaluation of the BMW M3 coupe by addressing their rival car manufacturer, BMW, in a derogatory manner. The pronoun 'It' refers back to 'your luxury badge', implying that BMW logo is no longer the symbol of luxury. Thus, the thematic patterns in the three declarative clauses focus on belittling BMW and lauding Audi. The Rheme conveys Audi's implicit message pertaining to its dedication and enthusiasm in image 1; superiority over BMW in image 4; and dispraise of BMW cars and praise of its own cars in image 6. Audi image producers attempt to influence the viewer and challenge BMW. The unmarked thematic structure is presented as follows:

Image 1(Audi)	I	'd rather be driving
Image 4(Audi)	Your pawn	is no match for our king
Image 6 (Audi)	It	may have expired
	Theme	Rheme

Table 8. Theme/Rheme analysis in images 1, 4, &6

Minor clauses

In **images 3** and **5**, BMW image producers use minor clauses as their headlines. The minor clauses ‘checkmate’ and ‘game over’ are exclamations usually uttered by winners in a chess game. Although such reverberating minor clauses have no thematic structure, i.e. no Theme/Rheme, a clear cut decisive powerful message is delivered in each case. By echoing the words of victorious chess players, BMW seems to be rejoicing the victory over Audi. Audi uses ‘thanks’ as a formulaic expression in **image 1** as follows: “Chess? No thanks, I’d rather be driving”. Although the minor clause displays no thematic structure, it implies sarcasm.

Elliptical clauses

Audi image producers prefer to use ellipsis in the headlines of **images 1, 2, and 6**. The function of ellipsis in ads is creating “an atmosphere of proximity and intimacy” (Cook, 2001, p.173). The elliptical clauses are either declarative or interrogative. They represent unmarked thematic structures shown as follows:

Image 1	(elliptical polar interrogative)	Chess?
Image 2	(It’s)	your move BMW
Image 6	(It’s)	time to check your luxury badge
	Theme	Rheme

Table 9. Theme/Rheme analysis in images 1, 2, &6

The omitted Theme is enclosed between brackets and the remaining parts of the thematic structure represent the Rheme only. The Audi image producers choose the unmarked form in the elliptical clauses -whether declarative or interrogative- as if they were betting on the abilities of the addressed rival and viewer to supply the missing subject and verb of the clause structure. The omitted Theme in the elliptical yes/no (polar) interrogative in **image 1** is left for the viewer’s imagination while the Rheme ‘chess’ implies a sarcastic tone. Moreover, ‘no’ the ellipted answer to the previous polar interrogative displays no thematic structure. The elliptical clause in **image 2** can be interpreted as a

direct challenge to BMW to take action while simultaneously arousing the viewer’s interest. ‘It’s’ represents the elliptical Theme in **image 6**. The Rheme signifies a demand on the viewer to take action although the clause is declarative. By configuring the thematic structures of the verbal text in the 6 images, viewers can gain insight into the nature of the advertisers “underlying concerns”, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) stress.

5.1.2 The interpersonal metafunction

In **image 1**, the structure of the headline: ‘Chess? No thanks I’d rather be driving’ displays a variety of clauses such as a polar interrogative and minor clause in the Mood- Residue analysis. ‘Chess’ functions as the Residue of an elliptical polar interrogative; the Mood is absent. The polar interrogative functions as a question that establishes a relation with both Audi’s rival, BMW, and the viewer. Audi begins a conversational exchange with BMW, and simultaneously engages the viewer into it. ‘No’ is a negative expression of polarity functioning as a mood adjunct in the answer to the previous question. ‘Thanks’ is a formulaic expression, a subtype of minor clauses, which has no Mood structure and no Residue. The declarative clause (I’d rather be driving) displays a straight forward Mood-Residue structure as follows:

(elliptical interrogative)	yes/no	Chess?	No	Thanks
		Complement	mood adjunct	Minor clause
No Mood		Residue		No structure
I	‘d	rather	be driving	
Subject	Finite	Mood adjunct	Predicator	
Mood			Residue	

Table 10. Mood/Residue analysis in image 1

In **image 2**, the headline ‘your move BMW’ is an elliptical declarative clause. The Mood- Residue analysis shows that the clause is formed of Residue only as the elements (the subject and finite) which represent the Mood are already omitted.

(It	is)	your move	BMW
Subject	Finite operator	Complement	Vocative
Mood		Residue	Vocative

Table 11. Mood/ Residue analysis in image 2

The elliptical declarative clause functions as a statement, yet it imparts no information as much as it functions as an indirect challenge to take action. Consequently, it arouses the viewer’s interest and curiosity for BMW’s upcoming reaction. It can be seen that the Residue includes the complement ‘your move’ only which is followed by the vocative

‘BMW’. According to Halliday and Matthiessen(2014), the vocative is not part of the Mood-Residue structure, although it is part of the clause structure. In using this vocative, Audi is directly addressing its rival, calling for the attention and participation of BMW in that challenging exchange, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) stress that speakers use vocatives to “mark the interpersonal relationship” and claim “superior status or power”(p.159). Consequently, Audi manipulates the vocative to signify superiority and power over BMW.

In **images 3 and 5**, the headlines “checkmate” and “game over” are minor clauses that have no Mood structure or Residue. In **image 4**, the Audi image producer selects a declarative mood for the headline as the commodity exchanged is information, where Audi underpins its superiority over BMW using defying lexical items (our king, no match, your pawn). The Mood- Residue structure is presented as follows:

Your pawn	is	No	Match	For our king
Subject	Finite operator	Mood adjunct	complement	Circumstantial adjunct
Mood		Residue		

Table 12. Mood/Residue analysis in image 4

In **image 6**, the image producer uses two clauses in the verbal text: One is an elliptical declarative clause and the other is declarative. Although the mood in the first clause is declarative, it functions as a command persuading the viewer to buy the Audi A8. The Mood- Residue analysis is shown as follows:

(It	is)	Time	to check	your luxury badge
Subject	Finite	Complement	Circumstantial adjunct	
Mood		Residue		
It		may	have expired	
Subject		Finite modal operator		Predicator
Mood				Residue

Table 13. Mood/ Residue analysis in image 6

It is evident that the Mood is absent in the elliptical declarative clause, while it is present in the second declarative clause. The Residue is present in both clauses. Modality is expressed in the second clause in the Mood by the finite modal verbal operator (may) which expresses modalisation, hence indicating a low degree of probability. Eggin and Slade (1997) point out that “the judgment expressed” in terms of modalization (may) “is somehow distant from the speaker” (p.101).

To conclude, Audi image producers select declarative mood clauses in **images 1, 4, and 6** as if they were imparting information to both their rival and viewers to brag off their products. They also employ elliptical declarative clauses in **images 1, 2, and 6**. They use one elliptical yes/no interrogative and one minor clause in **image1**. Ellipsis, as a cohesive device in ads, sheds light on the relationship between the two rivals. On the contrary, BMW image producers tend to use minor clauses that display no Mood-Residue structure. However, they mean more than what they say.

5.1.3 Experiential metafunction

In **image1**, there is notransitivity structure in ‘Chess? No thanks’, yet the elliptical structural elements in the polar interrogative presuppose a material process, where chess is the Goal. In the second clause, ‘driving’ is a material process encoding physical action and the transitivity structure can be presented as follows:

I	‘d rather be driving
Actor	Material process

Table 14. Analysis of transitivity structure in image 1

In **image 2**, the headline ‘(It is) your move BMW’ represents an identifying relational process. Although the elliptical declarative clause has no explicit process, the presupposed verb is (to be). The identifier is presented and treated as new information.

(It	is)	your	move
		BMW	
Identified	relational process	Identifier	

Table 15. Analysis of transitivity structure in image 2

In **images 3 and 5**, the headlines reveal no transitivity structure. However, in **image 4**, the function of the identifying relational process is to identify one entity in terms of another, as stressed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The significance of the value/token analysis is manifested in directing the readers towards the writer’s “broader concerns and values” (Thompson, 1996, p.91).

Your pawn	Is	no match	for our king
Identified/Token	Relational process	Identifier/value	Circumstances:behalf

Table 16. Analysis of transitivity structure in image 4

In **image 6**, the type of process operating in first clause is an identifying relational one despite the fact that the identified and the process (verb to be) are omitted structural elements. However, such elements can be easily recovered by the viewer. The second clause is a material process, where (may have expired) seems to express a happening

which affects the actor ‘it’ which refers back to the luxury badge. The transitivity structure is presented as follows:

(It	is)	Time	to check	your	luxury
				badge	
Identified	Process: relational	identifier	Circumstances of purpose		
			Process:material	Goal	
It	may have expired				
Actor	Process: material				

Table 17. Analysis of transitivity structure in image 6

To sum up, concerning the three metafunctions, BMW image producers did not utilize the grammatical structures: Theme/Rheme, Mood, and transitivity because they used minor clauses in the headlines that revealed none of the grammatical structures to convey meaning. However, they depended on the lexical meaning of the minor clauses which are culture-bound, depending on an underlying assumption that viewers share the same knowledge about the chess game. Conversely, Audi image producers aptly utilized the verbal text as a meaning-making resource, drawing heavily on the structural resources manifested in the three metafunctions. They conveyed their messages via various mood choices of the clauses which varied between declarative clauses, elliptical declarative clauses, elliptical polar interrogatives, and just one slight instance of a minor clause. Accordingly, meanings were construed via structural configurations.

5.2. Visual Analysis

5.2.1 Representational meaning

The images in the six selected images represent the world conceptually as evident in the absence of vectors, action and composition symmetry and tree-structure. Four of the selected images represent analytical processes (**images 1, 2, 3, & 4**); two images (**5 & 6**) denote symbolic suggestive processes. (It is to be noted that the description of the car parts is derived from BMW and Audi’s websites).

Analytical processes				Symbolic suggestive processes	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Table 18. Representational meaning in images

The analytical processes are evident in four images of the black Audi A4, the white BMW M3 coupe, and the white Audi R8, where the black Audi A4 is displayed in two billboards. The four images are concerned with the relation of parts (possessive attributes) to the whole (carrier). In such analytical processes, each brand car and its attributes are depicted as objects for contemplation and scrutiny of the viewer, which emphasizes the luxury of such brand cars. Each of the two leading German car manufacturers: BMW and Audi attempts to reveal the

unique possessive attributes of the advertised car in an alluring persuasive manner.

Images 1 and 2 are for the same car, the black Audi A4 but anchored with different headlines. The advertised black Audi A4 represents the carrier with its streamlined sheen, while its outstanding possessive attributes, such as the fog lights, LED headlights, the trapezoidal styling single-frame grille, the wide-angle exterior mirrors, the rear view mirror, the five -convex triple spoke wheel rim, and the elegant chassis design leave the viewer spell bound. Such alluring sensory attributes of the Audi A4 help the advertiser in persuading the target viewers.

Image 3 offers analytical representation of the white BMW M3 coupe, as a carrier, with a number of essential and luxurious possessive attributes such as headlights, front bumper kidney-grille, dark front windshield tint, oval-shaped exterior mirror caps in body colour, elegant sporty design, double-spoke wheel rims, and tyres. Such attributes create visual concepts of the carrier's dynamic performance, driving pleasure, absolute supremacy, mechanical power, and a spirit of challenge.

Image 4, similarly, offers an analytical representation of the white Audi R8, a two-seater sports car, as the carrier, and its possessive attributes render the two-door coupe as a masterpiece of beauty. The sporty Audi R8 poses for the scrutiny of the viewer who is spellbound by its large-format diffuser openings, captivating design, trapezoidal-shaped grille. On the whole, in images 1, 2, 3, and 4, advertisers present the cars to viewers as objects of contemplation "a statue to be worshipped" (Baldry, 2004, p.100). Such depiction acts as a persuasive tool that arouses the affluent viewer's desire and passion to possess such cars.

Symbolic suggestive processes are evident in images 5 and 6. **Image 5** depicts the white BMW Formula 1, the carrier, on a blimp (zeppelin), which was tethered to and flew over the billboard of the Audi R8. Image 5 represents a symbolic suggestive structure. BMW image producer presents the F1 single-seat race car with its open cockpit as an illustration, where the car details are de-emphasized except for the huge black tyres. The white colour dominates the background with the white F1 as a mere illustration except for the race tyres. Van Leeuwen (2005) stresses that the white colour signifies purity and innocence. By blending the car's white colour with the white background, the advertiser de-emphasizes the car details to create an overall mood of 'great energy', denoting that this car is a symbol of power, speed, and action. At the same time such image encodes a message of BMW's superiority in manufacturing powerful race cars.

Image 6 conveys a symbolic suggestive structure as there is one represented participant, the black Audi A8. The details of the car are de-emphasized in favour of creating ‘mood’ or atmosphere. The viewer is obstructed from scrutinizing the possessive attributes of Audi A8 because the details are blurred in favour of the overall effects of the overwhelming black colour of both the A8 and the background. Despite the image producer’s attempt to confer on the Audi symbolic values associated with mystery to arouse the viewer’s interest and curiosity, he has created an image of darkness and ghostly look of the car. Machin and Mayr (2012) point out “darkness... has association of concealment, lack of clarity and the unknown” (p.205). Darkness is the outcome of blending the black colour of both the car and background except for an aura of light shining from behind the advertised car to set it off from the black background. The effects of the black colour reveal a strong ambience of exclusive style and imbue the Audi A8 (the carrier) with symbolic meaning such as power, mystery, and uniqueness.

5.2.2 Interactive meaning

The interactive meaning is represented in terms of contact, social distance, attitude (perspective), and visual modality markers (colour differentiation and contextualization,). These semiotic resources interact to create interactional relations between the represented participants and the viewer.

Image	Contact		Social distance			Attitude (subjectivity)				
	demand	Offer	Close	Middle	Long	Horizontal angle		Vertical angle		
						Detachment Oblique angle	involvement front angle	Viewer power	Equal	Represented participant power
1 A4	√			√		√			√	
2 A4	√			√		√			√	
3 M3 coupe	√		√			√				√
4 R8	√			√		√			√	
5 F1		√			√	√			√	
6 A8	√			√			√		√	

Table 19. Results of the analysis of contact, social distance and attitude in the 6 images

Contact

The selected billboards are analyzed either as demand images or offer images. **Images 1,2,3, 4, and 6** are categorized as demand images, where there is an imaginary relation created by the vectors emanating from the headlights of the Audi A4, BMW M3 coupe, Audi R8, and the

LED headlights of the Audi A8. Such a relation arouses admiration in the viewer. The headlights of the cars are analogous to the human eyes establishing contact with the viewer and establishing an imaginary visual contact as if enticing the viewer to take a thorough look and admire the advertised product whether it is the A4, M3, R8, or A8. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) stress that if the represented participants-whether human or not- in the image are being depicted “as looking at the viewer; they are represented as human...to some degree” (p.118).

The image producers of the two competing brand manufacturers defy each other via their demand images. It seems they are not only addressing the viewer but also challenging the competing company to scrutinize the advertised car. It seems the car ads try to elicit emotions and “speak in an affective register offering pleasure, pride, glamour and status” (Cronin, 2008, p.105).

In **image5**, there are no headlights. Thus, the image ofBMW F1 is categorized as an offer image; the viewer is indirectly addressed as he becomes the subject of the look. The F1 is the object of the viewer’s contemplation, connoting that the viewer would yearn to be driving a dreamlike car.

Social distance (size of frame)

The image producer seems to manipulate the choice of size of frame. **Images 1,2, 4, and 6** are framed at a middle distance, which is common in advertising. The cars are displayed in full within the viewer’s reach, but are not actually being used. The medium shot served to accentuate the exterior features of the cars except for image 6 due to the darkness which blurs the articulation of visual detail. **Image 3** is framed at close distance where the M3 coupe occupies almost all the space of the billboard. It is depicted as if the viewer is using it. The choice of a close distance marks the image producer’s desire to captivate the viewer and create intimacy between the M3 coupe and the viewer. **Images 5** is captured at a long distance not within the viewer’s reach, but only displayed for contemplation. The long shot led to a minimum articulation of details except for the huge black racing tyres which stand out as the most salient feature of the F1.

Attitude

All images adopt a subjective point of view realized by “the presence of a perspectival angle” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.19).

Horizontal angle: All images except **image 6** are depicted from an oblique angle, which implies detachment. The choice of an oblique angle is motivated by the image producer’s desire to depict these cars as not belonging to the world of the average viewer who adopts a detached contemplative point of view. They have been designed to impress and

please the affluent viewers and defy the rivals. Depicting **image 6** from a frontal angle implies involvement; thus, the A8 becomes part of the viewer's world. The viewer is invited to be involved with it, connoting that 'this is what you deserve to drive.' However, darkness renders such involvement impossible, as the car details are blurred.

Vertical angle: All images-except **image 3**- are depicted from an eye-level angle which expresses an imaginary relation of symbolic equality that ensues between the target viewers (the affluent ones) and the advertised cars. Each of the competing companies mainly targets the "socially upscale car buyers" (Beasley&Danesi, 2002, p.12). Each seeks to entice the viewer to purchase its car and at the same time enhance the viewer's corporate loyalty' whether to BMW or Audi. **Image 3** is depicted from a low angle which enhances the superiority of the car. In an attempt to persuade the viewer to purchase the M3 coupe, the advertiser presents the car as a symbol of superiority and high status.

To sum up the images pertaining to the corpus of this study are captured by the horizontal oblique angle in 5 images implying detachment and 1 frontal angle implying involvement.

Visual modality markers

Colour differentiation: As colour is a semiotic mode that encodes meanings and represents mood and feelings, it is aptly used by advertisers. Colour is greatly reduced to a palette of black, white, and silver in **images 1,2,3**, and **4** except for the A4 orange indicators. The choice of a white background in **images 1** and **2** removes potential distractions and enhances the viewer's focus on the A4, the salient element. However, colour has been strongly reduced to a white monochrome in **image 5** and a black monochrome in **image 6** except for the brand name Audi written in red and the blue-and- white BMW logo. Monochrome reflects monotony. In an attempt to "lend symbolic value to a product", as Kress and van Leeuwen(2002) observe, advertisers use colour repetition(p.349). This is evident in images 5 and 6, where the image producers use the same colour for the car and the background: white in **image 5** and black in **image 6**. Van Leeuwen (2005) maintains that white, the dominant colour in **image 5**, "has a well-established meaning potential as the colour of purity, innocence..." (p.81). The black colour signifies power and authority. The colours, blue-and-white, as found in BMW logo, are "indexical of tranquility, peace and nobility"(Ademilokun&Olateju, 2015,p.9). The brand name 'Audi' written in red is eye-catching and signifies passion. BMW logo symbolizes white blades of an aircraft propeller cutting through the blue sky. Audi's four rings symbolize the four founding companies (Audi, DKW, Horch, and Wanderer).

The strategic choice of the two dominant colours black and white has introduced the chess theme in 4 of the selected images. The interplay between black and white symbolizes the chess board, the cars are the pieces of chess and the two rivals are the players in the chess game. Cook(2001) clarifies that one of the features of ads is foregrounding “metaphorical meaning” (p.219). Accordingly, the advertisers have brilliantly exploited and inverted the black and white colours in the billboards regarding the car and the background, hence enhancing the use of the metaphor of the chess game. The use of such metaphor has been extended and developed over the billboards, as a source of amusement, drawing the attention of passersby, drivers, and viewers to the billboards. In **image 5**, the white F1 was presented against a white background, signaling the end of game and ultimate victory. Refusing to accept such victory, Audi displayed its black A8 against a pitch black background. Consequently, it adopted BMW’s policy of unifying both the colour of the car and the background. It can be concluded that the black and white colours act as visual semiotic resources that carry meaning potentials and a set of affordances. However, colour differentiation in the six images acts as a marker of low modality.

Contextualization: All images are displayed in absence of a background. As a result, decontextualization plays a role in accentuating the advertised car. Both of the white background in **images 1,2,5** and the black background in **images 3,4,6** indicate low modality.

In short, the four semiotic resources of contact, social distance, attitude, and visual modality are intertwined to create more subtle relations between the represented and interactive participants.

5.2.3. Compositional meaning

Composition of the billboards illustrates the wide range of meaning-making resources to communicate multiple messages to the targeted viewers. Composition incorporates: information value, salience, and framing, the three interrelated systems that structure a multimodal text as a coherent meaningful unit.

Image number	Information value		
	Given/New	Ideal/Real	Centre/margin
1&2A4	√		
3)M3			√
4)R8		√	
5)F1			√
6) A8	√		

Table 20. Analysis of information value

Information value: The horizontally oriented composition of **images 1,2, and 6** utilizes the Given-New polarization structure, where the verbal is presented as the Given, i.e. what the viewer and the rival are assumed to know. The photographic images of the Audi A4 and A8 are presented as the New. The verbal text, i.e. the headline in the Given position signifies the agreed-upon point of departure leading the viewer's eyes from the left to the right, the side of the key information to which the viewer's attention is drawn. The logo and the brand name are aptly placed in the upper right corner of the composition, a salient eye-catching position. **Images 3 and 5** present a centralized Centre-Margin structure where the M3 coupe and the F1 are presented as the Centre, the focus of information. The margins are the verbal text (headlines) which are ancillary. Thus, the image producers draw the viewer's attention to the advertised cars which occupy a central position.

Image 4 is vertically organized into an Ideal-Real polarized structure. The headline "your pawn is no match for our king" occupies the top part of the billboard, the Ideal, representing the most salient part of the composition. The image producers are simultaneously addressing both their rival (BMW) and the affluent viewers promising them such high status and superiority, which is only attainable to their affluent Audi fans and potential customers. However, the R8 presents an unattainable dream and fantasy, which defies the humble capabilities of their rival BMW, being called a 'pawn' connoting the weakest chess piece. The Real position is occupied by the Audi R8, the actual advertised product a materialization of the dream, enhancing the viewer to live like kings. The Real is opposed to the Ideal because it presents the Audi R8 as down-to-earth information. The photographic image of the R8 serves to elaborate on the verbal text which embodies the ideologically foregrounded part of the message.

The logo, as a represented participant in the image, occupies a top right position in images 1,2,3,5, and 6, which signifies its prominence. The logo in image 4 is placed in the bottom left, to emphasize the superiority of the brand and identify the product (Beasley&Danesi, 2002).

Salience: Salience attaches visual weight to an element in the image on account of positioning elements in foreground, space, size, colour contrast, sharpness of focus, all of which enable viewers to identify the salient items.

In images 1 and 2, there is a focus on the photographic image of the A4 as it occupies the right position, the New; therefore, it is given more salience than the verbal text. The visual elements are interrelated, hence creating greater visual weight on the right side of the billboard. Hence, greater salience is attributed to the A4 in images 1 and 2. Colour

contrast between the white background, which is low in modality, and the black A4 accentuates the displayed car and foregrounds it.

In images 3 and 5, the M3 coupe and F1 occupy the central position, which enhances salience. The visual features in **image 3**, such as sharpness of focus and the size of the car occupying most of the billboard space, lead to the salience of the M3 coupe. Moreover, colour contrasts between the white colour of the M3 coupe and the black background accentuates the beauty of the car. As to the F1 displayed on the zeppelin in **image 5**, the salience shifts from the car which occupies a central position, to one of its attributes (parts) which has greater visual weight on account of its size. The huge black racetyres of the F1 are the most salient element in the image. The colour contrast between the white background and the black tyre adds visual weight to the tyre, which demands the attention of the viewer. Although it is a still image, the oblique angle of the car implies dynamic movement, speed and real challenge.

In image 4, the choice of the R8, as one visual entity, colour contrast between the white R8 and the decontextualized black background add to the salience of the car and make it stand out. **In image 6**, there is no salience, no visual weight attached to the car, no details depicted and a de-emphasized background. Image 6 has failed to draw the viewer’s attention to billboard, except for the colour contrast between the white headline and the black background.

Framing

Image	Connectedness	Reason	Disconnectedness	Reason
		Colour repetition		Colour contrast
1) AudiA4	√	Text & car	√	background&car/distinct spaces
2) AudiA4	√	Text & car	√	background& car/distinct spaces
3) BMW M3	√	Text&car/pictorial integration	√	background & car
4)Audi R8	√	Text & car/pictorial integration	√	background & car
5) BMWF1	√	Text&cartyres /pictorial integration	√	Background &car tyres
6) AudiA8	√	background & car	√	Text & car/ aura of light /distinct spaces

Table 21. Results of the analysis of framing

There are no dividing lines, no empty spaces, and no frame-lines to demarcate the visual elements in all the images except image 6. In **images 1,2, and 5** connectedness is realized via the repetition of the black colour of the verbal text, the colour of the A4, and the huge black tyre of F1. Similarly, in **images 3 and 4** the repetition of the white colour of the verbal text and the colour of M3 coupe and R8 signify connectedness. In **image 5**, unity and connection are created via a repetition of colour as

shown in the white background and the white F1. The images are weakly framed, so the verbal text and the photographic image are presented as a single unit of information. In **image 6**, the black colour is repeated in both the background and the car.

On the other hand, disconnection is realized through colour contrasts of the background and the car in **images 1, 2, 3, and 4** create framing devices. In **image 5**, the black tyres contrast with white background. In **image 6**, the aura of light coming from behind the car, probably the rear lights, creates a framing device. Connectedness is also realized in **images 3, 4 and 5** via pictorial integration as the verbal text is integrated inside the picture space (van Leeuwen, 2005). In advertising, pictorial integration “absorbs the text into the dream, the fantasy” (van Leeuwen, 2005, p.12). In contrast, **images 1, 2, and 6** display the verbal text and the photographic image as if they occupy distinct spaces; hence, there is disconnection (van Leeuwen, 2005).

6. Findings

6.1 Analysis of the Verbal Mode (headlines)

Metafunction	Lexicogrammatical structure	BMW images 3&5	Audi images 1,2,4,&6	
Textual	Theme-Rheme	Minor clauses No thematic structure	1,2,4,6 Unmarked thematic structure	
Experiential	Transitivity	Minor clauses No processes	1,6	Material clauses
			2,4,6	Relational clauses
Interpersonal	Mood	Minor clauses No mood/residue	1,2,6	No mood /residue only
			1,4,6	Mood-residue

Table 22. Analysis of the verbal mode

In terms of the three metafunctions, it is evident that BMW image producers selected minor clauses as their headlines in **images 3 and 5**. Consequently, they did not employ the three grammatical structures inherent in any clause. They fostered lexical choices which strongly implied BMW’s victory and superiority. On the other hand, Audi image producers aptly employed the lexicogrammatical choices embedded in the three structures, which contributed to the realization of meaning. Within the textual metafunction, Audi image producers selected the unmarked Theme in all clauses—whether declarative, elliptical declarative, or elliptical polar interrogative—which expressed the organization of the message. The unmarked Theme choice gave prominence to Audi’s challenging and sarcastic attitude towards BMW.

Within the interpersonal metafunction, the declarative mood is the main type selected in addition to one instance of the interrogative mood,

as the interactional exchange between the image producer and the viewer trying to influence the viewer’s attitude. Another interesting exchange is the onegoing on between the two rivals, where mood plays a role in exhibiting how they negotiate their relationship in terms of defeat and victory. Although the data analysis exhibits the choice of residue as the dominant element, the missing Mood element in some clauses is predictable. However, there is no direct correspondence between the declarative mood and the lexicogrammatical realization. Some of the declaratives request or demand something (from the rival or the viewer) rather than impart information. Similarly, the interrogative mood doesnot demand information; it expresses a rejection of a current event and implies a sarcastic tone. The Mood revealed Audi’s attitude.

Within the experiential metafunction, relational and material processes are selected. Material processes indicate actions related to cars such as driving, while they can equally indicate happenings such as expiry of something. The image producers use relational clauses in the headlines to grab the viewer’s attention. Although the relational processes are not explicitly mentioned, they are strongly implied as the missing items can be easily recovered.

6.2 Analysis of the Visual Mode (photographic image)

Type of meaning	Images of BMW		Images of Audi	
Representational meaning	3analytical 5symbolic suggestive		1,2,4analytical 6symbolic suggestive	
Interactive meaning	3 demand 5offer		1,2,4,&6demand	
	Horizontal angle	3 close distance 5long distance	Horizontal angle	1,2,4,6mediumdistance
	3 &5	Oblique angle detachment	1,2,4 6	Oblique angle /detachment Frontal angle/ involvement
	Vertical angle	All images are depicted at eye-level except image 3(low angle)		
	visual modality is low in all images			
Compositional meaning	Information valueCentre-Margin		Information value1,2,6Given-New 4 Ideal- Real	
	Salienc3car5 racetyre		Salienc 1,2,4car 6 no salience	

Table 23. Analysis of the visual mode

The image producers of both BMW and Audi employed the visual semiotic resources in realizing the representational, interactive, and compositional meanings, yet in different ways. In terms of representational meaning, both rivals used analytical processes to focus on the attributes of the advertised cars. Symbolic suggestive processes were also used to confer a symbolic value on the advertised cars. BMW

image producers created an image of power and action in 5; whereas, Audi image producers created an image of darkness in 6; hence, they failed to convey the desired message despite efforts to create a mood of mystery.

In terms of interactive meaning, mood, perspective, and social distance establish image-viewer interaction. The advertisers of BMW used demand and offer images; Audi advertisers used demand images. Thus, they either establish an imaginary relation with the viewer or they display the cars as objects of contemplation. Eventually, both have a common target, i.e. persuading the viewer to purchase the advertised car and sometimes inviting him to contemplate and admire an advertised car that marks the manufacturer's superiority. The advertisers of both companies have selected images of subjectivity; consequently, they set to impose their perspective on the viewer. Both rivals use oblique angles to imply detachment prompting the viewer's contemplation, while Audi advertisers used the frontal angle in image 6 to signify involvement. However, the darkness renders this involvement impossible. Symbolic equality of power is revealed in terms of using an eye-level angle, which signifies that such cars are attainable, except for the low angle in image 3 which signifies that such a superior car is intended for high status viewers. Concerning visual modality, low modality is evident in all images in terms of a decontextualized background and a reduced palette of colours or even monochromes.

Concerning the compositional meaning, BMW advertisers prefer the centralized position, presenting the advertised car as the focus of attention. Conversely, Audi advertisers foster a polarized position either by presenting the car as new information, hence grabbing the viewer's attention. The advertised car also occupies the Real position, where the viewer can easily visualize the car. Both rivals could depict the advertised car as the most salient element. However, there are two exceptions: the racetyre in image 5 stood out as the most salient element and absence of a salient element in image 6. The two rivals equally utilized colour contrast to enhance the salience of the advertised car except image 6. Framing plays a role in the composition of visual representation, where some images display disconnectedness via colour contrasts and distinct spaces. However, connectedness is also revealed in terms of colour repetition and pictorial integration.

In an attempt to relate the verbal and visual modes, it is evident that they converge in all Audi's images- except the A8-as both modes realize the same meaning via different semiotic resources. Abiding by the KISA principle, BMW image producers used minor clauses as their headlines that revealed nonherent grammatical structures; however, they managed

to convey messages via aptly-selected lexical items. Consequently, the visual and verbal modes converge as they realize the same meaning via deploying different semiotic resources. Both advertisers managed to display the luxurious features and benefits of the advertised cars to awaken the viewers' unconscious desires to purchase them.

7. Conclusion

The multimodal analysis of the car billboard advertisements highlighted that the verbal and visual mode contributed differently to the realization of meaning. The metafunctional analysis of the headlines showed that Audi image producers succeeded in utilizing inherent grammatical structures to realize meanings of Audi's superiority, challenge, and belittling BMW. BMW image producers depended on lexical choices to convey messages of superiority and victory. Using the social semiotic approach to image analysis served to illuminate the importance of semiotic resources, such as composition, contact, angle, perspective, visual modality, and conceptual structures, in drawing the viewer's attention to the messages conveyed by multimodal billboards. Both Audi and BMW image producers aptly succeeded in deploying the visual mode to foreground the alluring features of the advertised cars, except for the Audi A8. The visual and the verbal modes converge in the realization of the same meaning - rather in different ways - in all images except the Audi A8.

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Appendix



Image (1)



Image (2)



Image (3)



Image (4)



Image (5)



Image (6)