‘Friends’, ‘fans’, and foes: Identity performance through responses to Facebook brand marketing

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of a relatively recently-emerging type of social media discourse, where individuals reply to marketing and advertising messages that appear within their Facebook news feeds. Unlike in consumer discourse such as product reviews, the primary purpose of this interaction appears to be social in nature, due in part to the brand posts' contextualization within the social space of the news feed.

This thesis is concerned with the ways that responders 'use' news feed marketing messages as opportunities for the performance of identity, and how this is achieved linguistically through discursive exchange and evaluative language. This research question is approached through a triangulated discourse analytic approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004/2014), with a particular focus on the interpersonal dimension of meaning.

The corpus includes 18 brand posts, consisting of images, text, and hyperlinks, and 540 comment responses. The first analytical layer is an analysis of the context of the interaction, which consists of a multimodal generic analysis of the form and function of the brand posts, as well as a description of the communicative purposes of responders (Martin & Rose, 2003; 2008). The second stage of analysis is a consideration of identity performance through interactive discourse exchange, using Negotiation analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Martin, 1992). Finally, the third and central layer of analysis employs Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) to investigate performances of identity through evaluation of emotions, aesthetics, and ethics.

While there is an increasingly large amount of quantitative research considering the use and effectiveness of this emerging advertising model, there is to date no qualitative linguistic research considering the role of identity in responses to brand messages. The present study addresses this gap in the literature, whilst also addressing methodological issues and suggesting adaptations for applying these linguistic frameworks to computer moderated communication.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a discourse analytic study of computer-moderated communication (CMC), with a focus on identity in social media. The data in this study consists of responses to ‘news feed marketing’ in Facebook, as well as the marketing posts themselves.

News feed marketing is a relatively new social media phenomenon. In 2006 and 2012, Facebook introduced two types of marketing/advertising features that appear within users’ news feeds, which effectively merge interactive marketing/advertising posts into the social context of the news feed in such a way as to potentially blur the boundaries between social interaction and consumer discourse. In this thesis, I investigate the linguistic resources employed by Facebook users as they respond to these promotional messages, and how these responses constitute identity work.

The data analysed in this study consists of Facebook user responses to 18 different snack food brand posts, and the brand posts themselves. The thesis comprises a triangulated approach, including considerations of multimodal genre structure, conversation structure, and evaluation. The significance of the data, analysis, and methods is discussed throughout this chapter.

1.2 Background

In modern-day networked societies around the world, use of the internet and social media sites is increasingly embedded within daily life, partially due to advances in communication technology. In this context, research indicates that the distinction between ‘online’ and ‘offline’ social interaction is becoming ever-more blurred (Mautner, 2005; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Page, Harper, & Frobenius, 2013). In addition, the flow and exchange of communication within the internet has changed since the beginning of the 21st century (Herring, 2013: 4), and the internet today is increasingly seen as a site for dynamic interaction featuring user-generated content, rather than as a network used for gathering information generated by authoritative authors. To highlight this distinction, many researchers (e.g., Yus, 2011; Jucker & Dürscheid, 2012; Herring, 2013) refer to this significant shift toward a user-driven environment as the transformation from ‘Web 1.0’ to ‘Web 2.0’ (Bolander & Locher, 2014: 16). Zappavigna (2012: 2) further highlights the social nature of Web 2.0 by referring to it as the “social web”, drawing attention to the shift towards using the internet to construct and maintain social relationships, rather than primarily as a site for information sharing.

From a scholarly perspective, the large user bases of many social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, embeddedness of social media use within users' 'offline' lives, and accessibility of collectible data make social media rich and exciting contexts for research on identity. Indeed, many such studies have begun to emerge, including user-focussed research on identity-related aspects such as impression management (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Bazarova, Taft, Choi, & Cosley, 2012; Marder, 2012; Karakayali & Kilic, 2013), personality (Ortigosa, Carro, & Quiroga, 2014), personal narratives (Page et al., 2013; West, 2013), political expression (Warnick & Heineman, 2012; Halpern & Gibbs, 2013), compliments (Maiz-Arevalo & Garcia-Gomez, 2013), and bragging (Dayter, 2014). The present study is an original contribution to the literature on CMC and identity through its focus on evaluative responses to news feed marketing.

1.2.1 Social Media

Social Networking Sites (SNS)

In 1997, the first major social networking site (SNS) was launched, and since this pioneering introduction of SixDegrees.com, there have been hundreds to emerge, with each featuring different combinations of affordances, interests and practices (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 210). SNS have been described as "bundles of technological tools that incorporate features of earlier technologies (such as personal Web sites) but recombine them into a new context that supports users' ability to form and maintain a wide network of social connections" (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011: 875). More specifically, users engage with others within SNS by constructing and presenting personal profiles, using the platform to connect with other users, and viewing their own and others' connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 2011). Users can do this through features adopted from earlier technologies such as instant chat, blogs, and emails.

While Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010: 310) explain that features, applications, and user bases of social media change rapidly, making research on social media similar to trying to hit a "moving target", they also argue that that there are underlying persistent cultural patterns and social practices that have been teased out through existing research of social media. Thus, in conducting research on data occurring in a highly successful social media platform such as Facebook, the present research takes an initial focus on the affordances of a site (which are prone to change), before embarking on empirical research on the social practices that occur *within* the site.

The Rise and Rise of Facebook

Facebook is one of the most important social media sites in modern society in terms of user numbers and rate of expansion (Caers et al., 2013: 983). Created in 2004, Facebook was initially a site only open to Harvard University students, but the site has gradually opened membership first to other university students, and then to users worldwide (Champoux, Durgee, & McGlynn, 2012: 23). In recent years, user numbers have exploded, and as of 2013, when the data in the present study was collected, Facebook reported 1.15 billion active monthly users, 819 million of which use the site through mobile devices such as mobile phones or tablets (Facebook Inc., 2013). In addition to expanding user numbers, usage 'amount' of SNS is also increasing and is often integrated into daily life (Castells, 2010).

Essentially, Facebook is a social media platform used to share communication, photos, and videos with family, friends and acquaintances. Users create accounts on the website www.facebook.com, where they are required to use their real name[1]. Users set up a personal profile, which can include personalisation with photographs and information such as political views, workplace, education, and relationship status. Every profile is laid out in a standard format determined by Facebook. In addition to profile information, each profile has a 'wall' where the user can post 'status updates' including text, photos, and links to other media such as web sites, articles, and so on. On the 'wall' the user's friends can also post comments, which may be messages to or about the wall owner, or links to sites that the poster wishes to share with the wall owner. Each user also has access to a personalised 'news feed', where they see status updates from 'friends' and from pages and brands that they have 'liked'[2].

A changing context: Marketing and advertising within Facebook

Like other SNS, Facebook is "primarily organized around people, not interests" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 219). It does not generate income from user purchases or membership fees; however, in order to financially support the site given its growing popularity, income generation without introducing user fees is a major concern for the company. One strategy

[1] This is an official requirement (Facebook Inc., 2014). However, there are obvious examples where people do not comply, and there does not appear to be a mechanism for policing this requirement.
[2] 'Liking' is a function within Facebook that is generally used to let the owner of a post know that you have enjoyed the post or content, while not actually commenting on the post.

Facebook has used since its early days is side bar advertising (Vovoreanu, 2009: 67). This is similar to the Google side bar advertisements, where the ads are on the right side of the screen, separate from the news or content feed. This model is presently still used to some extent within Facebook.

In addition to the side bar advertisements, brands have also been able to present a more ‘organic’ presence within Facebook since its early years. In 2006, Facebook began an initiative to allow brands onto Facebook, and allowed ten companies to set up Facebook profiles. In 2007, when the option was opened up to all companies, tens of thousands of companies registered (Champoux et al., 2012: 23). Facebook presence is a beneficial marketing strategy for brands, as users can visit company Facebook profiles much as they would a website outside of Facebook, where they seek to find information about the company and products. Users who ‘like’ a brand page see updates from the company within their user news feed. These updates might include promotions, contests, links to studies or articles, or comments designed to engage users in dialogue with the brand and other fans.

Brands do not pay to set up profiles, so this marketing feature is not a source of revenue for Facebook. However, the evolution of this feature eventually led to a solution to a potentially disastrous problem for the company. In the early years of the 2010’s, Facebook faced a growing challenge relating to the use of the site via mobile devices. By 2012, mobile use of the site was quickly increasing with developing technology of mobile phones and tablets (Facebook Inc., 2013: 1). Due to layout constraints however, the mobile site does not feature the side bar advertising that is used on the desktop site. Thus, the quick expansion of the mobile user base began to draw questions about how Facebook would continue to bring in advertising revenue if they did not have a viable model for advertising to mobile users (Yu, 2013).

In early 2012, Facebook developed its advertising strategy by introducing a concept known as ‘news feed advertising’ (Yu, 2013), or ‘promoted posts’ on its desktop programme. This new concept is similar to the concept introduced above, where status updates by brands appear within a Facebook user’s news feed. Unlike the ‘fan’ model however, the news feed advertising model allows brands to pay for promotional posts to appear within individuals’ news feeds who are *not* ‘fans’ of the brand. The format of the advertisement is very similar to a ‘friend’ status update, and is framed by the posts a user would see from their ‘friends’.

Below is an example of a captured screen shot from the data within this research.

Image 1: Example of brand post [LAY-2-BRAND] and comments

In addition to 1,346 'likes', the Lay's post attracted 182 comments, including those above. As seen in this data sample, the range of user comments can often vary, even if the product post is not in itself particularly controversial. With the possibility that users can post negative comments about a brand, companies typically develop strategies to maximise value and minimise the risk of this type of advertising, but they do not tend to delete negative user comments (Champoux et al., 2012).

The news feed advertising model is, in a sense, a combination of two brand promotional strategies already in place – the side bar advertisement, and the brand 'fan' model. Unlike the side bar advertisements though, the news feed advertisements are placed *within* a user's news feed, between posts from their friends and contacts, rather than in the more 'traditional' location within a separate right-hand side-bar. Thus, despite the main differences from the other two models being a matter of location of the advertisement, and a matter of whether the audience has 'liked' the brand, the new model can be seen as a new formulation of web page aesthetics, as well as a change of contextualisation of advertising and of the news feed as a social space.

Because users largely view the site as an intimate setting for communication amongst friends and acquaintances, the new strategy carried certain risks. Placing advertising in more salient locations risked alienating the customer base, as the advertisements could be seen as intrusive and distracting (Champoux et al., 2012: 23). Nevertheless, Facebook pushed ahead with this new model, and shortly after the introduction of news feed advertising model onto the desktop site in early 2012, Facebook introduced news feed advertising within the mobile site as well.

Due to the ever-increasing mobile user base, Facebook's future may very well have depended upon whether the news feed advertising model was successful in generating revenue. In fact, the timing of the introduction of news feed advertising was such that it indirectly attracted global headlines. In May 2012, Facebook made its stock market launch, which did not go smoothly; its share price fluctuated from opening at $38 per share to hitting a low of $17.55 in September 2012 (Yu, 2013). At the time of Facebook's stock market launch, consumer reactions to the recently-introduced mobile advertising model were as yet unknown, which led to speculation over whether Facebook would be able to generate a significant amount of revenue from advertising, given the increasing use of the site via mobile devices.

There are now indications that the advertising model *does* 'work'. Initial marketing reports claim that social media users are far more likely to engage with this model of advertising than with side-bar advertising. For example, social media advertising reporters Ingram (2013) and Koetsier (2013) report that the click-through rate of news feed advertising is 49 times higher than side-bar advertising, and Nanji (2014) cites a click-through rate of 44 times higher. Furthermore, mobile use of the site has continued to increase despite the introduction of mobile advertising (Facebook Inc., 2013) and in August 2013, news reports emerged that Facebook's stock price recovered and surpassed its original launch price due to high profits generated from mobile advertising (Yu, 2013).

Although data indicating the 'click-through' success of the news feed advertising model can be relatively quickly gathered by those with access, the social impact of the model will take longer to evolve and investigate. One potential consideration of such qualitative research is that because brands are promoting to fans as well as to non-fans, and are actively soliciting public dialogue, there may be a level of vocal resistance or otherwise diverse responses that did not exist with the 'fan-only' promotional model, or in other discourses that can be characterised as consumer feedback (e.g., eBay and Amazon.com reviews). The discourse in the present study emerges from a new context of marketing/advertising, which lends itself to research on how individuals (not necessarily fans) position themselves in relation to brands and promotional discourse to perform identity.

Due to the recent introduction of this model, scholarly work is only beginning to emerge, and is primarily market research focussed on the impact and optimisation of marketing, rather than on user identity (e.g., Logan, 2014; Jung, Shim, & Jin, 2015). Caers et al. (2013: 992-4) argue that there is particular value in future work that addresses the user perspectives of such advertisements. As such, the present thesis is among the first to focus primarily on the social perspectives emerging from this advertising model.

On the basis of this controversial and untested advertising model thus far being extremely successful, within one of the most successful social media platforms of all time, the present research is inspired by the question: why? Within a context where users have historically engaged socially, why would they be so willing to interact with advertisers who are technically intruding within an otherwise personal social context? This study is conducted under a general hypothesis that consumer interest is not the only (or perhaps even the main) driving factor behind user engagement with advertising in this context; rather, that individuals respond to these promotional posts as part of their social interactions, where they engage in identity performance.

1.2.2 Identity

Identity as 'performance'

The present study is focussed on a conceptualisation of identity as 'performance' (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Butler, 1990; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). In the theorisation of identity as performance, it is not seen as being defined by factors such as gender, age, nationality, etc.; rather, identity is realised when people position themselves in relation to other people, objects, and ideas. That is, identity is performed and negotiated socially. As Bucholtz & Hall (2005: 586-8) define identity, it is "the social positioning of self and other" and is "best viewed as the emergent product rather than the preexisting source of linguistic and other semiotic practices".

Of course, this is not to say that gender, age, nationality, etc., cannot be factors influencing identity performance, but assuming causal relationships between social identity and linguistic behaviour is problematic for a number of reasons. Not least of these issues is that social categories such as social class are assigned by researchers, and biological or local characteristics such as sex, age, and nationality are not necessarily the social identity categories that an individual chooses to negotiate within particular linguistic interactions (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006: 26-7). Furthermore, there are numerous issues with the use of 'biological' categorizations, such as gender; for example, being a female adult biologically does not necessarily mean that a person will identify with the gender of 'woman'. Or, being born in a certain place does not necessarily determine a person's nationality (Johnstone, 2008: 150).

In defining identity as emergent through language, rather than researching causal relationships between language and identity categories, the present research focuses on the use of language and individual choice, rather than on characteristics that are often used to categorise (and sometimes essentialise) individuals. In short, the current understanding of identity within discourse generally focuses on identity as a socially negotiated performance (Johnstone, 2008: 155). In addition to avoiding a deterministic perspective of identity, this performative focus has other advantages in that "it highlights the ways in which people decide who to be and how to act, and the extent to which they are responsible for the consequences of such decisions" (Johnstone, 2008: 153).

In this thesis, the discourse analysis of naturally-occurring data is not initiated with any pre-determined categories to focus upon, such as gender, social class, or political orientation. Rather, through using a theoretical framework where identity is seen as emergent, I allow salient aspects of social identity to emerge from the corpus.

‘Virtual’ identity

Initially, it seems possible that researching identity within internet discourse would have methodological challenges associated with the online discourse context. For example, there is potential for internet users (and researchers) to feel scepticism over the identity of others online because the lack of physical presence online allows anonymity (Donath, 1999). If the present research were conducted using a deterministic perspective, this could potentially allow an individual to represent his or her identity in an inauthentic, deceptive way – an identity representation at odds with their ‘real’ identity, and there would need to be mechanisms for ‘checking’ who the people interacting ‘really’ are.

However, as Benwell & Stokoe (2006: 245) point out, this anxiety regarding the authenticity of virtual identity is unfounded within a framework theorising identity as emergent through discourse, as “in this version of identity, 'virtual' becomes a red herring: a moniker that perpetuates the myth of the authentic, stable and essential identity. With these arguments in mind, we may decide that 'virtual identity' is simply a prosaic term for identity work that *happens* to occur online". In other words, identity that is performed online is still ‘real’ identity because there are no essential qualities that a person must accurately represent in order to do identity work. For example, whether or not a person is biologically female does not have any bearing on whether this person could ‘legitimately’ perform a female identity.

Another potential ‘red herring’ in the consideration of identity within CMC is the possibility that individuals communicating online do not perceive social consequences of their communication because they are not physically co-present. Hine (2012: 264) argues that “meaning-making spans online and offline, and that frequently the appropriate standards of behavior are judged both by participants and onlookers according to frames which are not confined to the online realm”. For example, an intentional insult that occurs online still has social meaning.

With these considerations in mind, within this research, I do not distinguish between ‘virtual’ identity and other ‘types’ of identity. In referring to ‘social’ identity, I emphasise the performed, socially negotiated nature of identity. This is not to say, however, that the context of CMC does not have implications on identity. Of interest in this study is the nature of affordances and constraints of typed language within the CMC environment (compared with verbal communication, for example), in terms of performing social identity. This is discussed further within Chapter 2.

1.2.3 Evaluation

To further expand on the mechanisms that individuals use to perform identity, I refer to theorisations of evaluative language, which is a term that is generally interchangeable with 'stance-taking language'. According to Hunston & Thompson (2000: 6-13), evaluation is used by a speaker/writer to perform three functions: express opinion, manipulate the hearer/writer's attitude, and organise discourse. These three functions are carried out simultaneously by evaluative language, and this language is one of the mechanisms for performing identity.

To provide an example of how stance-taking language can be used to perform identity, Ochs (1992) explains that a person may finish a statement using tag questions such as 'isn't it?' to index, or relate to, uncertainty, which can itself index a non-threatening or powerless identity. This could, in turn, index a social identity as a witness in court, or a student speaking to a teacher. Or, in American culture, where relative powerlessness is expected of females, the stance-taking language performing uncertainty could index a social identity of being female (Johnstone, 2008: 137-8).

Another way stance-taking can be used to convey a particular aspect of identity is through seemingly 'objective' lexico-grammatical strategies, such as expressing enthusiasm (Martin & White, 2005: 5). The comment below is an illustration of this concept, and is an example from the corpus used in the present study. In this response to a brand post, the commenter expresses 'objective' enthusiasm for the American chocolate brand Hershey's:

[HSH-1-1] Hershey's with almonds my favorite!

Although this comment is very short and can be better understood within context (as it will be analysed within this thesis), it is still apparent that this expression of enthusiasm is a performance of the writer's identity as a 'fan' of this particular brand. The methodology for the analysis of evaluative language is introduced later in this chapter.

1.3 Research aims and questions

This thesis focuses on two related research questions. The first of these questions relates to two main issues: firstly, that this particular discourse occurs within a new context where social communication and promotional discourse interact in their meaning-making. The second issue is that existing research methodologies tend to focus upon individual aspects of this context, such as meaning-making within images *or* text, and identity performance within social discourse *or* consumer/promotional discourse. Thus, the first research question is:

How do individuals use language within online comment responses to brand posts, and how can this communication be analysed?

By addressing this question, the thesis makes an original contribution in challenging established methodological frameworks by adapting them to the analysis of a recently-emerging, and thus under-researched communication context. Specific considerations, and original contributions, that result from this research question include:

- How can promotional Facebook posts be understood as interpersonal and interactive, and analysed using a framework compatible with analysis of stance-taking language?
- How can user comments be understood as socially-driven, rather than consumer-driven, whilst acknowledging the stimulus of the promotional discourse?
- How can existing linguistic frameworks be adapted to apply to CMC in order to be used in rigorous studies?

Following from the first research question, the second main research question addressed in this study is:

What aspects of identity are represented, constructed and negotiated through stance-taking user comments on Facebook brand posts?

By addressing this question, the thesis makes an original contribution to the mapping of identity features in the hybrid context of Facebook brand posts. News feed marketing was introduced within Facebook in 2006, and news feed advertising in early 2012, and **there is no existing literature on the discourse of user responses to these advertisements**; the present research addresses this gap in the literature.

Specific considerations, and original contributions, that result from this research question include:

- Do identity performances through response to brand posts have features distinguishing them from consumer discourse or Facebook comments directed to non-brand interlocutors ('friends')?
- What role, if any, do responders' 'friends' play in the semi-public dialogue between brand posts and responders? Do they constitute a silent audience, or are they invited into the dialogue by responders?

These considerations are explored in detail within Chapter 2 and throughout this thesis.

1.4 Delimitations

In order to clearly define the research aims and focus of this thesis, in this section I outline and justify its boundaries, and specify which closely-related aspects are *not* main aspects of consideration within this thesis.

Social categories

One important issue to consider in researching identity in a SNS is: who is participating – who is represented online? Sundén (2002: 100) points out that the CMC interface has a feature of hiding those within society who do not have the skills and requirements needed to participate, which creates the illusion that everyone participating is equal in terms of access to online means of representation. Although aspects of this issue could potentially be addressed through an ethnographic approach, this study does not take this approach.

Although issues of representation within the online sphere are significant and not wholly unrelated to the present research, I do not focus on these issues in depth, but equally do not claim that findings are accurate representations of any particular society as a 'whole'. Although an ethnographic study would allow for a thorough analysis of representational features (or population exclusions) such as age, gender, ethnicity, and social class, this would not usefully contribute to the research aims of this thesis because, as discussed earlier in this chapter, identity is seen as emergent, rather than as a being produced or influenced by social categories.

Consumer research

The commercial opportunities and challenges introduced by SNS advertising are attracting a significant amount of consumer research that focusses on how brands can engage with their customers (e.g., Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; Champoux, Durgee, & McGlynn, 2012), perhaps driven in part by quantifiable results such as increased site visits and sales. Such research that focuses on consumer behaviour and makes online branding recommendations can be carried out systematically within the Facebook environment, and these types of studies do provide convincing arguments that marketing on SNS such as Facebook is highly effective.

Although not a main focus of the present research, a general overview of consumer research is useful as contextual background; for example, this type of research indicates that thus far, brands have generally not attempted to limit the freedom that users experience within the advertising model, even where it constitutes negative exposure for the brand. However, detailed focus on marketing strategies, and consumer practices such as ‘follow through’ to websites and product purchases, is beyond the scope of the present research, as it does not significantly contribute to the investigation of identity-related aspects of user discourse.

Consumer communities

In addition to the growing body of consumer research focussing on Facebook, there are also several recent studies that focus on user experiences and motivations within online consumer communities (e.g., Utz, 2009) and the social influence of SNS posts (e.g., Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012). The function and structure of consumer community websites is centred on the consumer process, whether that be interacting with others in connection with a product, or obtaining information prior to purchasing a product. By contrast, within Facebook, the user comments on the brand pages are a collection of comments made by users who are (most likely) engaging in an online environment that they do not primarily use for consumer purposes.

As research suggests that pre-existing social relations are the primary focus of SNS interactions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 221), Facebook is set apart from consumer-based websites such as epinions.com, eBay, or product websites where user comments are allowed (Gray, Ellison, Vitak, & Lampe, 2013). Therefore, in this study I approach these brand pages not as consumer communities, but as a collection of user comments within a SNS organised around social relations.

Virtual communities

Although it would be possible to approach this research project with an aim of describing how the data demonstrates aspects of one, or multiple ‘types’ of communities, the benefit of using this approach must be considered. Watson (1997) makes an insightful argument, still relevant today, that rather than trying to determine whether web forums are or are not ‘communities’, it is more helpful to ask ourselves what descriptive value we gain by calling these forums communities. Watson argues that our inclination to call SNS communities stems from an intuitive feeling that these forums resemble the form of communities we are familiar with, but that it is more useful to investigate the communicative functions within SNS that lead us to attempt to describe their meaning. In a similar argument, Pérez-Sabater (2012) argues that existing research on Facebook tends to focus upon sociological and pragmatic approaches in order to identify aspects of community relationships, but that there is little research about the linguistic characteristics of communication within Facebook.

In agreement with these arguments (Watson, 1997; Pérez-Sabater, 2012), I analyse the data in this study not as online (consumer) communities, and not in an attempt to define whether, and what type of communities are formed through user comments. Rather, I investigate and describe the social communication context and the language use occurring within social media marketing posts.

Embodiment

Researching SNS communication entails consideration of many complexities of the context, which is constantly evolving. In looking at specific acts of communication, online interaction is necessarily different from offline interaction. In comparison to sensory-rich activities like social grooming and gossiping, Donath (2007: 247) claims that “computer-based communication … is decidedly austere. Hunching over a keyboard and peering at a flat screen to log into an SNS is a somatically uninspiring experience”.

However, Donath’s (2007) argument assumes that interaction within the ‘virtual’ world should be multimodally adapted if users are to engage meaningfully with each other as they do in the ‘real’ world, which carries the implication that the ‘virtual’ world is lacking in the resources that individuals require in order to meaningfully interact and perform identity. In contrast to this claim, the present study focusses on the typed language of CMC as offering users rich resources for interaction, both through representation of self and ideas, and through identity performance and negotiation.

Food, health, and morality

In focusing on snack food brands, this study comprises a wide, non-specialist consumer base, as snack products are relatively inexpensive and are widely available. However, an inescapable consideration of this methodological decision is whether the cultural context of the brands is a central factor within the overall argument of the thesis. In particular, the focus on snack food brands within this research has the potential to lead into debates about food-related health, such as obesity, which is an increasing concern in many Western countries such as the USA and UK (Evans, 2006, 2010; Evans & Colls, 2009; Tanner, Maher, & Fraser, 2013).

If a high proportion of the comments in this research corpus were to indicate relevance to the diet and/or the obesity debate, a discussion focussing on this as a major aspect of social identity would be a focus of this research within the discussion chapter of this thesis. However, although user comments about weight, fat, and shame are certainly present (more so within certain threads than others), they are by no means the overall dominant discourse topic within this type of product page. Therefore, shaming and morality relating to food consumption is not a central consideration within this research initially, but is addressed as part of wider discussions within Chapter 5.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology in this thesis has been developed in order to conduct a specific and in-depth study of the salient issues of this research as identified in the research questions, whilst maintaining focus through the restrictive boundaries described in the delimitations section above. The data selection, collection, and analysis are driven by the research questions and aims.

1.5.1 The data

The data in this research is naturally-occurring and consists of brand posts and user comments made on a range of snack food brand pages on Facebook. The data was collected from a total of six brand pages:

Brand types and names for collected data		
	USA brand	**UK brand**
Chocolate	Hershey's chocolate	Cadbury chocolate
Crisps	Lay's potato chips	Walkers crisps
'Healthy' snack	Nature Valley granola bars	Activia yogurt UK

Table 1: Brand types and names for collected data

These brands were chosen as they represent products that are inexpensive, widely available, and widely recognisable within the respective cultures. As food is a feature within many cultural activities, a variety of general topics may come up – perhaps food-related, perhaps not.

I have selected products from among the most widely popular types and brands of snack products in the USA and UK (chocolate and crisps), as well as brands that are promoted as 'healthy' (granola bars and yogurt). By including a range of products including mass-produced, inexpensive crisps and chocolate, as well as products marketed as healthy, the aim is to include Facebook comments posted by individuals from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. This resulting data is also not necessarily gender biased, as would be the case if I focussed on a typically gendered product range, such as cosmetics. That is, as description and comparison of demographic representation is not an element of this study, focussing on widely-accessible, relatively class- and gender-neutral consumer products means that conclusions made from this study describe a general population, rather than a specific demographic.

Brand pages are set up and mediated by company representatives, who post images of products or product-related promotions. Many product pages actively try to get consumers to engage with the marketing messages by asking questions. For example, the Hershey's brand page had 26 new posts in July 2013, which each attracted between 9 and 1,525 comments, with a typical post on this brand page attracting in the range of 100 comments.

Within this research, a data set consists of the brand post, which includes text and image, and thirty consecutive user comments beginning at a random point within the thread. Three data sets were collected for each brand, resulting in a corpus of 18 data sets, including 540 user comments. The analysis of this data is quantitative and qualitative, so the amount of data collected is intended to be diverse enough to identify general trends of communication but limited enough to investigate trends and specific incidents in detail.

The data has been collected manually. Each data set has been captured using screen shots, and the text has been copied and formatted to be analysed manually using Microsoft Excel. All private information is removed from the data examples provided within this thesis in order to accommodate free access and privacy concerns.

1.5.2 Analysis

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the analytical frameworks used and adapted for this research were chosen for their affordances in addressing two research questions. There are three main approaches to analysis used and developed within this thesis: genre analysis, Negotiation analysis, and Appraisal theory. Each of these is introduced in this chapter, and described in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.5.2.1 Genre Analysis

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the corpus consists of promotional discourse (brand posts) and social discourse (user comments). In order to consider the context within which user comments are made, it is necessary to describe brand posts in detail. This is done using genre analysis (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008) as the initial level of analysis in this research. In line with the other analytical tools employed within this thesis, the genre analysis employed follows the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) model (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1994/2004).

The genre analysis is conducted by analysing each data set, which includes identifying schematic stages of the brand advertisements, identifying the communicative purposes of these stages, and identifying the communicative purposes of user responses.

In order to fully account for the communicative context within brand posts, the genre analysis of each data set includes analysis of the image and hyperlinks that comprise significant meaning-making processes within each brand post. I approach this analysis by employing multimodal analytical concepts outlined by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), who have developed a framework for the analysis of images and hyperlinks as an extension to SFL. In Chapter 3, I describe the aspects of Kress & van Leeuwen's framework that are used in conjunction with the genre analysis.

1.5.2.2 Negotiation Analysis

To complement the genre analysis and Appraisal analysis of this corpus, I also consider the discourse as dialogic conversation. Specifically, I employ Negotiation analysis (Martin, 1992; Eggins & Slade, 1997) in order to analyse the interpersonal stances that individuals take in relation to the brand and other individuals engaged in dialogue in this context. For example, the Negotiation analysis enables me to consider whether individuals tend to accept propositions made by brands, reject them, or ignore them and propose their own topics of conversation.

1.5.2.3 Appraisal Analysis

At its core, this thesis relies upon discourse analysis as a means to investigate aspects of interpersonal interaction and identity performance. Specifically, the discourse analysis in this thesis is informed by the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), which is particularly relevant to this research due to its focus on interpersonal interaction. Appraisal theory is an extension of Halliday & Matthiessen's (1994/2004) work, and develops SFL analysis to further focus on meaning of language as a social process. This is explained in detail in Chapter 2.

Appraisal theory focuses on three major aspects: ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION[3]. In this thesis I focus primarily on ATTITUDE, and consider aspects of GRADUATION that relate to ATTITUDE. ENGAGEMENT is not included in this analysis for reasons discussed later in this thesis.

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[3] In this thesis, as is customary for Appraisal research, categories are represented in SMALL CAPS. References to Appraisal as a theory are capitalised, whilst references to appraisal as instances of evaluation are not capitalised. The Negotiation analysis follows these conventions as well.

ATTITUDE is a system developed within Appraisal theory that focusses on our feelings, and can be further subdivided into three categories: AFFECT, concerning emotions; JUDGEMENT, concerning the appraisal of ethics, which generally relates to people; and APPRECIATION, concerning the appraisal of aesthetics, which generally relates to objects (Martin & White, 2005).

In addition to discourse carrying ATTITUDE values, it can also simultaneously carry values within another Appraisal system: ENGAGEMENT (Martin & White, 2005). This deals with the concept of intertextuality – in how a speaker/writer positions him/herself in relation to potential responders and audiences. While the consideration of positioning is of interest within the present study, it is not addressed using ENGAGEMENT, and is rather approached using the related concept of Negotiation, as introduced above.

Finally, the third system within the Appraisal framework, GRADUATION, deals with gradability within ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT (Martin & White, 2005). For example, within AFFECT, being 'slightly disappointed' is seen as a lower-force instance of 'sadness' than being 'devastated'.

In this research, AFFECT and GRADUATION analysis is conducted manually, using Microsoft Excel. Within each data set, quantitative results are compiled, which indicate trends within a data set. The qualitative analysis follows, where specific attention is given to specific topics and communication features. Following the analysis of all data sets, a compilation of qualitative and quantitative results from the entire corpus informs discussions on aspects of identity.

A detailed description of this framework follows in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I detail the procedures for adapting this framework for use in the present research.

1.5.2.4 CMC Analysis

In addition to the focus on evaluative discourse, the research in this thesis includes a consideration of features of online communication. Internet communication is, by now, not particularly new; linguists have been analysing it for well over a decade. By the 1990's, linguistic research on CMC was well established through studies on email and chat groups (Androutsopoulos, 2006: 420; Schmied, 2012: 44). Indeed, people have been communicating online for long enough now that CMC has had time to evolve and adapt to better serve the communicative needs of those who interact online.

There have been qualitative studies on CMC cues, but they tend to focus on emoticons (e.g., Provine, Spencer, & Mandell, 2007; Dresner & Herring, 2010) and there is lack of consensus on the use and function of this particular sub-set of CMC cues. Vandergriff

(2013) argues that to date, little is known about the function of CMC cues in general, which include punctuation variations, emoticons, and non-standard capitalizations. Likewise, Darics (2013: 6) argues that the functions of CMC cues are under-researched and that not only is more research on contextual, user-centred CMC communication needed, but a paradigmatic shift is called for in order to account for the inseparable nature of verbal and non-verbal cues in CMC, just like that found in speech.

The analysis of CMC cues within this corpus intersects with the Appraisal analysis within this study. In Chapter 3, CMC cues that feature heavily in this corpus are considered in terms of what categories of Appraisal they appear to enact.

1.6 Thesis outline

The present study is organised into six chapters. The introduction chapter has provided background and motivation for pursuing this particular project, and has broadly located the study within theoretical and methodological frameworks. The research questions guide all aspects of this study, and this chapter has also broadly overviewed the delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 is a literature review covering the theoretical considerations of the study including aspects of identity, CMC, discourse analysis, image analysis, and genre analysis. This chapter locates the present study amongst existing research and introduces research frameworks that are used and adapted in this thesis.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology of this study, including data selection, collection, and preparation. It also details how existing methodologies are adapted and used to analyse the discourse from the research corpus.

Chapter 4 details the data analysis of the present research. It includes quantitative results of the three layers of analysis, as well as introductory discussion of features of the corpus.

Chapter 5 includes in-depth, primarily qualitative discussions focussed on the details of the corpus as a whole, as well as on comparisons of data sets that have comparable and contrastable features.

In Chapter 6, I conclude this thesis by summarising and drawing together the analytical results, methodological processes, and theoretical considerations introduced in earlier chapter. The original contributions of this thesis are reviewed and placed amongst literature of relevant developments in these areas of research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature with two main focusses: the nature of communication within the present-day online environment, informing the analysis of the specific context of the research corpus; and an overview of the theoretical frameworks that are used and adapted to analyse this communication.

Part one of this chapter lays the foundation for the focus on identity performance within internet discourse with an overview of 'Web 2.0' as a general communicative environment. It includes emphases on social media platforms and affordances, the theorisation and features of CMC, online marketing, intertextuality, and implications of identity within this environment.

In its focus on networked identity, the present study draws on a considerable body of previous scholarship including research on the features of Web 2.0 as a communicative environment (e.g., Herring, 2007; Papacharissi, 2009; Boyd, 2010; Walther, 2011), theorisations and empirical studies of networked identities in various internet genres such as Twitter (Zappavigna, 2012) and online consumer reviews (Walther et al., 2012; Vásquez, 2014a), and the development of advertising within this social space (Koteyko & Nerlich, 2007; Tan, 2010; Stoian, 2012; Warnick & Heineman, 2012). However, to date there has been relatively little, if any, qualitative research focussing on the linguistic representation and construction of identity through responses to the recently-emerging news feed marketing genre. The present research fills this gap in the literature and updates our understanding of marketing-initiated identity performance within an ever-changing networked society.

Social media communication in general cannot be understood as the simple relocation of verbal or written communication to an online context. Similarly, the genre of social media news feed marketing, which is co-produced by marketers and the audience, cannot be understood as the mere sum of its parts. Thus, while the present research owes a debt to these established, interdisciplinary areas of research, it also makes a unique contribution through consideration of this emerging genre as a new cultural phenomenon. With the integration of marketing into social media, it is possible for new communicative functions to emerge, much as the use of hashtags developed within Twitter as a novel and emergent use of interpersonal metadata (Zappavigna, 2011: 803).

At the very least, news feed marketing has opened up an excellent research opportunity through the public availability of authentic audience responses to marketing messages. The present research takes a step toward conceptualising the social relevance of this emerging communicative context.

Admittedly, responses to brand marketing have commercial value through use of data mining research techniques such as sentiment analysis, which is used to determine positive or negative polarity in various discourses such as online product reviews (Wei & Gulla, 2010). However, in the present thesis I focus instead on a relatively under-researched area – I use a qualitative approach to address the value and purpose of responses *for the individuals who engage with the marketing,* whether these purposes be primarily driven by the consumers, or the brands.

Part two of this chapter is an overview of literature relating to the linguistic frameworks used and adapted within the present study. I provide an overview of the ways in which discourse analysis can describe interaction and identity in conjunction with quantitative approaches. The general topics in this chapter section include previous research on the conceptualization of identity (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2008; Walther et al., 2011; Zappavigna, 2013), genre theory (Bhatia, 2002; Martin & Rose, 2003; Rose, 2007; Santini, 2007), conversation structure (Martin, 1992; Eggins & Slade, 1997), and Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005).

While each of these fields of research have been applied successfully to the analysis of a variety of discourse, including online genres, the present study is the first to apply and adapt these approaches to this particular type of internet discourse.

Chapter 2, Part 1: Contextual overview and corpus description

2.1 The landscape of Web 2.0

Crystal (2011: 1) describes the internet as “the largest database of language the world has ever seen”, and points out that because many linguistic researchers are naturally drawn to this research opportunity, internet linguistics is emerging as a new field of research. However, linguists have been analysing internet communication for well over a decade; by the 1990’s, linguistic research on CMC was well established through studies on email and chat-groups (Androutsopoulos, 2006; Schmied, 2012: 44). However, today’s online communication presents new challenges and opportunities for users and researchers, due to the quickly-evolving nature of the type of social communication that is becoming increasingly popular (Schmied, 2012: 44). The present section of this chapter is an overview of the development of internet communication, including participants and features of their communication.

2.1.1 Definition and overview of Web 2.0, SNS, and CMC

The internet environment is often called ‘Web 2.0’, which is characterised by the use of social media (Schmied, 2012: 44). Throughout this thesis, the term ‘Web 2.0’ is used to describe this complex communication context from which the corpus originates. The term is also used to implicitly emphasise that user-generated content, such as user responses, is not merely the by-product, or ‘result’ of marketing discourse, but is one of the key components that characterises the marketing discourse itself.

Despite being frequently used to describe today’s ‘cutting edge’ of internet use, the term Web 2.0 has been around since 2004 (O’Reilly, 2009). It emerged following the dot-com crash of 2001, when the web did not turn out to be ‘overhyped’ as some critics had predicted, as it led to the development of user-generated content on sites like YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, and personal blogs (Winder, 2008; Zimmer, 2008; O'Reilly, 2009). Zimmer (2008) describes Web 2.0 as a blurring of boundaries between content consumption and participation, and is a context where the individual is celebrated whilst collaboration and social networks are also enjoyed.

The present thesis contributes to our understanding of one particular web communication activity – exposure to marketing – that was previously consumption-based, and is evolving towards becoming participation-based within Web 2.0. That is, the user experience of marketing in Web 1.0 generally consisted of viewing a marketing message and potentially clicking on it to navigate to an online marketplace. In contrast, the emergent, Web 2.0 version of marketing potentially involves actually participating in the marketing message itself through dialogic response to the message. Through this process, the marketing message is integrated into the personal and complex social communication environment of the Facebook user. Thus, in keeping with Zimmer's (2008) characterisation of Web 2.0, collaboration and the celebration of the individual are achieved.

One way of defining Web 2.0 is to consider it to be a contextual level. Web 2.0 is the highest contextual level online, representing a conceptual present-day internet culture where the main function is not to seek 'official' information, but for users to post and share content and interact with each other.

Within Web 2.0, the term 'social networking site/s' (SNS) is interchangeable with social media sites, or social media platforms. Users visit a particular site, application, or platform to create and exchange content socially (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). Social media platforms are engineered by companies, and the limitations and technical affordances of the platforms are determined by the companies, not the users.

Within social media platforms, the messages, blogs, images, videos, etc. that are produced and shared are called user-generated content. Within user-generated content, creative and evolving uses of technological tools (perhaps unintended by developers) may be a reflection and a driver of cultural trends (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010).

The term 'CMC' is used in this thesis to describe specific content; CMC analysis may include linguistic description and analysis of words, or semiotic analysis of images and other multimodal content. Although the term CMC and user-generated content are technically interchangeable, the term CMC implies focus on specific instances or types of content or communication features, rather than general types of content. Further discussion of CMC follows later in the present chapter, in Section 2.1.4.

2.1.2 Evolution of Web 2.0

Many of the key features within Web 2.0 have been carried over or adapted from older forms of CMC such as email, chat, and discussion forums (Herring, 2013). As such, it is beneficial to briefly overview the development of the internet in general before leading to the argument of why a conceptualisation of Web 2.0 is particularly significant to the present research.

The obvious starting point of Web 2.0 is, of course, the invention and implementation of the World Wide Web in 1990 and 1991, respectively, by the physicist Tim Berners-Lee, who sought to “enable [the] two-way flow of information” (Brake, 2013: 591), allowing users to not only access, but also create documents. In these early years of the web, the content posted on the Web typically consisted of commerce sites, frequently asked questions, and personal web pages (Herring, 2013: 2). This is likely because initially, the technical expertise required to create documents or web pages was such that it proved a barrier to all but the more technically-minded users (Brake, 2013: 591).

Following the emergence of these early sites, the precursor to Web 2.0 can be traced back to the emergence of blogs and internet news in the late 1990’s, when websites began to become more interactive (Herring, 2013: 2). It is argued that Web 2.0 as we conceive of it today emerged in the mid-2000’s, when programming experts began creating platforms enabling others to easily create content such as web pages, and interact with content published by others (Brake, 2013: 592). Web 2.0 is characterised in many different ways, but frequently cited characteristics include participatory information sharing, user-generated content, collaboration, and new uses of web technology. The types of sites that most clearly encompass Web 2.0 features are wikis, blogs, social networking sites, and media sharing sites (Herring, 2013: 2).

The term Web 2.0 has itself been criticised for various reasons, including lack of a clear definition and the implication that it merely refers to ‘new websites’, which cannot indefinitely continue to be described by the ‘2.0’ label and must eventually move on to ‘Web 3.0’ and beyond (Herring, 2013: 3). Nevertheless, the term Web 2.0 is useful in the present thesis for its conceptualisation of a networked context where there are varying levels of control over communication.

The first level of control over communication in Web 2.0 belongs to the ‘computing elite’, who build and maintain social media platforms, shaping and facilitating the communicative environment through aesthetics, such as general layout of platforms, and the configuration of interactive tools, such as chat, messaging, and ‘liking’, for example.

The next level of communicative control belongs to the ‘average user’, who is able to use these available platforms to engage with others socially, and post creative content without requiring a particularly sophisticated understanding of programming. Those who make use of this level of communicative control can be understood as ‘content creators’. Examples of this include creating blogs and web pages from ready-made templates, which can be personalised with photographs and graphics, and uploading original messages, photos, and videos to platforms such as Facebook. In the context of the present research, advertisers can be considered to have the level of communicative control as ‘average users'; they are not able to specify the layout and tools available for their messages, but can use these tools for personalised communication. Their membership and use of social networking sites is managed by the 'elite'.

The third level of control follows from the second level; it is also experienced by 'average users'. However, this is not necessarily in the form of content creation, but rather, is in the form of response to content created by other social media users.

The interplay between these three levels of control is particularly relevant to the present research, as the often unwelcome infiltration of advertising and marketing into our everyday social lives (as facilitated by the 'elite' platform developers) has significant impact on the interactive environment of the 'average user'. In other words, I use the term Web 2.0 to emphasise not only the vast online communication opportunities for the average individual, but to imply the caveat that this communication is necessarily and opportunistically moderated by those with technical expertise.

2.1.3 User participation within Web 2.0

To complement the overview of the technological tools of relevance within Web 2.0 in general, and Facebook in particular (detailed in Section 2.2 of this chapter, below), the present section of this thesis chapter focuses on social factors and affordances that characterise user participation.

Herring (2007) refers to social affordances as "situational factors", which include information about participants and their relationships, communicative purposes, topics, and language. These situational factors are described by Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010: 311) as "social affordances", which facilitate interaction between individuals within a particular environment by offering perceptual cues. For example, a tool identifying active users within a chat room is a social affordance, as is the 'CC' field within an email message, which lets the recipient know who else was sent the message and thus shares contextual information about context of the social exchange. Within social media, an example of a social affordance is a tool that records and displays how friends are connected to each other within their social networks.

The social affordances relating to user participation within social media include: participation structure, participant characteristics, participant purpose, communication topics, and 'friendship' within social media (Herring, 2007). These are described in more detail below.

Participation structure

Participation structure relates to how many actual, actively participating, and potential people there are within an online communication situation (Herring, 2007). Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010: 310-1) describe this type of information flow and communication within social media as a two-way audience, or “many-to-many”. This is different from one-directional media, such as television and radio, where direct feedback is not possible, or two-way media, such as email and phone, where there are specific senders and receivers of communication. These distinctions, although not always clearly delineated, help to demonstrate how the “many-to-many” nature of communication within social media differs from, but is dependent upon technological tools such as email and video. Herring (2007: 19) also explains that the participation structure category also includes the rate, amount, and distribution of participation, the publicity or privacy of communication, and anonymity of participants.

The participant structure of the present research corpus is noteworthy in that it is ‘many-to-many’. This is a marked evolution from traditional forms of advertising such as television or magazine advertising, where the media is one-directional and the audience is not able to respond. By contrast, in news feed marketing, the audience is not only able to respond, but they are able to do so publicly.

Participant characteristics

Participant characteristics include user demographics, background or sociocultural knowledge, language skills, computer skills, and CMC skills, experience with the addressee/group/topic, and attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and motivations (Herring, 2007). Participant characteristics can affect what users choose to communicate, and how (Herring, 2007: 19-20).

In the present thesis, the focus on identity is a discourse approach, relying on a theorisation of values and attitudes as being emergent through discourse rather than ‘pre-existing’. As such, I do not focus on participant characteristics such as demographics, background, or language skills. This is discussed in more detail throughout the present chapter.

Participant purpose

Participant purpose includes group purpose (professional, social, etc.) and goals of interaction such as developing relationships, obtaining information, impressing others, and having fun; purpose can vary even between people involved in the same interaction (Herring, 2007: 20).

Yus (2011: 134) argues that user preference for different technological tools is driven by their social goals, and users adhere to implicit communication rules within specific channels. For example, for teenagers, email is too formal for interaction with peers and is used for student-teacher interactions instead, while social networking sites are more informal, and instant chat is used for intimate peer conversations.

Within the context of the present research, this aspect of CMC is particularly important as the concept of user-generated content entailing responses to product marketing appears to involve several different types of 'participant purpose', which can be enacted simultaneously (Ginossar, 2008). That is, within the data collected for the present research, users do not appear to be solely, or even primarily, engaging in consumer feedback, despite the fact that the comments are replies to product marketing.

Communication topics

'Communication topics' are a situational factor of CMC which relates to group topics, such as politics, feminism, or science fiction. Topic of exchange is the actual topic within an interaction, whether or not it is the stated, or 'official' group topic. So, for example, within a feminism group, the topic of exchange could be about vacation plans (Herring, 2007: 20).

In the case of Twitter (but not necessarily Facebook), Zappavigna (2012: 28) argues that microblogging may not necessarily have a particular topic, but rather, performs a 'phatic function'. That is, the content may not necessarily be the primary function of posts, but rather, individuals post tweets in order to keep in touch with an ambient audience by reminding them of their presence on the site. Zappavigna does acknowledge, however, in line with Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) that language does not convey information *or* perform an interactive function – it does both simultaneously.

In the present corpus, it is not unusual for a brand post to initiate a communication topic that is not obviously relevant to the product or brand itself. While these communication topics do relate to some of the communicative purposes of the discourse, there are often additional contextual factors that must be considered. That is, the purpose and function of discourse is often far more complex than it might appear through focussing on communication topics alone.

‘Friendship’ in social media

‘Friendship’ has become an important social feature within social media, because the meaning of the term in this context is often very different from the way a friendship would be defined in the offline world (Bryant & Marmo, 2012). Yus (2011: 133) argues that within social networking sites, the concepts of ‘friend’ and ‘friendship’ are coded. For example, within Facebook, a ‘friend’ is, technically, someone with whom a user shares a link because one or the other sent a ‘friend request’. A ‘friend’ may be someone a user does not know at all and shares no relationship with in the physical or virtual realm, apart from having sent or accepted a friend request. That is, within Facebook, the term ‘friend’ technically relates to explicit access permission – one who is a ‘friend’ has access to certain (potentially restricted) content, while one who is not a ‘friend’ does not.

The access permissions granted to Facebook ‘friends’ circumvent the subtle, spontaneous communication decisions that people would make in the offline world; within this ‘many-to-many’ setting, where the audience is often silent and invisible, specific direction of communications is not generally instinctive. For example, within a status update, a user would need to make specific efforts to ensure that each post is socially appropriate for all of the people categorized as a ‘friend’ within the platform. This is because the ‘friend’ network encompasses various types of friend relationships, including family, colleagues, romantic partners, close friends, casual friends, and acquaintances (Bryant & Marmo, 2012: 5-6). As such, Danah Boyd argues that the Facebook era is an anomaly because users struggle to balance multiple audiences simultaneously, which leads to awkwardness; this is one reason that users seek different social media platforms for different communication purposes (Hamburger, 2014).

Yus (2011: 114) argues that the literature on the attributes of social networking sites rarely acknowledges that social media platforms are also capable of altering or blurring the dividing line between interactions and networks within the physical realm and those that occur in cyberspace. Yus further explains that this can happen in three combinations: online friendships are initiated within the platform, and the communication always occurs within the digital medium; mixed-mode friendships are those that are initiated within social media but later develop within physical settings; and physical friendships are those that begin outside the internet and are later connected through a social media platform as well.

Despite this ambiguity over the relationship status implied by being Facebook ‘friends’, Boyd (2010: 44) argues that denying a ‘friend request’ is an act of social rejection, and when deciding to accept or deny friend requests, users are more likely to consider the implications of this rejection, rather than the benefits of accepting them into their social media network.

This ambiguity does not translate over all social media, however; within different social media, the coded concept of a 'friend' varies. Yus (2011) explains that within the blog site LiveJournal, users can 'friend' other users without reciprocity – a user will specify whether posts will be public, private, or for friends only, and the 'friend' status is a technical tool that determines what level of access another user has to the blog posts. In Twitter, a similar concept for 'friending' is 'following', and, like LiveJournal, can be asymmetrical as users can subscribe to other users' post feed without expectation that the other user will do the same (Zappavigna, 2012: 27).

In summary, the social affordances of social media are varied and complex. In some ways, users may have more types of information about the social context within a social media platform than they would in an offline setting. But in other ways, social media users may lack orientation, which may result in social ambiguity and anxiety. The social affordances of each social media platform are different – some radically, some subtly. It is clear that any analysis of social media communication and identity should include a detailed analysis of the social affordances of that particular platform.

Community' in Web 2.0

In considering user participation within Web 2.0, it is useful to consider also whether users in the data of this study participate as individuals, or as members of communities. One potentially useful theory to investigate this concept, which has been considered in previous studies of social media discourse (e.g., Murillo, 2008; Annabi & McGann, 2013; Pihlaja, 2014) is Communities of Practice (CofP) theory (Wenger, 1998).

This theory takes central focus on explicit membership in a group (R. Scollon, 2001). Wenger (2006) defines CofP as: "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly". The CofP theory is focussed on "learning as social participation", where members are engaged in the "process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities" (Wenger, 1998: 4, italics in original).

Wenger (1998: 73) lists a number of indicators that are useful in determining whether a community of practice has formed. They include the following basic criteria: mutual engagement of the members; members share a joint enterprise; and shared repertoire between members. Below, I investigate these three basic criteria of a CofP, and discuss considerations in determining whether the discourse in the corpus meets each of the criterion.

Mutual engagement of members

Mutual engagement can be understood as a practice where "people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with each other" (Wenger, 1998: 73). The conceptualisation of 'mutual engagement', in the case of the present corpus, is not straightforward. A simplistic description of the interaction in the corpus may suggest that this criterion is met; it could be said that the brand posts a message, and the Facebook user responds, and that this constitutes 'mutual engagement'. Also, there are instances where responders address other Facebook users within their responses to the brand post. However, I argue that there are technological factors which restrict mutual engagement, and that there is lack of evidence that mutual engagement occurs regularly in practice.

The technological restrictions on communication between brands and individual Facebook users are complex, and relate both to privacy settings and to 'types' of Facebook membership. The brand could be said to fulfil the role as the network 'anchor', as it is the interlocutor in common amongst all individuals communicating in the context of each brand page. However, the brand is not a person; while the relationship between brand and 'follower' mimics the 'friend' relationship in Facebook, there are also notable differences, which restrict engagement options. For example, while Facebook 'friends' are able to see and respond to the status update posts of 'friends', the brand does not have this access to the updates of its followers. This means that the communication between interlocutors on brand pages must follow certain 'initiation and response' rules: the brand must post first, and the Facebook users may respond. In other words, the technological interface prevents complexity of mutual engagement, resulting in a homogenous, 'top down' configuration of engagement, from brand to Facebook user, where the Facebook user has the option to respond to the brand but not to initiate engagement in this context.

The second issue with mutual engagement is that of the non-brand interlocutors. At the time of the data collection, Facebook users were not able to directly reply to a comment that is itself a reply to a brand post. In other words, 'sub-chains' of dialogue were not possible, and all responses were framed as direct responses to the brand post. Responders could, however, post a comment that lexically refers to another comment in the thread of responses; thus, mutual engagement between responders is technically possible. However, in the corpus, the vast majority of comments are responses to the brand post only, and do not engage with the other responders.

In a sense, the comments could be said to exist in 'digital proximity' to each other, which is similar to geographical proximity between interlocutors, in that responders are individually communicating within the environment and context created by each brand post. However, while geographical proximity can help in enabling interactions between individuals, Wenger stipulates that proximity alone does not constitute a practice of mutual engagement – rather, it is established through sustaining "dense relations of mutual engagement organised around what they are there to do" (1998: 74).

I argue that while 'digital proximity' of communication is evident in each data set within the corpus, there is no evidence of dense relations of mutual engagement. This argument is based on the observation that communication is typically limited to initiation by the brand and a single response turn from each of the responders, and that responders rarely interact with each other within a particular brand post, or apparently from one post to another[4]. That is, in the initial investigation of the research corpus, it emerged that relations are primarily between the brand and individual responders, and not among responders in patterns that indicate shared practice or complexity of mutual relations. This suggests that the CofP conceptualization of mutual engagement is not a feature of news feed marketing.

Members share some jointly negotiated enterprise

One of the key criteria in establishing a joint enterprise is the process of negotiation among members (Wenger, 1998: 77). In the context of the present corpus, when the two main 'types' of interlocutors are considered – the brand, and the responders – it is unclear whether there can be said to be a jointly negotiated enterprise.

It is relatively safe to say that the brand's primary enterprise is to sell products, by promoting the product itself, and by associating the brand with cultural values. The responders do not share the goal of selling products, but if they did primarily have consumer goals including product consumption and association with brand values, the commercial enterprises of the brand and the responders would be complementary. The jointly negotiated enterprise could be said to be 'satisfying specific consumer needs and desires and establishing the value of a brand'. Of course, this jointly-negotiated enterprise would entail not just the exchange of information about a particular product or brand, but

[4] : While I did not 'track' individuals to see whether they interact on other brand posts within the same brand page, there was no linguistic evidence in the corpus to suggest that relations had developed between responders who interacted within a brand page.

would entail more complex interactions relating to socio-cultural values and consumption practices within culture, including harmonious and conflictual dialogue.

However, based on initial consideration of the corpus, and in subsequent detailed analyses, it is evident that there are a substantial number of comments where consumer needs and desires do not factor explicitly, and the nature of the implicit performance of values is such that it is often unclear as to whether they constitute consumer discourse at all.

That is, while a substantial amount of the discourse in this corpus is focussed on the brand or product, a substantial number of other responses focus on cultural events and values which may or may not be said to be contributions to the implicit, values-based aspects of consumer practice.

One consideration in determining whether interlocutors are negotiating a joint enterprise is to consider whether there is mutual accountability. Wenger (1998: 81) specifies that "these relations of accountability include what matters and what does not, what is important and why it is important, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore…" and so on.

In the present corpus, the concept of mutual accountability does not seem to apply. Each comment appears to be independent, and not belonging to a system of mutual accountability among the other responders. That is, each response may focus on a wide variety of different aspects of the brand or brand post, or even to topics not particularly relevant, but these sentiments are rarely condoned or challenged by each other or by the brand. These diverse responses suggest that there is not mutual accountability in terms of 'what is important' – whether that is focus on the brand's ethical practices, the product's qualities, the practice of cultural beliefs and values, or the engagement in 'casual chat' with Facebook users and 'friends'.

It must be acknowledged that rather than indicating the presence of a CofP, the discourse could belong to a 'wider' social context, where products and brands are ever-present, but interaction with them may be on the basis of cultural familiarity and contextual availability (i.e., brand posts unexpectedly appearing within the news feed with a relevant cultural topic), rather than consumer practices constituting a CofP. In other words, although the initiator of the discursive exchange is always a brand with consumer interests, this alone does not necessarily mean that there is a jointly negotiated consumer enterprise.

The CofP is characterised by the members' shared repertoire

Wenger describes the repertoires of a CofP as including "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice" (1998: 83). A repertoire of practice involves two characteristics: "1) it reflects a history of mutual engagement; 2) it remains inherently ambiguous" (1998: 83).

In the present corpus, it is not evident that there are such shared repertoires which could be said to belong to a specific CofP, rather than to the context of web-based communication as a broad cultural and linguistic practice. That is, while there is certainly use of web-based communication practices such as emoticons and abbreviations, there does not appear to be specialist slang, vocabulary, or etiquette that is part of a particular brand community.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of a history of mutual engagement between the brand and the responders. While in many cases, it is evident that the responders are well aware of the brand, products, and general brand marketing 'identity', there is nothing to suggest that the responders have engaged in dialogue with the brand before, or that past interactions have led to further instances of dialogue.

There are a few isolated instances where responders' interactions with each other is characterised by ambiguity and indication of a history of mutual engagement, such as apparent references to inside jokes. However, in this corpus, these occur in conjunction with the technological affordance of 'friend tagging', which indicates that the shared repertoire is not between individuals who belong to a brand community, but rather, is between two people who share a pre-exiting 'friend' relationship. In other words, whilst responding to a brand post, a Facebook user 'tags' his or her 'friend', thus bringing them into a discursive exchange initiated by the brand post.

In summary, by investigating the corpus and attempting to apply Wenger's (1998) three main criteria for identifying a CofP, it is unclear as to whether this data can be described using the theory. However, it is worth also considering whether variations of Wenger's theory may be relevant in the description of the discourse. While Wenger's (1998) research initially focussed on traditional communities, such as the community of an office workplace, CofP theory was brought into sociolinguistics by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992). They describe a community of practice as: "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour… practices emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992: 464).

Within sociolinguistic research, the CofP theory has been at the core of different types of studies engaging with business-related communities of practice. Eckert's seminal (2000) research focusses on high school students near Detroit, and identifies three major groups – the 'jocks' who generally participate in school activities, the 'burnouts' who do not tend to participate in school activities, and the 'in-betweens' whose activities varied between those of 'jocks' and 'burnouts'. Eckert finds that group participation involves innovative linguistic characteristics, such as certain vowel pronunciations, as well as social practices that position them outside the norms of other groups in the school.

The main goal of Eckert's work "lies in elucidating the complex relationship between individuals' participation in practices associated with these groups – their shared repertoire of social practices defining them as more of less prototypical or core members of those groups – and their linguistic practices" (Meyerhoff, 2002: 536).

This focus on the relationship between individual language use and group membership is of relevance in the present study, as the recent emergence of this genre means that the relationship between individual practice and group participation is unclear. Given that groups define themselves through practice, it is relevant to consider whether the linguistic practices in the corpus can be said to belong to a shared repertoire of a newly-formed community.

In the initial stages of research in the present study, I focussed on CofP theory for its potential to describe the interactions within the corpus, which appeared to constitute consumer communities. One feature that potentially defines the discourse in the present corpus is that there are a variety of ways a brand post becomes visible to the user, but the only thing the responders clearly have in common is that they have each viewed and commented on the product post. These posts are 'collected' and can be viewed in chronological order on the brand's Facebook page. The problem generated by this interaction is: are these brand pages communities, or are they recontextualisations of interactions where responders do not interact with each other? And if the former is the case, what purpose does the community serve?

There have been recent studies using CofP theory that are relevant to the present research. For example, Rosenbaum and Shachaf's (2010) study extends the CofP framework to online communities, primarily focussing on the community interaction aspects of online Q&A communities such as Yahoo! Answers, WikiAnswers, and Askville. Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford (2013: 2) focus on social media brand management – but rather than focussing on the construction of brand messages and personalities targeted at individuals, they focus on “leading and connecting” groups of consumers which they call ‘tribes’.

Despite the potential relevance of these studies, the specific characteristics of the present corpus result in ambiguity over whether Facebook pages meet the criteria of “sustained mutual relationships – harmonious or conflictual” (Wenger, 1998: 125). Particularly in the case of larger brands which can attract hundreds, if not thousands of responses to individual posts, the possibility of ‘sustained mutual relationships’ between responders is unlikely. From the observational phase of the corpus analysis in the present study, it is clear that the majority of interactions on the pages occur between complete strangers who will likely never interact again. Similarly, in Pihlaja's (2014: 150) study on YouTube discourse, he finds that it is untenable to analyse these interactions using CofP theory as “‘typical behaviour’ is difficult to define and suggests that credible analysis of users requires observation and analysis of users over time, in a variety of interactions – something that has not historically been a part of YouTube research”.

In summary, each of the three criteria for constituting a community of practice is problematic when applied to the present corpus. There is little evidence of diverse and complex relations as constituted by mutual engagement between members; that is, the engagement is always initiated from brand to Facebook user, and not the other way around. Responders to brand posts do not appear to engage with each other except on very occasional instances. The existence of a jointly negotiated enterprise is contentious, and there is not convincing evidence of a shared repertoire between members. Thus, CofP theory is not useful in this study as the responses to brand posts do not constitute sustained interaction amongst a group of people, and therefore I do not further engage with theories of community in this thesis.

Ultimately, following this initial investigation, I argue that CofP theory and other similar theories of ‘community’ cannot be used by researchers to conceptualise interlocutors engaging with brand marketing as members of a community. However, this conclusion is noteworthy in terms of the investigation undertaken within this thesis, as the exclusion of CofP theory leads to the investigation of identity not through community, but through the range of interactive aspects enabled by this form of communication. In the following sections, I highlight how the communication is shaped by the medium, and I identify the relevant interactive and identity-relevant elements within the corpus.

2.1.4 Description of CMC

There are a number of terms used to describe the communication that occurs within Web 2.0. One of the most widely-used terms, ‘computer-mediated communication’ (CMC), became widely known in the 1990’s (Crystal, 2011: 1). Due to its wide use and general descriptive qualities, this is the term that is used throughout the present thesis.

There are many other phrases that are used to describe communication on the internet, such as: ‘electronically mediated communication’ (EMC), ‘digitally mediated communication’ (DMC), ‘cyberspeak’, ‘netspeak’, ‘Netish’, ‘Weblish’, ‘electronic discourse’, ‘computer-mediated discourse’, ‘e-language’, (Crystal, 2011: 2-3) and ‘internet-mediated communication’ (Yus, 2011). Crystal (2011: 1), points out that one reason for these various terminology preferences stems from an argument that the term ‘computer-moderated communication’ (equivalent to ‘computer-mediated communication’) is a problematically broad descriptor because it may encompass all forms of communication, such as language, video, music, etc. However, in the context of the present research, this abstraction is useful precisely because of this applicability to multimodal communication.

The present thesis adopts Herring’s (2007: 1) definition, which describes CMC as "predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony". Herring further specifies that online language can be identified as ‘computer-mediated discourse’ (CMD). In line with these terms, the data in this thesis is referred to both as CMC, and more generally as ‘discourse’.

Arguments over technological affordances are also at the centre of the debate over terminology. For example, Crystal (2011: 2) dismisses Herrings’ (2007) definition of CMC, as he claims that “people do not really feel they are holding a computer up to their ear when they talk on their cell phone”. However, Crystal’s argument is increasingly weak given recent developments in mobile technology which have led to people using their mobile phones as “honorary computers” (Herring, 2013: 6). Another example of the blurring of internet/telephony communication is the increasing popularity of the platform WhatsApp, which is an internet-based chat application which allows users to use their mobile phones to access a social media platform where they send text messages, as well as text chat and voice chat (Jucker & Dürscheid, 2012: 43). Ultimately, as argued by Herring (2013), the use of the term CMC is based on its historical use as a term describing the communication that occurs using digital devices.

Another consideration of digital devices is that within the past five years, the distinction between online social media and mobile social media has become increasingly blurred;

Humphreys (2013: 22) argues that while the early mobile social media focused primarily on GPS-related applications, currently, people use their mobile devices to access social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

The changing ways people use digital devices also have an impact on the ways we communicate with these devices. Jucker & Dürschield (2012: 40) argue that "any type of communication is influenced by the context and the physical affordances of that mode of communication, such as the specific technical properties of electronic devices." Thus, it is worth bearing in mind that the very existence of CMC-specific language is due at least in part to the relative speed and ease of communicating using devices such as mobile phones. For example, Benwell & Stokoe (2006: 260-3) argue that CMC has more in common with spoken discourse than with offline written discourse due to the tendency toward rapid writing and responses within the medium. Furthermore, as social media continues to migrate to mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops (Humphreys, 2013: 21), this communication will likely continue to evolve. Specific features of CMC are described in detail in Chapter 3.

CMC as a sufficient, not deficient mode of communication

As part of the investigation of the social importance of news feed marketing interaction, it is necessary to consider the nature of CMC and how it may or may not enable meaning-making differently to other modes of communication.

In this thesis, I primarily focus on the plain-text messages that individuals write in response to multimodal brand posts. The contextual descriptions of the data in the present study include comparisons of CMC to face-to-face communication at various levels, such as the technological appropriation of the concept of 'friendship', as discussed earlier in this chapter. Another consideration, also discussed earlier in this chapter, is the complex social environment of the 'many-to-many' context within Facebook, where the diversity and extent of the audience far surpasses that of a typical face-to-face situation.

Other potential considerations relating to CMC as a mode of communication may include whether – and how – meanings typically conveyed by verbal intonation or facial expression are possible through plain-text communication. For example, many CMC researchers are concerned with the lack of particular nonverbal cues such as gesture and facial expressions when CMC is compared to face-to-face communication. Some early CMC theorists (e.g., Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976; Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & Mcguire, 1986; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986; Daft & Lengel, 1986; Lea & Spears, 1992; Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995) claim that CMC is a deficient form of communication due to lack of nonverbal cues, and therefore cannot accomplish particular social functions such as intonating the ‘warmth’ experienced in face-to-face communication (Walther, 2011). However, these theories and supporting empirical studies have largely been rejected within more recent research on CMC (e.g., Dennis & Kinney, 1998; Nowak & Biocca, 2003; Walther, Deandrea, & Tong, 2010) for various reasons including disproved assumptions and evidence of flawed research design (Walther, 2011).

Similarly to the researchers who theorise CMC as a deficient form of communication, some researchers (Childress & Braswell, 2006; Barnes, 2009) claim that in learning situations, making use of multimodal communication resources such as avatars can counteract the ‘deficiency’ of plain-text CMC. However, this research assumes, rather than proves, that a three dimensional representation of a communicator improves the interpersonal aspects of communication.

While it is still unclear why individuals often choose to use plain text over multimodal options to achieve social goals through CMC, the fact remains that they do so. Walther (2011a: 446) argues that the still-pervasive use of “plain-text messaging through e-mail, mobile phones, and the 140-character Twitter tweet suggest[s] that text-based CMC is not at all gone” and remains relevant to us as social individuals and as researchers.

Within the present thesis, I see plain-text communication as neither deficient nor superior compared with other modes, and the meanings produced are not more or less ‘real’. While it may be unclear as to why, it is established in the literature that plain-text communication is simply a mode preferred in general by many people in particular contexts, at times in favour of other, more technologically complex modes.

Perhaps the preference for plain-text communication in many CMC contexts is due to the relative efficiency of the mode, given the communicative goal and communicative tools available at the time. These tools include not only visual, phonetic, and lexical cues, but also contextual information afforded and implied by different modes.

This can be demonstrated through examples applying the contextual and technological features of CMC discussed in this chapter. For example, relaying birthday wishes or making casual contact with a friend may be best achieved in particular instances through a plain-text message in the semi-public context of Facebook, as it does not commit the writer to a time-consuming exchange, and the context achieves the informal level of intimacy desired by the writer. Meanwhile, more detailed and personal communication, such as proposing and arranging a coffee date with a local friend to discuss a specific personal issue, may, at times, be best achieved through a more complex and private mode, such as through a telephone conversation, a mode where a speaker may also produce emotions implicitly through intonation, rather than explicitly through words. Or, communicating with a long-distance romantic partner may be most efficiently achieved through online video chat, as the ability to see each other in respective local surroundings may serve an interpersonal function of sharing presence over distance, which enables re-establishing a level of intimacy that is difficult to maintain in long-distance relationships (Neustaedter & Greenberg, 2012).

In short, while it is useful to explore the contextual, technical, and lexical affordances of particular instances of CMC, in the present research, I do not engage deeply with the debate on the potential superiority or inferiority of any particular mode of communication. Rather, I focus on exploring the meaning-making role of plain-text discourse, which I assume to achieve at least some of the communicative goals of those who engage in it, as it is used extensively even in cultures with a plethora of other modes readily available.

CMC cues

There are several aspects of communication, such as tone, interactional goals, and social norms, which are enacted through use of 'CMC cues', which are specific types of language use found within electronic communication (Herring, 2007). For example, Yus (2011: 118) finds that orality may be carried out through a variety of linguistic features such as letter repetition (e.g., 'Oooooo yummmyyyyyy'), capitalization (e.g., 'NO GMO LAY'S sort it out!), emoticons (e.g., :( ), and creative punctuation (e.g., YES!!!!!..........the best in the WORLD!!!!!!!).

Despite emerging research and theories on the use and meaning of CMC cues (especially emoticons), these cues are still under-researched (Vandergriff, 2013). They are relevant to the analysis in this thesis to the extent that they contribute to the overall evaluative meaning expressed in the users' comments.

Martin & White (2005: 11-12) argue that linguistic analysis using the Appraisal system makes clear that in speech, intonation and voice quality contribute to interpersonal meaning, not as marginal paralinguistic speech characteristics, but rather as central to meaning-making. In the present study, I make a similar claim; the CMC cues within the corpus are not paralinguistic, but rather, are central to the meaning-making within the discourse. As such, they are considered not as 'separable' features of CMC, but as meaning-making resources along with 'standard' plain-text language, and are considered within the Appraisal analysis described later in this chapter.

Zappavigna (2012: 149), who uses Appraisal theory in her research on social media discourse, describes ten types of nonstandard orthography within her Twitter corpus. Of these, the following categories are relevant within the present corpus: phonetic writing, vowel [letter] removal, initialisms, numbers homophones, letters homophones, emoticons, and non-standard [unclear] spelling. Lee (2002) and Crystal (2001) find similar categories in their analyses of online conversations of Hong Kong residents, and in native English speakers, respectively (Poon, 2011: 96). Furthermore, there is frequent use of non-standard grammar to comic effect in CMC, which is more likely to be found in speech than in written communication, and also tends to escape sanction by fellow CMC users (Crystal, 2001).

In the investigation of CMC, a consideration of context, form, and ideology[5] are all relevant, and therefore, an analysis of discourse structure is a further level of interest in the present study. As Bucholtz & Hall, 2005: 586) explain, "identity does not emerge at a single analytic level – whether vowel quality, turn shape, code choice, or ideological structure – but operates at multiple levels simultaneously …it is in interaction that all these resources gain social meaning".

The description of CMC cues continues in Chapter 3, where I outline the CMC cues relevant within the research corpus, demonstrated with examples collected from the corpus.

Summary of Web 2.0 as a communicative environment

In summary, within this section of the present chapter I have explored Web 2.0 as a communicative environment where users are reliant on technology to shape their interactions, as social media platforms are built and controlled by the computing elite, who have significant control over the modes of communication available to the users. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.2 of the present chapter, below.

People who interact within Web 2.0 are able to take advantage of various communicative tools and modes such as avatars, video chat, and plain text, in order to interact in a dynamic environment. The uses of these modes are, in some ways, reflections of offline modes of communication such as face-to-face chat. In other ways, however, online communication is characterised by novel uses of language via such features as emoticons, nonstandard orthography, and novel metadata use (e.g., hashtags), which do not appear to reflect offline modes of communication.

[5] For an explanation of the use of the term 'ideology', see section 2.4: Critical Discourse Analysis

As with all language, CMC is not a fixed practice, and I argue that where contextual ambiguities are broadly problematic within Web 2.0, communicative practices evolve to meet the interactive demands of web users. In other words, CMC may constitute a reconceptualisation of social functions, such as 'friendship', and the ability to widely transmit communication to an unseen social network. Further implications of CMC are described in Section 2.2 of the present chapter, below.

2.2 Interaction within social media

In this chapter section, I introduce platform-related aspects of the CMC context, particularly related to Facebook and the data analysed in the present study. This includes discussions of technological affordances, marketing within social media, intertextuality, recontextualisation of communication within Facebook, an exhaustive technical description of the Facebook home page, and an investigation of the identity work performed within Facebook.

2.2.1 Social media platforms and technological affordances

In the previous section of this chapter, a definition of Web 2.0 was introduced, in which Web 2.0 is characterised by the use of social media (Schmied, 2012: 44). However, it is difficult to identify the unique qualities of social media as opposed to other media, because, as Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010: 310) argue, "all media have a social element." Therefore, in order to more clearly describe Web 2.0, the qualities and affordances of social media must first be explored.

Social media platforms have different technical affordances – modes and mechanisms for communicating – which, in part, influence the ways that individuals use them. While it may initially seem useful to begin by differentiating between Facebook and other media, or to categorise types of social media platforms, this is difficult for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Hogan & Quan-Haase (2010) explain that platforms and user-bases evolve together – so, if a particular feature exists within a social media platform, users will decide whether – and how – to use it, even if it is not what the platform developers had in mind. Such was the case with Twitter hashtags, which were originally developed as a way for users to classify post topics for searchability (e.g., #obama). But, through user creativity, the hashtag now performs a variety of grammatical functions. For example, Zappavigna (2011: 792) identifies uses of hashtags which, in Systemic Functional Linguistic terms (Halliday & Matthessen, 2004), function as 'Things' (agents carrying out an action, such as people), 'Classifiers' (descriptions of social categories within which the 'Thing' belongs), and

Processes (actions, which are typically realised by verbs). The examples Zappavigna uses to demonstrate these grammatical functions are: "…pathetic #obama supporters…" (Classifier); "…she finds #obama cool…" (Thing); and "…Volunteer to #helpbushpack" (Process). Zappavigna also identifies more elaborate types of humorous play memes (e.g., #DONTJUDGEME; #AREYOUSERIOUS) (Zappavigna, 2012: 93). Because the use of features is dependent not only on straight-forward technological possibilities, but also on the evolution of how users have adapted the functions to serve more complicated social goals, categorization of social media by the technological affordances available within that platform is missing the point, somewhat, of understanding the use of social media.

Another problem with classifying social media is that, as Dylko & McCluskey (2012: 252-3) argue, classification and explication of user-generated content types is obstructed through a process of hybridization, or "media convergence", where the technological features of social media become similar to another. The overlap in technological features is seen in the major social networking platforms, and as a result discerning between 'types' of social media is difficult (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011: 266). The features common to many platforms include various configurations of email, ratings, tags, comments, blogs, instant messaging, status updates, and content sharing.

Distinguishing between social media and earlier forms of media is also problematic; the transformation from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 is so pervasive that even the more basic 'traditional' online tasks are interactive. For example, Grinnell (2009: 577) describes user roles during the Web 1.0 period as "clearly delineated" in a supply-and-demand system, where companies offered information and users called upon this information. Although this may initially appear to still be the case for online tasks such as using search engines, Baker & Potts (2013: 188) argue that even information sources have transformed within the Web 2.0 environment and are interactive platforms rather than "uni-directional portals", as they were within Web 1.0; this transformation can be seen by considering the popularity of Wikipedia as a general information source. Similarly, Pariser (2011) argues that Google is no longer a 'mere' search engine where users seek static information sources; rather, Google has developed algorithms that gather data on user behaviours and locations, and return personalised search results based on what the algorithms predict the user will find most relevant.

The distinction between searching for information vs. using social media becomes even more blurred when attempting to describe the primary function of some well-known social media platforms. For example, Zappavigna (2011: 788-9) argues that while use of search engines has become the dominant means for locating information and searching for content, Twitter is an example of a social media platform that could be seen as a 'search engine' where users actively search for and identify with real-time opinions and communities of shared values.

In short, within Web 2.0 it is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly categorise social media platforms according to their affordances and uses. In an alternative solution to this problem, Herring (2007) argues that CMC system features (i.e., social media platform features) can be categorised. Herring's goal in categorising these features, which complements the goals of the present research, is to understand how the features of social media platforms have the potential and tendency to influence CMC discourse – or, to understand what types of discourse are produced using particular technological tools. Herring (2007: 13-7) describes ten "medium", or technological categories (as opposed to situation, or social categories), which are listed below.

Synchronicity: exchanges that are performed in real time are synchronous (e.g., 'real time' chat), while messages are asynchronous when they are stored online and do not require simultaneous log-in between participants (e.g., email). However, Jucker & Dürscheid (2012: 43) point out that in typical chat conversations now, message transmission is not 'synchronous' in the sense that communication is sent as stroke-by-stroke, as it is produced; rather, they argue that chat functions are "quasi-synchronous" because users are logged on simultaneously but messages are transmitted turn-by-turn. As with spoken vs. 'traditional' written discourse, Herring (2007) argues that synchronicity can have significant impact on structural complexity and communication behaviour.

Message transmission (1-way vs. 2-way): 1-way messages are transmitted as a whole message, while 2-way messages are transmitted line-by-line as they are produced. These features have impact on turn-taking behaviour (Herring, 2007).

Persistence of transcript: the length of time a message is stored on a system (Boyd, 2007; Herring, 2007. For example, emails tend to remain on servers until they are deleted. On the opposite end of the timescale for 'persistence of transcript', Kotfila (2014) describes the wildly popular platform SnapChat, introduced in 2011, where messages 'self-destruct' on the server a mere one to ten seconds after they are received by the intended recipient. Herring (2007) argues that 'persistence of transcript' features have impact on users' meta-linguistic awareness and reflection on communication. However, Hogan & Quaan-Haase (2010: 315) argue that although the data on social media may be persistent, in reality, the use of social media is oriented toward the present, and the "unfolding in the here and now of cultural, environmental and political events and people's lives".

Size of message buffer: the number of characters allowed within a single message (Herring, 2007). Email is virtually unlimited, while on the shorter end of the scale, Twitter, which was developed in 2006, allows users only 140 characters per message (Zappavigna, 2011: 790). Herring (2007) argues that buffer allowances have impact on message lengths and likelihood for structural abbreviations within messages.

Channels of communication: the types of medium supported within the communication, such as video, audio, animated graphics, etc. (Herring, 2007).

Anonymous messaging: some platforms allow or require users to create usernames in order to facilitate anonymous communication (Herring, 2007). Researchers have found that anonymous messaging can have effects such as increased anti-social behaviour (Donath, 1999) and increased freedom with identity performance (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

Private messaging: a technological feature allowing users to send and receive messages in a private channel that is not accessible to uninvited users (Herring, 2007).

Filtering: a technological feature allowing users to block messages from users with whom they do not wish to interact (Herring, 2007).

Quoting: a technological feature allowing users to quote messages partially or in entirety without having to retype or copy/paste (Herring, 2007).

Message format: the order in which messages appear (e.g., new messages tend to appear at the top of a comment thread in blogs) (Herring, 2007).

In addition to these categories, Boyd (2007) argues that one of the fundamental qualities of social networking sites also include searchability, where we can manually locate information within a site, and invisible audiences, where strangers are able to access some content of a user's profile.

The chart below includes a summary of the technological affordances as described above, and how the affordances are featured within Facebook. The majority of the descriptions of Facebook affordances below are derived from observation of the site, while some technical affordances are cited from the Facebook Help Centre web page.

Technological categories and Facebook features (partially adapted from Herring, 2007: 13)	
Technological category	**Facebook affordances**
Synchronicity	Most activity is asynchronous, such as status updates and comments, tagging, etc. Text chat feature is quasi-synchronous. Video chat feature is synchronous.
Message transmission	1-way: Messages are transmitted in their entirety, rather than letter-by-letter or line-by-line. This includes updates, comments, and the chat feature.
Persistence of transcript	Varies; different types of data are stored on Facebook servers for different lengths of time. Generally, information such as messages, content, and user activity is kept on Facebook servers indefinitely, or until manually deleted by users or account is deleted. Information on the advertisements a user clicks is kept for a limited period (Facebook Inc., 2015a).
Size of message buffer	Within status updates, it has been reported that as of November 2011, Facebook allows 63,206 characters (Lavrusik, 2011).
Channels of communication	Embedded videos can be posted on Facebook. Video chat is available. However, most communication is through written text and posted photos.
Anonymous messaging	Facebook requires users to register with “the name they use in real life” for their account (Facebook Inc., 2015b). Creative usernames can be created but are used as web addresses rather than as ‘handles’ for interaction.
Private messaging	Most of the communication on Facebook occurs within public, or semi-public access (for example, a user can determine that only friends, or only friends and friends-of-friends can see certain types of updates). Private messaging is also available.
Filtering	Although each user can control who can post on their timeline, any Facebook user can send a message to another user (Facebook Inc., 2015c).
Quoting	There is no quoting feature – users must copy and paste text in order to quote. Users can comment directly and specifically on most content, however, and content can be ‘shared’ with other users, which is a form of quoting.
Message format	On comment threads, the most recent comments appear at the bottom. Within user walls, the most recent updates appear at the top. Within news feeds, the most recent updates generally appear at the top but Facebook also has an algorithm where ‘top’ posts (ranked by a ‘popularity’ algorithm) appear at the top.
Searchability	One of the main search features in Facebook is the people search, where users can locate specific people by searching for specific criteria, such as being a graduate of a particular school during a particular year. Users can also search through their ‘friends’’ ‘friends lists’, and find other users with similar interests, or search for groups or organisations.
Tagging	Another notable function, which deserves a category of its own is ‘tagging’, which is when an individual is identified within, and linked to a photo. Another form of tagging is done when a user sees a post or an advertisement, and within the comments field they mention another user. The user mentioned is then linked to this post or ad, which means the post appears on the user’s wall, and the user is notified of the tag. Within Twitter, this function is accomplished with the @ symbol.

Table 2: Technological categories and Facebook features

Herring (2007) acknowledges that this list of categories is open-ended, and as technological systems continue develop and researchers better understand how people use these technologies, there will likely be appropriate additions and omissions. For example, as mentioned above, Jucker & Dürschield's (2012: 43) argument regarding synchronicity demonstrates how practices change and the categories may need to be revised. For the purpose of the present research however, this list of categories provides a useful starting point for the description of the specific affordances of Facebook as a social media platform, and provides terminology for discussing the types of user activity found within the corpus data.

In summary, the various social and technological affordances of social media make it impossible to achieve any sort of precise description of a platform as a context or as an opportunity for particular types of user engagement. Because Facebook tools are quasi-synchronous and asynchronous, and communication is extremely diverse as it can be mono-modal or multimodal, textual or verbal, formal or informal, the platform does not embody one particular type of communication, but facilitates all types of communication (Jucker & Dürscheid, 2012: 61). Although this media convergence imposes research challenges, it also means that by studying a particular forum of communication within Facebook, there is potential for insight into a more broad comprehension of social media discourse in general.

2.2.2 Social media marketing

Historically, advertisers have always sought to place advertising and marketing in any setting they can reach consumers. So, it is unsurprising that with the increase in online activity, advertisers have capitalised on the internet as an opportunity to sell (Tuten, 2008: 1). However, new advertising opportunities do not necessarily simply entail using the existing advertising model in a new place. Rather, as has happened with internet advertising, the opportunities for advertising online have changed the very philosophy of advertising (Tuten, 2008: 1-2).

This argument has emerged not only within the field of advertising research, but also within the humanities. Warnick & Heineman (2012: 100), approaching social media marketing through the field of rhetoric studies, argue that "advertising via social networking is not simply an online reproduction of traditional word-of-mouth advertising but rather a more complex process".

One of the major paradigm shifts that advertising has undergone in its emergence within social media is a reconfiguration of the traditional one-way communication in the traditional media types such as television, magazine, outdoor advertising, newspaper, and radio. By contrast, social media marketing takes advantage of the interactive opportunities in this environment. As Tuten (2008: 3) argues, advertising in Web 2.0 "encounters the 'perfect storm'… [it] truly enables two-way (or multi-way) communication between brands and consumers. Online, advertising becomes more about conversations, connections, and shared control and less about passive consumption of packaged content".

Furthermore, Tuten (2008: 3-4) claims that the 'interruption-disruption' model of traditional advertising is dying out, where consumers were compelled to tolerate advertising interruptions because they understood it was necessary for the funding of the media content. Now, Tuten argues that consumers are producers and controllers of their media content in an age of "media democracy". However, Tuten's research does not take into account that advertising online is (and was, in 2008) still a relatively new phenomenon, and as such it is also possible that at the time of her argument, the infrastructure for placing interruptive advertisements did not yet exist. Indeed, in any given period of time using the internet, one is likely to be exposed to numerous and highly disruptive advertisements in the form of pop-up, auto-scrolling, auto-play, banner, and in-text advertisements in the course of viewing content from internet news to blogs to personal websites. While some services (e.g., Spotify) allow users to purchase 'premium membership' packages and avoid advertisements (Spotify, 2015), other platforms, including Facebook, do not. Thus, I argue that the possibility of "media democracy" was a short-lived concept.

To date, there is a significant body of literature addressing business and marketing strategies and concerns for social media marketing, such as brand management (Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013) improving brand post popularity (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012), social media marketing for universities (Bélanger, Bali, & Longden, 2014), and issues that some brands face in relinquishing control to the audience (Savulescu, 2014). These studies take an approach focussing on the production and form of marketing content as eliciting more or less favourable responses from the audience as (potential) consumers.

Brand-focussed research is concerned with strategies for developing brand-consumer relationships in ways that are favourable to the brand; cultural context is explored only where it is perceived as being relevant to brand goals. In contrast, the present research addresses, in part, the many ways that (consumer) identities *emerging* from this discourse may have broader, deeper significance within all aspects of culture. It is this concept of emerging identities within a brand-infiltrated context that is addressed in the present research. Conceptualisation of responders as potential consumers is certainly warranted, as the discourse emerges from interactions between brands and individuals. However, by conducting a relatively objective analysis of the linguistic features of the discourse, individuals can be conceptualised as having multiple, conflicting, and complex identities, many of which are of little relevance to brands. That is, through focussing only on the brand goals and consumer identities of the audience, the existing literature on social media marketing fails to account for many of the complex ways in which individuals engage with brand marketing. It is this gap in the literature that the present study addresses.

2.2.3 Intertextuality

One of Facebook's key technological features is a constant recontextualisation of content and comments, which is described in the present thesis as intertextuality. This concept is central to the understanding of how a Facebook user is exposed to content that has been directed to him or her through a variety of social relationships, including consensual friendship communication, consensual or non-consensual marketing discourse, and non-consensual advertising discourse. In turn, the simultaneous display of content recontextualised from various sources helps to explain why the social context of an individual's news feed is complex and serves multiple social functions.

Intertextuality is a concept that can prove difficult to pin down; the term 'intertextuality' has undergone multiple definitions and redefinitions by various theorists (Allen, 2000: 59). The term was coined by the French scholar Julia Kristeva in the 1960s within her influential work on the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (Fairclough, 1992a; Johnstone, 2008). The concept of intertextuality is centred on the idea that all utterances made within a context are influenced by previous utterances and existing patterns of meaning and evaluation. Furthermore, all utterances seek to promote further responses, which means that as soon as an utterance is made, it belongs to the system of language and meaning which includes past and future utterances.

Bakhtin argues that intertextual analysis should accompany textual analysis; while a linguistic analysis will show how texts draw upon linguistic systems (such as grammar, vocabulary and textual organization), intertextual analysis highlights the role of society and history on the production of texts, through resources such as genres (Fairclough, 1992b: 195).

The ambiguity of the term ‘intertextuality’ is perhaps compounded by its use; in discussions of intertextuality, it is not always made clear which ‘type’ of intertextuality is being discussed. Fairclough describes two types of intertextuality: manifest and constitutive. Manifest intertextuality is characterised by “the explicit presence of other texts in a text”, while constitutive intertextuality, or interdiscursivity, is “the constitution of a text from a configuration of text types or discourse conventions” (Fairclough, 1992a: 117-8).

Furthermore, within manifest interdiscursivity, Fairclough describes three different modes of intertextual relations: sequential, embedded, and mixed intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992a: 117-8). In the table below, I outline these different types of intertextuality and provide examples of each type.

Types of Intertextuality			
Intertextuality type	**Modes of intertextual relations**	**Description**	**Example**
Manifest Intertextuality Other texts are explicitly present within another text; may use quotations or explicitly respond to a specific text	Sequential	"different texts or discourse types alternate within a text" (Fairclough, 1992a: 118).	News articles: journalists paraphrase information they have gathered from various sources
	Embedded	"one text or discourse type is clearly contained within the matrix of another" (Fairclough, 1992a: 118).	Quotations: the writer includes direct text from another source within quotation marks, and has not changed the text at all
	Mixed	"texts or discourse types are merged in a more complex and less easily separable way" (Fairclough, 1992a: 118).	Textbooks: it is difficult for the reader to determine which text is quoted, paraphrased, or original
Constitutive Intertextuality (interdiscursivity) Discourse conventions (e.g., genres, discourses, styles, modes, voices) draw on previous texts		"the constitution of a text from a configuration of text types or discourse conventions" (Fairclough, 1992a: 117-8).	An advertisement, where a statement such as "research has shown" draws on scientific discourse genres to increase authority, but places this within the genre of advertising where citation of the study is not given (Rahm, 2006: 203).

Table 3: Types of Intertextuality (adapted from Fairclough, 1992a: 117-130)

The distinctions between different types and modes of intertextuality are particularly relevant within the discussion of intertextuality as it applies to the present study. Manifest intertextuality is the type of most relevance when describing the communicative context(s) represented within a particular data set within this corpus. In other words, when looking at a data set as a whole, it is very clear that there are multiple utterances created by, and attributed to, different individuals, because their username appears next to their comment, which appears linguistically exactly as it was written[6]. Specifically, this is embedded intertextuality.

Within the present thesis, the term 'intertextuality' relates to Fairclough's (1992a) definition of manifest intertextuality, and more specifically embedded intertextuality. By contrast, where discussion involves the higher-level meanings evoked within a text, such as genre conventions, styles, and discourses, I use terminology associated with the genre analysis framework, rather than the term 'intertextuality'.

2.2.4 The context and recontextualisation of the corpus data

One of the ways that communication on Facebook is recontextualised (through manifest intertextuality, as described above) is the process of user 'wall events' being posted in multiple places.

Androutsopoulos (2014) describes communicative events on Facebook, or 'wall events', as being the basic unit of analysis for Facebook data. By this conceptualisation, each data set within the present corpus could be understood to be a 'wall event'. By Androutsopoulos' (2014: 7-8) description, the characteristics of a wall event are that it is "a spatially and temporally delimited, multi-authored sequence of contributions on a Facebook timeline", and that it begins with a status update consisting of features including text, photos, videos, links to web content, and so on, which viewers can 'like', or respond to through comments.

The issue of recontextualisation arises over who 'owns' these wall events. On one hand, the individual who posted the wall event is the 'owner' of this interaction as the initiator. But those who 'like' or respond to the wall event also have 'ownership' over their part of the interaction. This 'ownership' can be iterated when wall events that an individual 'likes' appear in the news feeds of his or her 'friends' (e.g., '[xxx user] liked this post').

The way Facebook manages this multiple 'ownership' is as follows. Content created by individual users is posted to that individual's 'wall'. The 'wall' is a collection of that user's posts as well as content that has been explicitly 'shared' with that person by his or her 'friends' (e.g., public happy birthday wishes or news articles that a 'friend' thought he or she would be interested in, and were 'shared' with her or him). This post also appears temporarily on the 'news feed' of the individual's 'friends', who are subscribers to these posts unless they have manually unsubscribed from a particular user's updates. Thus, content is recontextualised within the subscriber's ('friend's) news feed. This process is

[6] Apart from some features that automatically change emoticons – e.g., :) becomes ☺ automatically

described in further detail below and is demonstrated in the image below, which is a simplified mock-up of how this process occurs:

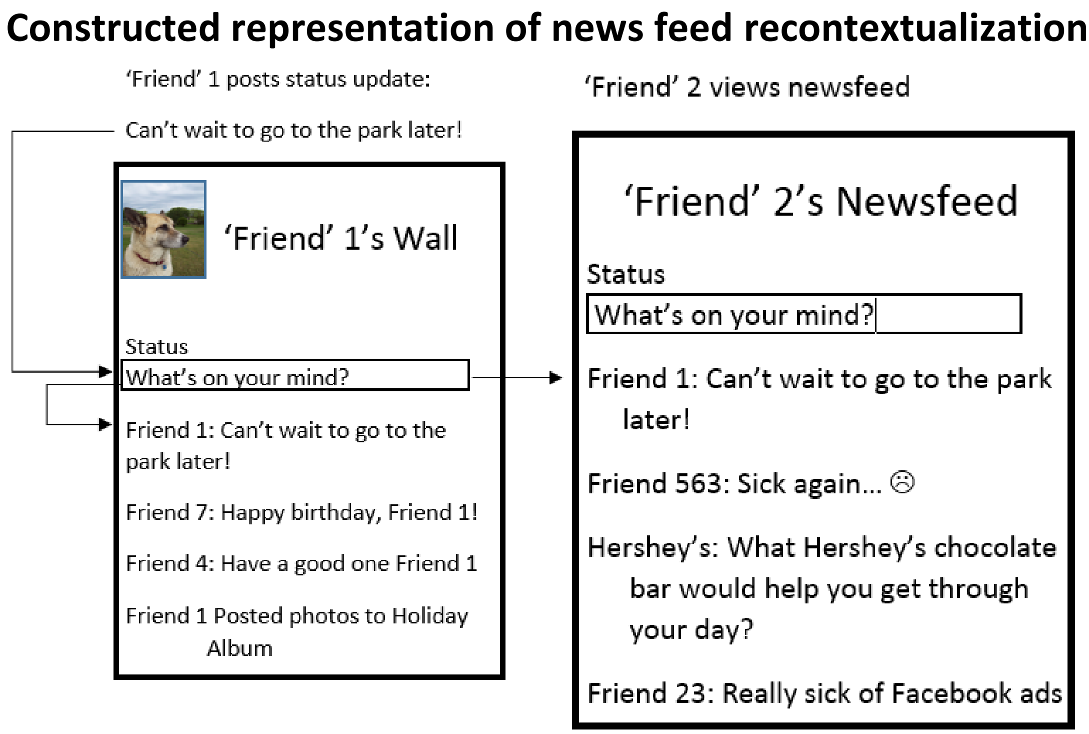

Image 2: Constructed representation of news feed status update recontextualisation

In order to elaborate on the process of recontextualisation that characterises Facebook communication, a more detailed description of the data and data sets is necessary. First and foremost, the communication within these product pages on Facebook is initiated by marketing representatives, and primarily works in three ways. First, promoters can pay to have their messages appear in users' news feeds, among non-promotional messages posted by the users' friends. This option follows general advertising principles in the sense that advertisers simply pay to place content in the line of vision of media 'consumers', but has potential social implications in that the advertising is incorporated into the particular social context of the personalised Facebook news feed. This is demonstrated in Image 3, below, which is a simplified, plain-text constructed representation of a Facebook user news feed:

Constructed representation of paid news feed advertisement

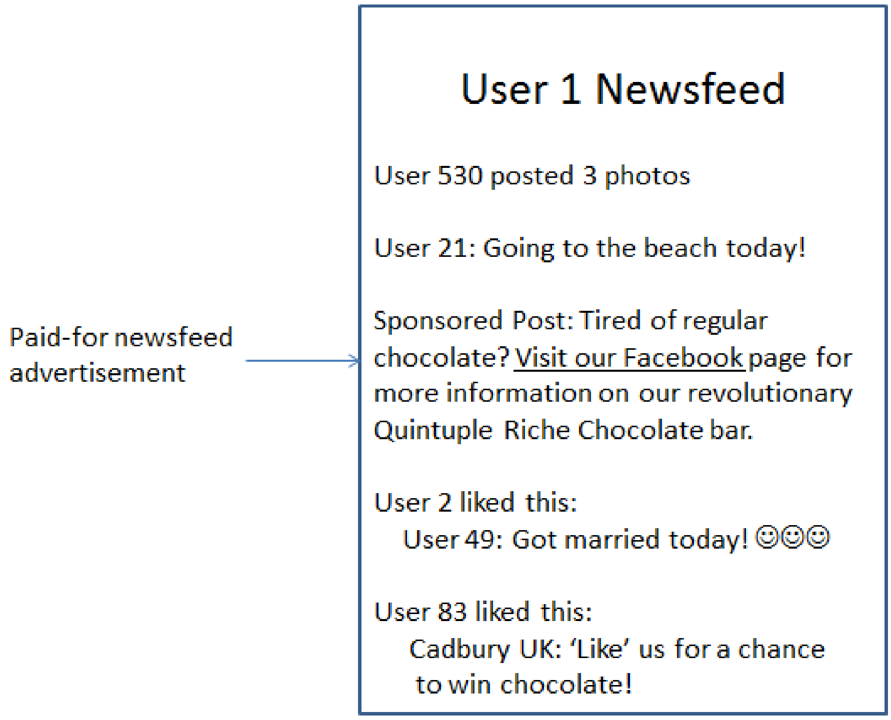

Image 3: Constructed representation of paid news feed advertisement within user news feed

Another popular form of marketing is for companies to set up a free 'profile' page, which is much the same as an individual user profile page. Users can click a button to 'like' the page (within the Facebook site, or through tools on other sites that link to Facebook), and if they do so, they will see the 'status updates' (which is actually promotional material) from the company within the user's news feed[7].

Although this might be the same post as the brand uses for unsolicited advertising, the 'invited' nature of this second option (because the user has 'liked' the page) more closely resembles brand marketing than advertising; this process leads to a grey area in the consideration of advertising vs. marketing. This is demonstrated in Image 4, below.

[7] At the time of the data collection, users would see a high proportion of the brand posts made by 'liked' brands. However, this has been changing in recent years: tech bloggers have been reporting on the decreasing 'organic reach' of brand content, with Grant (2012) reporting a decrease from approximately 50% of brand posts reaching fans, down to 12% in 2012. There have since been reports (e.g., Baer, 2014) that it dropped to 6% or below in 2014, and 2.6% in March 2015 (Cohen, 2015).

Constructed representation of brand marketing post

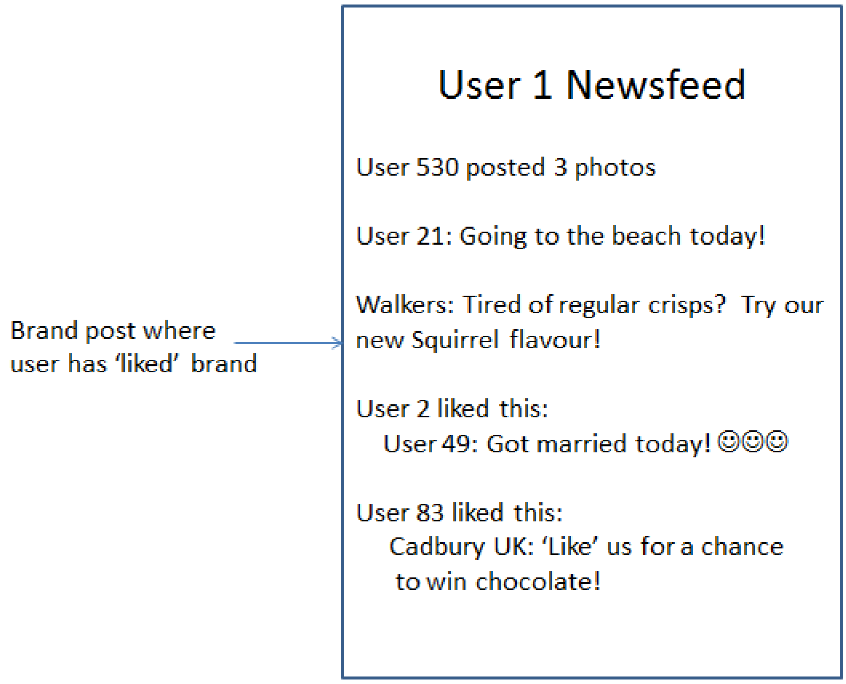

Image 4: Constructed representation of brand marketing post within the news feed of a 'fan'

Finally, the third main way users are exposed to marketing messages in Facebook is when marketers pay for the 'social context' function of advertising, which means that if a user has a friend who 'likes' or comments on a product post, this will appear on the commenter's friend's news feed. This is demonstrated in Image 5, below.

Constructed representation of ‘pushed’ brand marketing

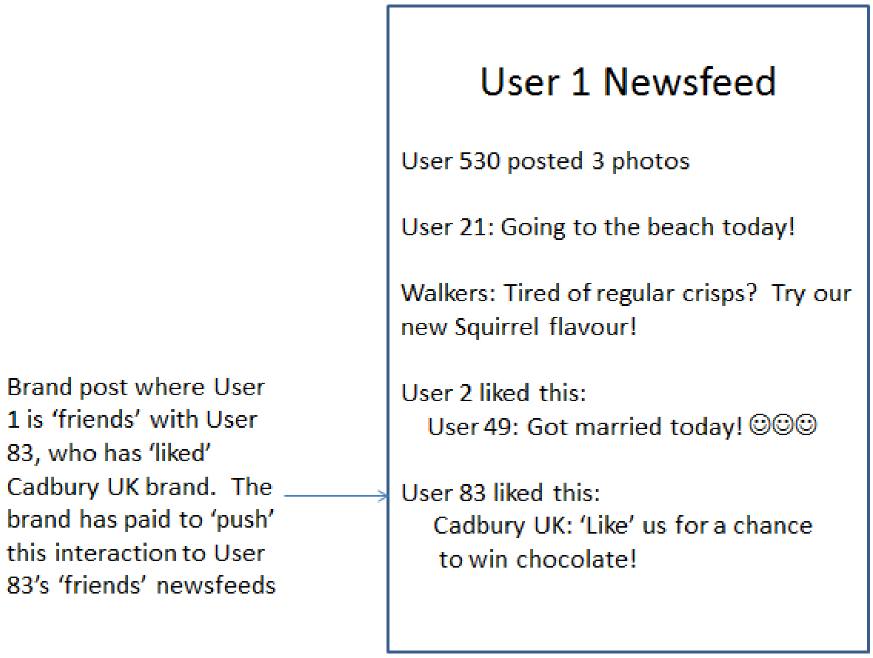

Image 5: Constructed representation of ‘pushed’ brand marketing within non-fan’s news feed

Additionally, on the desktop Facebook programme, there is the more ‘traditional’ form of online advertising where targeted advertisements appear on a sidebar (Facebook, Inc., 2012: 8), exemplified in Image 6, below.

Constructed representation of sidebar advertising in Facebook

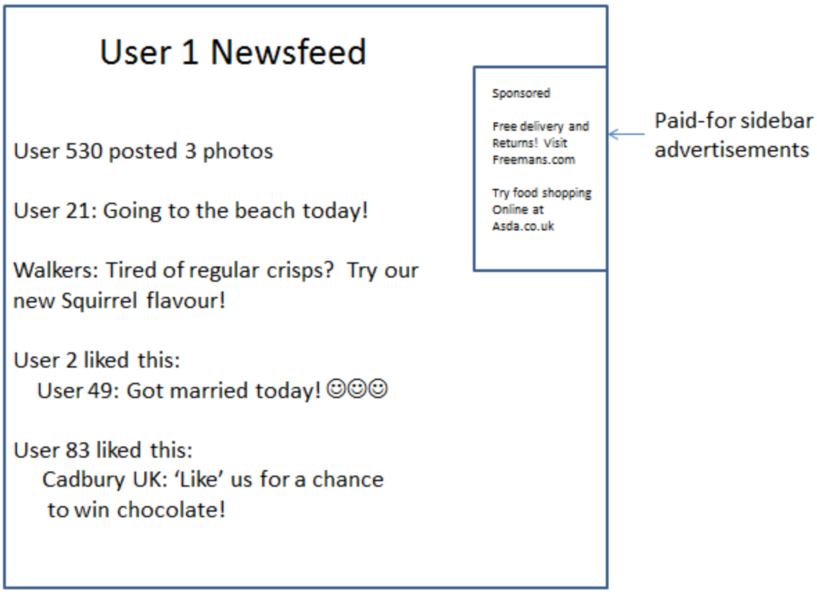

Image 6: Constructed representation of sidebar advertising on Facebook desktop site

Within Facebook, there is no way to identify which of the above processes has resulted in a user seeing the brand post. While all options are technically possible, the most likely option in the case of the present corpus is that the users have generally 'liked' the product page and therefore have implicitly agreed to allow product marketing within their news feed. However, as it is not possible to track the process of recontextualisation of marketing posts from the content creator to the audience's news feeds. As such, various aspects of this study, such as the Negotiation analysis, take into account these numerous and complex possibilities for the recontextualisation of any given brand post to the Facebook users who eventually respond to such posts.

2.2.5 Technical description of the Facebook framework

Because identity is shaped through discourse within the context in which it is performed, it is necessary not only to describe the process by which interaction occurs within newsfeed marketing messages, but to also describe the Facebook framework itself.

The description in this chapter section focuses on the Facebook 'home page', which is the page each Facebook user sees upon logging in when using the desktop site. Image 7, below, is a screen shot of a Facebook user's home page, captured on 27 February 2016. Of course, there will have been changes to the site between the initial data collection in 2012, and the screen shot discussed below, but for the most part, the major components of the site (e.g., the news feed) have remained relatively unchanged.

It should be noted that the home page can appear differently at different times and to different users due to changes made to the Facebook interface, which are sometimes rolled out at different times depending on the user's location, browser, and/or type of computer. It is also conceivable that different users' home pages are configured differently depending on which affordances they regularly use. For example, a frequent user of games might see this feature in a more salient location.

Furthermore, the mobile site interface does have a notably different appearance. Due to the limited screen space on mobile devices, sections visible by default are the status update (labelled in Image 11, below, as cluster 3), and newsfeed section (labelled in Image 12, below, as cluster 4). The other features (Clusters 2, 5, and 6), are hidden, and are accessible either by using a selection tool to access them (e.g., an additional button or 'swipe action', depending on the device and version of the mobile app), or the features are not available when the user is on the mobile version, but become available when the desktop version is used.

For the purpose of the description of the Facebook framework, it is not practical to investigate the specifics of differences of interface display. Because the desktop version includes the full range of features, this is used to demonstrate and describe Facebook as a communicative environment. Furthermore, because there is a potentially unlimited number of pages a user can navigate to from the home page, the description of the Facebook interface includes only general descriptions of the content and functions of the hyperlink destinations that can be accessed from the home page.

In this section, the user is referred to as 'she', as the Facebook account used for this description is my own. Furthermore, while it is useful to provide examples of how features are used, many of the features can be used in a multitude of different ways. As it is not possible to provide comprehensive empirical evidence on 'typical use' of features, some descriptions of the typical functions of features rely on the user's personal experience gained through long-term Facebook use.

With the caveats addressed above, the screen shot below is described as a 'typical' depiction of the appearance of the site.

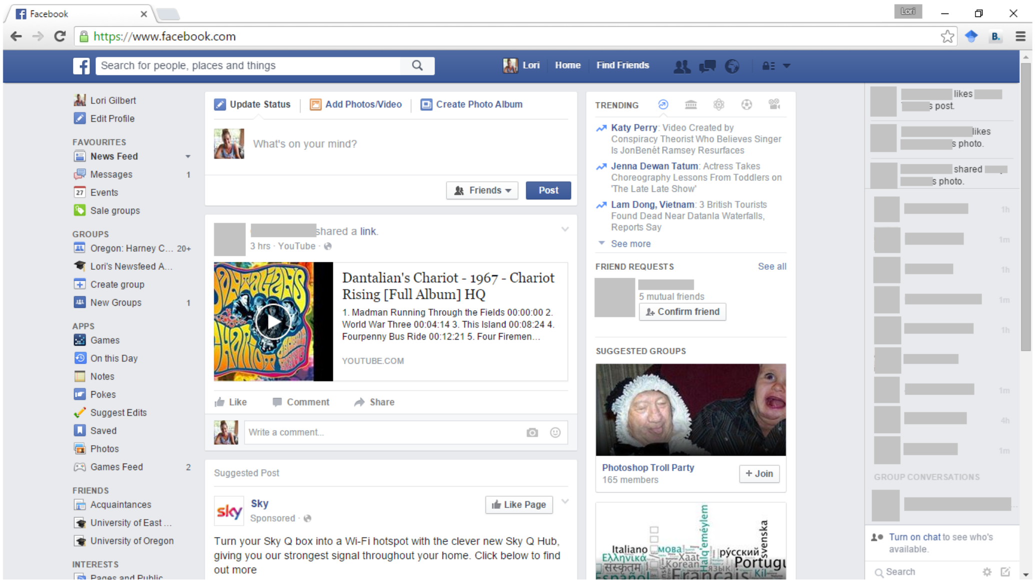

Image 7: Facebook home page

As visible in the image above, one of the features of the Facebook home page is the use of framing to separate content into different sections within the page. The overall background colour is grey. The bar at the top is set apart from other elements on the page as it has a dark blue background. On the right and left, there are columns set apart from the rest of the page by a faint line next to the right tool bar, and by a column with a white background next to the left tool bar. There are three boxes within the widest column in the centre, each of which has a white background separating the elements from other on the page. To the right of the widest column, another column is identifiable, also through framing within a white background set against the overall grey background of the page.

Image 8, below, is the same screen shot of a Facebook user's home page, with modifications including truncation of the names and user icons of the 'friends' of the logged in user, and the addition of six red boxes and number labels to identify 'clusters' within the framework, which are discussed in turn below.

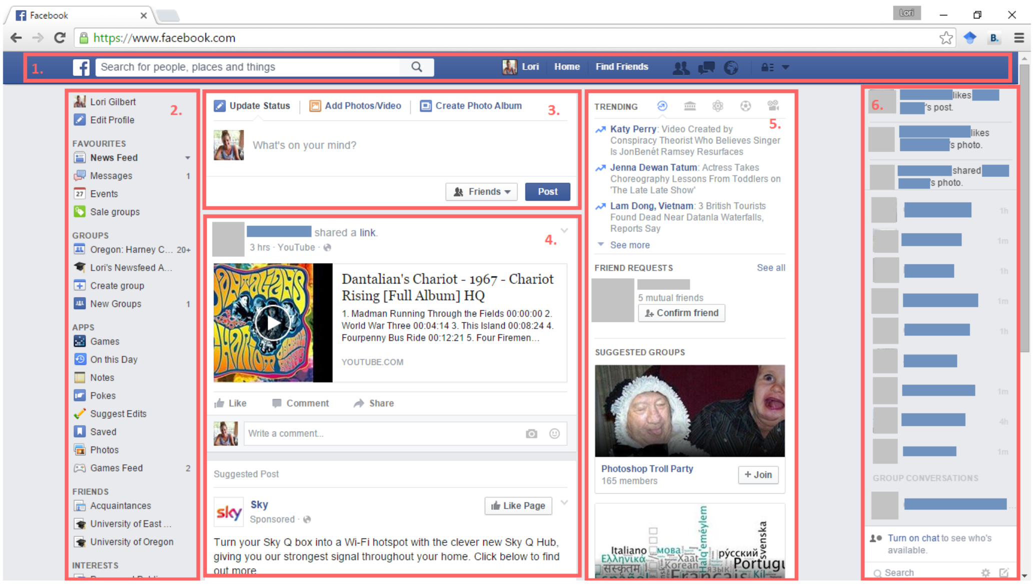

Image 8: Facebook home page clusters

As discussed above, each of the 'clusters' is identified by analysis of the frames used within the interface[8]. Each of the six clusters identified includes at least two modes, and some clusters comprise a number of features, which are not necessarily technically related to one another, despite being located within the same frame. Below, I describe each cluster in turn, focussing on the modes and features within each, before discussing the overall communicative environment of the Facebook interface.

Image 9, below, is a cropped version of the image above, depicting only cluster 1.

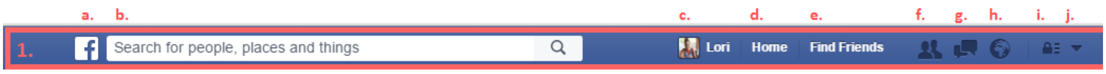

Image 9: Facebook home page cluster 1: Top bar

The red letters above cluster 1 indicate features and tools that are described below.

1a: The furthest left element in this cluster is the Facebook icon 'f', which is a 'home page' hyperlink. When a user navigates to other pages within Facebook, this hyperlink brings the user back to this home page when clicked.

1b: The box to the right of the 'f' icon is the main search box used within Facebook. The text inside the box, which disappears when clicked, reads "Search for people, places and things". A user can, for example, search for the Facebook profiles of celebrities, brands,

[8] For the purpose of the description of the Facebook framework, the terms 'frames' and 'clusters' are used generically; however, these terms are contextualised within multimodal theory in the Methodology chapter of this thesis.

businesses, or groups. When a search is performed, the results appear in a pop-up box below the search box, and the user can click on a result to be redirected to that particular page.

1c: To the right of the search box is the user's profile icon and name. This is a hyperlink that directs the user to her own profile page.

1d: The 'home' hyperlink functions in the same way as the 'f' icon, and directs the user back to the home page if she has navigated to another page within Facebook.

1e: The 'find friends' hyperlink leads to a page listing the friend requests the user has received and not responded to, as well as a list of people the user 'may know', as determined by Facebook algorithms, such as being 'friends' with multiple people within a particular social network (e.g., a sports club).

1f: The icon to the right of 'find friends' is a shadow of two heads, and directs the user to a dialogue box with the same functions as the 'find friends' hyperlink to the left.

1g: The icon of two speech bubbles opens a dialogue box displaying the personal messages the user has in the messages archive. If there is a new message to read, this icon will be highlighted to draw attention to the new message in the 'inbox'.

1h: The 'world' icon is a hyperlink opening a dialogue box that displays the user's notifications. This could include when a user has been tagged in a photo or the status update of a 'friend'.

1i: The icon of a padlock is a hyperlink that displays privacy options, such as checking 'who can see my stuff' and 'how do I stop someone from bothering me'.

1j: The downward-pointing triangle is a hyperlink opening an option dialogue box for 'pages', 'groups', and advertisements. 'Pages' are sub-accounts set up by Facebook users that typically have a particular task, or function. For example, a 'page' could be set up as a central 'location' to share particular memes, such as 'women laughing alone with salad'. 'Groups' are described in more detail within cluster 2, below.

Altogether, the top bar includes hyperlinks allowing the user to perform the majority of the main interactive tools available in Facebook, where users can search for and interact with 'friends', businesses, 'pages', 'groups', etc. Many of these features are reiterated in other locations within the home page, with different icons and labels.

Image 10, below, depicts cluster 2:

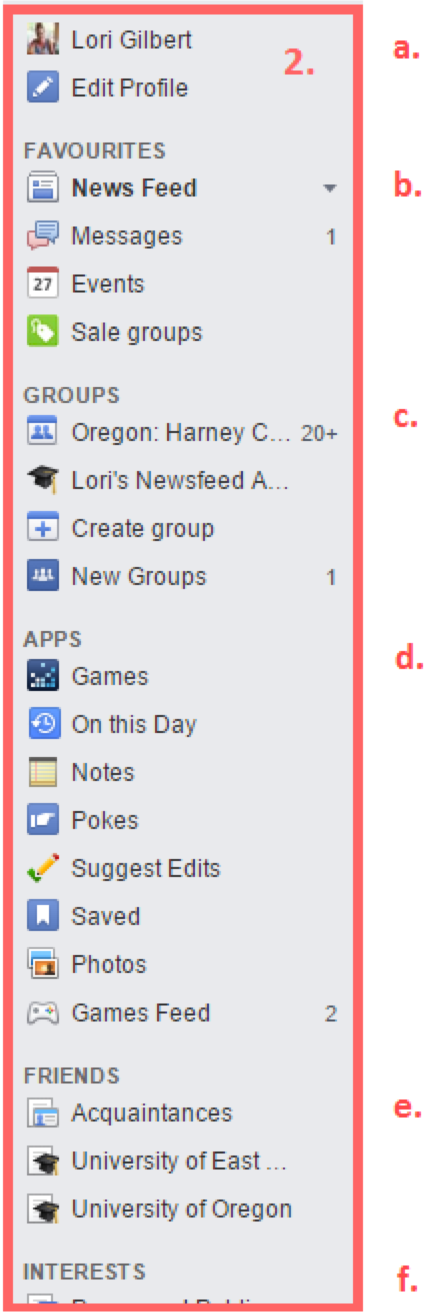

Image 10 Facebook home page cluster 2: Left toolbar

2a: The user name is the first hyperlink in section 2a, and directs the user to her profile. The second hyperlink, 'edit profile', brings the user to a page where she can change any aspect of the profile, including changing the profile picture, posting a photo album, adding or removing 'interests', and adding or editing information she has provided about herself, such as educational achievements or place of work.

2b: The hyperlinks in this section are called 'favourites', suggesting that these are the tools most used by the user. On this particular profile, the hyperlinks include 'newsfeed', Messages, Events, and Sale groups.

The 'events' hyperlink directs to a tool where the user can send and receive invitations to 'friends', for example, to attend a party. Recipients of event invitations can respond that they will attend, will not attend or might attend. Other invitees to the event can see who has been invited to the event, and who plans to attend.

It should be noted that although the 'Sale groups' tool is listed on this profile as a 'favourite', this user has not ever used this tool; therefore, it seems that Facebook uses the 'Favourites' area not only to make frequently-used tools available to the user, but also to promote tools to users.

2c: This section displays hyperlinks allowing the user to participate in and manage 'groups'. A 'group' is set up by a Facebook user, who is then the 'owner' of the group. The owner can invite others to join the group, and membership can be open, invite-only, or could require permission to be granted from the group owner. An example is the Facebook group "That's PROFESSOR Uptight to you!". This is a restricted-access group, where a user can request membership and permission must be granted by the group owner. In this case, the group owner specifies that permission is granted to those whose Facebook profiles clearly show the potential member is an employee at a higher education institution. The reason for this restriction is that the group purpose is for fellow university educators to 'vent' about their students, who are frequently referred to as 'precious snowflakes'. Of course, there are professional reasons for keeping access to this group restricted, as the stated aim is not to disrespect students, but to engage in a support network of fellow educators who face similar frustrations in their work with students, and at times, provide constructive advice for dealing with difficult student/educator situations.

Another example of a group is an open-access group, such as the one visible on this page: 'Oregon: Harney County United!'. This is a group with open access, and members tend to post things like photos of the area (a county in the US), or announce community meetings.

2d: This segment of the tool bar includes 'Apps', including 'games', 'on this day', 'notes', 'pokes', 'suggest edits', 'saved' 'photos' and 'games feed'.

The tools within the 'apps' cluster have a number of different purposes. The games hyperlink leads to a page where a user can select games and play these online, within Facebook. The 'on this day' feature is a tool that shows the user events that she posted on this day of the year in previous years, presumably to reminisce.

The 'notes' feature allows the user to post an item somewhat similar to a status update, but which is stored in a separate section in the user profile. While there are no 'rules' on what can be published in a 'note', the present user's experience is that this feature is used as place to participate in 'friendship memes', and 'about me memes', where, for example, a user will post a note describing '10 things my Facebook friends probably don't know about me', and invite other friends to also complete and post the meme as a note. Although there is no limit to the length of text that can be posted within status updates, it seems that in practice, notes are often far lengthier than status updates. Also, because the 'note' feature is a feature used far more infrequently, but appears among the user's personal information in her profile, this functions as an opportunity for the user to engage in identity performance where there are not social expectations of brevity, as is the case in status updates, and the content of the note is not visible unless the 'friend' clicks on it (unlike a status update).

The 'pokes' feature is a simple tool used to draw attention from another Facebook user. If a user 'pokes' another user, he or she will receive a notification the he or she has been 'poked', and can 'poke' the original user back.

The 'suggest edits' feature allows the user to 'check' the details of pages that she has liked, such as a particular restaurant, and 'vote' whether the posted opening times, or other information, is correct.

The 'saved' tool is a bookmarking tool that allows the user to archive news feed items in order to read later, such as an article posted by a 'friend'.

The 'photos' tool directs the user to the photos she has posted or has been 'tagged' in.

The 'games feed' is a tool allowing the user to see what games the user's 'friends' are playing within Facebook.

2e: This is another 'friend' tool, which allows the user to view 'friends' based on affiliations, such as attendance or employment at a particular university.

2f: The 'interests' hyperlinks allow a user to subscribe to special news feeds for interests, such as 'fiction authors' or 'animal causes'.

Overall, this column includes a large number of different tools, many of which are reiterations of the same tools, represented in different modes, available elsewhere on the home page.

Image 11, below, is a screen shot of cluster 3, the status update window.

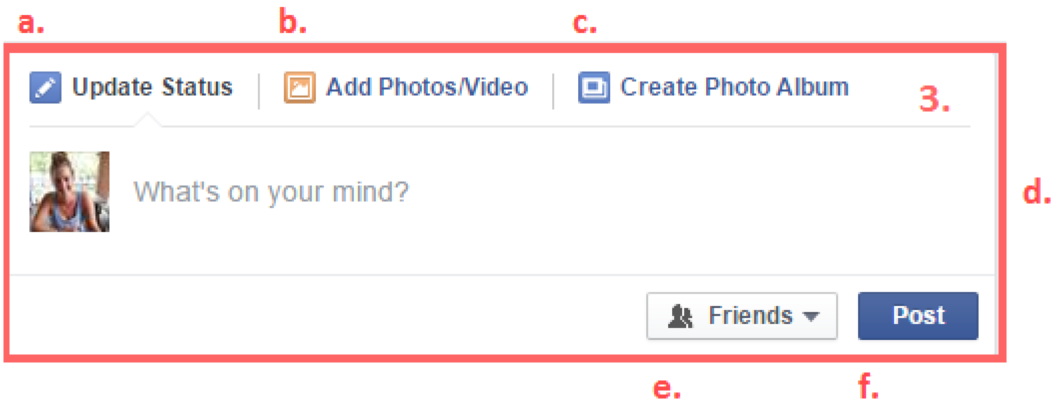

Image 11 Facebook home page cluster 3: The status update window

Cluster 3 is particularly salient within the home page, as it is in a top-central position within the widest column on the web page. This is the 'status update' section, where a user can post text, images, videos, and photo albums. When a user posts an item within this section, it then appears within the news feeds of her 'friends', as well as on her own news feed, located below.

3a: The 'update status' hyperlink is selected by default, and relates to the 'status update' window (3d, described below).

3b: Rather than posting only text, the user can add photos or a video as a status update. The user can add comments about the photos or video to introduce or evaluate the photos/video (thus positioning herself 'with' or 'in opposition' to the meanings constructed through the photo/video).

3c: The user can create a photo album, which can include a number of photos, and will be posted in the user's timeline and on her 'friends' news feeds. The photo album can be named, such as 'USA Holiday 2016'.

3d:The 'status update' window is to the right of the user's profile picture. The box reads "What's on your mind?". Its position next to the user's own profile photo constitutes an invitation for the user to 'update' her friend network on anything she wishes – such as posting a funny quote, announcing a life event, venting about a frustration at work, etc.

3e: This button allows the user to choose who will see the post. The user could allow only her 'friends' to see the post, or to make it 'public', meaning that anyone with an internet connection would be able to view the post on her profile. The user can also build 'custom groups', where specific people are selected to view a post. For example, the user could set up a 'family' group, and use this option to share posts she would not wish her other 'friends' to have access to.

3f: The ‘post’ button allows the user to complete the process of sharing the status update. Until the user clicks this button, anything entered or attached in the status update can be modified or deleted.

Overall, the ‘status update’ section of the home page is one of the most important in terms of the main aims of the site, which encourages communication between ‘friends’. The status update allows the user to share thoughts, feelings, pictures, videos, and so on, which ‘friends’ will then see and be able to interact with. The status update section enables the addition of content to the Facebook news feed.

Image 12, below, is a screen shot from the section below the status update section – the newsfeed.

Image 12: Facebook home page cluster 4: The news feed

4a: This section includes the user name and user profile picture icon of the person posting the status update (a ‘friend’ of the user). It also includes information on the post, including the time it was posted (displayed as ‘how long ago’ it was posted, which eventually changes to a date and time), what ‘type’ of post (in this case, it is a ‘shared link’, and the origin of the link – YouTube – is displayed below; in the case of a text-only post created by the poster, no label will appear), and an icon displaying the privacy setting of the post (in this case, the ‘world’ icon indicates it is a public post and anyone can see it; if the icon were the profile of two heads, it would indicate that it is shared with friends only).

4b: This section is the content of the post. In this case, it is a shared video link to a music album on YouTube. The ‘play’ icon in the still image indicates that it is a shared video, not a photograph. The user can click on the image to play the video, either within Facebook, or as a redirection to the original location of the video on YouTube.

4c: These are the ‘share and respond’ options. The user can ‘like’ the post, indicating positive evaluation of the post and engagement with the ‘friend’. The user can also comment on the post through by clicking on the ‘comment’ link, which simply engages the comment entry window below reading “Write a comment…”. The user can also ‘share’ the post, which means that the post will be recontextualised as a ‘new’ post, posted by the user and labelled as a ‘shared’ post which was first posted by this particular user.

4d: This is the second news feed post within this particular news feed, and is an advertisement. It is identifiable as such as it is labelled as a ‘suggested post’. There are different options available for this post, and different types of information included. Notably, the user can ‘like page’, which is a very important function in the context of the present thesis. It is the equivalent of ‘friending’, but is a connection made between a Facebook user and a business/brand page on Facebook. By ‘liking page’, the user implicitly agrees to see more posts by this brand within her news feed in future, and the brand will show up in the user’s profile as one of the ‘liked pages’. In other words, if the user ‘likes page’, it implies positive evaluation of the brand, and constitutes an instance of identity performance through alignment with the brand.

The ‘down arrow’ to the right of the ‘like page’ option allows the user to access Facebook’s ‘advertisement feedback’ options, such as ‘hide advert’, ‘why am I seeing this?’ information, and ‘save link’.

Underneath the ‘suggested post’ text is the Brand Hyperlink, including the brand user icon and the brand name. To the right is the word ‘sponsored’, which lets the user know that this is a paid-for advertisement, rather than a ‘friend’ post.

Below the Brand Hyperlink is the content of the advertisement itself, which, in this case, consists of text. This could also be a photograph, a video, or a shared article.

In summary, the news feed is the main area within a Facebook homepage where the user can view and interact with the content her 'friends' have created and shared. It is also where advertising and marketing messages typically appear, such as those discussed in this thesis.

To the right of the status update and news feed sections is another toolbar, labelled here as the 'right' toolbar. Image 13, below, is the screenshot for this cluster.

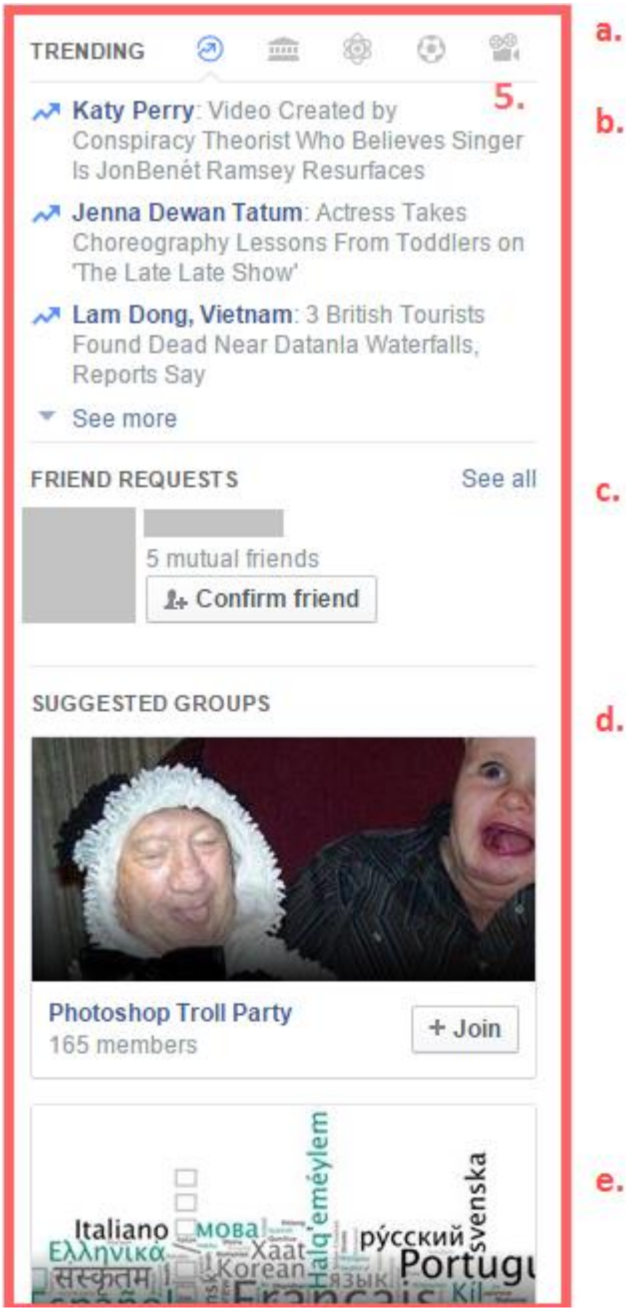

Image 13 Facebook home page cluster 5: Right toolbar

5a: The top section in this toolbar comprises 'trending' news headlines. At the top there are five icons: the one selected by default (visible in this image) is the 'top trends' in news headlines. The user can select the icons to the right to view headlines with different topics. Clicking the icon to the right, which is a building with columns, displays the 'politics' news headlines; the 'atom' icon displays 'science and technology' news headlines; the 'football' icon displays 'sport' headlines; and the 'movie camera' icon displays 'entertainment' headlines.

5b: In this screen shot, there are three 'trending news headlines'. The general 'key word' is displayed in blue text, and a short summary is displayed in black text. The user can click on any of these stories to be directed to the full news articles on the web sites of various news sources.

5c: The section below the 'trending news headlines' is a display of the friend requests the user has received but not responded to. This tool displays the user profile icon and name of the person who has made the request, as well as information on whether there are any friends in common. In this example, there are 5 friends in common, which suggests that the users may know each other through mutual membership or participation in a group, such as a local club. If the user clicks the 'confirm friend' button, the user and requester will become 'friends', and the status updates and posts each makes will appear on the other's news feed, and they will be able to see the 'friends only' information within each other's profiles.

5d: This is the 'suggested groups' section, where a Facebook algorithm is used to suggest groups to the user that she may be interested in joining. In this case, the suggested group is "Photoshop troll party", which has 165 members and is presumably a group where people share humorous Photoshopped photos. The user can click the '+Join' button and will become a member of this group, and will receive notifications by default when a member adds a post within the group page.

5e: This is another 'suggested group', presumably a linguistics-based one, as the 'group photo' is a word cloud comprising words in different languages.

In summary, the right toolbar, like the left toolbar (cluster 2) comprises a number of unrelated features and tools, many of which encourage the user to increase her 'friend' and 'group membership' network.

The final cluster in the description of the Facebook home page, the Facebook chat tool, is shown below in Image 14.

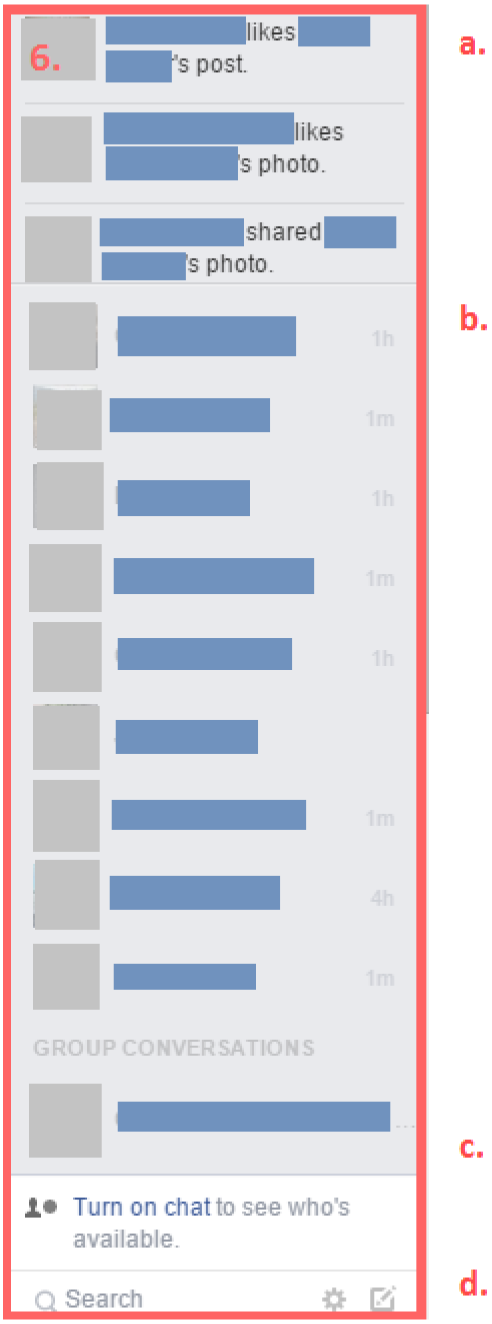

Image 14 Facebook home page cluster 6: Facebook chat tool

6a: The top section of this toolbar, labelled in this description as the 'Facebook chat tool', does not strictly fall within the functionality of the chat tool. In this section, a number of 'friend' updates are displayed. This includes the profile picture icon and username of the 'friend', and a short description of their activity, such as "[Friend1] likes [Friend2]'s post". Each of the 'friend' names in this description are hyperlinks, and the user can click on them to be directed to the profile of the 'friend'. It is unclear why this activity is displayed in this location, rather than in the news feed, but appears to be based on a

Facebook algorithm, where certain instances of user activity are prioritised and appear within the news feed, while others appear at the top of the chat toolbar.

6b: In this section, which is part of the Facebook chat tool, a number of the user's 'friends' are displayed, along with a number indicating how long it has been since they have been online in Facebook chat. This allows the user to determine who is available online to 'chat', and the selection of 'friends' here is presumably selected by an algorithm that determines who the user interacts with most frequently. When the user clicks on one of her 'friends' in this area, a chat dialogue box opens, and the user can send private text-based messages to the 'friend'. The user can also initiate a 'video chat' where the users can use their computer's cameras in order to see and speak with each other in real time, similar to Skype.

6c: This is the 'group conversation' option, which in this case, displays the group chat the user has participated in previously. Because text-based chats are stored in the system and are asynchronous, the user can re-engage in a chat at any time.

6d: This area allows the user to turn chat 'on' or 'off'. In this case, the chat function is turned off, which means that the user does not appear as available to her 'friends', despite the fact that she is active on Facebook at the time. In this section, the user can also search for 'friends' to chat with who are not listed above.

In summary, this cluster primarily comprises the chat tool, which enables the user to engage in text and video exchanges with 'friends'. This is a communicative tool that is available in addition to the more 'public' status update option, and enables direct communication between 'friends', without the entire network being able to view the exchange.

Overall, the large number of features on the Facebook home page described above work in tandem to construct the complex communicative environment of Facebook. As argued earlier in this chapter, many social media platforms have the same tools and affordances as each other; yet, it is the way that individuals and groups use these tools that distinguishes one platform from another.

One of the notable features of the Facebook home page as a whole is that there are a large number of tools that allow and encourage users to interact with and expand their 'friend' networks. In the clusters described above, each one includes multiple tools that ultimately function as communication tools, some of which are repetitions of the same tools, displayed in different locations and modes. Because of position and size, the status update and news feed features have maximum salience on the page, and these features essentially form the ‘core’ of the communicative environment in Facebook. These are also the tools that afford the greatest potential for communication with a user’s entire ‘friend’ network and beyond. The tools in the periphery, in the side bars, include a number of tools the user can engage with, many of which enable the user to engage with specialist or selective groups of people. These could be ‘friends’ (through the chat tool, for example), or Facebook users who are not ‘friends’ but are members of the same ‘groups’. The user can also use these ‘periphery tools’ to engage in activities that are perhaps not immediately evoked when one mentions they are ‘on Facebook’, such as playing games and reading trending news headlines.

While the description in this section is relatively detailed, it addresses only the surface level of the interactive options available within Facebook. In the section below, I describe how some of these features can be used in the process of identity performance.

2.2.6 The emergence of identity within Facebook

The central theoretical notion in this thesis is that of identity performance – that identity emerges through discourse. As Davies and Harré (1990: 46) explain, “An individual emerges through the process of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate.”

While the theorization of identity as emergent through language is emphasised throughout this thesis, the actual process of how this occurs involves complexities beyond the remit of this study. That is, the discourse in the research corpus comprises a miniscule ‘snapshot’ of discourse within Facebook, and is part of individuals’ discursive practices within the site and beyond. This study does not involve ‘following’ the individuals who post in response to brand posts, and this would be required to investigate how this discourse is part of their identity construction over a potentially lengthy period of time, and among their networks of Facebook ‘friends’. In this section, however, I describe some of the ways in which identity emerges through discourse in Facebook, and explain how and why identity never becomes fully ‘emerged’.

First, I provide an overview of some of the uses of the tools introduces above, before discussing how identity emerges through use of these tools.

The Facebook profile

The performance of identity in Facebook potentially begins even before, or without membership, in contexts ‘outside’ of Facebook. For example, with the increasing popularity of Facebook, it is possible to perform identity as a 'non Facebook user', which may be a performance of resistance to networked culture. In some cultures, being a Facebook user may be the 'norm', and being a member of the site may be a performance of being 'part of' mainstream culture.

When an individual signs up for Facebook, the first thing they are invited to do by the site is to build a profile. The user can choose how much or how little to include on the profile, and some of the 'standard' things to include are location, educational history, a photograph, place of employment and job title, relationship status, name of partner, website, other names, favourite quotes, favourite music, favourite books, favourite films, favourite sports and teams, and a general 'about me' paragraph, where the user can write anything they wish.

All of these things constitute identity performance, and in the profile alone a great amount of identity work can be performed. Some of these things can be considered to be 'facts' (e.g., educational achievements), while others are evaluations. All information entered in the profile constitutes identity performance, as the user can choose whether, and how to construct a representation of upbringing, achievements, preferences, and opinions. On the other hand, users can choose not to complete profile information – they can keep the anonymous icon instead of adding a photo of themselves, and can choose not to complete any of the profile options that Facebook enables.

While anyone with an internet connection can now search for this particular person and see whether he or she has a Facebook profile, the user can choose whether the profile information is viewable by 'friends' only, or whether it is publicly viewable.

Building a network

Once a user has joined Facebook, they are invited to 'find friends'. If the user has completed certain profile information, such as the name of the high school he or she attended and the year of graduation, Facebook can 'suggest' others with matching information as 'friends'. The user can send a 'friend request' to other users, who may accept or 'ignore' this request. If the 'friend' request is accepted, the new 'friend' will be able to see the information that the user has added to his or her profile, and vice versa.

As the user's 'friend' network grows, Facebook will continue to make suggestions of people who the user might know, based on mutual connections (e.g., having three 'friends' who are each 'friends' with a fourth person).

Through requesting and accepting 'friends', the Facebook user's identity emerges in terms of visible relationships with others. This may entail performing membership of a friendship group, or family, and may even entail performance of identity through exclusion (e.g, not 'friending' a particular person who is well-known to the user outside of Facebook, and has many mutual 'friends' within Facebook. As an individual becomes more active in a sports group, for example, more 'friend' relationships with fellow members may be created, and if a user falls out with a 'friend', they can be 'unfriended' – which may constitute an identity performance through active social distancing.

Posting in the news feed

One of the main features within Facebook is the news feed, as described above. In posting to the news feed, the user can engage in an infinite range of identity performances, from informing his or her network what she had for breakfast, to notifying them about a life event, to posting holiday photos, to posting a passive-aggressive message implicitly directed toward an unnamed 'friend'.

These posts appear in the news feed of the users 'friends', and are also archived on the user's timeline, which appears within the user profile. Thus, news feed posts become part of a user's 'history'. Identity emerges through the news feed over time, and users may develop performative patterns, such as posting a multitude of pictures of his or her children, or pictures of food ordered in restaurants, or performances of 'intelligence' through quotes of revered thinkers. These patterns may produce a performed identity as a 'devoted parent' or 'foodie' or 'intellect'.

Interacting with 'friends'

As the user looks at his or her news feed, he or she may read a post by a friend and wish to engage with it. By 'liking' it, he or she lets the author know that the post has been read, and there is an implicit suggestion that the user is engaging positively, which may imply agreeing with the post, supporting the 'friend' who posted, or commiserating with the poster, for example. This evaluation allows the user to position him or herself in relation to the 'friend' and the 'update' – usually in positive alignment.

The user can also engage in dialogue by commenting on the post. There is potential that by commenting on a post (or 'liking' it), the post will appear as activity by the responder. That is, if 'Friend1' replies to 'Friend2's post, 'Friend3' may see the activity on his or her news feed: "Friend2 has commented on Friend1's post". Thus, by engaging with a post, it may enact a 'status update chain'. Unlike 'liking', dialogue can enable 'friends' to engage in stance-taking through any number of evaluations.

‘Sharing’ in the news feed

In addition to posting original content, or responding to the posts of ‘friends’, the user can also engage in identity performance through the very popular ‘sharing’ tool. There are a multitude of sites (notably including news and entertainment sites) that have a ‘Facebook share button’, which a user can click on, and will automatically post the article as a status update to appear on the user’s wall and in his or her ‘friends’ news feeds.

For example, if the user ‘follows’ the celebrity astronaut Col. Chris Hadfield, and he posts a photo taken from the space station, the user can ‘share’ this post with his or her own ‘friends’. The user can write an introduction to the post which may include a positive or negative evaluation of the shared item (e.g., ‘Amazing!’ or ‘Terrifying!’). The user’s ‘friends’ can then click on the post to view the original post, and can interact with the post in the same way as a ‘normal’ status update.

The use of the ‘sharing’ tool may be particularly useful for users who may want to align or distance themselves from complex topics, such as politics or feminism, as they can simply post an article and construct their evaluation of the article as insightful (or abhorrent), rather than attempting to construct a position themselves.

The ongoing process of emergence

As has been described in this section, identity emerges within (and outside of) Facebook through uses of complex and interconnected tools and affordances that allow a user to position oneself in relation to any conceivable person, place, or concept.

The presentation of the ‘self’ in the profile may appear to be objective, but in fact, the user is able to perform identity as he or she pleases. Publishing posts in the news feed is the primary tool around which Facebook is based, and while there are virtually unlimited possibilities here for identity performance, it must be noted that one cannot perform identity in this context without ‘writing oneself into being’. ‘Friend’ relationships in Facebook are, through their existence, performances of identity, and these can constantly change. ‘Sharing’ in the news feed can enable a user to align or disalign with complex texts such as political articles, but as current events evolve, the contextualisation of alignments shifts (e.g., being a Donald Trump fan in 2006 may perform a different sense of identity than in 2016).

Identity is never fully ‘emerged’ for a number of reasons. Most importantly, as has been discussed throughout this thesis, there is no ‘true’ identity to be ‘revealed’. The intended meaning of the metaphorical ‘emergence’ must be put within context of the theoretical notion as described by Bucholtz & Hall (2005: 586-8), which is that identity is an “emergent product” of “the social positioning of self and other”. In other words, to extend the metaphor, social positioning *produces* identity, which emerges as a new ‘formation’. Thus, rather than conceiving of a pre-existing notion that could be fully ‘revealed’, it should be seen as an in-progress ‘manufactured’ product which will constantly be modified.

Another reason that emergence is never ‘complete’ is that, because it is produced through social positioning, it will always evolve as other identities and entities ‘change position’. ‘Friend’ relationships can be made and broken, status updated can be posted and forgotten, and values and opinions can be performed differently as current events evolve.

Facebook may be a site where identity performances become linguistic artefacts, but as long as members are active on the site it will continue to be a context for the performance of identity. Indeed, even in the ultimate act of deleting one’s Facebook account, identity is not ‘erased’ or ‘finalised’, but continues to be in a state of emergence.

Summary

In this section, Part 1 of the literature review chapter, I have introduced, defined, and described the concepts of Web 2.0, social media, user-generated content, and CMC, and how they have been approached in previous research. This chapter section has provided an overview of the evolutions of Web 2.0 that have led to the context of communication analysed within the present study.

The present research builds on literature theorising identity as an unstable, complex, emergent phenomenon (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Zappavigna, 2012; Herring, 2013; Vásquez, 2014b), whilst making an original contribution by exploring responses to social media marketing – a type of discourse that has not yet been qualitatively analysed.

In Part 2 of the present chapter, I discuss the theoretical frameworks that are used within the present research in order to investigate aspects of identity as it is performed within Web 2.0.

Chapter 2, Part 2: Theoretical and methodological frameworks

Introduction

In this section, Part 2 of the literature review, I introduce the theoretical frameworks that are used to analyse the corpus within the present research. The primary focus of the research is centred on identity, and the theories/methodologies used to investigate identity in this particular context are (multimodal) genre theory (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008), conversation structure (Negotiation analysis) (Martin, 1992; Eggins & Slade, 1997), and Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). These three traditions are located within the SFL framework (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1994/2004).

2.3 The notion of identity performance

The nature of identity, and the relationship between language and identity, are topics of on-going debate, and are often approached by researchers as "complex, contradictory, and multifaceted" Norton (1997: 419). In order to investigate aspects of identity as expressed in a particular context, it is useful to first position the present research within current theory on the nature of identity.

Benwell & Stokoe (2006) explain that in the latter half of the 1900s, identity was often approached by researchers as a response to the question: 'Who am I?', and tended to focus on identity using group labels of age categories, ethnicities, and social classes in order to measure social behaviour or language use. More recent research, however, has challenged this approach to identity and increasingly acknowledges that singular category labels are not definitive; rather, categories such as 'adolescent/adult' or 'working class/upper class' are seen as intersecting, and they contribute to a multi-dimensional concept of identity (2006: 25).

Norton (1997: 410) defines identity as "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future". This definition places emphasis on identity as a function of social context, rather than seeing identity as something internal and inflexible.

Linguists have long been interested in the relationship between language and identity, and this area of investigation has re-emerged in the past decade or so by researchers (e.g., Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) who conceptualise identity as an interactive phenomenon (Hyland, 2010). In this tradition, the present research follows Butler's (1990) definition and description of identity as *performance*, a conceptualisation which was developed from the work of J.L. Austin (1962).

Butler (1990) sees identity as performance in that it is not static, essential, or inherent; it is not a quality that is *reflected* by behaviour. Rather, identity *emerges* through social action – in particular, through language (Bucholz & Hall, 2005: 588). Hyland (2010: 160), explains the concept of identity performativity as such:

> Identity is a person's relationship to his or her social world, a joint, two-way production and language allows us to create and present a coherent self to others because it ties us into webs of commonsense, interests, and shared meanings. Who we are and who we might be are built up through participation and linked to situations, to relationships, and to the rhetorical strategies and positions we adopt in engaging with others on a routine basis. This means that it is through our use of community discourses that we claim or resist membership of social groups to define who we are in relation to others. Identity therefore helps characterize both what makes us similar to and different from each other.

Hyland's (2010: 160) description of identity as a socially constructed phenomenon highlights a key function of language in general – that it allows us to "create and present a coherent self to others". By this, he emphasises the conceptualisation of identity as *construction* and *representation.* That is, while we use language to represent a notion of who we think we are, or who we wish to be, we also construct identity through actual interactions with others. We use language to index our perceived similarities and differences to others (e.g., stance-taking and evaluation), which we accomplish through linguistic interactions with others.

The present research concentrates on the linguistic expression and negotiation of identity in a specific interactive context as *identity performance*. In line with current research on identity and language, identity is seen as on-going representation *and* construction, and takes into consideration an individual's ability to "actively manipulate linguistic resources to create identities" (Dyer, 2007: 106).

This perspective is particularly useful for the context of the present research corpus within Web 2.0, which has been discussed throughout the present chapter. It could be argued that, within Web 2.0, certain characteristics commonly associated with 'identity', (e.g., gender, social class), are, in any case, less identifiable due to the lack of physical presence within online interaction (Hancock, 2007). For example, an individual who performs a gendered identity in face-to-face interactions through clothing choice and physical gesture will not have the same visual resources available within a text-based communication environment. However, the individual participants have relative (textual) control over constructing their identity within web forum participation. The nature of the context is possibly beneficial for qualitative discourse analysis focussing on identity as emergent through discourse, due to participants' lowered social inhibitions and/or freedom from physical constraints. In other words, the conceptualisation of identity as being emergent through discourse is an approach well-suited to a context where individuals must "write themselves into being" (Sundén, 2003). It also allows a focus on interactions between individuals and a vast variety of social groups which, in this context, may not impose physical requirements for co-identification, such as age, gender, or nationality.

Social identity

Another aspect to consider is the nature of identity as relating to an 'individual' or 'group'. Membership within a particular group has the tendency to impact our concept of who we are as individuals, and vice versa. But the relationship between group and individual identities can also create tension, as they do not always completely coincide (Joseph, 2004: 5). The discussion of identity as both individual and social, and as both representation and construction, is key in the focus on linguistic practices relating to identity work performed within a CMC environment.

Although the notion of differences between 'individual' and 'social' identity implies that they are distinguishable from one another, I do not take that view in the present research; rather, I take the view that all identity is negotiated socially. Joseph (2004: 6) explains that linguistic and social researchers tend to see identity as an unstable social and linguistic construction, and not as based on "natural facts" such as skin colour, place of birth, and physical traits. Therefore, in employing the term 'identity' I imply a process of social negotiation in relation to identity work, rather than a focus upon a perceived difference between social identity and interpretations of individual identity where it is constituted by inherent qualities. In other words, within the present research, I focus on aspects of individual and group identity as co-occurring and co-producing.

Peirce (1995), following the poststructuralist theorist Weedon (1987), argues that social identity is not fixed but is rather contradictory, and should be seen as "multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change" (Peirce, 1995: 20). This perspective is helpful in the analysis of social identity in reminding the researcher that there may be simultaneous and valid but contradictory descriptions of the identity-negotiating function of a particular discourse.

Another consideration in researching social identity is the concept that communication does not occur in a vacuum – rather, it occurs between individuals, making it an inherently social process. In turn, the social process of communication functions to establish and maintain social identity (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982: 7).

Johnstone (2008: 151) similarly argues that interaction requires performances of selves, which can be described as identity: “Identity, in this sense, refers to the outcome of processes by which people index their similarity to and difference from others, sometimes self-consciously and strategically and sometimes as a matter of habit". Thus, in the present research, the aim is to consider both the language used by individuals, and the social identity constructed through language, as one cannot be adequately approached without the other.

Norton (1997: 420) distinguishes between social identity and cultural identity, arguing that the term social identity is used to refer to “the relationship between the individual and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, schools, workplaces, social services, and law courts.” Cultural identity, on the other hand, involves a relationship between an individual and members of a group with common history, language, and ways of understanding the world.

Norton (1997) has argued that although there are many similarities between social and cultural identity theories, she does not employ cultural identity as a research focus due to potential limitations in seeing identity as dynamic and heterogeneous. In alignment with Norton’s (1997) position, the present research emphasises the social aspects of identity, rather than explicitly focussing on the cultural sphere, although as Norton acknowledged, there is frequent overlap between the two points of focus.

2.4 Approaches to discourse

The theoretical frameworks used within the present study have been selected for their applicability to investigation of discourse as a means through which identity is performed. While a number of other theoretical frameworks have been used to investigate identity, these have been ruled out due to differences in research aims. This is discussed in further detail below.

Ethnography

The approach in the present study differs from earlier studies on language and identity such as Milroy's (1980) study, which uses ethnographic methods to focus on linguistic identity as a reflection of social position. Although the description of social groups and language in such variationist research is not generally disputed, a major criticism of variationist studies within more recent research is that they encourage us to see the relationship between social identity and linguistic behaviour as causal (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006: 26-27). Variationist sociolinguistic studies tend, in other words, to "[theorise] identity in a similar way to social identity theory, as a pre-discursive construct that correlates with, or even causes particular behaviours [such as] language behaviours" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006: 26).

Rather than assuming that the individuals who post comments on Facebook 'reveal' their 'existing' social identity through their use of language, the data in the present study lends itself to the analysis of how the participants construct their identity in the context of this particular communication.

For example, analysis of the present research corpus with a focus on 'revealing' identity may seek to determine whether individuals who engage with Activia brand posts tend to be female and/or weight-conscious. This could help to determine whether Activia is promoting marketing messages that correspond to this demographic group, and it could identify correlation between yogurt consumption and female gender.

By contrast, an approach focussing on identity performance (the approach used within the present thesis) would potentially indicate where a participant aligns him/herself with the discourse of Activia brand ambassador Gok Wan, which in turn could index alignment with discourses of sisterhood and self-acceptance. In short, my focus on the emergent nature of identity is justified by the research interests of the present study; in addressing the research question of *how* identity is performed in this context, I emphasise the social function and use of language, rather than the characteristics of individuals as indicated by language.

Sentiment analysis

Sentiment analysis is an approach to discourse analysis that is receiving a substantial amount of attention in the analysis of social media discourse (Khoo, 2012). Sentiment analysis often involves automated categorisation of texts in order to determine whether it carries positive or negative sentiment, but is more broadly understood as a type of computational analysis focussing on opinion, subjectivity, and sentiment within a text. The terms ‘sentiment analysis’ and ‘opinion mining’ are often used interchangeably (Pang & Lee, 2008: 10).

Research using sentiment analysis has focussed on a variety of online genres, such as movie reviews (Taboada, Brooke, & Stede, 2009; Thet, Na, & Khoo, 2010), product reviews (Wei & Gulla, 2010), and Twitter discourse (Balabantaray, 2012). It is a functional approach compatible with a variety of different theoretical approaches to discourse, including SFL and Appraisal theory (e.g., Read & Carroll, 2012).

However, within the present study, I do not use a sentiment analysis approach for a number of reasons. Firstly, sentiment analysis is used to produce primarily quantitative data, whereas the present study is primarily qualitative. This is because I do not only wish to determine whether responses to brand marketing have positive or negative sentiment; rather, I seek to determine *how* negotiation of meaning positions individuals in relation to any number of people, entities, or phenomena. Although the goal of sentiment analysis is to achieve ever-more sophisticated automatic coding accuracy for subtle evaluations, my research goal is not to improve automatic coding of evaluative discourse, but to describe in fine detail what *this* corpus and discourse genre says about the participants.

Secondly, the data in the present corpus is complex in that it is not always consumer discourse. That is, while responders may express negative sentiment toward a brand post, it could involve negative sentiment toward a brand, product, social topic, or fellow responder. Although some sentiment analysis approaches do annotate the targets of expressions (e.g., Wiebe, Breck, Buckley, & Cardie, 2003), within this emerging discourse genre it seems unlikely that an automated approach would be able to achieve a high level of accuracy given the CMC features and subtle references to the target of sentiment.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to discourse that regards “language as social practice” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258) and is primarily concerned with the relationship between language and power, and relations between struggle and conflict (Wodak, 2001: 2). CDA differs from other approaches to discourse in that CDA researchers focus not only on texts, but also how texts and meaningful interactions with texts are produced as a result of social structures and processes (Wodak, 2001: 3).

CDA emerged from the tradition of ‘critical linguistics’ (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Fowler, 1991), which addressed critical concerns of hegemony through linguistic analysis. CDA combined critical linguistics with the social perspective of Foucault and

Bourdieu, and focuses on the dynamic nature of power relations and text production (Joseph, 2004: 58).

CDA has been developed in the work of Fairclough (1989, 1992a), van Leeuwen (van Leeuwen, 1993), van Dijk (1997), and Wodak (1995, 1997). CDA seeks to analyse "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 1995: 204).

There are three dimensions of discourse central to CDA analysis. The first is discourse-as-text, which involves a systematic analysis of linguistic features and patterns. The second is discourse-as-discursive-practice, which entails an analysis of the discourse as a social resource – e.g., speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality. The third is discourse-as-social-practice, which considers ideology and hegemonic processes involving discourse (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000: 448). While the first two dimensions of CDA are of central relevance to the present research, the third – a consideration of power, ideology, and hegemony – is not.

To clarify, in this thesis, consideration of the concept of ideology is given within the tradition of SFL, where 'ideology' is a broad term used to refer to and describe belief and value systems, or world-views (Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 4). This approach to ideology differs from other fields, including Critical Discourse Analysis, where the identification and explanation of ideology is central, and relates more explicitly to power structures and social inequality (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough argues that the former approach emphasises the speaker's perspective as though everyday actions simply happen, rather than being "determined by and determinative of wider social structures" (2001: 10), and that the focus is on 'what' questions, rather than 'how' and 'why' questions.

Indeed, SFL studies typically entail a generally descriptive approach to ideology as an aspect of language within culture; however, I would argue that this is one of many possible approaches to the analysis of language, rather than condemning it as "neglecting" (2001: 2) or "ignoring" (2001: 10) the relationships between language and power structures. In other words, I argue that it is not inherently problematic to ask 'what' questions by focussing on structure and function, as there is no reason this cannot be related to 'how', and 'why' questions in further, complementary research. Admittedly, I would argue that there is great research potential regarding the power relations relevant to (online) marketing audiences. Furthermore, there is potential for a study considering the ideological mediation of online communication by the computing elite and corporate powers who control mega-platforms such as Facebook. However, the present study is an exploratory, discourse-led analysis of an emerging genre of discourse. A focus on power relations would potentially entail a central focus on the commodification of individuals as participants in marketing discourse. On one hand, this is a potential function of the discourse that is not ignored within the present study. However, the emphasis on emergent identities is conceived of as an approach where power relations may relate to any number of power structures. That is, a CDA approach is not taken within the present research because in this type of discourse, individuals refer to such a wide variety of power structures (e.g., advertising/marketing, food production and processing, 'acceptable' appearance standards, and so on) that a focus on one or a few of these power relationships would dominate a study intended to demonstrate the variety and linguistic aspects of identity performances within this discourse. Indeed, within Chapter 6, a number of suggestions are made for potential further research directions which could be pursued using the political aims and framework of CDA.

Mediated Discourse Analysis

Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) is an approach that shares the CDA goal of "understanding societal issues and conflict, both contending that discourse analysis opens a window on social problems largely constituted in discourses, with power relations grounded in social practice" (Scollon & de Saint-Georges, 2013: 69).

However, MDA is a partial departure from CDA in that it focuses on social action, practice, and material products. Specifically, MDA challenges Fairclough & Wodak's (1997) third definition of CDA, that "discourse constitutes society and culture". By contrast, the MDA approach "takes it that discourse is among the means by which society and culture are constituted … [and that] society and culture are constituted in the material products of that society as well as its non-discursive practices" (Scollon, 2001: 141).

If the present study were to employ a MDA approach, it would be necessary to identify which types of social action are relevant to the discourse, which is typically accomplished in MDA using ethnography-based approaches. As discussed above, an ethnographic approach is not ideal within the present study for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it identifies a connection between a particular social group and its practices. In the present study, the global nature of the communication context would entail conceiving of a social group so broad as to be incredibly vague.

Secondly, the corpus in the present study consists of casual conversation. While this discourse has particular value for negotiation of meaning in interactions, it is problematic within ethnographic enquiry due to its apparently banal nature. That is, questioning interactants about the meanings and motivations of their responses within the present study may seek a level of self-reflection that is unrealistic. As Hyland (2010: 162) puts it, “Most of the time … we are not performing identity work by narrating stories of ourselves but claiming identities while engaged in doing something else” (Hyland, 2010: 162).

Ultimately, an ethnographic approach is not compatible with the present research as it emphasises identity as being expressed and transmitted through discourse, rather than as being emergent through discourse.

While the present thesis does not employ a pragmatic approach, there are many aspects of the study where pragmatic influences are of note. However, within the present thesis I focus on discourse analytic approaches, rather than pragmatic approaches to discourse. Below, I briefly introduce two pragmatic approaches of potential relevance to the present study, and explain why these approaches were not chosen for the analysis of this corpus.

Speech Act theory

Firstly, the central theoretical notion in this thesis, that of identity performance, originates with Austin’s (1962) conceptualisation of speech acts and performative speech, which was further developed by Searle (1969, 1979). Speech act theory conceptualises a speech act as having three different levels: ‘locutionary’, ‘illocutionary’, and ‘perlocutionary’.

The ‘basic’ level is the ‘locutionary’ act, where words have a literal meaning. At another level, Austin (1962) argues that there are utterances which do not ‘describe’ things, and cannot be considered to be ‘true’ or ‘false’; this is the ‘illocutionary’ act. Illocutionary acts such as requests, demands, warnings, and marriage vows bring states of affairs into being, rather than describing pre-existing states of affairs. These speech acts imply intended actions to be performed as a result of the utterance, and are the most clearly ‘performative’ of the three types of speech acts.

The third type of speech act Austin (1962) theorises is at the ‘perlocutionary’ level, which depends not only on the speaker’s intentions, but also on the effect on the audience. For example, persuading is a perlocutionary act as its success depends upon the addressee, whereas promising is an illocutionary act, as the audience’s belief or disbelief in the speaker’s promise does not change the fact that a promise was made.

Despite common conceptualizations of the performative function of language, pragmatics and SFL differ in the way they focus on this performativity. The pragmatic conceptualization of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts takes stock in speaker and listener intentions through a focus on context; SFL, which does also takes context into account, focuses on the grammatical level of discourse.

While a pragmatic focus on the performative nature of the discourse in this corpus would likely result in valuable insights into 'what is happening between the speaker and audience', the position taken in the present study is that the central aim is to approach the discourse itself and analyse the grammatical form and function. While the context-focussed aspect of discourse is certainly important, I argue that a discourse-focussed approach justified as an initial exploration of an emerging genre, particularly where contextual factors are ambiguous due to intertextual relations, as described throughout this thesis.

Politeness theory

Another pragmatic theory of relevance to the research corpus is Politeness theory, most notably theorised by Brown & Levinson (1987). This theory is based on the notion of face, or "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself". This consists of the related concepts of positive and negative face. Speakers attempt to save 'positive face', which is "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants;" and negative face, which is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 61).

In the analysis of the present corpus, comment responses to brand posts generally involve two explicit interactants – the responder, and the brand – while the responder's entire Facebook network acts as implicit (and potential) 'bystanding' listeners. From an analytical perspective, the analysis of speaker intention and listener interpretation in terms of face 'saving' or 'threatening' behaviour would likely entail conceptualising the brand as the primary 'listening' interlocutor.

It would certainly be of interest to investigate how meaning in this interaction is negotiated. However, it would potentially entail a focus on commenter-brand interaction (and thus potentially consumer relations) to a larger extent than is desired in the present study. By contrast, in focussing on the discourse itself, rather than on the intended effect on the brand as the listener, it is possible to focus on the positioning of the responder in relationship to all the entities and values being evaluated (including the brand), without prioritising the role of the brand as the 'listener'. In other words, the context in this discursive genre is ambiguous in ways that the conceptualization of 'speaker' and 'listener' would need to be adapted to reflect the many 'types' of audience participants within this discourse. Indeed, it is possible that while the brand is the explicit 'listener' of comment responses, the implicit listener network plays a role equally, if not more important in terms of identity performance of the speaker. For this reason, a discursive approach, where meaning is interpreted through focus on grammar and the discursive context, is favoured.

Furthermore, like Speech Act theory, politeness theory is concerned with specific interactions between individuals within context. Thus, a potential pragmatic approach in the analysis of the corpus is limited by the nature of the corpus itself. In other words, one of the motivations for researching this particular discourse is that the very nature of the corpus is discursively 'rich' but contextually ambiguous due to intertextuality. In addition, the commenters' relationships with one another is relatively anonymous and therefore 'intent' and 'interpretation' are spontaneous, rather than based on understanding between interactants. Due to these features, a pragmatic focus, focusing on meaning within context, speaker intention, and the effect on listeners, would be particularly challenging.

Summary of approaches to discourse

Section 2.4 has outlined several approaches to discourse which have similarities to the present research in terms of research aims. However, I have argued that each of the approaches described above does not completely correlate with the aims of the present study. In Section 2.5, below, I describe SFL, the discourse analysis approach employed within the present study.

2.5 Systemic Functional Linguistics

All three layers of analysis within the present study (genre, Negotiation, and Appraisal) are based upon frameworks influenced by SFL, a theoretical approach to discourse analysis developed by Halliday & Hasan (1976), Halliday (1977, 1985, 1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen (1994/2004).

SFL is a functional approach that involves a social-semiotic perspective of language, the foundation of which dates back to ancient Greek linguistics. Halliday & Hasan (1985) saw limitations in semiotics in that signs are often studied as entities in themselves, and they argued that semiotics should instead entail a study of meaning through sign systems. Language is one such sign system, and it operates alongside 'social-semiotics', which could be described as a social system, or as culture (Halliday and Hassan, 1985: 3-5).

This relationship between culture and language is highlighted through the premise of SFL that meaning is derived through studying both 'text' and 'context', and that context “goes beyond what is said and written: it includes other non-verbal goings-on – the total environment in which a text unfolds” (Halliday and Hassan, 1985: 5).

Halliday and Matthiessen’s (1994/2004) work develops SFL analysis to further focus on meaning of language as a social process. They assert that language has two basic functions: explaining our experience, and enacting our relationships. These functions are carried out through three dimensions, or ‘metafunctions’ of meaning that function simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (2004: 29-30).

In the *ideational* dimension of meaning, we name and categorise participants and how they act upon and relate to each other (processes) and configure this language into grammatical patterns, thereby representing theories of our experiences (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 29).

With the *interpersonal* dimension of meaning, we interact with others, thereby enacting social relationships; the language we use not only represents our experiences but “is also a proposition, or a proposal, whereby we inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 29).

Both the *ideational* and *interpersonal* dimensions can only function within organised discourse that is cohesive and continuous; this is called the *textual* metafunction, and concerns the way text is constructed (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 30).

SFL researchers consider the meaning of discourse at various levels. The three metafunctions, introduced above, are typically concerned with meaning as it emerges through discourse at clause level through grammatical structures and patterns. For example, Knight (2008), focusses on the relationship between the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions in her investigation of bonding through humour in internet messaging interactions. She investigates the ideational metafunction by identifying the participants and processes represented in the discourse, and combines this with an interpersonal focus on evaluation. An example is the use of the phrase “i did make a little boyfriend there though!”, which represents a particular person (ideational metafunction) as well as a positive evaluation of the person (interpersonal metafunction) (Knight, 2008: 490).

This approach is congruent with the research aims of the present study, where identity is seen as emerging through discursive interactions. An investigation of this process should aim to be objective whilst also taking cultural context into consideration; SFL is a framework that offers the tools to do both. It focusses on the form and function of language structures in a systematic way, enabling researchers to make justified arguments about the meanings of texts as they emerge through specific language features and patterns, within a social context.

Two of the three layers of analysis used within the present research (Negotiation and Appraisal) are focussed on the interpersonal metafunction of language. This dimension of meaning is particularly useful for studies focussed on identity, as it enables researchers to show how social relationships are enacted through language (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 85).

Over the past ten years or so, SFL researchers interested in identity often apply Appraisal theory to investigate evaluative language. Appraisal theory is an extension and evolution of the interpersonal metafunction as it is understood within SFL. This approach is used within the present study, in one of the three layers of analysis. In Section 2.8, below, I provide an in-depth overview of the framework, as well as a description of studies where the interpersonal dimension of meaning is investigated through the use of Appraisal theory.

In addition to meaning emerging at clause level, SFL is concerned with the social context in which language occurs; it is concerned with meaning 'above' the clause. Genre is a concept "used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals" (Eggins, 2004: 9). This is described in detail within Section 2.6, below.

The methodological frameworks adapted within the present study are all derived from theories located within the SFL tradition. These include genre analysis (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008), which addresses the cultural context and purpose of the brand posts; Negotiation analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997), which is used to investigate the interactive functions of discourse participants, and Appraisal analysis (Martin & White, 2005), which is used to investigate the evaluative function of discourse. These frameworks and their previous applications are described in the chapter sections below.

2.6 Genre

The research corpus comprises two main types of discourse: marketing discourse, and user comments made in response to this discourse. Because the meanings and functions of the user comments are related to the context in which they were made, an analysis of the form and function of the promotional discourse is central to the research aims of the present study. This analysis is carried out through application and adaptation of genre analysis.

In this chapter section, I discuss the concept of genre and the framework used within the present study, as well as key considerations for the selection of this framework. The specific applications and adaptations of this framework are discussed within Chapter 3.

2.6.1 Genre traditions

Notions of genre, as it is generally understood today, originate with the Russian philosopher and linguist Bakhtin (Taboada, 2011: 248). In Bakhtin's (1986: 60) view of genre, as participants engage in various areas of human activity, language is realized through concrete utterances. These utterances include content, linguistic style, and most importantly, compositional structure, all of which work together to reflect the conditions and goals of specific areas of activity. While each separate utterance is individual, “each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres” (Bakhtin 1986: 60).

The importance of genres to the way humans communicate is described by Bakhtin (1994: 83):

> If speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible. We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing others’ speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole.

Similarly, Martin & Rose (2003: 7) explain that from an early age we are able to identify patterns of meaning within our interactions, and that “since patterns of meaning are relatively consistent for each genre, we can learn to predict how each situation is likely to unfold, and learn how to interact in it”.

Within the present research, the concept of learning genres is of interest because as web-based communication evolves, genres take form within cultures because individuals repeatedly engage in specific types of goal-driven discourse exchanges. Thus, the present study, through focussing on an emerging genre, examines aspects of society that are either newly emergent within Web 2.0, or are evolving through new modes of communication.

The theoretical foundation for genre research can be categorised into three main traditions, which take notably different perspectives but can still be seen as complementary to each other. These are the New Rhetoric school, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and the Sydney school, which draws from SFL (Hyon, 1996: 693).

The New Rhetoric school

The New Rhetoric school (Adam & Artemeva, 2002; Coe, 2002) is a non-linguistic tradition which emphasises situational context such as social setting, which means that genres are seen as dynamic and evolving (Johns, 2002: 8). So, for example, for a writer in a new setting, knowledge of the culture will be important in composing appropriate discourse within a particular community (Adam & Artemeva, 2002: 182). Although the theorisation of genre within the New Rhetoric school is not incompatible with the genre investigated within the present study, the ethnographic focus of this genre tradition does make it less useful than the approach that is used.

The English for Specific Purposes school

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) school was developed by the researchers Bhatia (2004), Hyland (2007), and Swales (1990). This school, unlike the New Rhetoric school, takes a linguistic approach to the study of genre. Within this school, influential research has included research genres such as academic articles (Swales, 1990) and professional genres such as business correspondence (Bhatia, 2004).

Swales (1990) is a key theorist in the contemporary development of genre theory within the ESP tradition (Chandler, 1997). Swales has referred to genre as “a fuzzy concept” (1990: 33), but defines genre as comprising “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” and stipulates that various patterns exist within genre, including “structure, style, content and intended audience” (1990: 58).

ESP differs from the Sydney school (described below) in that it is “concerned with the communicative needs of particular academic and professional groups and so genres are seen as the purposive actions routinely used by community members to achieve a particular purpose” (Hyland, 2007: 154). For example, Biber and Conrad (2009: 3-4) explain that ESP focuses on genres within particular professions or disciplines (e.g., biochemistry or physical therapy), “with the ultimate goal of developing instructional materials that will help students learn the particular language patterns that are typical for the different situations and different kinds of texts in those field”. As such, while the ESP approach is compatible with the present research for its focus on text and context, its instructional aims do not correspond with the descriptive aims of the present study.

The Sydney school (SFL)

The third main genre tradition, the Sydney school, is based within the SFL tradition. It emphasises genres as being purposeful and sequential whilst drawing links between language and context (Martin, 1992). Like the ESP school, the Sydney school takes a linguistic approach to the study of genre, but it differs in that it is not primarily focussed on the instruction of specific, situated genres for non-native language learners. Rather, the SFL-based genre tradition is concerned with primary and secondary education.

In the Sydney tradition, genre is explained as a goal-oriented social activity (Martin, 1992; Martin, 1997), and is a relationship between context and text (Taboada, 2011: 248). This theorisation was developed by Hammond et al. (1992), Martin (1992), Rothery (1994), and Martin & Rose (2008).

The SFL tradition of genre is the approach used within the present research. The purpose of the genre analysis within the present research is to identify and analyse the features of the marketing discourse within the corpus; as such, the SFL approach is particularly useful as it emphasises the analysis of semiotic features within social context. This approach to genre is also theoretically compatible with the other analytical frameworks employed within this thesis, which are based on SFL conceptualisations of language and context.

In particular, the analytical framework adapted within the present study follows the Sydney model as described by Martin & Rose (2003; 2008). According to this theorisation, genres are defined as "different types of texts that enact various types of social contexts" (Martin & Rose, 2008: 8). These genres are recurrent global patterns of discourse which are given names; examples of genre names include 'stories', 'narratives', 'reports', and 'descriptions' (Martin & Rose, 2008: 5), each of which has more specific sub-genres as components.

Within genres, the recurrent patterns (or 'stages') are called schematic structures. So, for example, for discourse within the genre of 'procedures' and the sub-genre of 'scientific experimentation', the schematic structures include Aims, Equipment, Steps, Results, and Conclusion (Martin & Rose, 2008: 6).

The present research includes this conceptualisation of genre to investigate the stages and goals of the brand posts, in order to understand how discursive patterns help to achieve their goals. This is essential in this study as the interactions between responders and brands must be contextualised as being initiated by the patterns and purposes of the brand post.

In the following sections, I describe various genres of relevance to the present study, and outline in further detail the framework used for the genre analysis of the data.

2.6.2 Multimodal genre analysis

Although the primary focus of this research is upon the linguistic analysis of text, it would be limiting to ignore the importance of the visual images that typically accompany each product post. In order to appropriately consider the context within which the data in the present study occurs, in the genre analysis I also carry out an analysis of web images that appear alongside text in the product promotion post.

The visual analysis I incorporate into the genre analysis within the present study is based on work by Baldry & Thibault (2006), Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), and (Kress, 2010). Their multimodal analysis approaches are extensions of Halliday & Matthiessen's (1994/2004) SFL framework, and, like SFL, are based upon social-semiotic theory. Kress (2010) explains that two strands of social-semiotics have developed from Halliday's theory; the linguistic, and the semiotic perspectives, and that multimodal analysis is based on the latter strand.

The analysis of various semiotic modes of communication within a single text poses a number of challenges. For example: how can we accurately predict the likely intended and received meaning of, for example, the positioning of a particularly prominent element in a painting? Can such material qualities be systematically analysed?

One way of approaching this problem is to acknowledge that terminology for linguistic phenomena, which allows for the grammatical study of language, developed through focus on a mode that was known only as an abstraction. In other words, language is a sign, rather than a material, and 'grammar' is a framework that describes language. The physical presence of material modes such as art (represented through elements such as paint and ink) and music (represented through instrument and vocal sounds which make sound waves) are, like language, semiotic – the difference is that the elements of representation are material, rather than abstract (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 225-6). Because non-linguistic modes are semiotic forms, within culture they have meaning. Therefore, like language, it is theoretically possible to explore and develop a 'grammar' for describing and analysing various modes of communication.

Another key consideration in the justification of not just whether*,* but also why non-linguistic, semiotic modes should be analysed, is that "signs are always newly *made* in social interaction [and] signs are *motivated*, not *arbitrary* relations of meaning and form"

(Kress, 2010: 54, italics in original). In other words, signs are not a material that simply exist – they are created with motivation, and therefore produce meaning through cultural and social interaction.

Multimodal analysis is applied by using tools relating to those used in SFL. Rather than applying the tools to written text, however, they are applied to different semiotic modes of communication, such as a piece of music or a television advertisement. The three SFL metafunctions are applied to these different semiotic modes, including the ideational function, where we name and categorise participants, processes, and the circumstances in which they interact. This metafunction can be related to multimodal theory in the example of conveyed qualities of consumer product, the plot of a television show, or the mood in a musical piece. The interpersonal function can be realised through advertising to consumers or putting on a show for an audience. As in SFL analysis, the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions are realised through the textual metafunction – the cohesion and continuity of the mode of communication, whether it be music, dance, advertisement, or painting (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 15).

The particular relevance of multimodal analysis to the data in the present study can be seen through the following passage by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 171):

> Most glossy magazine food photographs, for instance, are highly sensory in their depiction of food. The colours are intense. The texture of the food is shown in sharp detail. Lighting enhances the fresh droplets of water on a bunch of grapes, or the viscosity of a sauce, or the glazing of the ham and the cherries in a pie. But the surrounding objects tend to have lower modality. The weave of the tablecloth on which the food is displayed, for instance, may be only just be visible and often the setting is absent altogether, with the food shown against a black background. In other words, such pictures are not only sensory, they are also abstract. The 'sensorily' depicted food is taken out of context, idealized and essentialized. And this shows that each of the modality choices in such a modality configuration is expressive of specific meanings, which then come together in the whole.

This description of magazine food photographs demonstrates the significance of the image in promotional features, such as advertising. This example is particularly relevant to the present study as it demonstrates the importance of the sensory and abstract impact of images in food-related discourse.

In summary, within the corpus of the present study, the Facebook posts created by the brand representative include an image and text; as such, the analysis of the interaction between consumers and the product posts must address the multimodal nature of the prompt post. In addition, the genre analysis includes analysis of another mode – hyperlinks. The methodology for the multimodal genre analysis is detailed in Chapter 3.

2.6.3 Applications of (multimodal) genre analysis

Genres within Social Media

As social media use becomes more pervasive in networked culture, researchers use genre analysis to understand and describe how individuals interacting through various types of platforms achieve their communicative purposes.

The application of genre theory to CMC genres emerged soon after electronic communication became part of culture. The use of genre analysis for CMC discourse was pioneered by Yates & Orlikowski (1992) (within the rhetorical genre tradition) in their investigation of how functional business correspondence evolved from various organizational genres (e.g., the business letter and the memo) with the introduction of email. As the use of electronic communication has evolved, researchers have applied genre analysis to various CMC genres, including online bulletin board messages (Taboada, 2004), weblogs (Miller & Shepherd, 2004; Herring & Wright, 2004; Nowson, 2006), online encyclopaedias (Emigh & Herring, 2005), electronic news (Bateman, Delin, & Henschel, 2007), and webpages (Santini, 2007).

While responses to news feed marketing can be considered to be part of a distinct genre, they do not, in themselves, constitute a genre – that is, individual comment responses must be contextually considered as a response to marketing discourse. As such, the genre analysis in the present thesis primarily focuses not on the generic structure and purposes of comments, but on those of the brand posts. In doing so, it is most useful to focus primarily on promotional genres and their evolution within online contexts.

Although the communicative purposes of the comment responses are multiple and complex, I approach the brand posts themselves as having rather more straight-forward social purposes – marketing of brands and products, with an ultimate aim of selling products. However, as I argue throughout the present thesis, news feed marketing constitutes an emerging genre of marketing discourse, as it features specific recognisable differences from more traditional marketing genres (both online and offline), both in form and in function.

The present thesis draws on a number of multimodal genre studies considering various types of marketing discourse, including brand web site marketing (Koteyko, 2009), online property advertising (Pounds, 2011, 2012), university brochures (Osman, 2015), university webpages (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013) and internet sports advertising (Liang, 2014). However, to date there has not been research considering news feed marketing as a distinct genre; it is this gap in the literature that the present study addresses.

Although the primary focus within the genre analysis is on the promotional nature of the brand posts, the comment responses analysed within the present study do have similarities to both social media status updates and to online review discourse. The former has been approached in a study using genre analysis (Page, 2010, 2012), where it was found that Facebook status updates share generic characteristics with narratives.

Another relevant genre is that of online reviews. Online review discourse has been the focus of studies in the fields of business, marketing, tourism, economics, and information and technology, but to date there is relatively little empirical work based within the field of language and discourse research. Within genre research, Taboada (2011) has researched consumer-driven online reviews, while other researchers (Vásquez, 2012; De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013) have focussed more specifically on online travel reviews.

In summary, the genre aspect of the present research owes a debt to previous research considering general online communication tools (e.g., email, chat, blogs, news), as well as more specific genres including online review discourse, status update narratives, and in particular, promotional genres. This thesis builds upon these studies by considering a genre that has emerged within an online context where these other genres have become familiar to many users of internet technology.

In Section 2.6.4, below, I describe promotional genres in more detail, as the form and function of brand posts share features with such genres.

2.6.4 News feed marketing as an emerging promotional genre

In addition to arguing that news feed marketing is a promotional genre, I argue that it is an emergent genre[9]. This is to say that although there are characteristics of brand posts that are clearly derived from established genres (such as magazine advertising), there are elements that are novel in form and function.

[9] As with most emerging genres, a generally accepted name for the genre has yet to emerge; for the purposes of the present thesis I refer to it as 'news feed marketing' although this term may eventually be socially recognised under a different name.

In order to specify how the features of news feed marketing constitute an emerging genre, it is useful to initially distinguish between established and emerging genres. Crowston & Williams (2000) identify three classes of genres, which are particularly relevant to web genres: reproduced, adapted, and novel (emerging). Reproduced genres are those where traditional genres (e.g., books) are simply relocated to a new context virtually unchanged (e.g., e-books). Adapted genres involve modifications to pre-existing genres, such as online journal articles with hyperlinks or embedded information. Novel, or emerging genres, may be derived from previous genres, but serve communicative purposes unique to the context.

On this basis, within the genre analysis of this study, I demonstrate how news feed marketing is not only derived from previous marketing genres, but is an emerging genre in that it represents unique communicative purposes compared to its predecessors. In order to do this, I adapt a generic structure from Cheong's (2004) framework for print advertisements, which follows the multimodal framework developed by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), and the theorisation of genre structure developed by Halliday & Hasan (1985) and Hasan (1996).

There are a number of considerations in identifying print advertising as being the most useful established genre from which to base the analysis of this emerging genre. Firstly, within print advertising, still images and text are the primary modes of communication – as is the case within the brand posts in the research corpus. This similarity is significant when compared with other modes and contexts of advertising, such as television, radio, sports sponsorships, or plain-text web browser advertisements.

There are two other particularly notable similarities between the genres, which both relate to context. Firstly, print advertisements are placed *within* the flow of the media, which can generally be presumed to be of interest to the audience. In other words, the viewer will encounter the advertisement if they sequentially flip through a magazine or newspaper. This is similar to the positioning of brand posts within the news feed, where an individual scanning sequentially through the news feed will encounter the brand post.

This contextualisation may be significant in that the promotional discourse must be clearly identifiable as such, despite also adapting its content and appearance to 'blend in' with the surrounding texts. As such, I venture that there are key generic stages that distinguish the advertisement from its surrounding content, whereas other promotional genres (e.g., flyers, web banner ads, web pop-up ads, web browser side-bar ads) are perhaps primarily distinguished through contextual placement (or sudden appearance) rather than predictable stages consistent across the genre.

Secondly, related to the issue of placement as explained above, news feed marketing bears more similarities to printed advertising than some web genres in that it consists of relatively concise discourse within other media, as opposed to such promotional genres as brand websites (Koteyko, 2009), university websites (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013) and online property advertising (Pounds, 2012). For these reasons, it is useful to adapt the printed advertisement generic structure to the emerging genre of news feed marketing.

The generic description used within the present thesis is based on the framework developed by Cheong (2004), who investigates the visual and verbal resources used in printed advertisements, focussing in particular on the SFL dimension of ideational meaning.

Following the SFL version of genre analysis, Cheong (2004) is concerned with the analysis of 'parts' of a genre, or 'stages'. This framework was introduced by Hasan (1977), who describes the genre of 'appointment making' as comprising the following stages[10]: Identification ^ Application ^ Offer ^ Confirmation (Martin and Rose, 2008: 8).

In this tradition, Cheong (2004: 164) finds that printed advertisements comprise the following generic structure:

Lead^(Display)^Emblem^(Announcement)^(Enhancer)^(Tag)^(Call-and-Visit Information).

These generic stages are described in detail within Chapter 3, but of central importance in the context of the literature review is that the majority of the generic stages identified by Cheong (2004) are also present within brand posts. Additional elements (e.g., hyperlinks) are considered using the SFL-based theorisation of semiotic meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Kress, 2010).

Promotional genres and non-promotional discourse

One of the primary characteristics of brand news feed posts is that while they include particular elements which clearly identify them as marketing, they otherwise often appear to be more similar to 'typical' news feed posts (i.e., those posted by Facebook users) than to recognisable marketing or advertising. Nevertheless, I argue that whether or not brand posts clearly promote a specific product through positive evaluation (via text or image), the genre can be classified as a promotional genre.

Shaw (2006: 160) explains promotional discourse in relation to genre: "In promotional genres one can assume that everything, whether explicitly marked as positive evaluation or

[10] where the symbol ^ represents: 'is followed by'

not, is interested in the sense that it is included in order to achieve the writer's goal". That is, within brand posts there may be apparently non-promotional discourse which nevertheless fulfils promotional purposes through social means, such as association with the values of modesty and humility (Shaw, 2006: 161).

Furthermore, non-promotional discourse within a brand post may be combined with other stages within the genre to ultimately fulfil its promotional purpose. To demonstrate how news feed marketing achieves promotional purposes through non-promotional discourse, I provide an example from the corpus, below:

[WKR-6-BRAND]	It's a big day for Britain. Our new Prince is finally here! Who's excited?
[WKR-6-1]	no not that bothered
[WKR-6-2]	I might be excited if we got an extra bank holiday ;-)
[WKR-6-3]	Who cares babies are born everyday

In the example above, I have intentionally decontextualised the brand post by omitting the image accompanying the text. I have done this in order to demonstrate the non-promotional nature of the text-based genre stage, despite the overall promotional nature of the post. Initially, it may appear from this example that the genre does, indeed, most closely resemble the communicative purposes of status updates. However, I argue that it becomes clear from the full brand post (below) that it is most appropriate to primarily consider brand posts as a promotional genre, rather than as an adaptation of social media status updates.

Image 15: [WKR-3-BRAND]

Further to this justification of including genre analysis in the present research, it is also necessary to consider how the user comments fit within this stage of analysis; while the brand posts are identified as promotional genre, what of the user comments? If "genre is a staged, goal-oriented social process" (Martin & Rose, 2008: 8), and user comments appear within the same context as the brand posts, do the user comments realise the goals of individuals, brands, or both? That is, are the user comments part of the promotional genre or do they constitute a different genre?

These questions are complicated for a number of reasons, not least by the fact that the context of the brand posts and user comments is ambiguous due intertextuality (discussed in Section 2.2.3, earlier in this chapter), where comments are made within one context yet appear in another.

While in the overall, audience-based research focus within the present thesis I do not conceptualise responses as being promotional, this does not necessarily mean that they cannot be considered as an essential component of the promotional genre. In fact, it is of particular interest that responders have different goals than the brand promoters, as this feature may be one of the key factors in categorising this genre as emergent, rather than adapted.

In her research on Twitter discourse, Zappavigna (2012: 28) acknowledges the relevance of genre because tweets “may have a wide range of social functions realized by different microgenres”. However, she claims that genre analysis generally only exists for longer texts (e.g., Martin & Rose, 2008) and that it is unclear how a user’s stream of posts can be analysed within genre theory due to the stream’s “intersection of different textual timelines” (i.e., intertextuality).

However, I disagree with this argument; in many cases (such as in the present research corpus), it is possible to contextualise a short text within a larger text, where there is enough contextual information to identify communicative purposes. In other words, when a comment can be contextualised as a response to a specific instance or type of text, its communicative purpose can be identified and thus it can be included within an investigation of genre. As such, an analysis of the (non-promotional) communicative purposes of the responses is integral to the understanding of the genre as a whole.

2.7 Negotiation

One of the theoretical contributions of the present thesis is a novel approach to the analysis of social media comment threads. I use conversation analysis (specifically, a focus on Negotiation) (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Martin, 1992) to show how this discourse bears important similarities to conversational turn-taking.

While Martin & White (2005: 7) see conversation analysis as being applicable only to *spoken* discourse, I argue that several features of CMC in general, and the present research corpus in particular, provide compelling justification for applying a conversation analysis approach to brand posts and responses. In the present research corpus, all brand posts are considered to be conversation ‘initiations’, while the user comments are ‘responses’. A focus on how individuals engage in stance-taking through responses is useful in the investigation of identity performances. This is addressed in more detail within the Chapter 3.

In this approach, I see responses as casual conversation. Eggins & Slade (1997: 6) describe ‘casual conversation’ as interactive, meaning-making language, which does so through everyday tasks such as buying and selling, transferring knowledge, practical activities such as making appointments, and importantly, conversing “simply for the sake of talking itself”. Although casual conversation may at times appear trivial and aimless, it is extremely important because through turn-taking in interaction "we negotiate meanings about what we think is going on in the world, how we feel about it, and how we feel about the people we interact with" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 6). It is this emphasis on the negotiation of meanings that informs an approach to conversation analysis, which I refer to as Negotiation analysis.

2.7.1 Conversation analysis

The analysis of conversation as a turn-taking activity was introduced in the 1970's by the sociologists Harvey Sacks (e.g., 1972, 1974) and Schegloff (1982), who used ethno-methodological analysis to examine how seemingly banal conversations can provide enormous insight into human interactions. The linguistic approach to the conversation analysis differs from these initial sociological studies in that rather than focussing on conversation as an insight into social life, it focuses on how language structure "*enable[s]* us to do conversation" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 7). This approach is compatible with the overall research questions of the present thesis, focussing on identity as emergent through language.

Like the genre analysis and Appraisal analysis approaches described in the present chapter and used within this research, the Negotiation analysis approach is a development within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1994/2004), which adapts the SFL framework to investigate several aspects of spoken, casual conversation.

The theorisation of the Negotiation system was originated by Martin (1992), who proposed the framework as a means to analyse conversational structure. Eggins & Slade (1997) developed this framework and applied it to casual conversation.

The main types of Negotiation are summarised in Table 4, below, adapted from Eggins & Slade (1997: 192-195):

Negotiation: main categories	
Opening moves "begin sequences of talk, or open up new exchanges" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 192).	
Sustaining moves "keep negotiating the same preposition" introduced within the opening move (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 195)	Sustaining: Continuing moves are made by the speaker who has just been speaking
	Sustaining: Reacting moves are made by a speaker taking a new turn

Table 4: Negotiation main categories

Within these categories, of particular interest are further distinctions within the Reacting category. Here, the useful categories distinguish between supporting, and confronting moves. In this way it is possible to analyse conversational moves to indicate where responders may align or disalign with the brand itself, or the topic suggested within the brand post. The Negotiation analysis in this thesis focusses on exchange structure, and does not involve technical conversation analysis methods such as transcription conventions, etc.

Along with the other layers of analysis in the study, this is useful for the focus on identity as emergent through language and interaction. These Negotiation categories are investigated in more detail within Chapter 3.

2.7.2 Previous research on Negotiation

The present study builds on a relatively limited number of studies considering Negotiation. The majority of these studies are focussed on CMC learning contexts (e.g., Piriyasilpa, 2009; Zammit, 2011; Coffin, Hewings, & North, 2012; Don, 2012; Lander, 2014), while Don (2007a) focusses on identity within email discussion lists.

Negotiation is an aspect of communication often neglected in empirical studies on CMC, but it has been argued that a focus on the interactive aspect of conversation can provide novel insight into the generic characteristics of asynchronous discussion (Lander, 2014).

For example, Zammit (2011) has adapted Eggins & Slade's (1997) 'moves analysis' (Negotiation) and applied it within a study investigating the way students navigate through websites. Similarly to the approach taken with the present thesis, Zammit (2011) conceptualises website navigation as a type of computer-mediated, interactive 'conversation'.

In another study considering learning through asynchronous communication, Lander (2014), similarly to the present study, considers both Appraisal and Negotiation in her investigation. In doing so, Lander provides novel insights into researchers' concerns (e.g., M. Hammond, 2005; Hopkins, Gibson, Sole, Savvides, & Starkey, 2008) that asynchronous communication does not facilitate learning to the extent that the researchers expected, given its affordances. The potential reasons for this disparity between potential and realised value are a matter of debate within the online learning research community, but Lander (2014) finds that research into online discussions does not tend to include empirical investigation of the interactive aspect of online conversation; she seeks to address this neglected aspect by applying Negotiation analysis to asynchronous CMC data.

Lander (2014) finds, for example, that within online ‘conversations’, initiating posts receive responses from multiple participants or, at times, no one at all, and this may lead to frustration for the participants as it presents difficulties in terms of fulfilling conversational expectations of tracking the conversation.

While the present study is focussed on identity, rather than in dissatisfaction with asynchronous communication as a learning tool, Lander’s (2014) study potentially sheds some light on a key characteristic of message threads. Although there are aspects of verbal conversation exchange structure that are identifiable within message threads, such as initiating and responding moves, ‘conversations’ do not tend to develop as they might in an offline context. While this may be problematic within learning situations, it remains to be seen whether this ‘conversation’ structure has a positive or negative effect on the performance of identity.

In a study that addresses a related, identity-focussed question, Don (2007b) investigates email discussion list discourse, specifically focussing on interaction as a means for identity negotiation. Don investigates Appraisal and conversation structure (Negotiation), and finds that many online discussions are centred around topics that “appeared to form the scaffolding for the positioning of self in relation to social values, and the writer’s authority to comment on these topics” (2007b: 274).

This finding has significant relevance to the present study; it suggests that an investigation of Negotiation can highlight the ways that individuals may respond to or initiate conversational topics for purposes other than exchange of knowledge or information (as might be the case in primarily consumer-driven discourse, for example). That is, in finding that many online contributors are primarily concerned with negotiating identity, Don’s (2007b) study demonstrates how discourse can be investigated in terms of the *usefulness* of various topics for the performance of identity, rather than considering the topics as determiners for the purpose of the conversation. Within the present study, for example, this approach may enable an argument that individuals who discuss the merits of a particular brand of chocolate may actually be using the topic as an anchor to perform social values.

In summary, the findings in these previous studies suggest that application of Negotiation analysis to computer mediated, non-spoken discourse can produce valuable insights into the many ways meaning is negotiated in online environments.

2.8 Appraisal

Appraisal theory is one of several theories that are concerned with 'evaluation', which Hunston & Thompson (2000: 5) describe as "the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of a set of values."

The central analytic layer within the present study is based on the framework of Appraisal theory, which is an evolution of the SFL framework. This framework is particularly useful to the present study and its focus on social identity, as it allows for a systematic analysis of the interpersonal aspects of discourse, including interaction between people and sharing of feelings (Martin and White, 2005: 7). The Appraisal framework is detailed in the sections below.

2.8.1 Evaluation in discourse

Appraisal theory is an approach to discourse which is primarily concerned with evaluation. In affective evaluation research, speakers are seen as 'having' personal feelings and expressing them through words (Hunston & Thompson, 2000: 2). Hunston & Thompson's choice of the term *evaluation* emphasises the user-orientation, rather than words as *having* connotations, and the researchers further justify the terminology choice because it allows them to refer to the "*values* ascribed to the entities and propositions which are *evaluated*" (Hunston & Thompson, 2000: 5).

One of the key concepts in evaluation is to do with how opinion is expressed toward different phenomena, as not all opinion can be dichotomised as evaluating as 'good/bad'. In addition to good/bad evaluations, opinions can be concerned with certainty, expectedness, and importance (Hunston & Thompson, 2000: 25). Some approaches to evaluation deal with these different types of evaluative meaning by separating them in different system networks (e.g., Halliday & Matthiessen, 1994; Martin & White, 2005), while others combine them (e.g., Conrad & Biber, 2000; Bednarek, 2006).

A number of different terms are used by different researchers to discuss similar and often overlapping approaches to evaluation. Martin & White (2005) use the term *appraisal,* while Conrad & Biber (2000) use the term *stance,* and Thompson & Hunston use *evaluation* and *stance* (Hunston & Thompson, 2000: 2). The terms *stance* and *evaluation* could be used interchangeably, but *stance* is usually used to imply a more grammatical focus within large-scale, semi-automated corpus analysis (Bednarek, 2006: 26-7).

In following the framework developed by Martin & White (2005), the present research uses quantitative and qualitative methods, but the research aims take a qualitative focus. This makes Martin & White's (2005) theory more useful than the corpus-based quantitative approach developed in the theoretically similar framework developed by Conrad & Biber (2000), which describes evaluation as *stance*.

To clarify, although the framework adopted in this study is Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal theory, the terms *stance, evaluation,* and *appraisal* are not (unless otherwise specified) meant as references to other evaluation approaches, but are meant to describe aspects of evaluation within Appraisal theory.

In the present research, the term *stance* is generally used to refer to the *ideological position* a speaker/writer takes in relation to a value perceived within a text or audience. Stances are most obvious within the Appraisal system of ENGAGEMENT where individuals agree or disagree with other positions, for example. But stance is also taken within the ATTITUDE system, where individuals take positions in relation to phenomena such as feelings, ethics, and aesthetics.

The term *evaluation* is used within the present research to refer to the *language* individuals use to position themselves in relation to other value positions.

The term *Appraisal* is primarily used within the present research to refer to Martin & White's (2005) *framework* that is concerned with "how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise" (Martin & White, 2005: 1). At times within discussion in the present research, the term *appraisal* may be used interchangeably with the term *evaluation* to indicate particular instance or use of language (e.g., "the individual's appraisal of the product indicates displeasure").

2.8.2 Appraisal theory framework

Appraisal is described by Martin & White (2005: 34) as one of three resources of interpersonal meaning within discourse semantics, or "the meaning beyond the clause" (Martin & White, 2005: 12). The Appraisal framework has been developed by a group of Sydney-based scholars (Martin, White, Rose, and Rothery) beginning in the mid-1990's. It is a development of the interpersonal dimension of meaning as understood within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 1994/2004). Within the interpersonal dimension of meaning, we use language to interact with others, thereby enacting social relationships: the language we use not only represents our experiences but "is also a proposition, or a proposal, whereby we inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 29).

In order to describe the Appraisal system as it applies to this thesis, it is first necessary to explain the nature of the 'system' within SFL and Appraisal. Eggins (2004: 13) describes SFL as approaching language as a semiotic system, which can be visualised through the concept of traffic lights. This system has three attributes. Firstly, there are a limited number of choices: red, amber, and green in this case. Secondly, only one option can be chosen; the light cannot be red and green at the same time. Finally, the precise description of the choice does not particularly matter as the meaning is derived from the oppositions between choices; it does not matter whether the light is red or pink, but that it is in opposition to green (Eggins, 2004: 13).

A system network involves interrelated options that are organised in terms of "what could go instead of what" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 22). Appraisal theory is based on the systemic approach used in SFL. However, Martin & White (2005) have departed from Halliday's (1994) argument that systems must consist of discrete choices; rather, Martin & White argue that some systems within Appraisal can be represented as being scalar (i.e., a scale of low to high such as dislike > hate > detest), rather than a system of categories consisting of discrete choices between red/amber/green, for example).

For some systems, including AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION, Martin & White (2005: 52) further explain that within context, we can recognise whether a characteristic is positive or negative, and that these values can be considered to be scalar. An example within the AFFECT system for the positive value of happiness would be: contentedly > happily > joyously > ecstatically (Martin & White, 2005: 136). For the purposes of encoding, however, the systems of ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT are generally represented as systems as it is not possible to distinguish whether a value such as 'hate' could be scaled as a median value or a high value of AFFECT: DISINCLINATION. On the other hand, these values can be represented within the GRADUATION system, which is represented as a scale. This is discussed further below.

Figure 1, below, an overview of the Appraisal system, is adapted from Martin & White (2005: 38). The figure is an example of a system network, where at each stage there are at least two 'choices' to be made between meaning, which can lead to further systems of choice. A square bracket leading from one value to the next values indicates the next system where a more precise system of opposing meanings can be used to describe textual meaning.

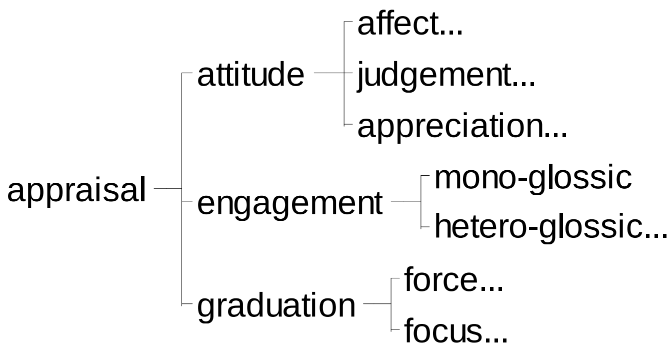

Figure 1. The Appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005: 38)

Within Appraisal analysis, system networks allow researchers to discover patterns within a corpus or a text through encoding values within the text and analysing these values quantitatively. Typically, an in-depth qualitative analysis follows. In the case of the present research, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are key in the analysis of the corpus. Basic quantitative methods are used to identify trends through statistics resulting from manual Appraisal categorizations.

The qualitative analysis of the corpus is based on Martin & White's (2005) work on Appraisal theory. They describe the Appraisal framework as a theory that focusses on the stances that writers adopt toward the subject of their communication as well as toward those with whom they communicate. Writers share emotions, tastes and value judgements while representing and constructing their own identity, either in alignment or disalignment with readers of their discourse.

These focus points within Appraisal theory indicate the appropriateness of the framework for the current study; the discourse within the corpus is strongly characterised by writers who actively engage with others in order to share their opinions relating to products, companies, and social topics, and in doing so are negotiating social identity.

Martin and White (2005) focus on written discourse. Through this framework, it is possible to perform a systematic analysis of identity construction (where the sharing of feelings and views is particularly important) within a social context (where interaction is particularly important). The Appraisal framework focuses analysis on three interactive categories: ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION.

The ATTITUDE category focuses on feelings and reactions, and is comprised of three types: AFFECT, which is concerned with positive and negative emotional reactions such as happiness, sadness, fear, desire, and so on. JUDGEMENT is the assessment of human behaviour and ethics, and can include praise, condemnation, and criticism. APPRECIATION is the evaluation of 'things' such as aesthetics, products, and natural phenomena (Martin & White, 2005: 42-69).

The Appraisal GRADUATION system relates to ATTITUDE categories in that items of ATTITUDE can be intensified, weakened, and compared, i.e., 'very tasty', 'sort of annoying', and 'as happy as you are' (Martin & White, 2005: 42-69).

The Appraisal ENGAGEMENT system "is concerned with the linguistic resources by which speakers/writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address" (Martin & White, 2005: 92).

ENGAGEMENT includes two basic positions: MONOGLOSSIA (where the speaker/writer does not include/allow for other positions) and HETEROGLOSSIA, which does allow for other dialogic positions. HETEROGLOSSIC categories include: disclaim (e.g., 'you don't need to…'), proclaim (e.g., 'naturally…'; 'I contend…'), entertain (e.g., 'apparently…'; 'it seems…'), and attribute (e.g., 'X said…'; 'X claims that…) (Martin & White, 2005: 97-98). GRADUATION also applies within these categories, through FORCE (e.g., *slightly* talented) and FOCUS (e.g., a *true* friend) (Martin & White, 2005: 134-8).

The present research does not apply the ENGAGEMENT system within the methodology, as dialogic position in this case is explored through the Negotiation analysis, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The table below gives a general overview and examples of the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION categories, adapted from Martin & White (2005).

Appraisal categories and examples: ATTITUDE and GRADUATION		
Appraisal system	Sub-systems	Examples (positive and negative)
ATTITUDE	AFFECT	DIS/INCLINATION: long for / wary UN/HAPPINESS: cheerful / depressed IN/SECURITY: trusting / anxious DIS/SATISFACTION: pleased / angry
	JUDGEMENT	SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY: fashionable / odd SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY: competent / stupid SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY: persevering / timid SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY [truth]: honest / manipulative SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY [ethics]: moral / evil
	APPRECIATION	REACTION: IMPACT: captivating / boring REACTION: QUALITY: lovely / repulsive COMPOSITION: BALANCE: harmonious / distorted COMPOSITION: COMPLEXITY: elegant / simplistic VALUATION: exceptional / shoddy
GRADUATION	FORCE	INTENSIFICATION: slightly sad / greatly disturbed QUANTIFICATION: small/large problem; many/few problems
	FOCUS	SHARPEN: a true father… SOFTEN: an apology of sorts…

Table 5: Appraisal categories and examples (Martin & White, 2005)

The examples in the table above include 'positive' and 'negative' values for AFFECT categories, such as 'cheerful' and 'depressed' as examples of AFFECT: UN/HAPPINESS. The organization of boundaries between categories, such as between AFFECT: UN/HAPPINESS and AFFECT: DIS/SATISFACTION are called 'parameters'.

The categories are described in further detail in Chapter 3.

Criticisms of Appraisal theory

There have been relatively few criticisms of Appraisal theory, and those criticisms that have arisen seem to focus not on inherent issues with the theory itself, but on the borders of its theoretical focus. For example, Poynton & Lee (2009, 2011) argue that the premise of Appraisal theory is incomplete, in that it sees evaluation as representing affect, but does not address the ways that language can *produce* affect. In other words, the authors argue that Appraisal sees evaluation as "expression of individual feeling or emotion" whilst failing to account for the potential for language to *produce* affect through, for example, interactive talk (Poynton & Lee, 2011: 639). I argue that this criticism seems to overlook the interpersonal focus of Appraisal, in that one of the major goals and uses of the framework is to investigate how individuals use evaluation to “construct relations of alignment and rapport” (Martin & White, 2005: 2). While perhaps tracking specific instances of produced affect are not of primary concern in the use of Appraisal theory, constructed relationships can certainly be said to (at least partially) be the product of not only expressed, but produced affect.

In another criticism of Appraisal theory, Bednarek (2006), argues that one shortfall of Appraisal is that while parameters are assigned, there is not a clear theoretical acknowledgement for the differences between parameters, and the possibility for parameters to be combined. For example, while Appraisal theory involves focus on the similarity between types of evaluations (e.g., the emotions of ‘cheerful’ and ‘depressed’ are similar in ways that make them both belong within the category of ATTITUDE: UN/HAPPINESS), it does not acknowledge, for example, that something that is ‘important’ can be good *or* bad. Bednarek argues that “evaluating something as important, comprehensible or expected is fundamentally different from evaluating it as good or bad… If something is important, comprehensible, or expected this is not automatically good” (2006: 42-43).

So, taking the example of ‘cheer’ as introduced above, Bednarek’s (2006) argument is that Appraisal theory may over-simplify the categorisation of ‘cheer’ as good, or positive, and ‘depression’ as bad, or negative. For example, there are conceivably times when cheer is evaluated within, or in combination with desirability or expectation parameters, not positive/negative parameters – e.g., cheerfulness is not desirable or expected in certain cultural contexts, such as at a funeral.

While Bednarek’s theory of evaluation proposes a framework for accounting for this phenomenon where types of appraisal can be combined to form complex evaluations, her approach is not incompatible with that of Appraisal theory. Within the present thesis, the level of delicacy offered by Appraisal theory is (often *more* than) sufficient to address the research questions. Within the corpus, user comments include evaluations of people, things, and emotions, but because very limited discourse and contextual information is available, it is quite often not possible to analyse individual evaluations at a complex level. While the analysis of these evaluations is of central importance within the present research, the approach taken to the investigation of interpersonal meaning is focussed on developing methodologies to account for the contextual information that *is* available, such as the interpersonal function of the brand post and image as identified within the genre analysis.

2.8.3 Applications: Appraisal analysis and identity

In the past ten years or so, Appraisal theory has been used extensively to investigate identity performances within discourse, including online discourse. The present thesis draws on the work of researchers using Appraisal to address identity within social networks, and in particular Eggins & Slade (1997) who use Appraisal to analyse identity within casual conversation, Zappavigna (2011, 2012), who focuses on Twitter discourse; Delahunty (2012), who investigates identity of TESOL students within online discussion forums, Knight (2010, 2013), who investigates conversational humour and affiliation, and Don (2012), who addresses affiliation within written interaction via email. I also draw on the work of Vásquez (2012, 2014a, 2014b), whose corpus approach to evaluation within online consumer reviews is useful as a complementary body of research.

To date, however there has not been an Appraisal study focussing on responses to social media marketing; the present thesis addresses this gap in the literature.

Previous studies focussing on Appraisal and CMC demonstrate the usefulness of the Appraisal framework in the investigation of identity. In a recent application of Appraisal theory, which has particular relevance to the present study, Delahunty (2012) uses the Appraisal framework (amongst other methods) to investigate the discussion forums of an online post-graduate TESOL group. Delahunty demonstrates that identity within an online discussion forum can emerge through discourse as students engage in self-evaluation, negotiate their relationships within a group, and use contextual cues to determine what is of particular value within this group. One of the distinctive features of this study is that it demonstrates that communicative meaning within web forums can be carried solely through textual posts, as face-to-face cues are not available.

Delahunty analyses how participants use ATTITUDE categories to negotiate identity in relation to other participants. For example, AFFECT, which relates to emotions, is a feature in the following discourse, relating to a discussion about where the participants would like to teach in the future: “I love to travel” and “I loved Singapore, as a city . . .” (Delahunty, 2012: 412). In these instances, Delahunty explains that these participants are attempting to form bonds with others who have similar emotional reactions (Delahunty, 2012: 413).

Another ATTITUDE category, JUDGEMENT, is also an important feature within Delahunty’s analysis. This is not limited to JUDGEMENT of others; JUDGEMENT of self is employed within this forum to significant effect. For example, one of the participants posts this negative judgement of herself: “I don’t have an Education or Teaching background… My lack of teaching knowledge and experience certainly adds to the challenge of the course”. In this statement, the participant is placing a low value (negative SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY), and therefore a negative identity, on (herself) not being a teacher.

These findings are useful in relation to the present study in that they demonstrate that perhaps as important as the type of evaluation is the target of the evaluation; as mechanisms for identity performance, there are significant differences in negative evaluation of the self vs. negative evaluation of other people or things, even if the Appraisal category is the same (e.g., ‘hate’). The approach used within the present study to consider the distinction between evaluation targets is explained in Chapter 3.

In another related social media-based study, Zappavigna (2011, 2012) uses Appraisal theory to investigate the use of ‘searchable talk’ in Twitter communication, which is done through the use of hashtags (i.e., #obama). She finds that interpersonal meaning is supported by the functions of Twitter, as evidenced by the abundance of emotional and evaluative language within her corpus, which includes tweets about the 2008 U.S. presidential election. For example, after Obama won the American presidential election in 2008, Twitter comments, where users announced the results with positive AFFECT, carried on long after the news would have been widely known. This demonstrates “that the tweets may be forming a more interpersonal social function in which users are affiliating around values relating to the election result” (2011: 798). Zappavigna argues that Twitter users use personal evaluation to affiliate with others, and that criticisms of the platform that suggest discourse within Twitter is inane “have missed the social point of twittering” (2011: 803).

Similarly, within the present study, in investigating the casual comments where individuals respond to marketing, I investigate the powerful effect of plain-text CMC to perform identity in relation to or affiliation with others. This may be achieved through positive evaluation of a product if, for example, the brand post itself affiliates positively with a social value. Alternatively, in many cases, the target of evaluation is not a product or brand at all, but is instead a social topic such as nature appreciation, for example. As such, these comments, despite their relatively casual, concise nature and commercial elicitation, perform an important social function whereby individuals can perform identity and align or disalign with others.

This brief overview of relevant studies demonstrates the versatility of Appraisal theory when used within identity research; it illustrates the useful application of this framework in laying bare aspects of interpersonal communication in various research contexts, including political discourse, online learning, social media, and commercial/consumer discourse. Within these studies, researchers use Appraisal theory to show that in all different contexts and circumstances, individuals evaluate people, things, and emotions, and in doing so they take a stance and make a statement about who they think *they* are – in short, they perform identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has summarised literature relevant to the present study, including: the notion of identity performance within Web 2.0; a discussion of the linguistic theories and frameworks to be used in this study; and a discussion on CMC theories that provide background to the meaning-making potential of CMC as it appears within the discourse of the research corpus. In the following chapter, I describe the application and adaptation of these frameworks within the present study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter focusses on the nature of the corpus, data collection, and methodological design of this research project. These aspects of the research are guided by the research questions introduced in Chapter 1 of this thesis:

Research Question 1: How do individuals use language within online comments, and how can this communication be analysed?

Research Question 2: What aspects of identity are represented, constructed and negotiated through stance-taking user comments on Facebook brand posts?

The chapter begins with an introduction to the corpus and a description of data selection and collection, and the preparation of the corpus. Then, each of the three analytical frameworks, genre analysis, Negotiation analysis, and Appraisal analysis, are described, with illustrative examples from the corpus provided.

3.1 The Corpus

3.1.1 Data Selection

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are a number of reasons for building a research corpus consisting of Facebook snack food brand page posts. Social media sites are increasingly important communication contexts within modern culture and, therefore, provide new opportunities for scholarship. The comments found in snack food pages on Facebook consist of non-specialist, naturally-occurring and open-access language, therefore offering authentic insight into general interpersonal strategies within a CMC context.

Further to the goal of choosing snack foods as a representation of inexpensive and widely available consumer products, the specific brands have been chosen as representatives of popular 'types' of snack foods. The corpus consists of data collected from the Facebook pages of six snack food brands:

Corpus description: Product types and brands		
	USA brand	**UK brand**
Chocolate	Hershey's chocolate	Cadbury chocolate
Crisps	Lay's potato chips	Walkers crisps
'Healthy' snack	Nature Valley granola bars	Activia yogurt UK

Table 6. Product brands and types for data collection

These product types and brands were chosen to allow for different possibilities for comparison and/or case studies, including the potential for cross-cultural comparison and health considerations. The aim in considering these possibilities is to cross-reference the data in order to more fully account for whether trends in identity performance can be attributed to contextual factors of particular promotional sub-genres.

In order to consider English-language data from two countries, products from the United States and the United Kingdom were chosen. This is not to say that the products are necessarily either US or UK-based companies. Rather, either the product is primarily only available in that country/region (such as Hershey's, which is mostly available in North America, especially in the United States) or there is a Facebook page for the product that is specifically targeted to consumers in that country (such as Activia UK).

The aim in this aspect of product selection is not necessarily to collect data about 'national' products, but rather to attempt to collect data where the majority of the Facebook comment activity is based on shared cultural information and references, and thus encourages different aspects of identity work.

In the case of the chocolate and crisps, these two countries had comparable products in terms of national popularity and product price and quality. Hershey's and Cadbury were chosen as they are both popular, iconic chocolate brands in their respective countries. Although Cadbury is now an American-owned company, its primary consumer base is in the UK.

Lay's and Walkers crisps are both products of the Frito-Lay Corporation, and although they have different brand names, their logos and products are very similar. Both brands are extremely popular in their respective countries, and account for a very large segment of the crisps market in each.

Unlike the chocolate and crisp brands, in the case of the 'healthy' snack food products, it was not possible to match two generally equivalent products from the US and UK. Therefore, two different product types were chosen: granola bars for the US, and yogurt for the UK. These are referred to in this research as the 'healthy' snack food products; however, I do not necessarily claim that they are, in fact, healthy. This label is meant simply to reflect that they are generally perceived as healthier alternatives to products like chocolate and crisps, regardless of whether they may actually have higher levels of ingredients such as salt, sugar, artificial sweeteners, fat, and GMO ingredients.

3.1.2 Data Collection

The corpus consists of three data samples from each of six products. Each data set consists of a brand post, comprising an image and text, as well as 30 consecutive user comments from a random starting point within the comment chain. Therefore, the corpus consists of 18 data sets, including 18 brand posts and 540 user comments.

The size of the corpus has been determined by the research aims of the study. The qualitative methods employed in discourse analysis provide a great amount of insight when each text is approached multiple times with a variety of tools, and therefore a small amount of text can be surprisingly revealing. There is often a wide variety in the content of the comments, but the ‘saturation point’, in terms of general ‘types’ of comments, is reached after approximately 30 comments.

Each of the data sets is based on a ‘typical’ post, compared to the other posts within that approximate period. So, for example, if the chocolate brands focus heavily upon Christmas in December, I have selected posts focussing on that theme. Thus, over the total corpus of three posts per product, a range of cultural events/themes are included.

There are several types of product posts that were excluded from the corpus for various reasons. Product posts that included videos, rather than still images, were excluded in order to maintain consistency in the visual analysis element of this research. Product posts with text only, and no image, were also excluded on these grounds. At the time of data collection, the majority of product posts consisted of text and an image, and for this reason the data selection was focussed on this combination.

Product posts that encourage standard and highly-repetitive responses were excluded. For example, many product posts asked users questions such as whether they preferred cheese and onion crisps or lightly salted crisps, or asked users to comment that they ‘like’ a product in order to enter a competition. These tended to attract relatively large numbers of comments; however, these comments had very little variation. Although these types of comments do, of course, still hold potential insight in the investigation of identity, they tend to include substantially less text in terms of quantity and variety than in other types of comment threads. Therefore, they were excluded in favour of other comment threads where the communication could be considered to be richer in variation.

The brand posts collected are referred throughout this thesis as ‘marketing posts’ as well as ‘advertisements’. As introduced in the discussion on intertextuality within Section 2.2.3, it is generally not possible to identify whether a Facebook user is exposed to a marketing/advertisement message as a result of ‘organic intertextuality’ (e.g., a ‘friend’ commented on a brand post and thus it appeared in his/her ‘friend’s’ news feed) or whether the brand paid to promote, or push the post to a wider audience. There are, however, particular brand posts, or news feed ads, which can clearly be identified as such as they are labelled as a ‘sponsored post’ or ‘suggested post’. While these may appear within a Facebook user’s news feed, they often do not appear on the brand page ‘wall’. That is, it appears that when brands pay for these types of posts to appear in targeted users’ news feeds, there are certain visibility ‘privileges’ for these posts, as only selected users can see them, and typically, only within personal news feeds.

During the data collection process, one of the attempted methods was to collect brand advertisements which are clearly identifiable as such. At the time of data collection, these typically appeared relatively infrequently – generally once or twice a day per user’s news feed. Furthermore, these types of advertisements typically attracted very few comment responses, making the majority of advertisements unsuitable for the study.

In an attempt to collect more advertisements, I invited my personal Facebook friend network to share with me the advertisements that appeared within their news feeds. While there was initially substantial interest in participating in the project, ultimately the majority of participants discontinued due to anxiety over whether the advertisements they received were targeted at them based on their internet behaviour.

As a result of this unsuccessful data collection attempt, this method of collection was discontinued in favour the data collection method ultimately used for the present thesis, as detailed earlier in this chapter section. However, this discontinued approach did highlight interesting considerations and potential for future research as discussed in Section 6.4.

In summary, rather than accessing brand posts as they appeared in user news feeds, I selected specific brands and accessed their posts through the brand page, which consists of a ‘collection’ of the posts they have made, as if they were an individual user. These posts were, in general, far more accessible and attracted a much greater number of responses, than the clearly-identified ‘sponsored posts’ that also appear within news feeds.

3.1.3 Preparation of Corpus

The data was collected manually. Screen shots were collected of all posts, images, and comments. The product post text and user comments were copied and formatted into .txt documents. Usernames were removed and comments were assigned identities according to the following scheme:

Corpus Data Numbering Conventions		
Product	**Product Code**	**Example: [Product Code]-[Data Set]-[Comment ID]**
Hershey's	HSH	[HSH-1-BRAND] (Hershey's, Data set 1, Brand post)
Cadbury	CBY	[CBY-2-1] (Cadbury, Data set 2, Comment 1)
Lay's	LAY	[LAY-3-2] (Lay's, Data set 3, Comment 2)
Walkers	WKR	[WKR-3-21] (Walkers, Data set 3, Comment 21)
Nature Valley	NRV	[NRV-2-22] (Nature Valley, Data set 2, Comment 22)
Activia UK	ACT	[ACT-1-30] (Activia, Data set 1, Comment 30)

Table 7. Corpus Data Numbering Conventions

Only comments in English were included in the corpus. This is partly due to language knowledge constraints, but is also due to the possibility that CMC within different languages may have different features to those in English CMC, and therefore a translated analysis could misrepresent these subtle cues. The cross-language investigation of CMC is certainly an interesting research angle, but is beyond the scope of this research.

Comments that appeared to be 'spam' are not included in the corpus. These included comments that had no relevance to the brand post that clearly solicited others to visit particular websites, for example, or participate in 'chain mail' games (e.g., 'repost this within ten seconds or else x will happen').

In the process of copying text from the Facebook context to a .txt document, emoticons end up with a different appearance. Within Facebook, many emoticons automatically change from text format to images – so, for example, a smiley face typed as :) becomes an (upright) image of a yellow smiley face, and <3 becomes a red love-heart. This does not affect the analysis of the CMC features but it is noteworthy that, within the corpus, these appear as text whereas in Facebook they are either typed as text or chosen from a list of images.

The final step of the corpus preparation was to import comment responses in to Microsoft Excel, which was used for analysis and coding.

3.2 Genre analysis

The first analytical framework used within this thesis is a genre analysis of the brand posts and comments. In terms of the thesis as a whole, this stage provides background and context regarding comments as responses; in order to thoroughly account for meaning in responses, a consideration of what responses are responding *to* is an essential step.

To date, there has not been a genre-specific analysis conducted investigating the form and function of news feed brand posts. As such, the first step in the analysis of the present corpus is a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the genre structure of the brand posts.

The starting point for the genre element identification is the genre structure identified by Cheong's (2004) analysis of print advertising, which is adapted to describe different types and configurations of multimodal elements. This adaptation entails identifying similar genre elements to Cheong's print advertisements within brand posts (including Lead, Display, Announcement, and Enhancer), and developing descriptions for those elements not described in Cheong's genre analysis (including Branding, Brand Hyperlink, Date, User Activity, and Share-and-Respond Options). These brand elements are described in detail below.

The analysis process then involves individually analysing each of eighteen brand posts, and identifying features with distinct communicative purposes through consideration of aspects such as context, mode, and framing, as described within the SFL framework.

These communicative purposes are categorised and recorded to produce the (qualitatively-led) quantitative results. This task is completed for both the brand post as well as the responses, which are considered to be a genre element 'within', or as 'part of' the brand post.

3.2.1 Genre structure considerations

Identification of elements

In most genre analysis (see review in Chapter 2), genre elements[11] may be identified in terms of communicative purpose, mode (e.g., text, image or hyperlink), and spatial positioning. For example, for any post in this corpus which includes an image and a separate lexical component, the Facebook interface arranges this with the lexical component on top, followed by the image. Because of these differences in configuration and mode, these two components constitute two separate genre elements. Clusters of hyperlinked words with similar hyperlink functions can also be separated into different elements, depending on their spatial location, framing, and their function; for example, the hyperlinks 'like', 'comment', and 'share' are located in a cluster, and clicking on any of

[11] An explanation of the use of the term 'genre elements', rather than the traditional 'genre stages' follows in this chapter, below.

these leads to options to interact with this post. Other hyperlink clusters, such as '505 likes', and '57 comments', when clicked, lead to displays of all the Facebook users who have 'liked' or commented on the post; these too can be considered as a genre element as the hyperlinks realise similar functions.

Some elements, however, are identified using a more interpretative approach. Within particular elements (most often the Lead and Announcement, which are described in 3.2.2, below), specific visual and lexical strategies are used to realise essential functions of the brand post. Most notably, a brand post must include an aspect of branding; otherwise, the audience of the brand post would not be able to associate the meaning of the post with the brand. The branding element can occur in various places within the brand post, and can be repeated numerous times within a single post. Thus, its identification depends on cultural knowledge of what 'branding' looks like, whether in iconic or lexical form.

Non-linearity of elements

In the Sydney school tradition of genre analysis (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008) introduced in Chapter 2, it is understood that one stage follows another sequentially, and a specific sequence is generally necessary in order for the genre to be completed successfully. At its most general realisation, the structure can be understood as Beginning^Middle^End. However, in a multimodal genre such as social media marketing posts, the concept of linearity becomes complicated by the possibilities for different reading paths. Reading paths may be influenced by the relative salience of elements within the genre, but they may also be influenced by the goals of the viewer, and the relative salience becomes irrelevant. Hiippala (2012) argues that reading paths are largely task-driven, and the factors affecting visual perception are beyond the control of the designer. Therefore, I argue that multimodal genres do not conform to the notion of linear approaches to genre analysis.

With the goal of adapting linear genre analysis methodology to multimodal genres, whilst retaining the ability to concisely describe the components of this particular genre, I propose a simple solution: rather than referring to genre 'stages', I refer to them as genre 'elements', thus eliminating the reference to sequentiality. Furthermore, rather than referring to the genre structure as Beginning^Middle^End, (with ^ symbolising 'is followed by'), I propose to use an alternate symbol with the meaning 'is co-present with'. So, this would be realised as: Element A~Element B~Element C~, to indicate that these three elements are co-present. The order in which I list these is, therefore, theoretically arbitrary, and in the case of the present data, I generally list elements beginning with the most salient feature, and then move in a path toward the top of the post and skip back down toward the bottom.

Embedded elements

The solution to sequentiality also addresses another issue, concerning genre elements that do not consistently appear in the same mode or in a specific location within the brand post, thereby precluding their identification by the means used to identify other elements.

There are three such elements identified within the present corpus: Branding, Product Display, and Enhancer. These are described in detail below, but the crucial point is that, unlike the Lead and Announcement elements, which are identified by their mode and spatial positioning, these other elements exist within a brand post in various locations and/or forms. For example, an instance of Branding may occur within the Lead or the Brand Hyperlink as a brand logo, or within the Announcement as the lexical representation of the brand. Thus, these elements are realised as separate elements, but one may exist *within* another.

I have addressed this particular issue by labelling these elements as 'embedded', signified by the + symbol. And, because the elements are represented as being 'co-present' (~) with the other elements, the description of how these elements fit within the genre as a whole is relatively straightforward. There are two possibilities for representing embedded elements. The first is as follows:

Announcement +Branding (+Product Display) (+Enhancer)~

Brand Hyperlink +Branding~

In the example above, I demonstrate a potential scenario where embedded elements are located within other elements (the Announcement, and the Brand Hyperlink are the 'containing' elements indicated above). However, annotating the genre as above would compromise the 'non-linear' description of the genre, as it would imply that the embedded element is viewed within the 'host' element. However, in keeping with the concept of a task-driven reading path which cannot be consistently predicted, it is not possible to claim that in being embedded within another element, these two elements will be perceived as one, rather than separately. That is, just because an instance of Branding is embedded within the Lead element, does not mean that it will be perceived as 'part of' that element by the viewer, or that it will be viewed at the same time. Thus, the embedded elements must be represented separately as 'co-present' elements, which is possible due to the adaptation as described above. The generic structure may therefore be represented as below:

Lead~

(Announcement)~

(+Product Display)~

+Branding~

(+Enhancer)~

Brand Hyperlink~

Date~

(User Activity)~

Share-and-Respond Options~

Response(s) to Post~

These genre elements are described in detail in Section 3.2.2, below.

3.2.2 Multimodal genre analysis

The analysis includes a focus on multimodal elements in the form of text, images and hyperlinks. I approach this analysis by employing the multimodal analysis framework outlined by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), who develop the SFL framework in order to analyse images. Like Appraisal theory, multimodal analysis is an extension of SFL and is based on social semiotic theory. While Appraisal theory focuses on the linguistic perspective of meaning, multimodal analysis focuses on the semiotic perspective.

The multimodal analysis initially involves analysis of structural aspects, in order to establish the nature of the genre. Additionally, structural analysis is used in order to identify salient features of the brand posts upon which to focus in the representational and interpersonal analyses.

The analysis of images and text within brand posts (also referred to as 'visual' and 'lexical' analysis) involves identifying representational features – particularly the main participants (e.g.people, products) that appear within images or text, and the circumstances within which the participants are represented (e.g., setting, location).

The analysis also involves consideration of interpersonal features, which are often relevant in realising communicative purposes within a brand post. For example, where the camera angle looks down upon a product, it implies 'viewer power', which may strategically position viewers as powerful consumers who may purchase or consume the product. Or, when interrogative sentence structure is used, it constitutes an invitation to potential 'fans' to interact with the marketing message.

Because meaning is constructed across modes within the brand post, salient structural, representational, and interpersonal features of brand posts are identified using the multimodal analysis framework (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), as this allows an analysis of visual elements, along with textual elements. This framework is used initially to identify structural features of brand posts. It is then used to investigate representational and interpersonal meanings constructed through images, alongside Halliday & Matthiessen's (2004) framework for the analysis of representational and interpersonal meanings constructed through text. Finally, these analyses are used in the description of the form and function of the genre, in terms of genre elements and communicative purposes.

Structural meaning

Structural meaning is one of the three types of meaning in a text, and is described as "the composition of the whole, the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 176).

Kress & van Leeuwen describe three systems for the analysis of composition: information value, salience, and framing. The information value system addresses the placement of elements; however, I do not engage with this system of analysis in the analysis of images. One reason for this is that the corpus involves a number of images with only one element (e.g., a Hershey's bar), making the analysis of placement of elements within an image moot. While the placement of elements within the brand post as a whole would be possible, this structure is determined by the Facebook interface, and as such the issue of layout and placement of elements is instead addressed within the description of the Facebook framework within the Literature Review chapter.

The analysis involves two of the three main aspects of structural meaning: salience and framing. These are described in Table 8, below.

Structural meaning in images	
Salience	The degree to which an element draws attention to itself, due to its size, its place in the foreground or its overlapping of other elements, its colour, its tonal values, its sharpness or definition, and other features
Framing	Disconnection: An element is visually separated from other elements through frame lines, pictorial framing devices, empty space between elements, discontinuities of colour and shape, and other features
	Connection: An element is visually joined to another element via absence of framing devices, vectors, and continuities or similarities in colour, shape, etc.

Table 8: Structural meaning in images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 210)

To demonstrate salience, in Image 16, below, there are three elements that are particularly 'eye-catching', or salient.

Image 16: [ACT-3-BRAND]

The first salient element is the word 'want', which is displayed in larger, bolder text than that preceding or following it. The word 'have' is also in this larger, bolder font, and is highlighted by its placement over the sun. The third salient element in this image is the pot of Activia; although it is relatively small, and placed in the corner of the image, its green colour sets it apart from the colour scheme of the rest of the image, and its placement as though it is 'floating' in the clouds (or perhaps in 'heaven') is unusual, and therefore eye-catching. Furthermore, when considering the brand post as a whole, the image of the yogurt pot is a repetition of the Brand Hyperlink icon, which increases salience.

In Section 3.2.3, below, the concept of framing is exemplified, as it is used to determine genre ‘elements’ within brand posts.

Ideational meaning

The second stage of the multimodal analysis entails a description of the ideational meaning within the brand images – or, “objects and their relations” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 42). This typically involves a transcription of visually represented participants (people or objects), processes (actions or states of being), and circumstances (e.g., place, manner, means). The framework for analysing ideational meaning in images, as detailed by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), is directly related to Halliday & Matthiessen’s (2004) framework for ideational meaning, which is used for the analysis of lexical items in brand posts.

The analysis of ideational meaning within the corpus text consists of a relatively basic application of Halliday & Matthiessen’s (2004) framework, in that it involves only an identification of main participants within the text. This essentially involves identifying the noun which is the person or ‘thing’ that is doing, sensing, saying, or being within a clause (2004: 260).

The analysis of representation is also possible within images, using the conceptualisation of represented participants described in Kress & van Leeuwen’s framework (2006). As with the representation analysis of text, the analysis of representation within images is relatively basic, and involves identifying the most salient participants within an image, such as people, products, or other items.

For example, in Image 17, below, there main participants include six people, and three products.

Image 17: [ACT-1-BRAND]

Interpersonal meaning

Interpersonal meaning is one of the three types of meaning considered within the SFL framework, in addition to textual and ideational (representational) meaning. The analysis of interpersonal meaning can involve a number of different analytical tools, and the ones most relevant to this corpus are Mood and modality for the lexical analysis, and interactive meanings and modality for the image analysis. These are described in detail below.

Mood within text

To account for interpersonal meaning within the text of brand posts, particularly within the Announcement and Lead elements (defined and described in Section 3.2.3, below), the analysis includes a relatively basic analysis of Mood, based on Halliday & Matthiessen's (2004) framework, as summarised by Young & Fitzgerald (2006: 70-7). The Mood analysis entails determining whether major clauses are statements (declarative Mood), questions (interrogative Mood), or demands (imperative Mood). In the corpus, there are also a number of clauses that do not have a typical Mood structure, and are referred to as minor clauses. These minor clauses include greetings, exclamations, calls, and alarms (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 153).

By investigating the interactive roles enacted by the brand post text, the brand/consumer, or brand/fan relationship can be investigated as a basic dialogic exchange. For example, the use of questions in this context is potentially interesting, as it enacts discursive interaction between the brand and potential 'fans' – that is, the brand is asking 'fans' what they like, and what they think. As dialogue is not possible within magazine or television advertising, for example (although use of rhetorical questions is, of course possible), the frequent use of interrogative Mood within brand posts may constitute a key characteristic of new sfeed marketing.

The Mood analysis can be achieved by identifying the order of the subject and finite verb (a verb with a 'time' indication of past, present, or future, as opposed to a non-finite verb, e.g., 'to be happy') within a clause (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006: 71-2).

For declarative clauses, the order is 'subject + verb'. For example, this is the arrangement in the brand post text below:

[WKR-2-BRAND] It's family time tonight!

In this case, the subject is "it", followed by the finite verb "is". If the order were reversed, and the comment instead was "Is it family time tonight", this structure would instead indicate interrogative Mood.

For interrogative Mood, the structure is 'auxiliary + subject + verb', where an auxiliary (e.g., do, does, did, have, had, are) is used in addition to the subject + verb to form a question. Additionally, interrogative Mood can be constructed with a 'wh-interrogative' (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006: 74), which begins with the words who, what, which, when, why, or how, followed by the verb. The example below, from [CBY-1-BRAND] is a demonstration of the auxiliary + subject + verb structure: the word 'would' is an auxiliary, the subject is 'anyone', and the verb is 'like'.

[CBY-1-BRAND] Would anyone like to share our Wispa sandwich with us? […]

Example [WKR-3-BRAND], below, is an example of the wh-interrogative structure.

[WKR-3-BRAND] […] Who's excited?

Finally, an imperative clause is identified through the structure where the subject is 'understood', and there is a verb only, which comes first in the clause (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006: 72-5). Such is the case in the example below:

[ACT-2-BRAND] […] get your questions ready […]

In this case, the subject would be 'you', but this is understood and is not present in the text. The verb in this example is 'get', and this comes first in the clause.

Of course, it is possible within discourse to realise particular Moods in clauses through a non-standard, or 'marked' arrangement of the subject and verb, such as: "It would be a good idea to get your questions ready", where the structure is declarative, but within context (depending on power structure, such as a teacher and student) it could be imperative (Young & Fitzgerald, 2006: 75). In this analysis, major clauses are analysed for Mood, with context as a consideration in the case of marked Mood structures. Minor clauses, and in particular greetings, are also considered in the Mood analysis

Interactive meanings within images

Similar to the positioning of dialogic participants through Mood structure in the analysis of text, it is possible to analyse the interactive participant in the context of images; that is, to analyse the 'position of the viewer' and the image producer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 114). This can be done through the analysis of various features within images, including whether the represented participants make 'eye contact' with the viewer, how far away the represented participants are from the viewer/image producer, and the position of the represented participants in relation to the viewer, on the vertical and horizontal axes. These characteristics are summarised below in Table 9, and are explained in further detail below.

Interactive meanings in images		
Contact	Demand	gaze at viewer
	Offer	absence of gaze at viewer
Social distance	Intimate/ personal	close shot
	Social	medium shot
	Impersonal	long shot
Attitude	Involvement	frontal angle
	Detachment	oblique angle
	Viewer power	high angle
	Equality	eye-level angle
	Represented participant power	low angle

Table 9: Realizations of interactive meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 148)

Contact: Gaze – Demand

When a participant within the text makes ‘eye contact’ with the viewer, a connection is established, and the viewer is acknowledged and addressed. Kress and van Leeuwen refer to this type of image as a ‘demand’, as direct gaze “demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation” with the participant within the text; these relationships could, for example, involve affinity, or subservience, or desire, depending on the expression of the represented participant (2006: 118).

Kress & van Leeuwen argue that the ‘demand’ picture is preferred in posed magazine photographs, and that meaning can be related to the language of advertising, as the ‘you’ is represented through the ‘demand’, but the represented participant is an objectified “he/she/they”, rather than an “I” (2006: 121-2). In the corpus, there are no instances of ‘demand’ contact, which is perhaps notable for its absence.

Contact: Gaze – Offer

An alternative option to the direct gaze is the indirect address, where the represented participant does not look at the viewer and is therefore the subject of the gaze, positioning the viewer as the “invisible onlooker” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 119). Furthermore, whether the ‘offer’ or ‘demand’ is used may, in part, indicate or constitute pictorial genres. While the ‘demand’ may indicate a genre such as magazine advertising, the ‘offer’ photograph is favoured in films and television dramas because “here a real or imaginary barrier is erected between the represented participants and the viewers, a sense of disengagement, in which the viewer must have the illusion that the represented participants do not know they are being looked at, and in which the represented participants must pretend they are not being watched” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 120).

Such is the case in Image 17, above. In this image, none of the six represented participants are making ‘eye contact’ with the viewer; they are all looking at something to the right of the viewer – presumably, the real or imagined photoshoot photographer/camera. This constitutes an ‘offer’, as though the represented participants are “items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case” (2006: 119).

The photo in Image 17, [ACT-1-BRAND] enacts this type of barrier between the represented participants and the viewer through the ‘offer’ – the viewer is positioned ‘behind the scenes’, so to speak, as they are not only not the subject of the gaze, but it is clear that the represented participants are posing for a photo, and at the top right corner of the photo, a piece of photography equipment is visible, further suggesting the ‘behind the scenes' position of the viewer. The represented participants are all focussed on an object out of frame to the right of the viewer, and thus, the viewer is given the impression that the represented participants are posing not for them, but for some other observer. It is interesting that the 'offer' was chosen for this photo, as it eschews the conventional advertising 'demand' described by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 122).

Indeed, the 'behind the scenes' positioning of the viewer constitutes an 'offer' in this photo, which enacts a complex relationship between the viewer and the represented participants. Perhaps it suggests a relationship of friendship, as 'behind the scenes' access normally requires special permission. Given the function of the photo, which is used as part of a Facebook brand post, it seems that the 'behind the scenes' position of the viewer constitutes an 'offer' that the viewer could, conceivably, walk into the frame and become part of the group being photographed. When the meaning constructed by the text is also taken into consideration ("What's [your #FeelGoodPledge]?"), the 'invitation to participate' with the group can be understood to be communicated across modes and genre elements.

Size of Frame: Social Distance

The three basic categories of 'size of frame' are close-up, medium shot, and long shot; these frame sizes relate to how the image-producers choose to depict the represented participants in relation to the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 124). The close-up is described as showing the subject's head and shoulders, and enacts 'intimate' or 'personal' social distance; the medium shot shows a subject to approximately their knees, and enacts 'social' distance; and the long shot involves a human at half the size of the frame, and enacts 'impersonal' social distance (2006: 124-5).

To elaborate, these different distances of representation relate to social relations, in that close, or personal distance is typically shared only by people in intimate relationships, and is in a range within the distance where two people could touch if they held their arms out; 'impersonal business' is typically carried out at a distance just past close distance, and 'far social distance' is far more impersonal and involves being far enough apart to look at one another (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 124-5).

The importance of size of frame is that represented participants and viewers have an "imaginary relation. People are portrayed *as though* they are friends, or *as though* they are strangers. Images allow us to imaginarily come as close to public figures as if they were our friends and neighbours" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 126).

Considering size of frame, then, as it applies to the image in [ACT-1-BRAND], this image falls approximately in the range of medium shot, of the 'social' distance range. Most of the represented participants fit entirely within the frame, with the exception of the two on the outside, who are cut off at the hips and elbows, and the represented participants take up nearly the entire frame.

Image 19, below, in contrast, is an example of a long shot, enacting the ‘impersonal’ social distance. This could also be understood as “*public* distance, the distance of the ‘stranger’” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 125).

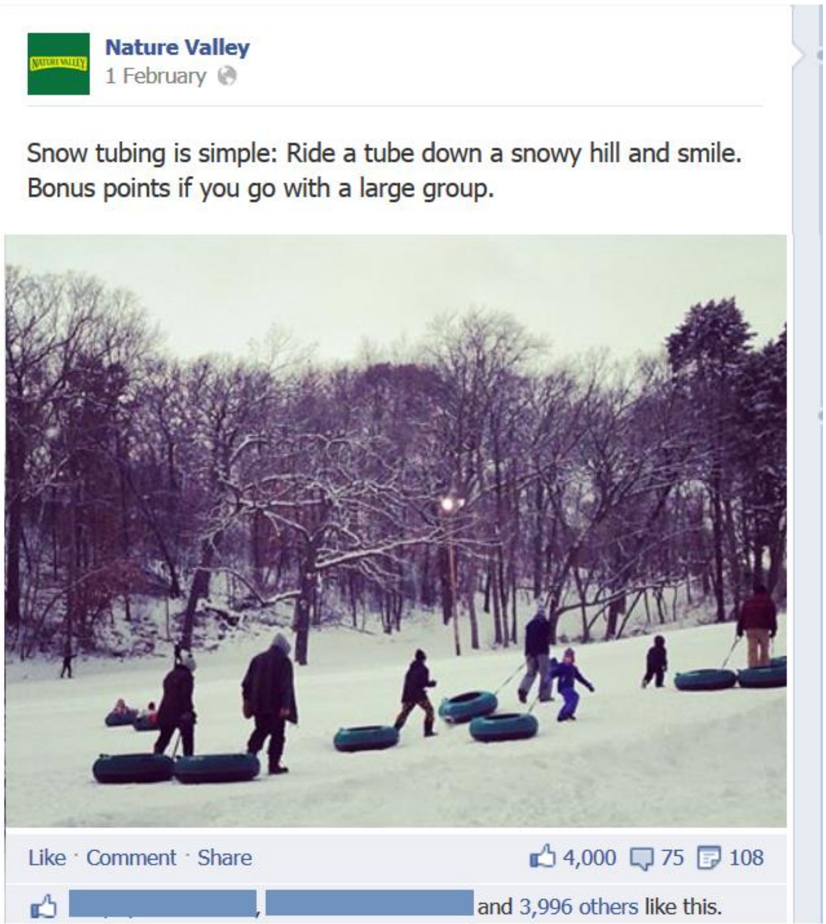

Image 18: [NRV-2-BRAND]: Example of impersonal social distance

In the image above, there are nine represented participants, each of whom take up a small portion of the picture frame and are shown in their entirety. The ‘impersonal’ social distance suggested by the size of frame positions the viewer as a stranger; the long shot allows us “to look at people like ourselves as strangers, ‘others’” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 126). Perhaps, in the context of this advertisement (and in consideration of the interplay between text and image), the impersonal social distance encourages the viewer to feel disconnection from the represented participants as an encouragement to gather their *own* group of friends to go snow tubing. Again, given the context of the interactive advertisement, there is an apparent goal of viewer participation, either through interacting with the advertisement, or purchasing the product, or both.

While non-human objects cannot enact the ‘offer’ and ‘demand’ system, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 127) explain that objects and the environment do construct meaning that can be understood in terms of size of frame and social distance. For objects, close distance entails depiction of the object “as if the viewer is engaged with it as if he or she is using the machine, reading the book or the map, preparing or eating the food” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 127). The object is not shown in its entirety, and may include the user’s hand, or a tool.

Image 20, below, is an example of an object as the represented participant, at close distance.

Image 19: [CBY-2-BRAND]: Example of interactive meaning – close distance

The picture above depicts a chocolate bar, with the packaging removed, at a close enough distance that the edges of the product are cut off by the frame. The effect could implicitly suggest that the viewer is holding the object, or that it is placed directly in front of the viewer.

An object shown at middle distance is “shown in full, but without much space around it. It is represented as within the viewer’s reach, but not as actually used” (Kress & van Leeuwen

Leeuwen, 2006: 127-8). Image 21, below, is an example of an object shown at middle distance.

Image 20: [CBY-1-BRAND]: Example of interactive meaning – social distance

In this image, the three chocolate bars on a dinner plate are shown as being within reach of the viewer. Kress & van Leeuwen explain that the object shown at middle distance "is common in advertising: the advertised product is shown in full, but from a fairly close range, and a steep angle, as if the viewer stands just in front of the table on which it is displayed" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 128). In the case of the image above, the viewer position is that of standing or sitting directly in front of the table and actually leaning over to look directly down at the product.

At long distance there is an invisible barrier between the viewer and the object. The object is there for our contemplation only, out of reach, as if on display in a shop window or museum exhibit" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 127-8). Image 22, below, is an example of an object shown at long distance:

Image 21: [ACT-3-BRAND]: Example of interactive meaning: impersonal distance

In this image, the object (the yogurt pot in the bottom left corner) is shown as being out of reach due to the 'invisible barrier' of height – the product is shown as an 'item of contemplation' as it is very small relative to the frame size, and as if it were floating very high in the sky amongst the clouds.

Perspective: Horizontal angle (involvement/detachment)

Another consideration of images involves perspective, or 'point of view', which "implies the possibility of expressing subjective attitudes towards represented participants, human or otherwise" Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 129). This involves both the horizontal angle and the vertical angle.

The horizontal angle encodes detachment and involvement between the image producer/viewer and the represented participants. The frontal angle constructs involvement, as though the represented participants are "part of our world, something we are involved with", while the oblique angle constructs detachment, as though the representation in the image is "*not* part of our world; it is *their* world, something *we* are not involved with" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 136).

Image 17 is an example where represented participants are depicted in both frontal and oblique angles. In this image, the two represented participants on the left – a woman and Gok Wan – are almost completely side-facing, including their gaze (no contact; offer). While the two centre represented participants are positioned in generally frontal angles, with a slight oblique turn primarily suggested by their foot positions, their gaze also is to the right of the viewer, which represents an offer. The represented participant to the right of the woman in the red dress is at an oblique angle, while the participant to her right is in a twisted position, with her legs at a right oblique angle, her torso and shoulders at a left oblique angle, and her gaze to the right, making no contact with the viewer. It is noteworthy that the women are all non-celebrities, while Gok Wan, the male wearing black, second to left in the photo, is a celebrity, and is also the only represented participant with a body position at a completely oblique angle.

In reading this image in terms of the horizontal angle and the attachment/detachment it encodes, the viewer is involved with the female, non-celebrity participants to various degrees; in Kress & van Leeuwen's words, they are "part of our world, something we are involved with" (2006: 136). The celebrity Gok Wan, however, positioned at an oblique angle, is represented as *not* being 'part of our world' – he is an 'other'. In this case, it contextually appears that rather than a derogatory 'othering' of Gok Wan, the 'detachment' encoded in this image may be more to do with his belonging to a more culturally celebrated world than 'our own', due to his celebrity status. And yet, as he is positioned at intimate distance with women portrayed to be 'part of our world', this detachment does not have the appearance of being insurmountable.

Perspective: Vertical angle (power relationship between represented participant and viewer)

The vertical angle encodes power relationships between the image producer/viewer and the represented participants. When the image is constructed in such a way as to place the viewer at a high angle (as though looking down) in relation to the represented participants, this encodes a position of power for the viewer. If the viewer and represented participants are at eye level, there is no power distance and this is encoded as 'equality'. If the viewer is looking up at the represented participants, the represented participant has power over the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 140).

In Image 17, above, the represented participants are shown at eye level, and hence there is no power difference enacted by the vertical angle.

Table 10, below, is a summary of the interactive meanings in [ACT-1], as described above.

Interactive Meanings in [ACT-1-BRAND]		
System	**Feature**	**Analysis**
Contact	Demand/ Offer	Offer
Social distance	Intimate/ Social/ Impersonal	Medium shot – 'social' distance
Attitude	Involvement/ Detachment	Various – full to moderate involvement with some of the female 'fans'; detachment from Gok Wan
	Viewer power/ equality/ represented participant power	Equality

Table 10: Interactive meanings in [ACT-1-BRAND]

Modality in Text

In the analysis of text, according to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 147), the system of modality can be used "to construe the region of uncertainty that lies between 'yes' and 'no'", in four different types of stances – probability, frequency, obligation, and inclination. These stances taken by writers, and those invited from interlocutors, are instrumental in the expressions of attitudes and positions. For example, the example below involves both a modalized and non-modalized statement (both shown in bold):

> [HSH-3-BRAND] White clothes **may be** out after Labor Day, but white chocolate **is** always in!

This modalization is to do with probability. In saying that white clothes 'may be' unfashionable after a particular day of the year, the writer is indexing an uncertain position towards the clichéd fashion advice to not wear the colour white after the holiday Labor Day, which falls on the first Monday of September. Perhaps this uncertain position towards the rather dated fashion advice is an implicit suggestion of awareness that fashions come and go, and what was once widely accepted may no longer be the case. By contrast, in saying that 'white chocolate is always in', the writer expresses certainty that (eating) white chocolate is socially acceptable at any time of the year.

Modality can be determined primarily through the use of modality markers, as exemplified in Table 11, below.

Lexical modality categories and markers	
probability	how likely (e.g., might, may, must be, certainly)
frequency	how often (e.g., usually, often)
obligation	whether something has to be done (e.g., I must…)
inclination	assessment of the tendency that something will occur (e.g., I will…)

Table 11: Lexical modality categories and markers (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006: 147-9)

Modality in images

The multimodal conceptualisation of modality is based upon the linguistic one, where auxiliary verbs such as ‘may’ or ‘must’ are used to indicate the “truth value or credibility of (linguistically realized) statements about the world” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 155). In images, “visuals can represent people, places and things as though they are real, as though they actually exist in this way, or as though they do not as though they are imaginings, fantasies, caricatures, etc.” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 156).

Modality can be described using eight markers outlined by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 160-2), as described below.

Modality markers in images		
Modality Marker	**Low end of scale**	**High end of scale**
Colour saturation	Absence of colour (black and white)	Full colour saturation
Colour differentiation	Monochrome	Maximum diversified range of colours
Colour modulation	Plain, unmodulated colour	Fully modulated colour (e.g., many shades of red)
Representation	Maximum abstraction	Maximum representation of pictorial detail
Contextualization	Absence of background	Fully articulated and detailed background
Depth	Absence of depth	Maximally deep perspective
Illumination	Absence of light and shade	Full representation of play of light and shade
Brightness	Two degrees of brightness (e.g., black and white, or two brightness values of same colour)	Maximum number of degrees of brightness

Table 12: Modality markers in images

The modality markers summarised above are exemplified in the analysis of Image 23, below, within Table 13.

Image 22: [LAY-1-BRAND]

Analysis of modality in [LAY-1-BRAND] image		
Modality Marker	**Level on Scale**	**Modality description**
Colour saturation	Very High	the blue and yellow colours are extremely vibrant, to a point where they do not appear naturalistic – they appear 'more than real'.
Colour differentiation	Low	relatively little colour differentiation – in addition to black and white, there is only yellow, blue, and the somewhat overexposed flesh tone of the referee's hands.
Colour modulation	Low	the blue of the sky is relatively uniform. There is slight modulation in the yellow of the crisp football.
Contextualization	Moderate / Low	partial decontextualization; the white goal post serves as a prop against an otherwise uniform blue sky, suggesting an undetermined American football field as the setting
Representation	Moderate Low	the overexposure has reduced some of the detail that might otherwise be visible – for example, the detail of the referee's hands. The crisp football is relatively abstract – it is questionable whether it is an edited photograph of a crisp, or a completely illustrated image
Depth	Moderate	the viewer is positioned below and to the left of the referee, which is similar to the angular-isometric perspective, where an object is viewed from the side, and above. This indicates moderate modality, as opposed to a central perspective, which has the highest modality.
Illumination	High Low	The referee is shown as being illuminated by a natural source (presumably the sun), and his shirt has naturalistic shadows, indicating high modality. The crisp football, on the other hand, appears to have shading, rather than a natural shadow, indicating low modality.
Brightness	High	full range of brightness, from pure white to pure black, and all shades in between

Table 13: Analysis of modality in [LAY-1-BRAND] image

The analysis in Table 13, above, indicates a range of levels on individual marker scales, from low to very high. It is important to note that the scale of 'low to high' in terms of modality features does not necessarily correlate with low and high modality. This is because the level of modality associated with modality features can be based on different coding orientations, such as the naturalistic orientation, and the sensory orientation, which are the two orientations of particular interest in the present study.

For example, Kress & van Leeuwen point out that in the naturalistic orientation, for colour saturation, modality increases as saturation increases up until the point of saturation that appears naturalistic; after this point, as saturation increases, modality decreases, as it looks less naturalistic (2006: 160). This is the case in the image above: the 'very high' level of colour saturation does not correspond with 'very high' modality, because it saturation appears to be 'more than real'. Thus, in this sense, the modality is somewhat less than maximum. In this thesis, I refer to this concept as either 'very high' or 'over-high' modality markers, in order to emphasise that it does not necessarily correspond with naturalistic modality.

In this thesis, modality is primarily considered in order to inform aspects of the genre analysis relating to communicative purposes such as appealing to the senses. These interpersonal meanings can be achieved through modality through various configurations of the modality markers described above.

While the multimodal analysis framework has been described in detail in the present chapter section, above, the primary purpose of the analysis is to inform the genre analysis. As such, Section 3.2.3, below, includes reference to and use of the concepts addressed in the present chapter section.

3.2.3 Genre elements

The full genre structure of the brand post, as introduced above, is transcribed below. The parentheses indicate optional elements, and the ~ symbol indicates that each genre element is 'co-present' with the other elements and is therefore not in a specific sequential structure. The + symbol indicates elements that are always 'embedded' within another genre element.

Lead~
(Announcement)~
(+Product Display)~
+Branding~
(+Enhancer)~
Brand Hyperlink~
Date~
(User Activity)~
Share-and-Respond Options~
Response(s) to Post~

A visual representation of the genre elements is presented in Image 24, below. In this example, all genre elements are represented. Although the Response(s) to Post element is/are labelled on the image below, the actual responses are not included in the image.

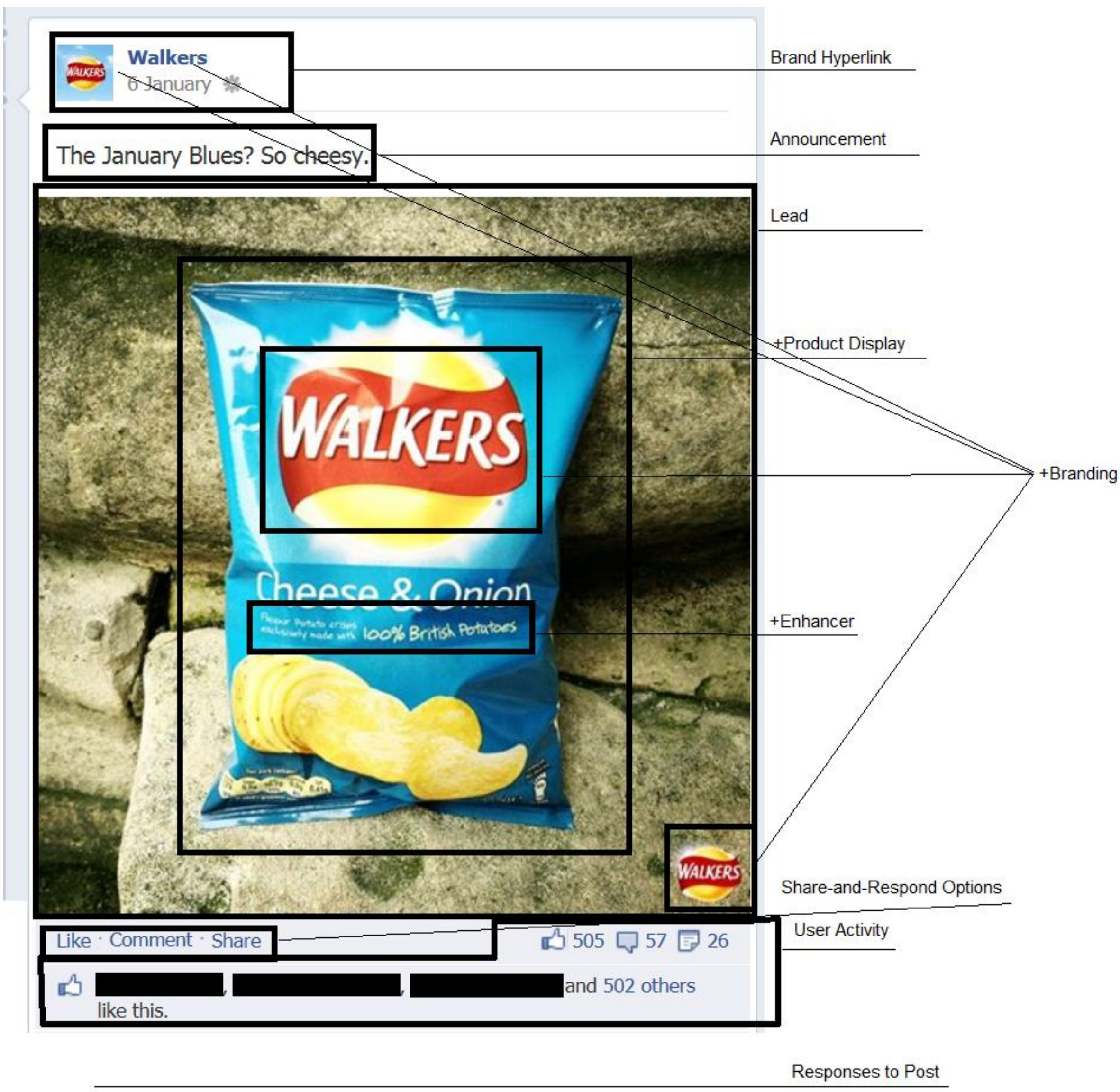

Image 23: Visual representation of genre elements

In the data analysis, eighteen brand posts are analysed to identify the genre elements listed above and consider any possible additional genre elements. Each of the genre elements is described in more detail below.

Lead

This is the element which has the highest salience, or what attracts the most attention in the brand post (Cheong, 2004: 165; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). In this corpus, the Lead is always the 'image' component, as the image is always larger than the 'stand-alone' text, or Announcement, and with more colour variation. The edges of the image form a natural framing line, setting it apart from the other elements. There are no instances in this corpus where the Announcement is higher in salience (through size, colour, framing, etc.).

The general purpose of the Lead is to attract attention to the post and/or brand, and to co-construct meaning with the Announcement element. The Lead often includes an image that is clarified or elaborated through text in the Announcement.

Because the present corpus consists of only brand posts which include the image+text configuration, this element is considered to be compulsory, although this is not necessarily the case within social media marketing posts as a genre. Although no quantitative analysis has been made on the typical mode found within the Lead, as videos were eliminated from the potential corpus at the data selection stage, the image+text configuration (or video appearing as still image+text) appears to be by far the most typical configuration for a brand post.

In terms of spatial configuration, the Lead always appears beneath the Announcement (described below). This has potential implications on likely reading paths, as well as the process conveyed meaning among elements. Responses often refer to propositions introduced in either the image or the text. For example, where a post includes a salient image of a product and text that is generally light-hearted, product-related wordplay, most of the comments focus upon the product, as demonstrated in brand post [CBY-2-BRAND], below:

Image 24: [CBY-2-BRAND]

The Lead is realised within brand posts as a singular image, although it often includes lexical objects, including product labels and text which is superimposed onto the image. These lexical objects may realise a number of genre elements that are co-present with, but discrete from the Lead element. In this sense, the Lead element may be seen as both a genre element with specific communicative purposes, as well as a layout feature, as identification of this element is informed primarily by its position within the brand post.

Announcement

The Announcement is described by Cheong (2004: 173) as the most salient linguistic item in an advertisement. Within this corpus, the Announcement is the text that is present above the Lead element. The Announcement is set apart from the Lead by the natural framing line formed by the top of the image in the Lead, and is set apart from the Brand ID and the Date, above, by a faint line that frames those elements as separate from the Announcement.

As with the Lead, this element may be seen as both a genre element with specific communicative purposes, as well as a layout feature, and identification of this element is informed primarily by its position within the brand post. The general purpose of the Announcement is to co-construct meaning with the Lead element, and to attract attention to the post and/or the brand. The Announcement often plays a secondary, or 'clarifying' role in elaborating or contextualising the Lead.

As with the Lead, because the present corpus consists of only brand posts which include the image+text configuration, this element is considered to be compulsory. Furthermore, the Facebook interface does not appear to allow 'status updates' that do not include text, although as with most platform requirements, it is possible that there are ways to modify the parameters.

The appearance of text within the Announcement is determined by the Facebook interface. It is always a standard font, standard size, and standard colour. This may vary depending on the specific platform used (i.e., desktop or mobile) but is a standard font, such as Helvetica or Tahoma, a 'normal' size (approximately 12 pt., which may vary depending on personalised device configurations), and is black. As such, The Announcement is not necessarily the most salient linguistic feature in the brand post, as the lexical items within the Lead may be any size, colour, or font, and the lexical items in other elements may be hyperlinked and appear in bold or blue font.

(+Product Display)

The Product Display element is an instance where a product is shown within the brand post. This element description is based on Cheong's (2004) genre category 'Display'. This element is optional, and is considered to be an 'embedded' element (signified by the + symbol), which means that it does not appear in a separate, specific location, but rather, is realised *within* other elements – in particular in this case, within the Lead and Announcement elements. However, despite being brand marketing, not all brand posts include this element.

The Product Display element may occur within the Lead, as a packaged or unpackaged product; it may occur within the Announcement, as a lexical representation of the product (e.g., "Wispa", as in the image above), or it may occur within the Brand Hyperlink, if the user icon is an image of the product (in the case of Hershey's), rather than the more typical choice of using the brand logo.

Although it is theoretically possible for the Product Display element to be implicit, rather than explicit, in this corpus it has not been necessary to make this distinction. This is because each instance of Product Display has either been a clear representation of the product, or has been an iconic representation that is similar enough as to perform as an explicit representation.

+Branding

The +Branding element includes any instance where the brand is clearly represented, either through a recognisable logo (e.g., the McDonald's 'M' is culturally recognisable to the point where it alone identifies the brand without the full brand needing to be represented), or through the brand name, or a combination of the two.

Similarly to the Product Display element, the Branding element is 'embedded' (signified by the + symbol), which means that it does not appear in a separate location, but rather, is realised *within* other elements. The reason this element is considered compulsory within this genre is that it is always present at least once, within the account user ID (found within the Brand Hyperlink element). The account user ID is required by Facebook to be a lexical representation of the brand – e.g., "Cadbury" or "Activia UK", and any posts created by this account are identified by the account user ID.

In every brand within this corpus, the account user icon is also an instance of the Branding element. Unlike the account user ID, the user icon may be any image or symbol the brand chooses. In this corpus, five brands have chosen a form of their brand logo, while Hershey's has chosen an image of a square of chocolate embossed with the word Hershey's (with partial ellipsis). Thus, in each brand post, this counts as a second instance of the Branding element, and both of these instances are realised within the Brand Hyperlink element (described below).

The Branding element may also be realised in other elements. It is frequently embedded within the Lead, either through product packaging or through the addition of the brand logo on top of the image. The element may also be realised within the Announcement through lexical representation of the brand (as opposed to the product; for example, 'Hershey's', not 'Cookies & Crème').

(+Enhancer)

This genre element is realised in the linguistic form only, and usually builds on or modifies the more salient aspects of the Announcement or the Lead (Cheong, 2004: 173). It may seek to persuade or influence the target audience to purchase/consume the product, and typically involves linguistic evaluation. In the case of the image above, the Enhancer reads: "Flavour potato crisps exclusively made with 100% British Potatoes". This is an instance of implicit positive evaluation of the social value of a product, because it is made from *British* potatoes only.

Brand Hyperlink

This element includes the user account ID (lexical) and the user account icon (image and/or lexical). The Brand Hyperlink is set apart from the Announcement, below, through framing enacted by a faint line. Both the ID and the icon are hyperlinks that lead to the brand's Facebook page when clicked. This element is compulsory within Facebook, as all posts include a hyperlink connected to a user profile or brand page. This element enables users to navigate to the brand page in order to view or participate in network activity in response to the brand's posts. The user account icon is also the brand hyperlink, but can realise two separate instances of +Branding.

Date

This element is compulsory within Facebook, and simply consists of the date the brand post was posted. The Date appears next to the Brand Hyperlink, and is set apart from the Announcement, below, by a faint line that constructs a frame. It appears in the format "13 March" with the year as an ellipsis if it is the current year. For example, if I view a post on 6 October 2014, and the post was posted 13 March 2014, it will appear as "13 March". If it was posted in the previous year, it will appear as "13 March 2013". The data in this corpus was collected in 2013, so all year ellipses refer to that year.

(User Activity)

This element includes a tally of previous user 'likes', shares, and comments. This element (along with Share-and-Respond Options) is set apart from the Lead, above, through framing enacted by its placement within slightly shaded box, and a white line, above. It is an optional genre element because it is possible that no one has engaged with the post. In the present corpus, all posts include this element because all data sets include a brand post + 30 user comments, and brand posts that had not attracted any user activity were not considered for data collection.

Share-and-Respond Options

This element includes options to 'like', 'share', and comment on the brand post. Like the User Activity, this element is set apart from the Lead, above, through its placement in a slightly shaded box. This is another genre element that is specific to social media, and it is a compulsory element.

(Response(s) to Post)

This element includes the comments that are made in response to the brand post. This element is set apart from the User Activity, and Share-and-Respond Options, above, through framing enacted by its placement in a separate slightly shaded box. Although it is an optional element, if a brand post attracts no User Activity (as well as/including no Responses to Post), it may be considered to be an 'unsuccessful' or 'uncompleted' instance of the genre as the communicative goals were not achieved. As with the User Activity element, within the present corpus, all posts include this element because all data sets include a brand post + 30 user comments.

Summary of genre analysis

This chapter section has outlined the procedure for analysing the corpus in terms of genre structure, which is based on Cheong's (2004) multimodal, SFL framework. This analysis is conducted by first considering features of brand posts, such as general communicative purpose, mode, and framing, in order to identify specific genre elements. A quantitative summary of the communicative purposes within each brand post then informs a qualitative discussion and description of genre structure of brand posts, and their discursive goals. Comment responses are also included as their communicative purposes are linked to those of the brand post.

3.3 Negotiation analysis

The investigation of identity within responses to Facebook marketing discourse is concerned primarily with stance-taking language. This is considered through application of two frameworks: Appraisal, which is discussed in Section 3.4, and Negotiation. As outlined in Section 2.8, Appraisal analysis considers stance-taking through evaluation of feelings, ethics, and aesthetics, while Negotiation analysis considers speech roles, or how users dialogically position themselves in relation to brand posts. In this thesis, I am particularly interested in how individuals perform identity through alignment and disalignment with the notions introduced in brand posts, including brand values, product appreciation, and cultural topics. This is investigated through the analysis of exchange structure, which enables a methodical focus on the dialogic strategies used by individuals.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2014: 135) explain that basic speech roles can be understood as fulfilling two functions: giving and demanding. This exchange can relate to goods and services, such as requesting the salt at the dinner table or asking someone to close the window; or information, such as asking which day of the week it is. In this way dialogue can be understood and analysed as an exchange.

The framework adapted within this study is based on the approach developed by Eggins & Slade (1997) and Martin (1992). This approach, like Appraisal, is an extension of SFL, and considers lexico-grammar as well as context in the analysis of functional language.

The Negotiation analysis in this thesis involves the identification of four main categories of conversational moves, as represented in the dark shaded boxes of Figure 2, below.

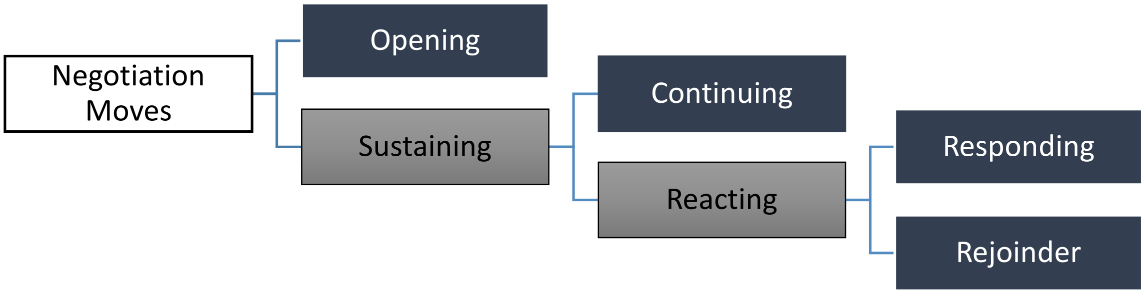

Figure 2: Negotiation moves by main category

The description of move categories is based on Eggins & Slade's framework (1997: 192-200). The most basic categorization of moves is to determine whether they *initiate* an exchange (opening moves) or *advance* an exchange that has already been initiated (sustaining moves). Following this latter system choice, there are two system choices for sustaining moves: continuing moves, where a speaker is the person who has already been speaking and remains 'with' a proposition; or reacting moves, where a speaker remains with a proposition but takes a turn following a previous speaker. The final two main categories in the present analysis follow the 'reacting' system choice, and are called responding and rejoinder moves. In responding moves, the exchange is moved towards completion; in rejoinder moves, speakers prolong the exchange. These categories, and the procedure for this analysis, are described in detail below, with illustrative examples of the specific moves.

3.3.1 Identification of moves

Exchange structure is comprised of two discourse units: the 'turn' and the 'move'. These units are related to, but not dependent on the grammatical unit of the clause. A turn is the speech or text that an individual produces until they stop, or another speaker/writer takes over (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 184).

In social media such as Facebook, it is generally very simple to identify a turn, as each comment, status update, or chat utterance is appended with format and structural features that effectively form a boundary between one person's turn and another's. In Facebook, text length is not limited, but it is unusual for comments to be more than a few sentences in length. Unlike in verbal conversation, a Facebook utterance technically cannot be 'interrupted', as a writer may spend as much time composing the comment or update as he or she likes, which it is posted only when the writer chooses to submit it in its completed form.

The primary unit of analysis for exchange structure in this study is not the turn, but the 'move', which is "a unit after which speaker change could occur without turn transfer being seen as an interruption" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 186). A single turn may be comprised by several moves. While moves are related to the grammatical unit of the clause, they are functionally different and cannot be reliably identified through clause analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 185).

Martin (1992: 40) defines a move as "a clause selecting independently for MOOD". In other words, dependent clauses may or may not constitute moves. This depends on whether the clause does or could express mood (e.g., declarative, interrogative, imperative) on its own, or if it relies upon an independent clause. Martin (1992: 40) gives the following examples, where bold section in the first does not constitute a move, but in the second example it does:

They loved the team **that won.**

Yes, I would, thank-you, **but make it a small one.**

There are a number of cases, such as dependent, embedded, and reporting clauses, where multiple clauses constitute a single move. For example:

[LAY-2-12] If you made an organic chip I would buy them again.

In this comment, the mood of the dependent clause [If you made an organic chip] is tied to the clause [I would buy them again], and together they fulfil a single move.

Eggins & Slade (1997: 188-189) argue that Martin's (1992) procedure for move identification is useful but requires a further consideration. They propose that the identification of moves in Negotiation analysis should consider both grammatical structure of the clause for mood, as well as prosodic criteria. This is because speakers often use a technique referred to as a 'run-on', where they rush into a subsequent clause with intonation suggesting there is no boundary between clauses.

However, I argue that Martin's conceptualisation of the move does address this concern, as he specifies that while *unmarked* moves can be identified as clauses selecting independently for mood, there are also exceptions through *marked* realisations (Martin, 1992: 59). Martin describes these exceptions in terms of contextual dependence between clauses in the sense of negotiated sentiment. He provides the example below to demonstrate this concept (Martin, 1992: 59):

Can you get me a beer? I'm dying of thirst.

Martin argues that in this example, the 'dying of thirst' sentiment is not negotiable – that is, within a particular context, it would be unusual for, say, a host to respond to his or her guest that he or she is not, in fact, dying of thirst. Rather, the negotiable sentiment is whether or not the host will get the guest a beer. I venture that in this example, a guest stating that he or she is 'dying of thirst' is a colloquialism, perhaps one indicating politeness or rapport building (in the same way a dinner guest might declare that he or she is famished as the food arrives), which is why it is contextually dependent on the previous clause and is not a negotiable sentiment.

I also provide a counter-example for demonstration: if a child were to ask her or his parent to bring a soda because he or she is dying of thirst, it might be the case that the parent would respond that the child is *not* dying of thirst, and issue instructions to fetch him or herself a glass of water. In this case, both sentiments are negotiable and constitute separate moves.

This is a demonstration of the contextual interpretation that Martin refers to as he explains that "it is not possible to define discourse units as categorically as grammatical ones. There is a system, but its potential for ongoing re-contextualisation means that there will always be rough edges for the analyst. Analysis in other words will inevitably involve interpretation" (1992: 59).

Thus, I argue that Eggins & Slade's (1997) 'extension' of the move identification criteria may actually be an interpretation of the concept introduced by Martin (1992), as it is realised within verbal discourse. Eggins & Slade conceptualise the exception to Martin's (1992) move identification guideline not as relating to contextually negotiable sentiment, but to speech rhythm and intonation. However, I argue that the concepts are related; in the case of written text, the analyst must consider context to determine whether one of the clauses is contextually dependent and therefore part of a single move, while in verbal discourse, speech rhythm and intonation provide evidence that this is the case.

In the present research, which is an analysis of social media discourse as a 'hybrid' between spoken and written discourse, I consider both Martin's (1992) approach, as well as Eggins & Slade's (1997) guidelines for identification of moves, including exceptions to the grammatical rules for identification.

Indeed, Eggins & Slade's (1997) descriptions of prosodic criteria frequently correlate with features that fulfil similar functions within CMC. While, as mentioned above, writers do not face the possibility of being 'interrupted' by other speakers, this does not necessarily mean that they will not engage in 'holding the floor' strategies.

For example, Eggins & Slade (1997: 189) demonstrate a single-turn run-on thus:

Oh he's in London so what can we do?

A similar effect is realised in the comment from the present research corpus:

[WKR-2-3] **Why would I want this advert I am supposed to be on a diet.** Go away

In this case, the bold section of the comment above would be considered as a single move as it is packaged as a single discourse unit even though the clauses are independent and select independently for mood. By Martin's (1992) criteria, the notion that the writer is 'supposed to be on a diet' is not contestable – the notion that is being negotiated is that of being subjected to a junk food advertisement; thus, the latter clause is contextually dependent on the first clause and, therefore, both can be considered as a single move.

Of course, in CMC, there is a large amount of discourse where punctuation is sparse, and this does not necessarily mean that what appears to be run-ons does function as single discourse units, such as in the following case:

[WKR-2-16] No more walkers crisps for me I have gone to mccoys they don't use real meat in there meaty flavours

In the case above, there are three independent clauses, each of which constitutes a different move despite lack of punctuation. The clauses fulfil separate discursive purposes and are thus separate moves.

As Eggins & Slade (1997: 189) recommend, in this analysis, where there is doubt about whether a move can be divided using prosodic or grammatical features, it is safest to fall back on the latter. In summary, the procedure for move identification is to first identify clauses that select independently for mood, and then to consider any prosodic features that may ‘package’ multiple clauses as single discourse units, or any contextual dependence between clauses that indicates they fulfil a single discursive purpose.

3.3.2 Classification of moves

The classification of moves in this thesis involves a basic application of the concepts of discourse purpose, ellipsis, mood, modality, polarity, and Appraisal, which are functions described within SFL. As I consider relatively basic forms and functions of these concepts in the Negotiation analysis, a brief description suffices in terms of methodological explanation.

The Appraisal analysis in this thesis is generally conceived of as a separate layer of analysis, discrete from the Negotiation analysis. It is used as a tool to specifically consider implications of evaluation, rather than interaction. However, Appraisal is also a necessary tool for the categorization of some Negotiation moves, such as polarity of opening moves in responses to brand posts, and is thus also used at a very basic level within the Negotiation analysis.

Ultimately, moves are classified by identifying contextual, grammatical, and semantic features that indicate the speech function, or discourse function. This type of analysis has developed from Halliday’s (1994/2004) investigation of interactive speech roles.

The two basic speech role functions, giving and demanding of either goods and services or information (Halliday, 2014: 135), have correlating responses, which can be either supporting or confronting. The speech functions are related to both context and grammar.

Dialogic exchange is accomplished through four primary speech functions: offers, commands, statements, and questions. For example, a command would typically have an imperative mood type, with a supporting or confronting response being a minor mood (e.g., yes; I will or no; I won’t). These are summarised in Table 14, below.

Basic speech functions			
Initiating speech function	**Typical mood in clause**	**Responding speech functions**	
		Supporting	**Confronting**
offer	modulated interrogative	acceptance	rejection
command	imperative	compliance	refusal
statement	declarative	acknowledgement	contradiction
question	interrogative	answer	disclaimer

Table 14: Basic speech functions
(adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 137; Eggins & Slade, 1997: 183)

These basic speech functions are adapted and elaborated by Eggins & Slade (1997), with a focus on context (discourse purpose), ellipsis, modality, polarity, mood, and Appraisal.

Discourse Purpose

Discourse purpose is a functional, contextual consideration of a move. Examples include 'offering' and 'accepting' – these discourse purposes can be carried out in a variety of ways in different contexts. Discourse purposes are, in other words, the basic categories of speech functions.

In the present corpus, discourse purpose entails understanding comments contextually as 'social media marketing audience responses', which may have particular implications in terms of speech functions that are available to responders. For example, speech functions such as demanding goods are not available as the interaction is computer-moderated, precluding the possibility of actually exchanging goods, as would be possible in a shop. Also, the Facebook page and brand posts do not constitute online marketplaces, so it is not technically possible to engage in direct purchasing interactions in this context.

Of course, as I have discussed at length within Chapter 2, social roles within the Facebook news feed are complex, and the context means that the interaction is not merely between the creator and viewer of a brand post. Some responses to the brand post (if not all) are also contextually directed to a wider audience, and in some cases responses are specifically directed towards other social media users.

One significant Negotiation aspect in the corpus, which is best considered within discourse purpose, is the direction of the exchange between participants – in other words, who is interacting with whom. While the vast majority of the comments in the corpus are responses to the brand post, there are notable exceptions where a comment is clearly a response to another comment which is itself likely to be a response to the brand post. These responses to comments are accounted for separately in order to portray the exchange structure accurately in both quantitative and qualitative findings. They can be identified contextually, such as in the following example [CBY-2-2]:

Image 25: [CBY-2-BRAND]

[CBY-2-1] Can you buy these? I'm liking the idea of being able to share a smaller piece and saving the larger pieces for myself! X

[CBY-2-2] My thoughts exactly, Kelly;-)

In this case there are three contextual clues that indicate that [CBY-2-2] is a response to [CBY-2-1]: the adjacent sequence of the comments, the ellipsis, and, of course, the direct address to a specific person rather than the brand (Kelly).

Another example is in the brand post and chain of comments below:

[LAY-3-BRAND] “Lights, Camera, Action! The award for the best award show snack goes to…”

[LAY-3-26] TRUTH. BigPharma contains several of the same companies as BigAgro. If they give... you "food" that makes you sick, then you will buy their "medicine" to cover up the symptoms, instead of preventing the sickness altogether by eating healthy. DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN. Sign petitions to force GMOs to be labeled, grow your own organic veggies, stop eating gluten-wheat (since 95%+ of it is GMO nowadays). And if you live in a town that tries to outlaw home gardens and farmers markets (this actually happens), you should be OUTRAGED and start a revolution. DO NOT LET THEM POISON US FOR PROFIT.

[LAY-3-27] go hug a tree

[LAY-3-28] Do you have healthy chips ?

[LAY-3-29] Pacific North West tree hugger all the way !!

In this exchange, comment [LAY-3-27] can be understood within context as a response to commenter [LAY-3-26]. And, it is contextually apparent that comment [LAY-3-29] is a response to commenter [LAY-3-27], despite the un-related comment between them, [LAY-3-28], which is a response to [LAY-3-BRAND]. This is due to both social context (understanding that anti-corporate campaigners are often derogatively referred to as liberals, or 'tree huggers') and lexical choices, such as the repetition of the words 'tree' and 'hug'. Thus, comment [LAY-3-27] has a discursive purpose of implicitly dismissing the previous commenter's right to his/her position, presumably on grounds of having 'incorrect' or 'invalid' political views.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a feature of reactions to prior initiations, where rather than using full clauses, interactants use clauses where meaning is dependent upon a previous clause (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 89). For example, in the following example, the meaning of the clause cannot be understood in isolation, as it is not a complete clause:

[NRV-1-4] Taking photos.

Rather, it can only be understood when it is represented in relation to the initiating clause:

[NRV-1-BRAND]   Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"

In this example, the full meaning of comment [NRV-1-4] is understood as an ellipsised form of the statement "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by **taking photos**!" Thus, the ellipsis is an indication that the comment is a response to the brand post, rather than an independent initiation of a notion unrelated to that introduced within the brand post.

Polarity and Modality

In this analysis, indications of polarity (yes/no) and modality (e.g., I will, unlikely) are primarily considered in order to determine whether a comment constitutes a supporting or confronting move in relation to the brand post proposition.

While polarity is a choice between 'yes' and 'no' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 176), modality accounts for the options in between; it is a grammatical feature where speakers/writers can qualify or temper their language in terms of frequency, probability, obligation, inclination, and capability (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 98-99). These categories of modality are exemplified in Table 15, below.

Modality type	Lexical Examples
Frequency	Always, usually, often, sometimes, it is typical, it is usual, it is rare
Probability	I'm sure, I think, I suspect, definitely, perhaps, possibly, in my opinion, it is certain/likely/probable
Obligation	Must, you are required, it is required, will, supposed to, expected, may, allowed, permitted
Inclination	I will, I'm determined to, I'm keen, I'm willing
Capability	Can, is able to, is capable of

Table 15: Modality (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 100-104)

Mood

In addition to a consideration of polarity and modality, the analysis considers the grammatical feature of mood. Mood is a feature of discourse within the interpersonal dimension of meaning, and is a key factor in understanding the nature of dialogic exchange. Table 16, below, lists the possibilities for mood types, as well as demonstrative examples from the corpus where possible.

Mood types	
Mood	**Examples from corpus (*= not from corpus)**
Declarative: full	[WKR-1-22] I love Smokey Bacon, Prawn and my favorite is Marmite.
Declarative: elliptical	[NRV-1-4] Taking photos.
Imperative: full	[LAY-3-7] Listen to your customers and Abandon GMO ingredients. […]
Imperative: elliptical	[*] Look.
Wh-interrogative: full	[LAY-2-9] Why use GMO oils?
Wh-interrogative: elliptical	[WKR-1-1] Why walkers why? […]
Polar interrogative: full	[LAY-3-28] Do you have healthy chips ?
Polar interrogative: elliptical	[CBY-1-24] too much? share? […]
Exclamative: full	[HSH-1-17] What I don't agree with is your labor practices.. […]
Exclamative: elliptical	[*] What a disgrace!
minor	[HSH-2-16] Aaaaamen!!

Table 16: Mood types (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 75)

Together, these contextual and grammatical features allow for a methodical analysis of exchange structure. In particular, responses are analysed and categorised into speech function types on order to determine how responders position themselves in relation to the notions introduced within the brand posts. These categories are described in detail in Section 3.3.3, below.

Appraisal

The final consideration in the classification of moves is Appraisal. While Appraisal is described and developed in detail as a separate layer of analysis in this thesis, it is also used at a very basic level within the Negotiation analysis. The categories used in the Negotiation analysis are limited to positive and negative AFFECT (the evaluation of emotions), JUDGEMENT (the evaluation of ethics), and APPRECIATION (the evaluation of aesthetics) (Martin & White, 2005).

The identification of Appraisal within the Negotiation analysis is also related to context. For example, in the brand post and comment below, the comment does not relate to the brand post text or image, but is rather, a positive APPRECIATION of the Nature Valley product (snack bars).

[NRV-1-BRAND] Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"

[NRV-1-17] Good snacks and cheap. Thanku nature valley

This is coded as a supporting move relating to the brand in general, which is indicated by the commenter's contextual awareness of the overall marketing purpose of the brand post. While there is not an ellipsis in the response relating to the brand post text, there is ellipsis referring to the brand product, which is evoked through contextual knowledge of Nature Valley as a snack food brand. The full statement would be: "[Nature Valley bars are] Good snacks and cheap". Thus, the comment can be understood as a supporting move only when context is taken into account, and the ellipsis is not derived from the conversational exchange, but from the context. Without a consideration of Appraisal and context, there would be no specific feature identifying the relationship between the response and the brand post.

3.3.3 Move categories

The move categories considered in this thesis do not realise the full level of delicacy developed by Eggins & Slade (1997); they have been reduced following an initial analysis of the corpus. Where categories were identified with very few instances within the corpus, they are generalised to the more basic level on the system network. The categories are introduced in Table 17, below, and are then described in detail.

Categories of Negotiation moves		
Move categories		**Discourse purpose**
Opening	Attend	Attention seeking
	Command	Demand goods and services
	Statement	Give information
	Question	Demand information
Continuing		Clarify, exemplify, restate, offer additional or contrasting information, qualify/explain previous move made by self
Responding	Develop	Elaborate, extend, enhance
	Supporting Reply	Accept, comply, agree, answer, acknowledge, affirm
	Confronting Reply	Disagree, non-comply, withhold, disavow, contradict
Rejoinder	Track	To verify information or get additional information needed to understand prior move
	Challenge	To dismiss addressee’s right to his/her position, to contradict, or to offer alternative position

Table 17: Categories of moves (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997)

Opening moves

The discourse purpose of an opening move is to “initiate talk around a proposition” (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 194). More specifically, this may include attention seeking (attending moves), demanding goods and services (commanding moves), giving information (statement moves), and demanding information (question moves).

The primary grammatical feature used to identify opening moves (as opposed to continuing, responding, or rejoinder moves) is the absence of actual or potential ellipsis, as described in Section 3.3.2, above. I further specify that this actual or potential ellipsis must relate to the content in the Lead and/or Announcement elements, rather than to the general ‘nature’ of a brand post. For example, any comment could contain an ellipsis such as ‘…unethical brand’ and it would be clear that this ellipsis refers to the brand that authored the marketing post. However, in the present study, I specify that this type of ellipsis does not preclude the comment from being an opening move in the cases where the Lead and Announcement contain no mention or reference to the brand. This is because the ellipsis in this example refers to a contextual feature of the brand post, rather than to a lexical, conversational initiation made by the brand. Thus, with this caveat, the absence of actual or potential ellipsis indicates that a proposition has not been introduced previously and is, therefore, a new proposition, or an opening move.

Although Eggins & Slade (1997) do not specify polarity for opening moves, I have adapted the framework in order to consider opening moves within user responses to include polarity. This is due to the nature of this discourse, where the brand post is the true initiation of the exchange, but responses will functionally either support or confront the brand *in general*, even when the response constitutes an opening move.

In the case of opening moves in comment responses, the distinction between supporting and confronting moves is primarily contextual, but may also include consideration of polarity, modality and Appraisal. For example, in the case below, the response to the brand post constitutes an opening move because it is an introduction of a new proposition unrelated to the lexical value of the brand post. The ellipsis in [NRV-1-17], "[Nature Valley granola bars are] Good snacks and cheap…", as explained in this section, and in Section 3.3.2, above, is derived from the context of the brand post, rather than from the lexical dialogue. However, it is still coded as a supporting move, based on contextual awareness that the brand post is a marketing message for a snack food product:

[NRV-1-BRAND]	Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"
[NRV-1-17]	Good snacks and cheap. Thanku nature valley

Attending moves

These moves are attention seeking, and is in a minor clause form, such as in the comment below:

[HSH-3-10]	Hey Hershey, […]

Commanding moves

Commanding moves are generally identified through imperative mood. In this case, the commanding move is confronting, as identified through sentence structure (imperative) and negative APPRECIATION of the product (GMO crap).

[LAY-1-28]	Do not eat this GMO crap!

Statement moves

Statement moves are generally declarative mood. The example below is categorised based on sentence structure (declarative) and negative JUDGEMENT of the brand for prioritising manufacturing cost above using quality ingredients in their products.

[LAY-2-21] They use GMO's cause they're cheaper. […]

Questioning moves

Questioning moves are realised by interrogative mood, such as in the example below:

[LAY-3-28] Do you have healthy chips ?

This move is categorised based on interrogative sentence structure, and is a confronting move as it has implicit negative APPRECIATION of the product unhealthy.

The identification of opening moves is summarised in the table below:

Identification of OPENING moves					
Opening moves	**Function**	**Grammar**			**Semantics**
	Discourse purpose	**Ellipsis**	**Mood (unmarked)**	**Polarity and Modality**	**Appraisal**
Attend	Attention seeking	No	Minor; formulaic		
Command	Demand goods and services	No	Imperative		+ve (supporting) -ve (confronting)
Statement	Give information	No	Full declarative	Fact: no modality Opinion: modality	+ve (supporting) -ve (confronting)
Question	Demand information	No	Interrogative	Polar or wh-interrogative Fact: no modality Opinion: modality	+ve (supporting) -ve (confronting)

Table 18: Identification of OPENING moves (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 194)

Continuing moves

Continuing moves, unlike opening moves, continue the negotiation of a previously introduced proposition (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 195). This category includes monitoring moves, where the speaker checks on the state of the interaction, and prolonging moves, where a speaker adds to his or her own contribution with further information. These are exemplified in the brand post below:

[ACT-1-BRAND] Gok wants to know your Feel Good Pledge and will be choosing some of his favourites next week. We love this one from Elsa on Twitter "#FeelGoodPledge not gonna judge myself too harshly in the mirror and notice something nice about ME everyday". What's yours?

In this example, the brand post introduces a proposition – that "Gok wants to know your Feel Good Pledge", and then engages in continuing moves to elaborate, extend, and enhance this proposition.

Continuing moves are considered within this analysis to a very limited extent. In the initial analysis of the corpus, I identified that, while comment responses to brand posts include a variety of move types within the first move, the majority of subsequent moves – approximately 70% – are continuing moves. Because these are elaborations, extensions, and enhancements of the previous move, the analysis is focussed on the more revealing move in the exchange – the initial move of the comment. Therefore, the only consideration of continuing moves in comments was during the exploratory analysis where important categories were identified and those present less often were eliminated.

The identification of continuing moves is summarised in the table below:

Identification of CONTINUING moves					
Continuing moves	Function	Grammar			Semantics
	Discourse purpose	Ellipsis	Mood (unmarked)	Polarity and Modality	Appraisal
	Clarify, exemplify, restate, offer additional or contrasting information, qualify/explain in previous move	No; Linked (or linkable) by: for example, I mean, like, and, but, except, on the other hand, then, so, because	Full declarative or elaborating/ extending nominal group/ prepositional phrase/ adverbial phrase		

Table 19: Identification of CONTINUING moves (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 201)

The identification of continuing moves in the initial analysis of the corpus was focussed on discourse purpose and (lack of) ellipsis. However, as described by Eggins & Slade (1997: 201), the discourse structure of continuing moves also involves the analysis of Mood, which is based on SFL logico-semantic relations (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Logico-semantic relations are used to analyse "how clauses are linked to one another" (2014: 428). For example, the word 'if' links two clauses together based on the logic of 'condition' (i.e., 'on the condition that x, happens, y will happen') and the words 'because' and 'so' link clauses together on the logic of 'cause' (2014: 432).

Given that CONTINUING moves were identified in the exploratory analysis using discourse structure and ellipsis, and were not considered in the final analysis of the corpus, a detailed focus on logico-semantic relations is beyond the scope of the present study.

Responding moves

Responding moves are those where a speaker reacts to another speaker in order to "negotiate a proposition or proposal on the terms set up by the previous speaker: that is, the respondent accepts being positioned as a respondent, and accepts to negotiate the other's proposition" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 200).

Linguistically, responding moves can be recognised through potential or actual ellipsis, as the responder depends upon propositions introduced by previous speakers and accepts this role within a specific exchange. While the predicted, or preferred responses do conform to the propositions introduced in previous speaker moves (i.e., they are supporting moves), it is also possible, if dispreferred[12], for responding moves to be confronting (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 201). The salient feature of responding moves, therefore, is that the negotiation is centred upon a notion introduced by another speaker.

In this thesis, I focus on two types of supporting responses (develop, supporting reply), and one type of confronting response (confronting reply).

Developing moves

This category includes elaborating moves, which restate, clarify, or exemplify the previous speaker's utterance (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 202), as in the comment response to the brand post below:

> [NRV-2-BRAND] Snow tubing is simple: Ride a tube down a snowy hill and smile. Bonus points if you go with a large group.
>
> [NRV-2-2] My family used to take Off early sat morning &heAd to mt.St.Helens prior eruption,intertubes,&salvation army ski clothes ..we'd tube all day.

In this response, commenter [NRV-2-2] exemplifies the notion introduced by a brand post – that snow tubing is a fun group activity – by describing a memory.

The develop category also includes extending moves, where the responder adds supporting or contrasting details to a previous speaker's move (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 203), such as in the response to the brand post below:

> [NRV-2-27] And stay on the tube all the way down......

This comment extends the notion of 'bonus points' given for going in a large group by adding a supporting condition that one can also get 'bonus points' for staying on the tube.

Finally, the develop category includes enhancing moves, where a speaker qualifies a prior speaker's move (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 203), such as in the following comment:

> [ACT-3-BRAND IMAGE TEXT] Don't let the things you want make you forget the things you have
>
> [ACT-3-BRAND] Our Motto of the Week. So very true we think, don't you agree?

[12] 'Dispreferred' is a term used in conversation analysis to refer to a discretionary alternative to the preferred response (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 28).

[ACT-3-2] So true. We have a lot to be grateful for if only we knew it.

In comment [ACT-3-2], the responder qualifies, or explains, the brand post's 'motto'.

Supporting reply moves

Of the various types of responses, replies are characterised as having particular negotiation resources in terms of the proposition introduced by a previous speaker (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 205). These are generally identified grammatically by actual or potential ellipsis in dependent clauses, where the ellipsis corresponds to a previous speaker's move.

Supporting replies correlate with the opening move. So, for example, if an opening move is a statement of fact, the supporting reply would be an acknowledging move, while a statement of opinion would correspond with a supporting reply of agreeing. If the opening move is an offer, the supporting reply is an accepting move, as demonstrated in the comment below.

[CBY-1-BRAND] Would anyone like to share our Wispa sandwich with us? It's a bit much for one person...

[CBY-1-9] yes please

In the comment above, although the offer is hypothetical, as the brand is not actually offering to share with the audience, the responder plays along with this make-believe situation and 'accepts' the offer.

Supporting replies to questions are affirming, agreeing, or answering moves, such as in the examples below.

[WKR-3-BRAND] It's a big day for Britain. Our new Prince is finally here! Who's excited?

[WKR-3-11] I am

[ACT-3-BRAND] Our Motto of the Week. So very true we think, don't you agree?

[ACT-3-16] I totally agree,

Confronting reply moves

Like supporting replies, confronting replies negotiate a proposition introduced by a previous speaker, and correlate to various types of opening moves. While they do depend on an initiating proposition, they do not align with it. For example, a confronting reply to a statement would be a contradiction:

[HSH-2-BRAND] If the day ends in "y," it's a good day for chocolate. Like if you agree

[HSH-2-30] Not in Spanish, mwahahahaaa!

Another confronting reply is a disagreeing move:

[HSH-1-BRAND] A HERSHEY'S Milk Chocolate with Almonds Bar is the perfect way to celebrate National Chocolate Covered Nuts Day, don't you agree?

[HSH-1-8] I started disagreeing when you left Hershey, PA and went to Mexico!

The identification of responding moves is summarised in the table below:

Identification of RESPONDING moves					
Responding moves	Function	Grammar			Semantics
	Discourse purpose	Ellipsis	Mood (unmarked)	Polarity and Modality	Appraisal
Develop	Elaborate, extend, enhance	Yes (actual or potential)			
Supporting Reply	Accept, comply, agree, answer, acknowledge, affirm	Yes (actual or potential)		+	+
Confronting Reply	Disagree, non-comply, withhold, disavow, contradict	Yes (actual or potential)		-	-

Table 20: Identification of RESPONDING moves (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 208)

Rejoinder moves

The final major category of Negotiation move is rejoinder moves, which, unlike responding moves, do not comply in negotiating a proposition introduced by a previous speaker. Rather, rejoinder moves interrupt, postpone, abort, or suspend; instead of negotiating "what is already on the table", they query or reject it (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 207).

Rejoinders have an important function within casual talk, because unlike responding moves, which complete an interaction, rejoinder moves have the potential to sustain and extend conversation. This has particular relevance to the performance of identity, as "the building and reaffirming of relationships and identity is never finally achieved, hence the need to use the linguistic resources to keep the channels open for as long as possible" (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 212).

The two types of rejoinder moves that are considered within this thesis are tracking moves, and challenging moves.

Tracking moves

Tracking moves support the prior move as they do not disagree with it, but they delay its completion by checking, confirming, clarifying, or probing its content. Tracking moves have actual or potential ellipsis, which is usually realised through an interrogative structure (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 207-209). This is demonstrated in the comment below.

[HSH-2-BRAND]	If the day ends in "y," it's a good day for chocolate. Like if you agree.
[HSH-2-20]	**What, like as in "Happy"?** For me, chocolate is usually for those vent-out-my-bitchiness days.

In this comment, although the responder is not disagreeing with the brand post, he or she is clarifying what is meant by "a good day for chocolate". The responder is implying that it is a "good day for chocolate" if it is a generally *bad* day.

Challenging moves

Unlike tracking moves, challenging moves confront a previous proposition. They attack it by questioning its relevance, legitimacy, or veracity, or by offering an alternative, counter-position, or counter-interpretation (Eggins & Slade, 1997: 212). This is demonstrated in the discourse exchange below:

Image 26: [CBY-3-BRAND]

[CBY-3-19] How much palm oil in that? Great christmas treat contributing to climate change, global warming and destroying eco systems. I am sure the son of God would be thrilled at such a birthday celebration.

This response begins with a challenging rejoinder move. The first move, "How much palm oil in that?" does not engage with the introduced proposition of eating a chocolate snowman if one is not able to build a snowman. Instead, it questions the relevance of promoting a product that uses ethically and environmentally irresponsible ingredients. Subsequent moves in the comment effectively reject the product itself by continuing this refocussing of the dialogue on the inappropriateness of associating the (ethically challenged) product with Christmas on grounds of it being a sacred holiday.

The identification of rejoinder moves is summarised in the table below:

Identification of REJOINDER moves					
Rejoinder moves	Function	Grammar			Semantics
	Discourse purpose	Ellipsis	Mood (unmarked)	Polarity and Modality	Appraisal
Tracking	To verify information or get additional information needed to understand prior move	Yes (actual or potential)	Interrogative	+	+
Challenging	To dismiss addressee's right to his/her position, to contradict, or to offer alternative position	Yes (actual or potential) apart from non-elliptical declarative for countering moves	Interrogative or declarative	-	-

Table 21: Identification of REJOINDER moves (adapted from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 213)

Summary of Negotiation analysis

In this section, I have detailed the procedure for analysing the corpus using the Negotiation framework. This process begins with identification of the moves within the brand posts and the comments. Then, I analyse the brand posts and the first move of the comments using the SFL framework developed by Martin (1992) and Eggins & Slade (1997), as adapted and described in the text and tables throughout this chapter section, in order to identify moves by category. The results are coded and quantified. The quantitative results then inform a qualitative discussion of how individuals engage in dialogue with brand posts in order to perform identity, particularly in terms of alignment and disalignment with the propositions introduced within brand posts.

3.4 Appraisal analysis

The primary layer of analysis in the present research is informed by Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), which is concerned with interpersonal meaning exchanged through language and how individuals take stances in relation to others and toward phenomena such as feelings, ethics, and aesthetics. This approach is particularly beneficial in investigating identity because in positioning themselves, individuals say something about who they are because of what they like, what they feel about others, and how their position relates to others. In other words, identity is not 'inherent', but is negotiated through positioning the self, using objects and other people as reference points. Identity is performed through stance-taking language, and Appraisal is a framework that specifically focuses on this evaluative aspect of language.

In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the framework, while in this section, I outline the Appraisal categories relevant to the analysis and provide examples from the corpus within each category. In research using Appraisal theory, the system of ATTITUDE is often seen as the main focal point, with GRADUATION as a simultaneous system working alongside ATTITUDE.

In describing the boundaries of the system of ATTITUDE, Martin & White (2005: 2) move beyond the traditional meaning of 'affect', arguing that through using evaluative language, individuals not only explicitly express their own attitudes, but they also take implicit stances and invite other speakers/writers to engage with these stances, in terms of alignment and rapport.

One of the ways individuals do this is through a system of meaning described in Appraisal theory as AFFECT. Martin & White (2005) move beyond the theorization of AFFECT as emotion. Rather, they take a more comprehensive focus and argue, citing Painter (2003), that we are born with emotion which is eventually expressed through the three semantic regions which include emotion as well as ethics and aesthetics (Martin & White, 2005: 42). These three systems are realised in Appraisal theory as AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION.

Martin & White (2005: 45) argue that from our embodied sense of AFFECT, we develop JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION as "institutionalised feelings, which take us out of our everyday common sense world into the uncommon sense worlds of shared community values."

The functions of ATTITUDE evaluation and identity performance are complex and intertwined. Stance-taking discourse featuring AFFECT is not merely 'expressed' or 'represented'; as with all discourse, words are spoken so they will be heard, and words are written so they will be read. This is to say that discourse is not just an expression of self but situates the speaker/writer within a culture of other individuals. As Martin & White (2005: 95) explain:

> …when speakers/writers announce their own attitudinal positions they not only self-expressively 'speak their own mind', but simultaneously invite others to endorse and to share with them the feelings, tastes or normative assessments they are announcing. Thus declarations of attitude are dialogically directed towards aligning the addressee into a community of shared value and belief.

This process of alignment is described within Appraisal theory as the system of ENGAGEMENT (interaction). However, in this thesis, I have opted to account for interaction with focus on Negotiation, rather than ENGAGEMENT, as explained earlier in this chapter. However, it is worth emphasising that ATTITUDE within discourse also performs dialogic functions and carries out identity work.

The methodological decision to employ Negotiation analysis rather than the ENGAGEMENT system is the result of an initial exploratory analysis of the data which included the analysis of ENGAGEMENT. The preliminary results from this analysis highlighted a feature of the corpus – and of the ENGAGEMENT system, that led to further enquiry into a toolset more suitable to the corpus. The issue was that the corpus data is inherently dialogic, but the ENGAGEMENT system accounts for dialogic *positions* within monologic texts.

To elaborate, the primary reason ENGAGEMENT does not suit this corpus is that it is theorised in the context of monologic texts – primarily written news texts. That is, it focuses on alignment and disalignment with other positions that is performed within specific types of discursive structures *within* the text, such as the attribution in the comment below:

[LAY-2-6] GMOs Cause Cancer French Study Shows Horrific Result of GMO Consumption […]

In this comment, the writer attributes finding that GMOs cause cancer to a French study. That is, rather than simply stating that GMOs cause cancer, the commenter 'brings in' a reference to an authority that made this claim, and in doing so, aligned with the position not just of being anti-GMO, but in being so based on scientific findings, thus disaligning with the brand Lays.

In the preliminary analysis, it was certainly possible to identify instances where commenters align and disalign with positions that are represented textually. However, the vast majority of alignment and disalignment occurs in a structure similar to that in the comment below:

[LAY-2-5] no GMOs for me

In this comment, an analysis using the ENGAGEMENT system would entail coding it as MONOGLOSS, because it does not appear to engage with dialogic alternatives – it is a statement about the commenter's preferences. Yet, when considered as a response to a brand advertisement for crisps, it is clear that it is indeed a disalignment with the advertised brand, as it is a confronting reply. This disalignment is only apparent through focus on the dialogic negotiation, rather than the analysis of the comment itself and its MONOGLOSS or HETEROGLOSS value.

In summary, while the ENGAGEMENT system is certainly useful for the analysis of texts, it appears that it is more appropriate for written, monologic texts where the writer must discursively represent any positions that will be used for alignment or disalignment. In the case of written text such as that in the corpus, which is dialogic in nature and involves many different authors, individuals are able to align and disalign with positions that are contextualised not within their own discourse, but within the discourse of the interlocutor and the context within which the dialogue occurs.

In the analysis of this corpus, it is useful to analyse stance-taking language oriented to ATTITUDE because these types of evaluation are rooted in emotion (Martin & White, 2005: 42) and are therefore key linguistic strategies for individuals performing identity. In other words, through the expression of emotions, whether they are personal feelings, emotions about ethics, or emotions oriented towards aesthetics, individuals take a stance on 'who they are' and socially position themselves among other individuals.

3.4.1 Appraisal analysis considerations

In addition to categorising evaluations within the ATTITUDE system, evaluations may be either inscribed (explicit) or evoked (implicit). The former category is achieved through vocabulary that clearly assigns value to an evaluation, such as the word 'lazily' (White, 2001: 6), which is an inscribed negative evaluation of JUDGEMENT: TENACITY (this category is described in Section 3.4.2, below).

Invoked appraisal, on the other hand, may include non-core vocabulary, metaphor, and intensification, the interpretation of which relies on context (Martin & White, 2005: 65).

An example given by Martin & White (2005: 68) is the statement: 'he played strongly'. In this case, the inscribed evaluation is positive JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY; the evaluation primarily relates to the player's capability. However, this statement also carries an invoked evaluation of positive APPRECIATION of the player's achievement in the game. Other examples given by Martin & White include lexical items with 'hybrid' evaluations, such as 'disgust', which is both AFFECT and JUDGEMENT.

Martin & White (2005: 62) acknowledge that analysis of implicit evaluation may appear to open an analysis to subjective judgements. However, they argue that this potential subjectivity can be limited through a 'tactical', or linguistically-motivated reading of a text. This is the position taken within the present analysis. That is, where evaluations appear to occur through implicit language such as metaphors and non-core vocabulary, the evaluative meanings are interpreted through and a tactical reading of the context.

When possible, background cultural knowledge of the language and/or context is used to interpret implicit evaluation. In a sense, this can be understood as a relationship between 'proof' and 'evidence'. Explicit language gives us 'proof' that a specific evaluation has taken place, whilst implicit language gives 'evidence' that may be more or less easily interpreted depending on immediate and cultural context.

In Section 3.4.2, I detail the systems of AFFECT, APPRECIATION, and JUDGEMENT. I specify which lexical characteristics determine whether an evaluation is coded within one category, rather than another. However, it is important to note that these specific determinations primarily relate to explicit (inscribed) evaluations. That is, in cases where two types of evaluation are plausible given the category definition, the specific criteria described in Section 3.4.2 are intended to identify inscribed evaluation, whilst the 'alternative' possibility may be coded as an implicit, and possibly secondary double-coded evaluation.

The conceptualisation and method for double-coding is described in detail below. At this point, however, it is important to note that the relatively clear-cut distinctions between categories outlined in Section 3.4.2, below, do not necessarily apply to implicit (invoked) evaluations. This is because invoked appraisal may be realised in myriad different ways through context and complex language, as compared to inscribed appraisal, which is typically more straight-forward in terms of being identifiable through specific words that can be compared to Martin & White's (2005) framework.

However, the examples in Section 3.4.2, below, do include some cases of invoked evaluations that occur relatively frequently within particular data sets. This means that a substantial portion of the invoked appreciation identified in the corpus is coded based on justifications described within this chapter. Thus, despite the potential for subjectivity in coding invoked appraisal, the procedure for making these coding decisions is made as transparent as possible within this thesis. However, for the remainder of the invoked appraisal, there are a substantial number of unique combinations of lexical choices and context, such that it is not useful to attempt to provide ‘standard’ examples of how invoked appraisal categories may be realised within this corpus.

Emoticons and orality

The analysis of emoticons and orality within the thesis is limited due to the under-theorisation of CMC within Appraisal, and the extension of the Appraisal framework to account for CMC features is certainly warranted. While the multimodal aspect of the brand posts is a significant component of the genre analysis, it is beyond the scope of the present study to comprehensively analyse the use of orality and emoticons within the Appraisal framework.

Orality markers most closely resemble interjections such as ‘ugh’, or ‘phew’, which Martin & White (2005: 69) argue are “underspecified as far as type of attitude is concerned”, and “bring us to the borders of what is normally considered language, comprised as they are of apparently residual protolanguage material”. While Martin & White acknowledge that paralanguage (e.g., orality and facial expression) and modality (image, music, etc.) are rich areas for further research and inclusion in the Appraisal framework, they are not currently extensively theorised within Appraisal.

In this thesis, while I do not go to the extent of completely excluding instances of orality and emoticons from the Appraisal analysis, it is beyond the scope of this study to comprehensively theorise the meaning of such discourse markers in terms of Appraisal. Indeed, even amongst researchers who focus specifically on CMC markers, there is no consensus on their meaning, as usage varies considerably depending on context.

This methodological decision was made following the initial, exploratory analysis of the corpus, which involved close attention to CMC features, and identified that while there is not an extensive variety of emoticons within the corpus (i.e., they are nearly all smiley or wink emoticons - :), ;-)), there is extensive use of them in the corpus. However, it was unclear whether it would be possible to develop a systematic approach for coding orality and emoticons as ATTITUDE. While this was identified as a possible direction in terms of theoretical engagement, it was clear that it would not also be possible to achieve the other goals of the study.

The apparently normative uses of particular emoticons (and orality) are included in the examples within the particular Appraisal categories described below, and their meanings are coded according to the justifications in these examples, typically as GRADUATION, but also at times coded as ATTITUDE. However, this is not to say that the analysis of emoticons can be conducted using a formulaic method (e.g., 'smileys' indicate CHEER); indeed, there is potential for a further study addressing this limitation.

Double-coded evaluation

Prior to the description of ATTITUDE categories, there is one further methodological consideration of importance to establish: that of double-coded evaluation.

The methodology introduced in this chapter section, as outlined by Martin & White (2005), is as specific as possible in order to inform a robust linguistic analysis of the corpus. However, given that Appraisal is based on semantic meaning, it is necessary to consider how implicit, contextual meaning can be accounted for, despite the risk for subjective bias on the part of the researcher.

Given the potential for implicit realisations of evaluation, it seems overly restrictive to limit the analysis to only explicit Appraisal; this is particularly the case in many such instances, where evaluations may be implicit but are nevertheless clearly discernible from the text. For example, there are many instances of evaluation similar to the comment below:

[HSH-2-2] Love Hershey's!

In these types of comments, coding only the inscribed appraisal would mean only the value of AFFECT: HAPPINESS: AFFECTION is coded, and counted in the quantitative analysis. However, it is clear in this case that there is also an invoked positive APPRECIATION of the brand and/or product. In this case, then, as the AFFECT: HAPPINESS: AFFECTION evaluation is inscribed, and the APPRECIATION is invoked, the AFFECT is coded as the 'primary' appraisal, and the APPRECIATION is coded as the 'secondary' appraisal.

There are a number of cases where invoked appraisal is of obvious importance, such as in the comment below:

[LAY-2-5] no GMOs for me

In this comment, there are two invoked evaluations. In saying 'no GMOs for me', the commenter makes an invoked negative APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH evaluation, directed at the product. Simultaneously, the commenter is making a public statement about his or her personal stance towards the consumption of GMOs – or, in other words, his or her personal boycott against GMO products. This has an invoked evaluation value of positive JUDGEMENT: TENACITY, with the self as the target – in other words, the commenter is making a public performance of being 'resolute'.

In this case, both evaluations are invoked, and both are expressed through the full comment ('no GMOs for me). Then, it is not possible to separate them and say that part of the comment should be coded as APPRECIATION and the other as JUDGEMENT. The solution, then, is to annotate two simultaneous evaluations, or a double-coded evaluation.

Unlike comment [HSH-2-2], however, it is less clear which is the 'primary' appraisal, as both are invoked. In cases where there are two invoked, double-coded evaluations, the solution is to determine which of the appraisals is given lexical prominence. In SFL terms, this concept is related to 'Theme' and 'Rheme', where the first participant, process, or circumstance in a clause is understood to have more emphasis than the following words, or the Rheme. So, in the case of [LAY-2-5], the word 'GMO' is more prominent than 'me' due to its position in the clause. Therefore, the evaluation of GMOs (negative APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH) is the primary evaluation, and the self-evaluation of the commenter (positive JUDGEMENT: TENACITY) is the secondary evaluation. This would be reversed if the comment instead read 'I refuse to eat GMOs'.

To this point, I have covered double-coded evaluations that are inscribed-invoked and invoked-invoked. The third possibility is inscribed-inscribed. In this corpus, and in Martin & White's framework (2005), there are no clear instances of double-coded appraisal where both evaluations are inscribed. In the examples of 'hybrid' evaluations given by Martin & White (2005: 68), such as 'embarrassed', 'jealous', and 'resentful', the AFFECT is inscribed whilst the JUDGEMENT is invoked. However, in this study, I did not discount the potential that there could be double-coded evaluation where both values are inscribed. In these cases, the procedure for determining the primary vs. secondary value is the same as for invoked-invoked double coding. That is, the evaluation or evaluation target that is given the most prominence within the clause through placement is determined to be the primary one.

Finally, the methodological procedure of double-coding evaluation introduces another issue within the quantitative analysis of results: does a double-coded evaluation count as one, or two instances of appraisal? This issue is dealt with in Section 3.4.4, later in this chapter.

This procedure that I have established for determining primary and secondary status for double-coded evaluation is summarised in Table 22, below.

Appraisal double-coding criteria		
Double-coding Categories		**Coding Criteria**
Evaluation 'A'	**Evaluation 'B'**	Assignment of 'primary' and 'secondary' status
Inscribed	Inscribed	N/A? Grammatical emphasis (Theme/Rheme) determines primary and secondary evaluations (primary = more emphasis). In some cases, substantial GRADUATION may contribute to emphasis.
Inscribed	Invoked	Inscribed primary; Invoked secondary
Invoked	Invoked	Grammatical emphasis (Theme/Rheme) determines primary and secondary evaluations (primary = more emphasis). In some cases, substantial GRADUATION may contribute to emphasis.

Table 22: Appraisal double-coding criteria

In addition to the double-coding criteria, there is one 'hybrid' category within the APPRECIATION system that simultaneously realises two related categories. However, for reasons explained later in Section 4.7, the 'hybrid' is coded as a single instance of appraisal, rather than as double-coded appraisal. As with this hybrid category, the double-coded evaluations are discussed in further detail in Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.4, below.

Evaluation source

In this corpus, each commenter, for the most part, speaks on his or her own behalf. That is, this discourse is different from, for example, journalistic discourse, where evaluation is often reported, quoted, or otherwise made on behalf of an entity other than the self. In literature, the source of the evaluation may depend on the narrator or point of view. In those cases, tracking the source of evaluation may be beneficial in order to demonstrate how interpersonal relations are enacted. However, in the present corpus, each commenter writes on his or own behalf, and there are very few instances where a single commenter has written more than one comment in any given data set, or within the corpus as a whole. As such, in this study I do not track the source of evaluation; all evaluations are attributed to the general category of 'anonymised commenters'.

There are very few exceptions where an evaluation is directly attributed to a person other than a commenter. For example, this happens in the comment below:

[CBY-2-24]		Andrew is happy ha ha

This comment is in response to a Cadbury brand post with a display of a particular Cadbury chocolate bar. Presumably, commenter [CBY-2-24] is noting that his or her friend, Andrew, is a fan of Cadbury chocolate and will be happy upon seeing the brand post. In cases such as these, I note that it is a 'projected' evaluation.

Within the quantitative analysis, this projected evaluation is not counted differently from non-projected evaluations. One reason for this is that the evaluation, although projected, is nevertheless written by the commenter. In other words, all the evaluations in the corpus are performed, in one sense or another, from the perspective of the commenter. For example, commenter [CBY-2-24] saw the [CBY-2] brand post and thought of his or her friend Andrew, who presumably likes Cadbury chocolate; this person performed Andrew's 'happiness', whether or not he actually experienced it.

The other reason for not separating projected evaluation is that it occurs very infrequently in this corpus, and is therefore not significant within the quantitative analysis. If this were not the case, it is likely that the nature of the discourse would lend itself to somewhat different data-driven focus points, in which case the consideration of evaluation source may be of interest.

Evaluation target

Unlike the source of evaluation, the targets of evaluation vary considerably. In order to be conducive to quantitative and qualitative analysis and discussion, targets are grouped into data-driven categories.

Initially, the broad categories of 'brand', 'product', and 'non-brand/product' (or 'other') are specified. Following the Appraisal analysis, the 'non-brand/product' target category is divided into sub-categories depending on what emerges from the corpus. Each instance of evaluation is coded with the target of the evaluation or, in the case of AFFECT, the 'trigger' of the emotion.

3.4.2 ATTITUDE categories

Within this research, I undertake a methodical analysis of the corpus in order to address the interpersonal aspects of identity as performed using stance-taking discourse. I begin the Appraisal analysis in this study by performing a detailed analysis of each data set to annotate ATTITUDE categories (AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION). These categories are detailed below.

ATTITUDE: AFFECT

Appraisal is described as a discourse semantic system and "is concerned with meaning beyond the clause (with texts in other words)" (Martin & White, 2005: 9). As such, in practice, the Appraisal categories do not apply to specific grammatical structures, but instead appear (in SFL terms) in such structures as qualities ('a sad captain'), processes ('the captain wept'), and comments ('sadly, he had to go') (Martin & White, 2005: 46).

This applies to all of the categories in Appraisal, including AFFECT, which is not the only system within ATTITUDE that deals with emotions. Specifically, Martin & White (2005: 42) describe AFFECT as being "concerned with registering positive and negative feelings: do we feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored".

As such, perhaps it is unsurprising that within the present study focussing on Facebook comments and on marketing, textual representation of AFFECT is very common. AFFECT is a key discursive strategy that individuals use in identity performance. One way of looking at this would be to see some identity performances as being based on who we *feel* we are; 'I *feel* happy, therefore I am a *happy person*'.

An example of the Appraisal categories for AFFECT is shown below, in a table containing a selection of the examples outlined from Martin & White (2005: 51). In the following sections, these categories are described in more detail and examples from the corpus are used to demonstrate each category.

AFFECT categories and examples		
AFFECT Categories	**Examples: Positive**	**Examples: Negative**
DIS/INCLINATION	miss, long for, yearn for	wary, fearful, terrorised
UN/HAPPINESS	cheerful, like, love, adore	sad, joyless, depressed, weepy
IN/SECURITY	together, confident, trusting	uneasy, anxious, startled
DIS/SATISFACTION	involved, engrossed, pleased, impressed	flat, jaded, angry, bored with

Table 23. Appraisal categories for AFFECT (adapted from Martin & White, 2005: 51)

DIS/INCLINATION

The category of AFFECT: DIS/INCLINATION is to do with fear and desire. Considering that this corpus consists of comments made on popular snack food brand pages, it is perhaps predictable that many of the comments contain instances of INCLINATION. In this corpus, however, there are generally not explicit expressions of DISINCLINATION through fear; rather, this emerges as implicit wariness of certain products through a 'fear' of certain aspects of the product, such as tempting them to break their diet or consume otherwise unhealthy ingredients. This is discussed further in examples below.

In this corpus, many of the instances of AFFECT: INCLINATION could be described as 'upgraded' instances of positive APPRECIATION (where an individual is referring to positive aspects of a *thing* rather than a *person* or *feelings*):

[HSH-1-2] **MUST HAVE**..It's my survival food

[HSH-2-6] **obsessed** to chocolates!!!

[CBY-1-13] I have a wispa **addiction**

[CBY-2-23] **I want this now** :-o !!!!!!

In other words, these comments go further than evaluating the product or qualities of the product, which would be APPRECIATION (discussed later in this chapter section); instances such as the comments above, which emphasise a feeling, are primarily categorised as AFFECT.

A consideration that emerges from these comments is whether, in the case of [CBY-1-13], the comment should be categorised as INCLINATION (toward the product), or as JUDGEMENT (toward the self). Within Western culture, an individual with an addiction is often stigmatised, perhaps in terms of ethics (SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY). However, in the context of this corpus, it seems appropriate to consider such talk of addiction (usually to chocolate) as tongue-in-cheek and a cultural phenomenon. As such, although these types of Appraisal do perhaps carry implicit JUDGEMENT toward the self, they are categorised as AFFECT: INCLINATION, as an upgraded form of APPRECIATION. However, as with other categories of Appraisal discussed in this chapter, the 'borders' between categories involve further contextual considerations regarding explicit and implicit evaluation, as described in section 3.4.1, above.

The negative counterpart of INCLINATION is DISINCLINATION, which is to do with fear or aversion. The comments below are examples of DISINCLINATION:

[WKR-2-3] **Why would I want this advert** I am supposed to be on a diet. **Go away**

[WKR-2-13] **No thanks**

A distinction within this category is useful because there are two main reasons users appear to express DISINCLINATION: they are either adverse to the product's taste, or to associated health factors (fattening or unnatural ingredients). This consideration, in turn, relates to the methodological issue of double-coding. In the case of comment [WKR-2-3], the phrase "Why would I want this advert… Go away" implies DISINCLINATION in relation to the advert, not the product: 'I do not want this advert (because it makes me want the product).' This, however, is qualified with the phrase 'I am supposed to be on a diet', which implies that the product is unhealthy/fattening (suggesting negative APPRECIATION), but also potentially appealing (suggesting INCLINATION).

Instances such as this highlight the benefits of focusing on the target of evaluation, as well as the evaluation type itself. Although the initial coding of the evaluation would, in this case, point to an instance of DISINCLINATION, further qualitative attention allows the researcher to see that, in describing the semiotic meaning of the text, accounting for the *target* of the evaluation is potentially as important as categorising the *type* of evaluation. In other words, this user has expressed DISINCLINATION toward the advert because he or she potentially *likes* the unhealthy product, rather than because he or she *dislikes* it. Because distinctions such as this can disappear within simplified quantitative analysis, it is useful to use qualitative and quantitative methods in Appraisal analysis including a consideration of appraisal type and target.

Furthermore, Martin & White (2005: 48) specify that fear (DISINCLINATION) can be characterised as being wary, whereas desire (INCLINATION) can be characterised by longing or yearning for someone/thing. In the case of comment [WKR-2-3], it appears that these two opposite (positive and negative) values for DIS/INCLINATION are concurrently present. This is perhaps a methodological issue as it seems likely that when analysing discourse relating to food (and particularly junk food), the expression of a co-presence of wariness and longing may have implications for the negotiation of identity – in this case, perhaps as an identity performance as a 'dieter'. In other words, perhaps this particular corpus is also useful for investigating how identity is constructed and negotiated through expressions of complicated and opposing emotions, particularly because identity, as performed through food preference discourse, is relatively low-risk (as opposed to emotions of uncertainty surrounding religion, for example).

The boundaries between Appraisal categories, and distinctions between coding an instance as explicit or implicit are not always clear. Through careful attention to 'fuzziness' between boundaries during the analytical process, I draw out methodological considerations as to how Appraisal theory applies to this communicative environment. This is discussed in further detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

UN/HAPPINESS

One of the most common occurrences of AFFECT within this corpus, HAPPINESS: AFFECTION, introduces a theoretical dilemma concerning categorisation – whether to consider comments such as the following as AFFECT (emotion), APPRECIATION (aesthetic evaluation), or JUDGEMENT (evaluation of people):

[HSH-2-23] i **love** hersheys

[ACT-2-25] I so **love** Gok he cheers me up when I feel down .

The reason for this 'fuzziness' between categories is that the user in comment [HSH-2-23] (and many other individuals who make similar comments) is expressing an intensified positive APPRECIATION for chocolate. Similarly, commenter [ACT-2-25] is expressing an intensified positive JUDGEMENT of the celebrity and Activia 'brand ambassador' Gok Wan, but is doing so through language indicating positive HAPPINESS: AFFECTION. Within this study, these instances are categorised primarily as AFFECT rather than APPRECIATION or JUDGEMENT. This is because the explicit lexical emphasis is on the emotion that the individual is feeling, rather than on particular qualities of the chocolate (other than the characteristic of inducing euphoria/love, which is a concept that is abstract despite much scientific research on the subject) or Gok Wan. In other words, the explicit 'centre of feeling' is within the user, who feels *love* for someone/something. If the comment were written: "Gok is **lovely**", it would be primarily coded as positive JUDGEMENT rather than positive AFFECT.

However, in the examples above, the evaluation is double-coded to account also for the invoked APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT values, respectively.

In addition to AFFECT: HAPPINESS: AFFECTION, I consider HAPPINESS:CHEER:

[CBY-3-19] I saw Asda setting these up and **I could barely contain my excitement**!

[HSH-2-7] i just had to count how many days end with y.**lol**

Unlike HAPPINESS: AFFECTION as described above, which relates to feelings directed at other people/things, CHEER is related to emotion 'in me' (Martin & White, 2005: 49). This can, in the case of [HSH-2-7], be realised through the abbreviation 'lol' (laugh out loud) to indicate that the commenter is amused by his or her reaction to the brand post. Another way CHEER is often expressed is through the 'smiley' emoticon; however, as discussed in the Chapter 2, the smiley emoticon does not necessarily always indicate emotion, as it sometimes fulfils other communicative functions. In this corpus, I code smiley emoticons as AFFECT: HAPPINESS: CHEER when there are also other contextual clues indicating that this is the function of the emoticon.

The corpus also contains instances of UNHAPPINESS. The two comments below realise this as UNHAPPINESS: MISERY, which, like CHEER, is experienced 'within the self':

[ACT-1-18]	soz gok much as i think your brill i havent got a feel good pledge cause **i never fell good bout myself** x
[CBY-3-10]	So wanted to try these but you stuck wheat in them! **Unhappy** coeliac chocoholic right now! Lol
[NRV-2-14]	To go with a large group I would have to have more than two friends **:(**

In the case of comment [NRV-2-14], UNHAPPINESS: MISERY is invoked (implicit) rather than inscribed (explicit) as there is not a specific word that identifies the AFFECT, but the writer expresses the AFFECT through the statement within context, particularly with the emoticon.

Unlike UNHAPPINESS: MISERY, the category of UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY occurs where a person directs the feeling 'at other things/people'. Within this corpus there are not a large number of these types of AFFECT as similar sentiments are generally expressed through negative JUDGEMENT and are not 'upgraded' to AFFECT. However, two examples of UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY are below:

[HSH-3-6]	I **hate** white chocolate blah
[ACT-2-20]	**Cant stand him!!!**

In comment [HSH-3-6], the target of the UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY is white chocolate; the AFFECT evaluation is the primary one because of the specific word 'hate', while there is a secondary negative APPRECIATION evaluation as well. Similarly, in comment [ACT-2-20], the primary evaluation is AFFECT: UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY, triggered by Gok Wan, while the secondary evaluation is a negative JUDGEMENT of Gok Wan.

IN/SECURITY

Martin & White (2005: 49) describe the IN/SECURITY system as relating to “our feelings of peace and anxiety in relation to our environs, including of course the people sharing them with us” and that these types of emotions are often associated with “’mothering’ in the home”.

As with UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY, this category does not appear often in this corpus. One instance (invoked) is present in the following comment:

> [LAY-2-8] i would buy your chips if they were GMO free...how hard would it be to sell organic, gmo free potato chips? evidently pretty difficult...**i don't want my kids to grow up on this**...sorry Lays!

This individual appears to be implying INSECURITY about the potential long-term health effects on her children if they were to eat this product, which contains GMO ingredients. Although in some data sets, the GMO issue appears in many comments, this particular expression of AFFECT is rare within the corpus.

The comment below is another example of INSECURITY:

> [ACT-1-3] I **worry too much** about what other people think of me.

In this comment, the INSECURITY is of a different nature to that in [LAY-2-8]; rather than being concerned with the results of a potential physical action (children eating unhealthy food), the concern is regarding the potentiality and/or actuality of being judged (negatively) by others.

Martin & White (2005: 69) argue that it is possible that some types of swearing and interjections (‘ugh’, ‘whoa’, ‘ohhh’, ‘oh shit’, etc.) may be associated with AFFECT and in some cases function as expressions of INSECURITY. However, this type of language is considered to be on the ‘borderline’ of what is considered language and is thus considered to be ‘paralanguage’ and is not particularly relevant to the category of IN/SECURITY due to the low number of instances of this type of AFFECT within the corpus.

DIS/SATISFACTION

Martin & White (2005: 50), describe the DIS/SATISFACTION category within the AFFECT system as dealing with “our feelings of achievement and frustration in relation to the activities in which we are engaged, including our roles as both participants and spectators". Martin & White (2005: 51) further explain that DIS/SATISFACTION can be realised through surges of behaviour, such as scolding, castigating, complimenting, and rewarding.

The example below is one such instance:

[HSH-1-17] What I **don't agree with** is your labor practices.. Why don't you pay your employees a living wage and stop exploiting the environment and the people in the countries you operate in?!?

This commenter is expressing DISSATISFACTION through disagreement with and scolding of the brand for its labour ethics. In Martin & White's terms (2005: 50), this instance of AFFECT: DISSATISFACTION shows that the commenter is 'fed up', perhaps as a spectator and (reluctant) participant of the consumer culture dominated by large corporations with questionable ethics, such as Hershey's.

Another example of DISSATISFACTION is given below:

[WKR-3-15] since you ask a direct question, Walkers, not me, definitely **not excited**, why should we be?

In this case, the phrase 'not excited' indicates, in Martin & White's terms (2005: 51), being 'bored with' or 'sick of' the British royal birth as a cultural event, which is the topic of the brand post. As with IN/SECURITY, this category does not frequently appear within the corpus.

The comments below are examples of SATISFACTION.

[WKR-3-7] So **pleased** to hear that she had a baby boy.

[ACT-1-26] I am **proud** of myself as a disabled woman .

In Table 24, below, the AFFECT categories used within this study are listed, along with explicit lexical realisations that demonstrate how the categories may be identified within the corpus.

AFFECT categories in the present study		
AFFECT Categories	**Inscribed AFFECT**	**Invoked AFFECT**
INCLINATION	want/need would like	I could do with I feel like having Gimme Yes please
DISINCLINATION	don't want	no thanks
HAPPINESS: AFFECTION	love like I am a fan	Happy birthday
HAPPINESS: CHEER	lol (laugh out loud)	:)
UNHAPPINESS: ANTIPATHY	hate don't like I am not a fan	
UNHAPPINESS: MISERY	disappointed	:(:/
SECURITY	confident	I feel like a million dollars
INSECURITY	worried	I don't feel good about myself
SATISFACTION	proud happy for them	
DISSATISFACTION	disapprove fed up with	why would you (say that/ do that…)
UNDERSPECIFIED AFFECT (category described later in Section 3.4.2)	I have feelings about this…	

Table 24. AFFECT categories in the present study

In this chapter section, the category of ATTITUDE: AFFECT has been outlined and demonstrated using examples from the corpus. Within the present research, this category is a useful analytical tool because the user comments in the corpus often refer to emotions. That this happens so frequently is a key justification for researching this type of discourse in terms of identity. It shows that Facebook users do not simply look at brand marketing and evaluate the product or brand; they respond with comments that include their own emotive reactions. Martin & White (2005: 6) argue that "Reports of one's own emotional reactions are highly personalising. They invite the addressee to respond on a personal level, to empathise, sympathise or at least to see the emotion as warranted or understandable". That is, in analysing discourse that includes AFFECT, it is possible not only to gain some insight into the emotions of an individual, but also to understand more about how these emotions are negotiated socially.

Figure 3, below, is a system network for the categories of AFFECT used within the present study.

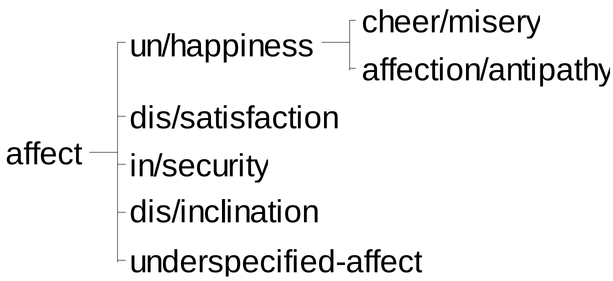

Figure 3. System network for AFFECT within the present study

ATTITUDE: APPRECIATION

Where AFFECT relates to human emotions, APPRECIATION relates to the appraisal of things (Martin & White, 2005: 56). The table below, adapted from Martin & White (2005), includes examples of the categories within APPRECIATION.

APPRECIATION categories and examples		
APPRECIATION Categories	**Positive**	**Negative**
REACTION: IMPACT 'did it grab me?'	captivating, intense, sensational	boring, predictable unremarkable
REACTION: QUALITY 'did I like it?'	okay, fine, good, lovely, appealing	bad, yuk, nasty, plain, ugly, repulsive
COMPOSITION: BALANCE 'did it hang together?'	harmonious, symmetrical, consistent, curvaceous,	irregular, flawed, contradictory, shapeless, distorted
COMPOSITION: COMPLEXITY 'was it hard to follow?'	simple, elegant, precise, clear, rich, detailed	ornate, extravagant, unclear, simplistic
VALUATION: 'was it worthwhile?'	creative, exceptional, authentic, valuable, helpful, effective	conventional, everyday, fake, worthless, shoddy, pricey, ineffective

Table 25. Appraisal categories for APPRECIATION (adapted from Martin & White, 2005: 56)

Because the data in the research corpus occurs within snack food product brand pages that are promoting food products, many of the comments within the corpus are positive and negative APPRECIATION evaluations for these products. This category is useful in the investigation of stance-taking in identity performance because as a strategy for identity performance, individuals evaluate the *things* in our lives: ‘This chocolate is delicious; therefore, I am someone who... (e.g., appreciates sensory pleasures in life)’.

Although in general, APPRECIATION is the evaluation of things whereas JUDGEMENT is the evaluation of people, it is more precise to consider the difference as a matter of aesthetics and ethics. For example, the category of APPRECIATION can be distinguished from JUDGEMENT because the former is concerning a physical quality (flavour of chocolate, colour of eyes), whereas the latter is an evaluation of human behaviour (White, 2001).

It is worth initially noting that particularly within this category, the descriptions given in Martin & White (2005) are adapted somewhat for use in analysing the language within this particular corpus. For example, the category of COMPOSITION: BALANCE, which can be summarised by asking ‘did it hang together?’ does not immediately seem to apply to the targets of evaluation in this corpus, and in particular, the APPRECIATION of food products. Although it might be common-place to describe a painting or a sculpture as ‘harmonious’ or ‘distorted’, it would perhaps be a little odd to describe a packet of crisps in this way. This is not to say that the category is necessarily irrelevant in this context; rather, the subtleties of the categories need to be teased out. Also, although the descriptions below adapt the APPRECIATION framework to describe food products within the corpus, it is not necessarily the case that *only* food products are the target of APPRECIATION.

REACTION: IMPACT – ‘did it grab me?’

The first category within APPRECIATION is REACTION, which has two sub-categories: IMPACT (‘did it grab me?’) and QUALITY (‘did I like it?’) (Martin & White, 2005).

One of the particular characteristics of analysing this corpus is that individuals see an image (often of a food product) and base their comments upon this; they comment on their REACTION to the image, but may or may not have actually consumed the product. So, the REACTION: IMPACT is often not based on the taste of the products, but rather on the image promoting the product. The category of QUALITY, on the other hand, tends to refer to the taste of the product.

The comment below is an example of REACTION: IMPACT.

[CBY-2-25] Heheheh, I can see which bits I'd share and which I'd be keeping lol

In reflecting on these types of comments as they appear within the corpus, the category of REACTION: IMPACT, where comments are responses to food product marketing, might be more precisely understood through the question: ‘do I want to buy it?’ rather than ‘did it grab me?’.

In this corpus, REACTION: IMPACT is often realised implicitly, particularly as the secondary evaluation attached to AFFECT: INCLINATION evaluations. So while a statement such as 'I want chocolate' is coded primarily as inscribed AFFECT: INCLINATION, it would be overly limiting to ignore the invoked positive APPRECIATION of the product. In this case, this secondary evaluation is best coded as REACTION: IMPACT because of the close relationship between the emotion of desire and the evaluation of the product desired.

REACTION: QUALITY – 'did I like it?'

QUALITY is the second category within REACTION, and occurs frequently within the corpus. In fact, in the analysis of this corpus, it is useful to distinguish within this category at a more precise level. In this analysis, there are three 'types' of REACTION: QUALITY: a 'basic' category, and two further categories based on the particular qualities of taste and appearance. Furthermore, there is a 'hybrid' category which can be said to partially fit within the REACTION: QUALITY category. This is described in more detail below.

Within the research corpus, the category of inscribed APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY can be distinguished from inscribed AFFECT because in the former, the focus is on the entity itself, such as the appearance of the product or the packaging. Comments are categorised as AFFECT when the focus is on how the product makes a person feel – so, if a commenter were to say 'I want that chocolate', rather than 'that chocolate looks… (tasty, desirable, etc.)', the comment would be coded primarily as AFFECT. As with other categories, however, APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY is a type of evaluation that is frequently invoked, and double-coded.

The first of these is not further specified, and can be understood as 'general' REACTION: QUALITY. This relates to APPRECIATION of the qualities of a 'thing' on a somewhat underspecified basis. These evaluations can include something being described as 'the best' or as a 'favourite' or as being 'nice', but without specific qualities being mentioned. Although it is potentially possible to infer that a 'favourite' chocolate is such because of its taste, in this analysis I avoid making this assumption by including this 'general' REACTION: QUALITY category. There are three examples of this category below:

[HSH-1-7] Best of the best!!!

[CBY-1-14] my favorite chocolate ,

[CBY-3-12] These are lovely ....

At a further level of delicacy is the category of REACTION: QUALITY: TASTE. This category is one that emerged as being relevant in this particular corpus, as it is comprised of responses to snack food marketing. The taste of the product, therefore, is a specific QUALITY that warrants its own category. Appraisal in this category is likely to have lexical realisations such as 'tasty', 'delicious', or refer to a specific flavour.

[CBY-2-26] **chocolicious**

[HSH-3-16] Oh my gosh I had one the other day and it was so **Delish**!

[CBY-3-7] Why does Cadbury chocolate not taste like Cadbury chocolate anymore? Just normal dairy milk **tastes - I don't know oily**?

Finally, the third sub-category of REACTION: QUALITY is APPEARANCE:

[CBY-3-10] Umm that **looks very rude** and not at all like a snowman!!

[WKR-1-30] **Should be green**...

[ACT-1-4] All I can see is **how big I am** , l,ve lost some but

As demonstrated in the examples above, the category of REACTION: QUALITY: APPEARANCE occurs in the corpus with various targets of evaluation, including product shape in [CBY-3-10], product packaging in [WKR-1-30], and, in the case of [ACT-1-4], human bodies.

REACTION: IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID – 'does it have appealing qualities?'

Within this corpus, there are a number of evaluations which meet the criteria for the APPRECIATION: REACTION category, but are difficult to classify more precisely as they have qualities of both REACTION: QUALITY and REACTION: IMPACT. That is, the evaluations indicate an aspect of being 'grabbed' by the product, as well as an aspect of 'liking' the product. For example, if a commenter describes a product as 'looking good' or 'looking tasty', there is a crossover between appreciating the product for its appeal (IMPACT) and for its apparent characteristics (QUALITY), such as in the comments below:

[HSH-1-13] yummy

[CBY-1-17] MMMMmmmmm

[CBY-3-22] Mmmmm looks soooo nice :)

It is unclear in comment [HSH-1-13] whether the commenter is reacting to the way the product appears (REACTION: QUALITY: APPEARANCE), the way it tastes (REACTION: QUALITY: TASTE), or the desirability of the product (REACTION: IMPACT), which is due to its appearance or taste. Because its appearance evokes past experiences of consuming this product or similar products, it is partially a commentary on the appearance and taste (APPRECIATION: QUALITY), but describing something as 'looking tasty' also implies its desirability (APPRECIATION: IMPACT). Although in other cases in this study I deal with multiple simultaneous evaluations through double-coding, in this case, the meanings are so closely related that it is not entirely possible to describe them as different types of meaning at all; thus, double-coding is not an adequate solution for these evaluations.

Indeed, perhaps this lack of clarity can be ascribed to a 'fuzzy border' between REACTION: QUALITY and REACTION: IMPACT, particularly for these expressions, which are more likely to appear in 'chat' than in media discourse. I argue that the issue is not implicitness, or lack of clarity within the comment, but that the evaluation category is unclear because of the unsuitability of the binary choice between IMPACT and QUALITY. These evaluations are on a continuum between types of evaluation, or as a 'scaled system', as described by Martin & White (2005: 16).

In the application of Appraisal theory, it may be preferable in terms of practicality to deal with infrequent cases of evaluation that falls 'in between' categories by allocating them to one or the other using some means of contextual justification. With infrequent cases, this solution is unlikely to significantly impact the outcome of either a quantitative or qualitative discourse analysis. However, in the analysis in this corpus, it has become apparent that there is a concentration of evaluation along the continuum between REACTION: QUALITY and REACTION: IMPACT. Therefore, this hybrid category is necessary, as otherwise the distinction between REACTION: QUALITY and IMPACT would be inconsistent and relatively meaningless.

Perhaps this issue has not arisen in previous Appraisal literature because the framework is most often used to analyse other types of discourse, such as media discourse (as is the focus in Martin & White's 2005 approach). However, it may be that as Appraisal analysis continues to be more widely used on a variety of discourse types, including consumer- and consumer-related discourse, other researchers will also find they need to focus more closely on category boundaries within the APPRECIATION system.

Admittedly, the category boundaries between this new category and either REACTION: IMPACT or REACTION: QUALITY are subtle, but the criteria for this category are based upon meaningful lexical differences. For example, while I specified earlier that the evaluation 'this is nice' is coded as REACTION: QUALITY, the comment [CBY-3-22], above, is slightly different,in that rather than saying the product *is* nice, the commenter is saying that the product *looks* nice. Rather than simply commenting on the quality of the chocolate, the comment also involves an aspect of desirability. Likewise, the borderline paralinguistic word 'Mmmm' involves appraisal of the actual or perceived quality of a product, as well as its desirability. Although the category boundaries are fine at this level, it is possible to be consistent in coding by following the lexical criteria described in Table 26, below.

COMPOSITION

Another category of APPRECIATION is COMPOSITION, which in turn has two realisations: BALANCE, and COMPLEXITY. BALANCE is described by Martin & White (2005: 56) as a type of APPRECIATION that can answer the question 'did it hang together?'. This is not a particularly useful question to ask when considering food products, and could perhaps more precisely be approached through the question 'do the flavour/ingredient combinations work together?'. Examples of these types of comments are given below.

[CBY-2-26] another crap combination forced upon us by Kraft Foods?

Similarly, the category of COMPOSITION: COMPLEXITY does not appear often within the corpus. Perhaps because users are commenting on snack food products rather than fine dining, they are not likely to expect or desire 'complexity'. The comment below is potentially an invoked instance of COMPOSITION: COMPLEXITY:

[LAY-3-17] Just trying the chicken and waffle flavor chips cant really taste the chicken taste nor waffles flavor but can taste the syrup need to make them so you can taste the other flavors or just rename it to syrup flavor ....

In describing the product as tasting of only one of the three major flavours it 'should' taste like, according to the product packaging, the commenter is potentially noting that there is lack of adequate complexity of flavour. However, in the case of comments such as [LAY-3-17], it is adequate to code the evaluation as negative APPRECIATION: QUALITY: TASTE rather than using the category of COMPOSITION.

Overall, the category of COMPOSITION (including both COMPLEXITY and BALANCE) is present within the corpus infrequently, and, even in those cases, rather ambiguously. As such, this category is not included in the analysis of this corpus.

VALUATION – 'was it worthwhile?'

Where the category of APPRECIATION: REACTION includes the further sub-categories of IMPACT, QUALITY, and IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID, the other main sub-category within APPRECIATION is VALUATION. This relates to "considered opinions" about things (Martin & White, 2005: 57). As with REACTION, it is useful within this research to further specify types of VALUATION within this corpus: HEALTH, and PRICE, and SOCIAL BENEFIT.

VALUATION: HEALTH

A number of the comments within the corpus remark on the health-giving (or otherwise) properties of the products, which can be seen as VALUATION as they could answer the question 'is it worthwhile [for my health to consume this product]?'. Examples of these comments categorized as VALUATION: HEALTH are given below.

[LAY-2-18]	ORGANIC only. NO to GMOs.
[LAY-2-23]	Laced with cancerous GMOs.
[NRV-3-2]	no offense, but your granola bars, which i used to love and think were so healthy, are really not.

Within the corpus, the most frequent type of APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH is negative and relates to the use of GMO ingredients, as seen in the comments above. The topic of GMO products is one of social importance, particularly in the United States, where they are used by many popular food brands. While there are a number of complexities involved in the 'GMO debate', within the comments in this corpus, health tends to be of central importance, while concern about the environment is also mentioned in relation to GMOs. This, however, can also be considered to be of primary importance due to health repercussions of a damaged environment. As such, within this analysis, comments where GMOs are mentioned in an implicit or explicit negative way are considered to be evaluations of APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH.

Perhaps surprisingly (considering the corpus largely consists of chocolate and crisps brands), explicit comments about the negative impact on health in terms of calories or fat are not present at all, and appear only rarely implicitly.

VALUATION: PRICE

The other type of APPRECIATION: VALUATION is concerning PRICE. The comments below show how users express negative APPRECIATION in this category.

[CBY-3-21]	why is it **so expensive** compared to other same weight cadbury bars ??????
[CBY-3-5]	You can buy them from Tesco **@ £3.35 a bar they are a bit steep** ....

VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT

As with APPRECIATION: REACTION, I argue that the APPRECIATION category of VALUATION is under-theorised in the Appraisal theory framework developed by Martin & White (2005). Above, I described two types of VALUATION particularly relevant to this corpus; a third type, which is likely not to be merely corpus-relevant, is that of VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT. I conceive of this category as relating to 'things' and 'performances' that are either helpful or harmful to people as they interact in society.

Although the category of VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT can encompass such values described by Martin & White (2005: 56) as 'worthwhile', 'helpful', and 'effective', as well as a number of others, they do not specifically describe any categories at a more delicate level than APPRECIATION: VALUATION. As such, I have established this category within the present study in order to account for a number of evaluations that have distinct differences from other types of VALUATION, such as HEALTH or PRICE as described above.

In one sense, there is a level of abstraction encompassed by this evaluation category that surpasses that in the others described in this chapter. That is, in order for an object or a performance to be categorised as 'socially valuable', the social context within which it emerges must be considered. For example, giving a business card to another person may have a different social benefit in Japanese culture than it would in American culture. Furthermore, the APPRECIATION of certain behaviours are valued differently in different cultures, which is an area of research perhaps best approached within intercultural communication.

Nevertheless, there are certain instances of objects and performances that can be included within the APPRECIATION system without more in-depth analysis of the social context. For example, in comment [CBY-2-9], the Cadbury product (Dairy Milk) has an invoked positive APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT evaluation as it is considered to be appropriate as a birthday gift:

[CBY-2-9] it is going to be a wicked day **its my mums birthday and i have a large bar of dairymilk for her** when i finish work happy birthday mum x

Another realisation of the APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT category is more abstract, as it relates to performances as being evaluated as being socially beneficial. An important distinction here is that the evaluation of a *general* behaviour can be considered to be APPRECIATION, while the evaluation of a *specific* person's behaviour would be categorised as JUDGEMENT.

The example below is an instances of a general behaviour being evaluated as socially beneficial:

[ACT-1-14] My New Years resolution and I guess #feelgoodpledge is **to generate my own happiness, feel confident and proud in my own skin and to play a proactive part in my life, rather than letting it pass me by**. So far this year I have joined a musical theatre company, started a fitness plan and started to take note of what I put in my body. It's hard **to change you're mind set** but **worth** persevering with.

In comment [ACT-1-14], there is an inscribed positive APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT, indicated by the word 'worth'. The 'performance' being valued as having 'worth' is 'persevering with changing your mind set', which encompasses the other behaviours mentioned in the comment: generating personal happiness, feeling confident, and being proactive. While the commenter may be vaguely relating to his or her own experience, in the language he or she has used, the 'target' of the evaluation is behaviour that is not being done by any particular person at any particular time; it is, in other words, a non-finite behaviour. This target of evaluation is identified also in the work of Don (2007b: 309).

In this sense, a generic behaviour is evaluated as a 'thing' that can be 'obtained', and thus fits within the APPRECIATION system. This behaviour is ascribed worth in terms of social benefit, in that the commenter suggests confidence should come from the self, rather than society; by extension, the suggestion appears to be that seeking confidence from others is problematic in (presumably British) society.

GENERAL VALUATION

As with the category of APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY, there are cases in this corpus where an evaluation of APPRECIATION: VALUATION is apparent, but it is not possible to categorise it at a further level of delicacy. An example of this can be seen in the comment below:

[ACT-1-2] My body has served me well for 59 years, what,s not to like? X

In this comment, the target of the positive APPRECIATION: VALUATION is the body, which as 'served [the commenter] well'. The commenter does not specify how this has been the case – whether it is through movement, or beauty or, perhaps, producing children. But it is clear that this evaluation, to use the terminology of Martin & White (2005: 57), is a 'considered opinion' rather than an emotive evaluation (APPRECIATION: REACTION).

Summary of APPRECIATION

The figure below shows the system network for APPRECIATION, which is helpful to visualise where the categories fit within the system in relation to each other.

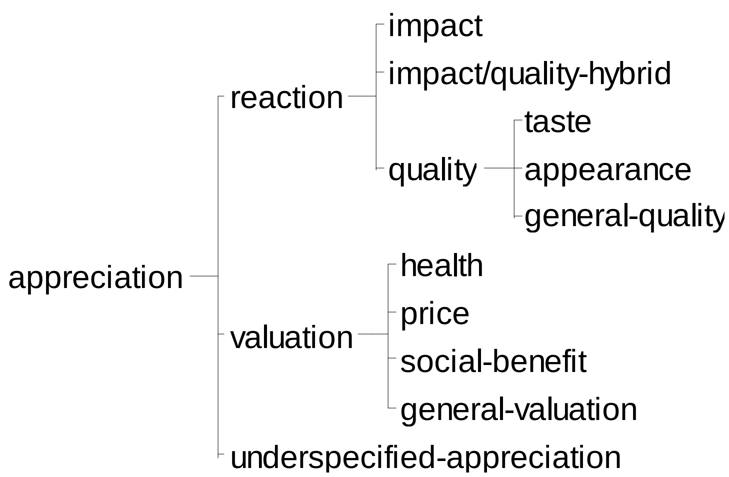

Figure 4. System network for APPRECIATION within the current study

In Table 26, below, the APPRECIATION categories used within this study are listed, along with lexical realisations that demonstrate how the categories may be identified within the corpus.

APPRECIATION categories in the present study			
APPRECIATION Categories		**Lexical realisations (inscribed)**	**Invoked**
REACTION	IMPACT	exciting, boring	want/need would like don't want
	IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID	Mmm Yummmmmy looks good looks tasty	(context dependant)
	QUALITY	best, favourite, lovely, nice	I love/hate chocolate I like chocolate I am a fan
	QUALITY: TASTE	tasty, delicious, yummy, flavour	(context dependant)
	QUALITY: APPEARANCE	Doesn't look right… Strange shape Bad packaging The way I look	(context dependant)
VALUATION	GENERAL VALUATION	(context dependant)	
	HEALTH	GMO	(context dependant)
	PRICE	good price, cheap, expensive	too small not enough in bag too much air in bag
	SOCIAL BENEFIT	worth, fun,	formulations of self-improvement and social harmony
UNDERSPECIFIED APPRECIATION (described in section 3.4.2, below)		(context dependant)	

Table 26: APPRECIATION categories in the present study

ATTITUDE: JUDGEMENT

The final major category within ATTITUDE is JUDGEMENT, which concerns the evaluation of humans and human behaviour (Martin & White, 2005: 52). Like AFFECT and APPRECIATION, expressions of JUDGEMENT are rooted in human emotion and comprise discursive strategies through which individuals take stances regarding the actions and behaviours of others and themselves. Expressions of JUDGEMENT can be used as an identity performance tool because one way individuals see who they are is through taking stances on who they perceive *others* or *themselves* to be: 'That person is a liar; therefore I am… (e.g., well-informed and shrewd)'; or: 'I am timid; therefore I am… (e.g., not a 'type A' personality). Furthermore, by casting JUDGEMENT on others and ourselves, we can affiliate with or condemn others. This discursive work helps to create and maintain in-groups and out-groups, which play an important role in social identity.

The category of JUDGEMENT can be sub-divided into two sub-categories at the next level of delicacy: SOCIAL ESTEEM and SOCIAL SANCTION. While these two sub-categories of JUDGEMENT have different realisations within context, they can also be considered as similar concepts but on a continuum. For example, Martin & White (2005: 53) explain that negative SOCIAL ESTEEM could be considered to be a 'venial sin' whereas negative SOCIAL SANCTION is a mortal sin; 'too much' of the former could be treated by a therapist whereas 'too much' of the latter would be dealt with by a lawyer.

Again, the importance of contextual, qualitative analysis of discourse can be seen through the allocation of categories. For example, someone who is accusing his or her cheating romantic partner of being a 'liar' is likely making a negative JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY (the partner is disloyal), rather than making an assertion that the partner is, for example, a criminal con-artist (negative JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY). But this distinction is generally determined from context.

Like other Appraisal categories, JUDGEMENT can be explicit (inscribed) or implicit (invoked). Invoked JUDGEMENT can require careful qualitative work which includes social, cultural, and/or ideological knowledge, as these stance-taking statements are often presented as facts without apparent evaluation (White, 2001a: 6). For example, an inscribed JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY evaluation might be: "He is fat", whereas an invoked JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY evaluation might be: "He spends all day doing nothing but eating". Culturally, in the UK or US, both comments would carry a negative JUDGEMENT, but in some cultures, such as traditional Fijian culture, the comment "He is fat" would likely carry a positive invoked JUDGEMENT, because there, "a large body size represented agricultural expertise, community commitment and high quality of care" (Williams et al, 2006: 276).

The categories for JUDGEMENT are illustrated with adjectives in the table below.

JUDGEMENT categories and examples		
JUDGEMENT Categories	**Positive**	**Negative**
SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY 'how special?'	lucky, natural, cool, fashionable	unlucky, odd, eccentric, obscure
SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY 'how capable?'	powerful, healthy, mature, humorous, clever, competent	weak, sick, crippled, immature, stupid, naïve, incompetent
SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY 'how dependable?'	brave, cautious, careful, persevering, reliable	timid, weak, disloyal, stubborn
SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY [truth] 'how honest?'	truthful, honest, discrete, tactful	dishonest, lying, manipulative, blunt
SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY [ethics] 'how far beyond reproach?'	good, moral, fair, just, sensitive, modest	bad, immoral, evil, snobby, rude, greedy

Table 27. Appraisal categories for JUDGEMENT (adapted from Martin & White, 2005: 53)

The category of SOCIAL ESTEEM can be described and further specified through categories of NORMALITY (how special), CAPACITY (capability), and TENACITY (dependability). These categories are described in detail below.

SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY 'how special?'

The category of SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY is concerned with how unusual, special, or customary a person's behaviour is (White, 2001). The comment below [WKR-3-12] is an instance of a SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY evaluation. The context in this comment thread was set by the brand post:

[WKR-3-BRAND] It's a big day for Britain. Our new Prince is finally here! Who's excited?

The comment, made in response to this post, is invoked negative SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY:

[WKR-3-12] I suppose Cameron 'll want to give her a knighthood now for **her amazing acheivement, like she's the first woman to have ever given birth**.

Here, humour and sarcasm are used to imply that, contrary to the expectation that the mother of the new prince has accomplished a spectacular achievement (which would be positive JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY), there is nothing special about 'the prince's mother' for having given birth. This might not be a particularly strong comment in a general context about a non-celebrity, but when referring to a royal birth, its negative connotations are enhanced. This comment is an interesting example of how JUDGEMENT can work to create/maintain in-groups and out-groups; this commenter appears to be distancing him/herself from an in-group of royalists.

SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY 'how capable?'

The category of SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY is concerned with whether a person is competent and capable (White, 2001). Comment [ACT-1-6], below, demonstrates evaluation within this category:

[ACT-1-6] Keep well Mrs you are **strong** lady xx

In the comment above, the word 'strong' indicates a positive JUDGEMENT of the target as being robust – presumably emotionally in this context, as the brand post introduces the topic of the 'feelgoodpledge'.

SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY 'how dependable?'

The category of SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY is concerned with whether a person is dependable and well-disposed (White, 2001). The comment below demonstrates this category through a positive self-evaluation where he or she makes an invoked JUDGEMENT of SOCIAL ESTEEM: TENACITY (resolute):

[ACT-1-12] My **#feelgoodpledge** is simply to be happy ! I have lots to look forward to this year :)

In the comment above, and in many others within this corpus, the evaluation of JUDGEMENT: TENACITY is invoked, with the self as a target, and is realised through the public announcement of a pledge or resolution of some sort.

SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY [truth] 'how honest?'

In a category departing from SOCIAL ESTEEM, SOCIAL SANCTION includes the categories of VERACITY (truthfulness) and PROPRIETY (ethics), and is more likely to be seen in written forms including laws, regulations, and religious literature (Martin & White, 2005: 52).

The category of SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY is concerned with whether a person is honest (White, 2001). The comments below are examples of stance-taking language with negative VERACITY evaluations:

[LAY-2-12] Lays should change their name to **Lies**! **They lie** about natural ingredients and contain GMO's!

The comment [LAY-2-12], carries inscribed negative JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: VERACITY as the commenter explicitly claims that the company has lied.

It is noteworthy here that although the target of these negative JUDGEMENT evaluations are directed towards corporations, not individuals, they are critical against human behaviour and practices of individuals within the corporations, which makes them JUDGEMENT rather than APPRECIATION.

SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY [ethics] 'how far beyond reproach?'

The category of SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY is concerned with whether a person is ethical and beyond reproach (White, 2001). The comment below includes several examples of this type of JUDGEMENT, and perhaps most notably, the section in bold:

[LAY-2-26] TRUTH. BigPharma contains several of the same companies as BigAgro. If they give... you "food" that makes you sick, then you will buy their "medicine" to cover up the symptoms, instead of preventing the sickness altogether by eating healthy. DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN. Sign petitions to force GMOs to be labeled, grow your own organic veggies, stop eating gluten-wheat (since 95%+ of it is GMO nowadays). And if you live in a town that tries to outlaw home gardens and farmers markets (this actually happens), you should be OUTRAGED and start a revolution. DO NOT LET THEM **POISON US FOR PROFIT**.

I venture that in virtually all cultures it is morally condemnable and presumably illegal to poison others, particularly for profit. This comment presents 'facts' to make this condemnation rather than describing these corporations or their executive boards as 'immoral' or 'evil' or 'corrupt' or 'greedy'. Therefore, despite not being particularly subtle, this is an example of stance-taking language using an invoked (implicit) negative SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY evaluation.

On the positive spectrum of PROPRIETY evaluations, the comments below demonstrate positive SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY stances:

[ACT-2-8] love gok to bits he **makes u feel good** with that lovely smile

[ACT-2-13] **He is brill**. **He makes you feel confident and makes you feel like a million dollars.** Could do with a make-over to brighten up my skin xx

In both of the examples above, these evaluations can be categorised as invoked SOCIAL ESTEEM: PROPRIETY because rather than the commenters saying that *they* feel good, confident, or 'like a million dollars' (all AFFECT), they are saying that Gok Wan (his behaviour) causes those feelings in others, which is positive PROPRIETY attribute which they admire. Perhaps if these comments used inscribed evaluations, they would be describing the celebrity as 'caring' or 'respectful' or 'altruistic'.

Summary of JUDGEMENT

The JUDGEMENT category and sub-categories, as described in this chapter section, are listed as a system network in Figure 5, and with key lexical realisations in Table 28, below.

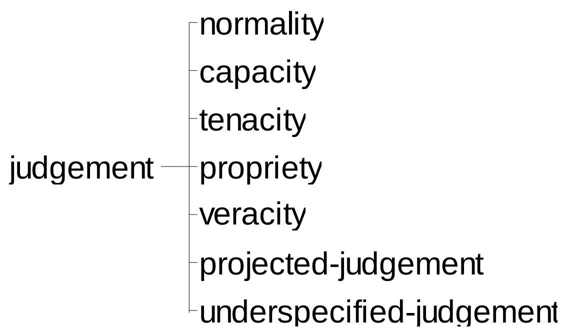

Figure 5. System network for JUDGEMENT within the present study

JUDGEMENT categories in the present study		
JUDGEMENT Categories		**Lexical realisations**
SOCIAL ESTEEM	NORMALITY	(sustained) confidence/insecurity
	CAPACITY	Intelligence, reliability, conscious healthfulness, environmental responsibility
	TENACITY	pledge, resolution, boycott
SOCIAL SANCTION	PROPRIETY	they poison us, they prioritise profit over health
	VERACITY	truthfulness, genuineness
UNDERSPECIFIED JUDGEMENT (described below)		awesome, the best (person), the worst (person), wonderful (person)

Table 28: JUDGEMENT categories in the present study

Underspecified ATTITUDE

As mentioned in this section, above, in each of the three main categories of ATTITUDE (AFFECT, APPRECIATION, and JUDGEMENT), there is an additional category for 'underspecified' realisations. This is to account for the possibility that an instance of evaluation within the corpus may be identifiable as one of the three main categories (AFFECT, APPRECIATION, OR JUDGEMENT), but that categorisation at a more delicate level is not possible. In order to account for these cases, each main category has a 'general' subcategory for underspecified evaluation (e.g., UNDERSPECIFIED AFFECT).

This could be realised for the AFFECT category with an evaluation such as: "I have feelings about this…", given that no further clues as to the nature of the feelings or emotions are given. In this corpus, all instances of AFFECT are identifiable to a further level of delicacy, so although this category is included within the methodological framework, there are no specific examples with which to demonstrate it. Primarily, it is included for consistency, as the general categories are necessary for the APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT categories.

In the UNDERSPECIFIED APPRECIATION category, an evaluation may be identifiable as APPRECIATION, but no further level of delicacy can be determined. This could be realised with an evaluation such as the comment below:

[ACT-3-3] I have to packs of Activa. :)

In this case, the smiley emoticon indicates that this is a positive evaluation of the product Activia because the commenter has 't[w]o packs' of it and is happy about this. However, it is not possible to determine whether the positive APPRECIATION is either REACTION or VALUATION; therefore, it is coded as UNDERSPECIFIED APPRECIATION.

Finally, as with the categories of AFFECT and APPRECIATION, there is a category for general, or underspecified JUDGEMENT. Evaluation that falls in this category may use such general expressions as 'wonderful', or 'the best' (person), or 'awesome'. The bold word 'wonderful' in the comment below is an example of UNDERSPECIFIED JUDGEMENT:

[ACT-1-17] My feel good pledge is to look at my gorgeous daughters every day and think " I'm amazing! Because I brought these **wonderful** girls into this world " xx

Summary of ATTITUDE categories

This section has outlined and exemplified all of the ATTITUDE categories used within the present study. These are further exemplified in Chapters 4 and 5, with discussion on the significance of these categories in relation to identity performance.

3.4.3 ATTITUDE and GRADUATION

The Appraisal analysis also includes an analysis of the GRADUATION within ATTITUDE. As discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, Appraisal theory sees values within the system networks as gradable; there are not a distinct number of value options available (graduations such as happy > chuffed > ecstatic, etc.) but system networks are used for distinctions between positive and negative (e.g., happy vs. sad) and different types of ATTITUDE and EVALUATION.

Within the GRADUATION system, there are two sub-systems. The first is FORCE, which is to do with intensity or amount, which includes gradability as discussed in the previous paragraphs, as well as assessments of aspects such as size and vigour. FOCUS, on the other hand, is to do with prototypes within categories (rather than scalability), and where the boundaries lie; words like 'true' and 'sort of' can identify linguistic phenomena within the system with FOCUS: SHARPEN and FOCUS: SOFTEN values, respectively (Martin & White, 2005: 137).

The system network for GRADUATION is shown below.

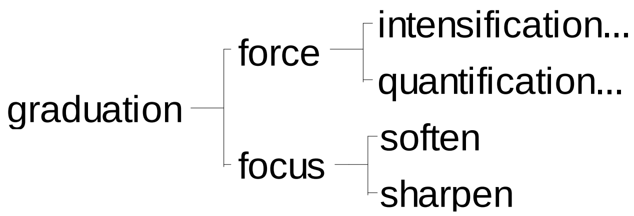

Figure 6. System network for GRADUATION (Martin & White, 2005)

GRADUATION: FORCE

Values for GRADUATION: FORCE have two further sub-categories: INTENSIFICATION and QUANTIFICATION. Values that are INTENSIFIED can refer to qualities (“slightly foolish”), processes (“this greatly hindered us”) or likelihood (“it’s very possible that”) (Martin & White, 2005: 140). The example below shows a GRADUATION of FORCE: INTENSIFICATION for a quality.

[HSH-1-20] This is **by far** in my opinion the BEST CHOCOLATE EVER!!!!!!

Values for GRADUATION: FORCE: QUANTIFICATION are to do with amounts, whether they be numbers, size, weight, or proximity (Martin & White, 2005: 141). The examples below show GRADUATION: FORCE: QUANTIFICATION of amount in terms of weight loss amount [ACT-1-4], salt amount, and number of available crisp flavours [LAY-2-17]:

[ACT-1-4] All I can see is how big I am , l,ve lost **some** but

[LAY-2-17] how about **more** flavors with **Less** Salt? i can't eat your brands, **too** salty, or preservative-allergic and I bet alot of other people can't either.

In this study, GRADUATION: FORCE is not coded separately or considered within the quantitative or qualitative analyses. However, it can, at times, be instrumental in identifying certain ATTITUDE categories, particularly in invoked evaluation. For example, in [LAY-2-17], the GRADUATION: FORCE: QUANTIFICATION of salt in the product (‘how about… less salt’, ‘too salty’) is key in identifying the negative APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH evaluation of the product; if the product were simply called ‘salty’, this evaluation would not be identifiable, or would be a reference to APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY:TASTE, because this is one of the characteristics of crisps. On the other hand, crisps that are ‘too salty’ to be eaten by a number of people are evaluated as being unhealthy.

GRADUATION: FOCUS

Within the sub-category of FOCUS, values can be either SHARPENED or SOFTENED. SHARPENING values include intensifiers, boosters and amplifiers, such as in the comment below:

[ACT-1-11] I am not the size I think I am, see the **real** me

The use of the phrase '**real** me' is categorised as GRADUATION: FOCUS: SHARPEN. As Martin & White (2005: 139) explain, FOCUS: SHARPEN values often indicate positive attitudinal value, whereas FOCUS: SOFTEN often indicate negative attitudinal values. Such is the case here, where the phrase 'real me' carries connotations of value and worth above and beyond what this commenter attributes to him/herself based on physical perception. In terms of investigating identity performance within this corpus, this example demonstrates the value of the GRADUATION system; terms like 'real me' and 'true self' are prime linguistic resources as they indicate attempts by individuals to identify and negotiate aspects of self within discourse.

The other type of FOCUS is a SOFTENING value, which can be understood as hedging, or vague language, such as the phrase "it was an apology of sorts" (Martin & White, 2005: 138). The corpus does not have any obvious examples of SOFTEN; however, it may be that this type of GRADUATION is often done through CMC cues, such as adding a smiley emoticon at the end of a negative evaluation.

In this study, as with GRADUATION: FORCE, GRADUATION: FOCUS (SHARPEN and SOFTEN) values are not coded or discussed separately. They do, however, at times provide context for invoked evaluations that might otherwise be difficult to categorise. The comment below is an example:

[NRV-3-17] I need a therapy session with nature :)

In this comment the word 'need' indicates inscribed AFFECT: INCLINATION. Contextually, there is also an invoked evaluation implied by the statement that the commenter 'need[s] a therapy session'. Normally, in Western culture, this might indicate that the commenter is deeply unhappy. However, when the smiley emoticon is taken into consideration, the tone is softened (GRADUATION: FOCUS: SOFTEN) and instead of appearing to be invoked AFFECT: UNHAPPINESS: MISERY, it instead appears to be invoked APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT, with 'nature' as the target. Furthermore, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, in this context, the smiley emoticon does not appear to indicate the emotion of AFFECT: HAPPINESS.

GRADUATION: CMC cues

Within this Appraisal analysis, CMC cues are frequently present in comments, and can generally be understood function as part of the GRADUATION system. To demonstrate, in the comment below, the CMC cue “haha x” has an effect that appears to be best described as GRADUATION: FOCUS: SOFTEN:

[CBY-2-30] Share Cadburys Chocolate!!!!!!! Are you mad??? **haha x**

It appears that this person used this strategy to soften the ‘insult’ that was directed toward the brand post. Meanwhile, the multiple punctuation has an effect of emphasising the sentiment, which can be described as GRADUATION: FORCE: INTENSIFICATION.

Although the GRADUATION system appears to be the most useful way to account for the meaning of CMC cues within Appraisal, there are cases where CMC cues may be better described as instances of ATTITUDE, such as in the example below:

[HSH-1-21] <3

In this case, the ‘heart’ emoticon is an instance of positive APPRECIATION: HAPPINESS: AFFECTION of the product. On the other hand, if the comment instead was: “I love Hershey’s <3”, the emoticon would have the effect of GRADUATION: FORCE: INTENSIFICATION. In short, the analysis of CMC cues does depend, to a large extent, on a consideration of context.

In the analysis, GRADUATION is considered within the ATTITUDE analysis in the sense that unclear or invoked evaluations may be categorised based on evidence provided by GRADUATION. That is, GRADUATION is not coded separately, but is considered as a tool for coding ATTITUDE. Typically, the consideration of GRADUATION involves FORCE: INTENSIFICATION achieved through repetition. That is, if GRADUATION were not considered, it might appear that there are several instances of the same type of ATTITUDE, one after the other. But, when sequential instances are considered as FORCE: INTENSIFICATION of an adjacent evaluation, a single instance of ATTITUDE is coded and counted within the quantitative analysis.

3.4.4 Quantitative analysis

In this study, I use the methods outlined in this chapter as a guideline in coding instances of appraisal. This process began with the analysis of the corpus, following which I conducted a quantitative analysis, the results of which are presented in Chapter 4. Within Chapter 5, the quantitative results from the analysis are used to highlight certain features of the corpus that are then discussed qualitatively. In the present section, I provide an overview of how quantitative results are compiled.

Figure 7, below, is an overview of the system network of Appraisal that is used in this particular study. It includes all aspects of Appraisal, as described in this chapter. Each feature depicted in the figure (e.g., ATTITUDE type, polarity, etc.) is coded for each instance of ATTITUDE.

System network for ATTITUDE

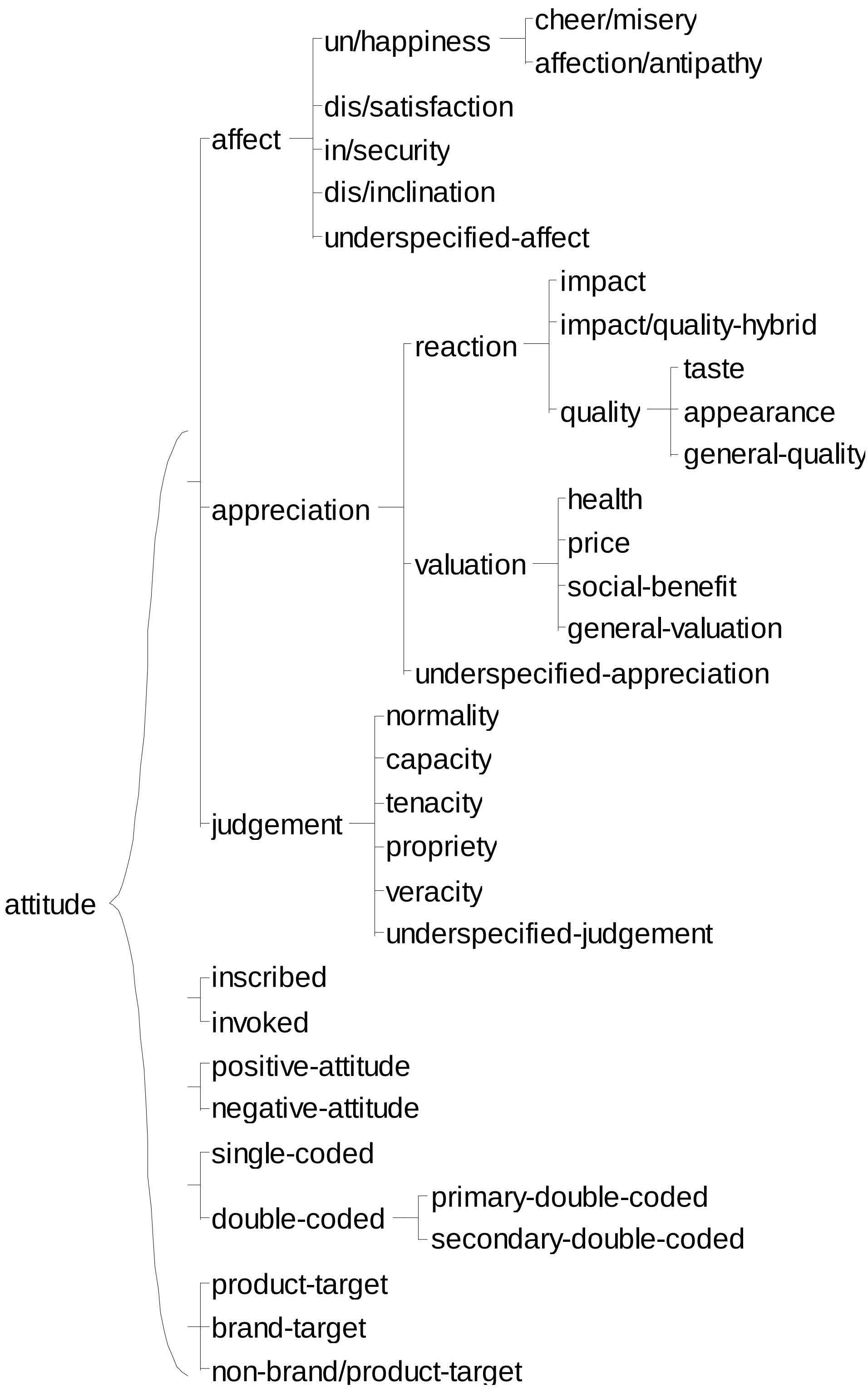

Figure 7: System network for ATTITUDE in the present study

Coding

All analysis within this study is completed using Microsoft Excel. Comments are assigned unique codes, such as [ACT-1-1], in order to anonymise commenters and to order each data set. Columns are set up for each feature of Appraisal, as outlined in the complete system network in Figure 7, above.

Basic codes are assigned to different categories of evaluation. For example, each type of ATTITUDE is given a unique three-letter code, such as 'aff' for AFFECT: HAPPINESS: AFFECTION. There are separate columns for ATTITUDE category, polarity (positive/negative ATTITUDE), inscribed/invoked evaluation, double-coding (solo/primary/secondary), projected evaluation, and target of evaluation.

Quantification

Quantification of results is calculated automatically, using 'formulas' set up within Excel. Two formulas are frequently used: 'COUNTIF' counts any particular value within a range of cells, and 'COUNTIFS' counts features that are co-present across a range of cells. For example, in Table 29, below, if I write a code in Excel such as:

=COUNTIF(C2:C6,"Aff")

Excel will calculate how many times a cell contains the value 'Aff' within column C, rows 2 through 6. The result will be 2.

For more complex calculations, where values are cross-referenced, I use the formula 'COUNTIFS'. So, for example, if I want to know how many instances of negative JUDGEMENT: TENACITY there are in this table, I would write a formula that essentially combines two 'COUNTIF' criteria:

=COUNTIFS(C2:C6,"Ten",D2:D6,"-")

The result, in this case, would be 1. This procedure is useful when dealing with corpora where manual counting is impractical, and is also especially beneficial in producing more complex cross-referenced results.

Demonstration of quantification method					
	A	B	C	D	E
1	Comment code	Comment	Appraisal	Polarity	Target
2	[XXX-1-1]	[…]	Aff	+	B
3	[XXX-1-2]	[…]	Aff	+	P
4	[XXX-1-3]	[…]	Ten	-	O
5	[XXX-1-4]	[…]	Ten	+	O
6	[XXX-1-5]	[…]	Hea	-	P

Table 29: Basic demonstration of quantification method

In the example above, I demonstrate two conditions – appraisal and polarity. However, multiple conditions can be entered, such as polarity, appraisal, and target. This enables me to see whether the product or a non-product/brand target 'receives' more instances of positive APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT, for example.

As mentioned above, the results from the quantitative results are presented in Chapter 4. Through graphs and charts, key trends are identified, such as a concentration of APPRECIATION directed towards products, for example. In Chapter 5, the significance of key formulations of appraisal are discussed in terms of how they constitute performances of identity.

Double-coded evaluation

In the quantitative analysis, each evaluation is counted as a single 'instance' of appraisal. A single evaluation includes: a 'solo' evaluation; or a double-coded primary evaluation; or a double-coded secondary evaluation; or a 'hybrid' evaluation (only applicable in the case of APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID).

For clarity, I summarise how each 'type' of appraisal (single-coded, double-coded, and hybrid) is counted in Table 30, below.

Double-coding quantification criteria	
Appraisal type	**Quantitative analysis 'value'**
Solo appraisal	1
Double-coded appraisal: 1 each Primary appraisal Secondary appraisal	 1 1
'Hybrid' appraisal (APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID)	1

Table 30: Double-coding quantification criteria in the present study

The quantification of the results in terms of ‘single’ evaluations, and ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ double-coded evaluations introduces a question about the relevance of the quantification of results. In this analysis, double-coded evaluations are counted as two evaluations, rather than one, because there are two distinct categories in question.

The justification for counting each evaluation as a ‘whole’ evaluation, rather than ‘half’ of one (i.e., counting both values of the double-coded evaluation together, as one instance of evaluation) is a methodological issue which has been solved with consideration of the research aims. Specifically, the aim of the quantitative analysis is not to determine whether a multi-layered (double-coded) evaluation diminishes the ‘impact’ of either of the double-coded evaluations. Rather, it is to identify specific instances when a certain type of evaluation occurs. That is, any particular type of evaluation either occurs or it does not, and it is therefore counted as ‘1’ or ‘0’. The layering, or double-coding of evaluation does not constitute justification for halving the countable value of a single instance of appraisal.

As argued above, the investigation of quantitative results from this analysis does not suggest a diminished evaluative value, or ‘impact’ of either the primary or secondary evaluation in a double-coded evaluation. It does however, by extension, mean that in terms of lexical density, double-coded evaluations are ‘richer’ than single-coded evaluations. That is, in double-coded evaluations, (at least some of) the same words are fulfilling two separate types of evaluation, potentially regarding two different targets. The significance of double-coded evaluation is described in more detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis.

Summary of Appraisal analysis

In this section, I have outlined the categories used within Appraisal theory, and have illustrated these categories using examples from the corpus. Appraisal theory provides the framework for the analysis of all user comments within the corpus, and quantitative and qualitative tools are used to identify aspects of identity that tend to emerge from the corpus. The Appraisal analysis is conducted by identifying instances of ATTITUDE, and conducting a quantitative analysis of these instances, as well as other factors such as inscribed/invoked appraisal and target of appraisal. These results are then discussed qualitatively.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the justification and methodology for the data selection, the data collection procedures, and the procedures for data analysis. The data analysis consists of three quantitative and qualitative components: genre analysis, Negotiation analysis, and Appraisal analysis. The results from these analyses are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents quantitative and qualitative results and methodological discussion from the genre, Negotiation, and Appraisal analysis of the corpus, in Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, respectively.

4.1 Genre analysis

This section is a presentation of results from the genre analysis of the corpus. The analysis begins with presentation of brand post structure and communicative purpose, and concludes with presentation of results from the analysis of communicative purposes of responses to brand posts. While initially the focus appears to be on the marketing discourse, the ultimate aim of the genre analysis is to enable discussion of how responses to this discourse are instances of identity performance.

Section 4.1.1. is an overview of the multimodal analysis results, including textual, ideational, and interpersonal meanings constructed within lexical and visual modes.

Section 4.1.2 introduces the quantitative and qualitative results from the analysis of the genre elements for their communicative purposes. The results are considered in terms of the corpus as a whole. This analysis also includes the comment responses to the brand posts.

4.1.1 Multimodal analysis results

Structural Meaning: Framing and Salience

As discussed in the Methodology chapter of this thesis, the analysis of textual meaning involves framing and salience. The analysis of framing was performed in order to describe the genre elements that constitute this emerging genre, which were described within Section 3.2.2.

Table 31, below, lists the genre elements and the number and percentage of instances within the corpus.

Genre elements identified within corpus		
Element	# of posts with this element	% of corpus
Lead	18	100%
Announcement	18	100%
(+Product Display)	15	83%
+Branding	18	100%
(+Enhancer)	5	28%
Brand Hyperlink	18	100%
Date	18	100%
(User Activity)	18	100%
Share-and-Respond Options	18	100%
Response(s) to Post	-	-

Table 31: Genre elements identified within corpus

As implied in Table 31, above, the majority of the elements in the table above are compulsory elements; these are represented without parentheses, and have 100% occurrence rates in the corpus. These elements are compulsory as they are controlled by the Facebook interface.

Of the elements that are not present in 100% of the brand posts (+Product Display, +Enhancer), there are some results of interest. Firstly, although +Product Display appears in 83% of brand posts, this, of course, does mean that a notable proportion of the brand posts do not show a product at all, implying that the marketing message is part of a long-term branding strategy, rather than pushing sales for a particular product.

In addition to the analysis of framing and mode, used to determine genre stages within brand posts, the analysis of salience was performed, in order to identify the general marketing approaches used in brand posts. For example, while one brand post may have a salient image of the product, and prominent lexical representation of the product, another post may omit any mention or visual representation of the product, and instead, the most salient lexical and visual items focus on an aspect of culture. The analysis of salience (or omission) of the brand/product is an important consideration in describing the form and function of brand posts.

In Cheong's (2004: 171) genre analysis of print advertising, he describes a genre stage called 'Display', which I have adapted as the +Product Display element. This stage has two distinctions; the first is explicit/implicit, which is whether a tangible product is shown, or is implied through strong contextual clues. I have not included this distinction within this analysis as there are no instances where a product is evoked; it is either shown explicitly, or the post does not make any reference to a product – even implicity.

The second further distinction of the Display is whether a brand post has a ‘congruent’ or ‘incongruent’ marketing message (Cheong, 2004: 171). A congruent display does not realise the value of the brand/product through symbolism (and instead makes assertions or implications of tangible value of the brand/product). An incongruent display, however, does realise the value of the brand/product through symbolism.

Within the brand posts in this study, there are posts that, when considered as a whole, may have an instance of +Branding and even of +Product Display, but through the low salience of these elements, the overall ‘message’ of the post is to imply an intangible value of the brand/product. For example, post [ACT-3-BRAND] is a photograph of clouds, and in the bottom left corner of the image is a small image of an Activia yogurt pot. The Announcement reads: “Don’t let the things you want make you forget the things you have”. In this post, despite the +Branding element within the Lead and the Brand Hyperlink, the overall ‘message’ does not explicitly link the brand/product to the topic of the post. Thus, the overall approach of the message is incongruent, as the ‘value’ of Activia is implied as being intangible (related to gratitude and desire, in this case), rather than tangible (that Activia is delicious or healthy).

In this genre, the distinction between congruent/incongruent then, is not a realisation of any element (such as +Product Display) as a standalone unit of meaning, but of the post as a whole, with salience being a key consideration. The coding decision is made qualitatively, once the communicative purposes of the brand post has been identified.

In this corpus, it is not always possible to make a distinction between congruent and incongruent marketing approaches. This is because some brand posts include salient aspects of both approaches; that is, a number of brand posts include emphases on both the product, and a cultural topic. An example of this is [WKR-3-BRAND], where the Lead element consists of ‘regalia’ (velvet pillow, trumpets, etc.) and an Announcement referring to the birth of a British royal; meanwhile, the object resting on the royal pillow is a packet of crisps.

As a result of this third type of marketing approach identified in the corpus, I instead assign brand posts to one of three marketing approach categories: product emphasis (congruent); culture emphasis (incongruent); and dual product/culture emphasis (hybrid). The results of the congruency analysis are summarised in Table 32, below.

Marketing approaches in corpus			
Approach	**Description of marketing approach**	**# of posts with this marketing strategy**	**Percent of corpus**
Product emphasis (congruent)	Very clearly a 'product/brand' advertisement through salient +Product Display, +Branding, etc. 'Real' consumption value implied Positive appreciation of brand/product	7	39%
Culture emphasis (incongruent)	Appears like a 'friend' post or motivational/topic post without explicitly pushing product. There is either a subtle +Product Display, or none. In the latter case, the brand is only represented in the Brand Hyperlink and otherwise might not be recognisable as marketing 'Symbolic' value of brand/product implied	6	33%
Dual product/culture emphasis (hybrid)	Lead and Announcement elements include salient focus on both the product, and on a cultural topic. The product may be superimposed into an otherwise culture-related post. Salient +Product Display, +Branding, etc.; value of brand/product may be 'symbolic', but also appeal to senses to imply 'real' consumption value	5	28%

Table 32: Marketing approaches in corpus

The table above indicates that of the 18 brand posts in the corpus, 39% emphasis the product as 'congruent' approaches, and are clearly recognisable as marketing. The 'culture emphasis' (incongruent) category comprises 33% of the brand posts. The third, 'hybrid' category, where both culture and the product are salient, comprises 28% of brand posts.

While these results cannot be said to be unusual without a larger data set and comparison to other types of marketing, it is a defining feature of the corpus that over a third of posts employ more of a 'friend' strategy than an overt marketing strategy (incongruent), and a further 28% employ a 'hybrid' overt/covert strategy.

Ideational Meaning: Representation

The multimodal analysis of the corpus involved a basic analysis of represented participants within both the Lead element, and the Announcement. The other elements were not analysed for representation as they are standardised across all brand posts, and therefore no differences in representation would be identified (e.g., all brand posts include a date).

The representation analysis is necessarily performed separately for lexical and visual items within the Lead and Announcement, in order to account for different but complementary forms of representation. As the analysis is conducted separately for text and images, it is possible to compare representation of participants between image and text. However, the meanings of these representations, conceptualised in this thesis as communicative purposes, are constructed through interplay across modes, which involves consideration not only of the Lead and Announcement elements, but all other elements in the brand post as well. As such, the comparison between images and lexical items in this section is intended to account for the explicit portrayal of particular participants within the text, within the two elements of the brand post where the text producer has the ability to produce a message. In other words, the results of the representation analysis, particularly because these are separated by mode rather than by brand post, are relatively limited in terms of usefulness for describing meaning-making within brand posts. Nevertheless, there are some potentially insightful trends that can be identified through the results of the representation analysis.

In focussing on the main participants, I have categorised them into three 'groups': 'fans', the brand or product, and an 'other' category (which includes participants such as 'nature', for example).

Figure 8, below, is a representation of the groups of main participants identifies in the lexical items within the Lead and Announcement elements.

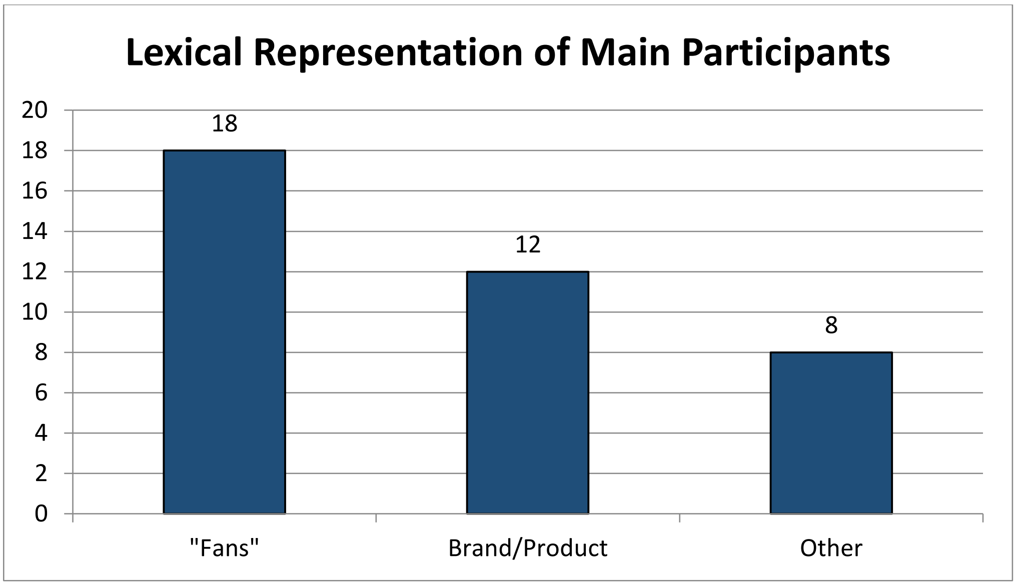

Figure 8: Lexical representation of main participants

The figure above clearly shows that of the three data-driven 'groups' of participants I identified in the corpus, the group most frequently represented lexically is 'fans'. There are a number of explicit representations of the audience, or 'fans', in the corpus, such as the example below:

[HSH-1-BRAND] …don't you agree?

The main participant in this comment is 'you' – the viewer.

In the corpus, in addition to explicit representations of 'fans' as 'you', this frequently occurred through ellipsis within imperative sentences, such as in the example below:

[HSH-3-BRAND] …Enjoy your day off!

In cases such as the brand post above, 'you' is a representation of the audience, members of which are positioned as 'fans'.

Given that brand posts are advertisements, the frequency of representation of the audience (an average of once per brand post) suggests that the lexical mode is used by brands to write the audience 'into' the advertisement, rather than to simply represent a product or a brand as a stand-alone entity without suggestion of the potential consumer or 'fan'. While this in itself is not particularly unusual for advertising, it does potentially indicate that in this discursive genre, there is a particular tendency toward lexically representing interaction between the brand and the audience.

In addition to the lexical representation analysis, I carried out an analysis of visual representation, and focussed the results primarily on three 'types' of main participants, as I did with the text analysis. The results are represented in Figure 9, below.

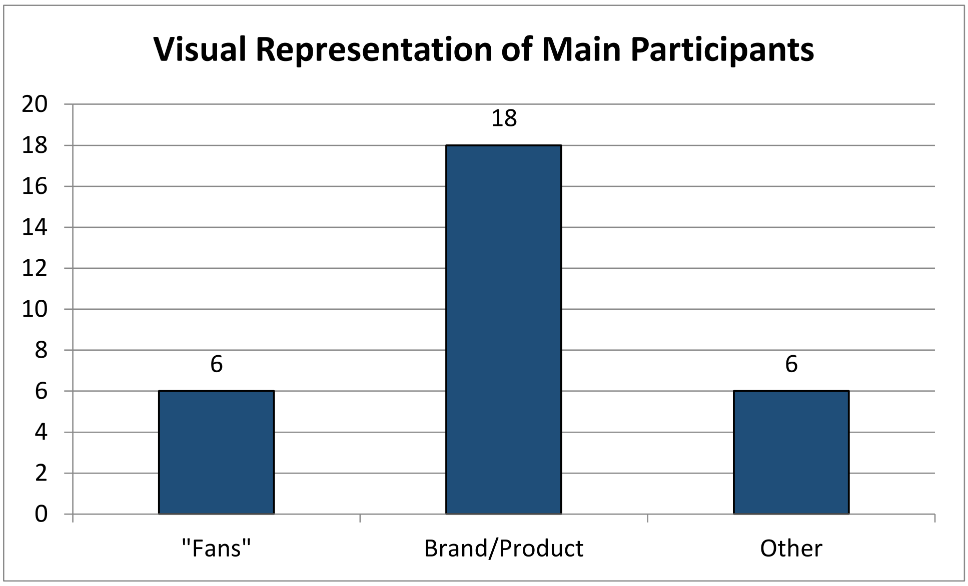

Figure 9: Visual representation of main participants

The results of the visual representation analysis indicate a clear prevalence of the brand or product being represented, which happens on average once per brand post. Figure 10, below, shows a comparison of the main participant categories between text and image.

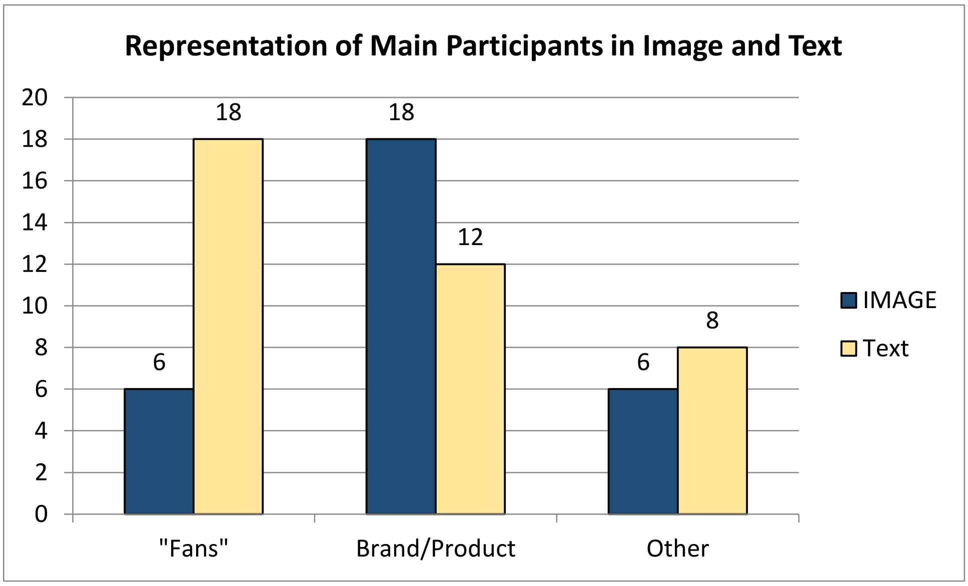

Figure 10: Representation of main participants in image and text

The figure above shows clear differences in the representation of 'fans', which occurs far more often in text than in image, and the brand or product, which occurs more frequently in the image than in text. This could suggest particular advantages of using different modes for different purposes, which is addressed in the Discussion chapter.

As mentioned above, the quantitative results of the representation analysis on their own do not lend themselves to particularly valuable insights, largely because of the small corpus. However, when combined with the other tools of multimodal analysis in order to determine communicative purposes, the representation analysis highlights a number of interesting features of the corpus. This is discussed further in Section 4.1.2, below.

Interpersonal Meaning

The multimodal analysis of interpersonal meaning, like representation analysis, is focussed on text and image in the Lead and Announcement elements. The tool used for the analysis of text is Mood, and the tools used for image are Interaction and Modality. The results from these analyses are presented below.

Figure 11, below, represents the results from the Mood analysis.

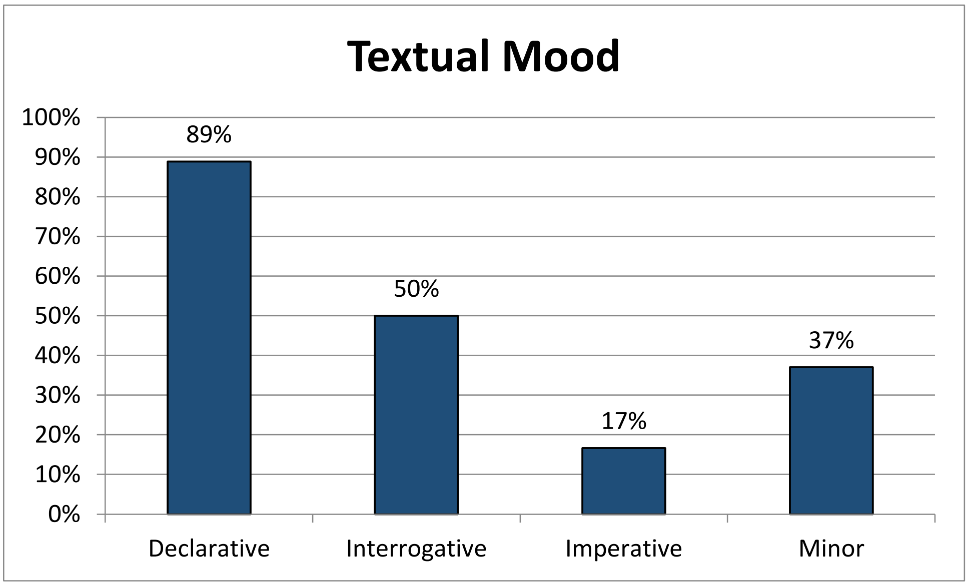

Figure 11: Types of Mood in text: Percentage of Data Sets in Corpus

The results in the figure above are represented as the percentage of data sets within the corpus that have at least one instance of the 3 types of Mood (plus ‘minor’). It shows that by far, declarative mood is prevalent, but that interrogative mood is also particularly noteworthy, with 50% of the brand posts having at least one instance. Also noteworthy are the minor clauses, with 37% of data sets including an instance of this type. In particular, interrogative and imperative Moods construct interactive relations between a text and the reader, and while in some texts it may be unusual to find instances of these Moods (e.g., news articles issuing directives or asking non-rhetorical questions of readers), it is thus noteworthy that these are used relatively often in brand posts. Furthermore, the uses of minor clauses, such as greetings, has a particular interactive function. These results are a strong indicator of the interactive nature of this discourse genre. Analysis of Mood type is an extremely useful tool in the analysis of communicative purposes, discussed in Section 4.1.2, below.

Figure 12, below, is a representation of the results of the modality analysis of images.

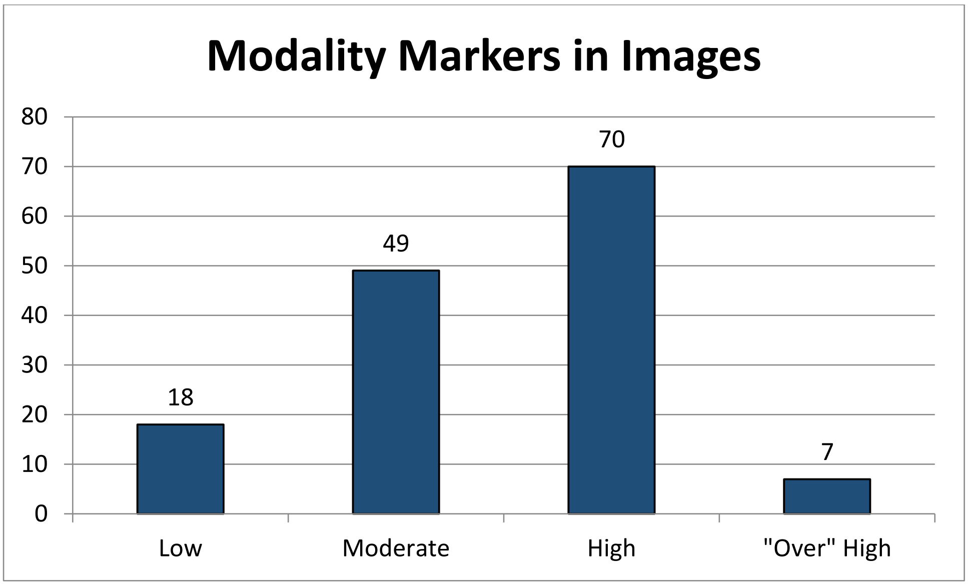

Figure 12: Modality markers in images

The figure above includes four 'levels' of modality marker – low, moderate, high, and 'over-high'. The 'over-high' category is not meant to imply that the *modality* is higher than the 'high' category, but that the modality marker itself was 'more than real'. For example, a photograph with colour saturation that is above the level of 'real life' saturation was annotated as having an 'over-high' modality marker. Whilst this could be said to fit within the moderate modality category, I chose to represent it as an additional category to account for the noteworthy use of 'more than real' modality markers, which often appeared to be used to appeal to the senses, particularly in the case of representation of food products.

The results in Figure 12, above, indicate that for the most part, the modality markers in the corpus are 'high', which correlates to a life-like depiction of the participants in the images. It is also noteworthy that there are also many modality markers that are not at the 'high' level, which indicates that in this communicative genre, it is not always the goal to portray 'realistic' representations within images. For example, some images had moderate modality markers for brightness, which may give a photograph a 'nostalgic' effect.

The final analytical tool set used within the multimodal analysis is the analysis of interactive meanings in images. The results from this analysis are represented in Figure 13, below.

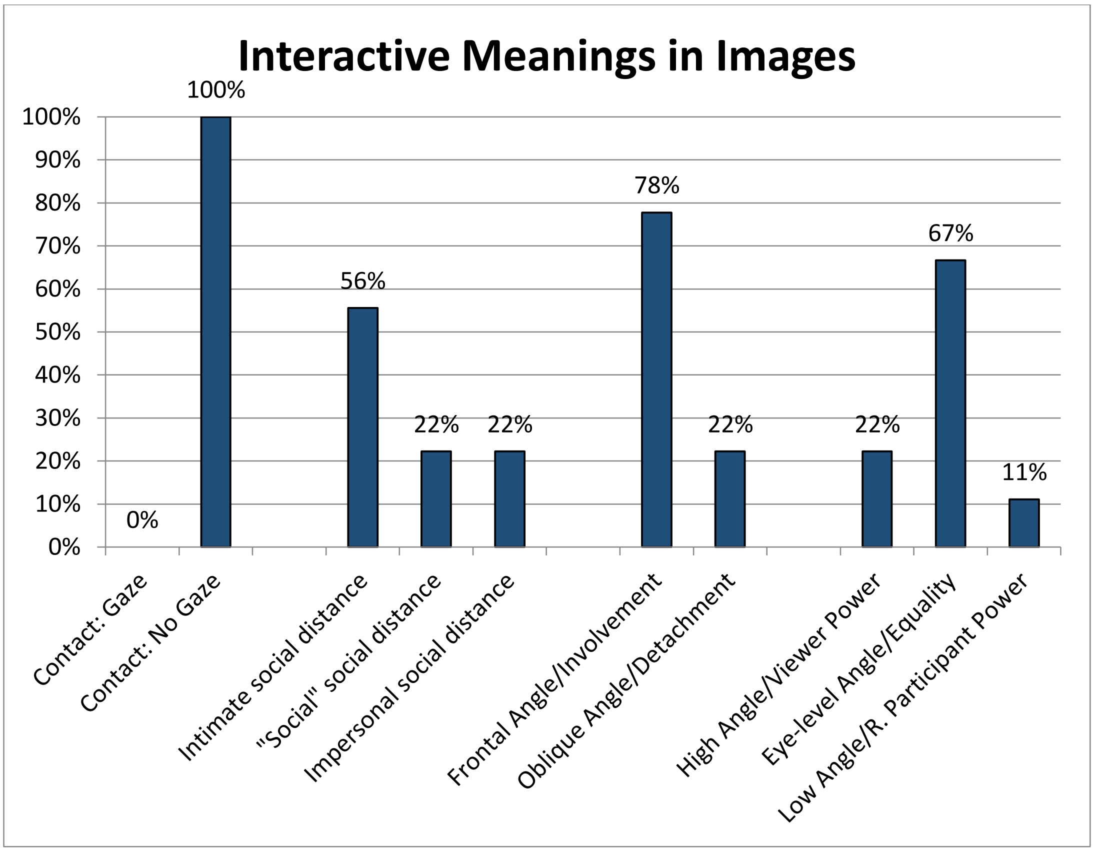

Figure 13: Interactive meanings in images

The results in the figure above are represented in 'clusters' to indicate the four different tools within the interactive meanings analysis (contact, social distance, involvement, and power).

In terms of contact, 100% of the brand posts had no gaze from the represented participants, which constitutes an 'offer'. This is noteworthy because Kress & van Leeuwen indicate that magazine advertising typically makes use of the 'demand' through direct gaze, while film and television dramas tend to use the 'offer' (no gaze) in order to enact a boundary between the audience and the represented participants (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 120).

The results of the analysis in the present corpus, therefore, are surprising in that they are the opposite of what might be expected given Kress & van Leeuwen's descriptions.

Perhaps then, this is one indication that news feed marketing does constitute an emerging genre and, and has notably different interactive characteristics to magazine advertising.

The analysis of social distance shows that in the corpus, the majority of posts (56%) show the represented participants at close, or intimate social distance. This most frequently occurs when the product is the represented participant, and often constructs an interactive meaning suggesting that the viewer is holding, or is close enough to touch the product. This interactive meaning is clearly useful within advertisements for food products, as it is a strategy used to entice a viewer to imagine actually holding the product.

The analysis of the horizontal angle (involvement/detachment) shows that 78% of the brand posts depict a frontal angle, which enacts involvement, rather than detachment. This shows the represented participants as being “part of our world” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 136).

The analysis of the vertical angle shows that 67% of the brand posts have an eye-level angle between the viewer and the represented participant, indicating an equality of power.

Altogether, in each of the four interactive meanings considered in the analysis, there are clear trends in one configuration over the other possibilities. Thus, while there are certainly variations between brand posts, it suggests that there may be relatively ‘typical’ interactive meanings constructed in this communicative genre.

4.1.2 Communicative purpose of brand posts

As mentioned above, the analysis results of individual analytical tools are, in themselves, of limited use in characterising the communicative functions of brand posts within the corpus. However, when the tools are combined to account for complex meaning-making across modes and genre elements, a description of the communicative purpose of individual brand posts, and therefore the corpus, is possible.

This section includes a presentation of the quantitative and qualitative results from the analysis of the brand posts for their communicative purposes. The results are considered in terms of the corpus as a whole, and are represented in the figures as percentages of the corpus as a whole (i.e., what percentage of brand posts have that particular feature). Discussion of each communicative purpose follows.

Figure 14, below, is a representation of results from the corpus.

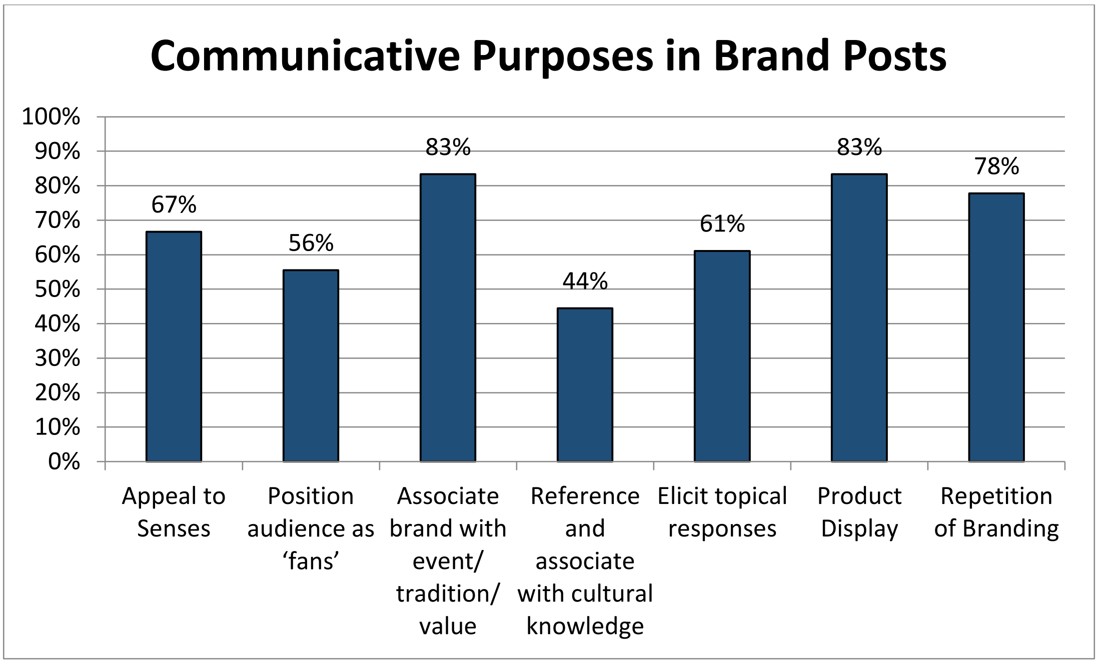

Figure 14: Communicative Purposes in Brand Posts

Appeal to senses

In the corpus, approximately two-thirds, or 67% of brand posts include the communicative purpose of appealing to the senses. Considering that all brand posts are produced by snack food brand representatives, it is noteworthy that this number is anything less than 100%, as appealing to the senses of consumers would be the most explicit mechanism for promoting consumption of specific products.

A number of the brand posts identified as constructing this communicative purpose share visual and lexical characteristics, particularly in terms of interactive meanings and modality in images. Many brand posts in the corpus included visual representation of the product with moderate or 'over-high' modality markers , such as 'more real than real' colour saturation. Another key modality marker indicating this communicative purpose is the decontextualisation of the product. By eliminating the background, the product is essentialised and the details are emphasised, which evokes senses such as touch, taste, smell, or aesthetic appreciation. The product is also often product represented at close social distance, and with the viewer positioned at a high angle in comparison to the represented participant (viewer power). Altogether, this constructs a powerful interactive effect where the viewer is shown the qualities of the product that are accentuated by visual modality to be particularly enticing, and the viewer is 'positioned' as though he or she is close enough to the product to touch it, and is looking down at the product as if it is placed on a surface that the viewer is leaning over. Additionally, the brand posts that construct this configuration of visual representation and interaction also involve lexical items that work in conjunction with the images to appeal to the senses, by using relational processes and describing the attributes of the product as “tasty” or “the perfect way to celebrate National Chocolate Covered Nuts Day” or “cheesy”.

Position audience as ‘fans’

In 56% of the brand posts in the corpus, there is a communicative purpose of positioning the audience as ‘fans’. This communicative purpose can be enacted within images through interactive meanings where ‘regular’ people are represented in images as consumers of the brand/product and interactive meanings such as horizontal angle (power equality) are used. Audience members can be positioned as ‘fans’ through interactive meanings lexically by use of interrogative and imperative Mood, as well as minor clauses such as greetings. Examples of these uses of Mood are represented below, respectively.

[CBY-1-BRAND] Would anyone like to share our Wispa sandwich with us? …

[ACT-2-BRAND] …So if you want some advice about how to feel good from within, get your questions ready…

[NRV-1-BRAND] Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans!...

In particular, use of interrogative Mood typically has the effect of engaging with the audience by positioning them to contribute positive responses to questions often relating to liking the product or engaging in some sort of symbolic activity suggested by the brand (e.g., sharing a “#feelgoodpledge”, which implies being a ‘fan’ of Gok Wan and of ‘feeling good from within’, which is also an unofficial Activia brand slogan).

Another mechanism for enacting this communicative purpose is ‘friend tagging’, where the brand selects ‘friends’ to mention within the Announcement element. The ‘friend’ username then appears as a hyperlink so that anyone who views the brand post can click on the link to view the profile of the ‘friend’. This is effectively a representation of ‘normal Facebook users’ within the brand post, which positions audience members as ‘fans’.

Associate brand/product with event/tradition/value

This communicative purpose, which is has been identified in 83% of the brand posts in the corpus, is typically realised by the representation of a ‘context’. This is often achieved lexically within circumstances of time (e.g., ‘Labor Day’ or ‘New Year’), and place (e.g., Ride a tube **down a snowy hill**).

Additionally, representing ‘fans’ or the brand, and depicting values-based phenomena can enact this communicative purpose. One example of this is in the lexical component of the Lead element in [ACT-3-BRAND], below:

[ACT-3-BRAND]   “Don’t let the things you want make you forget the things you have”

In this case, the sentence is imperative Mood, so the represented participant is ‘you’ (the audience), “don’t let” could also be interpreted as ‘don’t allow’, and the phenomenon is “the things you want make you forget the things you have”, which could be interpreted as relating to the value of gratitude – which could be read as either promoting gratitude, or more literally as condemning ingratitude.

In the case of this brand post and communicative purpose, there is an interesting interplay between lexical and visual modes, which serves as a useful illustration of the concept of the brand associating with values.

Image 27: [ACT-3-BRAND]

In [ACT-3-BRAND], above, the lexical representation of the value of 'gratitude' is the most salient aspect of the brand post, primarily due to size. This value is associated with the brand because, like all brand posts, it is communication authored by a brand representative, and is attributed to the brand through the presence of the Brand Hyperlink (Activia UK, plus the Activia product as the Brand Hyperlink icon). Additionally, a pot of Activia yogurt is represented in the Lead element, in the bottom left corner, as though it is floating in the clouds. Two words within the 'gratitude motto' have particular salience through size and bold text: "want" and "have", which is additionally salient as it is highlighted by a background of the sun, or potentially of a 'divine light', such as 'heaven'. Through these aspects of representation and salience, further values-based meanings can be identified: firstly, the salience of the words "want", "have", and the product display could achieve a combined meaning of desire and gratitude not in general, but for the product; in other words, a message to 'want and have Activia'. Secondly, it could be argued that another values-based meaning is constructed within the brand post by associating the brand not only with the value of gratitude, but also with religious values by invoking an association with 'heaven'.

As in the brand post above, within other brand posts, this communicative purpose can be identified in some brand posts where the image comprises medium or long distance shots where a location or culturally recognisable event is represented. For example, in [LAY-1-BRAND], the background is an American football goal post, the communicative purpose is to associate the brand/product with a tradition/event – American football/The Superbowl.

Reference and associate with cultural knowledge

Present in 44% of the brand posts in the corpus, the communicative purpose of referencing and associating with cultural knowledge is enacted through unusual representation of main participants lexically and visually, often enacting visual/lexical metaphors and puns, which reference and associate with cultural knowledge.

For example, in brand post [LAY-2], the image portrays two potato crisps with the superimposed words "Po-tay-to" and "Po-tah-to". This is an instance of lexical play that refers to the cultural debate over the pronunciation of the word 'potato'.

Elicit topical responses

This communicative purpose, present in 61% of the brand posts in the corpus, is constructed lexically, through use of imperative and interrogative Mood, as exemplified in the brand post texts below, as well as through the response hyperlink at the bottom of every brand post. Examples of the enactment of this communicative purpose through Mood are given below:

[HSH-2-BRAND] If the day ends in "y," it's a good day for chocolate. **Like if you agree.**

[WKR-3-BRAND] It's a big day for Britain. Our new Prince is finally here! **Who's excited?**

Additionally, this communicative purpose can be enacted through use of ellipsis within some declarative clauses. For example, in brand post [NRV-1], there is an explicit ellipsis: '"This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"' The implication, which is constructed cross-modally by the text and the affordance of the 'comment' hyperlink, is that the viewer should post a comment in reply to the elliptical statement, and state how *they* "plan to enjoy nature even more".

Product Display

In the corpus, 83% of the brand posts include the communicative purpose of displaying the product. The identification of this communicative purpose is relatively straightforward, as it involves image and textual representation of the product as a participant. In this communicative genre, it is a noteworthy communicative purpose because selling the product to consumers is ultimately the goal of the brand. Thus, identification of brand posts that have the communicative purpose of displaying the product is a useful tool to determine whether the meanings constructed in the brand post suggest product consumption explicitly (in part, through product display), or whether the sales strategy is more implicitly enacted through a variety of other meaning-making processes.

Repetition of Branding

Every single brand post in the corpus includes at least one instance of branding, which occurs within the Brand Hyperlink element. That is, the brand's user ID is required by Facebook to be the brand name, and this therefore identifies not only the brand, but enacts a meaning-making process whereby the brand post as a whole constructs an advertising/marketing message, no matter the content of the message. However, in the genre elements over which the brand post author does have control (the Lead and Announcement), it is possible to embed further instances of branding lexically or through images. It is noteworthy that not all brand post authors in this corpus choose to do so; 22% of brand posts include no mention of the brand or product apart from the compulsory mention in the Brand Hyperlink. In these posts, which are a minority of the corpus but nevertheless noteworthy, it is possibly an indication of a non-congruent advertising approach, where the brand attempts to engage with the audience not as business and consumer, but as part of a more implicit, values-based approach.

Additional communicative meanings

While the discussion of communicative purposes has largely been focussed on meanings constructed within the Lead and Announcement elements, this is not to suggest that the other elements within brand posts are irrelevant or separate in terms of meaning-making. For example, as discussed in a number of examples above, the Brand Hyperlink is, in some brand posts, the only aspect of the post that distinguishes it from an individual Facebook user post. That is, the Brand Hyperlink, in identifying the brand authorship of the post, also has an undeniable function of associating the discourse and meanings within the post with the brand itself, and with the ultimate commercial purpose of selling products.

Also discussed above, the Share-and-Respond Options, which are present in every brand post as they are compulsory within the Facebook interface, have the function of enabling and encouraging interaction within the social network. The hyperlinks have a technological function, but their predictable presence and location is a general feature within Facebook, where interaction is encouraged through easy access and salience of the options. Thus, their presence cross-modally constructs meaning within every brand post that the post is not only there to be seen, but to be interacted with. Therefore, when, for example, the Announcement includes lexical items with interrogative Mood, the meaning constructed is not necessarily that of a rhetorical question to be considered by the audience, but of an actual attempt at discursive dialogue.

Another feature in every brand post is the Date element, which functions to locate the text within time. Initially, a brand post has temporal relevance on the news feed, which diminishes over time. That is, posts do not appear randomly in users' news feeds; they generally appear in chronological order, with the most recent posts at the top. Therefore, as time advances, a post moves further and further 'down' a news feed, decreasing in relevance as it becomes more and more unlikely to be read in a given Facebook session. However, the complex intertextual processes in Facebook do make it possible for a post to appear in various contexts and out of chronological order amongst other Facebook posts, and thus, the Date element functions as an indicator of whether the post relates to a concept of higher temporal relevance, or can be considered as more of an 'artefact' within the platform emerging through an intertextual process. This temporal relevance differs from some other forms of advertising (such as magazine, billboard, television, etc.), where the marketing messages are not 'dated'.

4.1.3 Communicative Purpose of Responses

This section introduces the quantitative and qualitative results from the analysis of the responses to brand posts, in terms of communicative purpose. The results are represented in Table 33 and Figure 15, below, as percentages of the corpus as a whole (i.e., what percentage of responses have each communicative purpose in general). The criteria for each category of communicative purpose are also included in Table 33, and discussion of each communicative purpose follows.

Communicative Purposes of Responses		
Communicative Purpose	**Discursive Strategies**	**% of total corpus**
Response is specifically **topic-related** (usually directly in response to brand post) AND does not fit into any other categories below	'One-off' topic-related (determined for each data set – usually one or two). A few examples: Commit to future action (New Year's resolutions) Engage in self-esteem and sisterhood discourse Perform topic-related values (royalism)	25%
Wordplay, visual metaphor, and general manipulation of brand post message for the purpose of **humour or fun**.	Participate in topic-related 'fun' or 'play'	11%
Taking an **'alternative'** point of view/preference on a **culture-related issue**, which is not initiated in the main topic or focus, and is not a prominent/general focus by the majority of comments. Not an evaluation of ethics or the brand/product.	Take a stance on a cultural topic	8%
Positive and negative evaluation of the **product or brand**, based on **consumption** preferences (taste, enjoyment, pricing, availability, quality)	Perform consumer values (including product and brand evaluation)	39%
Positive and negative evaluation of the **brand/product or others** based on **ethics** (environmental impact of ingredients, honesty, greed, etc.)	Perform ethical values (including product and brand evaluation)	10%
Friend 'tagging', lexical representation of specific people, and communication that is clearly directed toward specific people or is very 'personal' (e.g., wishing someone goodnight or good trip)	Engage in personal discourse with friend/s	5%
Clear Communicative Purpose but not in any of the categories above. Or- Unable to interpret comment – no clear evaluation, context, topic, etc.	Other/Unclear	1%

Table 33: Communicative purposes of responses

In Figure 15, below, these results are presented using a bar graph for visual comparison. The descriptions of discursive strategy, as presented in Table 33, above, are represented below as communicative purpose. This is for the sake of brevity, and is intended to correlate to the communicative purposes described in Table 33.

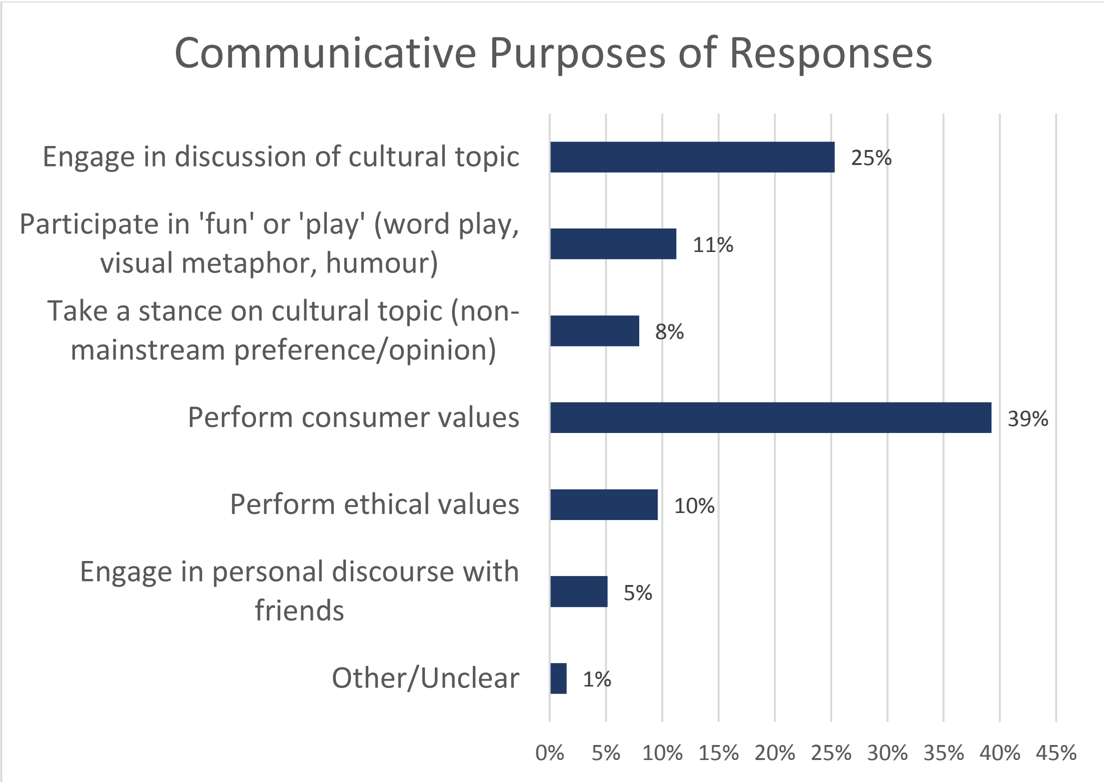

Figure 15: Communicative purposes of responses

These results indicate that responses to social media marketing are predominately *not* consumer discourse. Approximately 39% of comments fit into the category of consumer discourse, and of these, a large proportion includes negative appreciation of brands and products (this is further investigated in the Appraisal analysis, in Section 4.3, below).

Approximately 25% is ‘topic-related’, which entails engagement with the content of the marketing posts. This can be conceived of as ‘participation’ in cultural discourses and events through brand-controlled channels.

Approximately 10% of responses are performances of ethical values, which has obvious potential for discussion on political activism within social media, or, as it seems to be called somewhat derogatively in media studies, ‘clictivism’. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

With somewhat related communicative purposes, a further 6% of comments include minority cultural stances taken in opposition to the contextual majority (e.g., the topic is about football but someone says that hockey is better).

Approximately 11% of responses include performance of humour and playfulness through word play and visual metaphors; this may have potential for discussion on use of humour as a strategy to neutralise the 'power' of brand marketing.

Approximately 5% of responses include personal communication with friend/s, which could indicate that although the communication in this context is public, many people either don't completely understand this and/or use social media marketing as a tool to instigate or reinforce 'inside jokes' and discourses with personal friends, perhaps consciously doing so publicly to enforce an insider/outsider boundary.

Finally, approximately 1% of responses have unidentifiable communicative purposes, or 'other' purposes.

Figure 16, below, is a general comparison of the communicative purposes of brand posts vs. responses. Some concepts cannot be directly compared (which is discussed below), and as such, the figure is produced primarily for illustrative effect.

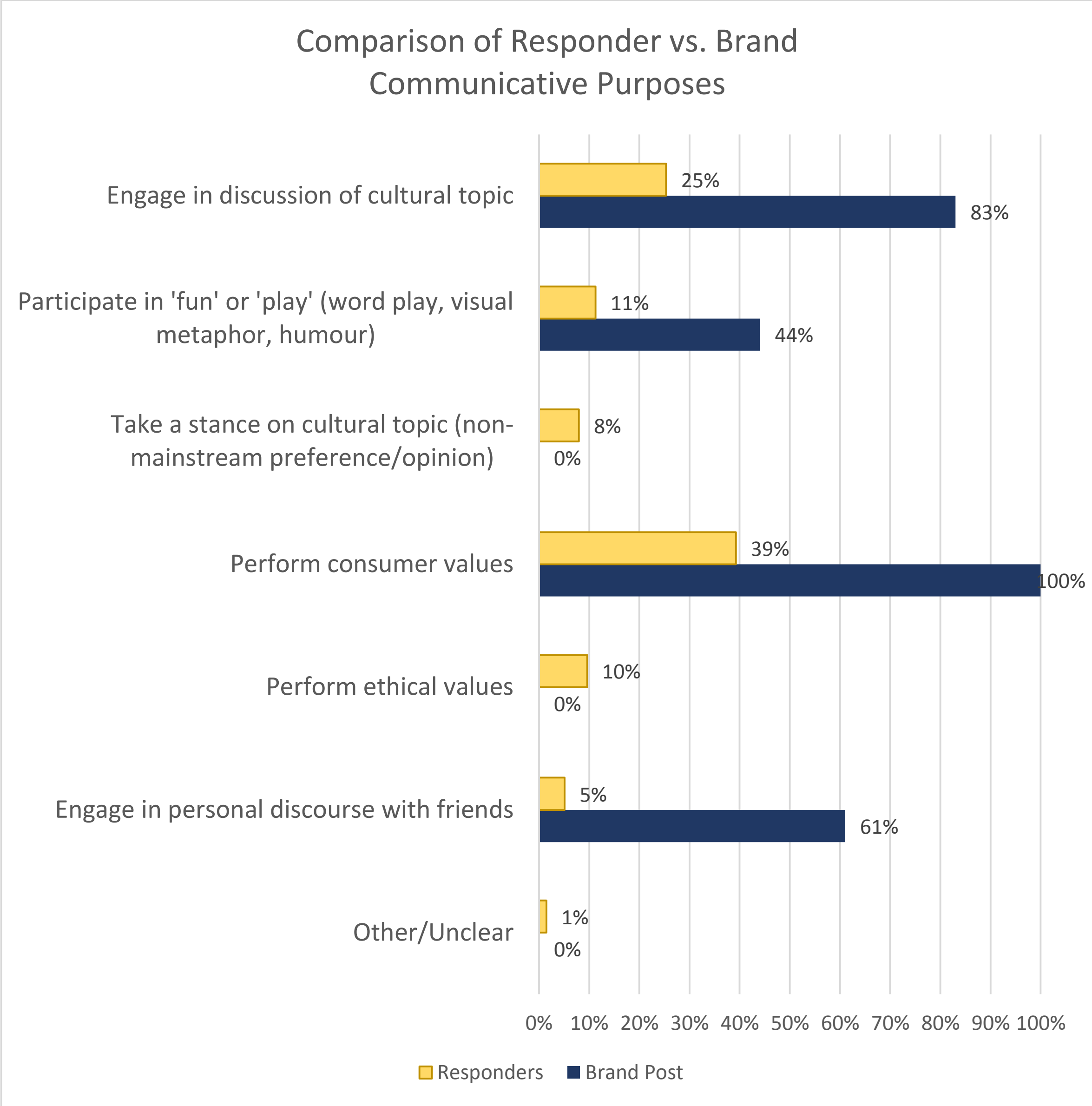

Figure 16: Comparison of responder vs brand communicative purposes

As mentioned above, Figure 16 has been produced to make general illustrative comparisons between the brand posts and responses. There are some notable features that emerge from this comparison.

For example, while the figure indicates that 61% of brands 'engage in personal discourse with friends', only 5% of responses have this communicative purpose. In this representation, within the brand post, this purpose is relatively superficial. Brand representatives create 'friendly-sounding' messages in order to promote products – for example, asking 'chatty' questions, or, as in [CBY-1], offering to 'share' a Wispa sandwich. On the other hand, when responses have this communicative purpose, they appear to be genuine personal discourse – for example, 'tagging' a friend in a response to a brand post in order to 'share' it with him or her as an inside joke.

As far as 'performing consumer values' goes, all brand posts fulfil this communicative purpose as it is branded discourse with the ultimate aim of maintaining or improving brand awareness and likeability, and/or selling products. For responders, on the other hand, less than half are primarily interested in the brand or the product. It is worth noting that in this representation, brand posts are understood to have multiple communicative purposes, while responses have been coded as having one primary communicative purpose.

If three of the categories are combined – engage in discussion of cultural topic, engage in 'play', and take a non-mainstream stance on a cultural topic, it could be said that 44% of responders have primary communicative purposes of engaging in cultural discourse as introduced by the brand, compared to 39% of responders who perform consumer values.

While all brand posts have a 'consumer values' purpose, and nearly all involve a communicative purpose relating to cultural topics, responders do not tend to take a dual approach[13]. There is one particularly relevant point in terms of the identity performances of responders. Given the 'availability' of two alternative topics, it is interesting that approximately half of responses engage with the brand/product aspect, whilst the other half is more interested in 'chat' about more generally culturally relevant topics. This suggests that approximately half of responders do not notice, do not particularly care, or happily accept that their culture-oriented 'chat' is framed by, and potentially contributory to, brand marketing.

4.2 Negotiation analysis

The corpus is analysed using a Negotiation analysis (Martin, 1992; Eggins & Slade, 1997), with further consideration of SFL analysis (Halliday, 1985) in order to demonstrate how responders align and disalign with the brand post, and how they agree with the content in the brand post or add to the content.

As discussed in Chapter 3, while the concept of CONTINUING moves is considered in the general classification of Negotiation, it is not represented in any of the data analysis results presented in this chapter. This is because the majority of moves after the first move in a

[13] Although in the analysis, only one communicative purpose is recorded for each comment, this methodological decision was made based on the observation that the vast majority of comments do only have one salient communicative purpose. As such, there is no quantitative analysis to determine how many responders engage in multiple communicative purposes within a single response.

response are CONTINUING moves (69%), but there are no instances of CONTINUING moves as the first move in responses. This indicates that responders tend to use their first move as their ‘stance-taking’ move, with subsequent moves typically expanding on this stance. As such, for the purposes of quantitative analysis, the results are most clear when only the first move per response is analysed. This results in a representative sample of Negotiation communicative behaviour. In other words, unlike in the Appraisal analysis, the results in this section of the chapter can be interpreted as percentages of *responders*, rather than as percentages of *evaluations*.

Overall, the results for Negotiation categories are represented in Figure 17, below.

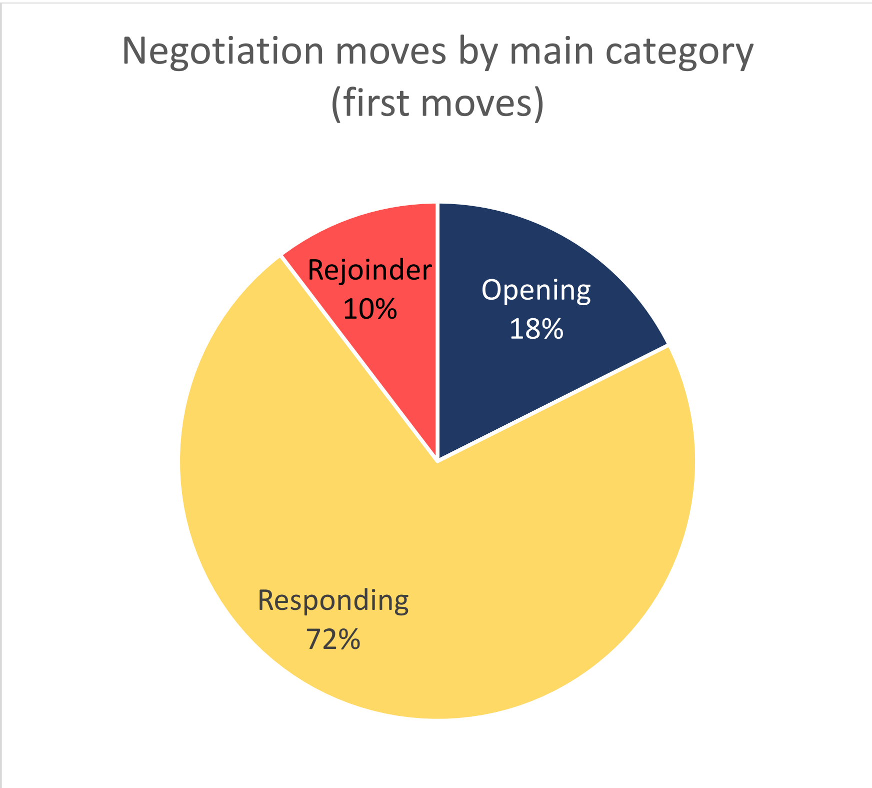

Figure 17: Negotiation moves by main category (first move)

The figure above indicates that the majority of first moves fall within the category of REACT: RESPOND. This indicates a clear preference for responders in that they negotiate their responses within the context provided by the brand post, rather than changing or redirecting the topic with either OPENING moves or REJOINDER moves.

Figure 18, below, breaks down Negotiation into main categories as well as alignment (supporting/confronting).

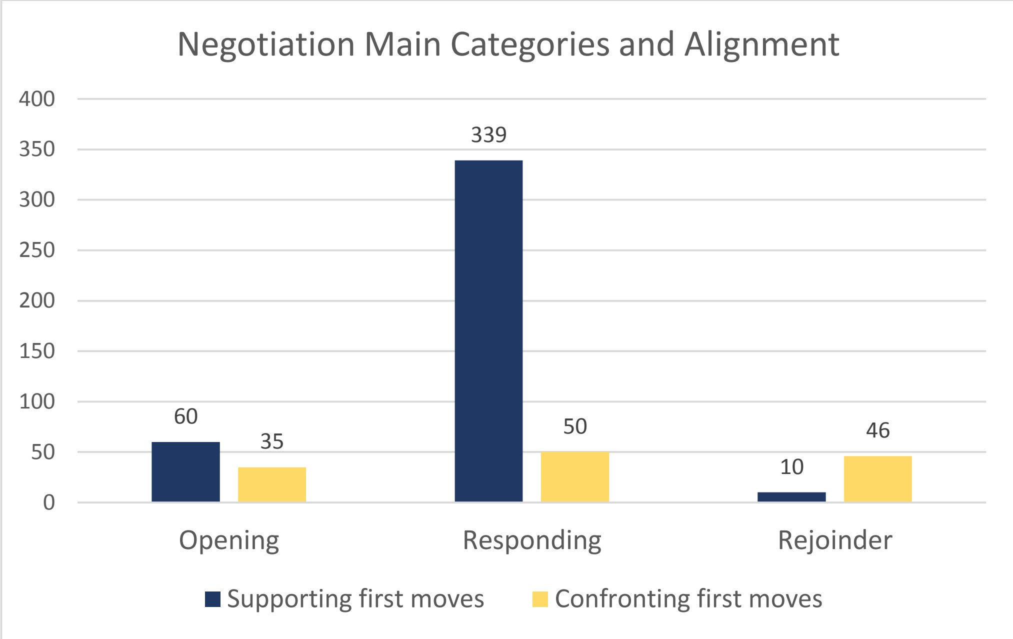

Figure 18: Negotiation main categories and alignment

In the figure above, it is apparent that one category is by far prominent – RESPOND: SUPPORT. With 339 moves in this category, it constitutes 63% of all first moves in the corpus, and indicates that overall, the responders find the content in the brand post to be engaging in a positive way.

In Figures 19 and 20, below, the Negotiation analysis results are broken down further into sub-categories. These are described in detail in Section 3.3.2, and a brief description of each category is presented in Table 34, below.

Negotiation move categories		
Move categories		**Discourse purpose**
Opening	Attend	Attention seeking
	Command	Demand goods and services
	Statement	Give information
	Question	Demand information
Responding	Develop	Elaborate, extend, enhance
	Engage & Register	Banter, non-verbal reaction (e.g., mmm, lol, ☺)
	Supporting Reply	Accept, comply, agree, answer, acknowledge, affirm
	Confronting Reply	Disagree, non-comply, withhold, disavow, contradict
Rejoinder	Track	To verify information or get additional information needed to understand prior move
	Challenge	To dismiss addressee's right to his/her position, to contradict, or to offer alternative position

Table 34: Negotiation move categories

Figure 19, below, is a representation of results for all confronting sub-categories.

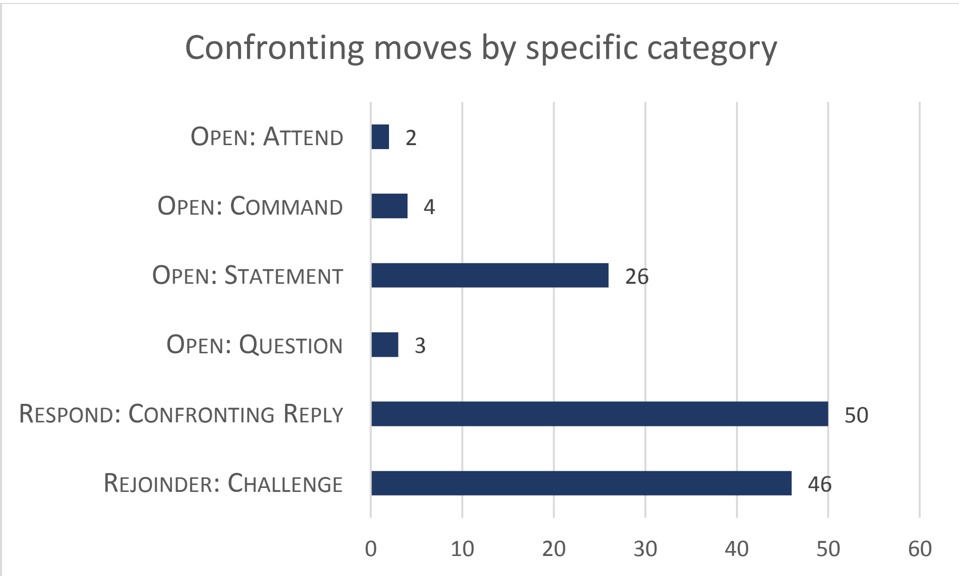

Figure 19: Confronting moves by sub-category

This data above clearly indicates that the main strategies used in confronting responses are RESPOND:CONFRONTING REPLY and REACT: REJOINDER: CHALLENGE. That one of the main categories of confronting moves is a REJOINDER category (where the negotiation relates to the validity of the previous move) indicates that responders' issues with brands may not have to do with the content of the brand post, but to some other aspect of their perception of the brand.

One other category, while not as prominent as the CONFRONTING REPLY and CHALLENGE categories, is also significant: OPEN: STATEMENT. This category is also discussed in Chapter 5.

To complement Figure 19, the supporting moves by sub-category are broken down in Figure 20, below.

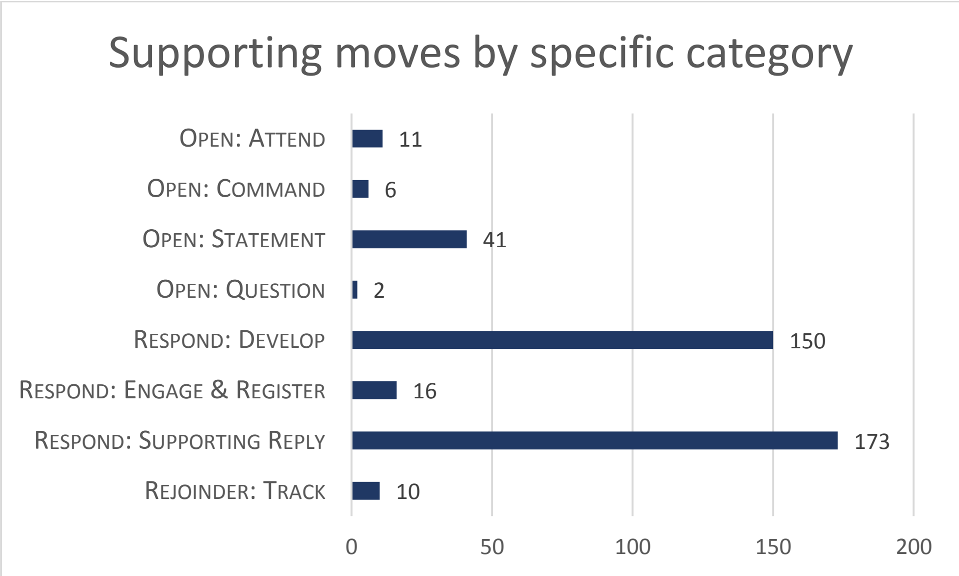

Figure 20: Supporting moves by sub-category

In Figure 20, it is apparent that the category of REACT: RESPOND: SUPPORTING REPLY is the most prominent supporting move. With 173 moves in this category, this constitutes 32% of all first moves in the corpus, and indicates that the most frequently used negotiation strategy by responders is to go along with the brand post content, primarily by agreeing, but also by answering, affirming, and accepting.

In Figure 20, above, while the RESPOND:SUPPORTING REPLY category stands out as the single most frequently used category, the RESPOND: DEVELOP category has nearly as many moves, constituting 28% of all first moves in the corpus. This indicates that more than simply agreeing with the brand post content, responders also prefer to expand on the post by relating this to their own experiences and preferences, and adding personal value to the message introduced in the brand post.

In Figure 21, below, all first moves are represented by sub-category and alignment.

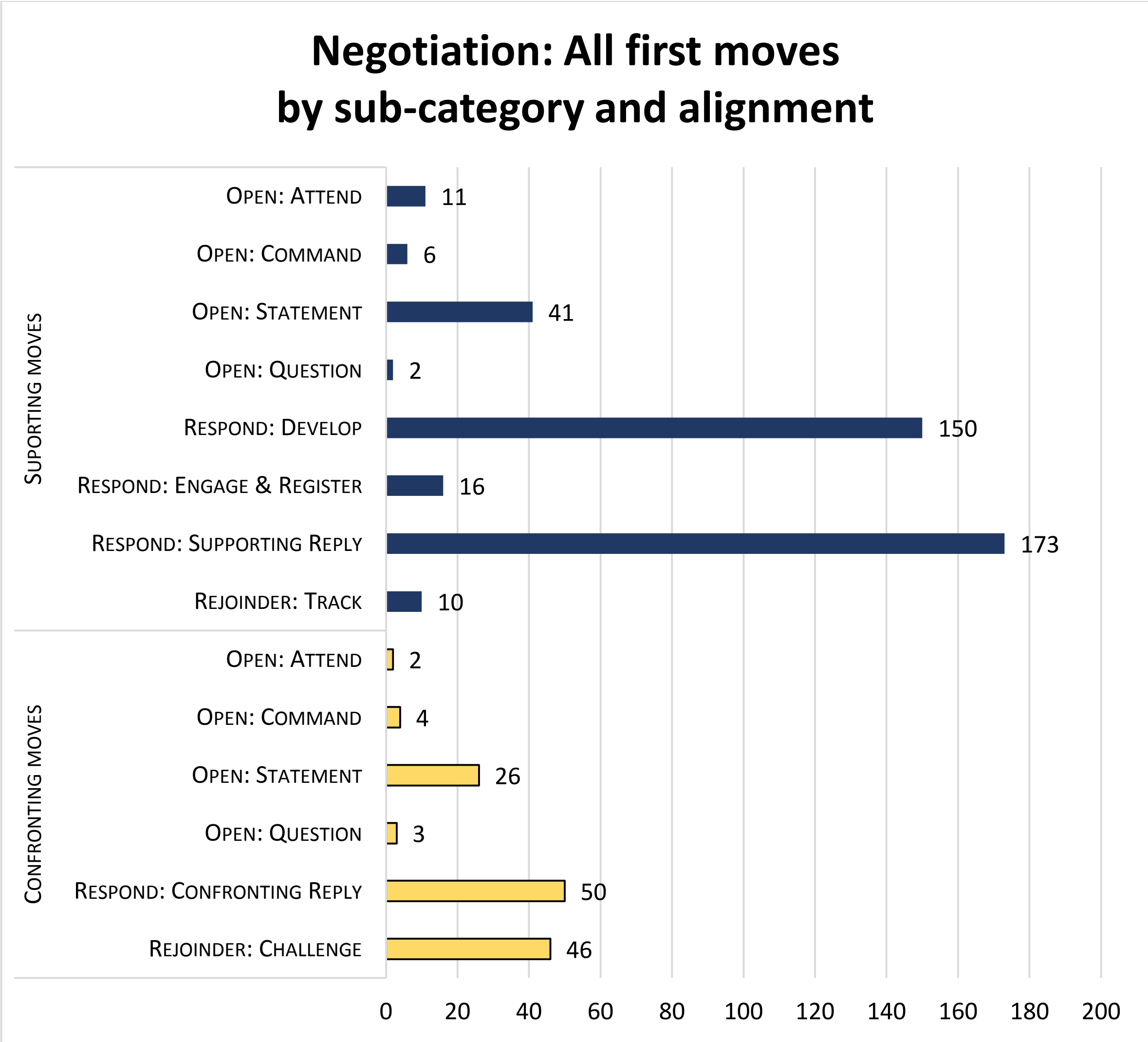

Figure 21: Negotiation: all first moves by sub-category and alignment

Figure 21, above, puts into perspective the comparison between supporting and confronting first moves by category, clearly showing the prevalence of supporting moves.

Summary

Overall, the Negotiation analysis has included a presentation of patterns in conversation structure. Within this corpus, responders appear to prefer to support the brand post, and the two primary strategies for doing so are SUPPORTING REPLY and DEVELOP. Within the corpus, 60% of all responses fall into these two categories. This is interesting because the findings within the Genre and Appraisal analysis (above and below, respectively) indicate that the brand is not the primary focus of the content of responses; however, the Negotiation analysis indicates that these 'non-brand' stances taken tend to align with the messages proposed by the brand, which include product promotion, but also many references to cultural topics and values.

There are also significant trends in confronting replies, with the most frequent sub-category being REJOINDER: CHALLENGE. This possibly indicates that the content of the brand posts is ignored by responders who have pre-conceived stances toward the brand, and that confronting responses tend to go 'off-topic' and challenge the legitimacy of the brand's practices (by citing information gathered outside the context of the brand post) rather than engaging with and challenging the topic through which the brand is attempting to promote itself.

4.3 Appraisal analysis

The corpus is analysed using a number of categories in order to elicit several different types of trends. The categories include:

Types of ATTITUDE:

AFFECT, APPRECIATION, JUDGEMENT, and sub-categories

Polarity:

Positive/negative subcategories of ATTITUDE

Target:

Brand/product, or non-brand/product ('other'). For AFFECT, the target is that which caused the emotion, or the 'trigger' of the AFFECT. For APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT, the target is that which the evaluation is directed towards.

Source:

In this corpus, almost all ATTITUDE evaluations (99%) originate from the writer; there are very few projected evaluations, or evaluations made by others but referred to by the writer (e.g., 'he is happy…'). As such, these projected evaluations are included in the analysis but are not considered separately, as explained in Section3.4.1.

Explicitness and Implicitness:

All evaluations are assigned a value of either 'inscribed' (explicit, typically derived from specific lexical items) or 'invoked' (implicit, derived from contextual factors and indirect lexical choices).

Double-coded evaluations:

Each instance of Appraisal is labelled as being a 'solo' evaluation, or a double-coded evaluation. Double-coded evaluations are labelled as being 'primary' or 'secondary', judged by the inscribed/invoked value, or the evaluation of most contextual salience. Each evaluation, whether 'solo', 'primary', or 'secondary' is counted as a single instance of evaluation, as described in Section 3.4.4.

4.3.1 General Results

There are 1009 ATTITUDE evaluations in the corpus as a whole. With 540 comments in the corpus, this means that on average, each comment includes 1.87 instances of ATTITUDE.

Polarity

At a basic level, the corpus can be described as comprising a majority of positive evaluations: 70% of the total evaluations (708). There are 301 negative evaluations, or 30% of the total corpus.

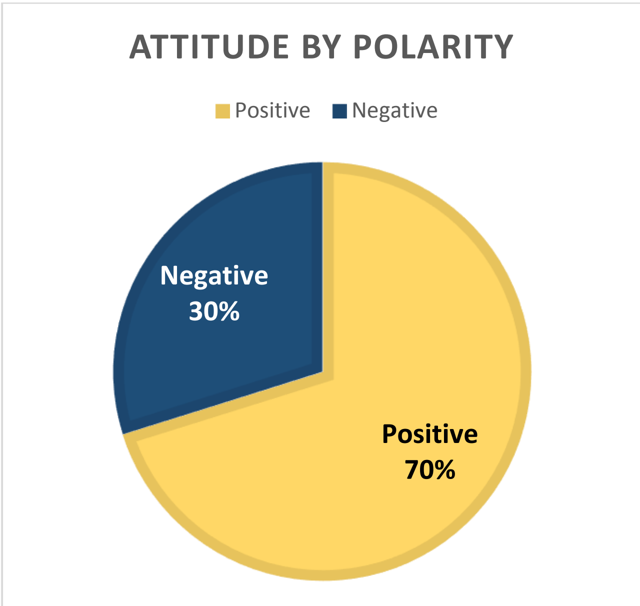

Figure 22: ATTITUDE by polarity

Figure 22, above, indicates that while the preferred form of ATTITUDE in this corpus is positive, negative evaluation is notable as well.

Basic ATTITUDE categories

The types of ATTITUDE evaluations in the corpus show a high prevalence of APPRECIATION (556 instances, 55%), while AFFECT and JUDGEMENT are nearly equal (216, 21% of all evaluations, and 237, 23% of all evaluations, respectively). Although APPRECIATION appears far more frequently, each of the three categories is meaningful within the corpus. These are represented in Figure 23, below.

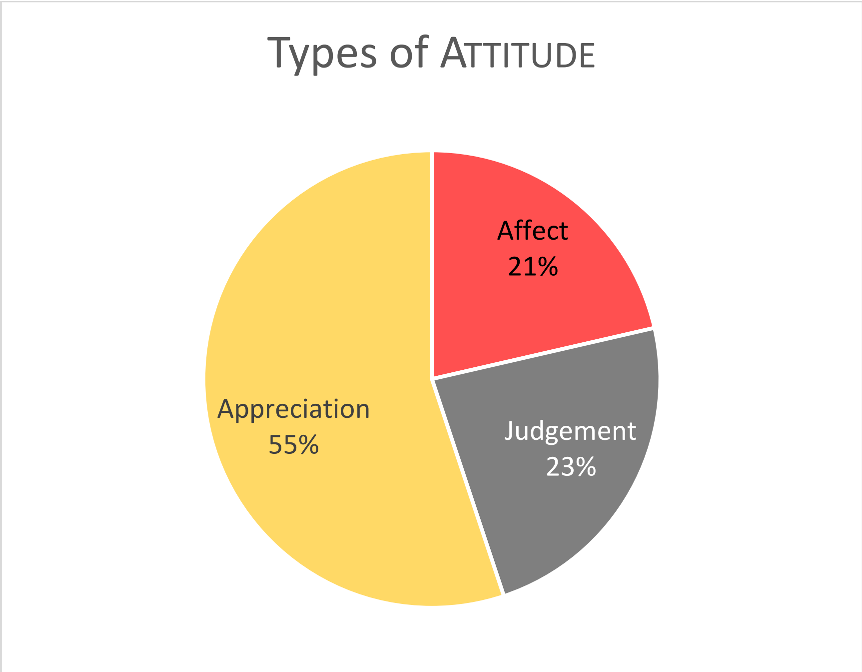

Figure 23: Types of ATTITUDE: major categories

Given that the goal of all brand posts is, essentially, product promotion, and 83% of the brand posts explicitly display products (as discussed in Section 4.1.1), it is perhaps unsurprising that in responses, APPRECIATION is the most-used type of ATTITUDE, as this relates to the evaluation of 'things'.

When the categories are broken down further to include polarity, as demonstrated in Figures 24 and 25, below, a clearer picture emerges of the evaluative discourse of responders. While the majority of the APPRECIATION is positive, a meaningful amount is negative (24% of the total APPRECIATION, or 13% of the overall evaluations), which suggests that criticism of the product is a notable feature within this corpus.

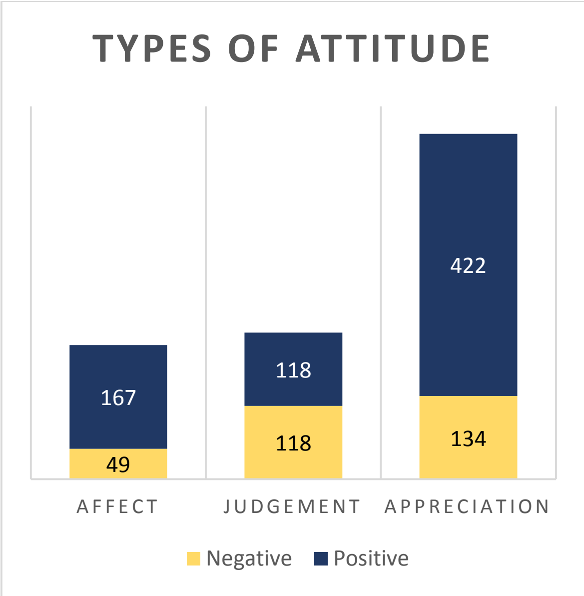

Figure 24: Types of positive and negative ATTITUDE

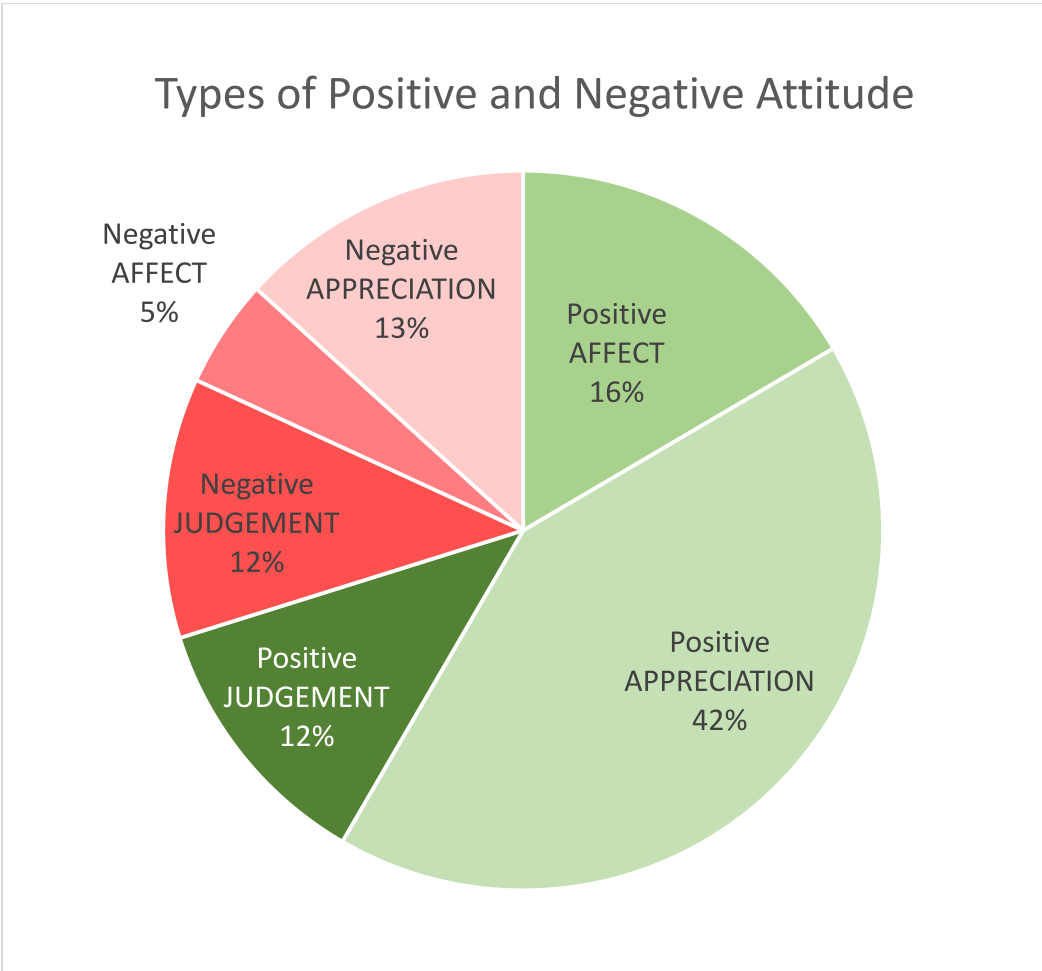

Figure 25: Types of positive and negative ATTITUDE: percentage of corpus

It is also interesting that the JUDGEMENT is evenly split between positive and negative (118 instances each), as it is a possible indication that a significant number of responses involve negative focus on brands as ‘mis-behaving’ corporate entities, despite corporate ethics never being mentioned in brand posts. It also indicates that a significant number of responders are concerned with acknowledging and/or praising socially ‘acceptable’ behaviour, and condemning socially ‘unacceptable’ behaviour, whether it is brands or other individuals in question.

The ratio of positive vs negative AFFECT is significant, and similar to the 3:1 ratio found in the APPRECIATION category. While negative AFFECT is the least frequent of all six major categories (taking polarity into account), at nearly 5% of overall evaluations in the corpus, it does have relevance in building an overall picture of how identity is performed through evaluation.

Targets of evaluation

In considering the major categories of ATTITUDE, evaluations are also categorised according to target. More than half (51%) of evaluations in the entire corpus are directed towards (or triggered by) a target ‘other’ than the product or brand, with the other 49% directed towards or triggered by the brand or product of the brand post. That is, the general results from the ‘target’ analysis indicate that the target of the responders’ evaluations are nearly equal, when compared between the brand or product, vs. all other targets (self, friends, other products, nature, etc.). This result is represented in Figure 26, below.

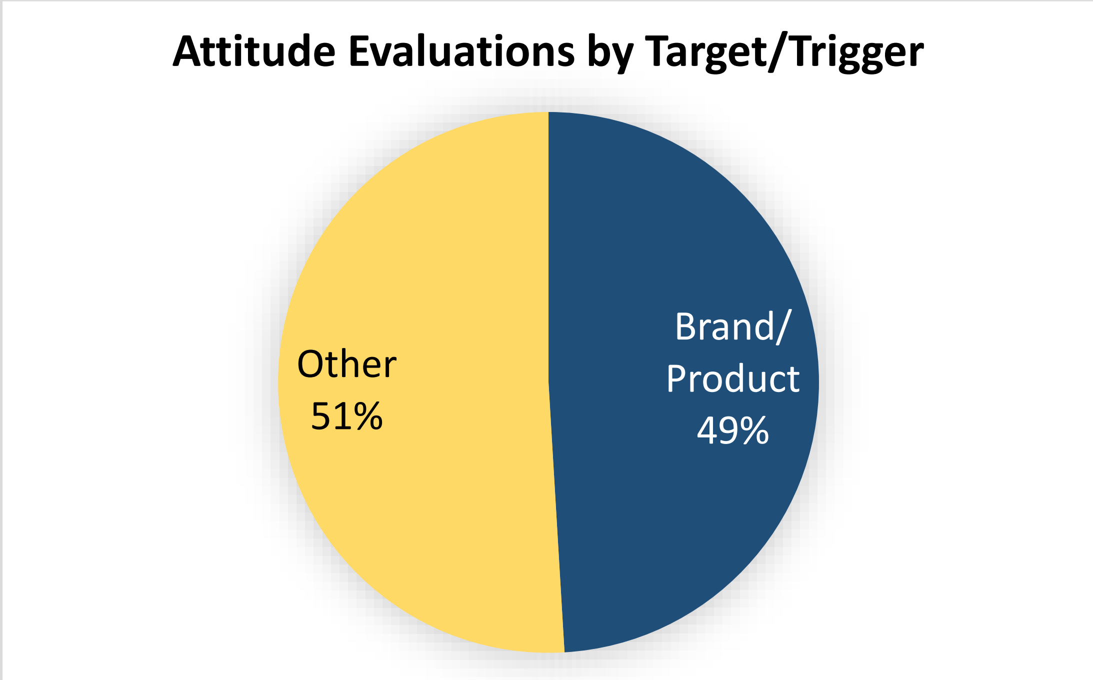

Figure 26: ATTITUDE evaluations by target/trigger

This result is interesting in that despite all responses being made in relation to the brand, over half of the evaluations relate to a non-brand/product entity, which may indicate a more complex evaluative context than one might expect from a general 'consumer' context (e.g., Amazon product reviews). In addition, it is a positive indication that evaluations in this corpus relate to a broad range of identity performances, rather than only performances related to product evaluation.

At the most basic level, there are two 'target groups': the brand/product (the brand being a target for JUDGEMENT, while the product is a target for APPRECIATION; both may be triggers for AFFECT), and non-brand/product targets, or 'other' (see Figure 28, below, for specific sub-categories of the 'other' category). Figure 27, below, represents the numbers of major evaluation types for each of the two major target groups.

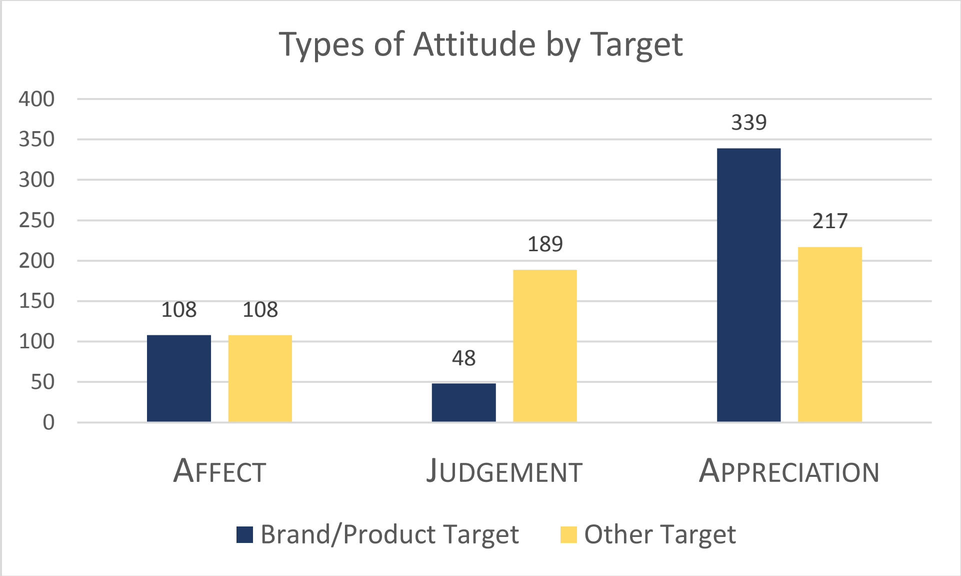

Figure 27: Types of attitude by target

Figure 27, above, indicates that the majority of APPRECIATION, 61%, is directed towards the product, whilst the other 39% is directed towards 'other' targets. The triggers for AFFECT are exactly evenly divided between the brand/product, and 'other'. JUDGEMENT is far more frequently directed toward an 'other' target (80%) than it is towards the brand (20%).

From these results, it is clear that the overall primary focus of evaluations is the APPRECIATION of the products promoted in the brand posts, whilst the evaluation of brand behaviour (JUDGEMENT) is the type of evaluation least present within the corpus. The evaluation of 'other' targets, meanwhile, is significant in all three major evaluation categories, primarily for APPRECIATION and JUDGEMENT, and also for AFFECT but to a lesser extent.

Figure 28, below, depicts a more specific breakdown of the general 'other target' category.

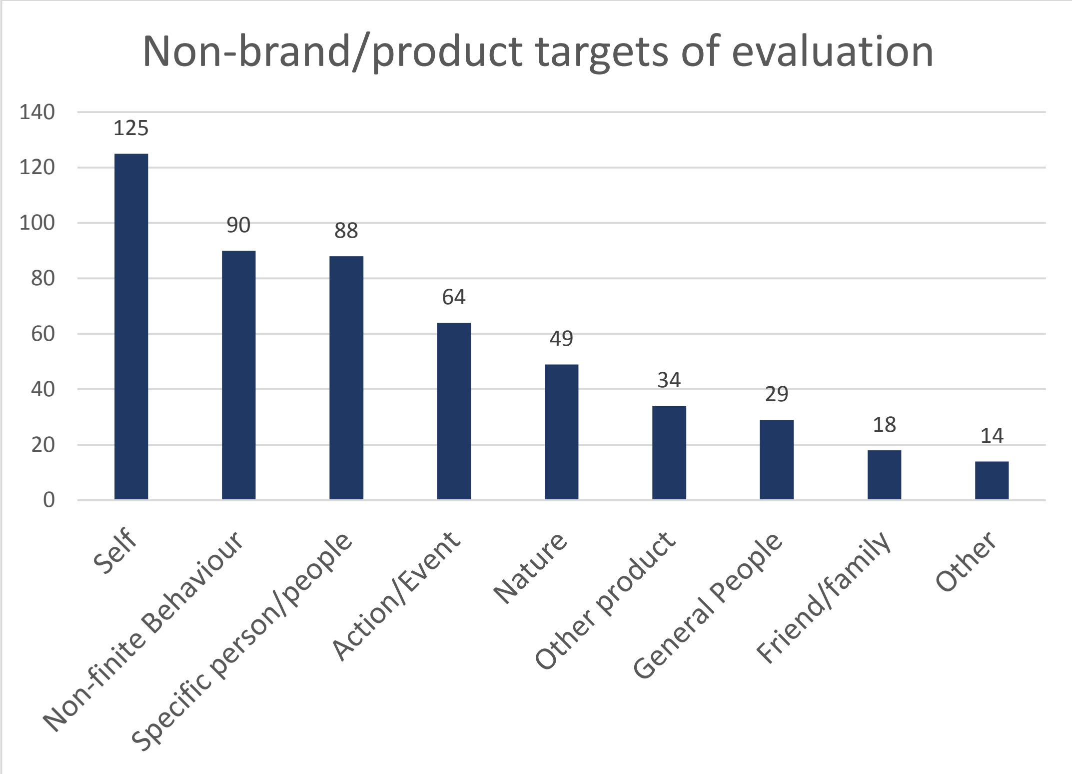

Figure 28: Non-brand/product targets of evaluation

The figure above indicates that the most frequent 'other' target of evaluation is the self; 125 evaluations, or 12% of the overall corpus, are directed by the commenter towards him or herself.

The second-most prevalent 'other' target is the evaluation of non-finite behaviour, as introduced in Section 3.4.2. This target refers to actions that are represented in their non-finite form and are "rendered as a grammatical entity" (Martin & White, 2005: 10) often through nominalisation (the use of processes as nouns – e.g., the treaty signing went well).

In this corpus, 'self-esteem' (or 'being confident') is a concept that can be evaluated as desirable or socially valuable, rather than as an experienced behaviour (JUDGEMENT) or emotion (AFFECT). At 90 instances, this category accounts for 9% of the total evaluations within the corpus.

The third-most prevalent 'other' target is the evaluation of specific people (excluding those who are clearly friends or family), such as other commenters or, as occurred frequently in the case of two of the data sets within this corpus, a celebrity (Gok Wan). There are 88 evaluations of this target group, or 9% of the total evaluations within the corpus.

Other notable target categories include 'actions/events', such as memorable outings, occurrences such as winning a competition, or requested changes to product packaging

(6% of total evaluations within the corpus), and nature (5% of total evaluations within the corpus). There are four categories which each constitute less than 5% of the total evaluations in the corpus: ‘other products’, where responders generally state preferences for products other than the one advertised within the brand post (3%), ‘general people’, which includes stereotyped groups such as ‘men’, ‘the fashion police’, or the public audience of a comment (3%), ‘friends and family’ (2%) and an ‘other’ category for all other targets that do not fit into one of the above categories, such as religion and wordplay (1%).

In Figure 29, below, all targets including product and brand are represented in ascending order of frequency, with blue and yellow indicating positive and negative sentiment, respectively.

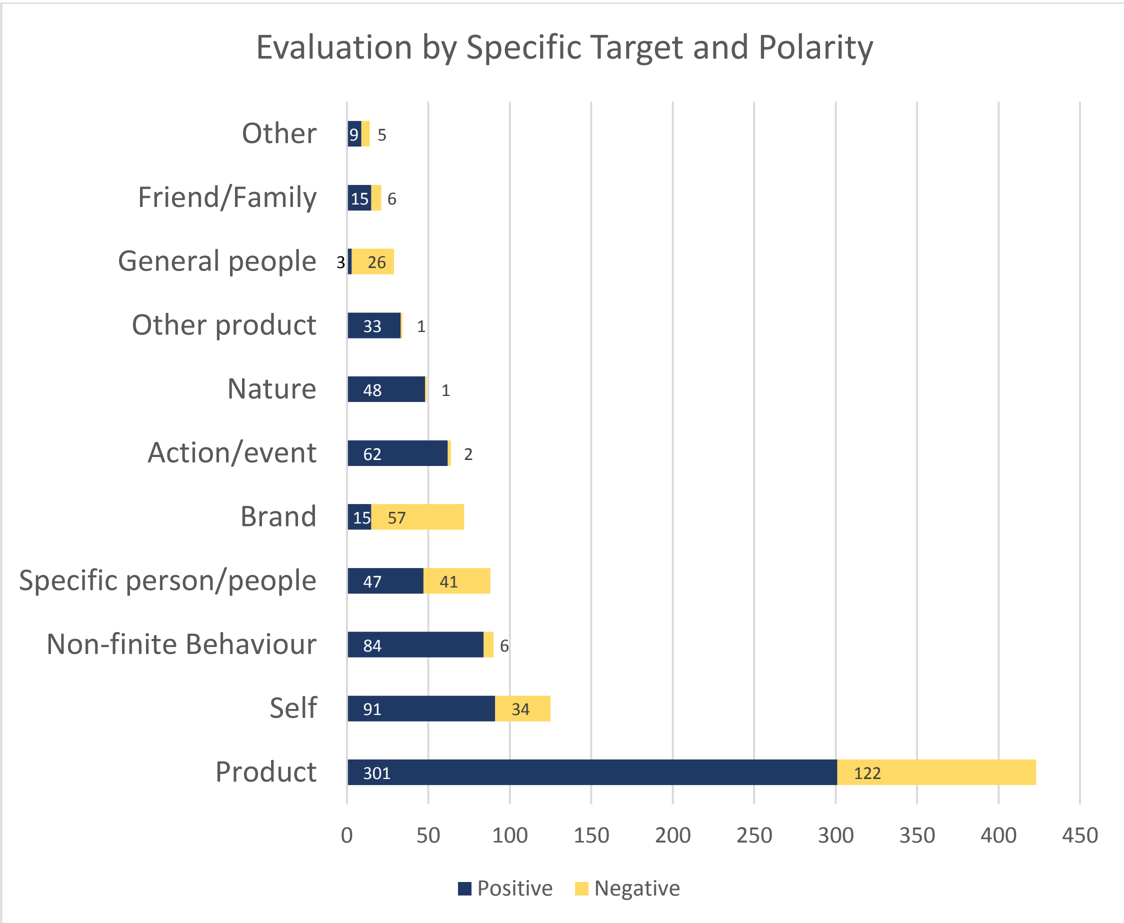

Figure 29: Evaluation by specific target and polarity

Figure 29, above, highlights a number of interesting results, as polarity and target considered together gives a much more precise picture not only of what is being evaluated, but whether individuals are aligning with or distancing themselves from these targets. For example, the two targets with significantly more negative evaluation than positive are the brand, and ‘general people’.

In the case of the brand, it could indicate that these brands, which are all nationally-recognisable, primarily attract positive attention for the products they produce (as evidenced through high instance of positive evaluations with the product as target), rather than their corporate behaviour. That is, when the brand is the target of the evaluation, it is nearly three times more likely to be a negative ATTITUDE evaluation.

In the case of the ‘general people’ category, these results suggest that when a homogenous, or stereotyped group is evaluated, such as ‘men’ or ‘the audience’, it is almost always a negative evaluation. On the other hand, when a specific person or specific people, or a friend or family is evaluated, it is more likely to be a positive evaluation.

This tendency towards positive evaluation is also the case for the second-most prevalent target: the self. The positive/negative split for this evaluation target is 73%/27%, respectively. This suggests that while individuals tend to positively evaluate themselves in this context, negative self-evaluation is also a meaningful feature of this discourse.

There are four targets that attract almost no negative evaluation: non-finite behaviour, actions/events, nature, and ‘other products’. In the cases of non-finite behaviour and actions/events, the targets are relatively abstract. The former is a type of personal action or emotion that is evaluated in general, rather than experienced (which would typically be AFFECT), while the latter is typically a change, or an event that has not yet occurred. For these targets to attract almost all positive and hardly any negative evaluation may suggest that within this context, future and potential behaviour and events are ‘written into being’ with positive evaluation, which is perhaps an idealisation of the possibilities of the future. Or, put another way, evaluations of future and possible events and behaviours do not tend to dwell on the negative in this corpus.

Another possible interpretation of these results is that positive evaluation of non-finite behaviour and ‘potential events’ is a mechanism for the construction and maintenance of cultural norms. That is, if a certain non-finite behaviour is frequently positively evaluated, it may be positive reinforcement of a culturally acceptable and preferable behaviour and/or value.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to consider norms and values on a national scale such as ‘American’ or ‘British’ culture. However, the results of the evaluation analysis do indicate that at least at a sub-cultural level, the performance of social norms and values is a notable feature of the corpus. It also may well be that the values are performed as a form of discursive resistance to perceived social norms.

These sub-cultural trends tend to emerge at a sub-corpus level and appear throughout the three brand posts within each brand sub-corpus. There are two particular sub-corpora within the corpus where trends were identified in terms of cultural norms. The first is the Activia sub-corpus, and the second is the Nature Valley sub-corpus.

Overall, the Activia sub-corpus contains more evaluation than any of the other five sub-corpora. Two of the three posts prominently feature the UK Activia brand ambassador, Gok Wan, who is best known as the presenter of the British reality makeover show *How to Look Good Naked*. Thus, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Activia sub-corpus comprises a relatively large number of positive evaluations of self-esteem as a non-finite behaviour. The comments below are examples of this evaluative strategy.

In each of the comments below, the evaluation starts with explicit or implicit proclamation of a '#feelgoodpledge' in response to the brand post.

[ACT-1-5]	Mine is am **not going to let others judge too harshly**. I think for 54 i am not to bad lolThink xx
[ACT-1-9]	**Keep believing in self and keep healthy**. Trying to get back to some form of fit but still love the individual I am :o)
[ACT-1-14]	My New Years resolution and I guess #feelgoodpledge is **to generate my own happiness, feel confident and proud in my own skin and to play a proactive part in my life, rather than letting it pass me by**. […]

The comments above involve complex evaluations, with the public pledge, or resolution, as a positive evaluation of self as 'resolute' (+JUDGEMENT: TENACITY). Each comment also includes an implicit positive evaluation of at least one non-finite behaviour, emphasised in bold text (e.g., 'feeling good', 'believing in self', '[not letting] others judge to harshly'). As these non-finite behaviours are evaluated as being the 'goal' of the pledge, they can be said to be evaluated as 'desirable' (+APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT).

In terms of cultural norms, it is possible that those who engage with the Activia brand posts do so as a part of a practice of performing and enforcing what they perceive to be cultural norms. It could be that the commenter perceives 'feeling good' (or, 'confidence') to be widely accepted as a positive personality trait. Alternatively, it could be that the performance of self-esteem values constitutes resistance and opposition to the social norm; that is, the commenters may feel that within the 'larger' cultural context, the values of self-esteem (particularly among women) are undervalued. That is, they may feel that women whose appearance does not conform to cultural beauty standards are not recognised as 'deserving' happiness or confidence. Thus, the comments evaluating the desirability of 'feeling good' or 'confidence', despite non-adherence to perceived beauty standards, may be a discursive performance of resistance to cultural norms.

The second sub-corpus with a large amount of cultural evaluation is Nature Valley, where the positive evaluation of non-finite behaviour also features prominently, as does the positive evaluation of 'nature'. The comments below are responses to the brand post:

[NRV-1-BRAND} Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"

[NRV-1-2] Being out there in the middle of it.....

[NRV-1-5] getting out there more!

As in the Activia examples above, these comments include a 'public pledge', or 'resolution', which carries a positive evaluation of the self as being tenacious (+JUDGEMENT: TENACITY), as well as a positive appraisal of non-finite behaviour. In this case, the behaviour is 'to enjoy nature' and 'getting out/being in nature'. Finally, this also involves an implicit evaluation of nature as being socially beneficial (+APPRECIATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT). This is because nature is implicitly attributed with the quality of enabling 'enjoyment'.

Like the Activia comments above, these comments can be seen both as performance and enforcement of social norms, and as resistance to perceived social norms. In the case of the positive evaluation of nature, and of 'getting out in nature', it could, on one hand, be that the commenter perceives nature appreciation to be normative. On the other hand, it could be that the commenter perceives the dominant culture to be, for example, technology-focussed to the detriment of nature, and therefore the alignment with nature as being socially valuable is a performance of resistance to the status quo.

Overall, the results from the Appraisal analysis, when target is taken into consideration, provide significant insight into the performance of identity. These results are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Inscribed and Invoked Evaluation

Another consideration of ATTITUDE evaluations is whether they are explicit (inscribed), or implicit (invoked). In this corpus, as shown in Figure 30, below, the majority of evaluations (71%, or 712 evaluations) are invoked, whilst only 29% (297) are inscribed.

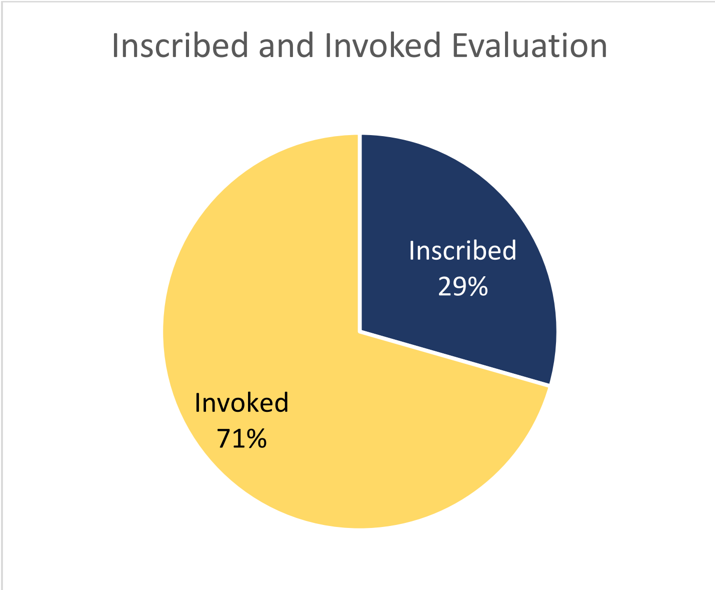

Figure 30: Inscribed and invoked evaluation

The prevalence of invoked evaluation means that individuals communicating in this context tend to make far fewer 'direct' evaluations with specific, identifiable lexical choices (e.g., 'this brand is evil', or 'I am a resolute person'), and instead prefer to make evaluations through less direct language (e.g., 'they poison us for profit' or 'my pledge is to…').

Figures 31 and 32, below, indicate the top 5 types of inscribed and invoked evaluation, respectively.

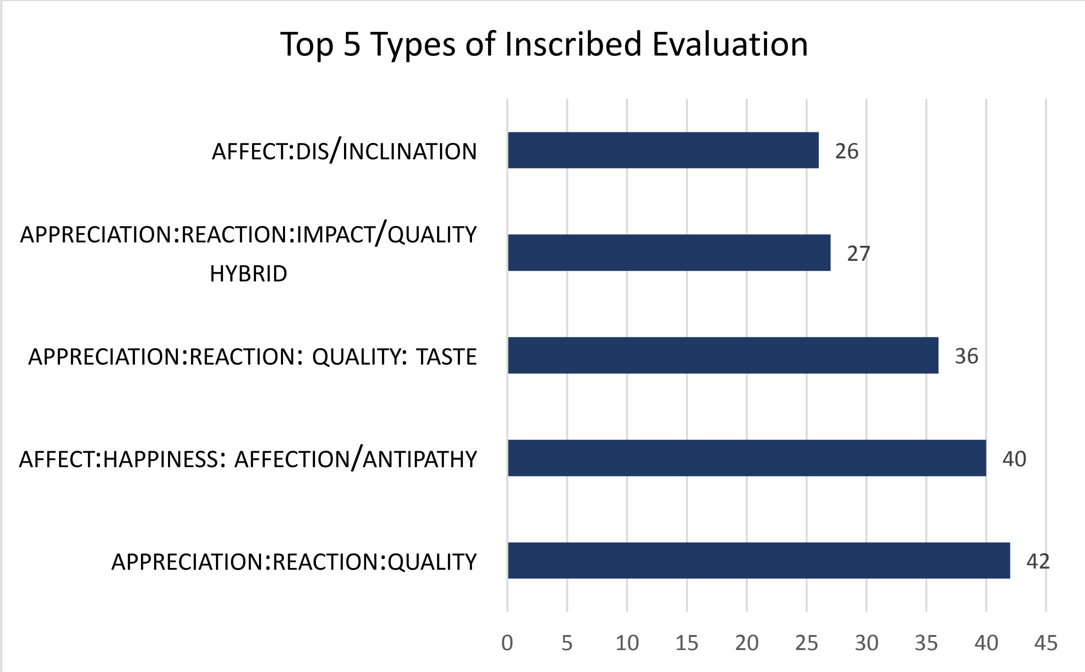

Figure 31: Top 5 types of inscribed evaluation

In Figure 31, above, the five most frequent categories of inscribed evaluation are listed in ascending order. The most frequent inscribed evaluation is APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY, which tends to involve words such as 'the best', 'my favourite', or 'lovely', and all evaluations in this category are directed at the product as the target.

The next most frequent type of inscribed evaluation is AFFECT:HAPPINESS:AFFECTION/ANTIPATHY, which is typically directed toward the product target and involves specific words such as 'love', 'like', or 'hate'.

The category of APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY:TASTE, predictably, is always directed toward a product target, and includes words such as 'delicious' and 'yummy'.

The APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID category is not a double-coded category, but rather, realises features of both impact (do I want it) and quality (do I like it) – in other words, it can be understood as wanting something because one likes its qualities, which is indicated with words such as 'mmm' and 'that looks tasty'.

Finally, the fifth most frequent type of inscribed evaluation is AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION, which occurs nearly equally between a brand/product target, and an 'other' target. Words used to indicate this evaluation are 'I want', 'I need', and 'I would like'.

In summary, most of the inscribed evaluation is directed toward a product, and is concerned with either QUALITY (APPRECIATION) or HAPPINESS (AFFECT).

Figure 32, below, represents the five most frequent categories of invoked evaluation.

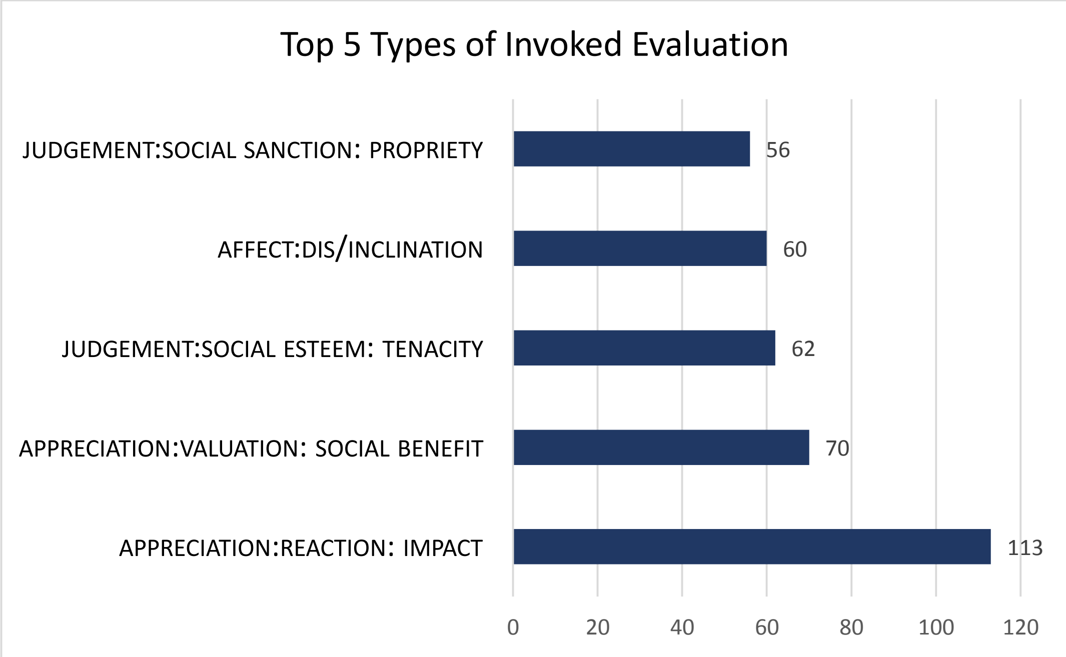

Figure 32: Top 5 types of invoked evaluation

Figure 32, above, indicates that the five most frequent categories of invoked evaluation are APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT (113 instances, or 11% of the overall evaluations in the corpus), APPRECIATION:VALUATION:SOCIAL BENEFIT (70 instances, or 7% of the overall evaluations), JUDGEMENT:SOCIAL ESTEEM:TENACITY (62 instances, or 6% of the overall evaluations), AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION (60 instances, or 6% of the overall evaluations), and JUDGEMENT:SOCIAL SANCTION:PROPRIETY (56 instances, or 6% of the overall evaluations).

Because of the implicit nature of these evaluations, their realisations tend to be far more varied than inscribed evaluations. Nevertheless, there are some notable patterns in how these invoked evaluations are made. For example, APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT, the most frequent type of invoked evaluation, occurs in this corpus frequently as the 'secondary' evaluation in a double-coded evaluation (discussed in further detail in this chapter, below). As discussed above in the description of the most frequent inscribed evaluations, a comment where an individual writes 'I want/need chocolate' is coded as an inscribed AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION evaluation. However, that is the primary evaluation whilst the secondary evaluation is APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT (or – 'did it grab me?'). So, in addition to being the secondary evaluation for all AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION evaluations to do with products, this most prevalent type of invoked evaluation can occur as a positive response to the offer of a product (e.g., Offer: 'Would you like some chocolate?' Response: 'Yes please'). It can also occur as the secondary evaluation of a statement such as: "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by…", where the primary (invoked) evaluation is JUDGEMENT:TENACITY of self (i.e., 'I am a resolute person'), and the secondary evaluation is APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT of a non-finite behaviour (i.e., 'getting out in nature more "grabs me"'). The method for quantifying these double-coded evaluations is detailed in Section 3.4.4.

Related to the above example, the second most prevalent category of invoked ATTITUDE is APPRECIATION:SOCIAL VALUE. This evaluation occurs frequently in conjunction with the other evaluations implicit in the statement, "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by…". In addition to the evaluations described above, a third evaluation is invoked here, which is APPRECIATION:SOCIAL VALUE of nature – that is, nature is implicitly evaluated as being beneficial for being 'worthwhile', 'valuable', or 'priceless', particularly for its beneficial qualities for personal 'balance'.

As mentioned in the discussion above, the invoked evaluation of JUDGEMENT:TENACITY is significant in this corpus, and is the third most prevalent type of invoked evaluation. In this corpus, this tends to be a positive evaluation directed toward the self, and is realised through the announcement of pledges, resolutions, and brand, product, or ingredient boycotts.

In summary, a consideration of invoked evaluation provides rich detail in terms of the identity performances that individuals make 'between the lines', or as layers of meaning underlying more explicit instances of evaluation.

Genre and Appraisal: Brand promotion focus and response evaluation

As discussed throughout this thesis and in sections 4.1 and 4.2, identity is performed linguistically through a number of strategies, and in order to adequately contextualise responses, the stimulus must be considered. In this section, I present Appraisal results based on groupings of brand posts as described in the genre analysis section of this chapter. In doing this, I demonstrate how the type and target of ATTITUDE evaluations appears to have significant correlation with the promotional focus of the brand post. In doing so, I do not aim to comment on the specific promotional strategies of brands, but instead to show how individuals respond to certain 'types' of marketing messages.

As mentioned in Section 4.1.1, Table 32, the three categories of the brand posts are: product emphasis, culture emphasis, and dual product/culture emphasis.

In product emphasis brand posts, the product is the most salient component of the post. This is usually done visually, and the accompanying text may generally refer to an aspect of culture, but the post is very clearly a product promotion. In this corpus, seven of the eighteen brand posts fall into this category. The target and polarity of the evaluation in these data sets is depicted in Figure 33, below.

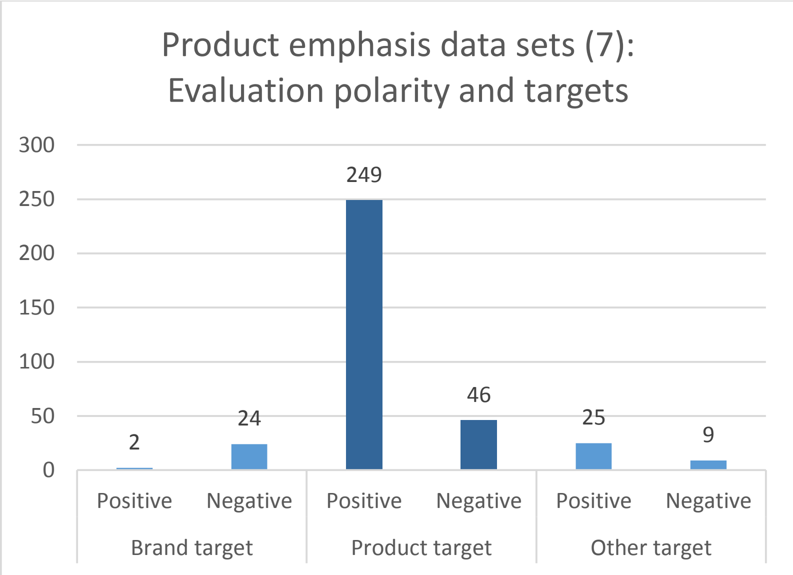

Figure 33: Product emphasis data sets: evaluation polarity and targets

Figure 33, above, clearly shows a high prevalence of positive evaluation with the product as target, while all other categories are relatively insignificant in comparison. In other words, this indicates that in posts where the product is saliently represented, the responses tend to focus on the product with positive evaluation.

Figure 34, below, represents the evaluations in responses to brand posts where some aspect of culture is the primary emphasis, and the product is either not represented in the post or is very much foreshadowed by the cultural emphasis.

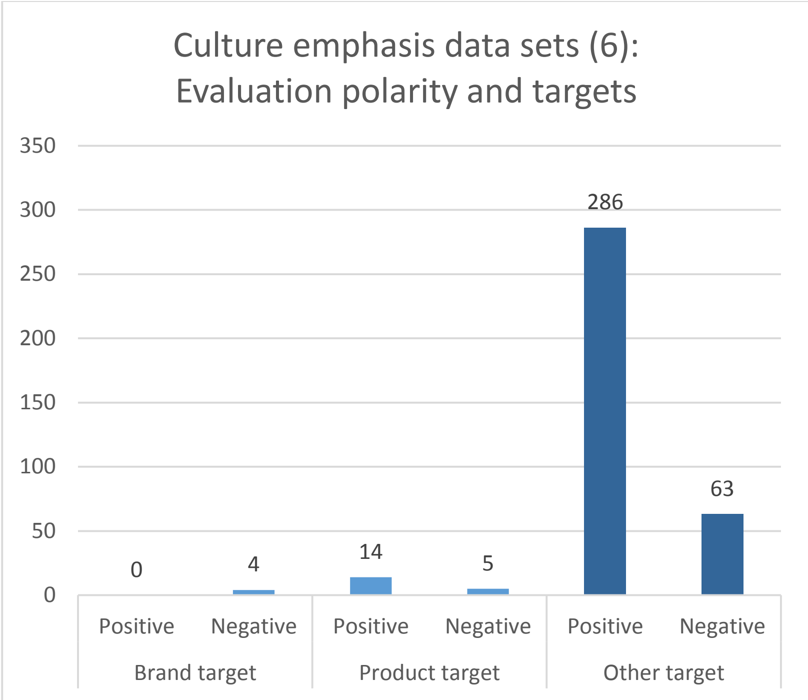

Figure 34: Culture emphasis data sets: evaluation polarity and targets

Figure 34, above, indicates, similarly to Figure 33, before, that the target of the evaluation in responses is consistent with the focus within the brand post, and that the majority of evaluations are positive.

Figure 35, below, represents the evaluations in responses to brand posts where both the product and a cultural aspect have significant focus within the brand post.

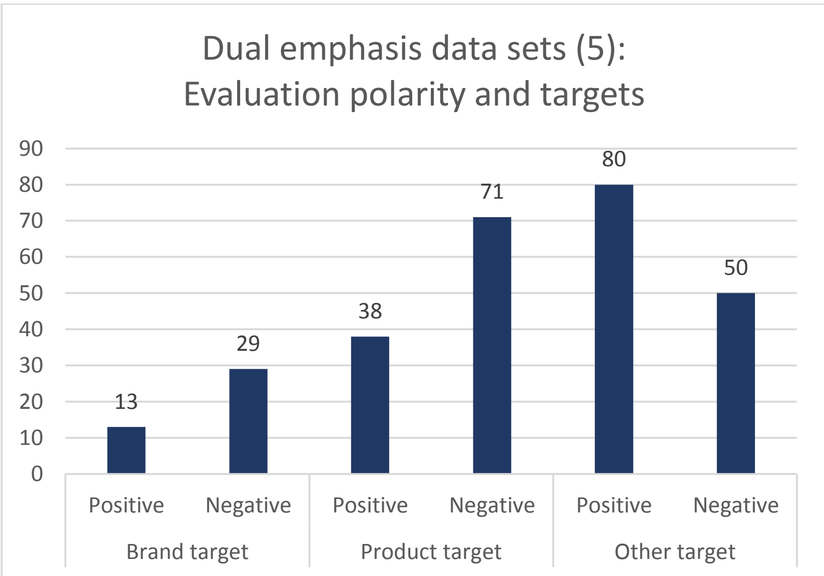

Figure 35: Dual culture and product emphasis data sets: evaluation polarity and targets

Figure 35, above, indicates that the target of the evaluation in responses is far more varied than those found in the product- or culture-focussed brand posts. Also, there is a more varied mix between positive and negative evaluations.

In summary, the findings presented in Figures 33, 34, and 35 demonstrate that there is correlation between the target of evaluations in responses and the promotional strategies employed within brand posts. That is, if the brand post introduces a topic that is in no (obvious) way relevant to one of its products, the responses to the brand post tend to focus on non-product targets. The same is true with product-promotional brand posts; responses focus on products. It is only in the dual-focussed brand posts that there is significant variety of polarity and target of evaluation.

This finding reinforces the primary findings of the Negotiation analysis, which is that the majority of responses consist of evaluations of the topic/entity introduced within the brand post, even when that target does not have any direct relationship to the brand or product.

In the next sections, the results for the three attitudinal categories of AFFECT, APPRECIATION, and JUDGEMENT are presented in further detail.

4.3.2 AFFECT

Overall, AFFECT constitutes 21% of the overall evaluations in this corpus. Figure 36, below, represents the specific types and polarity of AFFECT evaluations that occur within this corpus.

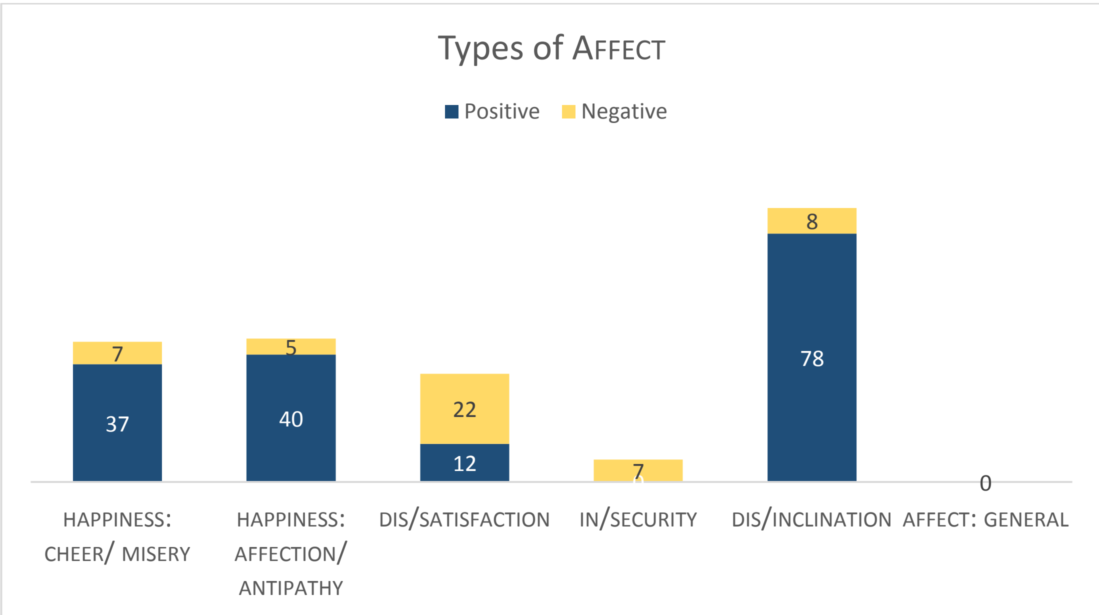

Figure 36: Types of AFFECT (results)

Given that the corpus consists of responses to product advertising, it is perhaps unsurprising that the most frequent category of AFFECT is INCLINATION (generally realised as desire), as the ultimate purpose of marketing/advertising is to create desire for products. This is coded as a separate evaluation from APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT, although the latter is typically coded as the secondary, invoked evaluation 'attached' to an AFFECT:INCLINATION evaluation.

The category of HAPPINESS, however, occurs slightly more frequently in this corpus (89 instances, or 41% of all AFFECT evaluations, compared to 86 instances, or 40% of all AFFECT evaluations for DIS/INCLINATION). Because the category has been 'split' to a finer level of delicacy, in Figure 36, above, it is not immediately visually apparent that it is more prevalent than DIS/INCLINATION. Indeed, the finer level of delicacy in this case is warranted as there is a nearly equal split between HAPPINES:CHEER/MISERY (generally realised as un/happiness 'in me') and HAPPINESS:AFFECTION/ANTIPATHY (generally realised as un/happiness 'directed outwards').

Within the corpus, AFFECT:HAPPINESS accounts for 9% of all ATTITUDE evaluations, as does AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION. The majority of both of these categories is positive evaluation.

When the results for the AFFECT category are further broken down to show the 'target' (or, in the case of AFFECT, the 'cause', or trigger of the emotion), another story emerges, as demonstrated in Figure 37, below.

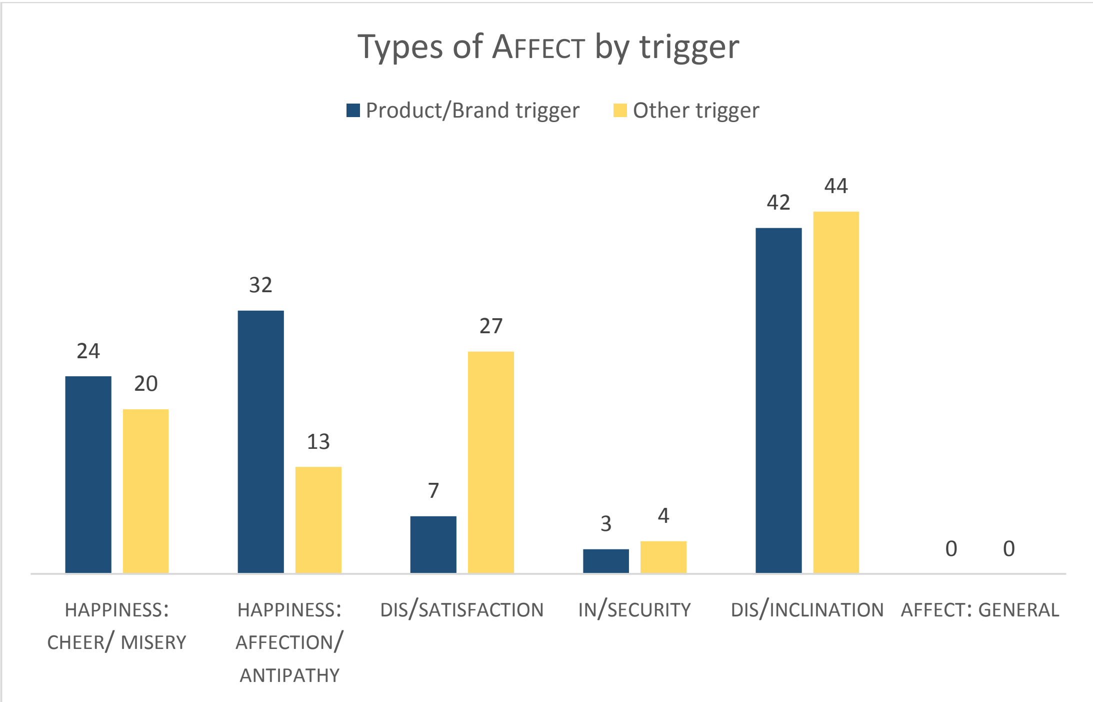

Figure 37: Types of AFFECT by trigger

Exactly half of the AFFECT evaluations in this corpus are triggered by a brand/product, while the other half is triggered by an 'other' target. Figure 37, above, represents a comparison of the two major trigger categories for each type of AFFECT.

As briefly discussed above, for responses to brand marketing to have a significant number of AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION evaluations is unsurprising; however, Figure 37, above, which accounts for trigger, suggests a more complicated story. More than half of the time, the trigger of AFFECT:DIS/INCLINATION is not the product/brand, but is an 'other' trigger. That is, more than half of the 'desire' and 'aversion' in this corpus is potentially only incidentally related to the product or the brand, if at all.

While DIS/INCLINATION and HAPPINESS:CHEER/MISERY are relatively evenly triggered by the brand/product or an 'other' trigger, HAPPINESS:AFFECTION/ANTIPATHY is far more likely to be triggered by the brand/product, and DIS/SATISFATION is far more likely to be triggered by the 'other' category.

Oerall, the proportion of AFFECT with a brand trigger vs. non-brand trigger is 50:50, with each accounting for 11% of the overall ATTITUDE evaluations within the corpus. In other words, the emotional responses within responses to brand posts are only related to the brand/product half of the time, which supports arguments made elsewhere in this thesis that the identity performances are varied and relate to consumer preferences as well as other phenomena.

4.3.3 APPRECIATION

Overall, APPRECIATION constitutes 55% of the overall evaluations in this corpus. At one further level of delicacy, the APPRECIATION:REACTION evaluations account for 35% of the evaluations in the corpus, while the APPRECIATION:VALUATION evaluations account for 17% of the overall corpus. Figure 38, below, represents the specific types and polarity of APPRECIATION evaluations at the finest level of delicacy considered within this analysis.

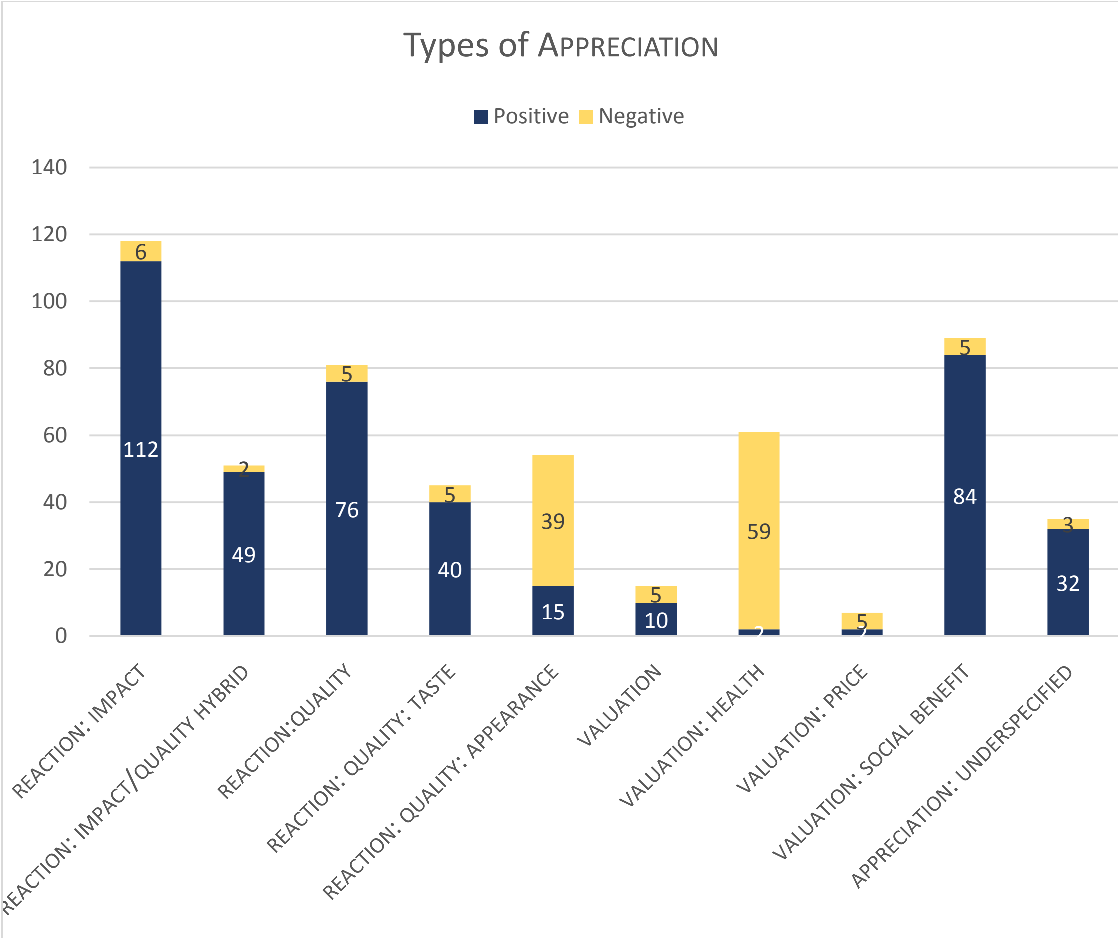

Figure 38: Types of APPRECIATION (results)

The most notable APPRECIATION categories, as demonstrated in Figure 38, above, are REACTION:IMPACT, VALUATION:SOCIAL BENEFIT, and REACTION:QUALITY. Each of these three categories is comprised of predominantly positive evaluations.

The category of VALUATION:HEALTH has been added to the ATTITUDE system network for its specific relevance to this corpus, as it consists of discourse relating to snack foods. Although 2/3 of the brand posts and comments relate to 'unhealthy' products (crisps and chocolate), 1/3 relates to snack foods generally perceived as 'healthy' (yogurt and granola bars). Given this, it is perhaps surprising that there are only 2 instances of positive evaluation for the VALUATION:HEALTH category, compared to 59 instances of negative evaluation in this category.

Another category represented infrequently is VALUATION:PRICE, with only 6 occurrences; this is an indication that in this discourse, although initiated by brand marketing, responses are not generally concerned with 'point-of-purchase' evaluations, which would most obviously be concerned with evaluations of price, payment, and availability.

Figure 39, below, represents the breakdown of APPRECIATION by general target groups.

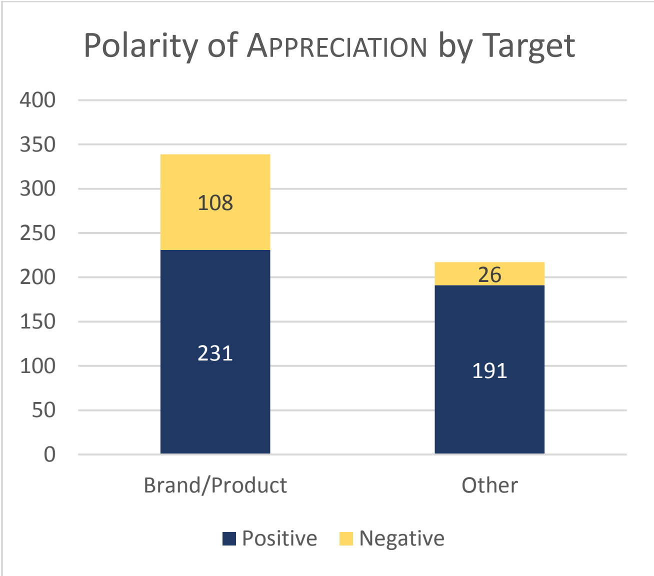

Figure 39: Polarity of APPRECIATION by target

The majority of the APPRECIATION in the corpus, 61%, is directed toward the brand/product target, with the other 39% directed towards all 'other' targets. As with the target analysis in other ATTITUDE categories, this indicates that while responses to brand posts do very often concern the brand or product that initiated the interaction, in many cases, the discourse involves stance-taking language that is not obviously connected to product consumption, such as negative self-evaluation of (body) appearance and the positive evaluation of values-based 'concepts' such as nature and family bonds.

In summary, the APPRECIATION system is most often used within this corpus to express and share sentiments relating to the evaluation of things. In particular, this corpus includes many comments concerning REACTION: QUALITY and VALUATION of snack food products, but there are also a notable number of evaluations relating to more abstract entities and 'performances' such as non-finite behaviours.

4.3.4 JUDGEMENT

In relation to the corpus as a whole, the category of JUDGEMENT is significant in that it comprises 237 instances of evaluation, or 23% of the total evaluations in the corpus. Figure 40, below, represents the specific types and polarity of JUDGEMENT within this corpus.

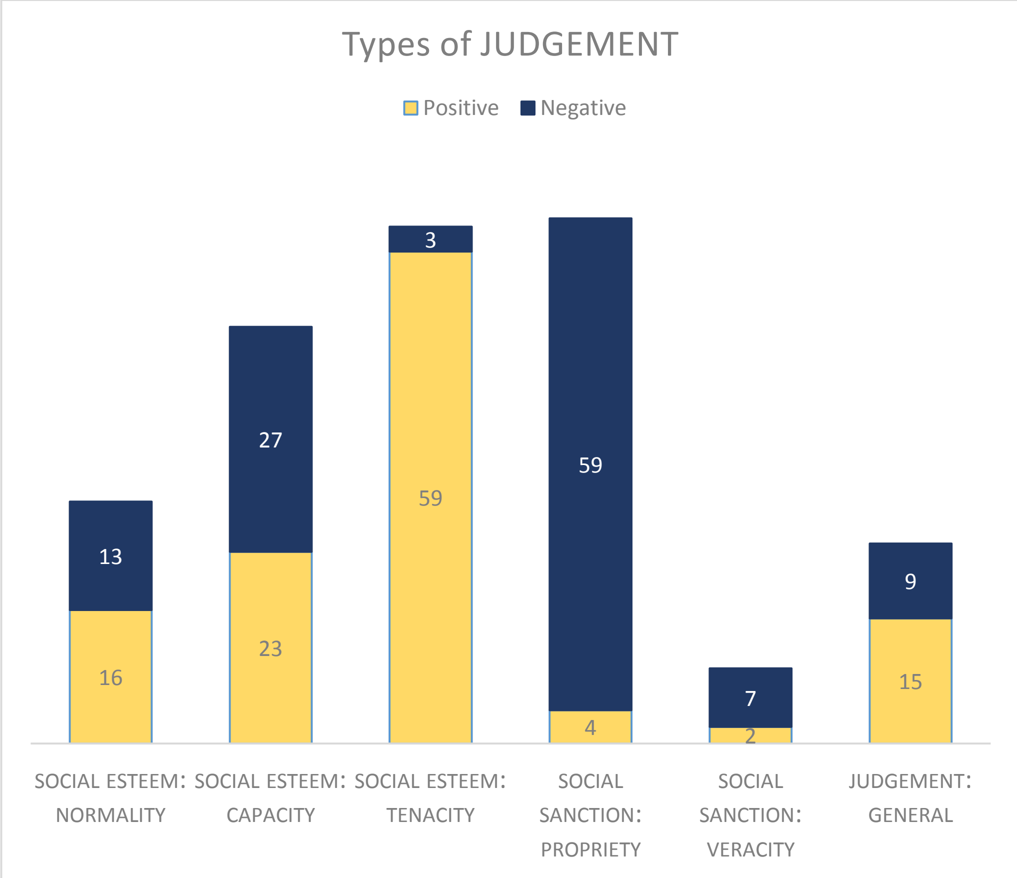

Figure 40: Types of JUDGEMENT (results)

The two most prevalent JUDGEMENT categories, with nearly equal numbers of evaluation, are SOCIAL SANCTION:PROPRIETY and SOCIAL ESTEEM:TENACITY. Each of these categories accounts for 6% of the total evaluations in the corpus. While the SOCIAL SANCTION:PROPRIETY category comprises primarily negative JUDGEMENTS, the SOCIAL ESTEEM:TENACITY category comprises primarily positive JUDGEMENTS. The potential significance of this is discussed briefly below, with target taken into consideration as well.

When the results are separated by target, as shown in Figures 41 and 42, below, a clearer picture of the functions of JUDGEMENT within this corpus emerges.

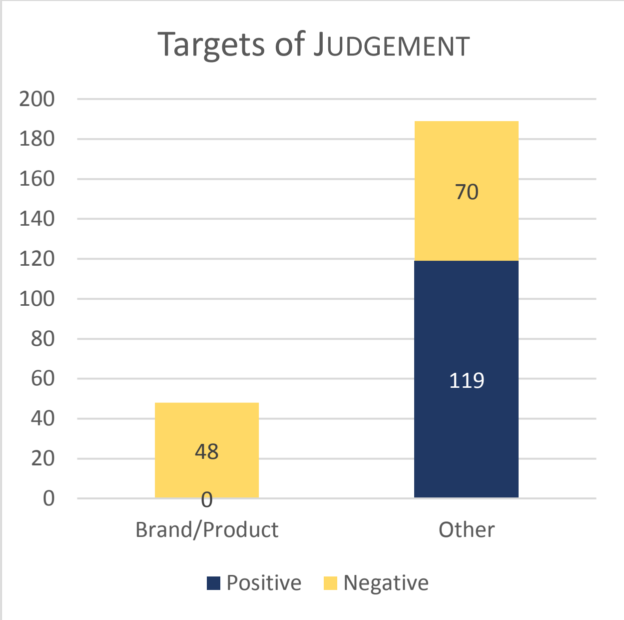

Figure 41: Targets of JUDGEMENT

As shown in Figure 41, above, all instances of positive JUDGEMENT have non-brand targets. That is, there are no positive JUDGEMENT evaluations of the brand, which is, in this case, often metonymically referred to and conceived of as a corporation of 'behaving' individuals.

Figure 42, below, represents further detail, as it includes type of JUDGEMENT by target.

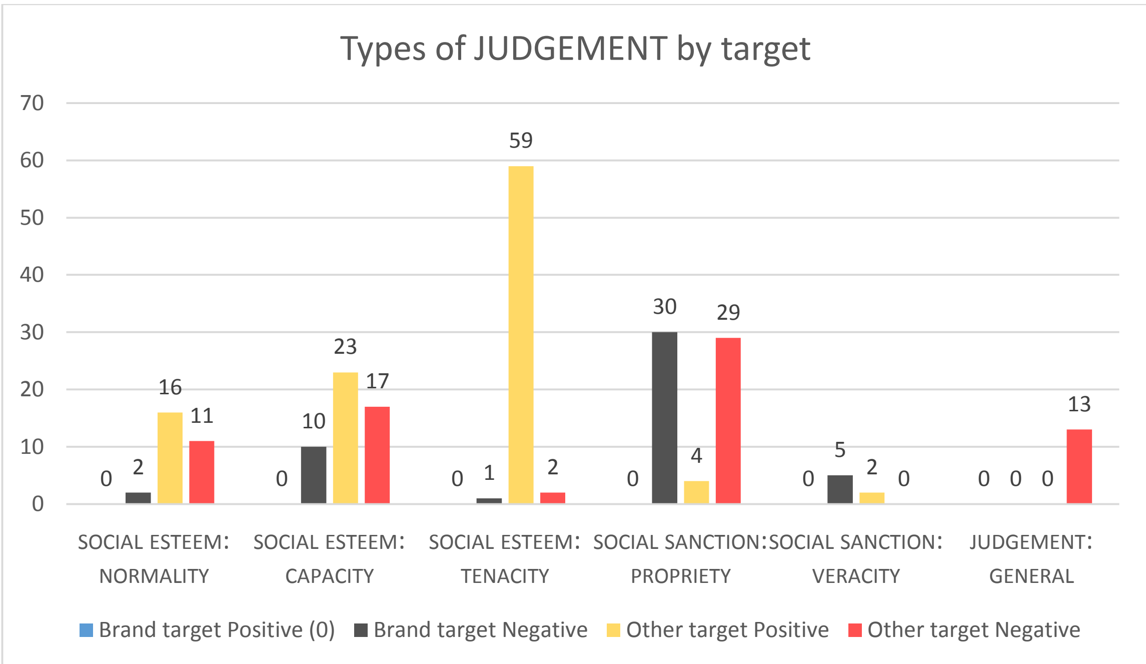

Figure 42: Types of JUDGEMENT by target

Figure 42, above, clearly shows a single most prominent category of JUDGEMENT by target, which is TENACITY directed towards 'other' targets. This accounts for 6% of all evaluations in this corpus, and is mostly positive JUDGEMENT directed towards the self (implicitly), through proclamation of pledges, goals, boycotts, and resolutions.

The next two most prominent categories, which occur approximately equally within the corpus, are negative SOCIAL SANCTION:PROPRIETY, directed to the brand, and to other targets. In the case of the brand target, this often relates to the brand as a corporation of individuals who choose to use GMO ingredients in the brand products, which is considered by many commenters to amount to 'poisoning' the public. The negative SOCIAL SANCTION:PROPRIETY evaluations toward other targets tends to consist of anti-GMO commenters, 'shaming' the general public for not standing up to/boycotting GMO products and companies.

4.3.5 Additional and combined ATTITUDE results

In sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, and 4.3.4, the results of Appraisal analysis were individually presented for each of the three major ATTITUDE categories, with some results including polarity and target analysis. Figure 43, below, lists the 10 most frequent types of ATTITUDE, taking into account the most delicate level of ATTITUDE analysis considered within this analysis, polarity, and target of evaluation.

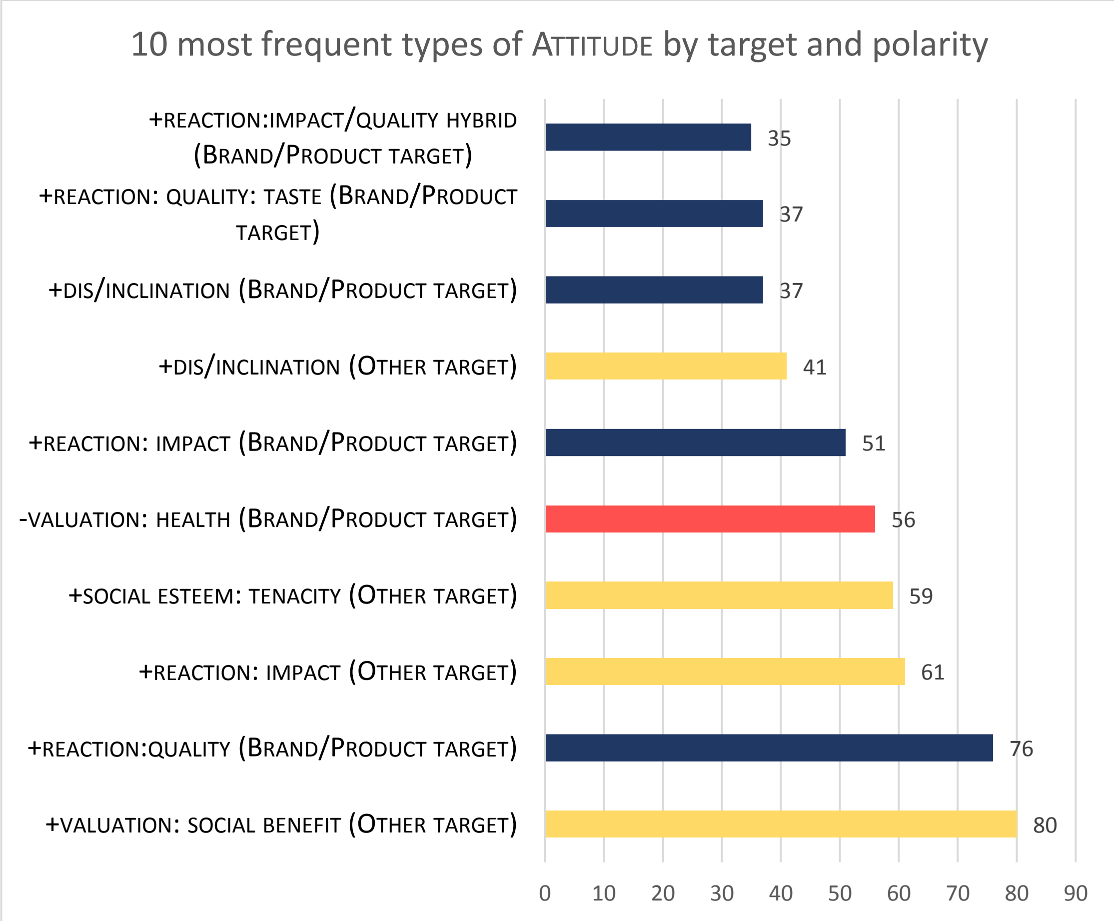

Figure 43: 10 most frequent types of ATTITUDE by target and polarity

When ATTITUDE category, polarity, and target are all taken into consideration, a more precise picture of the evaluative language in this corpus emerges. As shown in Figure 43, above, 9 of the 10 most frequent categories in this configuration are positive evaluations, with the single negative category being negative VALUATION: HEALTH, directed toward the brand/product (shown in medium red). The figure also shows that 5 of the 10 categories are positive evaluations directed toward the brand (shown in dark blue), with the other 4 positive evaluations directed toward other targets (shown in light yellow). There are 7 sub-categories within the APPRECIATION system, 2 within the AFFECT system, and 1 within the JUDGEMENT system.

The analysis has shown clear trends in evaluation, which is also the case here. Overall, Figure 43 indicates that positive evaluation, and APPRECIATION are the most prevalent evaluative trends at this more delicate level of analysis. However, the variety of type of evaluation and target indicate that despite the positive APPRECIATION trend at this level of analysis, the evaluations in this corpus are complex, rather than homogenous.

It is, nevertheless, possible that there is a relative homogeneity in evaluation at the level of the individual data set, rather than corpus-wide. Indeed, the many trends identified in this analysis could be indications of 'clusters' of similar evaluations types around particular topics or even brands, which are individually considerably different in focus, despite their common theme of originating from snack food brands. Figure 44, below, is a presentation of data collected to address this question. The figure shows the percentage of evaluations within each data set that are categorised in the top 3 out of 44 possible ATTITUDE categories (each sub-type of ATTITUDE, plus polarity).

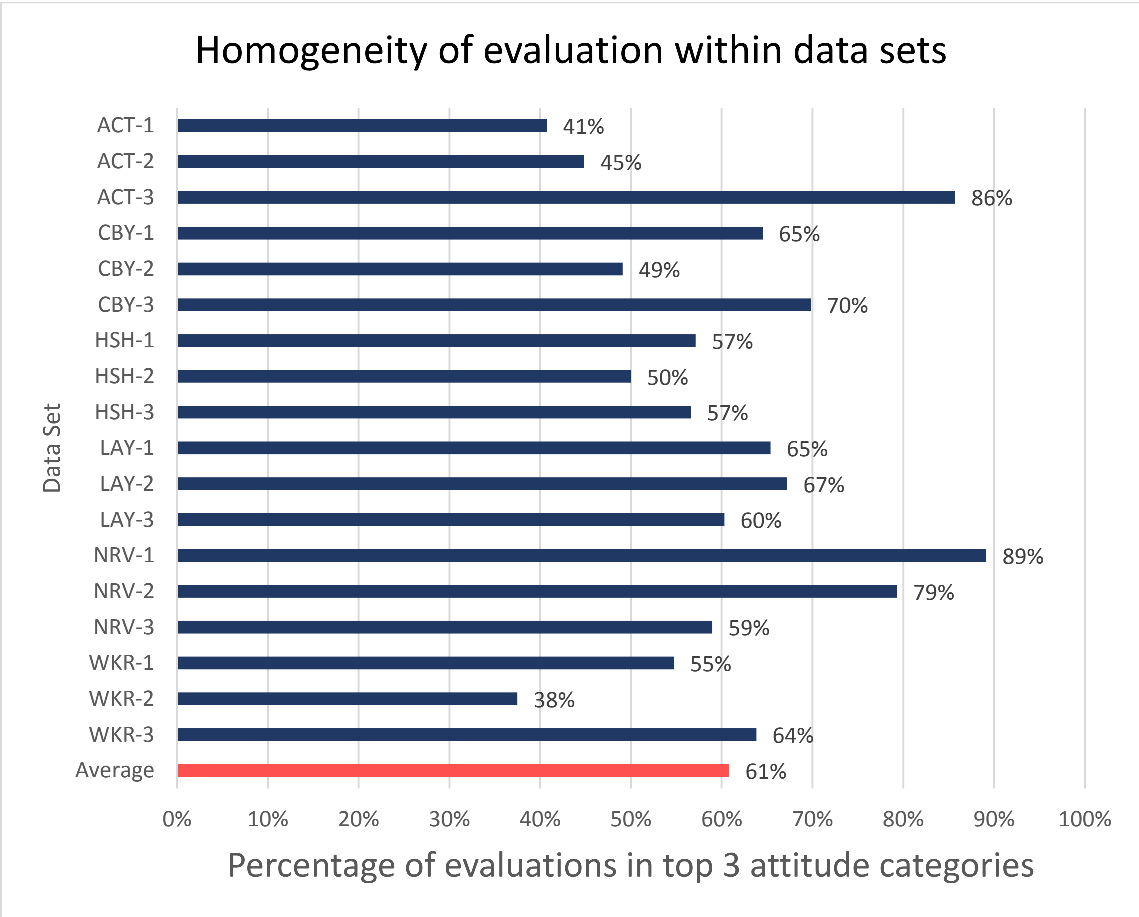

Figure 44: Homogeneity of evaluation within data sets

Figure 44, above, then, does indicate a high level of homogeneity within each data set; it shows that on average, 61% of evaluations are categorised within just 7% of the possible ATTITUDE categories (the top 3 occurring within that data set, out of 44 possible categories, divided by the total evaluations in that data set). The finding that most evaluation within a given data set falls within just a few categories may indicate that the manipulation of brands is 'working'. On the other hand, there is room for dissent, and indeed, there are instances in this corpus where the homogeneity of responses is counter to what the brand would want. Regardless of the potential reasons, the analysis has demonstrated that responses within data sets are relatively streamlined.

Double-coded evaluations

The final consideration in the Appraisal data analysis is double-coded evaluations, which have been mentioned throughout this chapter. As stated earlier, these evaluations are 'double-coded' ATTITUDE evaluations, which may include an inscribed and an invoked evaluation, two invoked evaluations, or potentially (although this did not occur in this corpus) two inscribed evaluations.

A basic example of an inscribed and invoked hybrid evaluations is the statement, 'I love this chocolate!'. The word 'love' carries a positive inscribed evaluation of AFFECT:HAPPINESS:AFFECTION, triggered by 'chocolate' (or the image of chocolate). The statement as a whole also carries an invoked evaluation of positive APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY, with the chocolate as the target.

Figure 45, below, represents single, or 'solo' evaluations, compared to 'double-coded' evaluations.

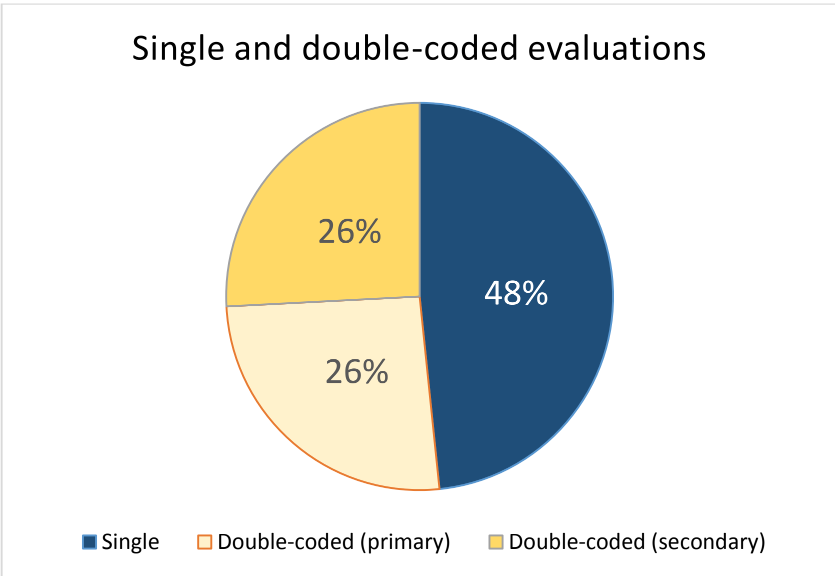

Figure 45: Single and double-coded evaluations

Figure 45 indicates that single evaluations account for less than half of the total evaluations in the corpus, while 'primary' and 'secondary' double-coded evaluations each account for 26%, or 52% together.

It is interesting that in this analysis, over half of evaluations are identified as being double-coded, because this density of evaluation potentially shows that the communication in this discourse is highly oriented towards identity performance through stance-taking language. Of course, a comparative study considering different discourse types would be required to make conclusive claims along these lines. However, other Appraisal studies, and in particular Martin & White (2005: 60) place little emphasis on double-coded evaluations, for example, claiming that “there is a small set of attitudinal lexis which arguably construes both AFFECT and JUDGEMENT at the same time”. If that is the case in most, or other discourse, it certainly does not appear to be within this corpus.

Figure 46, below, highlights the frequency of category combination (e.g., AFFECT/JUDGEMENT).

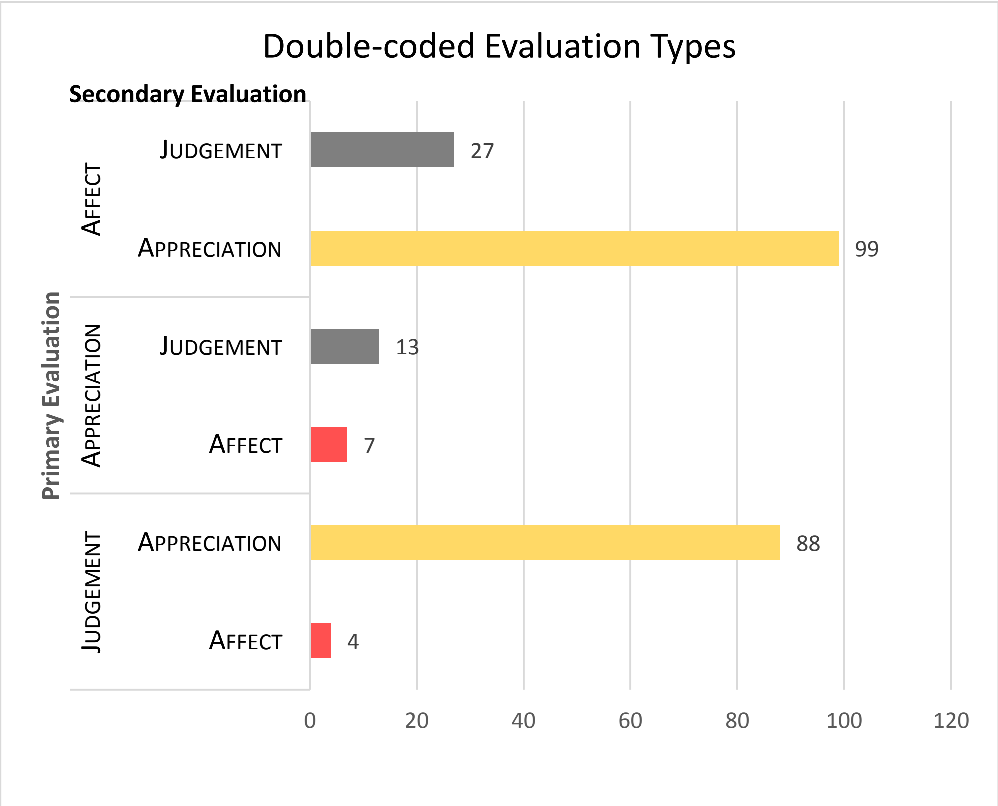

Figure 46: Hybrid evaluation types

The figure above highlights, in particular, that APPRECIATION is very often the secondary evaluation ‘underneath’ either AFFECT or JUDGEMENT, while it very infrequently occurs as a primary evaluation to which another category of evaluation is secondary.

Figure 47, below, lists the 5 most frequent hybrid evaluations by specific ATTITUDE categories.

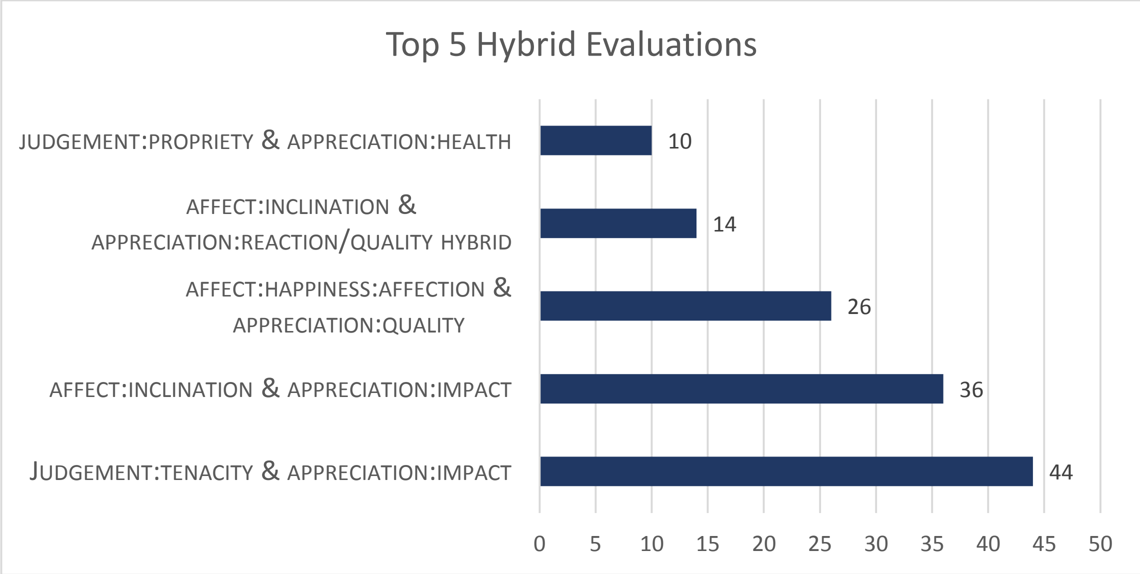

Figure 47: Top 5 hybrid evaluations

In Figure 47, above, the results depict the number of times that a specific combination occurred; this means that, for example, the largest category of JUDGEMENT:TENACITY & APPRECIATION:IMPACT occurred 44 times, which constitutes 88 separate evaluations. As such, this particular combination accounts for 9% of all evaluations in the corpus, whilst the next most frequent combination accounts for 7%. These combined categories are an important feature of this corpus, as they may provide insight into how our feelings about people (AFFECT and JUDGEMENT) are layered with evaluations of 'things' (APPRECIATION) in order to use marketing-centred discourse for personal identity performances.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has included a presentation of the results from the genre, Negotiation, and Appraisal analyses. While each layer of analysis provides different insights into the corpus as a whole, when considered together, the complexity of the discourse in the corpus is apparent.

The genre analysis findings indicate that there are three main 'types' of brand post: those that emphasise products, those that emphasise some aspect of culture (but not products), and those that take a dual focus on both products and culture. These marketing strategies are realised through a number of genre elements enacting various communicative purposes, including appealing to the senses, associating with values and traditions, and eliciting responses from an audience. The communicative purposes of responses, however, are nearly evenly split between consumer-based goals, and non-consumer, social goals, such as sharing banter with friends and engaging in cultural discussions.

Following the genre analysis, this chapter included the findings of the Negotiation analysis. While the genre analysis indicates that approximately half of the responses do not relate to consumer identities, the Negotiation analysis indicates that the majority (60%) of responses are replies to or continuations of topics introduced by the brand post. This indicates that even if the brand is not primarily the focus of the majority of responses, responders do appear to prefer to align with the content of the brand post, if not with the brand itself.

The results from the Appraisal analysis, which is the most detailed of the three layers of analysis, indicate that over half of the evaluation in the corpus is APPRECIATION, and the majority of the APPRECIATION in the corpus, 61%, is directed toward the brand/product target. Meanwhile, JUDGEMENT tends to be positive and directed toward non-brand targets, such as the self; there are no instances of positive JUDGEMENT directed toward the brand. AFFECT is exactly equally distributed between the brand/product as a target, and non-brand/product targets. There are a number of notable categories of evaluation which are potentially revealing in terms of identity performance.

Furthermore, the Appraisal analysis findings indicate that within data sets, or 'response threads', the appraisal is fairly homogenous. This may be a reflection of the Negotiation finding, that the majority of responses are continuations of the topics introduced in the brand post. This would explain the high number of instances of particular categories of evaluation, if particular topics dialogically tend to lead towards specific types of evaluation (e.g., Nature Valley asks responders how they plan to appreciate nature, which leads to the majority of responses positively evaluating nature).

However, there is another aspect of evaluation indicated by the 'homogeneity' finding, which is that in some data sets, the 'typical' evaluations are not reflections of the prompt made in the brand post (as identified in the genre analysis). Thus, although the results from the three layers of analysis do indicate a high number of responses that 'go along with' the brand posts, which have commercial aims and either overtly or covertly encourage responses to align with the product or brand, there is freedom and variation within responses that indicates that responders often have personal and social evaluative goals that do not obviously correlate to consumer purposes.

Within Chapter 5, I consider these results in a more qualitative light, in order to contextualise the findings in terms of identity performance.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

There are two main questions guiding this research. The first question is empirical in nature: how do individuals perform identity in responses to brand posts?

The second question is methodological in nature: how can these identity performances be described through application of a linguistic research framework?

Both of these questions are dealt with by focussing on three features of this discourse using three related levels of analysis:

- The brand post and responses have purposes that are realised through multimodal discursive features (genre analysis)
- The brand post and responses are dialogic interactions (Negotiation analysis)
- The responders perform identity by evaluating specific people, things, and phenomena which may or may not have been represented in the brand post (Appraisal analysis)

The contributions of each of these layers of analysis are discussed at length throughout this chapter. In Chapter 6, the empirical, theoretical and methodological findings inform an overall discussion of the implications of this research.

5.1 Genre Analysis

The analysis of the corpus begins with a genre analysis in order to describe the appearance and communicative purposes of posts and responses. This analysis details the form and function of the technological and discursive features of the brand posts and responses, which are identified through attention to linguistic and contextual considerations. Importantly, it also highlights the general communicative purposes of both the brand and the responders, and shows how these goals are compatible even when they apparently conflict. This layer of analysis shows how individual genre elements achieve promotional, consumer, social, and interactive purposes, and indicates that this emerging genre constitutes an evolution of modern networked communication.

The genre analysis of this corpus yields three notable findings. Firstly, the communicative purpose of the brand is primarily enacted through genre elements involving branding, product display, referring to cultural and social topics, and eliciting responses from the audience. Secondly, the majority of the responses reflect these brand-enacted elements through their own performances of consumer, cultural, and social values. The third empirical finding is that a notable proportion of responses are in apparent conflict with the communicative purposes of the brand. In the following sections of the discussion chapter, I examine each of these three findings in turn.

5.1.1 Social media marketing as an emerging genre

The first finding of the genre analysis relates to the genre structure of the brand post. In terms of identity, this is an important aspect of the study because responders position themselves in relation to the brand post. It is, therefore, important to specify which elements constitute the 'brand position', and how.

As described at length in the Chapter 4, the brand posts have a number of compulsory genre elements, as well as a number of optional elements that are used frequently in various combinations. The genre structure of social media marketing posts is presented in Table 35, below, following the conventions described in Section 3.2.1.

Genre structure of a brand post
Lead~ (Announcement)~ (+Product Display)~ +Branding~ (+Enhancer)~ Brand Hyperlink~ Date~ (User Activity)~ Share-and-Respond Options~ Response(s) to Post~

Table 35: Genre structure of a brand post

Many of the elements within a brand post, as listed above, are constitutive of all Facebook posts, including those created by individual Facebook users. These include standardised elements such as the username and hyperlink (described as Brand Hyperlink above), post date (Date), responses, 'likes', and 'shares' (User Activity), Share-and-Respond Options, and posted content (Lead and Announcement). These elements can be realised through one of a number of available modes, including image, text, and video. Image 29, below, reproduced from Section 3.2.1, represents the genre elements of a typical brand post within the research corpus.

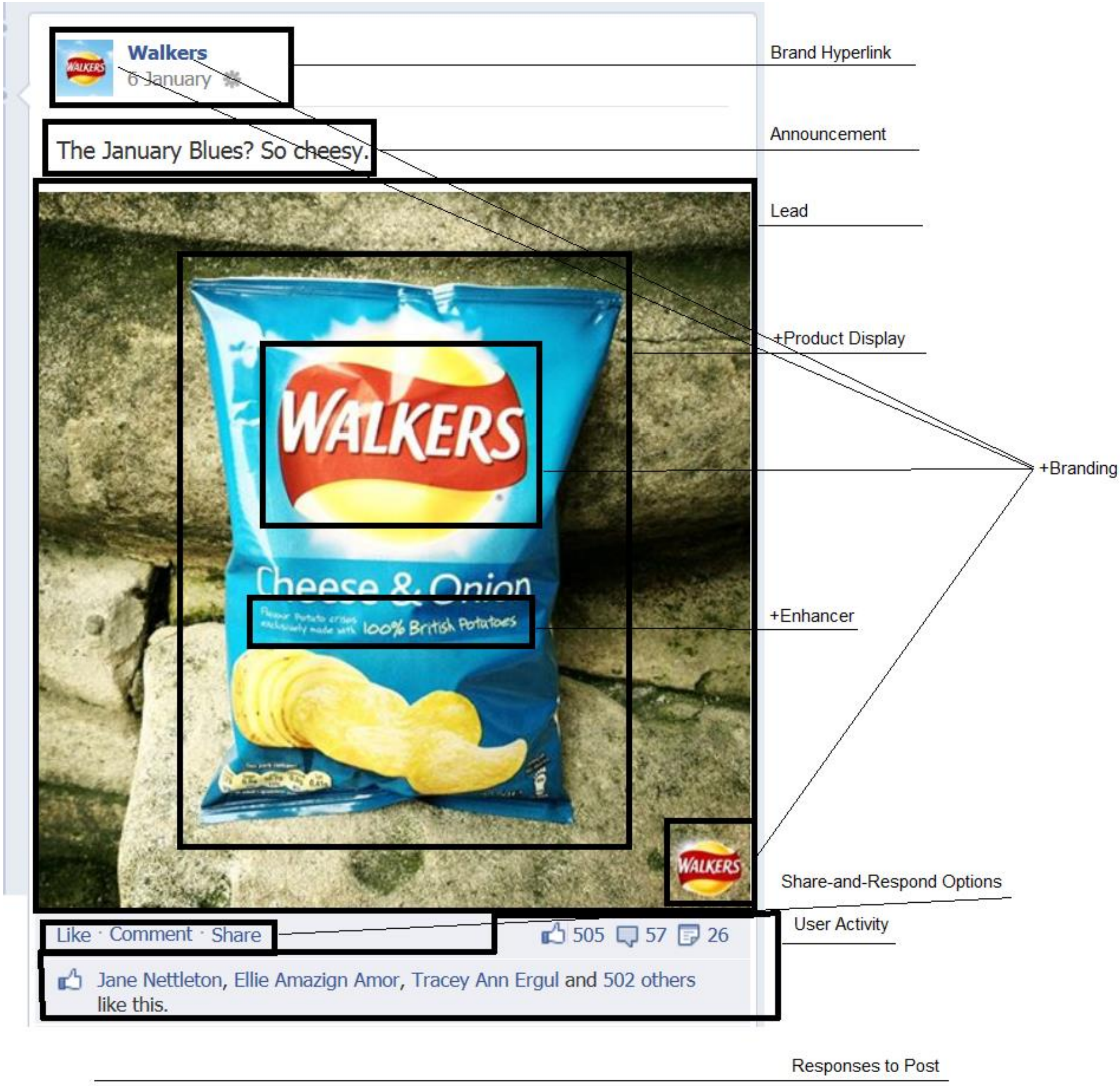

Image 28: Standard genre elements in brand posts [WKR-1-BRAND]

Most of the same, or similar genre elements can be seen in Image 30, below, which is an authentic Facebook user post. Although there are some slight differences in terms of layout, which may be due to changes implemented by Facebook after the brand post was collected, the elements themselves are virtually identical in form and function, with the exception that they relate to an individual, rather than a brand.

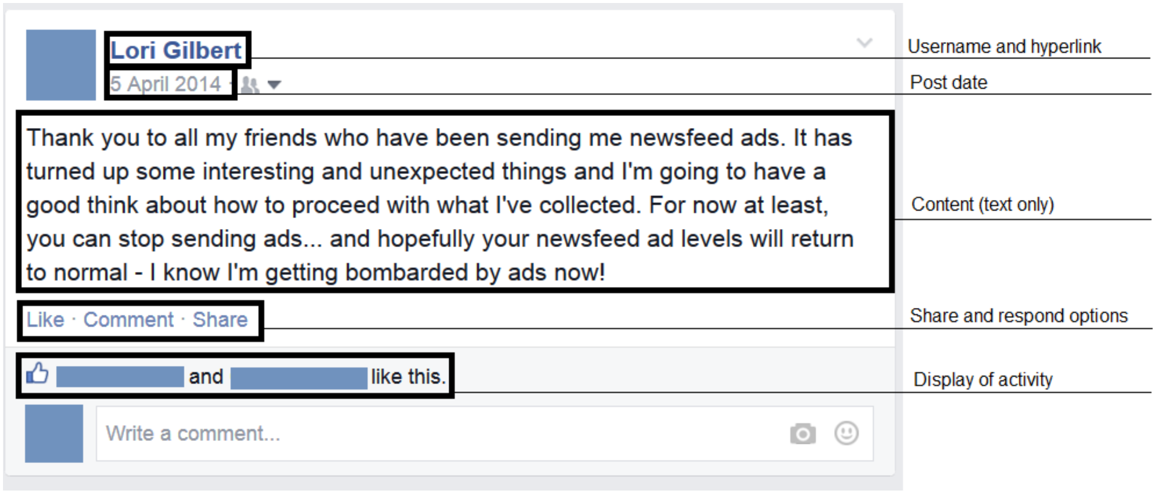

Image 29: Standard genre elements in user post (personal Facebook post)

Although the brand has no control over the layout of the brand post, which constitutes almost all of the genre elements identified in this study, the decision to post news feed content within Facebook constitutes compliance in adopting these elements within the posted content. These features are an important part of the brand post, because they make the post appear and function in the same way as an individual Facebook user's post.

This is noteworthy in that it demonstrates that Facebook brand posts, in terms of genre structure, more closely resemble social media discourse than they do traditional advertising. This is one reason that I argue that social media marketing is an emerging hybrid genre. These marketing messages are not mere placement of advertising within a news feed; rather, they conform to the layout conventions of a given platform (Facebook in this case, but Twitter and other platforms also enforce standardised formatting on marketing posts). This is demonstrated in Images 29 and 30, above, which represent that marketing posts and user posts are virtually the same in terms of layout and function of the majority of features.

Meanwhile, marketing posts enact different overall communicative purposes than the status updates posted by individual users. In particular, the +Branding element is a compulsory element in a brand marketing post, while it is not in an individual user's post. At a minimum, the username (Brand Hyperlink) of the brand post functions as an instance of the embedded +Branding element, while an individual's username (the user's 'real' name, in theory) does not have a branding function. Although all other elements within a brand post could be presented to make a marketing post appear to be a 'friend status update', it is the username (Brand Hyperlink) that effectively enacts a commercial purpose within the post. It provides contextual information to the viewer, who presumably understands that any and every official brand post is, at some level, an instance of marketing or advertising, regardless of whether the content appears to be promoting a product or brand.

Moving from the description of the compulsory elements of a brand post to those that are enacted through the components over which the brand *does* have control – in the case of this corpus, image and text (Lead and Announcement), there are a number of noteworthy characteristics that appear frequently within the genre.

The Lead (i.e., the image, in the case of this corpus) and Announcement (the text presented separately from the image) elements function in cooperation with each other towards a common communicative purpose of associating with an event, tradition, or value by repeating and elaborating ideas across modes. This process typically involves representation of cultural or social context within images and text, with the lexical mode and hyperlinks being key in the elicitation of topic-related responses.

As indicated in Figure 48, below, reproduced from Chapter 4, in brand posts there are clear preferences in using one mode above the other for the representation of 'fans' and the brand/product as main participants.

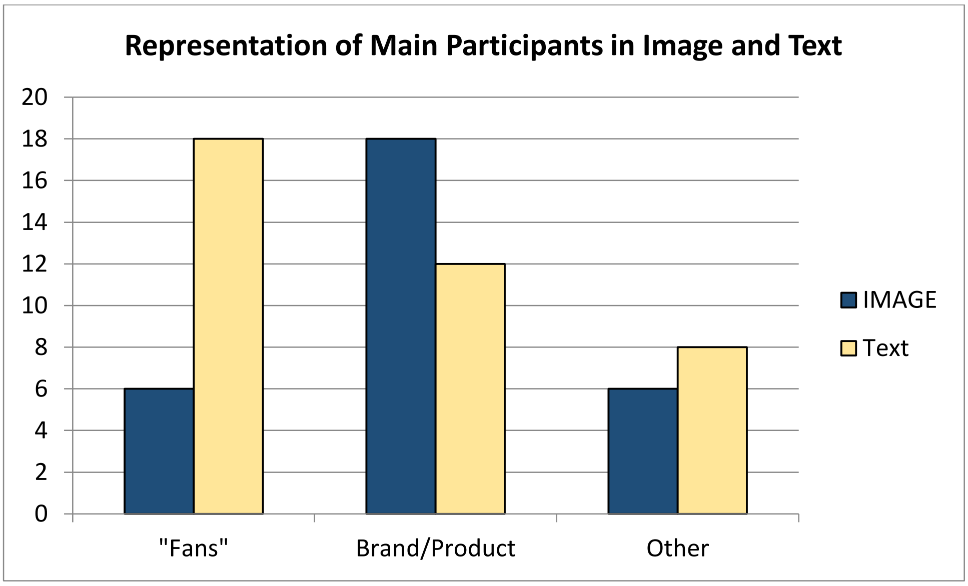

Figure 48: Representation of main participants in images and text

The first graph clearly indicates that the image is more frequently used to feature the brand or the product, while text is far more frequently used to feature a non-brand topic. In other words, the visual mode is preferred by brands to represent the brand or product, while the lexical mode appears to be used to represent other, perhaps more complex, entities. The modes and represented participants across text and image ultimately work in conjunction to fulfil social purposes.

This genre analysis offers insight into the promotional use of different modes of communication in contexts where there is an interactive goal. While the image appears to function as a ‘hook’, the data in this study, perhaps surprisingly, indicates that even in increasingly visual contexts (e.g., social media), lexical representation and linguistic construction of meaning continues to be essential in the multimodal construction of meaning-making processes.

Figure 49, below, reproduced from the Data Analysis chapter, represents the communicative purposes identified in brand posts.

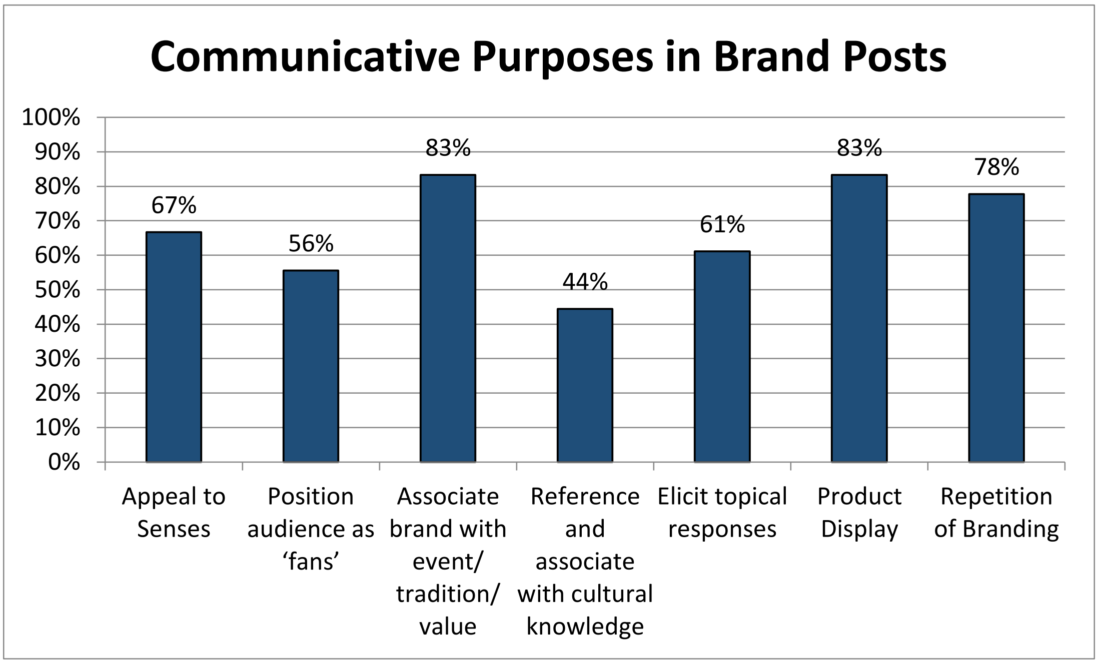

Figure 49: Communicative Purposes in Brand Posts

In considering these communicative purposes, for its absence, it is noteworthy that not a single brand post includes explicit pressure on consumers to purchase any product, such as referring to product price or other retail information, or encouraging purchase. Indeed, the genre structure described in this thesis is adapted from Cheong's (2004) genre analysis of print advertising, and a notable adaptation within the present approach includes the elimination of the genre element of ‘call-and-visit information’ as it does not appear in the corpus.

This is not to say that this does not happen at all in this genre; one of the criteria for data selection specifically eliminated ‘competitions’ and ‘promotions’ from the corpus on the grounds that during the observation phase of the study, these posts were used frequently by specific brands but did not appear to be a widespread strategy amongst brands on Facebook. Furthermore, these types of brand posts tended to elicit particularly homogenous consumer discourse responses.

It would initially appear that this finding is self-selecting – that purchasing information is not present in the corpus because it was exempted from the corpus at the data collection stage. However, the brand posts that were ruled out from inclusion in the corpus were those with a *salient* focus on purchasing information. The significance in this finding, then, is that it appears that brand posts do not tend to include a 'purchase information' element in any marginalised form – it is either of primary salience, or it is left out. This differs from many advertising forms where purchase information may be included in various levels of salience. This potentially indicates that social media marketing has undergone a transformation from the more traditional marketing genres and modes.

However, it may be that this finding emerged from this relatively small corpus due to cultural and contextual factors – for example, perhaps in the case of these popular snack food brands, marketing strategies do not tend to refer to price, availability, or special promotions as individuals are fully aware of where to purchase these products and approximately how much they will cost. Nevertheless, there is potential significance in marketers eschewing the inclusion of purchasing information in this digital context, as this exclusion alludes to, or constructs, semiotic value, rather than tangible value.

Overall, the brand post component of the genre can be described thus: the Lead element (image) and the Announcement element (text) work in conjunction to construct meaning. The Lead is most often used to attract attention to the brand and/or product through representation and/or sensory appeal, and also frequently alludes to a cultural topic. However, the more complex meaning-making processes of referring to specific cultural topics and referring to the role the audience is expected to play are either clarified or are enacted primarily through the lexical mode within the Announcement element. This form of brand post can be seen as an emerging genre as it differs significantly from other genres of advertising by allowing and emphasising audience interaction, and does not include marginalised instances of purchasing information.

5.1.2 Harmonious communicative purposes between brand posts and responses

As the focus of this thesis is on the identity performances of individuals, not brands, the genre analysis of the brand post primarily serves the purpose of describing the conversational context that acts as an initiator, anchor, and forum for these individual identity performances to take place. The brand posts and responses are considered together, as separate elements within a common genre instance. As such, the genre analysis results contribute to the overall aim of this thesis by accounting for the meaning-making processes within the responses themselves, as well as within the responses as part of a complex, multimodal genre instance. The notable finding in this aspect is that the majority of the responses positively reflect the communicative purposes of the brand posts.

Most brand posts contain both cultural references and product references, but the responses within each data set tend to focus on one or the other rather than both. For example, in data set [WKR-3], below, the brand post includes a salient product image as well as a salient focus on a cultural topic. However, only 2 of the 30 comments in the data set refer to the product in any way. A selection of responses is included below.

Image 30: [WKR-3-BRAND]

[WKR-3-18] Yeah very excited and i think they will name him philip charles

[WKR-3-19] nice for the couple im pleased for them but their loads od women giving birth all the time their dont get this it becausses their roalty or no one would give a dame x

[WKR-3-20] HAPPY 4 THEM

[WKR-3-21] should have been a girl :(

[WKR-3-22] Darn it. Now I want some cheese and onion walkers!!!

Another example of the tendency for comment responses to 'trend' in focussing on either the product or the cultural topic is exemplified in data set [LAY-1], below. In this data set, which also has a dual product/culture focus in the brand post, only 5 out of the 30 user comments relate in any way to the football/Super Bowl cultural theme (including [LAY-1-12] and [LAY-1-13], below), while the rest focus on the product.

Image 31: [LAY-1-BRAND]

[LAY-1-8]	eating lays
[LAY-1-9]	My Frito Pie potato chip labor has gotta be the winner.. Please let it be the million dollar winner. Or my Taco Salad in a Bag flavor.. Yum
[LAY-1-10]	I am a lay can't have just one
[LAY-1-11]	I like baked apple cinnamon potato chips!
[LAY-1-12]	Field chip.
[LAY-1-13]	More than just Snacker Bowl.Its' good.Touchdown.

It is beyond the scope of this study to consider cognitive features of discourse, such as motivation for particular response strategies. However, given the frequent dual product/culture focus in brand posts, it does seem unlikely that this level of homogeneity in topic focus across responses would be achieved if responders tended to read only the brand post and not the other comments. In other words, the tendency toward similar topics of focus within responses indicates that even though responders do not often directly engage with each other, responses are contextualised by other responses, as well as by the brand post.

While exchange structure is considered in more detail within the Negotiation analysis in this thesis, the genre analysis more clearly highlights the multiple 'cooperative' dialogic options presented to the audience within multimodal brand posts. Given the frequency with which products are presented saliently, it is perhaps unsurprising that the single largest category of responders' communicative responses is the performance of consumer values (i.e., referring to the product in terms of taste and desirability). However, it is particularly interesting that overall, the majority of responses have non-consumer communicative purposes such as performances of sociocultural values (e.g., family values and traditions, and the evaluation of social norms), and a form of social 'play' where the brand post is recontextualised as a source of wordplay or inside jokes. These communicative purposes are particularly prevalent within data sets where the brand post does not include any salient promotion of products, such as the comments below:

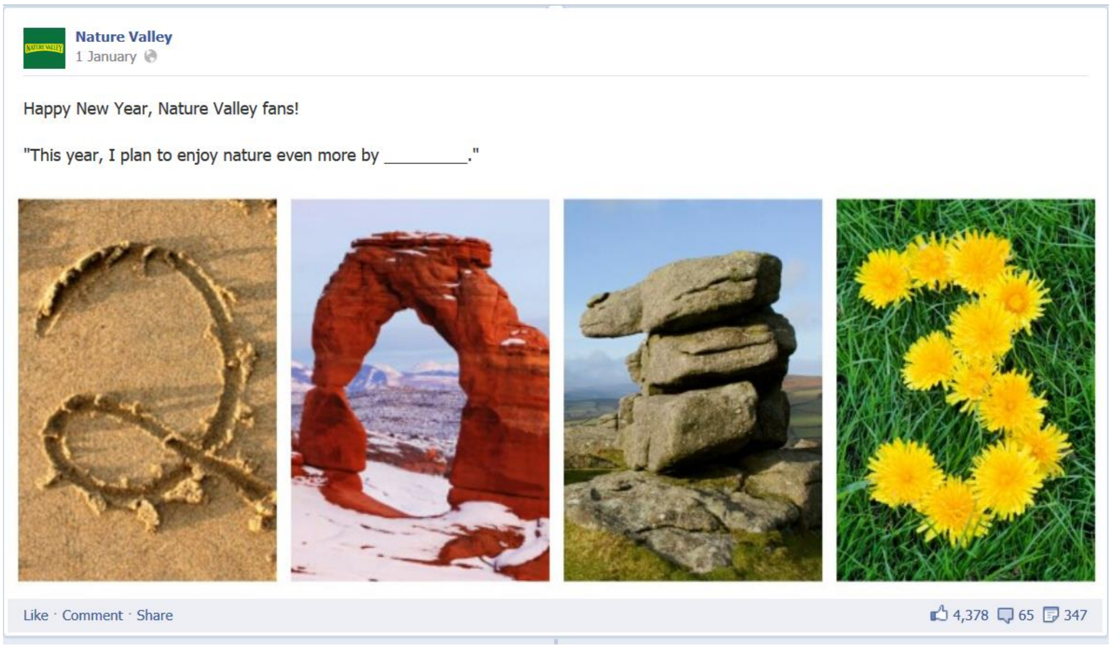

Image 32: [NRV-1-BRAND]

[NRV-1-9]	Going out into the woods more and doing a little traveling with my family
[NRV-1-15]	going outside more and not going to the casino as much
[NRV-1-21]	Noticing God's creation more!
[NRV-1-28]	Working in a community veggie garden and going back to the sit on the beach more.

Image 33: [ACT-3-BRAND]

[ACT-3-9] Be content with sustenance and covering "Never be anxious about what to eat, drink, etc." Bible

[ACT-3-21] A bird in hand is worth many in the bush! LOL

However, non-consumer communicative purposes also appear frequently in responses to brand posts that do promote products saliently, such as the comments below:

Image 34: [CBY-3-BRAND]

[CBY-3-3] It doesn't look anything like a snow man,more like something you would find in an adult shop :))))

[CBY-3-28] [‘Tagged’ friend username] do you also see what I see?!

Image 35: [HSH-1-BRAND]

[HSH-1-15] as my mom would say The male chocolate bar, with the nuts!

Image 36: [HSH-2-BRAND]

[HSH-2-1] How bout tomorrOW D:

[HSH-2-5] I guess Tomorrows not good for chocolate

[HSH-2-7] i just had to count how many days end with y.lol

[HSH-2-30] Not in Spanish, mwahahahaaa!

Image 37: [HSH-3-BRAND]

[HSH-3-4] Never been one to follow the "colour" rules !! Bring it on !!

[HSH-3-28] I wear white clothes all year round. That was done away with years n years ago.

Image 38: [WKR-3-BRAND]

[WKR-3-11]	I am
[WKR-3-12]	I suppose Cameron 'll want to give her a knighthood now for her amazing acheivement, like she's the first woman to have ever given birth.
[WKR-3-13]	Not me !
[WKR-3-14]	Absolutely pathetic all this talk, near enough every British company are overrating this news
[WKR-3-15]	since you ask a direct question, Walkers, not me, definitely not excited, why should we be?
[WKR-3-18]	Yeah very excited and i think they will name him philip charles
[WKR-3-23]	Pretty disgusted with the small minded people who are viewing this poor child who is only a few hours old, as a sponging blood sucker of the nation. I'm appalled. We are all entitled to an opinion....but please do some of you really have to show your ignorance publicly....

As can be seen in the comments above, while non-consumer types of communicative purposes are most prevalent overall within the corpus, this is not to say that among these categories there is consensus on shared values – rather, the research shows that there is often a focus on values in general. For example, in the performances of cultural values, there are instances where responders' comments are largely at odds with the brand post and with each other (e.g., data set [WKR-3] above, where many responders are in conflict with the brand position of being excited about the birth of the royal prince, but other responders find this position objectionable). The mechanisms of reflecting the brand posts' communicative purposes within responses, and the specific evaluation types are discussed in detail within the Negotiation and Appraisal sections of this chapter, respectively.

In terms of genre, this study has shown that brand posts tend to include a number of different communicative purposes including brand/product promotion, as well as engagement with social topics. Responses, however, tend to have more focussed communicative purposes that reflect some, but not all of the communicative purposes present in the brand post. Perhaps this is due to the nature of advertising, which often features artificial or tenuous links between products and culture (e.g., the link between white chocolate and 'fashion rules' in [HSH-3-BRAND], above). Responders may be interested in the product or in the topic of fashion, but do not have an invested interest in discussing both topics at the same time.

The analysis of communicative purpose has shown that while brand posts may often appear to be very similar to status updates, they have mixed communicative purposes which always, in this corpus, serve the ulterior communicative purpose of branding. That is, while brand posts may attract attention and initiate social chat, the differences of communicative purpose between brand posts and responses indicate that these are two different communication genres that occur adjacently and dialogically. However, neither the brand posts (interactive marketing discourse) nor the responses (social chat) would be 'complete' without the other. Thus, a conceptualisation of social media marketing discourse as an emerging hybrid genre is complicated in the sense that it could also be seen as a 'meeting place' of two different, co-dependent communication genres, rather than a single genre.

5.1.3 Sites of conflict: Contradictions of communicative purpose

To complement the discussion in Section 5.1.2 above, the third significant finding in the genre analysis is that a notable proportion of responses (10%) have communicative purposes that conflict with the commercial communicative purpose of the brand. From the brand's perspective, the marketing purpose is at least latent, if not the main communicative purpose. More specifically, the brand's communicative purpose is the establishment of positive rapport with the audience, which is instrumental in the goal of selling. Meanwhile, the responder's main communicative purpose is social interaction (casual chat), which may, but does not necessarily involve establishment of positive rapport with the brand.

In Bhatia's (2002) theorisation of genre, the goal of analysis is not to establish boundaries of a 'pure' genre, but rather, to understand the realities of the world of texts. As such, it is not necessarily theoretically problematic to describe a particular genre as having contradictory elements.

From a genre structure perspective, I have argued that a brand post can be considered an instance of the 'social media marketing' genre, and that in order for it to be a successful instance of this genre, there must be responses to the brand post. That is, responses constitute a compulsory element of the genre. It is, therefore, of theoretical interest that 10% of the responses are performances of ethical values in opposition to the brand; therefore, they have a communicative purpose that is in conflict with the brand's goal of positive rapport building. This multiple authorship involves complexity and potential conflict between specific communicative purposes of co-authors, while it is ultimately one of the defining characteristics of this particular genre.

I propose an explanation from two different perspectives, which accounts for a common communicative purpose enacted through potentially conflicting genre elements constructed by either the brand post or the responder.

First, I argue that in the case of the brand, the goal is to ultimately sell products through building rapport with the audience. To do this, it must create a post that could minimally consist of a single instance of branding, but may also include language and images that refer to the product and cultural values.

In order to elicit interaction and establish rapport, it is necessary for a brand post to not only allow, but to attract responses that are in conflict with the branding strategy. That is, in order for social media marketing to appear to be authentic interpersonal interaction (and thus attract as many responses as possible), it must be seen that responders may exercise (relative) free will in responding in any way they see fit. As Eggins & Slade (1997: 213) argue in their analysis of casual conversation, disagreement is of profound importance in the successful progression of conversation. Indeed, there have been instances where brands have attempted to delete negative comments on their social media sites, which ultimately had disastrous impact on the brands' ability to maintain a productive social media presence. In one such case, Champoux, Durgee, & McGlynn (2012: 22) argue that Nestle's censorship of confrontational Facebook comments "betrayed the founding intent of Facebook – to gather as humans".

In one way, the brand message always succeeds, in terms of affiliating with responders. No matter whether responses support or confront the brand post, the very act of responding enacts a goal of the brand post, which is simply to increase awareness of the brand. The expression 'there is no such thing as bad publicity' may apply in this case. From a sceptical perspective, it may be that, to some extent, the content of the responses is relatively irrelevant if the key goal is simply to lure the audience to respond, which enacts a process of intertextual dissemination of the brand post controlled by Facebook algorithms and the advertising options the brand has purchased.

However, the perpetuation of the brand name/logo does not appear to be the sole goal of social media marketing; in other words, it does not appear that the content of the textual interactions is irrelevant. This is evidenced by the study on brand censorship of negative responses to brand posts (Champoux, Durgee, & McGlynn, 2012) and as discussed above, and by the more recent tendency for brands to respond to negative criticism with PR-style engagements. Thus, it would appear likely that so long as the 'good' comments prevail, the brand accepts that the overall social media campaign is a success; the communicative purpose of building positive rapport, which is instrumental to product selling, is met.

The second perspective in explaining the presence and necessity of conflicting communicative purposes within this genre is from that of the responder. As has been the focus throughout this thesis, no matter the goals of the brand, the responses constitute identity performances within a social context where consumer discourse is not the primary function. As identity work involves positioning oneself in relation to objects, ideas, and people, at times it may be valuable to an individual to position oneself in conflict with another entity. From a pragmatic perspective, it may be preferential to perform nonconventional forms of identity by taking this oppositional position in relation to a brand, rather than the individual's actual 'friends', which would entail more social risk.

Thus, the communicative purpose of the individual – casual social interaction, which constitutes identity work – is achieved whether or not it also realises the brand's communicative purpose of positive rapport establishment.

While the communicative purposes of the brand-produced and responder-produced genre elements may, at times, conflict whilst not interfering with either party's overall communicative purpose, these disagreements do indicate that the Facebook news feed can be theorised as a site of conflict. Prior to the introduction of news feed advertising, a Facebook user could exert nearly complete control over whose posts would appear within the news feed[14]. However, the introduction of news feed advertising, and the frequent reconfigurations of the news feed marketing algorithms, have potentially rewritten this social space as one of conflict between an individual's perceived control over his or her Facebook social sphere, and the forceful colonization of this space by corporate entities, consumer pressure, and manipulation tactics.

One of the complexities of this emerging discourse genre highlighted within the genre analysis is the co-authorship, and co-ownership of news feed marketing. Although the brand creates and publishes the post itself, the comments posted by Facebook users are very much involved in the overall meaning-making processes of the text as a whole. Thus, the marketing message can be said to be jointly 'owned' by the brand and the responders.

This joint ownership is highlighted by the intertextual processes enacted and enabled by the Facebook framework. In addition to the co-authorship of the text, the Facebook framework recontextualises the user's activity as one of content creation. For example, once a Facebook user has commented on a brand post, this interaction may appear in a new format within the user's 'friends' home page, such as within the update area above the chat toolbar. This 'friend' could click on the status update to see the post itself and the comment that was made. Whether or not this happens though, the brand will have succeeded in affiliating with the commenter in the context of the commenter's Facebook network.

The post could also appear in the commenter's 'friends' news feeds; the information at the top of the post would read "[User1] commented on Activia UK's post", and in this case, the post itself could be re-posted onto the 'friend's news feed. The comment made by 'User1' may or not be visible to the 'friend'. As in the case presented above, whether or

[14] I refer to 'nearly complete control' of the news feed because there are certain cases where a third party's posts may appear within a news feed even if the Facebook user has not approved this person as a 'friend'. This is a somewhat promotional strategy by Facebook to encourage users to expand their friend networks. While users must actively approve 'friends' and can hide 'friends'' posts from the news feeds, depending on the user's security settings, he or she may see posts of a 'friend of a friend' – that is, if the user's friend comments on a third party's comment, this may appear within the news feed and will include the original post – depending on certain privacy settings of the Facebook users.

not the ‘friend’ actually reads the comment posted in response to the brand post, the brand has affiliated with the commenter publicly.

This is of potential concern in terms of marketing ethics, particularly because the affiliation is promoted whether or not the commenter discursively affiliated or disaffiliated with the brand. The comment below is an example of this:

[WKR-2-19] Get this filthy junk off my news feed NOW!

This comment is a perfect example of the intertextual ‘trap’ created through the Facebook marketing algorithms; the very act of posting the comment above implicitly grants ‘permission’ for the brand post to appear in this commenter’s ‘friends’ news feeds as an interaction (and thus affiliation) between the brand and the commenter. This process technically enables an affiliation which recontextualises the original discursive negotiation, in favour of the brand in this case, as the comment itself is unlikely to be visible to the commenter’s ‘friends’.

Furthermore, and importantly, the commenter is used as a channel through which the brand advertisement reaches a larger audience. Every time a Facebook user sees a brand name or recognisable logo, it constitutes further exposure for the brand. While increasingly, brands are being required to pay to ‘push’ this type of message through to the commenter’s ‘friends’, the fact remains that the commenter effectively serves as the brand’s ‘messenger’, and that the affiliation between the brand and the commenter becomes part of the marketing message itself.

As has been argued throughout this thesis, Facebook news feed marketing is a paradigm-shifting model; brands are increasingly turning to Facebook to promote major marketing campaigns, and both Facebook and brands are seeing enormous profits, which can be attributed to the news feed marketing model. However, I argue that the ethics and regulation of the model must be addressed; that is, while Facebook and brands have certainly acknowledged the ‘added value’ of affiliating marketing messages with Facebook users, the social and psychological effects must be investigated in the interest of all consumers, and in particular, vulnerable consumers. In other words, just because use of this model appears to enable brands to sell more products, does not mean that it *should* be used.

Of course, Facebook users can choose not to interact with brands, and they will not be unwittingly used as brand ‘ambassadors’, and it could be said that users should expect any communication made within the news feed to be visible to their ‘friends’. However, I argue that this is an unreasonable solution to the ethical issue, particularly as 'regular' user (i.e., users who do are not technologically 'elite') cannot be expected to understand the complexities of the Facebook algorithms that recontextualise their communications.

While proposing a solution to the ethical dilemma introduced by Facebook news feed marketing falls outside the scope of this thesis, the findings from this research suggest that the use of potentially non-consensual human participants to contribute to and distribute marketing messages must be addressed by the marketing regulation authorities in order to ensure consumer protection.

Summary of genre analysis

The purpose of the genre analysis in this study is to describe, in detail, the form and purpose of this genre. In doing so, the goal is to conduct an empirical study of a relatively recently-emerging type of communication, as well as to test the theoretical framework in order to determine whether aspects of the framework need to be developed or reconsidered in light of the evolution of communication within social media.

In relation to the thesis as a whole, the purpose of the genre analysis is to consider the context, or stimulus, that social media users engage with as they write comments that constitute identity work. In other words, the genre analysis allows me to identify the main communicative dimensions within which Appraisal is expressed through dialogue (Negotiation) by responders. The focus, in terms of identity performance, is on the responses.

The genre analysis highlights the ways in which brand posts and responses have separate, but usually complementary, discourse features and communicative purposes. I argue that this detailed description of the genre demonstrates that the advertising purpose may be intentionally implicit and symbolic, with the social purpose being emphasised through salient multimodal representations and elicitations of cultural values and social norms. Through the combination of these elements, the primary communicative purpose of the genre cannot be said to be wholly that of either traditional advertising (selling products) or social media discourse (casual chat, which constitutes identity work). This genre has its own communicative purpose of establishing rapport between a brand and its social media audience. The brand-authored elements in this genre function to establish positive rapport with an audience, but in the responder-authored element, individuals seek either positive or negative rapport with the brand and other social media users.

5.2 Negotiation analysis

The Negotiation analysis shows whether responders agree or disagree with the brand post, and how they take ownership of the topic introduced by the brand. It focuses on the nature of the interaction between individuals and brand posts and shows how identity is negotiated discursively. While the genre analysis identifies responses as 'types' of discourse, such as consumer discourse or social chat, the Negotiation analysis shows whether these identity performances support or confront the brand position, whether it be related to a product or a cultural topic. This layer of analysis demonstrates that while there is some conflict, the majority of responders engage positively with the topics introduced in the brand post.

The use of the Negotiation framework (Martin, 1992; Eggins & Slade, 1997) enables a focus on how responses to brand posts resemble verbal conversational exchanges, despite the asynchronous nature of this computer-moderated discourse. While the genre analysis describes the form and purpose of the discourse, and the Appraisal analysis describes the evaluative stances enacted through language, the Negotiation analysis focuses on conversational patterns in order to address a process described by Eggins & Slade (1997: 6) as "the joint construction of social reality". The Negotiation analysis is applied to account for the *interactive* stances that responders take in relation to brand posts. There is some overlap in the Negotiation and Appraisal analyses, as both consider stance-taking in the performance of identity. There is also some overlap in the genre and Negotiation analyses, as both account for agreement or conflict between the brand post and responders. However, this process is described at a finer level through the Negotiation analysis.

Where in the genre analysis discussion I argued that the responses constitute a compulsory element of the Facebook brand post genre, the successful application of the Negotiation framework indicates that responses can be theorised as dialogue. These findings are not incompatible, but do involve different approaches in the consideration of interactive communication in brand post responses.

While the Negotiation framework is typically applied to verbal conversation, there are a number of studies (e.g.,Yus, 2011; Vandergriff, 2013) that argue that CMC carries features related to spoken conversation discourse. Eggins & Slade (1997) focus on verbal 'casual chat' in order to investigate how individuals develop alignment and intimacy with each other over the course of prolonged conversations between individuals. I apply the framework to a different context and conversational structure, and instead of analysing the development of intimacy within a prolonged conversation, I focus on a single turn – the first response of individuals. In Chapter 4, I presented the quantitative results as a description of general trends of the responses, rather than focussing on any one individual.

This layer of analysis is particularly important to the research goals of this thesis because it accounts for a variety of identity performances through the interaction between individuals responding to the brand posts. I argue that when an individual responds to a brand post, they engage in dialogue where power is publicly negotiated between individuals and ‘corporate entities-posing-as-friends’.

While the results indicate that the majority of responses are ‘supporting’ moves, they are nevertheless still negotiations of power; in many cases, this occurs through a process of re-contextualising general topics into performances of identity that are extremely personal. In other words, the Negotiation analysis lays bare the way that individuals, in a sense, negotiate validity and ownership of the meanings interpreted from the brand post.

5.2.1 The dialogic niche occupied by brand posts

The findings of this analysis show that approximately a quarter of the responses are confrontations of the brand position, while the remaining three quarters are supporting responses. Of the supporting responses, they are fairly evenly split between ‘responding’ moves and ‘developing’ moves. Responding moves generally agree with or accept the brand position as is, while developing moves support the brand position by relating it to their own experiences and preferences, and adding personal value to the message introduced in the brand post.

These results indicate that even though products may not be of utmost concern to responders, the brand post typically does present a position that the responder supports. Many responders use ‘responding’ moves in discursive acts that generally amount to appropriation through complete agreement with the brand post position, with enthusiasm but no additions or amendments. The comments below are examples of responding moves of this sort:

Image 39: [ACT-3-BRAND]

[ACT-3-4] Absolutely !

[ACT-3-5] Very true

[ACT-3-6] Quite so!

[ACT-3-7] Amen xx

[ACT-3-8] So true

Those who respond with 'developing' moves, however, play a more creative role in the construction of a jointly-held position, by contributing their own perspectives and experiences to the topic. This type of move is exemplified in the comments below, which are responses to the [NRV-1-BRAND] post:

[NRV-1-BRAND]	Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by ____!"
[NRV-1-8]	hiking more
[NRV-1-9]	Going out into the woods more and doing a little traveling with my family
[NRV-1-10]	Walking my dogs more often!
[NRV-1-11]	getting out in it!!!!

Like the supporting moves, above, the confronting moves in this corpus involve a number of different strategies. The most commonly identified in this corpus are confrontational opinions, disagreements, and in particular, rejoinder moves, where the challenge is not related to the topic itself but of the validity of the speaker's authority. These are exemplified in the comments below:

Image 40: [LAY-1-BRAND]

[LAY-1-27] GMO

[LAY-1-28] Do not eat this GMO crap!

[LAY-1-29] It's GMOod!

The comments above are representative of a notable number of confrontational responses where responders discursively challenge the validity of the brand's role in the joint construction of social reality. This demonstrates that the audience of such brand messages includes a third 'type' of response – discursive attempts to publicly deconstruct and re-contextualise the social reality the brand is attempting to construct.

These findings indicate that the co-constructed reality that is being performed is most often, but not always, one of ideological agreement. Even when it is one of conflict, the dialogue is mutually beneficial for the brand and the responder; they have both 'written themselves into being' (Sundén, 2003) through motivated participation in a conversational exchange.

The significance of these results is that they show how individuals are dependent on brands to provide the 'content' that enables different identity performance strategies. The first of three trends identified in this study is that the responders 'allow' the brand to construct a position 'for' the individual, who only has to positively associate with the position by agreeing. The second trend is to respond to a general topic that appeals to an individual's personal experiences, which can then be personalised by the individual. Finally, the third trend is that individuals can take advantage of the opportunity the brands present as a public face of a profit-driven corporate entity – whether to praise or, more often, criticise their corporate ethics. This is discussed further in Section 5.2.2, below.

This reliance on brands to co-construct these identity performances is interesting because it is not entirely necessary. There is technically no reason that an individual could not either post the same types of content that the brands do, or make the same types of performances with the addition of contextualisation. For example, an individual could easily comment on the birth of the royal prince, or declare a New Year's resolution, or protest a love for chocolate, or bring up the questionable corporate practices of a particular brand.

I propose three considerations in speculating why an individual would choose to respond to a branded topic rather than creating his or her own. Firstly, it is a different discursive process when an individual positions oneself with or against something that already 'exists' in the world, compared with positioning oneself with or against something that only enters the communicative context when it is written into being for the purpose of this stance-taking activity.

Perhaps individuals intuitively gravitate to opportunities for the former method for social positioning (response), while not engaging in the latter form (initiation), but without a reflexive conceptualisation of why. Perhaps the individual feels anxiety over a perceived 'loudness' of status updates that will be visible to his or her Facebook network. In short, the performative implications of response and initiation may be in a phase of development within social media, where social norms go through exploratory phases before being largely abandoned by either the interface or the users. This topic is certainly of potential interest for further study.

The second consideration of why an individual would choose to respond to a branded post, rather than to initiate a particular topic, is a matter of creativity and genesis; perhaps the idea does not occur to the individual until they see it in the news feed.

Thirdly, perhaps the individual responds to a brand post rather than posting a status update because he or she wants to engage in a short-lived dialogue that will not be interpreted by his or her 'friends' as an invitation to engage with *them*. In other words, just because we are able to engage with our 'friend' networks through Facebook does not mean that this is always desirable. Perhaps the brand posts offer the perfect opportunity for 'banal chat' that an individual desires but does not want to 'bother' his or her network with.

In all three of the above considerations, the issue revolves around content. In the social media age where we are able to post photos, updates, blogs, videos, tweets, and numerous other forms of content, there are also reasons why we do not always choose to do so. Perhaps the significance of these results lies in the very dialogic nature of the interaction. In online, as in offline contexts, individuals have different preferences for how they engage in identity performance. Perhaps it is the case that these brand posts do actually serve a specific purpose that no other type of discourse can – they allow an individual to take an ideological stance without initiating it *or* without directly positioning oneself in relation to 'friends'.

5.2.2 Dialogue with brands

The analytic focus on the conversation structure of this corpus enables another contribution. It demonstrates that, to a limited extent, asynchronous CMC discourse resembles 'casual chat' in terms of how participants interact, even when one of those participants is not an identified person, but is an unnamed social media specialist representing a brand. The brand, in turn, is a corporate structure comprising a number individual employees. This process can be understood as an abstraction in communication structure. The social media specialist is unidentified, but takes on the role of 'speaking for the brand'. This allows responding individuals to take advantage of the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the 'corporate infrastructure'.

The goals of this communication are likely complicated and contextually dependent, as the 'conversation' has two main audiences – the brand, and the Facebook network (including 'friends' and non-'friend' Facebook users). As such, the individuals engaging with the brand, or the 'corporate infrastructure', may be motivated by the possibility that the brand management will 'listen' to public sentiment made within Facebook and make policy changes in their corporate practices. Alternatively, the engagement may be motivated by the public context of Facebook, which means that an instance of 'public sentiment' may influence other members of the public in terms of awareness of corporate practices, and also in potential action against the brand. Of course, this, in turn, may eventually impact public sentiment to such an extent that the brand management does take heed to such comments.

Regardless of motivation (which is, ultimately, beyond the scope of this study), the consideration of exchange structure of the discourse indicates that asynchronous CMC between an individual and a brand entails negotiation of power that an individual undertakes in relation to a corporate structure 'masked' as a symbolic entity, which is represented by a social media specialist. In this context, responders are able to negotiate meaning relating to corporate policy using conversational strategies. In other words, social media marketing affords the opportunity to individuals to deconstruct or ignore the symbolism of the brand and the marketing message, and focus instead on the actual, human decisions that shape the brand itself.

While interpersonal dialogue between identifiable individuals has, of course, been a means for individuals to negotiate brand value since the beginning of brands, it has previously been difficult to linguistically, dialogically negotiate the social values of a brand in a context with a potentially vast audience. In other words, my argument in considering why individuals are 'speaking back to brands' is to suggest that this dialogue is emerging as a strategy where individuals explore and perform their stances toward the corporate leadership of a brand, in a publicly visible forum.

Whether this will have any impact on the role brands play in our lives remains to be seen. However, the importance of the role language plays in shaping our relationship to the world cannot be overemphasised. This is a particularly salient point in the context of networked communication, where one must write, or photograph oneself into being. Now, it appears that brands have written themselves into being as 'speaking' social actors as well, which has opened up the possibility for individuals to negotiate meaning with brands, through public dialogue.

Summary of Negotiation analysis

The Negotiation analysis of this corpus contributes to the overall investigation of identity through a focus on how interaction allows individuals to explore and perform alignment or resistance to brands. The analysis demonstrates the ways that responders use dialogue to identify with or develop the positions introduced by the brand post. It also shows how responders can engage in in interaction in order to confront the position taken by the brand, or the validity of the brand's participation in a particular social dialogue.

Ultimately, a result of any dialogue – supportive or confrontational – is that the conversation partners have performed stances in relation to each other. It is of cultural importance that individuals are now able engage in dialogue with the 'corporate infrastructure' of brands, as discourse is a means for the construction of social reality. The emergence of brands as discursive social actors is a notable feature of brand marketing. To some people – such as the responders whose discourse is included within the research corpus – there is compelling value in engaging with this 'conversation' initiated by the brand.

5.3 Appraisal Analysis

The Appraisal analysis completes the triangulated approach of this study by identifying the stances that responders take toward specific people, objects, and phenomena. This complements the approach taken with the Negotiation analysis, which considers stances taken toward the brand post. Through the Appraisal analysis, I identify which specific topics are of relevance to responders, and which sub-cultural contexts these topics relate to, such as consumer culture and other sub-cultures.

The findings of this layer of analysis show that while the products feature heavily in evaluations, responders are also highly invested in the evaluations of social values. The stances taken in responses to marketing relate to a wide variety of issues, including activism, consumerism, gender, social norms, and so on. Some of these topical issues are instigated by the brand, while others are not. These findings indicate that in comment responses to brand posts, performances of identity are complex and, at times, contradictory.

The results from the discourse analysis potentially lend themselves to a number of further enquiries delving into specific cultural theories of consumption and identity; not least of which may take a critical or a sympathetic position towards the notion of the 'commodification of the self' (e.g., Giddens, 1991) or the 'authority of the consumer' (e.g., Keat, Whiteley, & Abercrombie, 1994). Indeed, the existence and diversity of these 'productions' of identity in response to product advertising provokes an important question and research opportunity for the theorisation of consumers as 'active', rather than 'passive'.

However, it is not within the remit of the present research to engage with such cultural theories extensively. Instead, I argue that this discourse represents an emerging hybrid genre comprising both product promotion and interpersonal interaction. The research aim, to reiterate the research question, is to focus on *how* identity is performed in this context – specifically, which types of evaluative language are present and prevalent. It is through this linguistic analysis of the corpus that I locate the cultural relevance of the present research – that just as we have learned to communicate with each other in the context of 'Web 2.0', we are also learning to communicate with each other through the relatively new medium of social media marketing.

One finding of particular importance relates to the targets of evaluation, which are reproduced below in Figure 50.

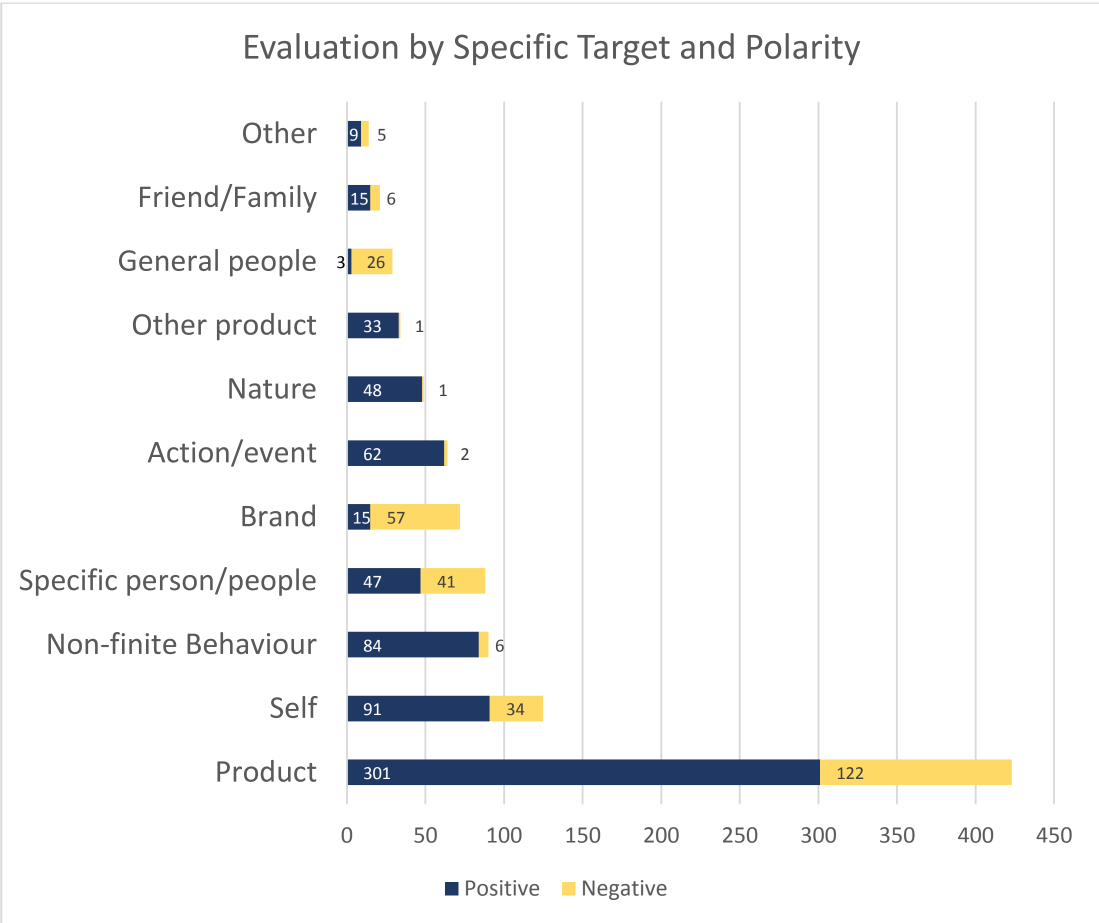

Figure 50: Evaluation by specific target and polarity

These results indicate that certainly, evaluations of products are by far the most frequent in this corpus. The brand also features heavily, as the fifth most frequently evaluated target. However, the other targets, particularly when combined into a collective ‘non-brand/product’ category, paint a picture of the corpus as something other than a collection of consumer-focussed identity performances.

The analysis of evaluation in this study entails an explicit focus on how individuals position themselves in relation to the meaning constructed within the brand post. Given that all brand posts are ultimately consumer-focussed, it is of great significance that so many of the commenter evaluations relate to a wide variety of targets, such as the self, non-finite behaviours (e.g., the desirability of ‘self esteem’), specific people, and events such as taking family outings, winning a competition, or receiving a life-changing makeover. These results indicate that to a large extent, the focus of evaluation is not on the brand or product, but on every aspect of daily life – hopes, dreams, disappointments, and values.

It is on this basis that I argue that news feed marketing discourse constitutes a new genre. As discussed throughout this thesis, technological tools may have particular affordances which are similar across platforms. However, users develop strategies for engagement with specific tools within specific contexts, and as these new discursive practices become norms, new communicative genres emerge. In the case of this corpus, the communicative practice of responding to a marketing message by evaluating a wide range of targets constitutes a new form of communicative practice.

I argue that the results of the Appraisal analysis demonstrate that news feed marketing is not simply ‘marketing put into a new context’ – rather, the nature of the marketing itself is altered through its affiliation with the hopes, dreams, disappointments, and values of the commenters who engage with it. Perhaps, from the perspective of Facebook developers, this was an unexpected (but certainly not unwelcome) response from Facebook users who suddenly found voices on their news feeds not only from ‘friends’, but from brands as well. Much like the evolution of the use of hash tags in Twitter, it is the novel engagement of the users which results in the development of a new communicative practice or genre, rather than the introduction of the technological tool itself.

From the perspective of individuals, news feed marketing constitutes a new genre because Facebook users can engage in stance-taking discourse without directly engaging in dialogue with ‘friends’. Perhaps many of the stances taken within this corpus would not have been, had the brand post been authored by a ‘friend’ instead; that is, perhaps the corporate nature of the brand serves as a relatively ‘generic’ position against which to perform a stance. In this way, engagement with brand posts is potentially very similar to ‘sharing’ news articles within a status update; rather than writing a post with evaluations constructed through original discourse, the user can reference the discourse of others and position him- or herself in relation to this. By contrast, any stance taken in alignment or disalignment with a 'friend' entails social positioning of an entirely different nature, as it is an explicit confrontation within a 'friend' relationship. Thus, news feed marketing perhaps offers a neutral 'third party' through which evaluations can be made.

From this broad perspective on the nature of social positioning through targets of evaluation, four main identity performance patterns emerge from the corpus. The first is the performance of compliant consumer identities, where responders focus on the product being advertised. These identities are often performed as apparently 'banal' interactions where an individual professes love, inclination, or a positive or negative reaction to the suggestion of a particular product. These consumer identity performances do not necessarily profess positive evaluation for products, but do indicate compliance in terms of performing the consumer role of considering and evaluating products. That is, these identities are 'compliant' because brands produce a number of different products, and a 'compliant' consumer is a potential purchaser; they may consider, sample, and evaluate some of the brand's products.

The second main pattern of identity performance centres on 'resistant' consumer identities. Two main themes appear frequently within the corpus: criticism of brands for use of GMO ingredients and other controversial corporate practices, and the positive (if implicit) evaluation of self for resistance to corporate control.

The third main identity performance pattern identified in the corpus centres on 'aspirational' social identities. These comments are often responses to brand posts that are not overtly promoting a product; rather, they are promoting a lifestyle, such as being 'outdoorsy' or 'stylish'. An aspirational social identity is performed through the evaluation of idealised lifestyle habits and practices, such as diet, exercise, fashion, or leisure pursuits. Although these identity performances do not obviously relate to consumer identity, there is often a strong affiliation created with brands that aggressively market their products as 'lifestyle props' or associate with particular lifestyles as a brand identity.

Finally, the fourth pattern can be generally described as the performance of socio-cultural identities. This includes socio-cultural aspects of identity such as social class and the performance and enforcement of social norms. These performances typically do not acknowledge the product, brand, or promotional nature of the brand post. Rather, they focus on topics of cultural relevance such as class relations or solidarity and inside jokes with others within their social group.

These latter two socially-oriented (rather than consumer-oriented) patterns of identity performance are particularly important, as the frequency with which they emerge within the corpus indicates that responses to brand posts in Facebook cannot, as a whole, be described as ‘consumer discourse’.

These four patterns of identity performance are discussed in further detail below.

5.3.1 Compliant consumer identities

In the Appraisal analysis, instances of evaluation are coded according to whether they relate to the brand/product, or to a non-brand/product target. As such, it is possible to identify specific categories and sub-categories which are generally used for one of the four identity performance patterns discussed in this section.

‘Compliant’ consumer identities are primarily enacted through positive AFFECT and positive and negative APPRECIATION directed toward the products promoted in brand posts. As noted in the data analysis chapter, the single most frequent type of appraisal is positive APPRECIATION of the products marketed in brand posts, which constitutes 23% of the evaluations in the corpus. In addition, negative APPRECIATION of products constitutes 11% of the evaluations, which means that overall, 34% of the evaluations can be described as compliant consumer identity performances.

The type of appraisal most relevant to performances of compliant consumer identities is also the largest single category within the corpus: positive APPRECIATION, with the brand/product as the target (23% of all evaluations in the corpus). Of this category, the a large number of evaluations fall within the sub-category of APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT, which constitutes 17% of the total evaluations in the corpus. Examples of this type of evaluation are reproduced below:

[WKR-1-4]	my favourite xxx
[WKR-1-9]	All time fav..nom.nom..
[WKR-1-6]	just eaten 2 packets !!!
[LAY-1-1]	We made Lay's potato chip cookies and drizzled chocolate on top. These should be a hit at the game day party. Anyone want the recipe?

There are also some instances of negative appreciation that fit within this category, such as below:

[CBY-1-8] No thanks, you can have it. Not a fan of Wispa

[WKR-2-7] Urgh horrid crisps ......

[WKR-2-22] Sound minging!!!

However, the vast majority of the instances of negative appreciation of the product relate to health concerns of GMO products, and for this reason the category of negative APPRECIATION is also considered within the discussion of resistant consumer identities later in this chapter.

The other key type of evaluation in compliant consumer identity performance is positive AFFECT when it is targeted towards the brand or product, such as the comments below. The first, [HSH-2-15], is an instance of AFFECT: HAPPINESS, while the second, [ACT-3-15], is an instance of AFFECT: INCLINATION:

[HSH-2-15] **<3** it totaly!!!!!!!!!!!

[ACT-3-15] **I want** an Activia....oh great!!!! I have them in my fridge!!! yep that works for me! ;)

Given that the corpus consists of responses to product advertising, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the main types of AFFECT is INCLINATION (most often, desire). AFFECT is coded as an evaluation connected to, but distinct from APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT. That is, the AFFECT is typically the primary evaluation in a double-coded 'pair'. Its realisation is typically an explicit performance of desire, perhaps through use of imperatives:

[CBY-1-2] Gimme…….

whereas an instance of explicit APPRECIATION is more focussed on the product:

[HSH-2-27] KING! THE BEST! <3

In this analysis, I specified a number of key types of APPRECIATION, including REACTION (QUALITY, IMPACT, IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID, QUALITY:PRICE, and QUALITY: APPEARANCE) and VALUATION (PRICE, HEALTH, SOCIAL BENEFIT). The consideration of these sub-categories enabled me to identify subtle yet meaningful differences in the way individuals evaluate products as a means of identity performance.

One finding of interest is the range of evaluation within the APPRECIATION: REACTION category. These range from the more 'considered' evaluations based on specific qualities

(APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY: TASTE, and APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY: APPEARANCE), to more general considerations of product quality (APPRECIATION: REACTION: QUALITY), to a hybrid 'considered/reactive' evaluation (APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT/QUALITY HYBRID), to a solely reactive evaluation (APPRECIATION: REACTION: IMPACT).

Although each of these four 'points' on the spectrum of APPRECIATION: REACTION occur with noticeably different frequencies (99, 81, 51, and 118, respectively), each category does comprise a substantial number of evaluations in comparison to the entire corpus. In terms of identity performance, this means that within this most-frequent sub-category of evaluation, the reactions to products achieve different purposes. For example, in identifying differences between such lexical formulations as 'this is my favourite chocolate' vs. 'mmm, chocolate', it emerges that emotive and descriptive APPRECIATIONS of products are relatively equally represented in this corpus. So, some individuals simply want to share which products they prefer, whilst others want to share how these products make them feel, or describe the reasons/qualities that make them like a product. In other words, there are different types and 'levels' of sharing.

These products are a stimulus and a means through which individuals perform identity that may be 'consumerist', but their presence on social media offers a brief insight into what they do or what they feel when they stumble across particular items in their daily life. Some think about what they like about a product, while others have a more impulsive reaction, and engage with the product emotionally in the sense of experiencing desire.

The relationship between product evaluation and emotion is even more pronounced and complex when the double-coding of appraisal is taken into consideration. In fact, although the positive APPRECIATION of products is the most frequent type of evaluation in the corpus, over a third of these evaluations occur as implicit, secondary evaluations 'attached' to instances of AFFECT, which are more prominent either through explicit language or grammatical emphasis. Approximately 8% of the evaluations within the corpus are positive, brand/product-targeted AFFECT. While a marketing professional would no doubt strive to achieve an even higher positive, product-targeted emotive response, it is nevertheless a significant amount of emotive reaction. This is especially so, considering the stakes are relatively low in terms of real impact on an individual's life when compared to, say, a political advertisement. This amount of affective interaction suggests that, particularly for well-known products, like Cadbury chocolate or Walkers crisps, the exposure to sensory marketing has an impact profound enough to elicit emotion, and perhaps in many cases, a form of nostalgia of the pleasure of consumption.

In these cases, the emphasis is not on how the product makes the individual feel, but on the feeling itself. So, in terms of identity, the experience 'within the self' (i.e., emotion) is linguistically prioritised above the evaluation of the product; these evaluations are 'about' the individual more than the product. The connection between APPRECIATION of products and AFFECT indicates that individuals who respond favourably to brand posts on grounds of the product being desirable do not do so passively – they tend to be invested in these evaluations at some level.

In terms of contextualising these evaluations within a social context, it could be argued that the prevalence of the APPRECIATION is predictable, particularly given that many of the people who respond to brand marketing are likely to be people who have 'liked' the brand. But it must be noted that this exchange does not merely occur between the responder and the brand representative. Rather, these responses are visible to the responder's Facebook network, as well as the wider Facebook community, given that brand posts and pages are 'public' and not protected by a Facebook user's privacy settings. Considering these responses within this contextualisation, a (perhaps familiar) question emerges: why would someone want to tell their entire Facebook network that they enjoy eating Hershey's', for example?

The sharing of emotions and reactions to product marketing may appear banal, but I argue that it is at the very core of a person's identity; interaction with different objects around us comprises the majority of what we do every day, and therefore the intricacies of these interactions are instrumental in who we think we are. Dismissing these types of responses as insignificant 'mindless consumer discourse' or 'banal chit-chat' would be ignoring the identity-related features of this discourse. Benwell & Stokoe (2006: 248) argue that attending to actual CMC data rather than focusing on abstract theorisations of it "reveals the surprising banality of much of CMC and its resemblance to [real life] talk". Indeed, particularly in the case of these 'consumer identity' responses, many responses within the research corpus evoke the type of banality one might experience in a physical setting, where conversation is not necessarily goal-oriented. Similarly, Walther (2011: 443) argues that social media messages may often be perceived as 'banal', but that "so is the stuff by which relationships are maintained".

That is, this consumption-oriented 'chat' is a potential indication of how the context might be perceived by responders. They are engaging in low-stakes chat, initiated by a neutral third party – the brand – in a setting where others might 'overhear' the conversation. Despite the apparent banality of this chat, it is identity performance nonetheless. It might be intended and/or received as identity performance through affiliation, motivated by the responder's desire to share his or her product preferences, which have meaning in his/her life. Or, it might be nostalgia which, when performed, functions as a mechanism for remaining visible to friends and family within Facebook, where individuals must "write themselves into being" (Sundén, 2003).

Social media affords a relatively new opportunity to share these once-private interactions with a potentially large network of people. Of course, not everyone may wish to be privy to these types of thoughts, perhaps written by people to whom they may be only vaguely connected. Nevertheless, the findings in this study show that a number of people do feel compelled to share, given the opportunity. Perhaps within the banal is hidden intimacy. That is, perhaps these broadcasted evaluations are received differently by different members of a social network; a secret admirer may cherish this type of intimate sharing, whilst a reluctant colleague may be annoyed or even repulsed by it. Although it is beyond the remit of this study to speculate on the reception of this discourse, it is important to emphasise that identity performance is socially motivated.

In short, no matter the intention or reception of these product-focussed interpersonal exchanges, they have meaning and purpose for those who make these evaluations, and function as interpersonal negotiations between the responder, the brand, and anyone who may read the response.

A final point of interest in the discussion of compliant consumer identity performance is the lack of positive brand-targeted JUDGEMENT. It is interesting that despite the intimacy projected by brand posts, where the audience is asked specific and often personal questions about preferences and values, there are no instances of positive evaluations of the behaviour of the brand. As discussed in the Negotiation section of this chapter, this may indicate that despite the placement of brand posts within the news feed, as though the brand is a 'friend', even those who respond positively to the post are not fooled into thinking the brand (representative) is an *actual* 'friend' – rather, there is understanding that the brand representative has corporate, commercial interests.

Perhaps the lack of positive JUDGEMENT with a brand target is due to the fact that the research corpus includes only well-recognised brands, which are likely to be perceived as large, impersonal corporations. By contrast, if the corpus included less well-known products, perhaps with ethical corporate practices and policies, these brands would potentially be supported by consumers on ethical grounds and therefore be evaluated positively in terms of human behaviour (JUDGEMENT).

5.3.2 Resistant consumer identities

The second main category of identity performance includes evaluations where consumer ethics are performed as part of 'resistant' consumer identities. In these evaluations, the brand/product is the target of negative evaluations on a variety of topics, from a general negative evaluation of the health impact of a product due to its GMO ingredients, to corporate practices on labour, environmental concern, product labelling, and regard for customers' health.

While not the single largest category for general identity performances, the category of 'resistant', or 'ethical' consumers identity performances is meaningful in that 11% of the total evaluations in the corpus can be described as 'resistant' to the brand. Important appraisal categories include negative JUDGEMENT and AFFECT with the brand as a target/trigger, and negative APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH and APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT, with the product as a target.

There is additional significance in this category because, unlike those who perform identities relating to positive consumer- or social identities, those who respond negatively to the brand tend to engage in the most salient recontextualization of the brand post. That is, those who perform consumer identities are interested in the product promotion, and those who perform aspirational social identities and socio-cultural identities tend to do so through responses to specific elicitations within brand posts. However, those who criticise the brand do so of their own volition, as none of the brand posts within the corpus has any implicit or explicit negative evaluation of the product or brand.

The most prevalent type of appraisal that is used for resistant consumer identity performance is negative APPRECIATION of the product on grounds of health factors. These types of APPRECIATION differ from those based on REACTION, which have been categorised in Section 5.3.1, as 'consumer identity' evaluations. VALUATION is a category of APPRECIATION is described by Martin & White (2005: 57) as "ideational worth", or "our considered opinions".

Many of the responses, particularly those relating to the American snack food brands, take particular issue with GMO products. The primary concern over GMO ingredients appears to be over health concerns, but environmental concerns are also frequently evoked. The responses below are examples of comments that evaluate the product negatively, using APPRECIATION: VALUATION: HEALTH:

[LAY-3-4] a real potato without all the additives Lays adds to it, like gmo canola oil, et al

[LAY-3-3] I vote for the flavor WITHOUT GMOs!.. Oh wait, they are ALL tainted with GMOs

Another type of negative APPRECIATION: VALUATION that is identified within the corpus (albeit relatively infrequently) is that of SOCIAL BENEFIT. This evaluation is evoked in the comment below:

[CBY-3-19] How much palm oil in that? **Great christmas treat** contributing to climate change, global warming and destroying eco systems. I am sure the son of God would be thrilled at such a birthday celebration.

In this response, the author sarcastically recontextualises the 'social benefit' of Cadbury chocolate as an inappropriate Christmas treat by arguing that, in fact, there are significant negative social repercussions involved in the sourcing of the product's ingredients. In Appraisal terms, this product is evaluated as having negative SOCIAL BENEFIT.

The other main category of evaluations used to perform resistant consumer identities is that of negative JUDGEMENT, with the brand as a target. The category of JUDGEMENT relates to evaluations of behaviour. In this sense, evaluations of the brand are metonymical, in that while the 'brand' is technically not capable of any behaviour as it is a corporation and a symbol, individuals refer to the brand but are in fact evaluating the brand employees and stakeholders. Examples of these negative evaluations are reproduced below, with the JUDGEMENT evaluations formatted in bold text.

[HSH-1-8] I started disagreeing when **you left Hershey, PA and went to Mexico**!

[LAY-2-4] Yeah that ROUND-UP sure is CRUNCHY! **Thanks for the poison**.

[LAY-2-11] Will you voluntarily label your GMO products please. Otherwise l will not eat any if your products unless l know what is in them. I heard you don't use GMO in Europe, why not here in the USA. **The reason may be corporate and political Greed and Corruption**...really that is the reason.

[LAY-2-21] **They use GMO's cause they're cheaper. Who cares if some dumb consumers get cancer.** Imma right LAYS? :)

[LAY-2-28] GMO **poison**, I would not eat your products even if they were free.

[LAY-3-12] **Lays should change their name to Lies**! **They lie** about natural ingredients and contain GMO's!

In addition to these evaluations on grounds of ethics, resistant consumer identities are performed through a third main sub-type: negative AFFECT, with the brand/product as a target. To contrast the positive AFFECT that generally indicated a consumer identity performance, negative AFFECT targeted toward the brand/product tends to consist of evaluations of DISSATISFACTION relating to brand practices. Instances of DISSATISFACTION can be identified in language that scolds or castigates (Martin & White, 2005: 78). For example:

[HSH-1-17] **What I don't agree with is your labor practices.. Why don't you pay your employees a living wage and stop exploiting the environment and the people in the countries you operate in?!?** Not to mention your "chocolate" is tastes awful.

The comment above includes a range of evaluations, including negative JUDGEMENT, but the act of castigating the brand can be identified as an emotive response, and therefore is coded as AFFECT.

In total, there are 9 instances of brand/product-targeted negative AFFECT, or 1% of the total corpus evaluations. Perhaps the relative infrequency of negative product/brand-targeted AFFECT indicates the ‘low-stakes’ impact potential of product marketing in that it does not tend to accidentally elicit negative emotions. Perhaps most people who are uninterested in the product simply ignore the post rather than being incensed to respond.

With the frequency of comments focussing on consumer ethics and, particularly, issues relating to GMO ingredients, many scholars (e.g., Shulman, 2009; White, 2010) might derogatively deem these evaluations to be instances of ‘clicktivism’ or ‘slacktivism’, terms derived from the phrase ‘clickstream activism’. These concepts are described as the minimal-effort engagement through social media, such as online petitions or social media comments (Karpf, 2010: 8). Some researchers argue that, as a form of activism, web-based “e-mobilizations” have a negative impact on civic engagement (Shulman, 2009) and that they “[ruin] leftist activism” (M. White, 2010). However, other scholars (e.g., Karpf, 2010;

Halupka, 2014) argue that clicktivism is either a means to, or is in itself, a legitimate political act.

Again, within the present thesis I do not engage with such theories in depth as they are best left to a more focussed, politically-based study. Instead, I point out that brand posts have, in some cases, become sites for online political campaigns, or at the very least, offer an open forum where responders may perform resistance to this discourse of commodification. From a perspective of consumer identity, Benwell & Stokoe argue that "a certain degree of *resistance* is creeping into cultures of consumption, and consumer culture is increasingly, simultaneously, about a *disavowal* of commodification. This resistance to commodification may originate with consumers in their critical or creative responses to commercial discourses" (2006: 188, italics in original).

In summary, these individuals have identified brand posts in Facebook as opportunities to perform these 'resistant' consumer identities, and do so using a range of evaluative language – particularly, in this case, negative JUDGEMENT evaluations. This is significant because while purchasing boycotts are one form of resistant consumer identity performances, it may be difficult for this political stance to be socially visible as it depends upon the (invisible) *non*-consumption of goods. The emergence of social media marketing, where consumer voices are elicited, has provided a forum for individuals to publicly, *visibly* perform their boycotts and voice their criticisms of the brands whose values they oppose. Through stance-taking language opposing particular corporate ethics, individuals are able to perform their own, positive values.

5.3.3 Aspirational social identities

The third type of identity performance identified within this corpus is that of aspirational social identities. As introduced in this chapter section, I use the term 'aspirational social identity' to refer to the public evaluation of an idealised lifestyle. This often involves conspicuous personal promotion consumption choices, leisure pursuits, and social interactions, such gathering with friends.

In this sense, it is related to consumer identity, and, in particular, 'compliant' consumer identity; this type of identity is often performed through positive engagement with a brand. However, in the examples within this corpus that I have identified as 'aspirational', there is little or no explicit or implicit linguistic reference to the purchase or consumption of particular products. The only affiliation between the responder and the brand is created through the actual act of responding to a post published by a brand.

The categories of appraisal that characterise this type of identity performance include JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION, and AFFECT evaluations of non-brand/product targets/triggers. In particular, aspirational social identity is performed through positive appraisal of the self through JUDGEMENT: TENACITY, and through positive APPRECIATION: VALUATION: SOCIAL BENEFIT appraisal of nature and particular types of ideal behaviour, or 'non-finite' behaviour (such as 'feeling good' about oneself).

In this corpus, most of the aspirational social identity performances occur in response to two of the six brands in the corpus: Activia UK (yogurt), and Nature Valley (granola bars). It is no coincidence that the discourse in these data sets differs from the others in the corpus, as the brands were intentionally selected as the 'healthy' snack food counterparts to the 'unhealthy' chocolate and crisps brands.

However, what is perhaps unexpected is that, despite being essentially similar products at either end of a 'health perception' spectrum, the evaluation in the responses to 'healthy' snack food brands does not correlate to the 'compliant consumer identity' responses as if the products have any similarities at all. That is, where responses to chocolate, for example, include a high number of APPRECIATION evaluations of the product's tastiness or desirability, virtually none of the responses to the 'healthy' brands focus on the product qualities at all, such as health benefits. Instead, the responses appear to constitute an entirely different discursive focus.

The linguistic evidence to suggest this is based on the Activia and Nature Valley comments featuring far less product- or brand-targeted appraisal than the responses to other brands in the corpus. For comments responding to Activia brand posts, there are only 8 instances of appraisal directed toward the brand or product, while Nature Valley comments include 15. By contrast, the average for each of the other four brands is 118 evaluations per brand. Furthermore, for the 'healthy' brands, the number of evaluations directed at non-brand/product targets is 213 and 136, compared to an average of 41 for each of the other four brands. Together, these results indicate that the responses to 'healthy' brands do not focus on lifestyle *and* the product; they generally omit evaluation of the product, and pay virtually no attention to the brand.

In terms of identity, this is interesting because it suggests that the consumption of the product itself is of almost no relevance in the identity performances responding to 'healthy' snack food brands. The brands, instead, appear to be afforded semiotic value as 'icons' of health. In turn, individuals affiliate with this value as though the brands transcend their capitalist motivation of consumer-generated profit. In other words, responders to these brands appear to see themselves as members of an aspirational social group, rather than as consumers of mainstream snack food brands.

To demonstrate this type of identity in more detail, a focus on specific types of appraisal is helpful. In this corpus, aspirational social identity is frequently performed through positive APPRECIATION of a non-brand target. More specifically, in this corpus, 9% of all evaluations are relatively abstract, as they do not value an object, but rather are positive APPRECIATIONS of a non-finite behaviour. In other words, while chocolate may be desirable because of its taste, a certain type of activity (e.g., travelling, hiking, walking) may be implicitly evaluated as desirable or valuable because of its life-affirming effect or positive impact on mental health.

This concept is illustrated in the following comments, which are made in response to the brand post [NRV-1]:

[NRV-1-BRAND]	Happy New Year, Nature Valley fans! "This year, I plan to enjoy nature even more by _________."
[NRV-1-18]	Visiting national parks this year!
[NRV-1-20]	Walking with my kiddos, playing at the park and just enjoying the beautiful MN weather!
[NRV-1-21]	Noticing God's creation more!

These are implicit evaluations, and by completing the sentence of how they 'plan to enjoy nature even more', all of these comments initially agree with the brand post that the non-finite behaviour of 'appreciating nature' is socially beneficial. They then go on to positively appreciate other non-finite behaviours as well. These are different from JUDGEMENT evaluations in that they are not evaluating the behaviour of any *person*, but are rather stating that these *behaviours* are generally socially valuable. Meanwhile, they affiliate with these behaviours through their public pledges to engage in said behaviour. As such, they are performances of aspirational social identities.

Another key manifestation of 'aspirational social identity' performance is through positive AFFECT with a non-brand trigger. This includes a variety of trends from various data sets, but of particular interest are those responding to Activia brand posts where the celebrity Gok Wan is the focus. This elicited positive AFFECT responses such as the following:

[ACT-2-24] **love** you gok

[ACT-2-25] I **so love** Gok he cheers me up when I feel down .

These comments are emotive performances of affection which imply that Gok Wan represents a socially normative ideal within British society – that of 'transformation'. Within the present corpus, two of the three Activia data sets are closely tied to the celebrity Gok Wan and his 'totemic' representation of the 'transformative ideal' (Kadir & Tidy, 2013: 181).

In these data sets, Gok Wan represents the concept of 'transformation' through elicitation of a "#feelgoodpledge', which is perhaps more directly relevant to his television show *How to Feel Good Naked* than it is to Activia. However, a subliminal connection to the brand is implied through the relationship between 'feeling good from within' and Activia's claim that it improves gut health.

The responses relating to Gok Wan also carry evaluations of a different nature: positive JUDGEMENT of a non-brand target, such as the following:

[ACT-1-10] I totally think GOK is a **true inspiration** to woman of all shapes and sizes(and lady's he's showed how us all,it really isnt your shape and size that counts)its's how you wear them clothes and get a look to feel sexy great in them. I also think they should make a little **GOK Doll trophey** for everyboby that acheives this.xx

[ACT-2-3] He seems a **real nice guy** , **down to hearth kinda guy** , **he makes people feel really special about them selfs ! Keep it up ....**

[ACT-2-5] He **knows how to make a woman feel good about herself** and that's a gift most men don't have.

These evaluations are generally categorised as positive PROPRIETY, such as being 'caring', 'sensitive', and 'kind', or even 'altruistic'.

Although classified in the same category, there are a number of positive JUDGEMENT evaluations with a non-brand target that have a different purpose in terms of identity performance. These are JUDGEMENTS of positive TENACITY, and are mostly implicit and targeted toward the self as being 'persevering' or 'resolute'. They come in the form of 'pledges' or 'resolutions', such as the responses below.

[ACT-1-9] Keep believing in self and keep healthy. Trying to get back to some form of fit but still love the individual I am :o)

[ACT-1-14] My New Years resolution and I guess #feelgoodpledge is to generate my own happiness, feel confident and proud in my own skin and to play a proactive part in my life, rather than letting it pass me by. So far this year I have joined a musical theatre company, started a fitness plan and started to take note of what I put in my body. It's hard to change you're mind set but worth persevering with. Noone else can be responsible for your happiness = :-)

[ACT-1-15] remember my stretch marks are because i carried my beautiful daughter and be proud of them and what my body did :) x

In addition to these Activia responses, the responses made to the [NRV-1] brand post, earlier in this section, are also instances of positive TENACITY targeted toward the self, where individuals are publicly declaring what they resolve to do over the next year in order to 'appreciate nature more'. In both the Activia and Nature Valley responses, this positive evaluation of the self for being determined to engage in a particular action or behaviour is, in essence, a proclamation of aspiration toward a 'better' self.

As a sub-corpus (i.e., a collection of three data sets relating to one brand), the evaluations made in response to the Activia posts are by far the most complex, and dense, in terms of evaluations per comment, of any in the corpus. When considered within the context of aspirational social identity performance, the range of evaluation in these comments suggests that the aspirations of those responding to Activia posts are complex.

On the one hand, responses include a substantial number of positive JUDGEMENT evaluations, both directed towards the self for being resolute, special, and healthy, and towards Gok Wan for being caring and inspirational. There are also a number of positive JUDGEMENT evaluations directed towards specific others, such as friends, family, and other commenters, which have the function of encouragement towards health and confidence goals. These JUDGEMENTS fall into a number of sub-categories, and in particular, CAPACITY, TENACITY, NORMALITY, and UNDERSPECIFIED JUDGEMENT; the behaviours in these categories generally relate to SOCIAL ESTEEM, which 'tends to be policed in oral culture' (Martin & White, 2005: 52). In this corpus this appears to be just what is happening – it is an oral culture where social norms and values are performed and maintained through evaluation.

At the same time, there are a number of invoked negative evaluations of the self through inscribed APPRECIATION: VALUATION: APPEARANCE – that is, negative body image talk, such as in the comments below:

[ACT-1-4]	All I can see is **how big I am** , l,ve lost some but
[ACT-1-7]	**I could do with a make over :-/ we have our days**. My hubby said something weird tho, he said he always looks the same hmm i never paid attention really lol x
[ACT-1-11]	I am not **the size I think I am**, [My #feelgood pledge is to] see the real me
[ACT-2-13]	He is brill. He makes you feel confident and makes you feel like a million dollars. **Could do with a make-over to brighten up my skin** xx

In a sense, the aspirational social identities in the Activia discourse are an exemplary demonstration of the complex and contradictory nature of identity. The aspirations seem to simultaneously promote a sense of social encouragement, self-love and confidence that is independent of body ideals and social expectations, whilst also engaging in the positive and negative appreciation of bodies for achieving or failing to achieve (at least partial) transformation in the pursuit of the very same ideals.

In a more general consideration of the performance of aspirational social identity, the comments identified as fulfilling this purpose indicate that iconic brands may use social media marketing as a 'meeting place' to attract individuals who identify with some aspect of the aspirational lifestyle that the brand implies they can offer to their customers. While they do not overtly push products, they semiotically associate the brand with complex social values that they invite responders to perform and reinforce through evaluation.

Of course, it may well be that aspirational social identities do often involve explicit product affiliation (e.g., the conspicuous ownership of a Rolex, BMW, etc. signifying wealth). But, in the case of the discourse in this corpus, it seems that the nature of the aspiration – the 'elusive', or 'elite' factor – is an idealised state of physical and mental health, including being 'socially acceptable'.

5.3.4 Socio-cultural identities

Finally, the fourth type of identity performance identified within this corpus is that of 'socio-cultural identities'. Of course, this is a term that could encompass all of the previous three types of identity discussed in this chapter; however, in this discussion, I use the term to refer to aspects of identity such as social class and social norms that appear to happen in a somewhat 'off-topic' manner within this corpus. By this, I mean that there is a meaningful trend in responses where individuals latch on to traditions or breaks in tradition that do not appear to be part of the marketing strategy.

These performances typically do not acknowledge the product, brand, or promotional nature of the brand post. Rather, they focus on topics of cultural relevance such as class relations or solidarity and inside jokes with others within their social group.

These comments tend to be interspersed throughout the corpus; in any given data set, there may be one or a few isolated comments that are performances of socio-cultural identity as described in this chapter. Unlike the other types of identity performance described in this chapter, there is often not a trend where multiple responses focus on the same aspect of socio-cultural identity.

However, within the corpus, there are exceptions to the typical 'scattered' nature of these comments; there is one brand post in particular, [CBY-3], that elicited a number of similar comments with this performative function. These are directed toward the product/brand, and are negative APPRECIATION: REACTION: APPEARANCE evaluations, but have an interesting performative function in upholding social norms of the chastisement (and humour) of profanity. The context of the brand post, below, is particularly important in this case.

Image 41: [CBY-3-BRAND]

Responses to this post include the following:

[CBY-3-3] It doesn't look anything like a snow man,more like something you would find in an adult shop :))))

[CBY-3-11] Hmm, yes I have to agree, it looks too rude to be eaten on public, lol. Not sure Cadbury have got this one right...

[CBY-3-16] Lol it looks like a p***s :)

[CBY-3-17] Doesn't look much like a snowman to me either!!!! :$ LOL

Although rather light-hearted, these responses are nonetheless social interactions where the appearance of the product is criticised for non-conformity to social norms as it is deemed by some responders to appear to be profane. Most of these comments also perform positive AFFECT: HAPPINESS, mostly through use of emoticons, which could be seen as further implications that the content of the post is inappropriate.

Another brand post where a number of evaluations focussed on socio-cultural values is within the [WKR-3] data set. Within the comments in this data set, there are a number of negative AFFECT evaluations with non-brand targets.

The brand post relates to the 2013 birth of the British royal Prince George. The brand post text is:

[WKR-3] It's a big day for Britain. Our new Prince is finally here! Who's excited?

Responses include negative evaluations of AFFECT: DISSATISFACTION, including being 'bored with' or 'sick of' (Martin & White, 2005: 51), or 'angry with'. This category appears in the following responses:

[WKR-3-5] **Not me** its only a baby I've got 3 of them does that make me special no

[WKR-3-14] **Absolutely pathetic** all this talk, near enough every British company are overrating this news

[WKR-3-23] Pretty **disgusted** with the small minded people who are viewing this poor child who is only a few hours old, as a sponging blood sucker of the nation. **I'm appalled.** We are all entitled to an opinion....but please do some of you really have to show your ignorance publicly....

Another category appears frequently within the same data set: negative JUDGEMENT of a non-brand target. This is seen in the responses below:

[WKR-3-4] Time to rid this country of the monarchy!!another **royal hanger on!!**

[WKR-3-12] I suppose Cameron 'll want to give her a knighthood now for her amazing acheivement, like she's the first woman to have ever given birth.

These responses to the [WKR-3] brand post are examples of identity performances where a negative stance is taken against a person or people (the royal baby, royalty in general, anti-royalists) and in doing so, alignment with opposing, positive values is implied.

Indeed, throughout this broad category of 'socio-cultural identity performances' there are a variety of positions held and challenged. It is possible that individuals are exposed to such a variety of different posts within their news feeds that these identity performances might be considered to be 'performance through selective response'. In other words, perhaps people who respond to brand posts in this way respond to posts that bring up topic they are already thinking about but do not wish to initiate as topics for a debate amongst their Facebook network. While personal status updates tend to be broadcast to a user's entire Facebook friend network, responses to others' posts (including brand posts) may be visible but are typically not visible to the entire friend network.

Perhaps then, responding to brand posts relating to social values and norms is a form of participating in social debate without contextualising it as a question or challenge to Facebook 'friends' – rather, it is a form of writing oneself into existence – but not too 'loudly'.

Chapter Summary: Identity performances within social media marketing

This chapter presents the results of the discourse analysis as a general overview which indicates that this emerging genre is incredibly complex in its range and variety of identity performances. Furthermore, as social media interaction evolves and Facebook users become more accustomed to seeing brand posts within their news feeds, it may be that some strategies identified in the present study will be seen less often, while others may emerge as 'cultural norms'. Future, comparative studies may contribute further interesting insights into how individuals adapt to ever-increasing advertising-colonised social contexts.

I argue that responses to brand posts do not necessarily constitute 'consumer discourse' in the sense of focussing on the purchase of products within an auxiliary online marketplace. Rather, they are a new hybrid form of social interaction. This research indicates that many individuals respond to the social, rather than promotional content of these brand advertisements. Furthermore, these brand posts function as 'conversation initiations' which enable identity performances varying from consumer values and preferences to emotive outpourings to challenges or enforcements of cultural norms.

It seems that, given the initial success of this advertising model, social media users can expect to see much more of these brand posts in the future. What remains to be seen is whether or not social interactions with brand posts will become the 'norm'. If they do, it may mean that our sense of self – our identities – will be contextualised by branded messages in ways we have not previously experienced.

In Chapter 6, I review the empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions and limitations of this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This study has employed and adapted the analytic frameworks of genre analysis, Negotiation analysis, and Appraisal analysis in order to investigate how identity is performed through language within the emerging genre of social media marketing, which is of increasing relevance in networked cultures. The combination of these frameworks has allowed a multi-dimensional analysis of the ways that individuals interact and position themselves in relation to materials and cultural topics presented in their realities by others and by themselves. The results from this study contribute to empirical knowledge on how identities are performed within the ever-changing landscape of networked communication. The study also contributes insight into novel applications of existing discourse analysis frameworks, as well as suggesting extensions for these frameworks for further CMC research.

6.1 Empirical contributions

This study contributes to identity research through its investigation of a new context within which identity work is done – through Facebook users' engagement with social media marketing. The results indicate that the identity strategies used in this context are complex and varied, and are enacted through linguistic strategies that appear to resemble casual chat with friends, as well as consumer discourse.

The three analytical levels of analysis, genre analysis, Negotiation analysis, and Appraisal analysis, work together to draw a picture of the range of meanings created (identities performed) within this discourse. Each of these layers of analysis has aspects of overlap with the others, but each constitutes a different focus on the corpus and on identity performance through stance-taking. It could be said that the analysis layers, in terms of description of the corpus, move from the general (genre), to the 'intermediary' (Negotiation), to the specific (Appraisal). In other words, the genre analysis provides an overview of the form and function of the brand posts and comments, the Negotiation analysis highlights what is happening 'between' participants through dialogue, and the Appraisal analysis involves a close textual analysis on specific stances individuals take in relation to the brand and other people and concepts. In this way, each layer builds upon the previous layer, and findings from all three layers relate to each other.

More specifically, the genre analysis catalogues what this particular discourse achieves through specific, multimodal elements, in terms of meaning-making jointly constructed by the brand and the responders. In the genre analysis, I identified features of social media marketing that resemble and differ from both 'friend' posts, and magazine advertisements. I found that brand posts use images and text not only to promote products through sensory depiction and description, but also to associate with and instigate discussions relating to cultural values. In some cases, mention of the product is entirely absent from brand posts. I also identified the communicative purposes of responders, and found that while responders do frequently engage in consumer discourse, there are also a substantial number of responders who engage in complex, non-consumer discourse.

The next layer of analysis, Negotiation analysis, is concerned with the strategies responders use as they engage in a dialogic relationship with the brand, and what positions these individuals take in relation to the brand. The findings from the Negotiation analysis indicate that the majority of responders 'go along with' the topic introduced in the brand post, by agreeing with or elaborating the sentiment of the brand post. As such, they claim a certain degree of 'ownership' of the topics introduced in the brand post, whether it is publicly affiliating with them, or recontextualising them in order to reflect and construct personal experiences and identity. A notable number of responders, however, take advantage of the dialogic opportunity provided in this context to engage with topics related to corporate practices; in other words, they use social media marketing to publicly perform stance-taking language that is in opposition to the brand.

The final, primary, and most detailed layer of analysis, Appraisal analysis, is an investigation of how responders use the context provided by the brand message to position themselves with or against the brand, product, or any entity or concept they wish to evoke. Like the genre and Negotiation analyses, this layer of analysis produced a finding that indeed, engagement with and evaluation of the brand and products is a major feature of this corpus. However, as with the other two layers of analysis, the findings also indicate that a large proportion of the stance-taking language in this corpus does not directly relate to consumer identity.

In this analysis, I identified four different realisations of identity performance that prevail in this corpus. The first is 'compliant consumer identities', typically where individuals positively or negatively evaluate products on the basis of taste and desirability. The second is 'resistant consumer identities', where individuals focus not on the desirability of the product, but on negative aspects of the product and brand that, in their view, harms society, through damage to public health, the environment, and social equality. The third realisation of identity performance I have identified is classified as 'aspirational social identities', where individuals engage in a number of types of evaluation in order to perform identities of ‘better selves’. Among these evaluations are positive evaluations of the self for committing to positive lifestyle choices, and public encouragement of self and others for contributing to supportive communities. Finally, the fourth realisation of identity performance involves aspects of ‘socio-cultural identities’, where individuals often engage in debate or banter on topics relating to social norms and values, such as profanity or cultural rituals.

Overall, the contribution this research makes is to describe the discourse and dialogue of the individuals who see brand posts as meaningful social messages – not as advertisements in the traditional sense – and who use these messages to construct and perform their own identities. This contribution is significant because it empirically informs a debate on how our communications on social media are adapting with the gradual infiltration of brands into this social space. Meanwhile, it suggests that our networked communications have become valuable commodities for brands, as they partially constitute the marketing messages themselves.

This research lends itself to a socio-political debate on the role and quickly-blurring boundaries of advertising in our society. I argue that identity-focussed social media marketing constitutes a significant evolution in our networked societies, where brands are able to take a leading role in the contextualisation of the thing we perceive to be truly ‘ours’ – our identities. Furthermore, our identity performances now actually have indirect *monetary value* as a form of revenue-generating brand advertising.

Perhaps this is an inevitable price to be paid for the free communication opportunities we enjoy through social media. In any case, I speculate that as long as the model continues to be profitable for social media corporations and advertisers, it will continue to expand and evolve. If this is the case, for many years to come researchers will have opportunities to study the complex social relationships between individuals and brands that emerge through social media discourse.

The results from this study indicate that this discourse is, in many ways, unlike consumer discourse, where an exchange of material goods or consumer information is the explicit goal of interactions. Rather, within social media marketing interactions, the goal is affiliation – for responders, they may engage in identity performances through affiliation or disaffiliation with the brand, product, or, most commonly, social norms and values. The cost of this values-based affiliation, however, is an affiliation with the brand as well, whether or not the individual takes any explicit stance toward the brand.

6.2 Theoretical and methodological contributions

Genre analysis

This study makes a theoretical contribution to genre research through its new approach to the analysis of multimodal genres, entailing a reformulation of the traditional, linear 'genre stage' structure. The proposed analytical framework instead involves describing genre 'elements', which do not occur in any particular linear order, some of which may be embedded within other elements of the genre. The approach entails conceiving of three simultaneously-enacted types of meaning within a text: mode (hyperlink, image, text), layout, and discourse. By considering these three meaning-making features of a text, generic elements can be individually identified and described using a simple generic annotation system.

Furthermore, while casual social media 'chat' is a type of discourse not normally considered using genre analysis (Zappavigna, 2012: 28), in the present study I have considered it as being part of, or partially constituting, the emerging 'hybrid' genre of social media marketing. Zappavigna argues that the complex intertextual relations in social media make it unclear how user posts can be analysed using genre theory. In the present study, however, I have accounted for this intertextuality within a detailed contextual description, and have identified one contextualisation which allowed me to consider the responses as a 'chronological' collection of comments made in response to brand posts. By using this contextualisation as one of many possible 'frames' within which the comments exist, I have considered whether, and how, these comments constitute an element of the social media marketing genre.

In other words, I argue that there are potential contextualisations of the social media discourse that enable genre analysis. This analysis does not necessarily show how comments have communicative purposes in common with the brand post, but rather, indicates that aspects of the two discourse types work together, both in harmony and in conflict, to achieve separate communicative goals. In other words, social media discourse, as a genre and as a collection of sub-genres, is complex and often multiply-authored, but nevertheless, the genre analysis framework as a method and theory is still of value in understanding the form and function of this discourse. It does require careful consideration of context and recontextualisation, and a flexible approach to the conceptualisation of an overall communicative purpose, but I argue, and demonstrate within the present study, that it is ultimately a valuable framework in the investigation of social media discourse.

Negotiation analysis

The research also makes a contribution to the study of dialogue analysis through the application of the Negotiation framework. Eggins & Slade (1997: 215) explain that the interpretation of speech functions should focus on patterns over a whole text, by either quantifying speaker patterns of specific individuals or by identifying changes in speech functions as the conversation develops. However, I have undertaken a novel theoretical interpretation of Negotiation, by applying it to an asynchronous CMC context, and by only investigating the first move of a response (as the conversations typically do not carry on far past this point). Also, I have used Negotiation analysis to compare the conversational strategies of many different speakers responding to a single, common point of stimulus. In doing so, rather than achieving an analysis of how particular interlocutors proceed through conversation and negotiate relationships over time, I consider trends in how a number of individuals react to brand posts through a collection of single interactions.

In the present study, this approach was favoured over the ENGAGEMENT framework within Appraisal theory, which would have made ENGAGEMENT a more obvious choice for a methodology seeking to address the interpersonal aspect of discourse. While ENGAGEMENT focusses on how a speaker brings up alternate voices, the Negotiation framework focuses on how a speaker interacts with the voices that are already present in this particular context.

As part of this novel application of Negotiation analysis to CMC, I contribute a description of how some features of dialogue emerge differently in CMC than in verbal discourse. For example, the concept of 'interruption' is irrelevant in CMC, as it is not possible for one commenter to cut short the comment of another. Meanwhile, I demonstrate that other aspects of dialogue – such as the 'linking' of two sentiments through use of 'run-ons', are not only relevant to this discourse, but also emerge differently. In spoken dialogue, a run-on may be achieved through intonation and lack of pause, whilst in CMC, it may be achieved through lack of punctuation or capitalisation. Also, verbal attention-seeking strategies (e.g., 'hey!'), may be achieved in social media through technological tools such as 'friend tagging'.

In summary, the present study demonstrates that while some elements of conversation analysis do not necessarily apply to CMC analysis, there are a number of considerations that can be applied to CMC directly as though it were verbal discourse, or through criteria modified to account for CMC characteristics.

Appraisal analysis

Finally, this research contributes to Appraisal research as an application of the framework to a new context of discourse. In doing so, the Appraisal framework categories have been slightly adapted to lay bare features of this corpus that are of particular salience and interest – in this case, categories were described at a finer level of delicacy for APPRECIATION evaluations relating to REACTION QUALITY (TASTE and APPEARANCE), and VALUATION (PRICE and HEALTH).

Furthermore, I identified in this corpus a number of instances of evaluation where it is difficult to distinguish between APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT and APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY. While Appraisal borders are known to be 'fuzzy' at times, in this case, I determined that it was necessary to account for this 'fuzziness' by establishing a hybrid category. It is possible that the distinction between APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT and APPRECIATION:REACTION:QUALITY is generally possible to make but that this corpus includes an unusual number of cases where the boundary is blurred. It is equally possible that the theorisation of these categories as distinct from each other could be further developed.

Another theoretical contribution resulting from methodological decisions made in this thesis is the detailed discussion of 'borders' between categories that are 'further apart' in the Appraisal system network than the two categories described above. In this case, an example of category 'fuzziness' was identified between the categories of APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT and AFFECT:HAPPINESS:AFFECTION. One type of comment that appeared frequently in this corpus was formulations of "I love [chocolate, crisps, etc.]". Lexically, the word 'love' is a clear indication of an appraisal of AFFECT:HAPPINESS:AFFECTION. However, this also constitutes an implicit, but clear, instance of APPRECIATION:REACTION:IMPACT.

The solution proposed in this thesis was the double-coding of these categories, amongst others. While the possibility of double-coding is mentioned in various Appraisal studies, in the literature there is a lack of detailed discussion on the implementation of a double-coding system or procedure. I argue that one potential reason for the avoidance of double-coding is that implementation of a double-coding system frees the researcher from the 'system network' decision of coding an instance of evaluation as one or another type of appraisal. I argue that the constraints of a single-coding system require the researcher to prioritise explicit lexical items indicating recognisable types of appraisal from Martin & White's (2005) framework. In turn, this reliance on identifiable lexical realisations of appraisal 'protects' the researcher, in terms of justifying coding decisions. That is, in cases where a researcher identifies explicit evaluation, he or she chooses to code this *instead of*, rather than *in addition to*, an instance of implicit evaluation that may also be justifiably coded in association with the same lexical items.

Of course, the goal of relative objectivity in Appraisal analysis is warranted and necessary in order to conduct robust research, and the identification of relatively uncontested lexical realisations of particular Appraisal categories is a reasonable strategy to achieve this goal. However, I argue that implicit realisations of evaluation, where coding more heavily depends on contextual, and therefore potentially subjective reasoning, are more instrumental in the meaning-making functions of communication than has been accounted for to date in Appraisal research. As such, only by beginning to develop systematic approaches to account for these implicit, layered evaluations, will the Appraisal community advance our understanding of how humans create meaning through these realisations of stance-taking language.

As implied above, one limitation of this system is that it is likely to entail making more coding decisions that are 'below' the level of explicit lexical realisations of Appraisal categories, which means there is more opportunity for inconsistency when the corpus is analysed by multiple researchers. In the present research, I have accounted for this limitation by creating a detailed description of many of these decisions within Chapter 3. Where there were a number of related instances that could be approached through consistent rationalisations (e.g., the decision to code basic anti-GMO comments as negative APPRECIATION:VALUATION:HEALTH evaluations, based on research into anti-GMO campaigns), I specifically outlined this in the description of that particular Appraisal category. In other words, although the categorisations of particular evaluative features may themselves be contestable, when it comes to significant evaluative trends in the corpus, there is a clear overview provided of how the corpus analysis results were obtained. As such, one limitation of the study is that I present these results as a thoroughly described and justified set of coding decisions, rather than as a study that depends primarily upon specific, relatively uncontested interpretations of lexical realisations of evaluation. However, I argue that this approach is justified as a manually-conducted, qualitative study with the research aim of investigating identity, as the coding of specific lexical realisations of Appraisal (with the aim of coding consistency) is currently being investigated through ground-breaking studies in sentiment analysis (e.g., Cruz, Taboada, & Mitkov, 2015).

In summary, the present research constitutes a methodological contribution to a central debate in Appraisal of the issue of 'system networks' in terms of the coding of explicit and implicit appraisal. I contribute to this debate by arguing that in many cases, a single utterance enacts multiple value positions simultaneously, relating to multiple value systems (emotions, aesthetics, ethics). While it is not a researcher's prerogative to read too far into the discourse, as unwarranted subjectivity becomes inevitable, I argue that in many cases there is certainly scope to justifiably identify two simultaneous evaluations enacted by one lexical utterance. The approach outlined in this thesis constitutes a contribution to the field by exploring the implications of double-coding appraisal.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Methodological limitations of this study were described in Section 6.2, above. Below, I outline two additional limitations of the study, particularly in terms of the corpus.

This study has involved a detailed qualitative study of social media marketing through analysis of a small corpus. The topics discussed at length were informed by quantitative results of this genre, Negotiation, and Appraisal analysis. As such, it is conceivable that a larger, or different corpus would produce significantly different quantitative results, and different categories would emerge as being more or less significant. However, this study is not designed to catalogue and quantify the configurations of the genre; rather, it is a data-led exploration of the genre intended to begin the process of identifying features of significance.

Another limitation of the study is the nature of internet discourse as being somewhat of a 'moving target' (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010). The data was collected in 2013, and since this time, the genre of social media marketing has advanced significantly. An up-to-date study would ideally include a focus on auto-play video advertisements, which have become a widely-used mode for social media marketing.

6.4 Concluding remarks and future research

The present research has many potential applications both within linguistics as well as in interdisciplinary work. There is potential to expand on the work in this thesis by investigating the more recent developments in Facebook advertising, where the number of advertisements a Facebook user sees has vastly increased, and brands have had the benefit of experience in honing their brand messages to improve in engaging their audience. It would be interesting to see whether brands now tend to favour messages that are obviously promotional, or whether they emphasise social values and cultural events.

Another potential direction for further research is multimodal in nature – it is now the norm for advertisements to appear in video format, which often automatically plays (with muted sound – for now) as the Facebook user scrolls through the news feed.

Also, the boundaries between marketing and advertising, which presented certain challenges in this thesis, as discussed in Chapter 3, are becoming even more blurred; Facebook has introduced an initiative to decrease the amount of posts a user sees even from a brand they have 'liked'. Facebook has justified this decision, reasoning that the very success of the social media marketing has resulted in users being 'bombarded' with marketing messages which squeeze out the messages of 'quality' (Boland, 2014). Of course, Facebook has built in a caveat – brands may choose to pay to have their marketing posts reach a higher percent of their consensual audience.

As the nature of communication within Facebook continues to evolve, it would be a study of great interest to research what a 'normal' Facebook post looks like – is it still the status update informing a social circle about life events, thoughts and feelings, as it was before media could be shared? Or is it to share (and thus implicitly affiliate with) media such as articles of interest, humorous memes, local news, and so on?

During the data collection process, a potential project of ethnographic nature presented itself; in an attempt to gather data that was certainly advertising and not marketing, I asked my Facebook 'friends' (approximately 100 people, all of whom I know from non-networked settings) to share with me any advertisements that appeared on their news feeds[15]. While the participation of this research group was initially enthusiastic, this quickly changed. Many participants individually informed me that they felt embarrassment at sharing the content of the advertising that appears on their news feed, because they assume that it is targeted at them based on their internet activity.

That is, they were reluctant to acknowledge any affiliation with these brands and products, even as the target of advertising. Perhaps this was because the individuals either did not identify with, or did not wish to be seen to identify with what they perceived as the target audience of the brand post for a number of reasons, such as age, political affiliation, health status, or gender identification. No matter the specific reasons, however, the reactions of the data collection participants support the claim in this thesis that social media marketing discourse is valuable for identity research. It appears there is potential for research into the growing anxiety that social media users are likely to feel as their

[15] For reasons explained here, in addition to other limitations such as insufficient numbers of audience responses to advertisements, the data described here was not used within this thesis.

meaningful, semi-private social engagements within the news feed are interrupted by marketers who appear to know very personal information about them, and have interpreted from this a potential desire or need for particular products.

The framework used in this thesis could also be applied to social media marketing in other platforms – of particular interest is the role of Twitter in ‘integrated marketing’, where, for example, a television advertisement may display a Twitter hashtag at the end in an attempt to initiate audience engagement within a specific social media ‘meeting place’.

Finally, there is potential for further research into the identity performance aspects of interaction between social media users and brand marketing. For example, there would be potential insight afforded through an ethnographic approach, or ‘netnography’ (Kozinets, 2009). This approach might entail observing a number of social media users as they interact not only with brands, but with their ‘friend’ networks as well. It could reveal more of the complexities about what is accomplished, in terms of identity, through responding to, ‘liking’, and ‘sharing’ posts written by various people and companies beyond the user’s friend network, who invest in aggressive web presence.

In summary, the present research is a potential starting point for future studies considering the quickly-changing nature of how we interact online, what it means in terms of ‘who we are’, and what role is being established by corporations and brands in this context. It is a rich environment for research, as it is for identity work. While social media is a context where brands are eager to ‘write themselves into being’, this study has demonstrated that the engagement they elicit from social media users is complex, and often appears to entail performances of identity that are rather less concerned with product consumption than they are with the goings-on of everyday life.

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