

Femvertising: A Multimodal Discourse Study of Female Video Advertisements from the Perspective of Visual Grammar

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Abstract

Femvertising (female empowerment advertising) has garnered significant attention in contemporary mass media. It is both a multimodal discourse and feminist discourse embedding complex layers of feminist meanings within its text. The complexity of meanings is due to the message delivered in advertisement which is not only used verbal language but visual image as well that work together as a unit of meaning. Under the guidance of the Visual Grammar theory of Kress & Van Leeuwen, this paper conducts a qualitative and quantitative multimodal analysis of the femvertising, to look at any multimodal elements which comprise the femvertising and how these elements express meanings. The results suggest that femvertising effectively conveys representational, interactive, and compositional meanings. Despite its diverse manifestations, femvertising represents a conduit for deeper insights into the intersection of visual and linguistic elements, but also contributes to a broader comprehension of feminist perspectives, enriching discussions on social cognition, cultural identity, and the dynamics of advertising.

Keywords: Visual Grammar, Femvertising, Multimodal Discourse

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1. Introduction

Feminism, originating in the mid-19th century with suffragettes advocating for women's voting rights, has evolved over time, notably marked by milestones like International Women's Day, which champions women's rights and celebrates their achievements. The advent of the Internet and media technology has ushered feminism into a new era, often termed as the "fourth-wave feminism" (Benn, 2013). In line with these developments, advertising, has also embraced remarkable changes. The concept of "femvertising", derived from female empowerment advertising, has emerged. Going beyond the traditional promotion of products and services, femvertising aims to communicate messages of female empowerment, confidence, and autonomy. By showcasing the diverse experiences and aspirations of women, femvertising dismantles stereotypes and fosters greater societal understanding and respect for gender equality.

This thesis aims to investigate femvertising, a prominent form of feminist discourse, within the theoretical framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (VG) theory, by employing a comprehensive approach integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, to explore its representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning of femvertising, while examining its multimodal characteristics.

This study holds significance in expanding the scope of Visual Grammar theory by employing multimodal discourse analysis to investigate femvertising. It reaffirms the utility of Visual Grammar theory in examining female discourse, highlighting its efficacy in unpacking complex visual and linguistic interactions within advertising narratives. Furthermore, discourse constructs social identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and meaning. As Fairclough (2003) posits, discourse not only reflects changes in societal culture but also catalyzes them. Therefore, an examination of female discourse could provide valuable insights into societal dynamics and unveil its profound impact on social structures and cultural metamorphoses.

2. Literature review

2.1 Visual grammar

Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) propose a framework for image analysis based on Halliday's three meta-functions under his Systemic-Functional Grammar, where images are regarded as social semiotics. Their Visual Grammar theory introduces "representational meaning", "interactive meaning," and "compositional meaning" as corresponding key elements for image analysis. This theory recognizes that images, like language, serve as social semiotics capable of expressing various themes and meanings. Through a multimodal discourse analysis approach, Visual Grammar examines the metafunctions in images and explores the interplay between language and image, thus elucidating the mechanisms of discourse and enhancing readers' comprehension of visual messages.

Previous studies on multimodal discourse from the perspective of Visual Grammar mainly focused on movie posters (Hu, 2019; Zhao, 2023) and commercial advertisements (Pratiwy & Wulan, 2018; Wang, 2020).

These studies typically employ qualitative analysis methods to examine images or selected frames, enabling viewers to delve into the implications and meanings conveyed by media texts from new perspectives.

However, there is a scarcity of research on feminist discourse within the context of Visual Grammar theory. The application of Visual Grammar theory to feminist discourse analysis assists in the interpretation of gender representations, revealing how media shapes and communicates perceptions of gender roles. Furthermore, it aids in uncovering power structures and cultural influences embedded within feminist discourse. Existing studies in this area often suffer from methodological limitations, relying on subjective data sources and employing limited research approaches.

2.2 Femvertising

Feminist discourse analysis has emerged as a comprehensive approach for understanding the power dynamics of language. Stemming from linguists' focus on gendered interactions and feminist scholars' critique of language as a tool of patriarchy, this analytical framework scrutinizes how discourse constructs categories of inclusion and exclusion within a patriarchal society. It also recognizes the intersections between discourse and other hierarchical structures.

Femvertising, a prominent form of feminist discourse, has been defined variably by scholars. The term gained recognition in 2014, when the lifestyle platform SheKnows hosted an Advertising Week panel on the subject in October of that year (Ciambrello, 2014). During this discussion, "femvertising" was employed to characterize modern advertising campaigns that challenge traditional female stereotypes. With the rise of the fourth wave of feminism, coupled with the emergence and increased popularity of social media, femvertising has experienced exponential growth in popularity over the past decade. Åkestam *et al.* (2017) defines femvertising as "advertising that challenges traditional female advertising stereotypes", while Kapoor and Munjal (2019) argue that it aims to "create awareness, breaking stereotypes surrounding the role of women in society". The underlying concept of femvertising suggests that brands can empower women not only by selling products or services but also by dismantling stereotypes and influencing society as a whole (Ciambriello, 2014; Kapoor and Munjal, 2019).

In the field of sociology, there have been burgeoning studies investigating topics as diverse as female liberation (Ford *et al.*, 1991; North, 2014), the interrogation of female stereotypes (D'Alessandro & Chitty, 2011; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004), and engagement with socio-political issues (Guzman *et al.*, 2017; Schmidt *et al.*, 2021). While various studies have scrutinized specific aspects of female portrayals, such as body size (D'Alessandro & Chitty, 2011) or attractiveness (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2011; Richins, 1991), femvertising typically integrates multiple features simultaneously, thus focusing on the overall impression or holistic representation of females in advertising (Åkestam *et al.*, 2017).

Within the realm of advertising studies, the proliferation of femvertising indicates that contemporary brands view it as an effective strategy to target female audiences (Åkestam *et al.*, 2017). Research has shown that femvertising impacts consumer reactions, leading to reduced ad reactance compared to traditional advertising and subsequently fostering higher ad and brand attitudes. These effects are contingent upon consumer perceptions of stereotypical portrayals within the advertisements (Åkestam *et al.*, 2017). Femvertising is, therefore, recognized as an advertising appeal. However, some studies indicate that certain brands use female empowerment messages merely as promotional tools (Michaelidou *et al.*, 2022).

Nevertheless, there is a relative scarcity of femvertising research from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis. Unlike typical feminist discourse, femvertising, as a form of multimodal discourse, utilizes a variety of semiotic resources including language, technology, visual imagery, sound, music, color, and even three-dimensional interaction. Through multimodal discourse analysis, the utilization of these diverse symbolic resources within femvertising can be explicitly revealed, providing a comprehensive understanding of how feminist discourse is presented and communicated. Moreover, multimodal discourse analysis helps uncover the relationships among different semiotic resources in femvertising and their interaction with discourse power dynamics. By integrating theories and methods from different disciplines, multimodal discourse analysis offers a richer and more comprehensive perspective, facilitating a deeper understanding of femvertising and its societal impact. Above all, it can be concluded that femvertising is a blend of both multimodal discourse and feminist discourse.

To conduct a more comprehensive study, this study employs the Visual Grammar theory, which allows for a deeper exploration of how various visual images interact to shape meaning and communicate messages related to gender representation and stereotypes within femvertising campaigns. By integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods, researchers can thoroughly examine the content and impact of femvertising.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

With the advancement of artificial intelligence and digital media technology, visual elements have become

integral tools in advertising for constructing and conveying meanings. As societal perceptions of women's roles continue to evolve, a new advertising practice known as femvertising has emerged, which is considered as a manifestation of feminism (Sobande, 2019). Increasingly, commercial brands targeting both female and male consumers have delved into femvertising, recognizing its potential to resonate with diverse audiences. Therefore, femvertising represents a typical multimodal discourse that offers a deeper understanding of dynamics. This thesis aims to focus on the two most widely viewed women-targeted video advertisements from commercial brands, typically showcased on International Women's Day—a globally celebrated day to honor women's achievements and advocate for gender equality. These advertisements showcased on this occasion serve as quintessential examples of femvertising. Based on the theoretical framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (VG) theory, this thesis aims to address the following two primary research questions:

1. How are the representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning of femvertising realized from the perspective of Visual Grammar?
2. What are the multimodal characteristics of femvertising from the perspective of Visual Grammar?

3.2 Data collection

This study focuses on femvertising as the research object, a topic widely explored by various commercial brands. In order to ensure objectivity in the selection process, the author conducted internet searches to find two video advertisements targeting distinct demographic groups: male and female consumers. According to Statista, a global data and business intelligence platform, over 60 percent of new car buyers in the United States between September 2020 and August 2021 were men, indicating a predominantly male consumer base in the automotive industry. Hence, one selected advertisement pertains to the car industry, while the other is chosen from women's product brands. Consequently, the data in this report possess a certain level of authenticity and reliability. Furthermore, all selected advertisements were released in 2023, thereby reflecting current design concepts and trends. Based on these conditions, the study selects the most viewed ads from each category for analysis from the perspective of VG, including one from Mercedes-Benz (with over 160k views) and another from a women's lingerie brand NEIWAI (内外) (with over 700k views). Therefore, this study selects these two advertisements through official websites, which is of high authenticity and reliability.

Mercedes-Benz ad selects various scenes to underscore the exceptional status of women in fields ranging from racing to science to corporate leadership. These women are portrayed as making history by virtue of being the first or the only female achievers in their respective domains. For International Women's Day 2023, Mercedes-Benz is conveying a powerful message for a shift in social norms where women are no longer viewed as exceptions but rather as integral members of a diverse community of accomplished women.

On the other hand, NEIWAI explores the theme of women's relationship with their bodies through the medium of dance, highlighting that bodily sensations represent as a guiding force. Divided into three distinct chapters, the advertisement delves into nuanced aspects of this dialogue. The first chapter, titled "The Discipline of Beauty," portrays women's dance movements being continuously distorted and constrained by others. The second chapter titled "The Suppression of Desire" depicts a scene where a man and a woman dance gracefully in a subdued setting, prompting introspective questions from the female protagonist about the validity of her desires "Is my desire inappropriate?" The third chapter titled "The Silence of Pain" captures the struggle of a woman attempting to voice her experiences, only to be constantly pacified by others with reassurances of "It's nothing."

3.3 Research Method

To expound upon construction of the three meanings within the Women's Day advertisements, the study selects the two most viewed advertisements obtained through official channels. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed to analyze these advertisements.

In the qualitative research phase, this study undertakes a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) of the two Women's Day advertisements by applying the theoretical framework of VG. The representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning are analyzed respectively and in detail.

Subsequently, in the quantitative research phase, the frequency and proportion of the three identified meanings within the two Women's Day advertisements are manually marked based on VG.

3.4 Analytical Procedures

Firstly, this study separately analyzes two Women's Day advertisements based on the VG theory. The frequency and percentage of three main meanings (representational, interactive, and compositional) are calculated manually along with their sub-meanings. The results are then presented in tables corresponding to each meaning. Through this analysis, the multimodal characteristics of femvertising are summarized.

Secondly, a qualitative analysis method is employed to examine the representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning, along with their specific forms of expression. One example is provided for each sub-meaning, except in cases where no corresponding visuals exist.

Finally, the study clarifies the multimodal characteristics of femvertising and how the three meanings manifest in femvertising. To mitigate subjective bias, the author seeks input from their supervisor and peers, especially when encountering uncertainty. This collaborative approach ensures a more objective analysis of the findings. Those procedures are presented in Figure 1.

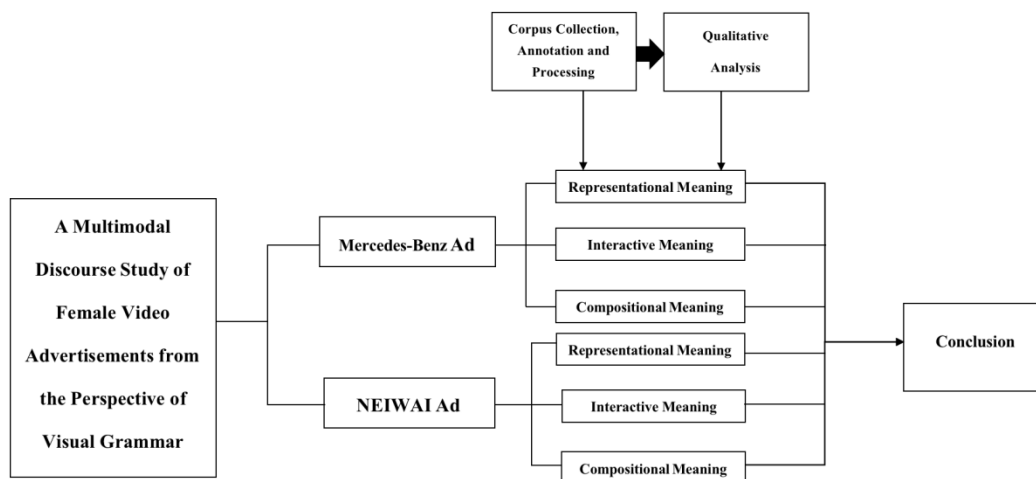


Figure 1. The Analytical Procedures

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Mercedes-Benz

4.1.1 Representational Meaning

Based on the ideational function of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) propose the concept of representational meaning, including narrative process and conceptual processes. The distinction between these processes lies in the presence of vectors in the picture. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of representational meaning and its subcategories within Mercedes-Benz Women’s Day advertisements.

Table 1. The Distribution of Representational Meaning in Mercedes-Benz Ad

	Frequency	Percentage
Narrative Process	10	53%
Conceptual Process	9	47%

4.1.1.1 Narrative Process



Figure 2. Males and Females in the Chessboard

As demonstrated in Figure 2, in the metaphorical world of chess, a domain characterized by fierce competition, the stark contrast between the black and white pieces serves as a symbolic representation of the gender binary. As a female piece advances across the board, its movement transcends the confines of a mere chess maneuver, embodying progress and the pursuit of equal opportunities for women within traditionally male-dominated competitive arenas. The stark contrast between the black and white pieces underscores the stark realities of gender inequality, while the forward momentum of the female piece represents a beacon of hope and progress in the pursuit of gender parity. Through this evocative imagery, the advertisement communicates a powerful message of empowerment and inclusivity, urging viewers to recognize the importance of leveling the playing field and dismantling barriers to women’s advancement. It underscores the transformative potential of individual actions in reshaping societal norms and fostering a more equitable and inclusive world for all genders.



Figure 3. The Girl Waving a Trophy

4.1.1.2 Conceptual Process

Figure 3 indicates that the portrayal of a young girl triumphantly waving a trophy while standing atop the champion’s podium serves as a powerful symbol of the exceptional women and women who make history. It underscores the pervasive belief that women can only earn respect and recognition once they achieve the highest accolades. This portrayal highlights the inherent challenges women face in their pursuit of recognition and success within a predominantly male-dominated landscape. Moreover, it subtly encourages viewers to question and redefine the criteria for acknowledging the accomplishments of women.

4.1.2 Interactive Meaning

Interactive meaning is associated with the social relations between actors and the evaluative orientations that participants adopt towards each other and to the represented world (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996: 110). This meaning can be realized from four aspects: contact, attitude, distance and modality. Table 2 shows how these aspects play out in Mercedes-Benz Women’s Day ads.

Table 2. The Distribution of Interactive Meaning in Mercedes-Benz Ad

	Frequency	Percentage
Contact	13	54%
Social Distance	0	0%
Perspective	11	46%
Modality	0	0%

4.1.2.1 Contact



Figure 4. The Lab Girl Asserting Resolutely

Towards the conclusion of the video, Figure 4 shows that the girl in the lab coat gazes directly into the camera and asserts, “I don’t want to make history. I don’t want to be the only woman. I want to be one of many.” This statement carries profound implications, suggesting that our admiration should extend beyond individual exceptional women and instead foster an environment where more women feel empowered to step forward and shine. Such an inclusive perspective champions gender equality, urging the society to not only celebrate individual accomplishments but also to create equitable opportunities and environments for all women. By doing so, the talents and contributions of women can be fully realized and appreciated.

4.1.2.2 Perspective



Figure 5. A Girl Raising Hand Among Boys

Throughout the advertisement, numerous overhead shots are employed, such as the image of Figure 5, a lonely girl raising her hand first amidst a crowd of boys. This camera angle effectively accentuates the dominance of the male figures while subtly insinuating that women are often in vulnerable positions and subject to the public gaze. This powerful visual narrative invites viewers to reflect on gender inequalities and the need for greater recognition of women’s agency and autonomy. It prompts a reevaluation of traditional gender roles and societal expectations, urging individuals to challenge and transcend these constraints.

4.1.3 Compositional Meaning

Compositional meaning is achieved by the layout of image which consists of information value, framing and salience. Since the entire advertisement image emphasizes the female figure, the study focuses specifically on framing. The frequency of framing in Mercedes-Benz ads is three times



Figure 6. A Girl Standing Below the Flag

4.1.3.1 Framing

In Figure 6, a solitary young girl occupies the center of the frame, with a flag emblazoned “the only woman” prominently displayed in the background. The close interplay between the visual imagery and the corresponding text effectively conveys the intended message of the creator. This scenario may serve as a poignant reminder of the continued lack of representation and isolation experienced by women in certain domains, or conversely, it could be interpreted as a bold affirmation of the individual worth and presence of women within traditionally male-dominated environments. It inspires viewers to embrace and champion the diverse voices and experiences of women in shaping a more inclusive and equitable world.

4.2 NEIWAI (内外)

4.2.1 Representational Meaning

Table 3. The Distribution of Representational Meaning in NEIWAI Ad

	Frequency	Percentage
Narrative Process	25	71%
Conceptual Process	10	29%

4.2.1.1 Narrative Process



Figure 7. The Dancing Woman’s Attempt to Present Herself



Figure 8. Surrounding Individuals' Inferences

In the evocative display of Figure 7 and Figure 8, the dancing woman within the advertisement grapples with the arduous task of liberating herself from the constricting garments that impede her movements. Despite her efforts at emancipation, she encounters underlying opposition from the surrounding individuals, consistently repelling her advances. Eventually, in a visually disconcerting manner, the woman's arms are contorted, and her legs are grotesquely entwined, exemplifying a profound distortion of her innate physicality. The poignant visual metaphor serves to underscore the pervasive influence of societal pressures and entrenched beauty standards. Moreover, it prompts viewers to critically reassess prevailing paradigms of beauty and femininity, compelling viewers to recognize the importance of embracing self-acceptance amidst societal pressures and cultural norms.

4.2.1.2 Conceptual Process

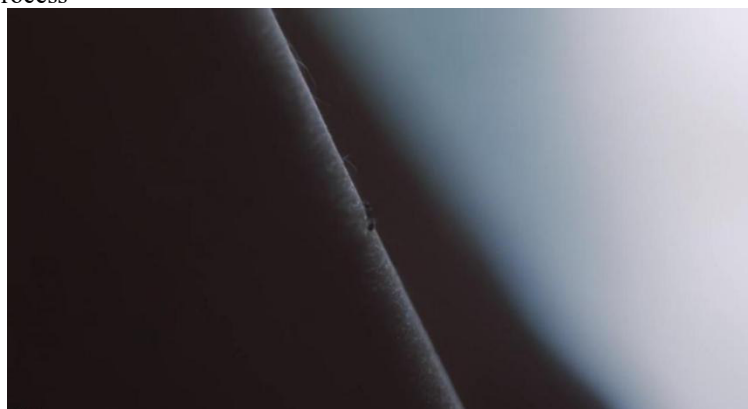


Figure 9. An Ant Crawling on the Skin

It can be demonstrated in Figure 9 that the concept of desire is poignantly represented in the advertisement through the imagery of an ant crawling on the skin. This symbolic depiction captures the physiological needs of women, which are often forced to be concealed by societal norms. Similar to the ant's confinement to darkness, women's desires are frequently hidden from public scrutiny, constrained by norms and expectations. The persistent crawl of desire, much like that of the ant, creates an ambivalent sense of discomfort and temptation, evoking a complex feeling of restlessness and contradiction. Through the nuanced portrayal, conveyed through visual language, the advertisement explores the intricacy of desire and the suppression experienced by women under societal pressures. It encourages viewers to reflect on gender identities and question the validity of societal expectations.

4.2.2 Interactive Meaning

Table 4. The Distribution of Interactive Meaning in NEIWAI Ad

	Frequency	Percentage
Contact	18	56%
Social Distance	0	0%
Perspective	12	38%
Modality	2	6%

4.2.2.1 Contact

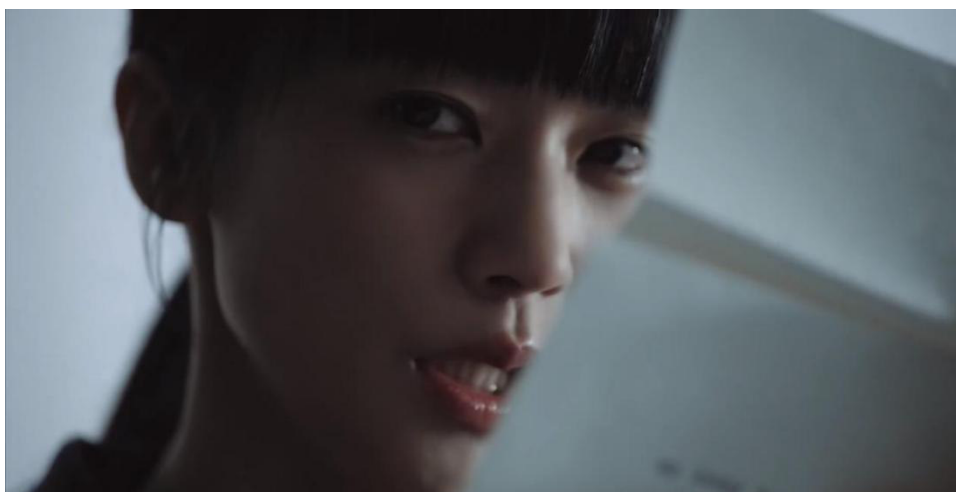


Figure 10. The Woman's Direct Gaze

As demonstrated in Figure 10, the woman's thought-provoking query, "Is it my shape or their vision that needs to change?" is accompanied by a significant visual gesture in the advertisement. As she utters the word "vision", her gaze shifts from the letter she was reading to a direct gaze into the camera lens. Through this subtle yet impactful gesture, the advertisement encourages viewers to stimulate contemplation among viewers. By questioning whether it is her own physical form or society's perception that requires transformation, the advertisement prompts individuals to challenge prevailing paradigms and advocate for more inclusive portrayals of beauty and identity. Through this nuanced approach, the advertisement seeks to foster introspection and encourage a shift in societal perspectives. It underscores the importance of challenging conventional norms and embracing diverse representations, ultimately advocating for greater acceptance and inclusiveness in society.

4.2.2.1 Perspective



Figure 11. Eye-level Angle of Perspective

The advertisement utilizes an eye-level angle of perspective as its primary visual approach, thereby creating a sense of equality between the woman and her body. In Figure 11, by placing the camera at the same height as the woman, the viewer is invited to experience the conversation as a personal encounter. This visual technique establishes a relatable and immersive experience, enabling viewers to identify with the subject matter on an individual level. Moreover, this perspective underscores the idea that the woman's relationship with her body is not hierarchical, but rather one of mutual respect and understanding. Through this visual approach, the advertisement fosters a sense of empathy and connection with the viewer, encouraging a more profound contemplation of the issues being addressed.

4.2.2.1 Modality



Figure 12. The Woman and the Man Dancing Together in the Darkness

In the second chapter of the advertisement, which centers around women's desires, the lighting of the imagery in Figure 12 is noticeably darker than in previous scenes. The dimmed light suggests a powerful visual metaphor for the hidden and suppressed nature of female desires. The subdued lighting conveys a sense of longing and aspiration that remains concealed under the weight of societal norms and expectations. This visual choice prompts viewers to explore the nuanced facets of female desires, provoking introspection and reflection on the multifaceted nature of feminine aspirations. Through this nuanced approach, the advertisement seeks to challenge traditional gender roles and prompt a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in female identity.

4.2.3 Compositional Meaning

Table 5. The Distribution of Interactive Meaning in NEIWAI Ad

	Frequency	Percentage
Framing	3	23%
Information Value	6	46%
Salience	4	31%

4.2.3.1 Framing



Figure 13. The Woman Constrained to a Chair

In this particular scene of the advertisement, a woman is depicted constrained to a chair at the center, unable to move freely. It can be seen from the Figure 13 that the chapter title “The Discipline of Beauty” stands out prominently on either side of her, echoing her constrained state. This visual composition invites viewers to contemplate the complexities and challenges that arise from conforming to conventional beauty standards. The woman’s constrained condition represents the limitations and restrictions imposed by society’s narrow definitions of beauty. The bold text of the chapter title further emphasizes the influence of these standards. By juxtaposing the woman’s physical constraint with the assertive text, the advertisement prompts viewers to critically reflect on the implications of societal expectations and the potential harm caused by rigid beauty ideals. Through this thought-provoking imagery, the advertisement encourages viewers to question and challenge the notion of beauty as a discipline, promoting a more inclusive and accepting perspective towards diverse forms of beauty and self-expression.

4.2.3.2 Information Value



Figure 14. Dancers Dancing Elegantly in Swirls

In Figure 14, women are depicted dancing in a beam of light amidst a dark and crowded room. This powerful visual composition symbolizes the desire of women to break free from societal norms and expectations,

asserting their own feelings and experiences above the judgments or opinions of others. The women's uninhibited dance movements express a sense of freedom and autonomy, reflecting their unwavering insistence on their rights and self-determination. The contrast between the light and dark elements of the scene emphasizes the significance of this struggle, highlighting the obstacles that women must overcome in order to assert their autonomy and individuality. Through this evocative imagery, the advertisement promotes a message of empowerment and self-expression, encouraging viewers to recognize the importance of asserting their own voices and desires in the face of societal pressures and cultural norms. The scene reflects a powerful assertion of women's autonomy and a steadfast rejection of the limitations imposed by traditional gender roles and expectations.

4.2.3.3 Saliency



Figure 15. The Woman Alone in a Dark Room

As illustrated in Figure 15, in the end of the second chapter, the man leaves the scene, leaving the woman alone in a dimly lit room, right at the center of attention. The visual portrayal underscores the challenges women often encounter when navigating their desires, frequently grappling with societal barriers that hinder their ability to seek assistance or understanding. The woman's solitude within the dimly lit space evokes a sense of introspection and isolation, symbolizing the profound emotional journey that women often undertake in their pursuit of fulfillment and recognition. By highlighting the woman's solitary presence, the advertisement aims to foster empathy and understanding towards the complexities and struggles that women encounter in their pursuit of their desires. It encourages viewers to reflect on the societal barriers that exist and to recognize the importance of creating a more inclusive and supportive environment that allows women to fully explore and express their desires.

5. Conclusion

The multimodal discourse analysis of the two widely viewed women-targeted video advertisements on International Women's Day reveals that femvertising effectively conveys representational, interactive, and compositional meanings.

In both advertisements, the highest frequency of meaning lies in their representational aspect, which emphasizes the use of symbols and visual elements to convey profound insights into gender dynamics, societal expectations, and women's experiences. These symbols and visuals highlight the various roles and challenges women face within different societal contexts, prompting viewers to critically reflect on traditional gender norms and social standards. Through the symbolic representation of a chessboard, the triumph of a girl on a winner's podium, and the crawling ants, femvertising utilizes vivid symbols and dynamite movement as metaphors to delve into the complexities of societal pressures, identity formation, and self-expression for women. This stimulates deep reflection among audiences on gender perceptions and societal expectations, encouraging them to reexamine and redefine the status and roles of women.

In the realm of interactive meaning, contact and perspective are most frequently utilized. Within the interactive system, contact takes precedence as it symbolizes the connection between participants and the interactive agent through eye contact, thereby eliciting emotional bonds among participants. Both advertisements seek to capture the audience's attention and provoke contemplation on the injustices faced by women and the shackles of societal norms through the function of eye contact. Moreover, both ads adeptly utilize perspective. Overhead shots prompt reflection on gender inequalities, while an eye-level perspective fosters equality and empathy, forging a deep connection with viewers. Social distance and modality are sparingly used due to the ads' brief duration and rapid transitions. In essence, these ads provoke critical reflection on gender dynamics, societal expectations, and the complexities of female identity, advocating for inclusiveness, equality, and a

reassessment of societal norms.

The Mercedes-Benz ad, given its short duration and emphasis on “the only woman,” primarily focuses on a single female subject, resulting in less apparent information value and salience. However, framing is employed multiple times, integrating visuals and text to better convey a call for a fairer environment rather than merely praising the achievement of “the only woman.” On the other hand, NEIWAI’s ad demonstrates a careful consideration of information value, salience, and framing. It vividly portrays how compositional elements such as the integration of visuals and text, along with the dynamic presentation of the dancer’s movements, depict the challenges women encounter concerning appearance pressures, desire management, and societal oppression. This underscores the significance of women prioritizing their own experiences and refraining from excessive focus on societal perceptions.

Moreover, this study holds significant real-world implications. It is anticipated that the study might enhance our understanding of how language and imagery in advertisements influence societal cognition and cultural identity, uncovering prevalent stereotypes, biases, and discrimination. Furthermore, it is hoped that the study could provide valuable guidance for advertisers and media practitioners in comprehending the role of visual elements in creating a more inclusive and equitable social environment. Overall, these implications extend beyond the realm of advertising, shedding light on broader issues of gender and identity within society.

Despite its contributions, this research is still limited in several aspects. The narrow methodological focus limits the breadth and depth of content coverage, while the scarcity of the corpus restricts comprehensive analysis. Additionally, the study’s reliance on manual annotation and statistical methods to interpret visual data may introduce biases, and the qualitative nature of the analysis inherently involves subjectivity.

To address these limitations, the study has implemented several proactive measures to enhance the credibility and robustness of the findings: (1) 20 rounds of annotation by teachers and peers were conducted to enhance data reliability; (2) a meticulous review process, comprising five checks on corpus annotations, was undertaken to minimize errors and discrepancies; (3) irrelevant data was carefully cleared to ensure the relevance and integrity of the dataset.

Future research could focus on expanding corpus sizes and employing advanced analytical tools such as automated annotation software and machine learning algorithms. Ethnographic studies, including participant observation and in-depth interviews, offer avenues for gathering rich qualitative data. Additionally, future investigations might explore stereotypes within femvertising discourse and analyze the influence of core customer gender on brand messaging.

The examination of femvertising not only presents novel paradigms and insights for the application of multimodal analysis and Visual Grammar theory, but also contributes to a deeper comprehension of how visual elements intersect with linguistic constructs to convey nuanced messages within female discourse.

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