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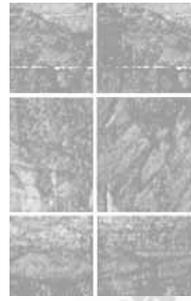
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Modelling engagement in a web-based advertising campaign



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ABSTRACT

This article explores the application of APPRAISAL theory, or more specifically, its subcategory ENGAGEMENT, to the analysis of an internet-based advertising campaign, from the viewpoint of dialogicity, heteroglossia and intertextuality, and its role in positioning readers within the heteroglossic diversity of hyper-media discourse. The author's close analysis demonstrates that ENGAGEMENT can be used as an analytic tool to explore the question of how the multivariate resources in dynamic multimodal texts function to create intersubjective positions for themselves and their audiences through the interplay of visual, verbal and interactive elements, by investigating the heteroglossic function of hypertext objects, the evaluative stance adopted by the various authorial voices present in the text, and by cross-mapping ENGAGEMENT resources and hyper-thematic development.

KEY WORDS

appraisal theory • authorial voice • dialogic engagement • evaluative stance • heteroglossia • hypermedia discourse • interactivity • multimodality • thematic development

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the question of how the multimodal elements in a web-based advertising campaign function to construct preferred dialogic positions for its readers, to influence them to adopt a certain point of view and to convince them of the merits of the advertised brand and/or marketing strategy. Amongst other things, the success of an advertising campaign largely depends upon how effectively it conveys its ultimate message, and whether viewers are able to identify and interpret that message accordingly. Traditional marketing research on the effectiveness of internet advertising often focuses on the impact of creative design factors (see, e.g., Baltas, 2003; Robinson et al., 2007) and the effects of interactivity on the consumer (see, e.g., McMillan and Hwang, 2005; Roehm and Haugtvedt, 1999; Stewart and Pavlou, 2002), whilst

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practitioners themselves seem more concerned with aspects such as brand recognition and overall consumer appeal (*Marketing Magazine*, <http://www.marketing-interactive.com/news/2846>). Very rarely do advertisers investigate how *the text itself* functions to engage and align the audience through the interplay of visual, verbal and interactive elements. Although Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006[1996]: 14) point to an increasing acceptance by the media industry towards combining systematic analysis and traditional research methods, without having recourse to viable analytical approaches and theories for interpreting the complexity of meanings produced by dynamic multimodal texts, 'a whole universe of meanings' may escape critical notice (Iedema, 2001: 202).

In order to gain a better understanding of the diverse meaning-making mechanisms in a web-based advertising campaign, this article thus aims to demonstrate through systematic analysis how the multimodal resources in a web-text function to create preferred dialogic positions for its target audience. As a means of accomplishing this, the article aims to explore the application, and extension, of APPRAISAL theory, or more specifically, its subcategory ENGAGEMENT, to the analysis of a dynamic and interactive multimodal text, as represented by an internet advertising campaign.

APPRAISAL theory (see Martin, 2001; Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005; White, 2003) developed as a subsidiary framework within what is known as the Systemic Functional (SF) tradition. Researchers working within SF traditions seek to explain how people use language as a resource for meaning-making, and how it is structured for such use. SF-theory¹ posits that language, or any other kind of semiotic system, is structured to make three kinds of meanings simultaneously, which is explained in terms of metafunctions:

- the *ideational* metafunction, which is concerned with how we represent experience;
- the *interpersonal* metafunction, which expresses the speakers' or writers' role relationship with their audiences, and their attitude towards the subject matter;
- the *textual* metafunction, which is concerned with how the text is organized in terms of information units.

SF-theory is 'a theory of meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options: ... not a conscious decision made in real time but a set of possible alternatives' (Halliday, 1994: xiv, xxvi). APPRAISAL theory, in turn, is concerned with the resources, or alternative options, by which producers of texts create and negotiate intersubjective positions for themselves and their audiences. The system of APPRAISAL encompasses three subcategories, namely ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT and GRADUATION. ATTITUDE (not investigated in this article) deals with expressions of affect, judgement and appreciation, while ENGAGEMENT focuses on the resources by which speakers negotiate an interpersonal space for their

positions and the strategies which they use to either acknowledge, ignore or curtail other 'voices' or points of views. GRADUATION, in consequence, focuses on the resources by which speakers regulate (i.e. either increase or moderate) the impact of these resources.

From a SF perspective, the system of ENGAGEMENT operates within the *interpersonal* metafunction, which locates participants in a system of social relations and viewpoints. Within traditional SF-theory, interpersonal meaning is largely concerned with the propositional value accorded to verbal and/or visual representations, and the roles that speakers/writers adopt for themselves in the negotiation of goods and services and/or information, and the positions thus designed for their viewers (see, e.g., Halliday, 1994, Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; see also Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006[1996]).

APPRAISAL theory, however, approaches ENGAGEMENT from Bakhtin's/Voloshinov's perspective of *dialogicity*, *heteroglossia* and *intertextuality*, which assumes that all texts are inherently dialogic (Martin and White, 2005; White, 2003; White, 2005a, 2005b). It construes texts as being informed by other texts (actual and potential), and sees audiences entering into complex dialogues with these texts rather than passively receiving their meaning. ENGAGEMENT deals with the resources that provide the 'authorial voice' with the means to position itself with respect to, and hence to 'engage' with, other voices and dialogic positions (Martin and White, 2005: 94). It thus assigns a 'greater role to the audience, or at least to the way texts can be seen to negotiate meanings with actual and potential audiences' (White, 2005a).

Newly emergent media such as internet web-pages – an innately hybridic genre that generates a multitude of intertextual possibilities by assembling texts from various modes and discourses (e.g. verbiage, image, sound, activity) that are then represented in multiple relations to one another – are by their very nature dialogic, intertextual and heteroglossic. It is this model of ENGAGEMENT that will thus be pursued in this article, and its role of positioning readers within the heteroglossic diversity of hypermedia discourse, as represented by a recent internet-based advertising campaign by a local beer producer.

THE WEB-CAMPAIGN

The advertising campaign analysed in this article was launched in October 2006 under the name *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* (<http://www.unravelthesecret.com>)² concurrently with a series of five Hollywood-type short films (each one lasting about 60 to 90 seconds), initially aired on Singapore television and cable channels, to commemorate Tiger Beer's 75th anniversary (<http://www.apb.com.sg/archive/wb-061020.html>). Tiger Beer is the 'flagship' brand of Asia Pacific Breweries Limited (APB), Singapore's first wholly-owned brewery. Launched in 1932, Tiger Beer has since acquired an international reputation and is produced in seven countries and marketed in more than 60 countries worldwide (<http://www.apb.com.sg/index.html>). According to Daniel Teo,

General Manager of Commercial for Asia Pacific Breweries Singapore, the advertising campaign was launched 'to re-affirm the brand's international, premium status and to celebrate its legacy of product excellence' (<http://www.marketing-interactive.com/news/2846>).

The internet-based advertising campaign features all five television commercials as well as other information pertaining to the campaign's creation.³ Although the campaign may not be representative of other web-based media, it is generic in a sense in that it combines a variety of discourses and genres in one dynamic multimodal text. This article seeks to explore the question of how such hybridic texts create dialogic positions for themselves to convey their intended message, and the multivariate strategies by which they align and engage their audience.

The following discussion is divided into two sections. The first provides the background to APPRAISAL in relation to the genre of hypertext. It then outlines how ENGAGEMENT can be applied to hypertext discourse, which provides the necessary contextual framework for the analysis of the web-based advertising campaign that is presented in the penultimate and final section.

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Appraisal and the genre of hypertext

From the viewpoint of APPRAISAL, genre is seen as a 'staged, goal orientated social process' (Martin and White, 2005: 32), because 'we participate in genres with other people ... to get things done ... [and] because it usually takes us a few steps to reach our goals' (pp. 32–3). APPRAISAL theory is concerned with the evaluative strategies a genre draws on to achieve these goals, and how these strategies evolve from one stage of the genre to another (p. 33).

Baldry and Thibault (2006) explore the question of whether the notion of genre in its traditional sense can be applied to the hypertext at all. While they admit that a website will necessarily possess generic features of its own, they posit that hypertext is a 'hybrid of *precursor genres* such as verbal text, visual images, and multimodal combinations of these' (p. 156). Lemke (2002), too, defines hypermodality as

the conflation of multimodality and hypertextuality. Not only do we have linkages among text units of various scales, but we have linkages among text units, visual elements, and sound units ... In hypermedia, there are more kinds of connection than those provided for in print genres. (p. 301)

Tiger: Unravel the Secret is one such text that combines distinctive web-based genres, such as functional buttons and hyperlinks, with a variety of other texts and genres that the viewer will be familiar with from previous encounters in other contexts (see Table 1 for further elucidation of the represented genres in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*).

Table 1 Represented Genres in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*

Hypertext elements (Genres and microgenres)	Interaction between elements	Hypertext elements (functional properties)
Film texts	↔	Animated
Verbal texts	↗ ↘	Dynamic
Photographs	↗ ↘	Interactive
Graphic displays	↗ ↘	Self-activating
Headline banners	↗ ↘	Static, inactive
Functional buttons and links	↔	
Speech, music, and sound	↔	

Definition of Items on a web-page

The functional objects on an internet web-page have been invariably described as *anchors* (Djonov, 2005), *clusters* (Baldry and Thibault, 2006) and *items* (Kok, 2004). Kok (2004), for example, conceptualizes an *item* as the ‘instantiation of one semiotic resource, or a combination of instantiations of different ranks of different semiotic resources joining together as a methodologically justifiable whole’ (p. 134), which means that in Kok’s terms, an item could be represented both by a single object or a grouping of objects on the page. This definition of an item, however, does not take into account that not all items function in the same way, or, as Burbules (1998) points out, ‘imply the same type of semic relation’ (p. 104). Baldry and Thibault (2006), on the other hand, acknowledge that a ‘hypertext object has an ambivalent status: it is a visual image at the same time that it is more than that’ (p. 146). They refer to the elements that enter into meaningful relationships on a web-page as *clusters*, mainly on the basis of the clustered objects’ potential for viewer-mediated interaction (p. 121). While building on the work of Baldry and Thibault (2006), this article will adopt the term ‘item’ to refer to the individual elements on a web-page, mainly on the basis that, in the web-campaign under discussion, a cluster-categorization does not take into account that, in terms of an item’s variable potential for dialogic engagement, a further differentiation can be made between functional or utility items, which designate items generally under the control of the viewer and items reserved for conveying the web-pages’ thematic content, which – in the website under consideration – have limited scope for viewer intervention (see Figure 3 for further exemplification).

The functional property of items

Accordingly, in terms of their functional potential for viewer-mediated interaction, the various objects on a page can be grouped into items that move autonomously without requiring intervention on the part of the viewer, which are defined as: (a) *self-activating items* (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 147); (b) *interactive items*, i.e. items that react when the viewer moves the mouse over

them or clicks on them; and (c) *unresponsive, static, or inactive items* represented by objects that cannot be influenced by the viewer.

Modelling engagement in hypertext

Baldry and Thibault (2006) acknowledge that hypertext objects have the 'potential for dialogic engagement with the reader' (p. 148). They suggest that:

Hypertext foregrounds the virtual field of possibilities within which the user can navigate and create multiple lines of connectivity among diverse texts, web pages and websites. All acts of meaning making are created against a background of unrealised possibilities. (p. 156)

Baldry and Thibault, however, interpret 'dialogic engagement' in terms of the items' unfolding generic structure potential. They recognize three aspects of interpersonal engagement, namely:

- (a) *Appeal*, which refers to the way in which changes in the object function to attract the viewer's attention;
- (b) *Orientation*, which refers to the perspective or stance the viewer is required to adopt on the object, for example, whether the object is part of a depicted scene or whether it affords action potential; and
- (c) *Action*, which refers to the specific purposes that can be achieved by performing determinate actions on the object.

(adapted from Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 152)

As Martin and White (2005) elaborate, 'it is, nevertheless, only through the act of reader/listener interpretation in a given context that meaning actually occurs' (p. 162). According to APPRAISAL theory, a text is seen as allowing for a range of possible instantiations, and hence possible interpretations, of meaning to occur in a given context (see Table 2 for further elucidation of possible realization options under APPRAISAL).

In line with APPRAISAL theory, genres can thus be 'described dynamically as they unfold, and not just modelled statically as a configuration of linearly arranged optional and obligatory stages' (Djonov, 2005: 70), which allows us to describe genres 'typologically (as distinct types) as well as topologically (as meaning potential from which different types of choices are made depending on a text's purpose)' (Martin, 1991, 1992, 1997, 1999a; in Djonov, 2005: 70).

In this context, the potential for dialogic engagement afforded by the functional characteristics of hypertext objects can be modelled from the viewpoint of ENGAGEMENT, which presumes that all texts are either *heteroglossic*, when they draw on resources that allow space for dialogic alternatives, or *monoglossic*, when they make no such allowances (Martin and White, 2005; White, 2003).

According to Martin and White (2005), in text-based genres, *heteroglossic* instantiations principally operate in two ways: they are either dialogically

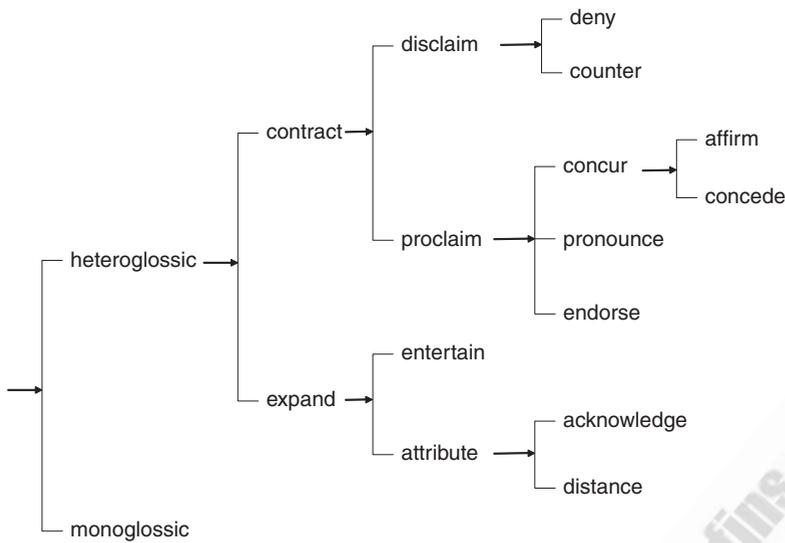


Figure 1 The system of engagement (adapted from Martin and White, 2005).

contractive, when they close down the space for dialogic alternatives, or they are considered to be dialogically *expansive*, when they are opening up the dialogic space for alternative positions (Martin and White, 2005: 103) (see Figure 1 for a diagrammatic representation of the system of ENGAGEMENT).

The same principles can be applied to instantiations of *heteroglossia* and *monoglossia* in hypertext (see Figure 2).

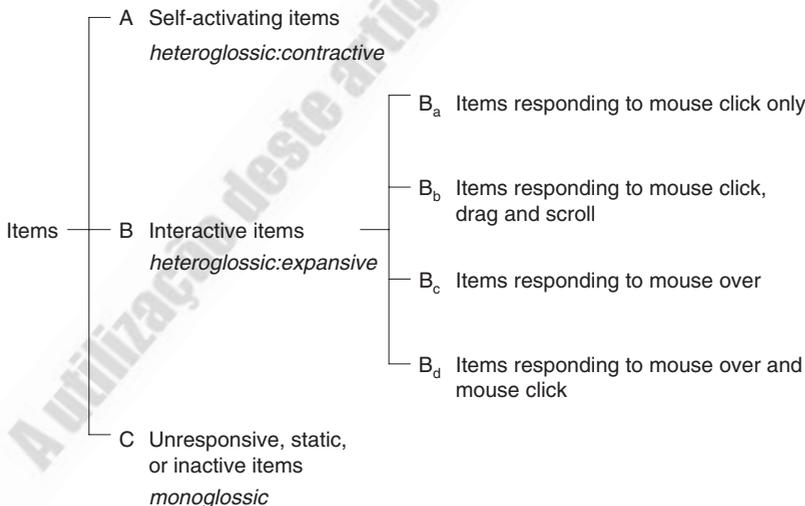


Figure 2 Functional properties of items in hypertext.

Monoglossic Items

Consequently, *unresponsive, static, or inactive items* may be considered hyper-textual instantiations of 'monoglossia', as they do not provide or allow dialogic alternatives to be established through viewer intervention. Thus, they may be deemed *monoglossic* in terms of their interactive function. In terms of ENGAGEMENT 'key' or register (Martin and White, 2005), they may be construed as representing the authorial 'voice' or stance of the web-page author or creator.

Heteroglossic items

Conversely, *self-activating items*, which engage the viewer interpersonally through dynamicity (realized through the medium of film, animation, speech, music, or sound), but which do not actively engage the viewer, effectively close down the space for alternative dialogic positions, and may thus be considered dialogically *contractive*.

Interactive items, in contrast, position the viewer interpersonally as an active participant in heteroglossic space. In the website under consideration, this is often supported through direct commands or imperatives 'SHARE THE MYSTERY', 'DOWNLOAD', 'MOUSE OVER TO NAVIGATE', 'TELL YOUR FRIENDS', 'CONTACT US' (e.g., see Figure 3 later in the article, items 10–11, 14–15), which in systemic functional terms, create the Mood for exchanging proposals (that is, goods and services, not information) and represent different degrees of obligation (Halliday, 1994: 89). They effectively open up the space for alternative positions, and may thus be considered dialogically *expansive*.

On the basis of the items' functional property, the potential for dialogic engagement in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* can thus be 'unravelling' as illustrated in the following section.

ANALYSIS OF ENGAGEMENT IN TIGER: UNRAVEL THE SECRET

The 'dialogue' between the web-text and the target audience

While in most web-contexts, a user's entry point to a website is through its home page (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 118), potential visitors to *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* are presented with multiple choices. For example, they have the option to enter the site through the parent company's home page, or more specifically through a subsection of the parent's home page, or they may access the site by entering the campaign name in a search engine, or entering it directly in the address bar in their web browser. Another possibility is to gain entry to the campaign's website through another web-page or 'blog' that provides links to the site under consideration. Once access has been gained to the website, Kok (2004) argues that the most salient items on a web-page are likely to catch the attention of the viewer and serve as the 'focal point through which the webpage is entered' (p. 152). This, however, is not the case

in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*. Here, the most salient objects in terms of size, colour and contrast, i.e. the stylized visual image of a key, as well as the campaign slogan that features prominently in large gold letters at the bottom of the page, are both *monoglossic* in terms of their potential for dialogic engagement (see Appendix 1, Screen 1a).

Instead, the 'key' to dialogic engagement with the viewer is presented by the modal choice of positive or negative polarity (Halliday, 1994: 88), that requires viewers to confirm that they are of legal drinking age by responding to a 'Yes' or 'No' question by running the mouse over and clicking on the provided hyperlink (Appendix 1, Screen 1a). This appears to be a generic feature endemic to most websites promoting alcoholic beverages, presumably due to legal requirements to prevent underage drinking, and which results in a conflation of different genres and 'voices' being represented in the text. In *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*, the visually foregrounded 'invitation' represented by the image of the key is eclipsed by authoritativeness of the 'legal' genre, as viewers are further encouraged to read and accept the 'Terms & Conditions'. A click on the provided link will indeed result in a pop-up screen whose generic properties are unmistakably 'legal' in terms of ENGAGEMENT 'key', i.e. in terms of the text's stance and register (Appendix 1, Screen 1b). As White (2005b) points out, by 'endorsing' such formulations, the textual or authorial voice 'aligns itself with some external voice which is represented as correct, authoritative or otherwise argumentatively compelling'. Graddol (1996: 76) observes the same kind of 'tension between promotion and regulation' in his analysis of a wine label. He suggests that the legislative requirements governing the design of such promotional texts may not only be 'regulating the ways in which the reader can be addressed by the text [but] they regulate also the kinds of social relation that can be established with a reader' (p. 75). Thus, while still dialogic in that the text overtly acknowledges or allows dialogic alternatives to be established, the adopted stance nevertheless acts to close down or contract the space for alternative dialogic positions (White, 2003: 268; 2005b: 3). Accordingly, in terms of their ENGAGEMENT function, these instantiations can be considered as dialogically *contractive*. In consequence, the negative polarity option produced by the 'Yes' or 'No' question may be considered as a heteroglossic instantiation of CONTRACT:DISCLAIM, as it represents a stance by which some 'alternative position is invoked so as to be directly rejected, replaced or held to be unsustainable' (Martin and White, 2005: 118; see also White, 2005b). While, on the one hand, viewers are given the option to assume an alternative dialogic position by owning that they are not of legal drinking age, this position is immediately challenged in the following screen (see Appendix 1, Screen 1c). From the viewpoint of APPRAISAL, such strategies are deemed to be 'maximally contractive' (Martin and White, 2005: 118; see also White, 2005b). For example, should viewers choose to engage with the negative polarity option ('No'), they are directed to a page (Appendix 1, Screen 1c) that not only denies them the ability of exploring *Tiger's* 'secret' any further,

but, in essence, terminates all dialogic engagement. The web-page does not contain any interactive items that viewers could engage with; their only choice is to exit the site through their personal browser. Thus, the page as a whole may be deemed *monoglossic*. As pointed out by Martin and White (2005):

Via the monoglossia, the writer construes the value positions of those who have a different view ... as not needing to be recognised or engaged with in any way. As a consequence, those who might hold to such a dissenting view are excluded from any possible solidarity with the writer since, not only are they obviously at odds with the writer, but theirs is a viewpoint which places them outside the community which the text constructs for itself. (p. 157)

Underage viewers are thus excluded from participating in *Tiger's* discourse. Only the positive polarity option ('Yes') has potential for dialogic expansion. Its interactive function, however, is unidirectional in nature. There are no other items with interactive functions that viewers could select, thus limiting the scope for dialogistic alternatives (Martin and White, 2005: 121). In terms of ENGAGEMENT, the page as a whole may thus be considered as an instantiation of CONTRACT:PROCLAIM, although this function may differ from text-based discourses in that it does not allow the finer gradations to be established that are possible in textual discourse analysis (as shown in Figure 1, for example). In terms of its functional properties, however, this instantiation of PROCLAIM nevertheless fulfils a similar purpose in that it rules out alternative positions.

Engagement through dialogic phases

According to Martin and White (2005), in SF-theory:

System and structure are complementary faces of meaning potential. The system perspective foregrounds the notice of choice ... [while] the structure perspective foregrounds the inherent temporality of semiotic processes – they unfold through time, and phases of this process enter into interdependent relations with one another by way of signalling the meanings that are being made. (p. 17)

The next page that the viewer is directed to (Appendix 1, Screen 2a) indeed unfolds in three distinct dialogic phases⁴ (Thibault, 2000; see also Baldry, 2004; Baldry and Thibault, 2006); that is, on this page, ENGAGEMENT opportunities are predicted by the sequential unfolding of distinctive stages, which are signalled by subtle shifts in semiotic modes and resources. According to Thibault (2000), these distinct stages 'may be signalled in a variety of ways in both the content and the expression planes. On the expression plane, phasal shifts may be indicated by 'a change, a break, or a pause in the rhythm of ... movement ... or by a change of tempo ... or a change in Kinesic Action' (Thibault, 2000: 326). On the content plane, they may be signalled by a 'corresponding shift in

... the visual or linguistic thematics, [or] the evaluative/interpersonal orientation' (Lemke, 1988, cited in Thibault, 2000: 326).

For instance, on the expression plane, the opening phase (Appendix 1, Screen 2a) is characterized by an animated, 10-sided star-shaped polygon (with the superimposed imprint of the *Tiger* logo), which appears to be revolving due to the alternating effects of light and shadow. On the 'content' plane, the polygon may be construed as resembling a lock on an ancient vault; an interpretation that receives added emphasis through the sound-image of a locking mechanism that unfolds in synchrony with the animated action on screen. As Bordwell and Thompson (2004) point out: 'sound can actively shape how we perceive and interpret [an] image' (p. 348). They explicate that the 'sound track can enter into an active relation within the image track' and thus cue us to form certain expectations (p. 348). Thus, whilst the opening phase may be construed as *monoglossic* in terms of its overt interactive function (as the image will not react to viewer intervention at this stage), it still engages viewers interpersonally by capturing their attention through dynamic choices in both visual and aural mode.

Similarly, the transition to the next phase (Appendix 1, Screen 2b) is heralded by a change in both aural and visual mode. As Baldry (2004) notes, phasal transitions 'relate to *changes* in the metafunctional organization of the text and as such may very well be related to changes in the soundtrack and not just what happens in the visual' (p. 94, original emphasis). He further claims that:

Transitions are frequently linked to the advert's ultimate message. Transitions are ultimately bound up with the expectations that the viewer has about the text and often guide the viewer vis-à-vis these expectations to the right conclusion ... suggesting that the viewer's expectations are that the chain of transitions from one phase to another will be linked to the final climax in the film. (p. 94)

This seems indeed to be the case at that stage of the dialogic phase, as the superimposed image of the *Tiger* logo metamorphoses and ends on a scene from the final sequence of the campaign's series of short films, 'NEW YORK 2004' (Appendix 1, Screen 2b), described in the accompanying verbal texts on the corresponding content page as *Tiger's* 'greatest achievement' (see Appendix 1, Screen 7; see also Appendix 2, column 2, for a detailed analysis of the verbal transcript).

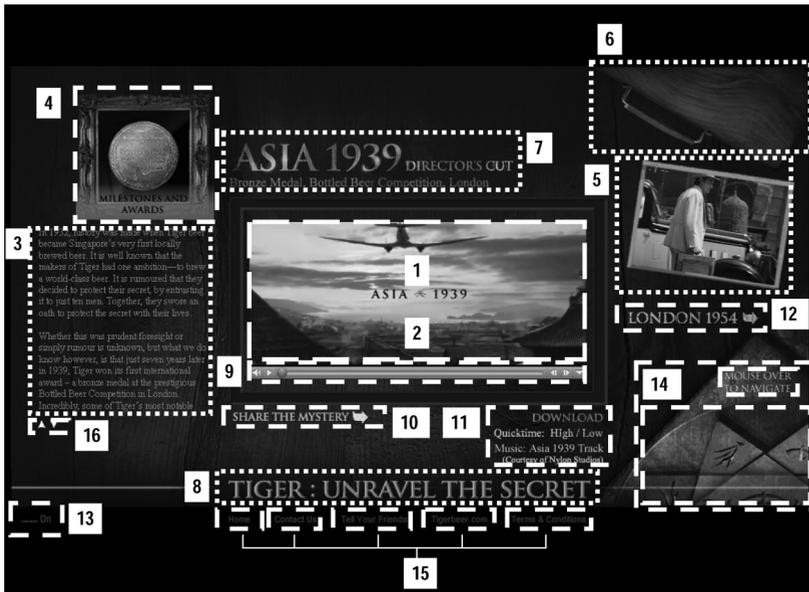
The shift to the final phase, in turn, is signalled by a complete secession of all activity on screen, which may function as a cue for viewers to re-enter dialogic relations with the items displayed on the screen. However, despite the verbal invitation 'WATCH THE FINALE' (see Appendix 1, Screen 2b), the central visual item last displayed is *monoglossic* in terms of its interactive function. Only by exploring their dialogic options by pointing the mouse over the corners of the polygon, and by clicking one of the appearing captions (see Appendix 1, Screen 2c), can viewers resume dialogic relations with the web-page.

While the two initial phases (Screen 2a–b) present a writer-orientated position, the stance projected in the final phase (Screen 2c) is viewer-orientated. In terms of ENGAGEMENT, it may in fact be construed as maximally *expansive* in that the dialogic alternatives offered by the vault's 'Dial' feature (represented by the corners of the polygon) and the links in the utility bar at the bottom of the page shift the dialogic control back to the viewer. For example, viewers may choose to 'unravel the secret' as suggested by the temporal order of the filmic narratives, but they also have the option to explore the web-text by selecting any item, either through the vault's 'Dial' on the entry page, or through the 'Dial' feature in the lower right-hand corner on any of the content pages (see Appendix 1, Screens 3–7). In terms of its dialogic function, the 'Dial', as a single item, is thus maximally *expansive*. It may be construed as the hypertextual equivalent of the resource of ENTERTAIN, whereby the authorial 'voice' of the web-page creator acknowledges that the positions being advanced are merely contingent and hence but a number of potential dialogic alternatives (Martin and White, 2005; see also White, 2005b).

Engagement and (inter)textual positioning

Baldry and Thibault (2006) propose that, in hypertext, possible reading positions emerge from the 'preferred way of integrating the activities of visual scanning with the potential meaning proposed by the page' (p. 105). In terms of the overall meaning-making potential arising from dialogic relationships, items on a web-page nevertheless fulfil a dual function. Dialogic opportunities are not only created through action or activity sequences, but through the intertextual relationships that exist among the various items on the page, although it may not always be possible to clearly distinguish between the interpersonal, textual, or compositional resources that serve to attract the attention of the viewer (Knox, 2007; see also Kok, 2004). For example, the textual or compositional function in multimodal texts can be interpreted as the proportional equilibrium between the visual and verbal elements in terms of their spatial arrangement on a page (Royce, 1998: 43, 46). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006[1996]: 193–4) argue that, in multimodal media, the most highly valued sector is the top of the page and is often reserved for the most salient information, which is indeed the case in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*, where the top of the page is generally reserved for the page's thematic content. In contrast, the less-valued part of the page appears to be set aside for items with functional properties, with the utility bar located at the very bottom of the page. While, in terms of their dialogic potential for viewer involvement, these items are maximally *heteroglossic* with the engagement value of EXPAND:ENTERTAIN (see Figure 3 for further illustration), they are generally visually less salient in terms of font size and colour. They represent but a number of possible dialogic alternatives, although this potential for viewer engagement is compositionally not foregrounded.

According to Van Leeuwen (1996), a crucial 'element of spatial composition is salience, which causes the elements of composition to stand out



Descriptive Label	Item description	Functional property	[Engagement function*]
1	Content items: Film text 'ASIA 1939'	self-activating	HETEROGLOSSIC: CONTRACT
2	Audio text 'Voice-over narration'	self-activating	HETEROGLOSSIC: CONTRACT
3	Verbal text 'factual enhancement/elaboration'	unresponsive/static	MONOGLOSSIC
4	Visual image 'awards'	mouse over	HETEROGLOSSIC: CONTRACT
5	Visual image 'film scene'	unresponsive/static	MONOGLOSSIC
6	Visual image 'repetition of item from film scene'	unresponsive/static	MONOGLOSSIC
7	Primary headline banner 'campaign slogan'	unresponsive/static	MONOGLOSSIC
8	Secondary headline banner 'page theme'	unresponsive/static	MONOGLOSSIC
9	Functional items: Functional item 'audio-video control'	click, and drag	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
10	Functional item 'share and tell'	mouse click only	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
11	Functional item 'download'	mouse click only	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN

(Continued)

Figure 3 (Continued)

Descriptive Label	Item description	Functional property	[Engagement function*]
12	Functional item 'next film sequence'	mouse click only	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
13	Functional item 'audio control toggle'	mouse click only	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
14	Functional item 'dial and select'	mouse over and mouse click	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
15	Functional items 'utility buttons'	mouse click only	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN
16	Functional item 'vertical scroll button'	click, drag and scroll	EXPAND:ENTERTAIN

* Monoglossic items on the webpage are identified by dotted frames, heteroglossic items by dashed frames

Figure 3 Functional property and descriptive label of items on the 'ASIA 1939' content page.

to different degrees' (p. 95), which, in consequence, creates 'a hierarchy of importance' amongst the elements on the page (Knox, 2007: 36). The most prominent item on a content page in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* is unarguably the film text (see Appendix 1, Screens 3–7). In terms of their interpersonal as well as compositional salience, the film texts may thus be seen as the preferred choice or resource for dialogic engagement with the viewer. This foregrounding of a preferred dialogic position is supported by choices in ENGAGEMENT as, in terms of their functional property, the film texts self-activate, i.e. they unfold automatically without requiring intervention on the part of the viewer (see also Items 1–2, Figure 3). As observed by Chatman (1999): 'film entails a different interchange. The audience is not in control – we cannot put the movie down as if it were a book. Further, the visual dimension is so powerfully verisimilar that it dominates' (p. 327). Accordingly, the film texts may be seen as dialogically *contractive*, as they leave minimal choice to the viewer.

Engagement 'key' and the text's thematic development

The ultimate meaning potential afforded by a web-text, however, is only partially dependent upon the 'entextualization' of the web user's meaning-making activity (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 116). APPRAISAL theory focuses attention on the meanings a text affords and the reading positions that are created by this potential in different ways (Martin and White, 2005: 25), and may afford a more comprehensive analysis. For instance, in APPRAISAL, the dialogic potential that emerges from the interplay between image and verbiage on a content page can be further 'unravelled' in terms of the items' ENGAGEMENT 'key' or authorial stance, in line with the text's overall thematic development (Martin, 2001, 2004). Macken-Horarik (2004), for example, employs the notions of

Theme and *Focus* to identify the evaluative patterns that a text may foreground by drawing on Halliday's (1994) principles of *Given + New* and *Theme + Rheme* (Macken-Horarik, 2004: 17). *Theme*, she observes 'presents the writer's angle on the message' (p. 20). The *Focus* (i.e. the *New*), on the other hand, represents the listener-orientated prominence – which, in other words, is what the text is asking you to attend to.

Martin (2001), in turn, proposes that the method of a text's thematic development may be predicted by higher-order Hyper-Themes, which in turn may be predicted by Macro-Themes, and so on ... (Martin, 2004: 283). According to Martin, Hyper-Themes evolve from the patterns that are established in the introductory sentence or groups of sentences in a paragraph (p. 437). The concluding sentence, or groups of sentences in a paragraph, are defined as the Hyper-New. Martin proposes that certain elements in a text, such as introductory paragraphs, titles and subtitles, may function as Macro-Themes, thereby indicating what the whole text is about, while repetitions of other elements may serve as the Macro-New (Martin, 1992, 2001, 2004).

Building further on this theory, Martin and White (2005), Martin (2004) and White (1998) conceptualized the term 'APPRAISAL keys' to identify distinctive patterns of evaluative stance in journalistic discourse, which they referred to as the 'authorial voice' (Martin: 2004: 279; emphasis added). Employing the same kinds of principles, an attempt will be made to identify the stance negotiated by the different 'voices', and how they engage viewers, or rather align them to adopt or convince them of a particular point of view, in terms of *Tiger's* content pages' overall thematic development (for a detailed analysis of the patterns of thematic development and engagement 'key' in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*, refer to Appendix 2).

Hyper-theme in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* – the tension between fact and fiction

According to the brewer's official website, the campaign – which is described as a dramatized version of the beer's award-winning legacy in international markets over the last 75 years

weaves a story around *Tiger's* history and extraordinary number of awards that it has won since its humble beginnings in 1932 ... While the 10 men may be a dramatisation, the awards and *Tiger's* provenance showcased in the five-part short film along with its worldwide recognition, popularity and success are facts. (<http://www.apb.com.sg/archive/wb-061020.html>)

The web-text may thus be construed as a blend of historical fact and fiction, which is not only reflected in the text's hyper-thematic development, but also through the authorial stance, or ENGAGEMENT 'key', adopted by the different 'voices' that compete for the viewer's attention.

The institutional voice

In *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*, the institutional voice is represented by the verbal texts on the primary content pages (see Appendix 2, column 2 for a detailed transcript), which, in terms of thematic development and ENGAGEMENT 'key', largely acknowledges the official stance adopted by the campaign's creators, or the owners of the *Tiger Beer* brand.

● BARE ASSERTIONS

For example, information related to *Tiger's* historical development is frequently introduced into the discourse as BARE ASSERTIONS, which, according to White (2003), are usually associated with consensual knowledge, or versions of events which are seen as 'fact', e.g. propositions that are 'held to be unproblematic and generally 'known' or 'accepted' in the current communicative context' (p. 263). At the same time, the import of these assertions is intensified or increased in FORCE (a value within the system of GRADUATION) by means of evaluative lexis (underlined in the following extract).

(1) a. In 1932, history was made when Tiger beer became Singapore's very first locally brewed beer.

b. ... in 1939, Tiger won its first international award – a bronze medal at the prestigious Bottled Beer Competition in London.

c. In 1954, Tiger beer stunned the world by winning an unexpected gold medal at the Brewers' Trade Exhibition in London.

d. Tiger beer's greatest achievement was in 2004 when it was awarded the Beer World's greatest honour, The World Beer Cup ...

These propositions are held to be *monoglossic* or undialogized (Martin and White, 2005: 99), which is also reflected by the verbal texts' functional property, which does not permit viewer intervention (e.g., see Item 3, Figure 3).

● PROCLAMATIONS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS

Another strategy deployed by the institutional voice is to represent its propositions as PROCLAMATIONS and PRONOUNCEMENTS, i.e. propositions that are 'highly warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable etc.)' (Martin and White, 2005: 97–8; see also White, 2005b).

(2) a. It is well known [CONTRACT:PROCLAIM:PRONOUNCE] that the makers of Tiger had one ambition – to brew a world-class beer.

Such utterances are dialogically contractive, and effectively function to suppress or rule out alternative positions. Although White (2003) posits that pronouncements 'involve the foregrounding in some way of the subjective involvement of the textual voice' (p. 270), in this instance the pronouncement may be construed as *objective explicit*, whereby the subjective stance is obscured or impersonalized, and which serves to give the proclamation prominence by being encoded in the matrix clause '*It is well known*' (see Martin and White, 2005: 130–1).

● DISCLAMATIONS AND COUNTERS

In other instances, the institutional voice closes down the space for dialogic alternatives by positioning 'itself as at odds with, or rejecting, some contrary position' (Martin and White, 2005: 97–8; see also White, 2005b) through *disclamations* and *counters*, i.e. 'formulations by which some prior utterance or some alternative position is invoked so as to be directly rejected, replaced or held to be unsustainable' (Martin and White, 2005: 118). According to Martin and White (2005), such formulations are often realized through conjunctions and connectives (such as *however*, *but*), comment adjuncts and adverbials (such as *only*, *just*), which function to 'represent the current proposition as replacing or supplanting, and thereby 'countering', a proposition which would have been expected in its place' (Martin and White, 2005: 120–1; see also White, 2005b).

(3) a. ...*but what we do know, however, is that just* seven years later
[CONTRACT:DISCLAIM:COUNTER] in 1939 Tiger won its first international award ... [BARE ASSERTION]

b. *But that didn't mean* [CONTRACT:DISCLAIM:COUNTER] their journey had come to an end. *On the contrary* [CONTRACT:DISCLAIM:COUNTER], it signalled to the world that their journey was *just* beginning [CONTRACT:DISCLAIM:COUNTER]

Here, facts that concern *Tiger's* accolades and achievements are introduced into the discourse as dialogically contractive by deflecting or inhibiting actual or potential dialogic alternatives. Thus, while still dialogic, they 'increase the interpersonal cost to those who would challenge the viewpoint currently being advanced by the text' (White, 2003: 268).

● ENTERTAIN, ATTRIBUTE AND DISTANCE

In contrast, propositions attributed to the world at large, or the fictitious world of the film, are introduced as dialogically expansive, that is as 'but one of a range of possible positions' (White, 2005b). By representing these propositions as grounded in their own contingent, individual subjectivity (see Martin and White, 2005: 97–8; see also White, 2005b), the institutional voice

distances itself further from these possible alternatives by attributing them to some unknown, external source.

(4) a. Furthermore, *it seemed* [EXPAND:ENTERTAIN] Europeans were developing a real taste for Tiger ...

b. *It is rumored* [EXPAND:ATTRIBUTE:DISTANCE] that they decided to protect their secret, by entrusting it to just ten men.

c. Whether this was prudent foresight or simply rumour is unknown [EXPAND:ENTERTAIN]

In the verbal texts, macro-themes, which are concerned with factuality, are introduced into the discourse as undialogized or dialogically contractive, whereas the 'Macro-New', pertaining to the world of fiction, is presented as dialogically expansive, i.e. as just one of a range of possible alternatives (see boxed text in Appendix 2).

The narrator's voice

According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004), a filmmaker's primary objective may be to appeal 'to our emotions, rather than presenting only factual evidence' (p. 141). However, these arguments may not always be presented to us as arguments per se. Often, a film text will present its arguments simply as if they were mere observations. In particular, in film texts that resort to voice-over narration, the viewer may be induced to associate this voice with the voice of conviction, and take the speaker as a reliable source of information (see Bordwell and Thompson, 2004: 141).

Chatman (1999) distinguishes between two types of voice-over narration. For instance, in voice-narrated cinema, a narrator may be either a character-narrator (sometimes referred to as a 'first person' or 'homodiegetic' narrator), or he may assume a role that is external to the world of the film, in which case he functions as a 'third-person' or 'heterodiegetic' narrator (p. 321). Toolan (1988), on the other hand, differentiates between four types of narration, depending on whether the narrator's point of view is internal or external to the diegesis, that is, whether the narration is extended from the viewpoint of a character (type A) 'or from the point of view of someone who is not a participating character but who has knowledge of the feelings of the character' (type B). 'External' narration, in turn 'relates the events, and describes the characters, from a position outside of any of the protagonists' consciousnesses, with no privileged access to their private feelings and opinions (type C), and in some cases actually stressing the limitations of authorial knowledge' (type D) (pp. 82–3).

According to Toolan (1988), however, these narratorial positions are not impermutable. It is quite possible for a narrator to oscillate between different points of view. In *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*, the narrator's voice is indeed ambivalent, and fluctuates between these alternate states. As Toolan points out

'the particularly interesting business for us to chart is the subtle and significant modulation from one stance to another that takes place in much narrative' (p. 83).

In the 'Prelude' (see Appendix 2, column 5), for instance, the narrator's voice seems overtly disconnected from the stream of images that unfold on the screen. In other words, the narrator is 'heterodiegetic', that is, his subjecthood derives not from the fictional world of the film, but from the objective world of 'discourse' (Chatman, 1999: 318, 32). In other words, the viewer does not identify the narrator's voice with one of the characters in the film. Yet, the stance adopted by the authorial voice is not that of the authoritative, omniscient third-person narrator that one often encounters in film and television (Budd et al., 1999: 96). On the contrary, in terms of macro-thematic development, the authorial voice is clearly anchored in the world of the film. The stance adopted by the narrator's voice further aids the 'suspension of disbelief' as information associated with the dramatized world of fiction is disguised as 'fact' via the monoglossic.

(5) a. There is a secret that only ten men know [BARE ASSERTION]

It is only in the subsequent film sequences that the narrator's voice explicitly leaves the objective world of discourse for the diegetic, subjective world of the film, indicated by the use of first-person pronouns 'us' and 'we', which could imply that he is either one of the characters in the film, or that he speaks for the 'ten men' in *Tiger's* story. As noted by Goodman and Graddol (1996), in film and television, the use of first-person pronouns has a strong potential to 'create a sense of linguistic (and, by extension, social) solidarity with the listening public' (p. 146). In other words, it serves to align the viewer. In *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* this is strongly supported through the ENGAGEMENT 'key'. By introducing propositions pertaining to the fictional world as bare assertions via the monoglossia, the narrator's voice aligns itself dialogically with his audience by the use of the inclusive pronouns 'we' and 'us' (see White, 2003: 279). As such, the narrator's voice positions itself as being in solidarity with its potential audience (White, 2003: 264; see also Miller, 2004).

(6) a. In the beginning, ten of us were entrusted with the secret [BARE ASSERTION]

b. The secret that brought us success ... [BARE ASSERTION]

The same strategy is maintained when the *Focus* (the 'New') shifts attention to the external world of historic fact.

(7) a. It was our greatest achievement [BARE ASSERTION]

b. We have even greater success in Europe [CONTRACT:DISCLAIM: COUNTER]

The Focus in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret*: the hyper-new: *Tiger's* accolades and achievements

While the authorial voices in *Tiger: Unravel the Secret* reveal the shifting tensions between the objective world of discourse (i.e. fact) and the subjective world of the film (i.e. fiction) in terms of their macro-thematic development, it is consistently the Hyper– or Macro New that is repeated across items on the web-page, which, in most instances, is concerned with the factual world of discourse, i.e., *Tiger's* accolades and achievements (see boxed text in Appendix 2). While space constraints do not permit a close analysis of the film text, it seems nevertheless significant that the meanings contained in the Hyper–New are also projected at strategic points in the film. Frequently, these images of medals and trophies are textually foregrounded, through extreme close-ups, or superimposed titles that are visually salient (e.g. see Appendix 2, column 7).

As Martin (2001) points out: ‘narrative genres typically deploy evaluation at the beginning and end of the story to make their point’ (p. 316). According to Chatman (1999), however, there is an important difference between narration in textual discourse and narration in film. In film, ‘the narrator’s presence is only salient at the moment he or she speaks. Otherwise the combined force of the diegetic visual and sound images dominate’ (p. 328). In film, seeing and hearing ‘the events themselves’ in their total immediacy may make us forget what some external voice has already told us about it (p. 328). Thus, while the audience runs the risk of being drawn into the fictional world of the film text, as it is given priority in terms of its functional as well as compositional property, it is ultimately the institutional voice of factuality that is being foregrounded in terms of the Hyper–New, which reminds viewers of the ‘key’ message that the text asks them to pay attention to: *Tiger's* accolades and achievements.

In other words, the ‘secret’, i.e. the campaign’s ultimate message, that the viewer is invited to ‘unravel’ is revealed not only by the authorial stance or ENGAGEMENT ‘key’, but by the text’s Hyper–New: the *Focus* across visual and verbal elements consistently accentuates *Tiger's* provenance and international award-winning legacy (presented as either dialogically *monoglossic* or *heteroglossic:contractive*) – which is, of course, in alignment with the advertiser’s intended marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

As the analysis in this article has demonstrated, ENGAGEMENT can be used as an analytic tool to explore the question of how the complexity of visual, verbal and interactive elements in a web-based advertising campaign functions to project idealized dialogic positions for its readers or viewers. As Macken-Horarik (2003) explicates, these idealized positions are ‘*projected by the text itself*’ which sets the terms of the interaction with the reader and makes particular subject positions more or less likely or “preferred” (p. 287).

Manovich (2000) cautions, nevertheless, that with new media there is always the 'danger that we will interpret "interaction" literally, equating it with physical interaction between a user and a media object ... at the expense of psychological interaction' (p. 57). He argues that, despite their endemic potential for viewer mediation, new media discourses generally ask us 'to follow pre-programmed, objectively existing associations' (p. 61). Thus, while visitors to a web-based advertising campaign, such as the one analysed in this article, may be given the power to engage interactively with individual items and texts on their own terms, it is the authorial voice of the web-page author or creator that determines the dialogic positioning of the 'facts' and 'stories' contained within, and how the viewer is expected to engage with these.

In this respect, APPRAISAL theory can be a viable instrument in helping us better understand, or at least appreciate, the variable resources or alternative options by which producers of such dynamic multimodal texts create and negotiate intersubjective positions for themselves and their audiences. In hypertext, however, these dialogic positions are inherently transient and evanescent. As such, it is thus always possible to perceive of hypertext as a medium that co-opts its readers implicitly through multiple, permutable and 'not necessarily consistent reading positions' (White, 2003: 275), brought about not only by the different 'voices' that compete for the viewer's attention, but by the hybridity of the web-texts themselves.

Whilst a SF approach, such as afforded by APPRAISAL theory, may not be the answer to all these problems, the analytical framework proposed in this article may constitute a viable means for deconstructing and making transparent aspects of meaning-making activity that 'might otherwise remain at the level of vague suspicion and intuitive response' (Iedema, 2001: 200).

The account of hypertextual ENGAGEMENT presented in this article is nonetheless a partial one and addresses only part of the research question. In other words, this analysis has systematically revealed how the text engages and aligns the audience through the interplay of visual, verbal and interactive elements. To gain a more comprehensive and unabridged understanding of the strategies by which multimodal hypertexts persuade their viewers to adopt a certain point of view in order to convince them of the merits of the advertised brand or marketing strategy, that is, to appreciate more fully why a text comes to be valued as it is, a complete analysis would have to look beyond the resources of ENGAGEMENT, by taking into account how the other resources within APPRAISAL, i.e. ATTITUDE and GRADUATION, interact with each other and the potential reader or viewer.

APPRAISAL theory and its application to dynamic multimodal discourse analysis, however, is presently still an under-researched area, and needs more explicit frameworks and models to facilitate a better understanding of the interfaces between these two disciplines, which may hence form the impetus for future research in this field.

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NOTES

1. For a detailed discussion of SF-theory, see Halliday (1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004).
2. The web-pages analysed in this article were screen-captured in early February 2007. While the URL is still active, it should be noted, however, that the website has meanwhile been updated and changed in appearance.
3. Due to time and space constraints, this article is concerned only with an analysis of the campaign's entry and primary content pages, an overview of which is provided in Appendix 1.
4. Baldry and Thibault's (2006) and Thibault's (2000) definition of a *phase* is based on the work of Gregory (1995, 2002), which aims at capturing 'the dynamic instantiation of micro-registerial choices' (Gregory, 2002: 323).

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