MULTIMODALITY IN THE FRONT COVERS OF
CHICK-LIT BOOKS

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MULTIMODALITY IN THE FRONT COVERS OF CHICK-LIT BOOKS

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study how chick-lit book covers utilise the complementary relationship between text and visual elements to provide more effective ways of meaning making. This use of multiple forms of modes, or better known as „multimodality", was studied in terms of its features, as well as how these features represent the chick-lit genre. From a social semiotic perspective, this study analysed the data in the form of twelve chick-lit book covers by looking at three main elements: the text, composition and representation of the social actors found on the covers. The goal was to determine if patterns could be found in the use of certain multimodal features and how these deployments of modes, as a whole, represent the chick-lit genre. In addition, this study also looked into how gender is represented on the book covers of this genre, given that chick-lit is a genre written by women, about women and for women.

Keywords: Multimodality, social semiotics, gender in the media, chick-lit.

MULTIMODALITY DALAM MUKA HADAPAN CHICK-LIT

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana muka hadapan buku chick-lit menggunakan teks dan unsur-unsur visual untuk menjanakan makna dengan cara yang lebih berkesan. Penggunaan pelbagai bentuk mode, atau lebih dikenali sebagai „multimodality", dikaji dari segi ciri-cirinya, serta bagaimana ciri-ciri tersebut mewakili genre chick-lit. Dari perspektif semiotik sosial, kajian ini menganalisis muka hadapan dua belas buku chick-lit dengan melihat tiga elemen utama: teks, komposisi dan perwakilan sosial actor yang terdapat pada muka hadapan buku. Matlamatnya adalah untuk menentukan sama ada trend boleh djumpai dalam penggunaan ciri-ciri multimodal tertentu dan bagaimana penggunaan mode, secara keseluruhannya, mewakili genre chick-lit. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga melihat bagaimana jantina diwakili di dalam buku genre ini, memandangkan chick-lit adalah genre yang ditulis oleh kaum wanita, mengenai kaum wanita dan untuk kaum wanita.

Kata kunci: Multimodality, semiotik sosial, jantina dalam media, chick-lit

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNESCO   : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

NGO   : Non-government organisations

SFL   : Systemic functional linguistics

RP   : Represented participants

SF   : Systemic functional

MDA   : Multimodal discourse analysis

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

This dissertation set out to identify the different modes found on the front covers of chick-lit books and in doing so, understand how those modes represent the chick-lit genre.

To meet these aims, the research first questioned: What makes a book's front cover more _attractive' than others? Are there certain elements present? And are these elements presented in a particular way? In the case of the front covers of books, the text has a two-fold function: Providing information regarding the subject, content and genre of a book, as well as attracting the target audience's attention for commercial purposes. As the famous saying _to judge a book by its cover' goes, people do use book covers to determine the worth of a book, the kind of story told within and whether to take it seriously and buy it (Thomsen, 2014). Moreover, front covers spark the imagination of the viewer and give us an impression of the legitimacy of the author, the story and the book as a whole.

However, unlike animated and interactive texts available in new media such as the internet, book covers offer only a single, non-dynamic snap-shot to its audience for identification and aesthetic purposes. Suffice to say, from a semiotic perspective, book covers are a treasure throve to semioticians as they not only offer a rich text for analysis but also a ways to understand how elements are exploited for maximum effects in meaning making. According to UNESCO Publishing (2014), a good cover design clearly conveys the essence of the book: the tone, content, level and intended readership of the book (Cunnane, 2013) and should also be aesthetically appealing signalling to readers why they might want to buy this book and indicating the faith publishers have in the title in the creativity and effort that has gone into producing it.

Cmeciu and Cmeciu (2011, p.470) called book covers a ―sign-vehicle‖ being a mediation between the ―visible relationships‖ and ―hidden relatedness‖ establishing themselves at the level of production, promotion, consumption and reproduction. Indeed, covers and their designs contribute to the positioning of the book in its cultural context, with signs that conform to a visual code that places a title within a certain genre or market. The interaction between these signs towards making a marketing message and achieving an aesthetic vision becomes the key interest of study in this research. Thus, to reiterate, this current study is geared towards understanding the complementary relationship between language and other visual elements on the front covers of books so as to provide better and more effective ways of meaning making. The term ‗meaning making‘ is explained further in Section 1.2.

This collaboration of language and illustrative elements—or better known as ‗modes‘—form what is called a ‗multimodal text‘. The use of multiple forms of modes in the creation of a cultural artefact is known as ‗multimodality‘ (Kress, 2009). In addition to reasons already mentioned earlier in this section, this research focused specifically on the multimodality on the front covers of chick-lit books as it is also the first form of interaction the viewer has with the book, thus serving to make a strong impression on the viewer in a very short time with very limited space.

To avoid any discrepancies, this research adopted a similar definition of ‗chick-lit‘ as Montgomery (2006) in De Hoog (2012, p.3):

―Chick lit is a genre comprised of books that are mainly written by women for women. The books range from having main characters in their early 20‘s to their late 60‘s. There is usually a personal, light, and humorous tone to the books. Sometimes they are written in first-person narrative; other times they are written from multiple viewpoints. The plots usually consist of women experiencing usual life issues, such as love, marriage, dating, relationships,

friendships, roommates, corporate environments, weight issues, addiction, and much more."

The definition Montgomery provides was chosen as it is both concise and comprehensive. She clearly outlines the writers, readers, characters, tone, viewpoint, and plot of the chick-lit genre.

1.2 Problem Statement

The literacies in this day and age are no longer confined solely to printed words standing alone in texts. According to Unsworth (2002, p.63), ─conventional literacies are maintaining a complementary role as well as being both co-opted and adapted in the evolution of our textual habitat". Novel skills for reading, finding, authenticating, manipulating, linking and representing information are demanded in this increasingly multimodal environment (Lim, 2011). Unsworth (2006) points out that language and images are integral to the texts we use. While they are able to make meanings separately, language and images also combine to make meanings in new ways in contemporary texts (ibid). According to Lim (2011), texts and communication, not just in contemporary times, have always been inherently multimodal. Lemke (2002, p.23) articulates:

─Semiotically, we never in fact make meaning with only the resources of one semiotic system: words conjure images, images are verbally mediated, writing is a visual form, algebra shares much of the syntax and semantics of natural language, geometric diagrams are interpreted verbally and pictorially, even radio voices speak to us of individuality, accent, emotional states and physical health through vocal signs not organised by the linguistic code."

In both traditional and electronic media, the complementary relationship between language and other modes of communication such as illustrations, sounds and animations are being embraced to provide far better ways of meaning making. Park (2013, p.43) defines meaning making as an ―effort to reduce discrepancies between appraised and global meaning". Gillies, Neimeyer and Milman (2014, p.2), on the other hand, argue that it is through meaning making that a person ―retains, reaffirms, revises and replaces elements of their orienting system to develop more nuanced, complex and useful systems". Thus, within the context of this research, meaning making refers to how an individual understands, interprets and construes a cultural artefact; in this case, the front covers of chick-lit books.

While much research has been done on multimodality in different genres of texts such as comics (Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Jacobs, 2007), school textbooks (Mohamad Subakir Mohd Yasin et al., 2012; Kamel Ali Sulieman Otoom, 2014), children storybooks (Guijarro, 2011), scientific illustrations (Unsworth, 2006), political campaigns (Thurlow and Aiello, 2007) and even on the multimodality of hairstyles (McMurtrie, 2010); there still remains some areas that have yet to be explored.

One such area is the chick-lit genre. Thus, there lies an obvious gap in this field of research which this study aims to fill.

1.3 Significance of Study

As established in the previous subsection, studies on multimodality in the chick-lit genre are lacking. Part of the reason is due to the fact that chick-lit has only recently gain popularity as compared to other genres in the field (Weinberg, 2003).

However, De Hoog (2012, p.2) notes an exponential growth in the chick-lit genre in recent years citing its popularity as a result of books such as ‗Bridget Jones‗ Diary‗. She describes chick-lit book covers as ―adorned with pastel colours, all kinds

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of female accessories and curly fonts that showcase the title and author". Rende (2008, p.21) on the other hand, claim that all chick-lit book covers seem to follow ―stereotypical cover conventions" which include: bright covers, curvy fonts, feminine colours like pink and purple, objects like shopping bags, a martini glass and high heels, as well as fragmented images of the female body. Similarly, Mazza (2006, p.18) said: ―Chick-lit has morphed into books flaunting pink, aqua, and lime covers featuring cartoon figures of long-legged women wearing stiletto heels".

It would seem that many have a shared perception of the front cover designs of chick-lit books. Thus, in addition to filling the gap that exists in this field of study, this research set out to determine the legitimacy of these claims and in doing so, sought to understand the need and the purpose of such designs and their repercussions on both the genre as well as the female population it seems to emulate. These ‗stereotypical cover conventions', after all, beg the question: Are all chick-lit book covers identified in this manner? And more importantly: Can the multimodality of chick-lit book covers be seen in such a simple, one dimensional light? In spite of the plethora of semiotic resources available, do all chick-lit book covers depict women and their stories in this singular, monolithic perspective?

1.4 Research Purpose

With these questions in mind, the purpose of this study is to investigate the multimodal features found on the front covers of chick-lit books and how these multimodal features are representative of the chick-lit genre.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the multimodal features found on the front covers of chick-lit books?

2. How are these features representative of the chick-lit genre?

The first research question aims to identify and categorise the different multimodal features on the front covers of chick-lit books by analysing the textual and visual features of twelve chick-lit books [Appendix A] based on the conceptual framework discussed in Section 3.2 and summarised in Section 3.3.

Through analysing the features both textually and visually, this research seeks to understand if homogeneous pattern[s] are found across all twelve books covers. In doing so, this research also looked at the meaning these patterns give the chick-lit genre, the need and reason for its use, its effect on the perception of its consumers and the gender issues surrounding the genre. The data to answer the second research question is analysed and categorised according to themes, for example: colour usage, font type, images used, spatial arrangement and lexis choice, which is discussed further in the third chapter of this research.

1.6 Contextual Information

According to Voon (2009, p.4), chick-lit is considered a ―new-born baby‖ in the long line of established literary works across the world and has only emerged as a bona fide literary genre in the past decade. Nonetheless, the genre is gaining popularity at a high rate, being propelled by book-turned-movies like ‗Bridget Jones‗ Diary‗ and ‗Confessions of a Shopaholic‗. In fact, Donadio (2006) calls chick-lit a ‗pandemic‗ and credits its popularity since 1990 to not just books, but television shows such as ‗Ally McBeal‗ and ‗Sex and the City‗.

In the local context of Malaysian chick-lit publication, the number of novels written in the literary scene has been rising steadily. Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Shahizah Ismail Hamdan (2010, p.67) note that these novels with ‒glossy covers" outnumber literary Malay novels due to their appeal to the masses. As opposed to literary novels [which are mainly used in school], Malaysian chick-lit uses simple language to articulate storylines of love and relationships of characters whom readers can relate to and empathise with.

However, it is important to note that the chick-lit genre in Malaysia does not exist within the same breadth as American chick-lit (ibid) and Western chick-lit in general. The reason behind this lies solely in the more conservative environment Malaysians are accustomed to; socially, culturally and religiously. Unlike American chick-lit, themes such as sexual liberation and pre-marital sex do not appear in the Malaysian corpus. Portrayals of such relationships, in the rare occasions that they do appear, merely serve to demonstrate the consequences of such transgressions. Despite their appeal to the public, chick-lit still remains unacknowledged by the mainstream literary criticism in Malaysia because the genre is not seen as ‒worthy of entry in a reputable canon" (Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Shahizah Ismail Hamdan, 2010, p.69).

Thus, this research limited its data corpus to Western chick-lit book covers due to its popularity and more universal storyline. Western chick-lit is seen to be a more established genre which demonstrates a far reaching and permeating quality as opposed to the local genre. The choice of the twelve book covers and how they were collected are discussed further in Sections 3.4 and 3.5.

1.7 Summary

In this first chapter, the pertinent points of research have been established; namely, the research aim, research questions, working definitions of key terms related to the field of study as well as the scope and significance of the research.

In Chapter 2, this dissertation reviews the literature and past research related to the current field of study to better understand the topic at hand. The review of literature will also aid in choosing the most suitable and reliable research framework for the current study, which is discussed in Chapter 3, along with how this dissertation applies the chosen framework to answer the research questions posed Section 1.5.

Chapter 4 details the analyses performed on the data based on the chosen framework and discusses the findings of this dissertation in great depth, which ultimately answers the research questions of this study.

Finally, Chapter 5 serves to summarise the dissertation and bring to light the issues—if any—faced during the course of the research as well as to provide recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the relevant literature related to the current field of study. The purpose of this review is to better understand the topic at hand, build on the findings and improve on the shortcomings of previous studies, as well as to seek the most suitable and reliable framework for this current dissertation.

The review starts with general topics, slowly zooming into the specifics of this research.

2.2 Modes and Multimodality

2.2.1 Modes, Culture and Perception

A mode is a semiotic resource that acts as what Forceville (2006) calls a ‗signalling system'. It is perceived through the senses, be it visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory or tactile (Lutkewitte, 2013) and is used culturally in the making of signs (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002). In a similar definition by Kress and van Leeuwen in 2001, a mode is a material resource such as colour, sound, movement or verbiage used in a recognisable, stable, and socially constructed way as a means of articulating discourse.

In both definitions, the meaning a mode carries depends heavily on social and cultural circumstances. This is because different cultural orientations can result in different perceptions and varied ways of understanding a message (Martin and Nakayama, 2008). A simple example is the meaning and use of the colour white. In China and many parts of East Asia, white is the colour of death and mourning; however in most parts of Europe, white is the colour of purity, worn by the bride at her wedding (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002).

Thus, as pointed out by Jewitt (2008, p.17), ―in order for something to be a mode there needs to be a shared cultural sense of a set of resources and how these can be organised to realise meaning". Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, p.343) shared the same stance, stating that contrasts—like the one on colour provided in the example above—―shake our confidence in the security of meaning". They thus put forth a movement for a ―quest for the grammar" of visual language as to how modes can be perceived with minimal discrepancies. The discussion on ―visual grammar‗, its relevance and application are expanded further in Section 2.3.

However, bringing the focus back to modes, Forceville (2006) argues that the way in which a mode is perceived is not the only criterion to distinguish a mode; but also the way in which a mode is produced. He identifies nine modes – pictorial signs, written signs, spoken signs, gestures, sounds, music, smells, tastes and touch, which, according to van Leeuwen (2005), can be considered as ―communicative acts‗. Reich (2011, p.1352) defines communicative acts as ―overt attempts to influence an addressee, either in the form of soliciting specific and momentary cooperation or in the form of providing it". In other words, a communicative act is an utterance—or a set of utterances—made up of mode[s] that is used to perform a linguistic action or function. Examples include: apologising, making a request, extending an invitation, refusing, paying a compliment and even complaining.

2.2.2 Multimodality and the Media

These communicative acts, according to Forceville (2006), can be achieved both monomodally or multimodally. Though every medium of discourse has a proclivity for a specific type of mode—text in books, images in advertisements, voices on the radio—these mediums also integrate different modes to enhance the

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communicative message. In other words, modes can be ―co-deployed‖ (McMurtrie, 2010, p.403) to facilitate social meaning making. This combination and integration of multiple forms of modes to produce meaning in a text (Wu, 2014) is termed ‗multimodality‘. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1998, p.186):

> ―All texts are multimodal . . . There is a trend in which, increasingly, the written text is no longer structured by linguistic means . . . but visually, through layout, through the spatial arrangement of blocks of text, of pictures and other graphic elements on the page.‖

The recent rise in research in relation to multimodal studies is due to the rapid development in interactive digital media, which in turn, highlights the multimodal nature of meaning making (Lim, 2011). This is supported by O‘Halloran and Smith (accepted for publication) who argue ―technology has greatly increased the human capacity for multimodal communication and thus socio-cultural development‖. New and digital media such as the popularisation of the Internet and the creation of web pages have led to a ―significant expansion of the repertoires of human cultural exchange‖ (ibid). New media texts such as web pages rarely depend on a single semiotic resource to convey the meanings of its content. Prominent features of web pages include both static and dynamic images, music, videos, and interactive links, which encourage kinaesthetic exploration. Together, these resources orchestrate a multimodal experience which was not previously available in traditional media (Lim, 2011).

However, this is not to say that contemporary texts are the only texts that utilise multimodality in meaning making, but rather that the digital media accentuates the multimodal nature of texts. As stated by O‘Halloran, Tan, Smith and Podlasov (2010, p.4), ―texts of all kinds are always multimodal, making use

of, and combining, the resources of diverse semiotic systems to facilitate both generic [i.e., standardised] and specific [i.e., individualised, and even innovative] ways of making meaning". According to Unsworth (2002, p.63), "conventional literacies are maintaining a complementary role as well as being co-opted and adapted in the evolution of our textual habitat".

Indeed, new modes of communication craft and manipulate media in contemporary ways which allows for greater opportunity for more meanings to be transmitted simultaneously.

2.2.3 The Use of Multimodality in Enhancing a Communicative Message

Baldry (2000, x) observed that "we live in a multimodal world". Having said that, we experience the world multimodally, and in turn, make meaning of our experiences in this world multimodally as well. Although language is predominantly used, multimodality acknowledges that language is rarely used without being co-deployed alongside other semiotic resources to enhance meaning making. As concisely stated by Christie (2002, p.3), language is now perceived "not as some discreetly independent entity, but rather as part of complex sets of interconnecting forms of human semiosis".

In their 2001 study, Kress and van Leeuwen stressed that similar meanings can be expressed using diverse semiotic modes. The use of varying modes increases the opportunity of the reception of an idea or concept in an audience (Lutkewitte, 2013). This is because every element in a discourse, be it the colour, placement, font, choice of words or even the organisation of content, creates meaning.

This line of thought is supported by Unsworth (2002, p.65) who explained that "the graphology of written language needs to be read multimodally". This is because the discreet information in a text has far from redundant effects on

readers. These semiotic resources are also not simply aesthetic peripheral embellishments to the print but rather a complementary resource to the verbal text. Thus, it is ‑inadequate to consider reading simply as processing print" (Unsworth, 2008, p.67). Wu (2014, p.1418) expands this stating that language and images complement each other through enhancement where ‑one mode provides meanings which expand another spatially, temporally and causally".

Thus, modes do not inherently possess a value per se but can be chosen and co-deployed in texts in order to facilitate the realisation of specific social purposes (McMurtrie 2010). Multimodal texts, therefore, are discursive articulations realised in a multiplicity of semiotic resources for the purpose of making meaning in a social context (Baldry and Thibault, 2006).

2.2.4 Past Research on Multimodality

As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, there has been a recent rise in research in relation to multimodal studies due to the rapid development in interactive digital media (Lim, 2011). However, Kress (2000, p.153) lamented that ‑the semiotic change which characterise the present and which are likely to characterise the future cannot be adequately described and understood with currently existing theories of meaning and communication". Following that, Kress (2001) curtly pointed out that the work on grammars for exploring the co-articulation of image and verbiage is still in its infancy.

Nonetheless, a steady stream of multimodal research has been flowing in after the turn of the century and they continue to grow in number. According to Lim (2011), research into multimodality as a domain of enquiry builds and develops from the foundational work of O'Toole (1994/2010) and Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) in the Systemic Functional Theory tradition to a wide range of texts. A sampling of these multimodal texts include films (Martinec, 2000; Baldry and

Thibault, 2006), animation (O'Toole, 2011), colour (van Leeuwen, 2011), picture books (Wu, 2014), comics books (Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Jacobs, 2007), school textbooks (Mohamad Subakir Mohd Yasin et al., 2012; Kamel Ali Sulieman Otoom, 2014), print advertisements (O'Halloran and Lim, 2009; Feng, 2011), documents (Bateman, 2008), television advertisements (Thibault, 2000; Tan, 2009), newspapers (Macken-Horarik, 2004; Bateman, Delin and Henschel, 2006), websites (Lemke, 2002) and children storybooks (Guijarro, 2011).

Thus, it is apparent that literature in this field is growing at a very robust rate in a wide range of areas of study. However, it is important to note that there still remains a niche in some areas which were not mentioned above. One such area is the field of interest in this current study: the multimodality of book covers. Moreover, much of the published research on multimodality links the co-deployment of modes to pedagogical studies and new literacies; areas which are not the main interest in this current research. Nevertheless, this subsection—and the subsection following this—reviews the available literature relevant to this current study in order to further establish the gaps that exist in this field of research, and to build on and extend the frameworks available in order to justify the most appropriate approach to fill these existing gaps in literature through this empirical study.

In the past decade, a substantial amount of multimodal research has been dedicated to children and teenage narratives incorporating multiple forms of modes and attending to the non-linguistic features of narrative (Mills, 2010). As mentioned before, much of these research have a strong link to pedagogy; stressing on the importance of being multimodally literate. Although these fields of enquiry are not the focus of this current study, there are pertinent points to be taken into consideration. In his analysis on comics, Jacobs (2013, p.9) states:

‖As texts, comics provide a complex environment for the negotiation of meaning, beginning with the layout of the page itself. The comic page is separated into multiple panels, divided from each other by gutters, physical or conceptual spaces through which connections are made and meanings are negotiated. Images of people, objects, animals, and settings, word balloons, lettering, sound effects, and gutters all come together to form page layouts that work to create meaning in distinctive ways and in multiple realms of meaning making."

Needless to say, comics prove to be a rich source of data for analyses in multimodal research. Jacobs (2007) articulates the significance of multimodality in comics, not just from the use of images in supplementing the story, but in the use of space to establish interpersonal relationships, differing fonts in establishing the characters' voices and word balloon shapes in establishing tone of voice. In the literacy of comics, Wertham (1954) also states that visuals are more easily ingested and interpreted than the written, thus allowing for meanings to be better transmitted than a purely word-filled text. Bodmer (1992, p.72) concurred stating that illustrations in general serve to ‖expand, interpret or decorate a written text". The notion of images being subservient (Jacobs, 2007) to a text is also supported by Wu (2014) who argues that pictures supplement a text: illustrations explain a story, but stories can also be understood without them.

Guijarro (2011), like Wu (2014), used the Systemic Funtional Linguistic approach to study picture books but had an opposite take on text-image relations. Guijarro (2011, p.48) stressed that pictures and their textual counterparts are ‖composite wholes" and argues that complete understanding of the message being conveyed requires the exploration of both the visual and verbal constituents. The study revealed that both modes, the verbal and the visual, complement each other;

and highlighted the potential of combining these said modes in pushing the limits of cognitive and literary abilities of readers. Subservient or otherwise, these past studies all agree that language and visuals complement each other in a multimodal text where meaning is realised through verbal and visual choices made by the creator of the text.

On the other hand, Ika Lestari Damayanti (2014) found in her analysis on school textbooks that images that accompanied linguistic texts fortified cultural and societal norms; which, in her study's case, was the gender asymmetry in Indonesia. With the text under question being school textbooks, these images, though less important than their textual counterpart, played a very implicit role in transmitting and establishing subtle nuances about stereotype gender roles in society in children. Thus, this highlights the understated role visuals play in a text. Ideologies, especially pre-existing and culturally established ones, are often reproduced and reconstructed in multimodal texts.

Lirola and Chovanec (2012), who studied the use of multimodality in cosmetic surgery advertisements, state that unlike women's magazines, these texts actively use prevalent ideologies and stereotypical ideals in their campaigns for personal economic gains. This is because the audience is better able to identify and understand the message being transmitted as it is considered a ‗norm' and something to be expected. However, the key interest here is in how such ideologies are realised multimodally and in doing so, non-verbally draw on and reproduce stereotyped representations of the world. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) also note that meaning is never to be ‗found' in any image or visual text itself, but rather in its situated design, production and distribution; it is also to be located in the discourses which contextualise and constitute the image or text.

All in all, past research show the significance of multimodality in making meaning and in the transmission of messages and implicit nuances as well as the permeating role co-deployment of modes has in the media of late. These studies, as mentioned by Lim (2011) also draw on frameworks put forth by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) taking on a Systemic Functional Linguistic approach, which is discussed further in Section 2.3.2.

2.2.5 Multimodality and Book Covers

The cover of a book comprises of not just the front cover but is a set of elements that also includes the back cover and the spine [edge], and less frequently an inside cover and an inside back cover where the print is double-sided. However, the focus of this study is solely on the front cover of books as it is the consumer's first contact with the book, thus playing a pivotal role in making an impression on the consumer.

In a Wall Street Journal study published by UNESCO Publishing (2014), it was found that a person only spends about eight seconds looking at the front cover of a book; meaning that a book cover has very little time to make an impact on its audience. It is also intended to spark curiosity and interest in its audience and therefore becomes a very strong tool in promoting a book. This is supported by Serafini, Kachorsky and Goff (2015, p.96) who say that covers serve a ―commercial and rhetorical purpose". Moreover, as stated by Lirola and Castejón (2014), book covers are also a ways in which the author, publisher and creator of the book cover present themselves to the world. Lastly, the front cover of a book is also often indicative of the overall theme of a book (Fang, 1996).

Indeed, it would seem that such a seemingly common piece of text, in actuality, plays multiple extensive and elaborate roles in discourse. With so many functions and communicative acts to fulfil simultaneously, and in such a short span of time, within such a limited amount of space, it should be apparent why this current study

takes such a keen interest in the front covers of books. However, it is once again reiterated that multimodal research with regards to the front cover of books is very much lacking. Past research include the representation of same-sex parents on picturebook covers (Sunderland and McGlashan, 2013), how teachers are represented on covers and visual narratives in children's literature (Barone, Meyerson, and Mallette, 1995), and literary practices on professional development book covers (Serafini, Kachorsky and Goff, 2015). Thus, the review of literature in this subsection looks at these past studies but also extends research on other genres of text to gain a better understanding of the topic at hand.

In her study on picture books, Fang (1996) listed six functions of illustrations in a book: to reinforce text, provide a different viewpoint, define and develop characters, contribute to textual coherence, extend or develop a plot and establish setting. Indeed, the power of images and illustrations lie in the fact that they are able to fulfil these functions without the use of a single word; thus the existence of the famous saying ‗a picture is worth a thousand words‘. Extending these functions to that of a book cover, it can be said that images are integral to such a text, as book covers only possess a very limited space to make meaning. In addition, the front covers of books are non-dynamic in the sense that they do not consist of changing images, animation, external links or sounds that allow for more information to be shared on a similar plane or presented on a separate one. The finiteness of the front covers of books proves to be a juxtaposition of both a curb in design and an opportunity for maximum exploitation of multimodality for meaning making.

In 2013, Sunderland and McGlashan (p.10) found that images and texts—meaning the book title—on the front covers of books are ―mutually enhancing" indicating that neither one is subservient to the other, but rather that they complement each other's meanings. In 2014, Lirola and Castejón reported that non-

government organisations [NGOs] propagated ideologies of economical dichotomy between poor and rich countries through multimodality on their magazine cover. Though the use of images and the representation of people were the main focus of their analysis, Lirola and Castejón (ibid) also looked at the use of colour as a semiotic mode to make meaning.

Thus, it is clear by looking not just at book covers, but at all types of texts, that multimodal ensembles communicate meaning through a wide myriad of modes including visual images, colour, spatial composition, design features and written language (Jewitt, 2009). Visual images have modal affordances that support the depiction and communication of concepts and ideas in certain ways that differ from the affordances associated with written language (Bezemer and Kress, 2008). It is for this reason that this current research looks at multimodality from not just an image-text perspective, but from a holistic point of view; examining textual features, compositional features as well as the use of images and space to create interpersonal meaning. The analysis looks not just at images on book covers, but on how these images, and other forms of visual semiosis, extend and complement the meanings of the text by articulating meanings of their own.

However, complications arise as the relationships among various modes in a multimodal text produce more elaborate and different meanings than those suggested by either mode alone (Hull and Nelson, 2005). Much of these past researches ended on a note with a call for more extensive and developed frameworks better suited for the multimodal analysis specific to the field of study, as all texts are genre specific with individual functions to fulfil, within a given cultural and socio-economic background. Nonetheless, these past studies, including the ones mentioned in Section 2.2.4, mainly draw on frameworks put forth by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006). Thus, to stabilise this issue, this research integrates a variety

of different frameworks on visual grammar to form an analytical framework based on the Systemic Functional Approach to language. The discussion on these topics is continued in the following subsection in order to build the research framework which is elaborated in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

2.3 Visual Grammar

2.3.1 Definition and Relevance

Jewitt and Oyama (2001) define visual grammar as what can be said and done with images [and other visual means of communication] and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted. In the same way linguistic structures and grammar of a language describe how words combine in texts to communicate meaning, visual grammar delineates the ways in which modes come together in visual statements of greater or lesser intricacy and extension to communicate meaning in its own way (Kordjazi, 2012). According to Lirola and Chovanec (2012), visual grammar acts as a tool in deconstructing the ways in which texts are created and in understanding the hidden and explicit meanings in multimodal texts. Thus, one of the main goals of visual grammar is to offer ―inventories of the major compositional structures" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.1) established by social and institutional conventions. Leborg (2006, p.5) states:

―The reason for writing a grammar of visual language is the same as for any language: to define its basic elements, describe its patterns and processes, and to understand the relationship between the individual elements in the system."

Jewitt and Oyama's (2001) definition ties in perfectly with Saussure's principle on a _signifier' and a _signified'. Saussure believed that a semiotic resource was not only a sound-image but also a concept that the sound-image

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stood for and represented (Berger, 2012). Thus, Saussure divided the sign into two parts: the signifier [sound-image] and the signified [concept]. Barthes (1977, p.38) extends Saussure's principle:

―All images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a ‗floating chain' of signifieds where the reader is able to choose some and ignore others. Polysemy poses a question of meaning and this question always comes through as a dysfunction....Hence in every society various techniques are developed intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of those techniques."

Simply put, visual grammar is a technique developed to create and understand signs and what they mean in a society with minimal discrepancies. Visual grammar in itself is neither transparent nor universally understood. Similar to modes, it is culturally specific. Thus, modes and signs in visual grammar are never seen as arbitrary, but rather following a system in a given culture in combining and constructing meaning in visual communication to ensure the best possible comprehension.

2.3.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Three Metafunctions

Systemic functional linguistics [SFL] views language as a social semiotic system (Halliday, 2004) that places emphasis on choices and its effects on meaning [paradigm], rather than on form and syntactic orientation [syntagm]. Halliday's SFL view of language has also been extended to that of other semiotic modes, such as visual language (Guijarro, 2011), which means it plays a significant role in the discussion on visual grammar. However, multimodal

discourse studies from the SFL perspective is a relatively new domain, dating back only to the mid-1990s.

The term ‗systemic' foregrounds Saussure's paradigmatic axis of choice in understanding how a language works. Halliday coined the term ‗functional' and stressed that language evolved under the needs and purposes that the language system has to serve. These functions, therefore, shape the structure and organisation of language at all levels and is said to be achieved through ‗metafunctions' (Halliday, 1994). Metafunctions are systemic clusters (Halliday, 1985) that have an equal status in making meaning of a related kind (Hasan, 2009). According to Halliday (1985), each metafunction describes a different aspect of the world, and is concerned with a different mode of meaning of clauses. The linguistic clause can be analysed simultaneously using the three metafunctions introduced by Halliday (1978):

Table 2.1: The Three Metafunctions

Metafunction	Focus
Ideational	Semiotic function of constructing a representation of the world.
Interpersonal	Semiotic function of enacting social relations and communicative interactions
Textual	Semiotic function of the creation of a text and the organisation of signs which cohere both internally with each other and externally with the context in and for which they are produced.

2.3.3 The Application of Systemic Functional Grammar to Visual Grammar

As mentioned by Guijarro (2011), the Hallidayan SFL model was used not just in language but extended to that of other semiotic modes, such as visuals as well. One extension of the Hallidayan SFL model was by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) who augmented the model to suit a purely visual function, as seen in Table 2.2. In

the same way linguistic structures are able to communicate meaning; the framework of visual grammar that Kress and van Leewen proposed reflected the SFL perspective of language in communicating meaning in a visual text.

Table 2.2: Metafunction Labels

Framework	Metafunction Labels		
SFL (Halliday, 1978)	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual
Visual Grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006)	Representation	Interaction	Composition

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) named the adapted SFL metafunctions as ‗metafunctions of visual semiosis'. The first metafunction, the representational metafunction, concerns the representation of interaction and relationship between the people, places, and things shown in images. The image represents and constructs our perception of reality in the form of what is happening in the image, which incorporates several entities like actors, goals and receivers (Halliday, 1985). Following this model, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) refer to the existence of two main categories of processes, of which the represented participants [RP] in the images come to participate. The first is the narrative process which serves to present the RP as doing something to or for each other; the second is called the conceptual process, which shows participants in a general, stable, and timeless fashion. The second metafunction, the interactional metafunction, deals with the relationship and interaction between the viewer and RP structured by the gaze of participants, the distance of participants, and the angle from which viewers as interactive participants see the RP. Finally, the compositional metafunction approaches the way in which

the first two metafunctions come together into a meaningful significant whole. It relates the representational and interactional meanings of the visual image to each other through three interrelated systems: information value, salience, and framing.

As mentioned in Sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5, this said SFL framework of visual semiosis became the foundational framework of analysis of many past studies in the field of multimodality. Being a very comprehensive framework of visual analysis what with it looking at three metafunctions of visual semiosis simultaneously and interpreting visual language functionally as a whole, this framework was chosen to be used as the basis of analysis for this study's data as well. According to O'Halloran (2004) this model, known as a systemic functional [SF] approach to multimodal discourse analysis [MDA] is concerned with the theory and practice of analysing meaning arising from the use of multiple semiotic resources in discourses. A more comprehensive breakdown of this framework and its application can be found in Section 3.2 and 3.3 of this dissertation.

2.4 Chick-Lit

2.4.1 Chick-Lit as a Genre

Although the term ‗chick-lit' originated from the United States (De Hoog, 2012), it was the publication of the British novel ‗Bridget Jones' Diary' by Helen Fielding that was credited as the ―eve of the genre" (Weinberg, 2003, p.47). Since then, chick-lit has gained massive popularity and continues to grow. Yet for all the popular attention it has drawn, responses towards chick-lit have been in polarising extremes: on one hand, chick-lit attracts the unquestioning adoration of fans claiming the genre reflects the realities of life for contemporary single women; on the other, it attracts unmitigated disdain of critics as being ―trivial fiction" (Ferriss and Young, 2005, p.1). Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Shahizah Ismail Hamdan (2010, p.69) share the same sentiment stating that while chick-lit appeals to the masses, it

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still remains an unacknowledged genre by mainstream literary critics as they are not considered ‖worthy of entry in a reputable canon".

But, this begs the question: What is chick-lit? What are the prominent and defining features of this genre that separate it from regular women or young adult fiction? Montoro (2012, p.1) laments that providing a comprehensive definition of a genre tends to be, if not ‖totally contentious", certainly ‖complex" due to the many stylistic, narrative or linguistic elements involved. Thus, this research looks into the findings of past studies in order to provide a thorough and comprehensive account of this genre.

Gormley (2009) considers chick-lit as novels written by women, [largely] for women, depicting the life, loves, trials and tribulations of their predominantly young, single, urban, female protagonists. Knowles (2004) outlines the plotlines of chick-lit, stating that the stories centre on a female character seeking personal fulfilment in a romantic-consumer-comedic vein. Montgomery (2006) stresses that the thing that sets chick-lit apart from regular woman's fiction is the tone, which is confiding and personal and always contains a lot of humour. Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006), on the other hand, note that the chick-lit genre had become identifiable by the end of the last decade of the twentieth century by its clearly marked jacket designs. Gormley (2009) added to this saying chick-lit's bold, pink, or pastel-coloured covers with cursive fonts and line drawings of handbags or shoes seem ubiquitous.

These four fundamentals became the ‗pillars' in the definition of the chick-lit genre in this study. First, Gormley (2009) outlined the prototypical author and readership of chick-lit. Second, Knowles (2004) outlined the prototypical characters and plotlines of chick-lit. Third, Montgomery (2006) outlined the tone of chick-lit. Finally, Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006) outlined the presentation and representation

of chick-lit, in the form of its book covers. The first three aforementioned pillars became the basis in choosing the working definition of chick-lit in this study, which was already established in Section 1.1. While the final pillar was not addressed in the working definition of chick-lit in this study, the covers of chick-lit books, or more specifically, the front cover of chick-lit books and the use of multimodality in its design, is fundamentally the key area of interest in this research.

However, though many past researchers do stand unanimously in their take of the design of chick-lit front covers [refer Section 1.2], it is important to state their fields of research did not focus on that of the design or multimodality of the book. Chick-lit, a genre that has only gained popularity in the mid-1990s is a relatively novel addition to the field of publishing. Research in the past decade centred primarily on the features of the chick-lit genre (Modleski, 2008; De Hoog 2012), stylistics (Montoro, 2012), gender and post-feminism (Gill and Herdieckerhoff, 2006; Harzewski, 2011), as well as the consumerism of and in chick-lit among readers (Smith, 2008).

Thus, this research aims to fill this research gap but stresses that while verbiage and language play a role in meaning making, the goal and principal focus in this study is on the exploitation of modes as a whole in creating, supplementing, extending and complementing meaning. While this study does acknowledge past findings on the linguistic styles, plotlines, consumerism as well as gender and racial issues related to chick-lit, the research takes a stance that these features will only be taken into account from a semantic perspective, in the way in which the modes visually present them as articulations of meaning.

2.4.2 Gender and Other Issues in Chick-Lit

The term _chick-lit' refers to a subgenre of fiction—not romance—created exclusively to ―encompass female authors' works usually involving a young,

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modern, single female protagonist who is struggling romantically or with her career"
(Brown, 2016, para.2). Loebig (2017, para.1) classifies it as a category of "genre
fiction that addresses the issues of modern womanhood, often humorously and
lightheartedly". While this term may seem innocuous, what with it being a common
expression used without consequence; its connotations and implications, in reality,
have a greater impact on gender disparity than initially realised. The segregation in
itself, with chick-lit being a 'female only' genre already raises issues with regards to
gender identification and stereotyping. After all, when a man writes a book about a
man for a male audience, the subgenre is not called 'guy-lit', 'dude-lit' or 'hunk-lit';
it is simply categorised, by default, into the broad genre of fiction. This separation
of chick-lit from the general literary realm of fiction is considered by Loebig (2017,
para.1) as "demeaning" to both writers and readers of this subgenre. She curtly
states (para.9):

> "Then there is the term "chick lit" itself. The word chick is viewed as derogatory
> by many women. According to one source, the term dates back to 1927 and
> comes from the word for a baby chicken. Chicks are cute, silly, young, brainless.
> Accordingly, women who read chick lit are seen as vapid and frivolous, which is
> untrue and sexist."

The segregation based on gender also creates a presupposed distinction that
fosters gender disparity in how we perceive and recognise women's literary
works, which in turn, forces many female authors to "pander" to a set of
standards established predominantly by a history of "white, male authors"
(Brown, 2016, para.6). These distinctions harm our understanding of masculinity
and femininity by propagating gender stereotypes. Brown adds to this saying that
separating the works of men and women does not bring emphasis but is instead

polarising and impedes female authors from receiving equality in terms of how their work is regarded.

Moreover, identifying a genre by its audience is problematic. As Brown pointed out, women's stories are not always 'lighthearted' and 'humorous' in spite of what is implied in the stories of this genre. The term 'chick-lit' blankets all female-oriented subjects and misconstrues people's perception about women and their lives. The genre nuances women's stories as "lighter" and "fluffier" (ibid) which inherently leaves a misleading impression about women's issues being less significant and to be taken less seriously as their male counterparts.

It is not to say that women do not face the same problems as the characters in this genre; in fact, the opposite is true. A lot of the time, authors do draw inspiration from real life situations (Maier, 2007) but the platform on which the chick-lit genre stands can oftentimes propagate an ideology that is too generic and stereotyped. Doris Lessing, a venerated novelist was quoted in Ferris and Young (2005) calling chick-lit 'chickerati'. Lessing further adds saying that it would have been better if "female novelists wrote books about their lives as they really saw them, and not these helpless girls, drunken, worrying about their weight" (quoted in Ezard, 2001, p.7). Moreover, heroines in these books deploy 'self-deprecating humour' which, though entertaining, is taken to reflect the young women who read and share these same priorities. This creates a phenomenon whereby whatever is presented in these stories is taken to represent the female population in general. As Brown (2016) brusquely asserts: women and light are not synonymous.

In a separate study, Voon (2009) found that women in chick-lit are expected to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers, and are frequently depicted as victims of gender stereotypes, sexism and objectification. Rende (2008) claims that

chick-lit book covers display fragmented images of the female body while Mazza (2006, p.18) says these covers feature ―cartoon figures of long-legged women wearing stiletto heels". Indeed, the media objectifies the female physique, playing on female sexuality and often highlighting ‗desirable‗ physical characteristics such as a pretty face, a thin silhouette, long legs, slim hips, and large breasts (Wolska, 2011). Women are often portrayed in the home performing domestic chores such as laundry or cooking; or as sex objects who exist primarily to service men; and also as victims who cannot protect themselves (Livingstone, 1994). Character-wise, these women are presented as emotional, loving, compassionate, caring, nurturing, and sympathetic (Collins, 2011). In recent times, however, the difference between the genders is not so vast anymore (Wolska, 2011). Nonetheless, the media still continues to use these stereotypes based on the assumption that they are widely understood thus helping the audience of the message to better receive and understand the meaning and content of the message being propagated.

This brings about the issue with regards to the book cover design of chick-lit. Roundtree (2018, para.1) from UK‗s Daily Mail reported that best-selling author Jojo Moyes, writer of ‗Me before You‗ believed chick-lit book covers, which are ―pink and glittery", are putting men off from reading novels written by women. Moyes stressed that stories written in this subgenre are not always fluff, stating that chick-lit does tackle ―difficult issues" (in Roundtree, 2018, para.4) but are still lumped under the overreaching ‗chick-lit‗ umbrella. Brown (2016) shared the same notion and lamented that this subgenre is being misconstrued and ends up excluding people from reading these stories. Moyes (in Roundtree, 2018) advocates more gender-neutral covers stating that male readers, who would otherwise like the book, steer clear of them due to their ‗girly‗ appearance.

Another major criticism of chick-lit is in its choice of character and storyline. Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Shahizah Ismail Hamdan (2010, p.69) observe that the plots of chick-lit novels focus on ―hip and stylish‖ women in their ―twenties or thirties‖ who live in ―urban settings‖ and fall in and out of love repeatedly. Loebig (2017) adds on to this saying that these protagonists are always heterosexual, white, urban, middle class or higher, aged in their late twenties to mid-thirties. Thus, chick-lit—and the women it represents—is biased and nearly ―inaccessible to women of colour and queer women‖ (para.8). Indeed, based on the majority of plotlines discussed by numerous researchers and write-ups regarding chick-lit, the protagonists all follow a similar set of conventions as the one stated above. Loebig (2017, para.14) attributes this to the many larger cultural and publishing problems that exist in the field and suggests making chick-lit more ―inclusive‖.

Nonetheless, these are some issues to be taken into consideration as this research analyses the front covers of chick-lit books. As mentioned in Section 2.4.1, this study acknowledges the gender, socio-economic and racial issues related to chick-lit but will only recognise these underlying themes from a semantic perspective, in the way in which the modes visually present them as articulations of meaning.

2.5 Summary

To conclude this section, the review of literature reaffirmed the lack of research done in the field of multimodality on the chick-lit genre. Nevertheless, past researchers of different fields and genres all concur that the use of multimodality does in fact enhance meaning making and the reception of the communicative message.

From the review, it was found that the SFL framework of visual semiosis became the foundational framework of analysis of many past studies in the field of multimodality. This is because the SFL model analyses the three metafunctions of visual semiosis simultaneously, interpreting visual language functionally as a whole.

Being a very comprehensive framework, it was also adopted as the basis of analysis for this study's data as well. Its details and use are explained further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on detailing the different conceptual frameworks used in this study and synergising them to become the analytical framework to answer the research questions and fulfil the research aim as discussed in Chapter 1.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

As previously established in Section 2, diverse semiotic modes are inherently combined and co-deployed to not just enhance meaning making but to also increase the opportunity for the reception of a message in all cultural artefacts amongst its audience. As such, the framework used in this research has to also be as extensive and comprehensive to cover such diversity. It was also found that though the number of research in this field is growing at a rapid rate, research on the multimodality of the front covers of books, especially that of the chick-lit genre, was severely lacking. Having said that, there was no readily available framework that was suitable to be used in this current study.

Thus, to create a comprehensive and holistic framework to study the many facets in the data, this research drew upon three distinct concepts to analyse the front covers of chick-lit books. The research looked at all aspects of the front cover of chick-lit books; starting from its texts, followed by the composition of elements and finally the social actors found on the covers. These concepts were employed simultaneously to analyse the book covers—and all its elements—as a whole.

3.2.1 Text

3.2.1.1 Functional stage

The functional stage of a text refers to the purpose the text serves. It is a staged and goal-oriented organisation of words expressed linguistically through a functional constituent structure in the text (Eggins 1994). According to Eggins (ibid), genre analysis can be carried out by dividing a text into its functional constituents, that is, we recognise ‗stages‘ in the genre as contributing a part of the overall meaning to the text for the genre to be accomplished successfully. Analysing genre in terms of a text‘s functional constituents emphasises the different roles each stage plays in making meaning relative to the text as a whole.

Martin‘s (1985) Schematic Structure of Genre comes into play when the functional stages of the text are analysed in terms of how each element is ordered to form the genre it constitutes. As concisely defined by Paltridge (2012, p.65), genres are ―culture specific and have particular purposes, stages and linguistic features associated with them, the meanings of which need to be interpreted in relation to the cultural and social contexts in which they occur‖. By far, the functional stage, which forms the schematic structure of a text, is the most overt expression of a genre.

Through analysing the lexico-grammatical orientation of a text, the overall purpose of the text enables us to suggest the generic categories a text belongs to. According to Eggins (2004), such an analysis adds a further dimension to our understanding of how these texts are making meanings. Some examples of the obligatory functional stages [which are defining elements of a genre] found on book covers include: the book title, author‘s name, blurbs and promotional reviews.

3.2.1.2 Typeface

According to Stöckl (2005), typography represents a mode/code in its own right. Typeface in essence, refers to the visual appearance of words. It is a larger umbrella category to the more commonly-known term ‗font'. According to Bernazzani (2017, para.6), a font is ―one particular weight and style of a larger typeface". For example, Serif is a typeface while Times New Roman is a font of the Serif family. It is important to note that for the sake of this research, the term ‗typeface' is employed as it is not possible to accurately categorise each and every font type found in the data based on minute differences in their design. Moreover, there exists many outlets and services these days to even create your own individualised font or to download these fonts from the internet. As such, this research chooses not to delve into these intricacies and instead focuses only on the general umbrella categories of ‗typeface', which can be divided into four main classes (Walker, 2001; Stöckl, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2006) as seen in Table 3.1.

For the sake of the analysis, however, the research does look at how some more creative use of font adds meaning and gives dimension to the chick-lit genre. According to McWade (2003), the use of a particular typeface has as much effect on how a document is received as the content itself. This is because typefaces can create mood and atmosphere, provide visual clues about the order a document should be read in and which parts are more important than others.

Table 3.1: Types of Typeface

Typeface	Description	Examples of Font
Serif	• Short lines at the top and the bottom on each letter, also known as ‗serifs'. • Formal outlook, commonly used in formal correspondence. • Perceived as delicate, beautiful, expensive, warm and old.	• Times New Roman • Cambria • Baskerville • **Rockwell** • Georgia • Book Antiqua
Sans Serif	• An absence of short lines at the top and bottoms on the letters. • A more modern outlook compared to serif fonts. • Streamlined, clean and intuitive. • Perceived as rugged, cool, cheap and young.	• Arial • Verdana • Calibri • Century Gothic • Corbel • Tahoma
Script	• Cursive. • Mimics the fluidity of human handwriting. • Elegant outlook but informal. • Perceived as feminine, beautiful, expensive, soft, delicate, relaxed, quiet, happy, weak and warm.	• *Edwardian Script* • **Script MT Bold** • *Brush Script MT* • *Freestyle Script* • *French Script MT*
Decorative	• All other font that does not fall within the first three categories is referred to as decorative font. • They are custom creations; usually very novel, interesting and creative. • More unusual and special than practical. • Meant to attract immediate attention and used only in small doses. • Perceived differently depending on the font.	• CASTELLAR • ALGERIAN • Curlz MT • **Snap ITC** • Gigi

Walker (2001) concurs, stating that the selection of a typeface depends solely on its aesthetic virtues as typefaces are considered the fundamental element which contributes to the core of the audience's experience when reading a text. Each element in a typeface design is important because every parameter applied has a great psychological impact on the audience. An example is the use of typefaces in a restaurant menu. According to Gendelman (2015), many restaurants use complex and difficult-to-read typefaces on their menus to impress their patrons. The use of complex typefaces gives the readers the impression that a great deal of effort and skill was involved in the product being described. An arduous typeface, therefore, makes the audience believes that what is being sold takes a great deal of effort to create and justifies its high price.

The use of a typeface also appeals to the senses of the audience. A recent TED talk from designer Sarah Hyndman (2014), who appropriately named her talk ‗Type Tasting', revealed that people associate fonts with smell and taste. According to Gendelman (2015), the Serif font is associated to plain and neutral tastes, Sans Serif to sweet tastes, Script to flowery and delicate scents and jagged, rough typefaces to salty and sour tastes and odours. His example was clear: the use of the feminine, soft, curly and fluid Script typeface for perfume brands instead of gasoline. As concisely put by Mayer (2010), the choice of typefaces has to be expressive yet appropriate.

Semiotically speaking, a text in itself contains both visual and verbal rhetorics. The first aspect of the conceptual framework, as discussed in Section 3.2.1.1 deals with the verbal rhetoric of a text; that is, the actual textual information which affects the ability of the reader to understand the

contents of the text. Analysing the typeface of the text, on the other hand, deals with the visual rhetoric of a text; that is, the visual elements which affects the overall impression of the document. According to Bulat (2012), visual elements in the text create and activate their own semantic representations, therefore giving a ―wider explanation of what is being presented in the text or present the meaning that is separate from what the text is about" (para.7). Furthermore, the visual rhetoric also plays a role in how the audience perceives the tone of the artefact, having affected the author's voice and credibility.

In addition, typefaces also play a major role in the sense of semantic memory. Different typefaces, as previously discussed, generate meaning in an audience, which in turn gets linked to the semantic memory of each person. When a person sees a specific typeface or font, previous experiences activates [be it memories or information] and if the current experience is consistent with the previous experience, the perception of the typeface gets reinforced. Once again, this enhances meaning making strongly yet subtly.

3.2.1.3 Colour

Colour, like typefaces, is a multifunctional semiotic resource used in the making of signs. An instant emotional connection to the ambience of the text can be established via one's choice of colour. This is because colours predispose us to specific sensations and has the ability to create an emotional response, be it stimulating, calming or hostile. This characteristic also applies to the cover of a book. We usually associate certain tones and hues with a particular literary genre: dark, sombre and

lugubrious for a mystery; bright, vivid and colourful for children's literature (UNESCO Publishing, 2014).

It is a known fact that colour _means' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002) but its meaning and symbolism changes from country to country, and from culture to culture. As the data of this research comes from Western origins, the meaning of colours was analysed from a Western perspective and therefore draws its meanings from Western culture. The framework to analyse colour usage in this study was adapted from van Leeuwen (2011):

Table 3.2: Colours and Their Meanings

Colour	Meaning	Examples
Red	Energy, passion, action, ambition, determination, war, danger, strength, power, courage, anger, desire, love and sexual passion.	
Orange	Social communication, optimism, enthusiasm, fascination, happiness, creativity, vitality, superficiality, attraction, success, encouragement, fun, friendly and stimulation.	
Yellow	Mental intellect, logic, optimism, cheerfulness, impatience, cowardice, joy, happiness, energy, confidence, playfulness, honour and loyalty.	

Table 3.2 continued

Colour	Meaning	Examples
Green	Growth, harmony, freshness, money, safety, balance, self-reliance, jealousy, greed, hope, possessiveness, nature, care and fertility.	
Blue	Security, honesty, trustworthiness, calm, peace, loyalty, integrity, conservatism, frigidity, depth, trust, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, tranquillity, piety, sincerity, knowledge, power, serenity, healing and seriousness.	
Purple	Royalty, power, nobility, luxury, ambition, wealth, extravagance, wisdom, dignity, independence, creativity, mystery, magic, imagination, individuality, immaturity, nostalgia and impracticality.	
Black	Hidden, secretive, the unknown, mystery, power, elegance, formality, death, evil, mystery, authority, grief, prestige and luxury.	

Table 3.2 continued

Colour	Meaning	Examples
White	Light, goodness, innocence, purity, perfection, safety, cleanliness, faith, simplicity and wholeness.	
Brown	Friendly yet serious, down-to-earth, secure, protection, comfort, material wealth, earthy, home, outdoors, reliability, endurance, stability, simplicity, and nature.	
Grey	Safety, reliability, intelligence, melancholy, modesty, dignity, maturity, soundness, functionality, old age, grief, compromise fluidity, emotional, sensitive and mystery.	
Pink	Unconditional love, nurturing, immature, silly, girlish, romantic, friendship, feminine and passiveness.	

On one hand, the collocation between meaning and colour seems obvious, natural and almost innate; while on the other hand, it seems idiosyncratic, unpredictable and anarchic. In either case, however, there are regularities, and they arise from the interests of the sign-makers. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, p.345):

―Colour is a semiotic resource like others: regular, with signs that are motivated in their constitution by the interests of the makers of the signs, and not at all arbitrary or anarchic. The task is then to understand the differential motivations and interests of sign-makers in the different groups, be they small or large, local or global."

Kress and van Leeuwen (ibid) drew their theory on the _grammar' of colour from Halliday's 1978 study on social semiotics based on his systemic functional linguistic approach to language. It was found that colour fulfils all three metafunctions simultaneously: the ideational metafunction [constructing representations of the world], the interpersonal metafunction [enacting interactions by social purpose and social relations] and the textual metafunction [assembling communicative acts into larger wholes to form communicative events and texts that fulfil certain social purposes].

Beginning with the ideational metafunction, colours are used to denote specific people, places and things. A simple yet clear example would be the colour of flags which denote countries and the use of a signature colour in the logo of a company. On maps, different colours are used to denote different landscapes like rivers, roads, forests and land. In the sense of uniforms, colour serves to differentiate rank. On book covers, colours denote which genre a book belongs to, its tone and plot theme.

The interpersonal metafunction can also be achieved via the use of colour. Similar to how language enables us to realise speech acts, colour allows us to realise ―colour acts" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002, p.348). In other words, colour is used to _do' things to and for each other. For example, the use of pastel blue on walls to promote calmness and to reduce

stress levels, the use of bright and bold colours like red, yellow and orange to warn against hazards and obstructions, and the use of colour in documents to highlight certain key points to its intended audience.

Last but not least, colour fulfils its textual metafunction in how it creates cohesion among separate elements to become a whole. In the case of buildings, colour schemes are chosen carefully so as to distinguish one room from another while also creating unity and harmony as a whole. In a text like a book cover, textual cohesion can be attained by colour coordination and the use of colour schemes.
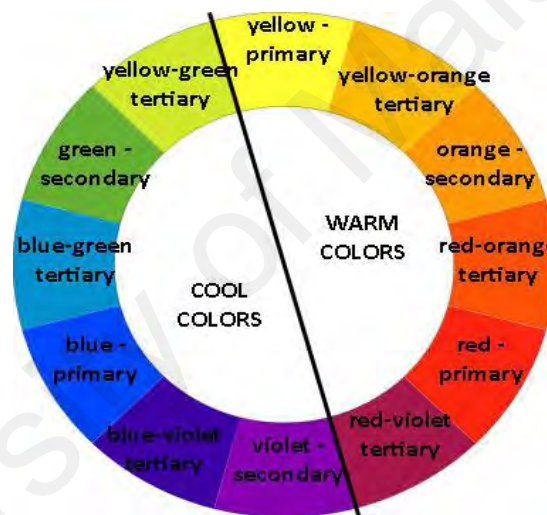
Figure 3.1: Colour Chart

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), there are five elementary colours [black, white, yellow, red and blue] from which all other colours are mixed. Red, yellow and blue form the three primary colours while black and white add value as to its shade, be it light or dark. The theory on colours also specifies groupings and ̲coordination‘ of colours to create contrast or harmony, as seen in Table 3.3 (adapted from Hard and Sivik, 2001) below:

Table 3.3: Colour Coordination

Colour Coordination Type	Explanation	Example
Complementary	Complementary colours are found on exact opposite sides of the colour wheel. These colours are highly contrasting and look very bold and vibrant combined. They draw attention and stand out.	
Analogous	Analogue colours are colours from the same spectrum, next to each other on the colour wheel. These combinations match well and exude a sense of serenity and harmony.	
Triadic	Triadic colours are colours that are found equidistant on the colour wheel. These combinations are more unusual and unconventional while still harmonious.	
Split Complementary	Split complementary colours bring about a more calm, toned down look than a combination of complementary colours, but still giving a significant impact. In addition to the base colour, it uses the two colours adjacent to its complement.	
Tetradic	The tetradic [or also known as ‗Rectangle‘] colour scheme uses four colours arranged into two complementary pairs. It offers a myriad of possible combinations and variations in colour choice.	
Square	The square colour scheme is similar to the rectangle, but with all four colours spaced evenly around the colour circle.	

In addition to meaning, colours also possess ‗values‘. Kandinsky (1977) divides a colour‘s value into two categories: direct value, which is the colour‘s actual physical effect on its audience, and, associative value, which is the symbolic, connotative and emotive value of colour. Like Kandinsky, Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, p.355) also distinguishes two types of values in colour which they term ‗affordances‘:

‗First, there is association, or provenance – the question of ‗where the colour comes from, where it has been culturally and historically‘, ‗where we have seen it before‘. This ‗where‘ may be a certain substance, a certain kind of object, the dress of a certain kind of person, a period or a region, or all and more of these, and it is clear that any colour allows many such associations. The second type of affordance is the distinctive features of colour. These distinctive features indicate a visual value on a range of scales. One such is the scale that runs from light to dark, another the scale that runs from saturated to desaturated, from high energy to low energy, and so on. We see these features not as merely distinctive, as merely serving to distinguish different colours from each other, but also as meaning potentials. Any specific instance of a colour can be analysed as a combination of specific values on each of these scales – and hence also as a complex and composite meaning potential."

The ‗distinctive features‘ Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) discuss are listed below:

a) Value. The scale to measure value is the grey scale, ranging from maximally light [white] to maximally dark [black].

b) Saturation. The scale looks at the intensity of a colour, from a densely saturated or _pure' manifestation of a colour to its softest, most pale and dull manifestation, and ultimately, to a complete desaturated manifestation of black and white. Its key affordance is its ability to express _emotive temperatures'. High saturation brings about a sense of positivity, strength, exuberance, adventure, abundance but also can be seen as vulgar and garish. Low saturation is soft, subtle and tender, but also cold, moody, brooding, deprived and repressed.

c) Purity. The scale of purity ranges from that of maximally pure to maximally hybridised. As previously discussed, three primary colours exist but can be mixed to form a system of additional colours. Colours with commonly used single names, such as _brown', _pink' and _orange' are considered to be pure, while other colours which require a more special name in place for their actual colour mix like _cyan', which is a green-blue composite, would be considered a hybrid. While pure colours are seen as bold and simplistic, they are also regarded with less sophistication and modernity.

d) Modulation. The scale runs from a fully modulated colour, complete with shades and tints as seen in life-like paintings, to a flat, one-dimensional colour as seen in comic book strips. Modulation is closely related to modality in which it does justice to the rich and raw texture of real colour while flat colours are simple and generic. Thus, the truth of flat colour is an abstract truth, and the truth of modulated colour is naturalistic and perceptual truth.

e) Differentiation. The differentiation scale measures the diversity of a colour palette, ranging from a monochrome to a myriad of colours. Its

semiotic affordance lies in its ability to be diverse and exuberant, where high differentiation gives a sense of adventurousness while low differentiation gives a sense of timidity.

3.2.2 Composition

3.2.2.1 Information Value

Information value refers to the concept that the values each element in a text holds is subject to its spatial organisation into _zones'. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), there are six significant zones in a text; they are: top, bottom, left, right, centre and margin. Once again, the data was analysed based on Western perceptions of spatial values as the data itself comes from Western origins.
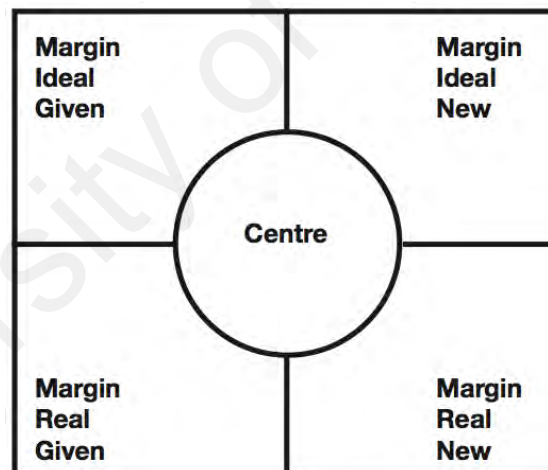
Figure 3.2: The Visual Space and Its Information Values

On the horizontal axis, the distinction between left and right is perceived as a source of meaning and indicates the relevance of information for the audience in a particular context. Elements placed on the left side of the text are considered to be _given' information already known to the audience. Elements on the right, however, are considered to be _new'

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information that the text is trying to get across. As an image moves in meaning from left to right, it portrays something the viewer is already familiar with and has established as true but shifts to something that the viewer has learnt or will come to conclude based on the inner meaning of what is represented in the shift. A clear example of this is in makeover and weight loss advertisements where the ‗before' picture is placed on the left, and the ‗after' picture is placed on the right. To put it simply, elements on the left are perceived as information that is self-evident and commonly known facts; while elements on the right are perceived as information that is contestable which may oppose the established information on the left zone. Throughout various texts and contexts, the left zone is frequently associated with ‗general', ‗past' and ‗recoverable' information; while the right zone is linked to ‗specific', ‗present' and ‗unrecoverable' information (van Leeuwen, 2005; Halliday, 1985).

On the vertical axis, elements are placed from top to bottom, graduating from general on top to more specific at the bottom (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; Holsanova, Rahm and Holmqvist, 2006). Elements placed on the top part of the text are considered to be ‗ideal' information presented to the audience idealistically and generally. Elements on the bottom, however, are considered to be ‗real' information containing factual details, documented evidence and practical consequences. This ‗ideal' and ‗real' relationship that flows from top to bottom are often used in advertisements and promotions where the ideal ‗promise' is given first before the detailed depiction of the ‗product' is presented. In this way, the viewer is first presented with the ideal, making its impression and experience dominant, attracting them to read further below where more

details are provided. It brings about an emotive response before providing a practical knowledge such as the FAQs, terms and conditions and contact details.

Finally, is the centre of the text where a circle of subordinates surrounds the central figure. The central position is the nucleus of information, which in turn, provides the margins that surrounds the text with a common meaning or purpose. The centre can either be centrally important, or it can act as a mitigating factor that mediates, links and bridges the differences along both the horizontal and vertical axes. The margins, on the other hand, are subservient.

3.2.2.2 Salience

Salience refers to the degree of which elements are given more prominence as compared to other elements in the same text based on visual cues. The elements that are given more salience are seen as more important and therefore hold higher value. This is because elements which are more prominent capture the audience's attention first and are also given more attention in general. They are also the main idea of the text, while the less prominent elements serve to support them.

However, it is interesting to note that the concept of salience is comparable to the two sides of the same coin. An element cannot be prominent if other elements are equally prominent within the same text. Thus, salience is a play of degree and relativity between and among different visual aspects.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), elements are made more obvious through a number a ways:

a) Size. Elements that are presented as larger in size relative to other elements are more salient because the elements are easier to see and take up a wider space compared to smaller, less significant elements. As a result, they catch attention easily and become the focal point of an artefact.

b) Colour. Colours that are bold, saturated, bright and vibrant are more salient than colours that are soft, dull and muted as they are more obvious and eye-catching. Human visual attention responds first, to contrast in colour and light, then, to the emotional and cultural value of a specific colour (Vazquez, et al., 2010). Frey, et al. (2011) found that the more saturated an element is in comparison to its surroundings, the more quickly it is noticed. Thus, the focus is not just on the saturation and level of pigmentation of the colour of an element, but also on the saturation of the colour of its surroundings and the contrast of it both.

c) Tonal contrast. The use of highly contrasting colour creates greater salience. The jarring differentiation of colours, be it between and among elements or between an element and its background, determines its ability to standout and attract attention.

d) Sharpness and focus. Objects that are pronounced are more prominent than blurred or fuzzy outlying elements. Blurred, fuzzy and indistinct elements in an image dissolve into the background and become indiscernible while elements that are sharp, crisp and clear stand out in an image as they are easily seen and identified by viewers. Thus, salience can be achieved by giving objects in an image sharp focus, or

in contrast, blurring out background elements to create a focal contrast.

e) Foregrounding. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), elements that are placed in central positions where they stand in front of other objects are more obvious than elements that are placed in corner positions or behind other objects. In overlapping elements, objects that overlap other objects are also more prominent than the elements they overlap simply because they are in front and unobstructed. Moreover, elements that are placed in the background are commonly seen as supporting the more important and crucial elements that are placed in the foreground, providing deeper meaning to the text rather than communicating the main idea to its audience.

f) Placement in visual field. Relating to visual ‗weight‘, elements are judged on how their composition is balanced in the field. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), elements not only become ‗heavier‘ as they are moved towards the top, but also appear ‗heavier‘ the further they are moved towards the left, due to an asymmetry in the visual field. In other words, it is the perception of balance or stability created by the balancing centre. This ‗centre‘ being discussed is the area which contains or projects the central message of the text (Royce, 1999).

g) Cultural factors. The use of identifiable objects such as human figures, cultural and religious symbols, landmarks and so on are much more salient than abstract and obscure objects.

3.2.2.3 Framing

Framing refers to the degree to which elements are connected or disconnected in a text. The concept of framing is a principle in which an element is given internal unity and coherence, or on the opposite end, is marked as distinct from other elements in the same artefact (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). Framing brings about a sense that disconnected elements should be read as separate and independent, belonging to different groups in a text. It also creates a contrast in meaning. Connected elements, on the other hand, are read as belonging together within the same group. They are seen as continuous and complementary whereby they flow without disruption or breaks in the text. Thus, framing unitises and individuates while a lack of framing suggests a group identity to the objects.

To create this unity and distinction, domains are established and defined using different techniques of framing. These techniques determine how elements in an artefact are read: connected, or disconnected; together or separate; grouped or independent; complementary or contrasting. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the [dis]continuity in a text may be achieved explicitly or implicitly through many different methods known as ‗framing devices':

a) Frame lines. Frame lines are a very explicit form of framing whereby lines, boundaries, boxes, grids and tables are used to separate elements. The thicker and bolder the frames, the more segregated the elements.

b) Colour. The use of different hues, tones and shades is a subtle yet significant and effective way of framing. The discontinuity of colour

sets elements apart. Elements that are presented in the same colour are seen as belonging to the same group while elements that are presented in contrasting colours are seen as unrelated and detached. Elements may also be presented in the same colour but in different shades, for example dark and light blue, to show different elements within similar themes.

c) Vectors. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state that all images are either narrative [composed of action, change and transition] or conceptual [static, stable and timeless concepts]. Narrative processes are further divided into action processes and reactional processes. In action processes, the vector emanates from the ‚actor' and can be divided even further into transactional [‚goals' are achieved through ‚vectors'] and non-transactional [one-directional ‚vectors' from ‚actors' that do not serve to achieve ‚goals']. In reactional processes, the vector does not emanate from a physical body part or tool but from eyelines of ‚reactors' towards a ‚phenomenon'. These processes can also be transactional [image contains both ‚reactor' and ‚phenomenon'] and non-transactional [‚reactor' looking at object outside the frame of the image].

d) Empty spaces. Though it may seem natural and obvious to have spaces between objects, gaps between elements create a discontinuity in the text. The larger the gap, the greater the disconnect.

e) Visual shape. Elements that share similar forms are often linked to one another while elements with different shapes are of a different group. The visual form of an object can range from its shape to a text's typeface.

3.2.3 Social Actors

In every semiotic act, interactive participants, or better known as ‗represented participants' [RP], are involved. These participants, who speak, listen, write, read, and even make or view images are called ‗Social Actors' (van Leeuwen, 2008). They are the subject of the communication. RPs are often used to create interpersonal meaning in a text. They tell a story about actions among all the participants involved in the production and viewing of an image, be it the creator of the image, the viewer, or the RP themselves. In this research, the scope of the analysis on the RP encompasses not only human figures, but also looks at inanimate objects as RPs as well. This is because—as mentioned in Section 2.3.3—RPs are found in both narrative processes where they are presented as doing something to or for each other; and in conceptual processes in which they are presented in a general, stable, and timeless fashion.

RPs are created to engage the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) in three main ways:

3.2.3.1 Gaze

Some images show the RP looking directly at the audience while others do not. This phatic function of the RP's gaze is to bring the audience into the RP's communicative realm. According to Nöth (1995), while gazes convey information about the addresser, the message focuses on the addressee. Gazes are therefore transactional. They select and give importance to people, or, they can be used to ignore and make objects marginal. They are able to include or exclude elements from their world. This form of eye contact established between the RP and the audience can either be ‗directed' or ‗non-directed', which in turn, creates engagement or lack thereof (Jewitt, 2009).

Following Halliday (1985), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) referred to images in which the RP makes direct eye contact as ‗demand‘ images where the RP addresses and engages the audience directly. The direct eye contact ‗acts on‘ an object to bring them into the realm of attention and forms a sort of imaginary relation with them. In contrast, images also contain RPs that do not make direct eye contact with their audience with no focus on a visual goal. Instead, the RPs become the object of the audience‘s gaze. Following Halliday (1985), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.119), this image is an image of ‗offer‘ where the RPs are offered to the viewers as ―items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case". Both the ‗demand‘ and ‗offer‘ gaze connect the viewer and the RP through vectors on a formal as well as an imaginary level (Esmat Babaii and Mahmood Reza Atai, 2016).

Of course, it is important to note that RPs in the form of inanimate objects do not possess eyes, and therefore have no eyelines and gazes; which makes this section of analysis inapplicable to these said RPs.

3.2.3.2 Social Distance

As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.130) note, ―in everyday interaction, social relations determine the distance [literally and figuratively] we keep from one another". Differing relationships and varying levels of intimacy determine the distance we keep from the people around us. Similarly, different interpersonal relations between the audience members and the RPs can be implied by the social distance between the RP on the book covers and audience, realised through the use frame sizes in the image.

To help classify these distances, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adopt a scheme from Edward Hall (1966) and borrow from the language of film and television. These distances are divided into six categories:

Table 3.4: Categories of Social Distance

Social Distance Hall (1966: 110-120)	Field of Vision Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 125)	Size of Frame Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 124)
Intimate	Head and face	Very close shot
Close personal	Head and shoulders	Close shot
Far personal	Waist up	Medium close shot
Close social	Whole figure	Medium long shot
Far social	Whole figure with space	Long shot
Public distance	Torsos of 4-5 people	Very long shot

As summarised in Table 3.4, a close shot creates and reflects intimacy between the audience and the RP, which in turn, allows audience members to feel like the RP is _one of us' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). A long shot, on the other hand, creates impersonality and shows the RP as strangers to the audience. To put it simply, the closer the shot, the more intimate the relationship while the longer the shot, the more detached and impersonal the relationship.

3.2.3.3 Perspective

Symbolic social and interactive relations between the audience and RPs are also presented through the use of angling or _perspective'. Perspective is achieved through two types angling: horizontal and vertical.

The horizontal angle denotes the degree of involvement or detachment between the RP and the audience (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). It is a function of the relationship between the frontal plane of the viewers and

the RP, that is, the two can either be aligned with one another or diverged from one another. The former, known as the frontal angle, develops a stronger involvement with the viewer, giving the viewer a sense of being ‗one of us'. The latter, known as the oblique angle, overtly turns RPs away from viewers, giving the viewer a sense of disengagement and being ‗one of them'. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.143) explain it in the following terms: The frontal angle says, as it were, ―What you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with." The oblique angle says, ―What you see here is not part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with." In essence, through the frontal angle, viewers are directly confronted with what is in the picture while through oblique angle, viewers literally and figuratively remain on the sidelines; they are detached from who or what they see.

The vertical angle denotes the degree of power between the RP and the audience. There are three categories to the vertical angle: high, medium and low. The use of varying angles exerts ―imaginary symbolic power" (Esmat Babaii and Mahmood Reza Atai, 2016, p.10) between the interactants. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), high angle shots in which the RP is looking down onto the audience denotes a higher degree of symbolic power of the RP compared to the viewer. On the other hand, if the RP is seen in a low angle shot in which the RP is looking up at the audience, the audience has a higher degree of symbolic power over the RP. Finally, if the RP is at a medium or eye-level angle to the viewer, then there is a relation of symbolic equality and there is no power difference involved. Table 3.5 below summarises the categories of perspective:

Table 3.5: Categories of Perspective

Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
Oblique angle: A sense of detachment between RP and viewer.	High angle: RP looking down on audience has more power than the viewer.
	Medium angle: RP looking horizontally at the audience has equal power as the viewer.
Frontal angle: Stronger involvement between RP and viewer.	Low angle: RP looking up at the audience has less power than the viewer.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The varying and diverse modes used in the making of a book cover is both complex and intricate, to say the least. From the use of texts to the subtle choice of colour; the placement of elements on the book cover and the angling of RPs; there are a multitude of factors to consider to give this research a just and complete analysis to achieve substantial and reliable results.

Thus, three different conceptual frameworks were combined and used holistically. Colour, for instance, though used in the analysis of text, is also a prominent feature in salience. The placement of elements, such as texts, is a form of information value. Therefore, the framework used in this research overlaps and is interwoven between each other to create a more comprehensive and detailed analysis.

As a book cover consists of not just textual, but also visual modes, the analytical framework had to address all these aspects as well. Thus, the first conceptual framework looked at the textual features of the book. The second conceptual framework studied the compositional aspect of the data and how the elements were placed. The final conceptual framework looked at the social actors of the covers and their interaction with the audience.

Below is a summary of the three conceptual frameworks combined to form the analytical framework of this study:
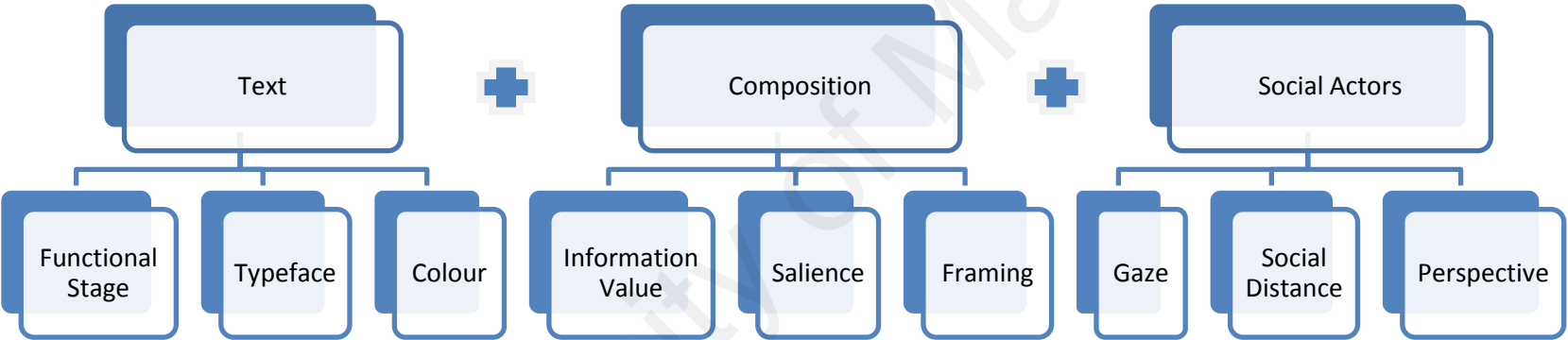
Figure 3.3: Analytical Framework

From the SFL and visual grammar perspective, these three concepts were chosen as they fulfil the three metafunctions of a text: ideational/representational, interpersonal/interactional and textual/compositional [refer Table 2.2].

3.4 Data Types

As this research chose to look at the multimodality on the front covers of books from the chick-lit genre, the data of this study comes in the form of twelve front covers of chick-lit storybooks. Kearns (2010) stresses that the cover design is the single most important element of a book as a book is judged, first and foremost, by its cover. In a mass of 70,000 books being published every year, a book cover has to trigger an instant response among its audience. A well-designed book cover also helps its author secure positive reviews, establish credibility, win awards and generate higher sales. According Peri-Poloni-Gabriel in Kearns (2010, para.3):

‒Eight seconds...this is the time a normal person spends on a book cover before either looking further or going on. That is the time you have to typographically and visually communicate your book. This is even more critical in the online marketplace where the covers are just thumbnails to begin with. The key factors in a cover are readability, concept, genre appropriateness, overall impact and wow factor."

Thus, book covers have to be designed compellingly as they have a very limited amount of time to make an impact. Semiotically speaking, book covers make an interesting choice of data as they are the reader's first contact with the book and play dual roles of form and function: they must look appealing and inviting to attract the viewers for commercial purposes while also being informative and concise regarding its subject matter. Therefore, it can be said that the modes found on a book cover has to speak to its audience in a subtle yet effective way.

In this study, a total of four covers were taken from three different chick-lit authors for analysis, totalling up to twelve covers. For comparison purposes, the four covers taken from each author consisted of two different cover prints of the same book title. The authors and the books are listed in the table below while the reason for choosing them is discussed further in Section 3.5. Although each book of the same title shares the same publisher, they each have a different cover due to the different editions and year of publishing. Further description of the books, their covers and how they were chosen are discussed in the subsection below.

Table 3.6: Authors and Books

Authors	Book Titles	
Sophie Kinsella	Twenties Girl	Confessions of a Shopaholic
Meg Cabot	Queen of Babble	The Princess Diaries
Lauren Weisberger	Everyone Worth Knowing	The Devil Wears Prada

3.5 Data Collection

In the initial stages of data collection, the researcher first set out to create a fair and unbiased choice of data. As previously established in Section 1.5, Western chick-lit is by far the most widespread and universal type of chick-lit in the literary realm. Thus, the choice of authors in this research was based on this criterion. Moreover, based on the working definition this study has on chick-lit, only books written by female authors were taken into consideration. The three authors chosen were: Sophie Kinsella [born Madeleine Sophie Wickham], an English author; Meg Cabot [born Meggin Patricia Cabot], an American author; and Lauren Weisberger, also an American. Based on their consecutive success on their work, chicklitclub.com also announced these three authors as their top 15 Ultimate Chick-Lit Authors in 2010;

with Sophie Kinsella coming in second, Meg Cabot at 12, and Lauren Weiberger at 13. Each of these three women also has one of their published books turned into a film, thus giving them equal commercial popularity.

As for the selection of book cover titles, this study chose to take one book-turned-movie, while another random book cover from each author. For the sake of the research, only books [and book covers] published within the past fifteen years [2001-2016] were taken as study data to ensure that the data was not out-dated.

Upon establishing the data set, the books were ordered and purchased over a period of two months from MPH Bookstore, Mid Valley Megamall. The visuals of the book covers can be found in Appendix A while the plot summary of each title can be found in Appendix B to G.

3.6 Data Analysis

This study utilised the qualitative research methodology of thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme is a level of patterned response or meaning from the data that is related to the research questions at hand which provides an accurate understanding of the _big picture'. Simply put, a thematic analysis identifies, discovers, analyses and records patters [or themes] within the data (Creswell, 2009). According to Guest (2012), analysing data thematically emphasises pinpointing, examining and recording patterns [or themes] in the data, and in turn, organises and describes the data set in rich detail. These themes across the data are fundamental to understand a phenomenon and become the categories of analysis.

Boyatzis (1998) divides thematic identification into two levels: semantic and latent. Semantic themes focus on the explicit and surface meanings of the data without going too far in depth. This form of analysis usually results in a loss of complexity and missed-out nuances. It does, however, provide a rich description of the entire data set. On the other hand, latent themes, which is the level used in this

research, focuses on underlying ideas, patterns and assumptions. This form of analysis targets specific areas in the data set and produces an in-depth outlook to the data.

The reason why thematic analysis, above all other methodologies, was chosen in this study is due to the fact that this methodology is able to capture the intricacies of meaning within a set of data. There are also many other advantages to using thematic analysis, mainly in its flexibility. In more novel fields of research where comprehensive theories are not readily available for studies such as this one to be grounded in, thematic analysis allows theoretical freedom: multiple theories can be applied across various epistemologies which results in a rich, detailed yet complex account of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moreover, thematic analysis also allows the research range to go past individual experiences (Guest, 2012). Themes emerge naturally and capture nuances from the data. On the other hand, the absence of clear and concise principles around thematic analysis also means that _anything goes' in some instances (Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter, 2002). Another area of concern is in the discovery and distinction of themes and codes (Charmaz, 1988). As previously pointed out in Section 3.3, there are a few overlapping themes to consider; like the use of colour in texts, the establishment of salience, to manifest connectedness or lack thereof in framing as well as to set the tone of the book.

To maximise the benefits of thematic analysis and to minimise any discrepancies, the analysis in this research was performed through the process of coding in six phases in order to create established and meaningful patterns. These phases, taken from Braun and Clarke (2006) can be seen in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Phases of Thematic Analysis

	Phase	Explanation
1	Familiarisation with data	Immerse oneself in the data by reading and re-reading to become familiar with what the data entails, searching for meanings and paying specific attention to patterns that occur.
2	Generation of initial codes	Codes, which are the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998) are generated by noticing patterns and collapsing the data into labels.
3	Searching for themes	Codes are combined into overarching themes that accurately depict the data.
4	Reviewing themes	After devising a set of candidate themes, the themes are further refined to produce the final set. This may involve discarding, collapsing or even separating potential themes.
5	Defining and naming themes	Having a satisfactory thematic map of the data, the researcher then identifies and defines the essence of what each theme is about and determines which aspects of the data the theme captures.
6	Producing the final report	Upon working out a full set of themes, a report is written based on the data analysis. The report should consist of concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting accounts of the data, within and across themes.

The process of thematic analysis, like most research methods, can occur in two main methods: an inductive, ‚bottom up' way, or, a deductive, ‚top down' way (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Approaching an analysis inductively means that the themes identified are strongly linked to the data. The coding process occurs without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing model or frame, but rather allowing assumptions to be data-driven. Conversely, approaching an analysis deductively means that the themes identified are strongly linked to the researcher's theoretical or analytical interest in the area and is therefore more analytical and theory-driven. The coding process involves categorising data into pre-determined frames, which in turn, tends to limit the descriptiveness of the analysis. This research chose to take on a

deductive approach as the purpose of the research was not so much to produce a framework but rather to use a number of frameworks to identify a recurring pattern in the data.

Using thematic analysis and by employing the analytical framework previously discussed in this chapter, the twelve front covers were first coded and then thematically categorised into nine divisions based on three separate theoretical frameworks, as seen in Table 3.8 below. In order to refer to each book cover easily, the book covers were given a code of A1 to A12 [refer to Appendix A]. The research was carried out to answer the two research questions initially posed in the first chapter of this dissertation:

3.6.1 Features of the Front Covers of Chick-Lit Books

The first research question of this study focuses purely on the different modes found on the front cover of chick-lit books. Thus, in order to address the first research question, this study analysed the textual and visual features of the twelve front book covers based on the analytical framework as discussed in Section 3.2 and summarised in Section 3.3.

Table 3.8: Data Themes

Themes	
Text	1) Functional Stage
	2) Typeface
	3) Colour
Composition	4) Information Value
	5) Salience
	6) Framing
Social Actors	7) Gaze
	8) Social Distance
	9) Perspective

The data was divided into themes, based on the three distinct conceptual frameworks, as seen in Table 3.8.

3.6.2 The Representation of the Chick-Lit Genre through Multimodality

The second research question of this study aims to address the representation of the chick-lit genre through the modes that are found when answering the first research question.

This is done through thematically analysing the modes found on chick-lit book covers both textually and visually. The research then focuses on the homogenous pattern[s] found among and across the twelve book covers. Recurring themes in the data are analysed for their semiotic meanings and how they play a role in the identification and representation of the chick-lit genre.

3.7 Summary

This chapter ends with the establishment of an analytical framework which is comprehensive and extensive enough to study both the textual and visual aspects of a book cover. Three separate conceptual frameworks were drawn to study the representational, interactional and compositional meanings in an artefact.

The synergised framework is used to analyse the data of this study and to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the dissertation. Chapter 4 details and discusses these findings.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the analyses of the data corpus and reports the findings of this study in detail. It also addresses the patterns in the data and answers the research questions posed in Chapter 1 of this study.

The outline of this chapter follows the stages listed in the analytical framework seen in Figure 3.3 and established in Section 3.3. It first seeks to understand and identify the different modes found on chick-lit book covers. These findings answer the first research question and can be found in Sections 4.2 to 4.4.

Following that, Section 4.5 discusses the patterns found in the data and relates the findings on the use of modes in the representation of the chick-lit genre thus answering the second research question.

4.2 Text

This section analyses the textual features found on the book covers in the data set. It looks at the functional stages of the text, the typefaces of the text as well as the colour of the text and its relation to the colour of other elements on the cover such as the background.

4.2.1 Functional stage

From the analysis of the twelve book covers, a total of seven functional stages were found in the texts. They, in no particular order, are:
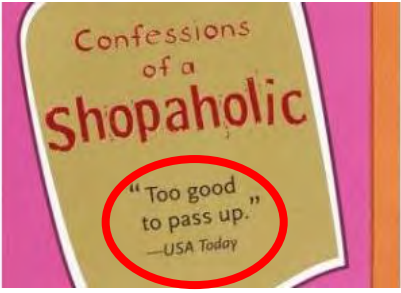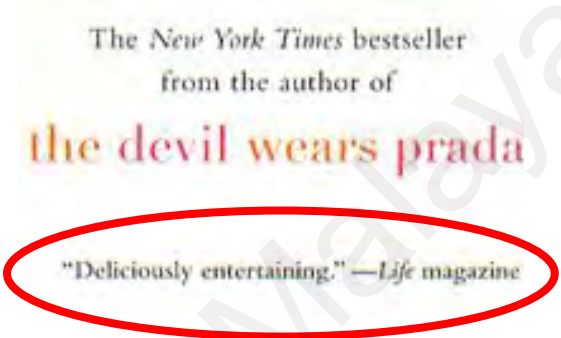
Table 4.1: The Functional Stages

	Stage	Function
1	Author's name	To show authorship of the book.
2	Book title	Name and title of the book.
3	Blurb	A short description of the book, written for promotional purposes.
4	Commercial reference	References made to other more famous works by the same author to gain greater recognition and popularity.
5	Tagline	A short but memorable phrase that has a dramatic effect to sum up the tone and premise of the book.
6	Book category	The type of book the literary work falls under.
7	Accolades	Acknowledgement or merit the book or author received to add credit.
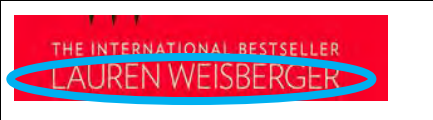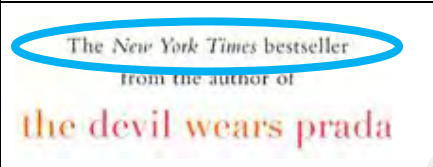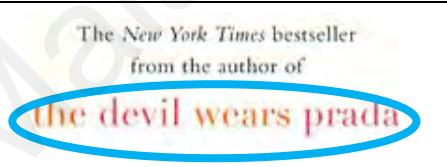
Based on the initial coding of the different functional stages of the texts found on the front covers of chick-lit books, it was found that three stages had somewhat similar functions: The ‗blurb', ‗commercial reference' and ‗accolades' stages were all used for promotional purposes of the book but each had a discrete difference in their features. This research made a clear distinction between these three functional stages to avoid any overlap of analysis by clearly defining what each stage entailed. ‗Blurb' referred to the praise the book received from an external source, directly quoted on the cover which describes the book in a light and positive manner. Some examples found are seen in Table 4.2 below. These blurbs on the book covers link the book to other text sources, making it more reliable and substantial.

Table 4.2: Chick-Lit Book Cover Blurbs

Data	Example
A4	
A10	

On the other hand, ‗accolades' refer to the merits, acknowledgement, awards or prizes the book and its author have obtained. ‗Accolade' is different from ‗commercial references' in the sense that ‗commercial references' deal with texts that mention the accolades the author received for other [more successful and popular] works so as to add merit to the current book at hand. ‗Commercial references' also encompass texts that mention other commercial outlets of the book, like a book-turn-movie. Simply put, ‗accolades' do not draw references from other sources, while ‗commercial references' link the current text to other pre-existing texts and artefacts. Table 4.3 compares examples of both functional stages found in the data.

Table 4.3: Chick-Lit Book Cover Accolades vs. Commercial References

Example			
Accolades		**Commercial References**	
A9	THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER	A1	#1 *New York Times* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC*
A11	The Phenomenal *New York Times* Bestseller	A5	NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE
A12	THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER LAUREN WEISBERGER	A9	From the bestselling author of THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
A10	The *New York Times* bestseller from the author of the devil wears prada	A10	The *New York Times* bestseller from the author of the devil wears prada

Although half of the data in this research consisted of books turned into movies, only one cover, A5, made a commercial reference to the movie made based on the book. It is also very common for book-turn-movies to feature the movie's lead on the cover of the book to garner more publicity and instant recognition; examples include Mandy Moore on ‗A Walk to Remember', Rachel McAdams on ‗The Notebook', Emma Watsons on ‗The Perks of Being a Wallflower', Viola Davies on ‗The Help', Shailene Woodley on ‗The Fault in Our Stars' and most recently Cara Delevingne on ‗Paper Towns' as well as Emilia Clarke on ‗Me Before You'. But this was not the case with the books in this data pool. It is important to note, however, that actress Isla Fisher did grace the cover of one ‗Confessions of a Shopaholic' print edition, though that book cover was not part of this research's data.

Victoria Ahearn, from the Canadian Press (2013), reports that mentioning a movie tie-in on a book cover can drive sales of a book as the reader's attention is instantly drawn to a familiar and famous face. In an interview with Ahearn, Bahram Olfati, vice-president of procurement for books at Indigo Books & Music Inc., confirmed this, saying that ―sales go through the roof, especially if the movie is a blockbuster" (para.18). In another interview with Ahearn, David Korinetz, who runs the book distribution company Red Tuque Books in Penticton, B.C., agreed but added that a celebrity figure on a book cover does not influence his enjoyment of a book. Vintage Canada publisher Marion Garner told Ahearn that books with movie tie-ins also give publishers better space in stores due to their potential selling power.

On the other hand, there are also parties who spurn movie tie-ins as it can irk readers who find their initial mental image and imagination tainted by the cinematic interpretations depicted on the book cover. In her interview with Ahearn, author Alison Wearing felt that using celebrities on book covers cheapens the experience and commercialises the book. Similarly, author Zoe Heller shared her dismay with Ahearn about her work on ‗Notes on a Scandal' that was permanently linked to actress Judy Dench, who appeared on the movie tie-in cover; something that she was not happy about and never intended for to happen.

Indeed, a movie tie-in is able to give a facelift to a book that has been in print for a number of years while also making it relevant to a new generation of contemporary fans who might not necessarily be avid readers. However, editors, publishers and authors often do not use photographic images of characters on their books as it gives its audience an association; one that is usually uninvited and unwelcomed.

In the case of this study's data, movie tie-ins were not utilised despite the fact that world-famous and award-winning actresses like Anne Hathaway and Meryl Streep were cast for the book's movie counterpart. Ironically enough, Hathaway played the lead role in two of the three book-turn-movie in this study's data— ‗The Princess Diaries' in 2001 and ‗The Devil Wears Prada' in 2006. Perhaps it is advisable then to not use the same celebrity more than once to avoid confusion. Associations may also be carried forward from one work to the next, or worse, have the more successful work compared to the less.

Another reason can be attributed to the fact that the authors have no input or influence on the production of the movie based on their book. Meg Cabot, author of ‗The Princess Diaries' series, mentioned on her website (megcabot.com) in 2004 that she had no say in both ‗Princess Diaries' movies, especially the sequel which had little to no similarity to the original book. With the small input writers have in the productions of the movies, this leads to many plotlines in the original story being either changed or omitted completely thus reducing its affiliation with the book.

Moving the focus back to the analysis of the functional stages, it was found that of the twelve covers, A2 and A7 were the only two books with absolutely no text serving any promotional purposes, be it blurbs, accolades or commercial references. It is interesting to note, however, that they were the two of only three books to have a tagline [refer Table 4.4], the third being A10, which is the only cover with all seven functional stages present.

While the presence of every functional stage indicates a well-planned, fully-developed and comprehensive genre in some cases, the same cannot be said of the text on a book cover. The reason for it is simple: in artefacts that have a limited amount of space to make meaning such as book covers, presentation

slides, statistical charts and posters, the key is to show, not tell. As established in Chapter 3 in this research, words alone do not convey enough while a picture paints a thousand words. The wordy design of A10 would only serve its informative purpose if a viewer were attracted enough to pick the book up and read the text. According to Murphy (2013), book covers should not be too ‗busy‘ and not every element needs to be included on the book cover. Book covers that sell well are books with a lot of space (ibid).

Table 4.4: Chick-Lit Book Cover Taglines

Data	Example
A2	
A7	
A10	

Analysing the recurring functional stages across the data set, each book only has an average of three to four functional stages, two of them always being the book title and author‘s name. According to Eggins (1994), select functional stages in the schematic structure define the genre. In other words, the presence of defining or ‗obligatory‘ functional stages in a text is essential in recognising the genre of the text as a whole. ‗Optional‘ functional stages on the other hand, serve to account for the variations in all texts belonging to the same genre (Ren, 2010).

Indeed, the two recurring functional stages of ‗book title' and ‗author's name'

define the broad text genre as that of a book cover.

Comparing the book pairs of the same title, each individual cover of the pair

would usually have a third or fourth functional stage that is different from its

counterpart in addition to the presence of the obligatory functional stages of

‗book title' and ‗author's name'. For example, in each pair of books of the same

title, one mentioned the book category while the other did not. While it seems

obvious and almost redundant to mention the book category, there are a number

of reasons why this is done. The first, relates back to history where literary

works such as lyrics, poetry, plays, journals, essays and memoirs were more

established, widespread and popular than novels, which only gained popularity

in the 18th Century (Neugebauer, 2013). In this day and age, however, novels are

the default but their book covers still hold on to the age-old labelling tradition for

prestige and clarity though it is no longer as necessary as in the past as books are

clearly organised and shelved in stores nowadays. Moreover, with technological

advancements, books are also coded, categorised and stocked in every

bookstore's inventory without any hassle.

Functional stages serving promotional purposes were also used sparingly. For

example, A4 utilised a blurb while A3 had an accolade and A5 had a commercial

reference while A6 had an accolade. These distinctions give variety to the books

as different and additional information can be transmitted through separate

mediums. As mentioned earlier, A10 was the only book cover with all seven

stages present, making it very wordy and textually overwhelming. The presence

of all functional stages does not necessarily aid a book cover in making an

impression, but rather makes it look congested and unappealing. Thus, selecting

and presenting key elements carefully is a much more effective strategy in making sure a book cover plays its role to its best ability.

Overall, the language used on the covers was in short, brief sentences whereas the lexico-grammatical choices were succinct. All these features add up to what a book cover is all about: comprehensive elements presented as concisely as possible, to convey as much meaning as they can, in a limited space, within a short period of time.

As established in Section 2.2.5, book covers have very little time and space to make an impact on its audience. Thus, it is imperative to keep texts short, simple and concise. Book covers have to be able to promote the book effectively and holistically to spark the audience's curiosity while also conveying the essence of the book. According to UNESCO Publishing (2014), a ‗good‘ cover is readable and able to impart its message clearly while also being aesthetically appealing.

After the analysis in this subsection, however, it was found that the functional stages alone do not and cannot clearly define the exact literary genre of the text in most cases. Only covers with a tagline established a stronger link to its chick-lit identity, mainly referring to their lead character causally as ‗she‘ and describing her life as well as personality in a light and informal tone.

Thus, it can be concluded that the functional stages alone do not serve as a strong enough mode to identify and represent the chick-lit genre, unless the lexical choice in taglines are explicitly geared towards a simple, light-hearted and feminine storyline.

4.2.2 Typeface

This subsection strictly discusses the typeface of the words present in the twelve book covers. It focuses solely on the style and visual appearance of words, but will not discuss the emphasis placed on the words, like the manipulation of size and use of bolded words, which are reserved for the subsection on salience [see Section 4.3.2].

The four categories of typefaces adapted from Walker (2001), Stöckl (2005) and van Leeuwen (2006) listed in Table 3.1 from Section 3.2.1.2 were all found in the data pool. Tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 details the different typefaces found on each book in the data set. Looking across the spectrum, Sans Serif was the most widely used typeface in the data, having appeared on ten out of the twelve books. The next most common typeface was Serif, appearing on half of the book covers in the data. The Script typeface was less common, only being used on five book covers while the Decorative typeface appeared only twice. These numbers, however, only refer to the number of book covers they appear on, but not the frequency of use on each book cover.

A general observation was that the choice of typeface was quite clear cut from author to author. Books from author Lauren Weisberger mainly used the Serif typeface only [refer Table 4.5]. A9 and A10 were in full Serif while A11 and A12 had slight use of Sans Serif and Script in addition to the usual Serif typeface. All of Weisberger's book titles were in Serif as well, giving it an elegant albeit older and more formal outlook.

Table 4.5: Typefaces on Lauren Weisberger's Books
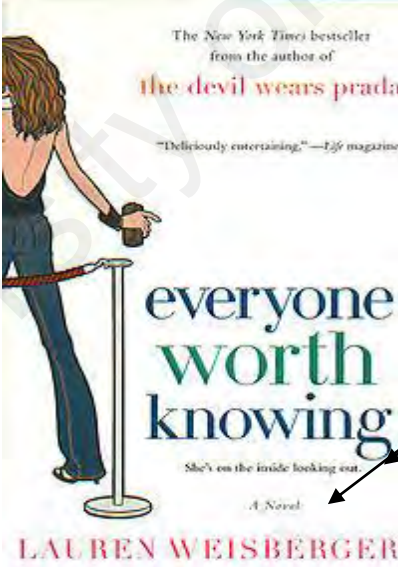
Data	Example	Typeface
A9		Serif
A10		Serif

Table 4.5 continued

Data	Example	Typeface
A11		Serif Script
A12		Serif Sans Serif

On the other hand, book covers from author Meg Cabot favoured the Sans Serif typeface [refer Table 4.6], with A7 in full San Serif fonts. It is also interesting to note that the choice of typeface for the functional stage of _author's name' in all of Cabot's books [A5, A6, A7 and A8] in the data was in Sans Serif, giving it more young, contemporary and approachable feel to younger audiences.

Table 4.6: Typefaces on Meg Cabot's Books
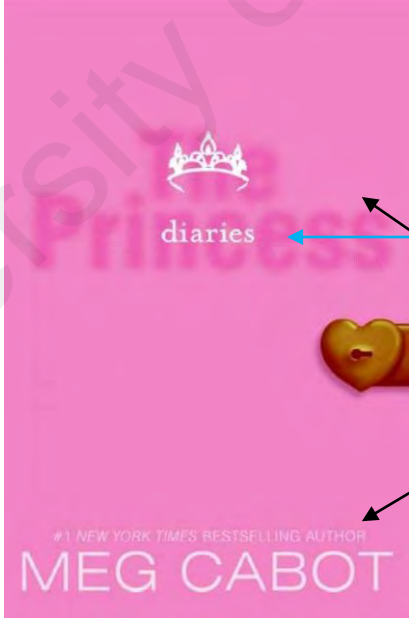
Data	Example	Typeface
A5		Sans Serif Script
A6		Serif Sans Serif

Table 4.6 continued

Data	Example	Typeface
A7		Sans Serif
A8		Script Sans Serif

Conversely, typefaces on the book covers from author Sophie Kinsella was a mix of all four categories [refer Table 4.7], with Kinsella's book covers being the only ones in the data to use Decorative fonts. However, looking more closely at its frequency of use, Kinsella, like Cabot, favoured the Sans Serif typeface.

Table 4.7: Typefaces on Sophie Kinsella's Books
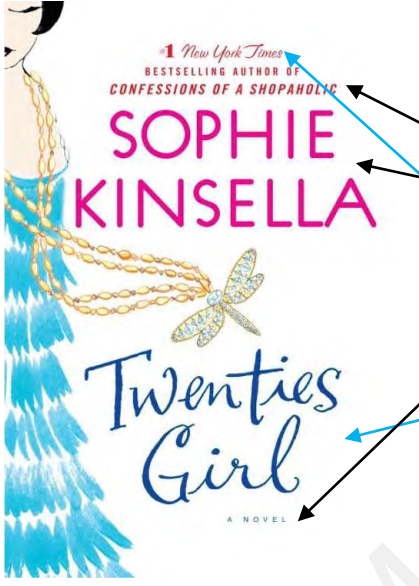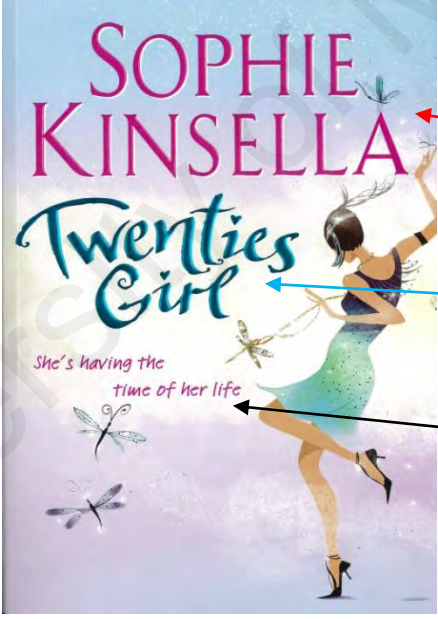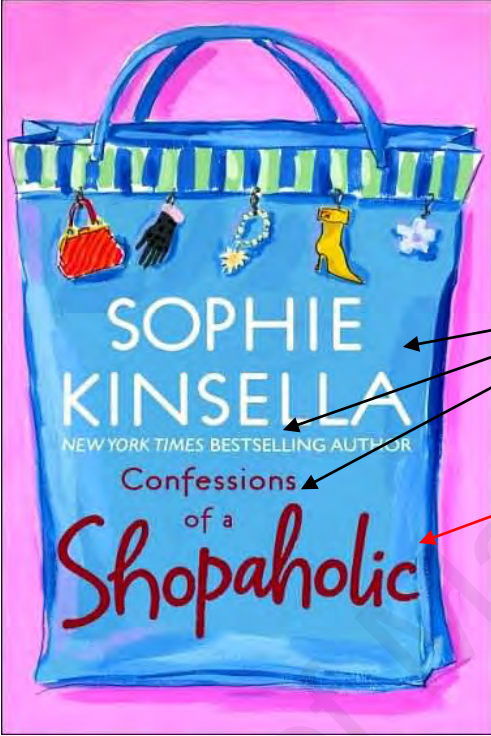
Data	Example	Typeface
A1		Sans Serif Script
A2		Serif Decorative Sans Serif

Table 4.7 continued

Data	Example	Typeface
A3		Sans Serif Script
A4		Sans Serif Decorative

The extensive use of the Serif typeface on covers A9 to A12 brings about a very formal and slightly more mature quality to the covers. Comparing the storylines of the books, however, the typeface does serve to emulate the plot.

Books A9 to A12 are of a more sombre and serious tone as compared to the other books in the data, having a storyline mainly linked to career stress and work problems. The use of Serif also exudes a sense of pedigree and respectability, often associated with a reputable and stable source (Walker, 2001), therefore becoming a recurring choice for the typeface of the author's name.

The findings support De Hoog's (2012, p.2) statement on chick-lit book covers having ―curly font that showcase the title and author". Despite Sans Serif being the most recurrent typeface found across all twelve book covers, the Script typeface made regular appearances as well. The cursive style of this typeface imitates the fluidity of human handwriting thus giving the text a more personalised and informal touch (van Leeuwen, 2006). This is because the Script typeface has long been linked to the handwritings found on wedding invitations, olden day manuscripts and greeting cards. The association gives the Script typeface a fancy, friendly, elegant, vintage, and intriguing quality (Stöckl, 2005).

Moreover, as handwriting is often used to express affection, audiences perceive the Script typeface as genuinely heartfelt and intimate (ibid). Having storylines where the readers are brought into the world of the female characters in the books and directly share the ups and downs of these character's lives, it's no wonder that such a typeface is used. In addition, the general themes of these books, though light-hearted, are linked to personal stories; for example: diary entries [The Princess Diaries], confessions [Confessions of a Shopaholic], and keeping secrets [Queen of Babble]. The Script typeface is also regarded as feminine and delicate (van Leeuwen, 2006), thus appealing to and indirectly representing their female audience and characters.

In spite of the fact that the Decorative typeface has practically no limits to its creativity and form, the examples of its uses, though limited in this data pool, was only restricted to ‚curly' and ‚squiggly' fonts comparable to that of the Script typeface. The Decorative typeface used on A2 even consisted of heart shapes replacing the dots for the letter ‚i', making a clear association to love, affection, compassion and femininity. Used in small doses, the use of the Decorative typeface made the book title on A2 stand out and look unique compared to other books. It brought with it a more customised touch, which made the book feel special and one-of-a-kind. The curly Decorative typeface used on A4 for the functional stage of book category gave the impression that the book was of a light-hearted, whimsical tone; not to be taken too seriously nor read too critically.

Other books in the data set also resonated this light, fun and whimsical tone through other forms of manipulation of more ‚formal' typefaces [refer Table 4.8]. For example, covers A10 and A11. Though both these covers utilised the Serif typeface in its title, the individual letters were printed in lowercase—a practice that opposes traditional and formal norms which requires the first letter of each word in a title to be capitalised. Even the infamous brand ‚Prada' was not capitalised either. This discreet but meaningful play on the typeface brings about additional meaning to the text, making it less formal and traditional.

Another instance of this manipulation can be seen in A7. The book fully utilised the Sans Serif typeface, but added an additional layer of ‚fun' by not just arranging the letters of the book title and author's name askew, but by also flipping the ‚B's in ‚Babble' so that they mirrored each other; thus resonating with the working definition of chick-lit.

Table 4.8: Manipulation of Typefaces

A7	A10	A11

In addition, the overall inclination towards the Sans Serif typeface demonstrates a desire to achieve a more modern outlook towards the books (Stöckl, 2005). As already established in Table 3.1 in Section 3.2.1.2, Sans Serif is less formal and traditional looking as compared to the Serif typeface. Its smooth design gives a very clean and appealing view to the audience while perceived as simple, chic, young, hip and cool (van Leeuwen, 2006). Walker (2001) describes the Sans Serif typeface as warm, personal and relaxed, creating a casual mood and friendly environment, which endorses the working definition of chick-lit in the current research where the tone of chick-lit books is usually personal, light, and humorous.

Thus, combining the uses and choices of typefaces gathered in the data, it is clear that the chick-lit genre is seen as one not to be taken too seriously. That is not to say that the female characters in the book do not face problems or conflict in their lives, but rather that their predicaments are often viewed in a more light-hearted and comedic perspective. Depending on the plots of the books, the typefaces chosen went from more personal [Script] to more formal and detached [Serif]. This use of typefaces thus supports McWade's 2003 argument that typefaces create mood and atmosphere. The use of typefaces on the book covers therefore reflects the tone of the book. Where the textual rhetorics [functional stages] failed to fully describe the chick-lit genre, the visual rhetorics [typefaces]

supplemented and gave a ─wider explanation of what is being presented in the text or present the meaning that is separate from what the text is about" (Bulat, 2012, para.7), giving the viewers a fuller, more comprehensive understanding of the genre. Moreover, the recurrent use similar typefaces on books of the same genre generate semantic memory. As established from the data, the recurrent use of the Script typeface as well as curly Decorative typefaces all in addition to a less formal Sans Serif all add up and enhances the viewer's experience of the chick-lit genre strongly but subtly.

4.2.3 Colour

This subsection discusses the use of colour in not just the words present on the twelve book covers, but also the relation of those colours to the background of the book and the colour usage across the different prints. The analysis focuses on the choices of colour and its meanings as well as its relation to the chick-lit genre as a whole.

Looking across all twelve book covers, the colour tones chosen were bright, vivid and highly saturated. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), high saturation brings about a sense of positivity, strength, exuberance, adventure and youth. The books also shied away using dark and sombre tones, with absolutely no use of grey, and with few occurrences of brown and black. According to van Leeuwen (2011), both brown and grey are equivalent to practicality, security and reliability, with brown related more to home as well as nature and grey to mystery as well as old age. Black on the other hand, relates to secrets, power, prestige, grief and evil forces [refer Table 3.2]. Thus, in this initial stage of analysis, it is already very clear that the use of colour on chick-lit book covers exudes an easy-going and straight forward sense of youth, energy, care-freeness

and excitement to audience members, with little to no reference to more mature, practical and serious subject matters.

Notably, there was a recurrent use of colour in books belonging to the same author and a correlation of colour across books of the same title. For example, A1 and A2 used the same colours—pink and blue—for the author's name and book title respectively. Both these books also had recurring uses of analogous colours [pink, blue and purple] to create a harmonious and serene effect [refer Table 3.3]. The use of pink and blue was also present in A3 and A4 as the background colour of the books. Once again, there was a repeated use of the same colour for the book title in A3 and A4—a deep red. The same can be said for the books from Meg Cabot. A5 and A6 were exactly the same in colour scheme, using only pink and white for the text and the background. A7 and A8, though not similar at first glance, also used similar colours to one another: a bright mix of pink, blue, orange and yellow. Likewise, books from Weisberger had a running colour theme across books of the same title. All four books from Weisberger utilised analogue colours, with A9 and A10 using blue and green while A11 and A12 used red and orange. Hence, it is obvious from the data that colours are not just a semiotic resource for aesthetic purposes, but are also used to create a relation between and among books.

Moreover, colours are also used to create harmony or to show contrast within the elements of the books as well as between books of different titles. As mentioned earlier, the analogous colour coordination of Kinsella's ‚Twenties Girl' [A1 and A2] and Weisberger's ‚Everyone Worth Knowing' [A9 and A10] as well as ‚The Devil Wear Prada' [A11 and A12] create an artefact where elements correspond and exist in harmony with each other. According to Bleicher (2011), this colour scheme creates a rich, monochromatic look.

On the other hand, colour coordination also served to create a contrast between book titles and elements on a book cover. One very clear example is the use of colours on Weisberger's books. On ‗Everyone Worth Knowing' [A9 and A10], the use of colour was a mix of blue and green. ‗The Devil Wears Prada' [A11 and A12] however, utilised a mix of orange and red. Though harmonious on their individual book covers, the colours contrast each other when compared across the different book titles. Blue and orange, as well as green and red, are complementary colour pairs respectively. They are found on opposite sides of the colour wheel and are boldly distinct from one another [refer Table 3.3]. From this, we can see that colours help harmonise books of similar titles but can also work to create dissonance in books of different titles from the same author.

In addition, colours are also able to bring about a contrast in elements on a book cover so as to produce a dynamic yet eye-pleasing artefact (Mitchell, 2018). For example, Cabot's ‗Queen of Babble' cover. A7 has a very well mixed palette of complementary hues such as purple and yellow as well as blue and orange. A8, on the other hand, utilised the complementary colours blue and orange. The presence of a magenta shade, which is quite close to the shade of purple—a complementary colour to yellow—was also present on the book. These complementary colours are highly contrasting and look very bold and vibrant combined. They serve to draw attention and make elements stand out (ibid). In the case of A8, it allowed the elements to ‗pop' on the white background.

Overall, colours linked the two books while also creating a tonal contrast on the book covers. From this, it is safe to say that colour combination was exploited to create harmony as well as dissonance, be it among elements on book

covers, books of the same title, or books of differing titles penned by the same author.

Going back to what was mentioned earlier in this subsection, the initial overview of the colour scheme of the data gave an airy sense of youth, energy, care-freeness and excitement to audience members. While writers are able to paint pictures for their readers with words, colour in itself adds a whole other dimension to meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002).

From the data set, the colour that was most frequently used was pink, appearing on eight of the twelve covers. It was used for both text and background alike. According van Leeuwen (2011), pink, being a hue of red, is commonly linked to love, romance and femininity; and is usually why it is used on book covers marketed to women. Carter (2013) adds that further associations are made to pink as a feminine colour due to the fact that it is used as the colour for breast cancer awareness. Toy companies like Mattel, Inc. market their infamous Barbie dolls in an array of different shades of pink. Going back to this research's working definition of chick-lit, this genre is one that is written by women, for women and about women, thus explaining the high usage frequency of pink.

The next most commonly used colour in the data set was blue, which appeared on seven of the twelve book covers. The colour was used for three book titles and appeared numerous times as the background colour on the books. According to van Leeuwen (2011), blue is a colour often connected to dependability, trust and security. Needless to say, the colour, especially when used dominantly as the colour for book titles, invokes a sense of reliability, integrity and loyalty. Moreover, the colour also brings about a sense of calm,

peace and serenity (van Leeuwen, 2011; Carter, 2013; Lentz 2015; Parker, 2017) which indicates a storyline that is not too fast paced nor hostile.

On the other side of the spectrum, red appeared on only four covers, but was only predominantly used on covers A11 and A12, with minimal use on A3 and A4. Red, according to Birren (1945), is the ardent colour of passion, love and war. It is a colour that elicits strong emotions such as anger, love, excitement and intensity (van Leeuwen, 2011). According to Carter (2013), red has the ability to make important information, such as the book title, _pop' on a cover design, which is exactly the case for A3 and A4 where a deep red was only used for the book title. Conversely, Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) states that red is a signifier for danger. This can be associated to A11 and A12 which is appropriately titled _The Devil Wears Prada'. The _Devil', or also known as _Satan' in Christian religious texts, is the primary opponent of God and therefore the very epitome of evil and sin (Leeming, 2005). As such, the colour scheme of the books was mainly red. A11 had texts and pictures in red while the entire background of A12 was a bright, vivid red. The storyline of the book, in which the main character has to deal with ridiculous tasks thrown to her by her over-demanding and demeaning boss, also plays a role in the choice of the colour. This said boss, who treats her subordinates in a manner that borders on emotional and psychological abuse, is referred to figuratively as the _Devil'.

Other colours to appear albeit minimally in the data set include orange and yellow. Orange made a minimal appearance in the background on A3, A4, A7 and A8, and was also used on A11 as the colour of the text in the book title. Being a mix of red and yellow, orange is tied to warmth, adventure, energy and enthusiasm (van Leeuwen, 2011). In its own right, orange is also a colour for creativity, vitality and fun (Parker, 2017). On book covers, orange can convey

affordability, confidence and independence to its readers, and is well responded to by children and young adults alike, due to its bright and youthful hue (Carter, 2013). Like orange, yellow also appeared in the background on A3, A7 and A8. Yellow brings about a sense of happiness, cheerfulness and optimism (Carter, 2013). These relate to the general theme of the chick-lit genre which is always fun, light-hearted and humorous.

Purple, green and brown were also present on the book covers of the data set although it was not obvious due to the scarcity of their appearance. Purple, the colour of imagination, nostalgia, magic, spirituality and mystery (Lentz, 2015) was used as the background on A2 and sparsely on A7. It makes sense that purple was used on A2 as the storyline of the book circles around its main character who is visited by the ghost of her recently deceased great-aunt who cannot rest in peace until her dragonfly necklace is found. The dragonfly itself is a symbol of spiritual activity and swiftness in many Native American tribes (Mitchell and Lasswell, 2005), thus tying the symbolic themes together. On the other hand, green, the colour of nature, wealth, fertility and envy was found scattered on A7 and as text in A10. With the chick-lit genre having little to no relation to such associations with that of nature, finance nor fertility, it is no wonder the colour was used quite so rarely on the book covers. As previously mentioned when discussing the use colour coordination on book covers, green was used more as a contrasting tone rather than a signifier of nature and harmony. Finally, brown was found twice in the data, once on A6 and another time on A11. Brown is a down-to-earth colour representing stability, reliability, comfort and support (van Leeuwen, 2011). The significance of this colour can be seen in what it was used for: a diary lock and a pair of leather boots; but nothing substantial relating to the chick-lit genre in specific.

Finally, this research looks at the use of the two most basic tones in the colour spectrum: black and white. Black was found on all covers except for A5 and A6 where the chosen hue was solely pink and white. On all other book covers, black was used sparingly as the colour of texts and in pictures. According to Rikard (2015), this is because black, while giving a feeling of perspective and depth, also diminishes readability. The colour is also one that is very aggressive and is often associated with evil, having been used by many villains as their default costume colour like Count Dracula, The Evil Queen, Darth Vader, Ursula the Sea Witch, Loki, Hades, Voldemort, Catwoman and Maleficent, just to name a few. Moreover, black is also frequently linked to secrets, mystery, death and power (van Leeuwen, 2011). It is a colour that is often used in the mystery, thriller and sci-fi genre for that exact reason, but not that of chick-lit which generally have a more transparent, light and straight forward plotline.

On the other hand, white was found on all covers, both in the use as a background colour and as text colour as well. According to van Leeuwen (2011), white conveys a sense of calm, space and peacefulness in marketing. Too much, however, and it exudes a sense of coldness and sterility instead. Thus, in a book cover design, white is predominantly used to create space and provide a sense of calm which can feel both inviting and contemporary, which explains why it was used as the background colour in five out of the twelve book covers in this research's data set. Also, as mentioned earlier in the analysis, the blankness of white allows other elements to _pop' when it is used as a background colour. Lentz (2015) identifies white as a _non-colour' which makes it a neutral tone that neither contrasts nor harmonises with other colours, but rather, acts as a blank canvas for other colours to mingle and interact with one another.

Looking at the ‗distinctive features‘ of colour put forward by Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), it is clear from the data that the colours used on these book covers had high meaning potential all reflecting that of the chick-lit genre. In the sense of the colour value, or rather, the lightness or darkness of the chosen colours on the book covers, a majority of the colours present were bright, vivid and cheerful, with few occurrences and sporadic use of darker shades like deep red [A3 and A4], dark blue [A10] and dark brown [A11]. The colours used were also highly saturated, intense and bold. The choice of colour on the book covers was densely pigmented and rich in quality with very sparse use of soft, pale or dull colours save for the basic hues of black and white. The key affordance of saturation is its ability to express ‗emotive temperatures‘ (ibid). High saturation brings about a sense of positivity, strength, exuberance, adventure and abundance. Moreover, the differentiation of the colours was diverse and colourful, often exploiting at least two colours on each book cover. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), high colour differentiation and saturation are signifiers of adventurousness; with differentiation representing the absence of monotony and routine while saturation stood for an intensity of feeling, living to the full and not being timid. Combined with the bright, vivid and cheerful quality of colour found on chick-lit book covers, it is clear that the message being sent out to audience members is that the genre is fun, positive, vivacious, lively, eventful and copious.

Other meaning potential from the distinctive features of colour comes from the purity of colour in this study‘s data. The more hybridised the colours are, the less pure they become [see Section 3.2.1.3]. Wierzbicka (1996) observes that the purity of colour can be closely tied to the names that colours are given. Colours with commonly used single names, such as ‗grey‘, ‗brown‘, ‗pink‘, ‗purple‘ and

‗orange' are considered to be pure. Conversely, the names of more hybridised colours require a more special name in place for their actual colour mix. Specialist might use specific terms like ‗coral' while non-specialist would refer to them by means of a composite name like ‗pink-orange'. Other examples include ‗bourbon', a brown-red shade, ‗granola', a sandy yellow-brown colour, and ‗peacock', a deep green-blue tone [refer Table 4.9].

It is important to note that in this study, the colours were not analysed based on its complexity of names. Like the matter of fonts and typefaces, it would be near impossible to accurately label the exact colour [and font] used for each and every element on the twelve book covers without discrepancies and inaccurate analyses.

Table 4.9: Pure vs. Hybrid Colours

Pure Colours	Hybrid Colours
grey	granola
purple	peacock

Therefore, as seen in the analysis of colour in the earlier subsections, the colours were just given basic names like pink, blue and yellow. However, looking into deeper detail in this subsection, it was found that the data did consist of colours ranging from pure to hybrid. For example, books like A5 and A6 used very basic and pure colours like pink and white while books like A2 and A7 had a mix of a variety of colours, including and not limited to shades of magenta [pink-purple], lavender [pastel purple], indigo [deep blue-violet] and turquoise [light blue-green]. Other instances of hybrid colour usage were not so apparent, mainly using secondary colours like orange, brown and pink.

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According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, p.356), pure colours have become the ‑key signifiers of the ideologies of modernity" while hybrid colours have become the ‑key signifiers of the ideologies of postmodernism" where the concept of hybridity is valued positively.

While this is by no means the only way in which Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) nor this research views the affordances of colour purity, it is nonetheless a culturally salient one. The mix of pure and hybrid colours across the twelve book covers in the data reflects the transition of the chick-lit genre from modern literature to postfeminist literature. Having only recently becoming established in the past decade, chick-lit is a genre that is slowly gaining not just popularity, but also an identity of its own. Postfeminist chick-lit published since 2001 has served to provide humour as well as social observations into Western marriages, courtship rituals, education patterns, feminism and postmodern values (Harzewski, 2011). It is a departure from the works of what Nathaniel Hawthorne called ‑a damned mob of scribbling women" in 1855 to the modern day female author (Modleski, 1986, p.194). Thus, chick-lit is responsible for transforming the genre, which in turn, has come full circle in the nearly three centuries since its invention.

Likewise, the modulation of colour on the book covers in this data set runs from fully modulated colours to flat, one-dimensional colour. As previously discussed in Section 3.2.1.3, modulation is the degree to which colours are used in creating life-like images and the justice it does to the rich and raw texture of colours in real life. In the data of this research, the colours were mostly flat and the modality it provided was low. The only three book covers which used highly modulated colours were book covers A5, A8 and A9, where the images looked real and life-like. Despite having live objects on the book covers like dragonflies

and women, the colours used gave them a more cartoon and illustrated feel, rather than a real, natural and true-to-life imagery.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), low modulation represents an _abstract truth' while highly modulated colours represents _naturalistic and perceptual truth'. Tying back once again to the definition of the chick-lit genre, this class of books is both humorous and light-hearted, with fictional storylines about the ups and downs in women's lives. It is no wonder that a lower modulation was chosen as it clearly represents the less serious and fictitious lives in the stories. As opposed to a biography or a thriller where the storylines are either very serious or non-fiction, chick-lit is represented more as a fantasy rather than a reality.

To sum up this subsection on colour, its usage, its meaning and its affordances, this dissertation reiterates that colour serves as a multifunctional semiotic resource used in the making of signs in an artefact. Affective responses and associations can be generated towards a certain text solely based on the choice of colour. As clearly shown in the analysis, colour _means'; and these meanings arise from the interests of the sign-makers (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002). Drawing from Halliday's 1978 study on social semiotics based on his systemic functional linguistic approach to language, this study found that colour on book covers fulfils all three metafunctions simultaneously.

Beginning with the ideational metafunction, the colours on the twelve book covers are used to denote the genre and tone of the book, the plot theme, its characters and even its intended audience. As mentioned in earlier analyses, the bright, saturated and vivid array of colours construct a fun, youthful, exciting and vibrant appeal to the books, setting the tone to one that need not be taken seriously. The heavy use of pinks creates an overall inclination to a more

feminine storyline related to that of love and romance, intended for a female audience while the low modulation of the colours indicates a fictional storyline.

Similarly, the interpersonal metafunction was also achieved via the use of colour. In addition to how a colour ‗means‘, a colour is also able to ‗do‘ things to and for each other (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002). In the case of the book covers, the heavy use of blue for the title, images and backgrounds of the books creates a sense of trust, security and dependability in its audience. The many occurrences of pink also attract a specific audience for the book, namely the female population. Moreover, the extensive use of vibrant colours on plain, white backgrounds highlights certain key points of the book to its audience as the blank background allows elements on it to pop while also creating a calm and open space.

Finally, colour was also used to fulfil the textual metafunction in how it created cohesion among separate elements to become a whole. Using colour coordination and schemes, the elements on book covers were effectively harmonised on the book covers. Elements were either synced or contrasted in hue and tone to create a colourful and exuberant effect. In addition, colour coordination and schemes also linked books of similar titles and authors.

Thus, from this extensive look into the use of colour on chick-lit book covers, it is clear that colour plays a major role in the representation of the genre. The choices of colour, its differentiation, saturation, modality and coordination all come together to create a youthful, vibrant, light-hearted and exciting genre known as chick-lit.

4.3 Composition

The composition of a text consists mainly of three principles: information value, salience and framing. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the composition

in a multimodal text relates the representational and interactive meanings of the image to each other through these three principles.

4.3.1 Information Value

As discussed in Section 3.2.2.1, information value is given by the placement of elements based on its location in the text. From the initial stages of analysis on the information value of the twelve book covers, it became apparent that the zones were not as clear cut nor as easily differentiated as initially established in Figure 3.2. Zones overlapped in some cases as the book covers did not consist of all six divisions as originally suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Thus, to avoid discrepancies and to ensure the most accurate of analyses, this research took on a ‗>50%‘ approach to separating elements into the different spatial zones. What this entails is to first separate a book cover into the different zones, regardless of the existing elements. If more than half of the whole element lies within a certain spatial zone, it is then considered part of that zone. Take for example A1:
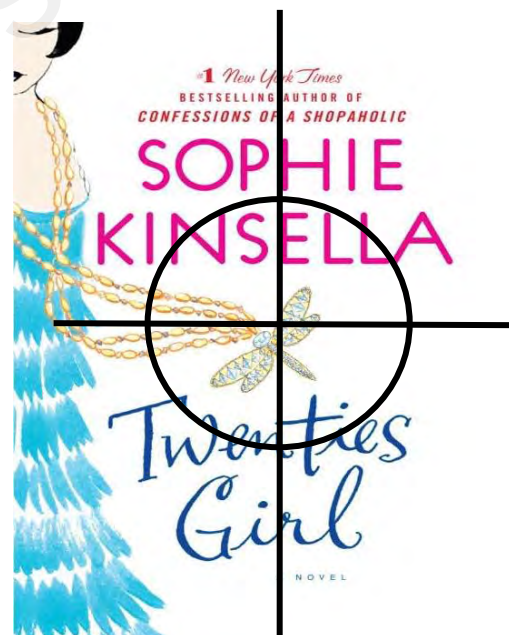
Figure 4.1: Raw Analysis of Information Value

From the separation seen in Figure 4.1, this research could then easily organise and regulate elements into their respective zones precisely, consistently and reliably with results displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Division of Book Covers into Zones

Title	Book Cover	
Twenties Girl		
	A1	A2
Confessions of a Shopaholic		
	A3	A4

Table 4.10 continued

Title	Book Cover	
The Princess Diaries		
	A5	A6
Queen of Babble		
	A7	A8

Table 4.10 continued

Title	Book Cover	
Everyone Worth Knowing		
	A9	A10
The Devil Wears Prada		
	A11	A12

Comparing the book pairs of the same title, there were definitely similarities and differences between the spatial organisations of the elements on the book covers. One main reason for this is due to the fact that each book in the pair has different functional stages, as already established in Section 4.2.1. However, a

running theme across most of the book pairs is that the book title was almost always placed in the centre zone of the book cover. The overall layout choice of each book pair was also closely similar. For example, A3 and A4 placed more emphasis on the centre zone, focusing a majority of the elements in the middle of the book. A7 and A8, on the other hand, mainly utilised the centre and bottom zones of the cover. Conversely, A9 and 10 utilised the top, left, bottom and centre zones of the page.

Looking at the overall picture, the most evident finding on the information value of the book covers was that every book cover utilised the centre of the book for the placement of elements. The types of elements found there, however, differed from book to book and from author to author. As mentioned, the main element found in the centre across the data set was the title of the book. Ten out of twelve book titles were found in the central point of the book covers suggesting that this element, above all else, is the nucleus of the text and thus plays the most important role on the cover. It also suggests that the book title links all other elements on the cover to each other, which is reasonable seeing as how the book title is the name that describes the book and its contents.

On covers A3, A7 and A9, the book title shared the centre position with another element: the name of the book's author. This shows that significance and importance is given to the book's author, especially if the author is well-known as it can help boost sales and increase the recognition of the book. Other elements that were found in the centre of the text include taglines, accolades and blurbs of the books, which shared the space with the title of the book. From the analysis in Section 4.2.1, it was already established that blurbs and accolades are used for commercial and promotional purposes and in the absence of a functional stage playing the role of merchandising a book, taglines are used instead. Thus, it

can be said that in addition to presenting key information to the audience, the centre part of a book cover also attempts to increase the sales of a book by marketing the book implicitly.

Conversely, a book may also use a single image as the nucleus of information. This was the case for the book covers A1 and A8. In A1, a dragonfly was placed in the centre of the book cover. From its placement, it is clear that the dragonfly [or what it symbolises] is discernibly the most important piece of information on the cover, and therefore, in the story of the book [refer Appendix B for book summary]. In Section 4.2.3, it was also established that dragonflies are seen as a symbol of spiritual activity in many Native American tribes (Mitchell and Lasswell, 2005). Thus, like the title of the book, the image of the dragonfly concisely gives its audience the main idea of the book and its subsequent content.

The same can be said for A8. From its top margin right to the middle of the book, the image of a woman can be seen. Though she is not identifiable, this RP is given the key focal point of the book, indirectly indicating that she plays an important role in the book; either as the main character in the story, or key supporting character. From her pose, we can see she has a hand over her mouth, a gesture to mean keeping silent and verbally hiding a secret. Compared to the storyline of the book [refer Appendix E], we can see that once again the image used matches the plot of the book.

Nevertheless, A1 and A3 were not the only book covers where images were found in the centre of the book. Covers like A5 and A6 had pictures of tiaras accompanying the book title while books like A9 and A12 had stilettos beside the title of the book. These images support and add meaning to the name given to the book—tiaras for ‗The Princess Diaries‘; stilettos for women working in the

world of fashion and glamour. This finding matches that of pictures found on the front covers of biographies where the image of the subject is found on the centre of the book cover.

Thus, to summarise the analysis on the centre zone of book covers, it was found that book titles were given the greatest importance. In books where the titles were not placed in the middle, an image encapsulating the storyline of the book was used. Other elements that were given prominence include taglines, accolades and blurbs for promotional purposes as well as images to support the book titles present on the centre of the page.

Similarly, the horizontal axis was a spatial zone that was utilised quite extensively on the book covers in this data set. A1, A2, A6, A9, A10, A11 and A12 used these spaces explicitly to place elements. Interestingly enough, the horizontal axis was utilised in pairs: either both covers of the same title used it, or they did not. A6 was the only exception with a diary lock placed on the right side of the horizontal axis while A5 mainly focused its elements on the vertical plane. Even more intriguing is the fact that the human RPs on the four covers, which are depicted in low modality, are found on polar opposite sides of the books—two on the left side [A1 and A10] and two on the right side [A2 and A11].

As already discussed in Section 3.2.2.1 on information value and the affordances of meaning of different spatial zones, having a human RP on the left and right side of the horizontal could indicate either one of two meanings: the first, that the RP on the left is evidently the main character of the book whom the audience should already know of before reading the book; or the second, that the RP on the right is a character that the audience will come to learn more about as the story progresses. Both meanings seem rational especially for A11 where the

RP on the right is not the main character, but the antagonist who will later make the life of the protagonist a living hell. As for the diary lock on the right side of A6, it is clear that the lock represents new information that the readers will come to know as they enter the life of the author of the diary and read its contents.

Other books which utilised the horizontal axis were A9 and A12. Though the images of the stilettos and book titles were in the centre of these two book covers, there was also a division of left and right for both elements—the heels on the left and the book title on the right. Given that chick-lit is a genre about women and for women, a stiletto, which is a type of woman's footwear, epitomises the feminine storyline of the book. The title of the book, on the other hand, is the new and learnt information the audience member receives upon reading the cover.

Thus, to summarise the usage of the horizontal axis of chick-lit book covers, it was found that RPs were mainly placed on the left and right side of the books. These images, like all images used on the book covers, play a signifying role, to provide and enhance the meaning of the text: human RPs to signify the characters of the book, diary locks to signify secrets and inanimate RPs like heels to represent glamour and femininity.

Finally, this research looked at the spatial usage of the vertical axis on the twelve book covers in this data set. Compared to the horizontal axis, the vertical axis was used more frequently, especially when it came to the placement of words and functional stages of the text. Eleven of the twelve books had some form of vertical spatial division, be it elements only in the top zone, bottom zone or both. The only book not to have a clear cut vertical axis division was A3 where the elements were mainly centred in the middle of the book.

The main element found on the vertical axis of the book covers was the name of the books' authors. Looking at the data set, however, it was found that the author's name was only placed on the top part of the vertical axis on two books [A1 and A2] while six books [A4, A5, A6, A8, A11, A12] favoured the bottom position. Another functional stage that shared similar proclivity was the book category. In all five books that the functional stage of book category appeared, it was found at the bottom section of the book. This inclination suggests that the author's name and book category are considered more detailed and specific information.

Other functional stages to appear on the vertical axis include commercial references, accolades, blurbs and taglines. Although these functional stages were spread out very evenly across the vertical axis of the book covers, each had an inclination to appear on one end of the axis. For example, four of the eight accolades found on the vertical axis were positioned on the bottom of the text. Similarly, the tagline in A7 was found on the bottom margin. Commercial references, on the other hand, were found at the top of the text. The same can be said for blurbs which were found in A10 on the top margin.

Referring back Section 3.2.2.1, the _ideal' and _real' relationship that flows from the top segment to the lower segment of the page is often used in texts where the ideal _promise' is given before the detailed depiction of the actual _product' is presented. Examples of such texts include advertisements, brochures, flyers and pamphlets. Book covers are no different as these texts also serve the dual purpose of indicating the tone, genre, level and content of the book while also merchandising the book to its intended audience.

Cunnane (2013) clearly states that the success of a book depends on its cover as much as its content and that book covers play a pivotal role in ensuring that

books reach the right audience, even to readers who might pick it up as an impulse buy. As such, book cover designs are seen to exhibit the _promise' and _product' spatial separation similar to that of other retail and marketing artefacts.

In the data of this study, commercial references and blurbs were found on the top margin, indicating that these elements are the ideal _promises' given to the audience, while accolades and taglines were positioned on the bottom margin, indicating that these elements are the real and detailed _products' being sold to the audience.

Taking a closer look at these functional stages, commercial references cite other more popular and successful works by the same author, as well as mention other commercial outlets of the book. In a like manner, blurbs cite the praise the book received from external sources. These commendations and tributes all add on to the assurance and guarantee that the book and its contents are of a certain credential and prestige. Conversely, accolades are the recognition or merit that the author and book itself received while taglines summarises the content of the book in a short but memorable phrase.

From this perspective, the functional stages of _accolades' and _tagline' both serve the purpose of presenting the actual and existing credits the current book received, without drawing references from an external source, whilst providing details about the book in a concise manner. Thus, it can be said that commercial references and blurbs _promises' prestige; accolades and taglines presents the true _product'. This way, the audience is first given a positive and reassuring impression to the book, alluring them to follow through to the bottom axis of the page where they are accorded further details about the book itself.

Regardless, the findings from this subsection proved to have a running theme across the data set. Elements that have the highest value on chick-lit book covers

are the titles of the books, as they were given the centre position of the book. Images of the RP and female accessories were mainly given positions on the horizontal axis while the author's names as well as functional stages that played the role of marketing and merchandising the book were given positions on the vertical axis.

4.3.2 Salience

In an artefact, elements are made to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees through the play on salience. It is the subjective hierarchy of importance among elements of a composition (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). In addition to information value and the central placement of elements, salient elements are of the highest value as it garners the most attention the quickest. In most cases, more salient elements are meant to attract the viewer's attention first and can be framed by other, less significant elements. These framing elements deepen the meaning of the text and create a more elaborate reading of the artefact (ibid). The analysis in this section focuses on these seven techniques previously elaborated in Section 3.2.2.2 by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) and compares its usage on the twelve book covers in the data set.

The first method to achieve salience is in the manipulation of size. Interestingly, the most prominent element across the data set in terms of size was the element related to cultural factors, thus drawing an overlap in techniques to achieve salience. Indeed, across the book covers in this research's data set, an overlap of techniques can be seen being exploited to achieve maximum potential in salience. Looking at the first cross-technique, some of the largest identifiable objects on the book covers were the RP. On covers A1, A2, A8, A10 and A11, the female RP, both in high and low modality, were the largest element on the cover. In fact, on covers like A1, the RP took up the entire length of the left side

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of the book while on covers like A8, the RP predominantly occupied about three quarters of the entire top section of the book.

Human RPs were not the only identifiable objects on the book covers. Inanimate RPs that were directly related to the genre and theme of the book were also found taking up the largest space on the covers. For example, a huge blue shopping bag and a giant gold price tag were appropriately used on A3 and A4 respectively for the books titled ‗Confessions of a Shopaholic' while a sparkly diamond tiara was the focal point on the cover of A5 of the book ‗The Princess Diaries'. Conversely, female accessories like stilettos and pumps were the largest element on book covers A9 and A12, echoing De Hoog's 2012 description of chick-lit book covers as being adorned with female accessories. Moreover, some of these elements, like the RP on cover A8 and the tiara on A5, were given also given the central position of the book, thus bringing in a three-fold technique to achieve salience.

In addition to resonating the findings from previous subchapters which found that images that encapsulated the main storyline of the book were given prominence, this section also found that elements that showcased femininity were made salient therefore making it more important. This stark display of orthodox gender identification such as the use of tiaras worn by royal women, high heels as a typical woman's footwear and shopping as a typical woman's hobby elucidates that the book is about a woman, and for a woman. Mixed with the heavy use of feminine colours like pink, the covers of chick-lit novels make it very clear that the genre is very much targeted at a female audience.

Another element that was made very prominent through size was the textual elements on the book covers. As previously established in the analyses on the functional stages and the information value of textual elements in the data, the

title and the name of the author are the two most important and essential parts of a book cover. These functional stages appeared on all twelve book covers and were also predominantly given the central position on the covers. From the perspective of salience, these two functional stages also took up some of the largest spaces on the book covers, coming in only second to the cultural images discussed in the earlier subsection.

However, when comparing the sizes of the words in each functional stage, it was found that the size of the words for the title were generally bigger than that of the author. A2 was the only cover where the author's name was slightly larger than the title. On covers A4, A5, A6, A9, A10 and A11, the titles were bigger and took up a larger area than the names of the authors. The remaining covers had both functional stages in approximately the same size.

Interestingly, the use of upper and lower case as well as bolded words played a role in the sizing and overall weight of the textual elements. For example, on both A3 and A4, the word ‗Shopaholic‘ was bolded giving it more weight and depth, even when compared to the fully capitalised functional stage of the author's name on A3. On A8, however, the usage of uppercase for the author's name gave it more weight compared to the title although both functional stages were of similar sizes.

Overall, the analysis on size echoes the results from previous sections—the largest and therefore more salient elements on book covers are cultural elements and the title as well as the author of the book, both of which are also predominantly found in the centre of the book, making it the most important element of a book cover.

Another method to achieve salience is through the use of colour. As clearly established in Section 4.2.3, chick-lit, being a light-hearted and fun genre,

utilised a great many bright, vivid and saturated colours on their book covers. Interestingly, though bright colours were prevalent across the twelve book covers, these colours were used in isolation, frequently with white as a counterpart. This phenomenon, too, was also discussed in Section 4.2.3 where white, acting as a non-colour (Lentz, 2015) is neither saturated nor dull, and neither contrasts nor harmonises with other colours but instead is used to create a blank space for other colours to interact with each other.

Indeed, white provides a neutral tone as a background colour and the blankness of white allows other elements of colour to stand out. Take for example, A1, A8, A9, A10 and A11. These five covers all had white backgrounds which allowed the brighter and more colourful elements on the covers to become more salient. That said, the elements that had vivid and saturated colours on these covers were the same elements given salience in terms of size and placement: cultural images and textual elements featuring the name of the book and the author. Once again, we see an overlap in techniques to better achieve salience.

Moreover, white was also used to create greater differentiation between similar elements on the same cover. Relating to framing, which is discussed in the following subsection, white was used in A2 to highlight the title of the book by only having the area backgrounding the title in white while other areas of the book had an analogous mix of pink, blue and purple which harmonised and mixed well with each other. The plain white background allowed the deep blue colour of the title to _pœp' thus bringing in yet another salience technique: tonal contrast.

This differentiation of tones was not only used for coloured elements on white backgrounds, but also for white elements on coloured backgrounds. Examples

include the textual elements found on covers A3, A5, A6 and A12 where instead of having white as a blank background featuring other colourful elements, white was allowed to shine through on top of a bright and vibrant background colour.

However, in the sense of using contrasting colours and highly differing colour saturation to create jarring tonal polarity and thus, salience, the data set yielded only a few examples. While contrasting colours were found on the book covers, they were rarely used to create salience but rather to enhance the vibrancy and ardour of the book covers in general whereby the colour of the elements contrasted each other as opposed to its background.

In addition to the use of white as a background colour for colourful elements; and also as a colour for elements on book covers with a colourful background, a deep and saturated red was also used in A3 and A4 for the book title. On A3, the deep red contrasted the bright blue while on A4 the deep red stood out on the muted gold-brown background of the book. On A7, the hot pink tone of the title stood out on the cool light blue background of the book. Though occurrences were rare, it is obvious that once again, the elements that were made salient through tonal contrast were the same as before: book titles.

The fourth technique mentioned by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to achieve salience is through sharpness and focus. From an overall view of the data set, there was only one occurrence of focal contrast where an element in the background was blurred out to give prominence to a foregrounding element, which is seen on cover A6. Half the book title ‗The Princess‘ was blurred while the other half ‗Diaries‘ was sharp and clear. This technique of placing an element on top of another element, the same way ‗Diaries‘ was positioned on top of ‗The Princess‘ is another technique to achieve salience, once again displaying how

salience techniques are often mixed and matched to bring about more evident results. This foregrounding technique is discussed later in this subsection.

Looking further into A6, the blurred out part of the title ‗The Princess' was larger in size compared to ‗Diaries' but with its sharp focus and brighter and more contrasting colour, ‗Diaries' was the more salient element on the cover, together with the cultural artefact of a tiara. These salient elements all summarises the book very effectively as the tiara is a denotation of royalty and the word ‗Diaries' correlate to the large diary lock present on the right side of the page.

However, this is not to say the data set did not yield any other occurrences of focal salience, but rather, that focal salience came in different forms. It was found that the main play on salience with regards to sharpness came in the form of the choices of typefaces. Typefaces, or rather, the visual appearance of words in a text, can be clear, sharp and clean; or unpolished, ragged and rough.

As established in Subsection 4.2.2, the four broad types of typefaces found on the covers were Serif, Sans Serif, Script and Decorative. Of these four typefaces, Serif and Sans Serif have clean and crisp designs, and were predominantly used on the book covers in the data set. The Script and Decorative typefaces, however, are squiggly and somewhat askew, with lines that are not as clean or as orderly as their counterparts. In this sense, the Serif and Sans Serif typefaces are seen as sharper and more focused, while the Script and Decorative typefaces are less clear, less sharp and therefore less salient. For example, when comparing the Serif and Sans Serif typefaces on covers A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, A10, and A11 to the Script and Decorative typefaces on the same cover, it is obvious that the Serif and Sans Serif typefaces are sharper, more focused and more salient than that of the Script and Decorative typeface. The only cover where a Script typeface was

more salient was on cover A5 where the size of the text was far larger than all other elements on the book, save for the tiara. In addition, as previously discussed in the analysis on tonal contrast, the title of the book in A2, which is in a Decorative typeface, is also highlighted with a lighter, white background compared to the background colour of the rest of the book. Though this provides it with a significant level of salience, the author's name was equally, if not more salient due to its size and sharpness.

Thus, drawing from this interesting finding, it can be seen that although different techniques are combined to create greater salience, elements with combined techniques of salience also _compete' with each other for an even higher level of prominence. This could be attributed to the fact that both elements in question are essential but different in their own way. In this case, the functional stages of author's name and book title are both distinct but defining functional stages of a book cover. This leads to the need to highlight both functional stages, but in a different way so as to attract attention while also allowing the audience to understand that they are not of the same category or function. Although it was consistently found in previous sections that titles were given slightly more prominence on book covers of this data set, the analysis on sharpness in terms of the typefaces used found that the author's names had clearer and sharper typeface designs compared to the titles.

Building on the analysis of combined techniques of salience, the sharpness of elements also extended to that of cultural factors on the book covers. On every cover in the data set except A7, there was an identifiable cultural element. However, of these eleven covers, only three covers had cultural factors displayed in life-like modality: A5, A8 and A9. As previously found in the earlier subsection, the modality of cultural factors in the data was mostly low and

cartoonish; colours used on the book covers, though bright and lively, did not create life-like images.

These flat, one-dimensional representations were given prominence in terms of size and vivid colours, but were made less salient with the lack of sharpness and modality given. A clear example of this is seen on A3 where the shopping bag, though big and bright, was made less prominent due to its low modality and background position. The sharp, crisp words on the shopping bag were instead given prominence. Thus, many of these cultural factors, though large in size, have low modality to allow other elements like the text on the book covers to stand out. These textual elements, like the author's name and book title are the most crucial and essential parts of a book cover, while the cultural elements simply intensify and strengthen the overall meaning of the book cover.

Shifting the analysis back to A3, another salience technique used was foregrounding. Repeating what was found in the analysis of information value, the element that was mainly given central positions was the title of the book. Some cultural elements and author names were found but not as frequently as book titles. However, looking not just at central positioning but also foregrounding and overlapping, the data set yielded only four occurrences. As mentioned earlier, the text in A3 overlapped the shopping bag, which, though big, was made less salient due to its background position and low modality. The second occurrence was in A4, where similar to A3, the text overlapped the very much larger price tag which was used as the background. The third occurrence was on cover A6, in which the sharper, but smaller, text ‗diaries‘ and tiara overlapped the larger blurred text ‗The Princess‘. Finally, the book title, which was backgrounded by bright and colourful circles in A8, slightly overlapped the very large and life-like RP at the bottom of the page.

In A3 and A4, the placement of text on top of the cultural elements gave it a sense of superiority. The prominence was more on the textual functional stages while the background cultural element enhanced the meaning of the text. In this case, it was the use of a shopping bag and price tag to connote being a ‗shopaholic‘. On the other hand, the image of the tiara and text ‗diaries‘ on A6 was more salient compared to the words ‗The Princess‘ it foregrounded not just because of overlapping, but also because of tonal contrast and sharpness. Once again, we see a play of different techniques to achieve salience. The size of the words ‗The Princess‘ gave it prominence, but its colour and sharpness—or lack thereof—made it sink into the background of the book. The image of the tiara, though small, was used as a signifier instead. All in all, the title of the book in A6 is still seen holistically as the most salient functional stage on the cover due to its central position.

Conversely, unlike the other three occurrences, the overlapping in A8 did not result in greater salience for the book title. Although it did stand out due to its placement on top of a contrasting and colourful background, the title still fell short in terms of salience mainly due to visual weight, clarity and size. The RP on A8, which took up nearly three quarters of the page, was both high in modality and large in size, thus making it the most salient element on the cover. Not to mention, the Script typeface used for the title made it somewhat less clear compared to the cleaner and heavier capitalised typeface used for the author‘s name, which stood out in contrast against a white background. However, like the other examples in the data, the overlapping element, that is the title, is linked to the element it is overlapping. In this case, the title, which is ‗Queen of Babble‘ refers to a woman—notably the main character—who speaks so rapidly and foolishly that she always blurts out secrets she is not meant to disclose. The RP

on the cover represents that said character: a female with her hand over her mouth as if to keep a secret.

Thus, to summarise, this research found that foregrounding was used mainly for the essential functional stage of book title, which was smaller in size, positioned on top of a much larger background element which was related to and complemented the overlapping element. However, it is important to note that the overlap did not give the element greater salience solely because it was on top and not obscured, but because other salience techniques were at play. As previously stated, the elements from this data set that were foregrounded were small, therefore reducing their salience. Simply put, it takes a negotiation of various salience features to be truly able to determine which elements stands out the most. Nonetheless, just as before, we still see a proclivity for the title of the book to be made the most salient element on a book cover.

Last but not least, this research looks at the final technique stated by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to achieve salience: placement in visual field. This technique is perhaps the most subjective of the seven due to the individual perception of the viewer. The role of the viewer is to make perceptual judgements about the salience of varying visual objects [based on the relative weights of these objects to each other] in combination, in order to reach a sense of balance amongst the different objects originating from a central point or core of the text.

Overall, the book covers in the data were fairly well-balanced, having large and small elements spaced out across the covers evenly. Examples of such covers include A3, A4, A6, A7, A10 and A11. Despite the large sizes of the cultural artefacts—a shopping bag on A3 and a price tag on A4—they were placed in the centre of the book cover rather than at the side, thus maintaining the symmetry of

the text. In A6, the large texts dominated both the top and bottom part of the cover, each balancing the other out, while in A7, the book title and author's name were placed in the centre of book, with abstract decorative designs on polar opposite sides of the cover. Finally, though there are rather sizeable RPs on both the left and right side of A10 and A11 respectively, the size and weight of the book titles in matching colours strikes a balance between the elements without making the overall text look heavier on either side. The smaller words surrounding both the top and bottom of the page also create a neat frame for both these elements and balances out the relative weight of the elements.

However, there were also occurrences where objects were placed off-centre in the visual field, resulting in a ‗heavier' visual weight compared to other elements in the artefact. While half of the book covers in this data set were fairly well-balanced and symmetrical, the other half carried greater weight on one side of the visual plane. In A1, the large size of the author's name was balanced by the equally large book title. Nevertheless, from the centre point of the visual field, which, in this case is the dragonfly necklace, the large RP spans out to the left of the cover, taking up the entire left frame. The RP is seen as carrying more visual weight, due to both its size and heavy gravitation to the left side of the book cover. Notably, the RP would have been even heavier, and therefore more salient, should the RP been in higher modality and unobscured. In A2, the centre point originates from the book title in the middle of the page. Next to it is a rather sizeable RP on the right. However, this said RP does not carry as much weight as the RP in A1 due to its size relative to the book title. Instead, the heaviest element on A2 is the author's name on the top of the page, descending downwards, creating a sort of inverted triangle of visual weight from top to centre.

Figure 4.2: Descending Visual Weight

Similar to A2, A5 was top-heavy, with a large tiara suspended on top of the focal point, which again, similar to A2 was the book title. However, it is important to note that the key difference between these two covers is that the weight the tiara carries in A5 did not create as much of an asymmetry as the author's name in A2 did due to the fact that the tiara is positioned slightly closer to the centre as compared to the author's name in A2, which was located at the very top of the page. But the top-heavy nature of both these covers pales in comparison to that of A8, where the RP dominates the entire top half of the book and partial of the bottom half as well; making it, without a doubt, the visually heaviest and most salient element on the book cover. Conversely, A9 and A12 are left-heavy, with the core of the text being in the centre of the cover. Both covers showcase a very large stiletto on the left side of text, sharing the middle section of the book with the book title. However, unlike A10 and A11 where the size of the title is big enough to create symmetry between the left and right side of the midpoint, the size of title on A9 and A12 were too small, thus not carrying enough visual weight to balance the image.

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Thus, from this analysis on visual weight, it can be seen that although an element is considered large in size, its placement on the visual plane also plays an essential role on its salience. Large elements with a central placement do not create asymmetry in a text and therefore is seen as less visually ‗heavy‗ and salient compared to elements which are placed off-centre. The comparison of A2 and A5 also support Kress and van Leeuwen‗s 1996 sentiment that the further up an element is placed in the visual field, the more weight it holds. Moreover, the interrelationship between the relative weights of the different elements on a book cover also determines the salience of individual elements. Two large, but equally balanced elements in the visual field create a symmetry that provides levelled salience to both elements, as seen in A10 and A11.

Reflecting what was found from the analysis of other subsections, the elements that had the heaviest visual weight, and therefore greater salience, were cultural artefacts such as the RP and stilettos, as well as the defining functional stages of author‗s name. Interestingly, the majority of the cultural elements in the data were found at the top and left side of the book covers thus creating even greater salience for these said elements.

To tie in the overall findings on this subsection on the analysis of salience, this research stresses and reiterates that though individual techniques can be employed in isolation to make an element more prominent, the functional semiotic analysis of salience cannot be seen in such a simplistic light. The interrelationship between and among elements and the constant negotiation of meaning can only truly be understood when all techniques are combined and analysed holistically in order to truly compare the relative salience of elements in a text. Only an in-depth analysis, such as the one performed in this subsection,

which looks at the application of all seven salience techniques, would be able to identify and explain a reliable and significant trend found in the data.

In the case of this study, the general finding was that three elements were given prominence on chick-lit book covers: identifiable cultural elements, the book title and name of author. With the type of text under analysis being a chick-lit book cover, and with a book cover's defining functional stages being the book title and author's name, there is no surprise that these elements were made the most salient. After all, a book cover's purpose is to provide information to its readers in as concise a way as possible and saliency makes certain that the most important and most informative elements get noticed first. Moreover, the cultural elements like the female RPs, stilettos, tiaras, shopping bag and price tag all encapsulate the storyline of the book while also and enhancing the reader's understanding of what the book is about. It also gives subtle cues as to the genre and intended audience of the book. It would be very odd to open a bright pink book with a tiara on its cover and a title written in delicate cursive font only to find its content about extreme sports or fish farming.

On a final note, it is crucial to note that saliency is relative, being a product of an intricate mix of different techniques, in comparison to one another. A large element does not necessarily stand out, especially if it is blurred out in sombre colours in the background. However, it may stand out if all other elements in the artefact were dark, fuzzy and backgrounded as well. Thus, analysis should not only focus on the saliency techniques employed, but also the saliency of each element in relation to other elements.

4.3.3 Framing

With varying number of elements co-existing together in an artefact, the relationship between and among the elements can be seen through framing.

Simply put, framing is a semiotic resource used for separating and connecting semiotic modes in an artefact (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). How heavily an element is framed reflects the degree to which the elements are seen as connected or disconnected from other elements in the artefact.

Similar to the analysis on salience, this subsection looks at five different techniques of framing—or better known as ‗framing devices'—identified by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to achieve [dis]continuity in a given text [refer Section 3.2.2.3]. The analysis focuses on the application of these devices and compares its usage on the twelve book covers in the data set.

The first framing device this research looks at is frame lines. Frame lines are a very salient form of framing. In fact, it can be considered the most explicit of the five devices as frame lines outrightly separate elements using lines, boundaries, boxes, grids, tables and borders. The dissociation becomes even more prominent when the frame lines are thick, bold and heavy. However, being a chick-lit book cover and not a PowerPoint presentation or business report, there was a lack of frame lines with regards to tables and grids. In fact, there were very few explicit uses of frame lines in the data set. But in the examples that were found, the frame lines were thick and bold, clearly defining the boundaries between elements. In A3 and A4 respectively, the shopping bag and price tag were framed off from the rest of the book with prominent boundaries. The separation was made even more obvious by making the background colour of these elements different from the surrounding area they were framed off from. Thus, similar to the analysis on salience, it can be seen that different framing devices are used simultaneously to create greater dissonance among elements in a text.

Interestingly, though frame lines did help separate different elements on A4 where some elements were placed within the frame while others were placed

outside, the frame that was used in A3 did not separate any of the elements at all. In fact, the frame only helped to tie in all the elements on the book cover together.

Another example of the usage of frame lines can be seen in A8 where the title was framed from the rest of the book with colourful circles as its background. The colourful circles also created a barrier between the large RP and the author's name below as both these elements were on a similar white background. In A10, the red carpet barrier pole in the image doubles as a frame segregating the book title from the RP. However, the pole does not extend nor frame the different entities fully, making its framing less powerful, thus creating a slight relation between the title and the RP; a finding that reflects what was established in previous subsections which found that cultural elements and RPs complement and enhance the meaning of the book title. All in all, from this initial analysis on framing, it can be seen that frame lines, though rare, are mainly used to separate the book title from other elements in the book.

The second framing device analysed is colour. It was found very early on from the analysis in previous sections that colours were a very large and significant part of the chick-lit genre. It portrayed a sense of youth and vibrancy, with a vivid mix of bright and saturated colours to exude fun, romance and light-heartedness. Unlike the explicitness of frame lines, the use of varying hues and tones is a more subtle technique used to create contrast or harmony between and among entities.

In this data set, colour is one of the most heavily used framing devices. Firstly, different colours were used for texts to differentiate the functional stages, especially those in the same size and typeface. A clear example of this can be seen in A7 where the title and author's name were centred in the middle of

cover, both in the same Sans Serif typeface and both the same size. As they were two different but equally important functional stages of a book, they were given similar prominence but were distinguished using different colours. In fact, eleven of the twelve book covers in the data set were found to use different colours for these two defining functional stages. The only cover to have both author's name and book title in the same colour was A12, where both these functional stages were in white. However, to differentiate them, additional framing devices, like the use of different typefaces, were employed. Similar to the case of A3 where the frame lines did nothing to separate the different entities on the book cover, different colours and typefaces were also used for the different functional stages. This technique of using different typefaces known as _visual shape' is discussed in detail further below.

Moreover, it was found that colour was not only used to create a separation between the modes on a book cover, but also used for the opposite function: to create a sense of harmony among the modes. While this may seem to be an impossible paradox, the explanation behind this phenomenon is quite simple: the individual elements on a book cover were separated using different colours, but the overall colour scheme chosen for all these said elements were analogous [refer Table 3.3], thus creating a sense of harmony among the different elements within a similar theme. Examples include book covers A1 [red, pink and blue], A2 [pink, purple and blue], A3 [red, pink and blue], A10 [green and blue] as well as A11 [red and orange]. The colours chosen for the modes on these covers go beyond just textual features; they extend to the background, inanimate RPs and are even found on the human RP's choice of clothes. From this analysis, we can see that the covers act as a functioning holistic unit, with different individual

parts working together to achieve what a book cover is meant to do: attract and provide information about the book to its intended audience.

Finally, it was also found that colour was manipulated in the background of covers to frame and highlight certain elements in order to make them more salient. As seen in Table 4.11, the background colour of A2 is a heavy mix of pastel blue and purple. These colours harmonise very well with pink, which was the choice of colour for the author's name. To create a sharper contrast for the title of the book, the area surrounding the title was frame off using a completely different background: white. This use of white highlighted the deep blue of the title and made it stand out compared to the pink name of the author, which blended very well with the background tones.

Table 4.11: Manipulation of Background Colour

A2	A5

Another example can be seen in A5. Although the colour scheme of the cover was a simple mix of pink and white, the background colour of the book was a subtle ombre, going from a highly saturated pink at the top, slowly becoming

more and more muted as it descended to the bottom of the page. The colour of the words, however, did not change. This created a decreasing level of contrast between the white lettering on the cover and their background from the top to the bottom of the page [refer Table 4.11].
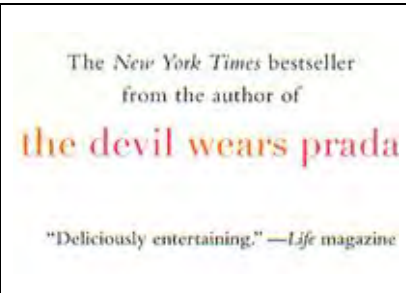
This levelling of contrast on the page also gave way to a subtle but clear differentiation between the different modes and functional stages of the text on the book. For instance: the title of A5 had the same typeface and colour as the book category right below it but was larger in size and stood out on its background more because it contrasted its darker background more whereas the book category was on a lighter background, making it less obvious. Conversely, to make the author's name salient, what with it being a defining and essential functional stage, the colour chosen for it was a deep pink tone to highly contrast the light pink background. From this, we can see an overt use of colour for both entities and their backgrounds to create contrast and differentiation between and among them.

Building on what was found in A5, colour was not the only device used to differentiate the elements on the text. Like much of the data in this study, the framing devices are a mix of different techniques, one of them being the use of visual shapes. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), visual shapes, also known as visual rhymes, are the continuity [or lack thereof] of the physical appearance of modes, be it in the sense of shape, form, colour, style or even modality.

One example can be seen in A10 and A11 where the title of A11 appears in A10 in not just the exact same colour, but also in the exact same typeface and visual shape [refer Table 4.12]. This creates an even stronger link between the books as not just the textual rhetorics are used, but also the visual rhetorics.

Framing devices connected the related literature works and to influence the audience's interpretation of the text. Therefore, it can be said that it is a literary device that manifests an interrelationship between and among texts. As seen from the data, it inspires and fosters related understanding in separate works.

Table 4.12: Framing Devices to Interconnect Books of Similar Titles

Example			
A10	The *New York Times* bestseller from the author of the devil wears prada "Deliciously entertaining." —*Life* magazine	A11	the devil wears prada

Moreover, the framing devices found position the readers and add layers of depth as well as meaning to the book covers, based on the audience's existing knowledge and understanding. One such example is the repetition of the sharp arrowhead tip design on A12. With the title of the book being _The Devil Wears Prada', the imagery of the book made use of the infamous cultural reference which depicts the devil in red, holding a three-pronged pitchfork, with horns, and a pointed tail. On the book cover, which is completely red in colour, the three-pronged pitchfork was used as the heel of the stiletto, and the pointy arrowhead design was repeated in the font design of the words in the title. This continuity of visual shape creates a link not just between text and illustration, but also between the meaning of the signifier and the signified; and the message that is translated to the audience.

Indeed, the use of this specific framing device was seen throughout the data set, with its most apparent use in the manipulation of typefaces and fonts for the textual features on the book covers. As previously mentioned in Section 3.2.1.2,

typefaces are the physical appearance of words. This encompasses their shape, style and visual form. It is important to note however, that there lays a significant difference between the term ‚typeface' and ‚font', especially when discussing the findings in this subsection. The ‚typeface' of a word is the larger umbrella term under which different ‚fonts' of the same typeface are categorised. This can be clearly illustrated in A9 and A10, where every textual feature on the cover was in the Serif typeface. Visually, however, the fonts used for each individual functional stage was different. Moreover, the style of the textual elements was also different: some were narrower, others either fully capitalised or in lowercase, sizes differed and varying colours were chosen. In fact, every functional stage on each book cover in the data was found to have a different font, save for A7. Even so, to differentiate the textual features on that cover, different colours and word sizes were used.

Based on the findings on the analysis of the functional stages in the data set, the book title and the author's name are the only two defining stages on book covers. From the analysis on composition, on the other hand, these two functional stages are also often given the central positions on book covers and are the highest in saliency, be it in terms of size, colour, sharpness, contrast or positioning. Thus it can be aptly deduced from these findings that these two functional stages are non-negotiable and equally important entities in their own right, playing different but equally crucial roles on the artefact they exist on. As such, framing devices come in, making sure that though they each have a fair share of prominence, they each appear different so as to easily discern them from each other.

The fourth framing device is the use of empty spaces. While having spaces between objects is a given, the gaps that spaces provide create a sense of

discontinuity. Similar to words in a sentence, each word contributes to the meaning of the sentence, but is separated from each other with spaces in between to mark their individual meaning as well. In the data, the book title was always found to be very close to the RP on the book cover. A7 was the only exception to this finding solely because the cover had no RP. Moreover, the functional stages of book category and tagline were also found to be placed very near the title. Four out of the six book categories [A1, A5, A8 and A11] and all three taglines [A2, A7 and A10] in the data set were positioned right below the book title. Conversely, the author's name was constantly found to be near to accolades on the cover. From the eight accolades that exist in the data set, six of them were found to be position either very closely above, or very closely below the author's name, as seen in A3, A4, A6, A8 and A12.

From these findings, it can be safely concluded that functional stages that are placed closely to one another are very much related, and often complement each other in meaning and in function. For example, the images of both the RP and cultural elements were always closely related in meaning to the title of the book. In many cases, the illustrations were a representation of the book, be it in the form of a human RP to signify the characters of the book, or female accessories to represent femininity and to encapsulate the storyline of the book. The tagline, on the other hand, sums up the tone and premise of the book while the book category lets the audience know the type of book the literary work falls under. Finally, accolades add credibility to the author, which in turn earns merit for the book. For promotional purposes, the accolades also instil a sense of trust and confidence in the audience in the author and her work.

Another interesting finding from the data was that large spaces were used on covers where the colour of certain elements in the text was the same. One clear

example was in A6 where an empty space—almost half a page long—separated the title from the author's name and accolade. Another example was in A12, where a significantly large gap lay between the title and the author's name as well as accolade. In both these two cases, the colour of the words chosen was white. Moreover, the sizes of the wordings were also quite similar. Large spaces were also used on A9 where the text was all found in the Serif typeface and was mostly black in colour. Thus, to create a greater disjoint among elements with similar visual shapes, large spaces were used.

The final framing device mentioned by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) was vectors. Vectors represent courses or directions; and are ‖formed by depicted elements that form an oblique line" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p.42). Due to the fact that the elements are connected by these ‖oblique' lines, the viewer understands the elements to be related and interacting with one another.

Referring to the hierarchical breakdown of categories and processes of images [refer Section 3.2.2.3], the analysis starts with the first type of narrative process called the action process; which can be further divided into two categories: transactional or non-transactional. A transactional action process is one whereby the actor achieves a goal via a vector in an image. An example of this can be seen in A8 where the RP, which plays the role of the actor, covers her mouth [goal] with her hand [vector] as if to withhold a secret and refrain from gossiping. As previously found in the earlier sections, the images on the book cover emulate the storyline of the book and in the case of this book, the storyline revolved around a woman who had a tendency of letting secrets slip.

Another transactional action process can be seen in both A1 and A2 where the dragonfly pendant [goal] floating in the centre of the book is held by a necklace chain [vector] emanating from the RP [actor]. The dragonfly necklace was an

essential part of the storyline of these books and ties in with the Native American belief that dragonflies are a symbol of spiritual activity (Mitchell and Lasswell, 2005). In A9, the heel [vector] of the stiletto [actor] is seen crushing a black personal planner [goal] and in A10, the RP [actor] is seen holding a purse [goal] with her arms outstretched [vector], walking down a path restricted by a barrier pole. Both these covers are from the book of the same title, with a story about an event planner living a fabulous life, frequenting the city's most fashionable night spots and rubbing shoulders with wealthy socialites. Thus, all these examples show how the RPs in the text are linked to one another to summarise the storyline of the book. The vectors are not overt, with an obvious lack of strong and heavy action processes reflecting the more laidback style of the genre.

On the other hand, the second type of action process is called the non-transactional action process. A non-transactional action process is one whereby there is only one participant, the actor, and the vectors that come from this actor are ―not done to or aimed at anyone or anything" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p.63). As such, there are no goals in these images and actions are one-directional. Only one example of this type of process was found in the data; and that was on A11. The RP [actor] on the cover is seen standing with her limb pointed outwards and her finger upright [vector] as if she is giving instructions or a warning. However, the vector was not directed at anyone or anything within the book cover. Once again, we see a tendency to use vectors to link the RP to the storyline of the book. From the body language of the RP, and also judging from the pointed tail and red clothes the RP wears, it can be certain that that said RP is the ‗devil' mentioned in the book title; presumably a woman in a position of power based on her authoritative stance.

The second type of narrative process is called the reactional process, which can also be transactional and non-transactional. In data, there were no occurrences of transactional reactional processes as there were only two images with eyelines—A1 and A2—in which both RPs were not looking at a specific phenomenon but rather with downturned and obscured eyelines respectively. A detailed and more in-depth analysis on gaze is discussed in the following subsection when looking at the social actors in an artefact. Nonetheless, an obvious trend can be seen from the book covers in the data: the RP's facial features—especially the eyes—were omitted, either partially or completely, in the images. This resonates Rende's (2008) claim that chick-lit book covers display fragmented images of the female body.

A viable reason for not disclosing the physical representation of the RP can be attributed to the same reason why editors, publishers and authors often do not use famous actors who appear in the movie tie-in on book covers [even though it may help boost sales]: it gives its audience an association and perhaps a biased view of the character and storyline. This notion is also supported by Stephenie Meyer, the world-famous author of the best-selling teen vampire romance series ‗Twilight' which has recently been turned into a five-part movie. On her website, Meyer personally addressed her fans' frustration towards to fact that after reading all four books in the series, they still did not have a substantial idea of what Bella, the main character, looked like. Meyer (2008, para.15) replied:

―I left out a detailed description of Bella in the book so that the reader could more easily step into her shoes."

From this curt but succinct reply, it can be fairly deduced that the authors and publishers of books want their characters to exude a certain level of relatability

so as to be able to seem more accessible to the audience members. After all, chick-lit is a genre by women, about women and for women. Though its storylines are mainly fictitious by nature, the women in these stories do go through every day struggles in life that women in real life face as well. Chick-lit author Jennifer Weiner is quoted in Sydney's Sun Herald that her books draw from ‑the raw material of my life and my friends' lives, and readers' lives, whipped into a meringue of fiction" (Maier, 2007, para.5). Thus, keeping RPs on book covers unidentified, vague and with a lack of eye contact makes the RP more generic, and therefore, more relatable to all classes and types of audience members.

The remaining RPs on the book covers in the data set all fall under the second category: conceptual representations. These types of images do not possess vectors, but instead possess a sense of timelessness and represent their participants in a generalised essence. Rather than involving the elements in an action process, the images represent a static and stable concept. The majority of examples on the book covers come in the form of cultural elements realised as female accessories: shopping bags, tiaras and high heels. Other examples came in the form of items associated with activities such as diary locks [keeping a diary] and price tags [shopping].

However shifting the focus back to vectors as a framing device, it can be seen that vectors link images on the book to summarise the storyline of the book to its audience. The vectors found were sparse and covert. Images on the book covers in the data set had a proclivity to be presented as conceptual representations rather than narrative processes. This propagates the belief that chick-lit is of a lighter genre, with the lives of the characters depicted in the images seen more as timeless concepts than a changing action process. The images also propagate

certain stereotypes related to gender with many conceptual images related to female accessories and what is thought to be ‗female‘ hobbies and activities. These generic representations of females on book covers, and their repercussions on the perception of gender identity and stereotyping, are addressed further in Section 4.5.

To bring the analysis on framing in this subsection to a close, we see a play of different framing devices working with and against each other to negotiate meaning. Similar colours and shapes create harmony, linking the elements and uniting them as a coherent unit. On the other hand, tonal contrast, large gaps and frame lines pull them apart making visually similar elements stand individually. Meaning potential in a text is not simplistic. It is very covert and its intricacies are oftentimes understood but overlooked. We are indirectly fed with the subtle messages that the book covers are projecting, without fully acknowledging why and how. Different techniques like saliency and composition put forth entities that are important, catching and directing the audience‘s attention to the selling points of the book, while framing devices cluster relevant details together making sense of both the individual units and the units functioning as a whole.

Nonetheless, the in-depth analysis on the composition of chick-lit book covers yielded similar and repeated findings which build on what was already found on the analysis on the textual features of the covers of these genres: the two defining functional stages on a book cover—the book title and author‘s name—were always given central positions and the greatest salience. In order for them to be differentiated, however, framing devices were used to individuate them, often via the use of different visual cues like font and colour. Moreover, to further build on the meaning making potential of the text and to complement the

book title, RPs were also given a high degree of salience and were placed alongside the title of the book.

These findings reflect what was previously established by many previous researchers, as summarised in Section 2.2.3: the use of multimodality and the co-deployment of multiple forms of modes enhances meaning making, and in turn, enhances the reception of the communicative message to the intended audience of a text. The subtleties of the modes and the meanings they surreptitiously carry may not be noticed when viewing a book cover as a buyer, but these semiotic resources are not simply aesthetic embellishments on a printed piece of paper, but rather an intricate weave of complementary modes that imparts indirect messages to audience members, unbeknownst to them.

However, this notion has sparked yet another question to be answered: do we receive these covert messages because they relate to us and represent us; or do we allow ourselves to believe they relate to us because that is what the media propagates? Does fiction reflect reality or do we allow our thoughts and actions to be influenced and shaped by fiction? After all, the perception of a mode and the meaning it carries depends heavily on socially and culturally constructed circumstances (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002; Martin and Nakayama, 2008). Thus, the research will proceed to the final section of the analysis, which looks at the social actors on chick-lit book covers before attempting to answer these questions, alongside tackling the gender issues hovering around this genre of literature.

4.4 Social Actors

Social actors in a communicative act are the represented participants [RP] of a visual text. Similar to what was discussed earlier in the subsection on vectors, RPs are either narrative where they present unfolding actions and events or conceptual

where they show abstract, comparative or generalised categories (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). These RPs are seen as textual instantiations of models of the self and others, both individual and collective as the representation of social actors is shaped and determined by discursive and social practices and formations (Koller, 2009).

In texts and artefacts where there is no face-to-face communication, RPs and the audience are joined in interaction via three factors: gaze [the social interaction between the RP and viewer], social distance [the social relation between the RP and the viewer] and perspective [the degree of involvement and power relation between the RP and the viewer] (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Together, these three factors on chick-lit book covers are analysed in order to understand how social actors are represented on the covers of this genre.

4.4.1 Gaze

The interaction between the audience of an image and the RP is established through the gaze of the represented social actor. What is interesting is the fact that even though eleven of the twelve books in the data had an RP on the cover—half of them being human RPs—only the RP on A1 had a visible eye— thus eyeline and gaze—in the data set. Even so, only one eye was visible and the other half of the RP's face was cropped out at the edge of the page. The RP on A2 is also seen to have a general direction in which her gaze is directed towards but the RP's face is turned away and her back is faced towards the viewers, thus hiding all facial features, including her eyes. The remainder of the human RPs in the data set all had obscured faces and no eyelines. Their heads, faces and most importantly, eyes, were cropped out of the edge of the book. It is an odd coincidence—if it can be called that at all—that five books, of four different titles, written by three different authors, across different publishing houses and

dates all share this pattern in establishing a relationship between the RP and viewer.

Thus, the obvious lack of a direct gaze, or any gaze at all for that matter, creates a very clear-cut and universally understood domain where RPs in the chick-lit genre are seen as the object of the audience's contemplation. Indeed, twelve books may be a very small number to draw such a decisive conclusion, but from the data set alone, it is plain that the RPs on the covers are not given a clear, life-like and highly modulated physical appearance [refer Section 4.2.3]. Most notably, the eyes of the RPs were constantly and intentionally omitted by strategic placement and body angling on the book cover.

Going back to the reason for having a human RP on a book cover, Bottcher (2013) lists a few significant advantages to doing so. First and foremost, the human eye is inevitably drawn to faces and having a face on a book cover will draw more attention than one without; thus promoting sales. Second, characters are able to convey a myriad of interpersonal meanings, ranging from emotions, concepts and interpersonal relationships through their body language, facial expression and dressing style. Finally, characters also enable the audience members to build and establish a relationship with them immediately, making the book feel more familiar with a strong sense of sentiment. However, Bottcher (2013) also listed a few reasons why placing a character on a book cover may not be to the book's best advantage. Firstly, characters can be distracting and draw attention away from other elements on the book. Second, depicting a character robs the reader's creative right to imagine them and takes away a very large part of the enjoyable reading experience many readers love. Finally, building on the second disadvantage, Bottcher (2013) also chimed Meyer's 2008 sentiment,

stating that depicting a character can also interfere with readers identifying with and relating to them.

Ultimately, Bottcher (2013) concluded that a ―level-headed approach‖ (para.5) needs to be taken where book cover designs are creative in their manipulation of the RP. In short, a balance should be struck between what is depicted and what is not, based on ―creative vision, business matters and readers‘ interests‖ (para.6). Thus, this could explain the inclination of the designs on these covers to keep the RPs, but to make them less identifiable and more generic to the audience members. After all, having an RP does create a stronger sense of connection between the readers and the characters, but not representing them in detail physically allows audience members to generate their own image of the characters, thus creating a win-win situation for both parties.

Moreover, the non-directed gaze of the RP forms a weaker link with the audience members, allowing viewers to form their own perceptions of the characters and the storyline of the book independently. Taking the direct gaze away from the RPs in the data, the audience members are left with the task of inspecting and deducing the many aspects of the character and the storyline of the book based on visual cues such as the RP‘s outfits, body language, gesture and physical background. For example, the outfits in A1 and A2 all represent the flapper style dresses and head pieces circa 1920s. On A8, the RP is seen with a gesture likened to that of keeping a secret by covering her mouth—which is in a coy and knowing smile—with her hand. On A10, the RP is walking down a path with a barrier pole; presumably a red carpet or the waiting line of somewhere exclusive. Her clothes, though casual, is revealing and stylish, all indicating a woman living a hip and glamorous lifestyle. Finally, the RP on A11 is seen to project a very assertive stance through her body language, what with her hand on

her hip and finger pointing like she is giving instructions or orders to someone. Her fully red outfit, with fur trimmings, heavy necklace and high boots all indicate a stylish and powerful woman who dresses expensively. The RP is also given a pointed tail, which, as discussed in Section 4.3.3, makes a cultural reference to the devil.

Thus, it can be concluded from this subsection that the use of gaze on chick-lit book covers are non-directed where the RPs become the objects of the audience's scrutiny and study, allowing audience members to dissect the cover more effectively with the visual cues that the RPs carry. Indeed, these human RPs and their representations inherently emulate and reflect the storyline of the book as well as the characters involved. They create a more personal and humanly touch on the covers and allow audience members to understand, at the very least, the gist of the storyline, genre and the characters in the book. That said, the lack of eyelines, and even a face, allows the audience to also create an image of the character in their head while still being guided with the minimum visual prompts and their symbolic signified representations through facial expressions, clothes, body language gestures and even physical background.

4.4.2 Social Distance

While interaction can be established through the gaze of the RP towards the audience, the relationship between the RP and the audience can be established through their social distance [refer Section 3.2.3.2]. It is important to note that this research took into account two separate matters in the analysis of this subsection: first, that the RP's eyes, heads and other body parts were cropped out of frame of the book cover; and second, that the inanimate RPs could not be analysed based on the framework put forth by Hall (1966) as that said framework utilised the categorisation of social distance based on human body figures.

Nonetheless, both these matters are addressed and resolved as follows: first, for purposes already established in the earlier subsection on the analysis of gaze, the omission of the eyes, heads and other body parts that were cropped out of corner of the frame of the book cover did not affect the analysis of social distance and RPs were still considered to be represented as ‗whole‗ figures despite missing such body parts; and second, the analysis on inanimate RPs in the data did not pose an issue with regards to the framework as all inanimate were presented as ‗whole‗ figures as well, with A9 being the only inanimate RP which was horizontally cropped out of the left side of frame. This is because the framework employed for human social actors looks at the vertical representation of the RP, not the horizontal.

Thus, with these matters aside, the social distances of the human RPs found on the book covers in the data set were divided based on the framework discussed in Table 3.4 in Section 3.2.3.2. Table 4.13 below summarises the findings:

Table 4.13: Social Distance of RP in Data Set

RP in Data Set	Social Distance Hall (1966: 110-120)	Field of Vision Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 125)	Size of Frame Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 124)
A8	Close personal	Head and shoulders	Close shot
A1	Far personal/ Close social	Waist up/ Whole figure	Medium shot
A2, A10, A11	Far social	Whole figure with space	Long shot

It was found that of the five human RPs, three were seen with their whole figures with surrounding space on the book covers. These long shots indicate a far social distance between the RPs and the audience which tie in with the findings on the analysis of gaze. As previously discovered in Section 4.4.1, the

RPs on the book covers did not have direct gazes. In fact, many of them did not have eyes at all. The absence of eyelines and eye contact created a disconnect between the RPs and the audience and it also weakened the interaction between the two parties, creating more of an ‗offer‘ image rather than a ‗demand‘ image. Audiences are allowed to look at the RPs being displayed and make judgements of them with guided visual cues. More importantly, the audience can very easily identify or even create an identity for the RP with the lack of connection formed between the RP and the audience.

The far social distance adds even more depth to this phenomenon by further disjointing the two parties. The RPs are seen as distant entities with whom the audiences have detached relationships with. The lack of intimacy can be attributed to the desire to keep the RPs assessable but unattainable; relatable but unreachable. After all, the point of having an RP on a book cover is to attract audience members and to ‗humanise‘ the book while still allowing the readers to form their own perceptions and images of the characters and their stories. Close shots would defeat this purpose as it would indicate an intimate relationship whereby the RPs and audience have a well-established and close-knit bond.

Another reason for the use of long-shots is perhaps also to do with the fact that long shots allow for more visual clues to be presented. Similar to why the inanimate RPs were all presented in a long shot, with whole figures and surrounding space, the objects were more easily identifiable and greater amounts of detail could be presented on these RPs. For example, we get to see the body language of the human RP, their clothes and style, and even their physical surroundings which would otherwise be an impossible feat in a tight, close-up shot. These visual clues implicitly add on to the perception the readers gain about the RP—and presumably, book characters—before reading the book. They

are able to translate and transmit ideas and concepts about the character, the story and the genre of the book, without a single word being said. This, once again, complements the findings on gaze where audience members are left to their own devices to construct their personal takes on the book based on the RPs on the book covers. This is also a strategic use of resources as book covers do not offer an infinite amount of space for a message to be transmitted. Having too many elements not only congests the cover, making it look untidy and overwhelming, but the abundance of information may also be lost to the viewer who only spends about eight seconds (UNESCO Publishing, 2014) looking at the cover of the book. In addition, unlike texts in new media such as web pages and electronic advertisements, book covers are neither interactive nor dynamic in the sense that they do not possess animations, changing images, sounds, and external links which allows for kinaesthetic exploration. Thus, the elements on a book cover have to play multiple roles to propagate—both implicitly and explicitly—messages to its viewers in an as effective a way as possible.

Conversely, there were also human RPs in the data set who were displayed in closer shots. The RP on A1 was displayed in quite an interesting way as the frame size and social distance did not fully match the framework by Hall (1966) [refer Table 3.4]. In the shot, the RP is actually seen somewhere from her knees up. This phenomenon does not match with the field of vision put forth by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) who divided the two closest compatible categories into either _waist up' or _whole figures'. As such, this research had to stand on middle ground and identify the size of frame simply as a medium shot, with the RP establishing a distant-personal or close-social relation with the audience members [refer Table 4.13].

Unlike the other RPs in the data set, the RP on A1 was the only RP to have a visible eye. Even so, her eye was downturned and the other half of her face was cropped out of the cover. In fact, like A10, the entire half of her body was omitted and though she is seen to be physically closer to audience members due to size of the frame, her overall identity still eluded the audience. She was given some notable visual cues like a flapper-style dress and a dragonfly necklace, but the lack of specific facial attributes made her a mystery. Much like the RPs in the long-shots, the lack of eye contact distanced her from the viewer.

However, the RP on A8 was quite different. Of the five covers in the data set which had a human RP, this was the only close up shot of the RP, in high modality. The RP is seen from her shoulders up; and, like the rest of the human RPs in the data set, her eyes were omitted from the shot. This phenomenon created an interesting paradox: on the one hand, the frame size indicated a close personal relationship between the RP and the audience; on the other, the indiscernible RP created a disjoint where the audience members could not identify nor connect with the RP on a deeper level due to the lack of interaction. The closeness of the shot also did not allow for much visual cues to be given to audience members. We do not see her clothes, her body language or her physical environment. The only thing the viewers have to work on is her hand gesture, and presumably, her gender. Thus, it still ties in with the initial conclusion on the need to be balanced when using an RP on a book cover. Close shot or otherwise, the human RPs remain unidentifiable and elusive. The use of high modality on A8 contrasted the lack of any recognisable facial features, what with her eyes cropped out of the page and her hand covering the other half of her face. However, as previously established, the RP on the book cover does help to emulate the storyline of the book, and this RP makes no exception. Her hand

gesture indicates one of keeping a secret, which the main character of the book fails to do, thus earning the title ‗Queen of Babble'. The closeness of the shot also gives a sense of intimacy between the RP and the audience, an understandable need given the fact that the RP is withholding a secret which is only usually shared with close friends.

In summary, this research found that there was definitely a proclivity in the data set for the use of a long-shot when presenting the RP to the viewers. The distance that the RP keeps ties in with the lack of eye contact and far social relationship the RP has with the audience. While the RPs do lend a human touch, a concept and a sense of sentiment to the book, their use is balanced out by keeping them detached and unattainable, much like viewing objects in a display case. However, close, medium or long-shots aside, the findings were recurrent: while the RPs might have been kept at differing distances physically, they were all kept very distant socially and emotionally due to their lack of interaction with the audience and their generic identity. From phatic point of view, the RPs did not make eye contact nor did they interact with viewers. Moreover, the intentional omission of eyes, faces and even the entire head all indicate a desire for the RP to be kept as an elusive entity rather than a familiar sentiment.

The findings in this subsection both reaffirms and supplements the patterns already found in the earlier subsection on gaze. To draw the analysis on RPs to a close and to form a stronger understanding on their use on chick-lit book covers, this study now looks at the final element in the analysis of social actors and the final subsection of the analytical framework of this research: the perspective of the RP on chick-lit book covers.

4.4.3 Perspective

Perspective deals with the degree of involvement and power relations between the RP and the viewer, bringing the analysis of this research on social actors full circle. It is displayed through the use of angling and is achieved on two separate planes: the horizontal angle and the vertical angle [refer Section 3.2.3.3].

Looking at the horizontal angle in the data, this study analyses the two different kinds of RPs in the data set: human RPs and inanimate RPs. On four out of five covers with a human RP, [A1, A2, A10 and A11] the social actors are all presented in an oblique angle, some greater than others. For example, A2 and A10 have RPs with their backs facing the audience while A1 and A11 are only slightly turned away. On the other hand, of the six inanimate RPs [A3, A4, A5, A6, A9 and A12], half of them were positioned at an oblique angle [A5, A9 and A12] while the other three faced the audiences head on.

All in all, we can once again see that the patterns found in the data do not just reflect but also supplement what was already established in Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. In addition to detaching the RPs both physically and emotionally through gaze and distance, the RP's involvement with the viewer is further reduced through the use of oblique angles.

A8, however, is once again the only cover with the human RP presented up front and close-up, which, as already pointed out in the analysis in the previous subsection, may be due to the storyline of the book: sharing a secret requires having a close social relationship with the RP and the viewer has to be treated as ‗one of us' rather than a stranger looking in at the sidelines from the outside. The inanimate RPs also had an equal tendency to be presented both from a frontal angle and an oblique angle. This could be attributed to the fact that these RPs are

lifeless objects that represent more of a concept than a living being with emotions and capable of forming a phatic connection with the audience.

From the vertical standpoint, the findings in the data were concordant across all book covers: the RPs were at eye-level with the viewers; which is an odd thing to say as all the RPs did not actually have eyes, save for the RP on A1. Taking this into consideration, this research chose not to base the vertical angle on eye-level too literally but rather to look at the gradient, incline and visual weight of the RP in the image. Regardless, it was found that none of the anglings on the five book covers showed great perspective shifts, favouring that of a medium angle where the RPs were presented horizontally to the viewers, which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), denotes equal power between the RP and viewer.

Similar to the analysis on the horizontal angle, the analysis in this subsection reflects and extends the findings from the previous two subsections on social actors. Though RPs are presented as detached from the viewer, they still have to be relatable and assessable. Having too high or low of a power status might change the relationship dynamics and perception the viewers have of the RP, the character, the storyline and the concept it represents. Moreover, the use of an RP is to humanise the book, add sentiment and encapsulate the storyline of the book. Making the RP seem more powerful than viewers may be intimidating thus removing some of the ‗light‗ and ‗humorous‗ (Montgomery, 2006) tones the chick-lit genre is famous for. As discussed, modes are sometimes used because it ensures and enhances the reception of the communicative message to the intended audience of a text [refer Section 2.2.3]. There would be a disjoint should the RP on a chick-lit book cover be presented as a daunting entity

looming forebodingly at a high angle above the viewers to represent a light and humorous storyline of the book within.

Nevertheless, the analysis on this subsection can be successfully drawn to a close by summarising that chick-lit book covers tend to favour oblique and eye-level shots, forming a detached yet status-equal relationship between the RP and the viewer. It is also very clear from the intersection of the multiple frameworks that the patterns found in the data were recurrent and complementary. Social actors are quite often used on chick-lit book covers as their presence adds some phatic value to the books, implicitly transmitting information regarding the genre, character and storyline of the book. However, in order to allow viewers to relate to these social actors, they are mostly presented to the viewers generically in a detached and distant shot, at an obscured but equal angle. This allows for the social actors to play their role, both in marketing and in presenting information about the book without stripping the viewers' ability to form their own perceptions of the characters and storylines and of the book, thus creating a win-win situation for both parties.

4.5 Representation of the Chick-Lit Genre

Sections 4.2 to 4.4 of this study report the analyses of modes in terms of text, composition and social actors of the data thus answering the first research question of this study. This section serves to tie those findings together and draw apt conclusions regarding the patterns found between and among the modes on chick-lit book covers to answer the second research question of this study which relates to the multimodal representation of the chick-lit genre.

From the get-go, the analysis of the textual features on chick-lit book covers yielded very clear results that the functional stages found only defined the broad text genre as that of a book cover. Two defining functional stages, or better known as

‗obligatory' functional stages (Ren, 2010) were found: the book title and author's name. However, based on the functional stages alone, the exact literary genre of the text remained unclear. It was only when taglines with ‗she' were used that the genre became clearer. Thus, the book covers took on many other modes such as typefaces and colour to further propagate its identity as being part of the chick-lit genre.

As mentioned in Section 4.2, the functional stages were the textual rhetorics of the cover while the usage of typeface and colour were part of the visual rhetorics which complemented the textual aspects so as to form a clearer and more defined genre. From the analysis, the Sans Serif typeface was favoured above all else to achieve a more modern outlook towards the books. Its smooth design gave a very clean and appealing outlook to the audience as it is perceived to be simple, chic, young, hip and cool (van Leeuwen, 2006). This endorses the working definition of chick-lit in this current research where the tone of chick-lit books is usually personal, light, and humorous.

However, the use of typefaces is also where the research started to see a greater shift in the appeal to gender of the genre, making it lean more towards the ‗feminine' side, thus earning the label ‗chick' to its title as opposed to just being called general ‗fiction'. The Script typeface was prevalent across the book covers in the data set. Even the Decorative typefaces used limited its design to ‗curly' and ‗squiggly' fonts comparable to that of the Script typeface. Clearly, handwriting is not gender-specific. Men and women both write. Needless to say, men and women both have cursive handwriting, too. But its incessant use on the book covers begs a question: is the Script typeface more associated with a woman than a man?

To answer this question, the research took a look at a recent phenomenon in the media called ‗gender flipping'. In essence, gender flipping involves flipping the roles of men and women in the media, be it in advertisements, comics, posters and even

book covers. Starting off as a meme, it became a simple yet eye-opening way of raising awareness towards gender representations and expectations in the media. One such flip was called the ‗coverflip' inspired by young adult fiction author Maureen Johnson who said her male readers were ―embarrassed to read her pink-covered books in public" (Matchar, 2013, para.7). In the flip, two books, originally written by male authors, were given ―women's fiction treatment" (ibid) as illustrated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Original vs. Coverflip Book Covers

Original Cover	Coverflip Version

Right off the bat, we see the use of the Script typeface on both covers of the coverflip version of the book; with the coverflip version of ‗Lord of the Flies‘ in full Script typeface. More interestingly, is the fact that the original covers did not, even once, use any form of Script typeface for their textual elements. Moreover, we also see a play on colour in both these two pairs of books. In both coverflip versions, we see a heavy use of blue while the coverflip version of ‗Lord of the Flies‘ utilised shades of pink for its text as well as RP. This reflects what was found in this study‘s analysis on colour where pink was the most frequently used colour in the data set followed closely by blue.

Though the data yielded a multitude of varying colours in saturated and vibrant shades, pink was ultimately the colour that was used the most across all twelve books in the data set. Referring back to Table 3.2 and the analysis on colour in Section 4.2.3, the cultural value of pink in itself is already related to the female gender and inherently given very ‗feminine‘ qualities. According to Paoletti (2012) and Verma (2015), the 1900s to 1940s first saw a movement towards gender distinction in clothing. The movement started for toddlers and later, for adults. According to the June 1918 issue of the Infant‘s Department, manufacturers at that time decided that pink was for boys and blue was for girls. This was because pink was seen as a sub-colour of red, thus being a stronger colour more suitable for boys. Blue, on the other hand, was more delicate and dainty, which meant it was prettier for the girl. However, the shift came post World War II when blue was extensively used for soldiers‘ uniforms. As a majority of the soldiers were males, blue became more associated as a masculine colour (Verma, 2015). Moreover, pink was propelled as a feminine colour from the 1940s onwards, with slogans like ‗Think Pink‘ to convince women to embrace their femininity. Since then, pop culture took the wheel and has been the main propagator of the gender segregation of this colour.

Thus, it is easy to see why, being a genre about women, by women and for women, that the colour pink is the most frequently used in the data set. Though it may not be the colour of choice on books of other genres, the use of pink on chick-lit book covers instinctively gives it an immediate and signature identity. In a way, the colour already tells a story about the character, genre, storyline, author and audience of a book without having to utter a single word, which saves immeasurable amounts of time marketing and explaining the book.

Overall, we are once again able to note a clear gender gap in the choice of not just colour, but typefaces as well. Van Leeuwen (2006) regards the Script typeface as delicate and feminine therefore making it a suitable typeface for a genre for women. This, paired with the recurrent use of pink, all implicitly identify women and their personality as girly, feminine, delicate and romantic. It is indeed a very broad generalisation to classify all women in this manner. Nonetheless, their use does help with the instant identification of the genre.

From a compositional perspective, the two defining stages of a book cover—book titles and author's names—were give the central placement on book covers. With the type of text under analysis being a chick-lit book cover, there is no surprise that these elements were also made the most salient, though they were also differentiated by using varying framing devices. However, it was interesting to note that along with these obligatory functional stages, social actors were also given central positions and high salience. These social actors came in two forms: inanimate RPs and human RPs. As found in Section 4.4, RPs on book covers helped to encapsulate the storyline of the book and also served to provide a visual illustration of the characters from the book. It also gave subtle cues as to the genre and intended audience of the book and enhanced the reader's understanding of what the book is about. However, it was also found that RPs did play a major role in the gender identification and stereotyping of the genre.

One observation from the analysis was that the book covers did have a high tendency to showcase many female accessories: shopping bags, tiaras and high heels. Other inanimate RPs came in the form of items associated with activities such as diary locks and price tags. While female accessories are understandable, one questions why writing in a diary and price tags, which are inherently linked to shopping, are seen as activities a female audience can relate to. According to Raoul (1989), the type of text written in a diary reflects a very feminine genre; one where the writer, a woman, writes about herself for herself. In addition, Leonard (2016, para.1) noted that ‒women write in diaries, men write in journals". Implicitly, a clear gender line is drawn in association with the action of keeping a diary.

The same can be said when discussing shopping. In his article posted on psychologytoday.com, Taylor (2014) shared a finding from a survey conducted on 2,000 Brits in 2013 which found that men become bored after only 26 minutes of shopping, while it took women a full two hours. The survey also found that 80% of men did not like shopping with their partners and that 45% avoided doing so completely. About 50% of all spousal shopping trips ended in arguments, with men becoming frustrated, because they bought what they needed straight away, while their partners were still looking and taking too long to make decisions. Taylor related this phenomenon back to the origins of such behaviour, when humans lived as hunters and gatherers: men were tasked with hunting wild animals while women took on the responsibility of foraging for plants, nuts, fruits and vegetables. Taylor believes that these instincts are reflected in a human's shopping habits today. A woman spends a lot of time browsing, examining the product to be bought, checking its viability, comparing the quality and discarding what is not wanted. The more the variety, the longer a time they take. Conversely, a man's shopping habit, like hunting, is mono-focused. In the past, the goal was to kill an animal and bring it home. In present time,

the goal is to buy only what is needed and head home. As such, shopping per se is seen very much as a ‗female‘ activity; enjoyed more and done in more lengthy detail by women than men. This, of course, is not to say that all women like shopping or that all men dislike it, but rather that there is an obvious gender difference towards this activity and that it is often exploited quite rampantly in the media.

On the other hand, the RPs in the data set of this research also came in the form of human RPs. These human RPs found on the book covers, in high modality or otherwise, all were of medium build. Those found in whole figures were all tall, long-legged and thin; dressed and accessorised well, in addition to wearing heels. This phenomenon resonates Mazza‘s 2006 (p.18) finding on chick-lit stating these covers feature ―figures of long-legged women wearing stiletto heels". In addition, these human RPs were also shown to have fair and light coloured skin. While this may seem to be a given, seeing as how the stories that these covers are based on are about white women, we can see a clear racial exclusivity with regards to this genre. This observation ties in with Loebig (2017) who states that chick-lit plots focus on characters who are always heterosexual, white, urban, middle class or higher, aged in their late twenties to mid-thirties. In other words, chick-lit—and the women it represents—is biased and nearly ―inaccessible to women of colour and queer women" (para.8).

This phenomenon of creating very media-stereotyped images of women continues with the physical attributes given to these RPs‘ bodies, as well. Across the data set, we see every RP with a thin, slim and shapely frame. Even the RP on A8, which story is about a protagonist struggling with weight issues [the original name of this novel was ‗Size 12 is not Fat‘] has a slender RP on its cover, with high and defined cheekbones and a sharp chin. Even in the coverflip version of ‗Freedom‘ [refer Table 4.14], the RP, positioned at an obscured angle with half her face cropped out, is slim and shapely.

Thus, three things can be seen here in the representation of women through a human RP: first, that the chick-lit genre very much marginalises women of different races and ethnicities; second, that women are still very much seen as a collection of body parts [mostly without a face or discernible facial features]—which ideally should be slim and shapely; and third, that women are dressed in a specific style which in turn highlight these slim, shapely—and therefore desirable—body parts. It is indeed unfortunate that a genre that is written by women for women and about women represents women in such a light. Instead of taking advantage of the opportunity to truly represent and celebrate the diversity of women in this world, we once again see the age-old media stereotype of the female gender.

However, in defence of the authors and this genre as a whole, this research does highlight that chick-lit authors—and authors in general—have very little control over their book cover designs. On her Facebook fanpage in 2014, late author Anne Rice responded to fans who were dismayed over the generic and unrealistic cover design of her latest book ‗Vampire Chronicles: Prince Lestat':

‖I have no control. Never have had. Of all the covers on my books over the years, I have liked a few."

More interesting is the fact that Anne Rice was not a new or burgeoning author in the industry. She was a very established writer with many book-turned-movies and best-selling novels under her belt. Despite being a veteran, Rice consented to the use of book covers that she did not like and permitted her publisher to brand her image in a way she was not keen on because of her loyalty to the publisher and trust in their vast marketing resources:

‖I do respect and have confidence in my UK publisher and my American publisher. And if the UK people think this is good for their market, well, I support them."

Thus, it is safe to say that Loebig's (2017) call for making chick-lit more inclusive is not unfounded. Like Rice, Loebig attributes these issues to the many larger cultural and publishing problems that exist in the field. But one thing is for sure: when women are represented as a timeless concept like that of an RP on a book cover, it enforces an unyielding stereotype of women in the viewer's mind. This is especially so when all the RPs on the book covers are non-identifiable, with their facial features—especially the eyes—omitted, either partially or completely, in the images. Though making the RP and characters of the book more relatable may be a viable reason for not disclosing the physical representation of the RP, it creates a nuance that women and their stories are generic and propagates that women in general are seen in this generalised, one-dimensional perspective. Moreover, it cultivates a certain gender stereotype of women, their hobbies, their dressing style and body image. Most importantly, the light and fun tone of the cover—and the storyline—of the book communicates that all women, and their lives, can be taken less seriously than their male counterparts (Brown, 2016).

4.6 Summary

Upon analysing the modes on chick-lit book covers and identifying the patterns in the use of multimodality, this research is finally able to draw a conclusion regarding the multimodal representation of this genre.

Notably, the use and combination of modes definitely swayed the genre to a more _feminine' side, with heavy uses of pink, cursive typefaces and RPs associated with the female gender. Of course, while these modes do help in the instant identification of the genre, it is also highlighted that the ramifications of the rampant usage of such stereotypes could lead to further gender and racial disparity.

Nonetheless, this research did pose some questions regarding the identification and reception of these modes in making meaning in Section 4.3.3. Specifically, do we receive these covert messages on book covers because they relate to us and

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represent us; or do we allow ourselves to believe they relate to us because that is what the media propagates? Does fiction reflect reality or do we allow our thoughts and actions to be influenced and shaped by fiction?

In a way, signmakers use these visual elements to complement the textual elements and to transmit implicit messages knowing that culturally, these visual modes would be understood by the audience; and we know this because as consumers ourselves, we do feed into a similar cultural phenomenon. Diverting from the norm creates confusion and discrepancies in meaning. A simple example to is imagine an expecting mother who paints her baby's room pink, decorates the walls with sparkly pink words and fills it with fluffy stuffed toys and dolls only to tell her friend she is expecting a son.

Contradicting as it may be, we play the role of both the creator and the receiver of a sign. Inherently, we use it because we accept and understand it; and we accept and understand it because we use it with positive effect; and so the cycle continues. Thus, it can be safely said that these modes used in the ‗templates' for chick-lit book covers will only continue to be seen throughout the genre for a very long time to come.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the pertinent points of this research and to bring the dissertation to a close. It focuses on the key findings of the study, discusses some drawbacks faced and provides suggestions and recommendations for future researchers.

5.2 Summary of Study

The aim of this research was to identify the different modes found on the front covers of chick-lit books and in doing so, understand how those modes represent the chick-lit genre. With this purpose in mind, two research questions were posed:

1) What are the multimodal features found on the front covers of chick-lit books?

2) How are these features representative of the chick-lit genre?

In short, this research focused on the collaboration of language and illustrative elements—or better known as ‗modes‘—on the front covers of chick-lit books so as to provide better and more effective ways of meaning making. Unlike animated and interactive texts available in new media, book covers offer only a single, non-dynamic snap-shot to its audience for identification and aesthetic purposes. The research analysed the exploitation of these modes on twelve chick-lit book covers to understand how they were used for maximum effects in meaning making and in the representation of a genre.

The reason behind choosing chick-lit book covers, above all other types of texts, for analysis was simple: there exists a serious lack of research done on this specific genre in the field of multimodality. As established in Chapter 2 of this dissertation,

multimodal research has thus far only focused on children's literature, pedagogical studies and new literacies. This research thus aimed to fill the research gap that exists in the field of multimodality and to enrich the literature in the realm of semiotics.

In order to answer the research questions initially posed in Chapter 1, the research employed an SFL framework of visual semiosis which became the foundational framework of analysis of the data of this study. This is because the SFL model analyses the three metafunctions of visual semiosis simultaneously, interpreting visual language functionally as a whole. As established in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, three separate conceptual frameworks were adapted and combined to study the representational, interactional and compositional meanings in the chosen artefact, which in this research's case were the front covers of chick-lit books.

This research strictly limited its data and its framework of analysis to that of Western origins to avoid any discrepancies with regards to cultural differences as modes and the meanings they carry are heavily dependent on cultural contexts. As explained in Section 1.6, chick-lit books of Western origin were also chosen due to its popularity and more universal storyline. Western chick-lit, compared to those in the local scene, is more established, widely accepted and popular. To ensure that the data was not out-dated, only books published within the past fifteen years [2001-2016] were taken as study data. Moreover, based on the working definition this research had on chick-lit, only books written by female authors were taken into consideration. The three authors— Sophie Kinsella, Meg Cabot and Lauren Weisberger—were chosen based on individual publishing merits, as well as having one of their books each made into in a film, thus giving them equal commercial popularity.

Using the qualitative research methodology of thematic analysis and through utilising the analytical framework established in Chapter 3, this study first looked at

the different modes found on the front cover of chick-lit books; analysing the different textual and visual features of the twelve front book covers. Next, the study focused on the homogenous patterns found among and across the twelve book covers. Recurring themes in the data were analysed for their semiotic meanings and how they played a role in the identification and representation of the chick-lit genre.

5.3 Findings

Similar to what was found from previous studies, this research reaffirmed that multimodality does in fact enhance and facilitate meaning making in a text. This is because multimodal ensembles communicate meaning through a wide myriad of modes including visual images, colour, spatial composition, design features and written language. On artefacts where space is limited and the goal is to show not tell, visual rhetorics play a role of the utmost importance in communicating meaning subtly yet effectively to audience members. It increases the opportunity for a message to be transmitted as it is able to carry multiple layers of meaning implicitly yet powerfully.

From a textual perspective, it was found that books covers generally have two obligatory functional stages: the author's name and the book title. These two functional stages, alongside illustrations that complement the title and encapsulate the storyline of the book, were usually found in the largest size and in the central position of the cover, making these modes the most salient and therefore most important elements of a book cover. To differentiate these two functional stages, framing devices such as different colours or different typefaces and fonts were used, thus allowing both elements to coexist in the same text with equal importance while being read separately.

However, the functional stages alone were insufficient to define the exact literary genre of the text. Alongside other functional stages used for promotional purposes

such as accolades, commercial references and blurbs, the textual rhetorics found only served to demonstrate that the text under question was a book cover. It was only when taglines were used in which a ‚she' was mentioned that verbiage helped in identifying the genre a little further.

Thus, visual rhetorics were drawn upon to define the genre with greater intricacy. Textually, the typefaces chosen added meaning and depth to the representation of the genre. The heavy use of the Sans Serif typeface and the Script typeface gave a more light-hearted, personal and whimsical tone to the books. In addition, the manipulation of the fonts, coupled with the use of bright, bold, vibrant and highly saturated colours gave the covers a youthful, casual, light and fun feel. Moreover, the recurrent use of pink on a majority of the book covers highlighted not just the genre and premise of the book, but also indirectly targeted the intended audience of the book, what with pink being a ‚feminine' colour.

The use of colour also fulfilled the three metafunctions of language and meaning. First, from the ideational perspective, the colours on the twelve book covers were used to denote the genre and tone of the book, the plot theme, its characters and even its intended audience. Second, colour was also used to create interpersonal meaning by invoking affective and emotive reactions in its audience. Finally, colour was also used to fulfil the textual metafunction in how it created cohesion among separate elements to become a whole.

The covers in the data set were also found to almost always have a social actor, either in the form of a human RP or an inanimate RP realised as a female accessory. These RPs lacked eyes and eyelines, had deviated gazes, were always positioned at an obscured angle and were stationed far away from the audience. The summary of all these factors indicate a desire for the RPs to remain distant and unattainable. While they were used to make the book more relatable, the RPs were kept detached

as they were mainly used for audience members to make deductions about the book, rather than forming a close-knit bond with. Far shots also allowed for more visual clues to be presented the audience, such as the RP's clothes, physical background and body language.

Interestingly, these findings did coincide with much of what was reported by previous researchers as reviewed in Sections 1.3 and 2.4. For example, the analysis found heavy uses of the Script typeface, bright and bold colours [especially pink], and RPs of either female accessories or fragmented bodies of slim women (Mazza, 2006; Rende, 2008; Gormley, 2009; De Hoog 2012). The use and combination of these modes gave the covers of these chick-lit books—and the genre as a whole—a more _feminine' appeal due to the culturally established and widely accepted norms and stereotypes propagated and perpetuated in the media. It aided in the instant identification of the genre as these modes have already become a recognised _template' for all chick-lit book covers. They are used because consumers accept and understand it, therefore yielding positive effects; and in turn, are lived out in reality by the consumers, thus bringing the phenomenon full cycle.

Of course, the study also highlighted the consequences of the usage of such stereotypes which could lead to further gender and racial disparity but concluded that the effectiveness of such stereotypes in transmitting a message would only lead to the continued use of such modes on chick-lit book covers.

5.4 Recommendations

In Section 2.2.5, much of the past researches cited ended on a note with a call for more extensive and developed frameworks better suited for the multimodal analysis specific to the field of study. Without a doubt, this research also faced the same issue with regards to choosing and developing a suitable framework that could analyse and describe the data accurately, effectively, consistently and holistically. Even after

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synthesising three separate concepts to form what was thought to be a very comprehensive framework of analysis, the study still faced some inadequacies with regards to that said framework. For example, the concept of information value and the spatial division of an artefact into zones were found to be—almost too—ideal and not as clear cut nor as easily differentiated as presented by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Zones overlapped and some artefacts lacked all six spatial divisions as originally suggested. Another problem came in the form of analysing the social actors found on the book covers. When applying the framework on social distance, it was found that not all RPs could be distinctively categorised into specific frame sizes and fields of distance. Once again, the framework provided was quite ideal and too limited in its division; and data that was found to straddle the fine line between two categories could not be assessed fairly and similarly to other elements in the data set. This reduces the reliability and consistency of the results of a research and greatly affects the soundness of findings in a study.

In this research, these shortcomings were resolved by making due changes to the existing frameworks and by taking a middle stance in analysing the data. However, like many past researchers, this research also puts forth a call for improved and more extensive frameworks in this field of enquiry as well as advocacy to future researchers to delve deep into the archives of the many pre-existing frameworks of study to pick, combine and develop different conceptual frameworks like what was done in this dissertation to create a comprehensive framework in order to analyse the data as accurately as possible.

Indeed, as highlighted in Section 2.2.4, ―the semiotic change which characterise the present and which are likely to characterise the future cannot be adequately described and understood with currently existing theories of meaning and communication" (Kress, 2000, p.153). Moreover, Kress (2001) stressed that the work

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on grammars for exploring the co-articulation of image and verbiage is still in its infancy. Ironically enough, research into multimodality as a domain of enquiry builds and develops largely from the foundational work of Kress himself (Lim, 2011), alongside other researchers like van Leeuwen and O'Toole. Thus, it is clear to see that the field of multimodality and the realm of semiotics, though growing at a sturdy rate, still have a long way to go in establishing themselves in the long line of research in academia.

Finally, based on the lack of existing literature available in this field of study, this research recommends a follow-up study looking deeper into not just the front cover of chick-lit books, but at the jacket of the book as a whole. These artefacts all carry, in itself, meanings in individual parts and collectively as a unified entity. Combined, the analysis on not only the front cover, but also the back cover, inside cover, inside back cover and spine would give a more all-inclusive perspective into the multimodality of chick-lit books. Moreover, this researcher proposes that future studies compare the modes found on chick-lit book covers with books from other closely related genres like general fiction, women's fiction and young adult fiction to further establish a profile for the genre based on the presence and absence of certain modes on the cover designs of these books.

With the field of study being quite a novel one, the sky is the limit for future researchers who wish to pursue deeper knowledge in the domain of multimodality and semiotics. The possibilities are endless, especially with the rapid advancement of new media and transmedia storytelling. The key concern is to pay heed to the limitations of the current frameworks, self-reflexivity, cultural diversity and engagement with technology.

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APPENDIX

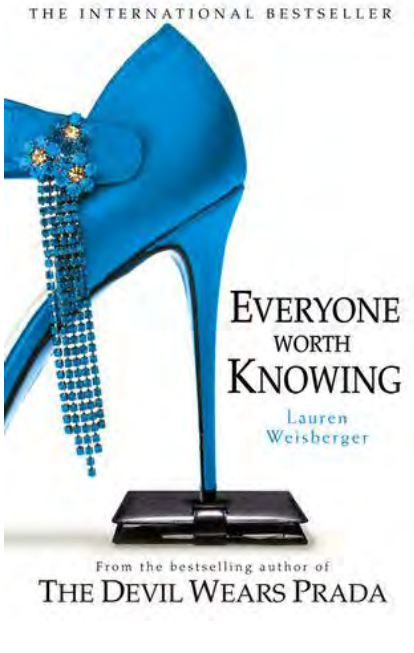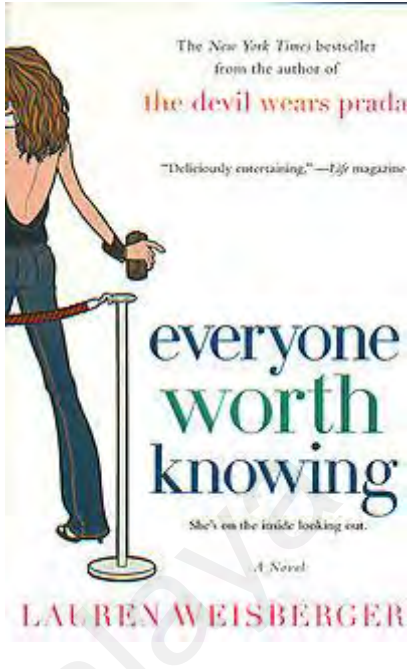**Appendix A:**

Title	Book Cover	
Twenties Girl		
	A1	A2
Confessions of a Shopaholic		
	A3	A4

The Princess Diaries		
	A5	A6
Queen of Babble		
	A7	A8

Everyone Worth Knowing	THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER EVERYONE WORTH KNOWING Lauren Weisberger From the bestselling author of THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	The *New York Times* bestseller from the author of the devil wears prada "Deliciously entertaining." —*Life* magazine everyone worth knowing She's on the inside looking out. A Novel LAUREN WEISBERGER
	A9	A10
The Devil Wears Prada	The Phenomenal *New York Times* Bestseller the devil wears prada A Novel LAUREN WEISBERGER	THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER LAUREN WEISBERGER
	A11	A12

Appendix B: Plot summary of 'Twenties Girl' by Sophie Kinsella

Twenty-seven year old Lara is visited by the ghost of her recently deceased great-aunt Sadie in the form of a Charleston-dancing girl who cannot rest until Lara finds her dragonfly necklace. Lara, however, has problems of her own: her uncertain future as co-founder of her own headhunting agency, and the fact that she was recently dumped by Josh, the love of her life. But after being coerced by Sadie, Lara embarks upon an arduous journey to find said necklace, but in the process of doing so ends up unravelling the truth behind her uncle's enormous success, unearthing a long-lost love story, and even finds herself a new love.

Appendix C: Plot summary of 'Confessions of a Shopaholic' by Sophie Kinsella

Rebecca Bloomwood (Becky) is a writer for Successful Saving, a financial magazine. Ironically, she has created substantial debt for herself being a shopaholic. The novel details Becky's desperate attempts to make and save more money, while avoiding the phone calls and letters from the bank and her credit card companies. Stressed out and depressed, Becky finds solace in spending; creating more problems for herself in the process. In the end, Becky is able to find herself, realising that pleasing others is less important than pleasing herself first.

Appendix D: Plot summary of 'The Princess Diaries' by Meg Cabot

Mia Thermopolis is an average—and somewhat awkward—ninth grader who lives with her single mother. One day, Mia's estranged father visits and drops a major bomb: He isn't just a European politician as he has always led her to believe, but actually the crown prince of a small country. Having suffered (and recovering) from cancer, he can no longer have children, leaving Mia as his only heir and the crown princess of Genovia. Following this, Mia's life turns upside down with her new

found fame. She attends ―Princess Training" with her grandmother where she develops into a great princess.

Appendix E: Plot summary of 'Queen of Babble' by Meg Cabot

Lizzie Nichols can't keep anything to herself. Her big mouth has gotten her into trouble and now she is stuck in London alone with no place to stay until the departure date on her non-changeable plane ticket. Fortunately, Lizzie's best friend is spending her summer in Chateau Mirac catering for weddings. Lizzie helps out but immediately causes a mess of things again with her big mouth. To make matters worse, Andrew, Lizzie's ex, shows up threatening to ruin everything, especially Lizzie's chance at finding love with Luke, Chateau Mirac's owner. Lizzie will have to find a way to use her big mouth to her advantage and save the day.

Appendix F: Plot summary of 'Everyone Worth Knowing' by Lauren Weisberger

Bette Robinson quits her job at an investment banking firm after getting news that her best friend, Penelope has gotten engaged. Bette's uncle introduces her to event planner, Kelly, and Bette starts working for Kelly and Co., planning events and partying at the city's most fashionable night spots. Bette soon becomes the subject of online gossip and is often linked to wealthy playboy, Philip Weston. Though the association is of benefit to her job, Bette finds herself attracted to Sammy, a bouncer, who is also associated with another wealthy socialite. Bette finds herself growing distant from her friends and must choose between the person she once was and the one she is becoming.

Appendix G: Plot summary of 'The Devil Wears Prada' by Lauren Weisberger

Andrea Sachs moves to New York City with her best friend, Lily in hopes to find a career in publishing. She gets a surprise interview at the Elias-Clark Group and is hired as junior assistant for Miranda Priestly, editor-in-chief of the fashion magazine ―Runway". Andrea's relationships become entangled because of her new job. Matters finally come to a head when her co-worker, Emily, gets mononucleosis and Andrea must travel to Paris with Miranda in her stead. A series of events and choices Andrea made in Paris helps Andrea realise (to her horror) that she is becoming more and more like Miranda. Following a public confrontation with Miranda, Andrea returns home to reconnect with her friends and family. The story ends with her returning to the Elias-Clark building to discuss a position at the company's other magazines.