

## **A Systemic Functional Grammar Analysis of English SMS Advertisements in Egypt**

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### **1. Introduction**

Seldom nowadays do we find someone who does not use a mobile phone. Mobile communication, one of the most widespread means of computer-mediated communication, has become very prominent, and even indispensable, all over the world. We depend on our mobile phones daily to make phone calls, send text messages, send emails, and check the social networks, among other things. Egyptians of all ages, all socio-economic classes, and all educational levels own and use mobile phones as the number of mobile subscriptions in Egypt surpassed 94 million in September 2018 (Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, 2018, October). Everywhere in Egypt, you will see people talking on their mobile phones, checking their Facebook, playing mobile games, or text messaging.

People interact with each other and share all kinds of information by sending SMS messages. The latter are prevalent among mobile users, as the estimated number of SMS messages sent worldwide in 2011 was eight trillion (Cougnon & Fairon, 2014). Their popularity could be attributed to the fact that they are relatively cheap, instantaneous, compact with information, and multidirectional, i.e., could be sent to more than one user at the same time. All of these factors make SMS advertisements attractive for advertisers. Moreover, mobile phone screens are considered by advertisers an excellent medium for advertising since there is a very large number of mobile subscribers in Egypt. Therefore, we are bombarded on a daily basis by SMS advertisements which are sent to our mobile phones about all kinds of products, such as clothes and household necessities,

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and services, such as promotions from clinics and banks (Becker & Arnold, 2010). Furthermore, it has been argued that SMS advertisements have high response rates (Carey, 2006) and are more effective than other kinds of advertisements, such as television advertisements and billboards (Haig, 2002); and therefore, they are used abundantly by advertisers.

The frequent use of SMS messages in advertising has led to the current study's interest in conducting an SFG analysis of SMS advertisements as it seeks to determine the distinctive grammatical features of such SMSs. This would be helpful in identifying the underlying structure for writing SMS advertisements which are designed to grab the attention of mobile users. The importance of identifying such a structure for writing SMS advertisements lies in its usefulness for advertisers.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is a theory introduced by M. A. K. Halliday in the 1960s and contributed to by other scholars, such as Ruqaiya Hasan and Christian Matthiessen. It “aims to provide a comprehensive account of how language is used in context for communication” (Göttsche, 2009, 225). According to SFG, how people use language is what shapes it; and therefore, forms of language are explained through the meanings they express (Göttsche, 2009). Fowler and Kress (1979) explain that SFG perceives language as being formed as a reaction to the structure of the society which uses it. They further illustrate how language, according to SFG, serves three Metafunctions: an Ideational Metafunction, an Interpersonal Metafunction, and a Textual Metafunction.

Firstly, the Ideational Metafunction means how the language is used to communicate about events, processes, and entities in the world in order to construe how the speaker views the world (Fowler & Kress, 1979; Göttsche, 2009). This Metafunction is realised through Experiential and Logico-Semantic analyses. The Experiential analysis (i.e., Transitivity analysis) of a clause focuses on the Process, which is realised by the verbal group, the Participants in that Process, typically realised by nominal groups, and the Circumstance(s), in which the Process happens and which are typically realised by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. The different types and examples of Processes and Participants are shown in Table 1. As for Logico-Semantic analysis, it examines the Logico-Semantic relations which describe how clauses build on the Experiential meanings of the clauses they relate to.

Table 1. List of types of processes and participants

Process Type	Function	Examples	Participants + Examples
Material Process	creating,	The lion caught the tourist.	Actor ( <i>the lion</i> )
	changing,	She crossed the room.	Goal ( <i>the tourist</i> )
	doing	She sent her best wishes to John.	Scope ( <i>the room</i> ) Receiver ( <i>John</i> )
		Fred bought a present for his wife.	Client ( <i>wife</i> )
Mental Process	seeing, feeling, thinking	Mary liked the gift.	Senser ( <i>Mary</i> ) Phenomenon ( <i>the gift</i> )
Relational Process	having	Sarah is wise.	Carrier ( <i>Sarah</i> )
	attribute or identity	Henry is the villain.	Attribute ( <i>wise</i> ) Token ( <i>Henry</i> ) Value ( <i>the villain</i> )
Behavioural Process	behaving	The child wept copious tears.	Behaver ( <i>the child</i> ) Behaviour ( <i>copious tears</i> )
Verbal Process	saying	He also accused Krishan Kant...	Sayer ( <i>He</i> ) Receiver ( <i>I</i> )
		I wasn't told the whole truth.	Target ( <i>Krishan Kant</i> ) Verbiage ( <i>the whole truth</i> )
Existential Process	existing	There was a storm.	Existent ( <i>a storm</i> )
Ergative Process	happening	The great flood spread.	Medium ( <i>The great flood</i> )
Causative Process	causing	The police exploded the bomb.	Initiator ( <i>the police</i> )
		The news made Bill happy.	Attributor ( <i>the news</i> )
		The mother called the baby Amanda.	Assigner ( <i>the mother</i> )

Secondly, the Interpersonal Metafunction is concerned with expressing the speaker's attitude to the events and entities of the Ideational Metafunction, expressing the relation the speaker perceives he/she has with an interlocutor, and influencing the interlocutor's behaviour or views (Fowler & Kress, 1979; Götzsche, 2009). This Metafunction focuses on the analysis of Mood types (Indicative Declarative or Interrogative, or Imperative), tenses used, Modality (High, Medium or Low Modals) and Adjunct types (Circumstantial, Mood, Polarity, Comment, Vocative, Conjunctive, or Continuity). In addition, it is concerned with the distinction between Mood and speech function; for example, not all Interrogatives function as questions.

Thirdly, the Textual Metafunction focuses on presenting all the above in coherent, adequate, and appropriate texts. It is concerned with how the meanings in the clause are organised to fit in with the co-text of the surrounding messages and with the wider context of the utterance (Fowler & Kress, 1979; Götzsche, 2009). It is concerned with analysing the Theme of a clause, the initial Experiential constituent, which has a special role in signalling how the current clause relates to clauses around it. There are three types of Themes: Topical realising the element of the clause to which a transitivity function can be assigned, Interpersonal realised by infused Finite in Interrogative structures and Modal Adjuncts, or Textual doing cohesive work in relating the clause to its context. Moreover, it examines Markedness of Themes, for example, when the Theme conflates with a Circumstantial Adjunct, or there is passivisation, and examines Cohesive devices, such as Repetition, Reference, Ellipsis, Synonymy and Co-hyponymy.

### **3. Review of Past Studies**

A number of studies investigated the characteristic linguistic features of personal SMS messages. These studies illustrated the unique characteristics which make SMS language different from the language used elsewhere. The findings of most of these studies demonstrated that SMS language is characterised by the frequent use of abbreviations (Akbari, 2013; Chiad, 2008; Kumar, 2012; Lyddy et al., 2013; Partey et al., 2018), and emoticons (Amaghlobeli, 2012; Baron & Ling, 2011; Chiad, 2008; Yusuf et al., 2016). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that marked and multiple Themes are preferred in writing SMS messages (Adebola, 2011).

Furthermore, given the prevalence of the use of SMS in advertising, many researchers have conducted different research studies on SMS advertisements. For example, a number of mass communication studies focused on how the effectiveness of SMS advertisements was determined by certain factors, such as credibility (Drossos et al., 2007; Lin et al., 2014), time pressure (Rau et al., 2014), and type of appeal (Drossos et al., 2007; Yeh & Lin, 2010). Some of these studies were experimental (Drossos et al., 2007; Rau et al., 2014), whereas some of them depended on surveys for data collection (Yeh & Lin, 2010; Lin et al., 2014). Moreover, consumers' attitude towards mobile advertisements was examined in a number of studies, showing how certain factors had a positive impact on mobile users' attitude towards mobile advertising. Examples of these factors were credibility (Zabadi et al., 2012; Okoe & Boateng, 2015), entertainment (Zabadi et al., 2012; Okoe & Boateng, 2015; Aslam et al., 2016),

product involvement (Aslam et al., 2016) and message relevance (Varnali, 2014). On the other hand, irritation negatively influenced attitudes towards mobile advertising (Zabadi et al., 2012; Okoe & Boateng, 2015; Aslam et al., 2016). The data analysed in all of these studies was collected through questionnaires.

Very few linguistic studies to date, to the researcher's knowledge, were carried out on the linguistic features of SMS advertisements. In Khodadust's (2013) study, 100 SMS advertisements in Iran were examined by looking at message length, the use of nonlinguistic features, the use of lexico-grammatical devices, such as consumerism-loaded vocabulary, numerals, emphatic words or intensifiers and nominalisation, the use of information structure, intertextuality and ideology in consumerism discourse, and the type of address terms used. In another study, Ogungbe (2011) analysed 20 SMS advertisements sent by two mobile service providers, MTN and Globacom, in Nigeria to 54 undergraduate students between July and September 2009. Halliday's SFG and Abraham Maslow's Motivation Theory were used to analyse some linguistic devices, discourse styles and non-literal language. In addition, El-Falaky (2016) examined 110 SMS advertisements, which were sent by mobile service providers in Egypt: Mobinil, Vodafone and Etisalat, following Halliday's SFG approach of analysis, the Interpersonal metafunction in specific. The grammatical and lexical choices as manifested through Mood, tense and pronouns were looked at and the findings were analysed in order to determine how mobile service providers make use of language to persuade their customers to buy their digital products.

To the researcher's knowledge, none of the earlier empirical studies has made use of Halliday's (2014) three levels of SFG analysis on English SMS advertisements sent by different product and service providers. In Ogungbe's (2011) and El-Falaky's (2016) studies, only SMS advertisements sent by mobile service providers were analysed using Halliday's (2014) SFG theoretical framework.

#### **4. Research Question**

The study sets out to answer the following research question: What are the grammatical features of English SMS advertisements sent to mobile phones in Egypt? To answer this question, Halliday's (2014) SFG theoretical framework was employed.

## 5. Data and Methodology

The method of sampling was convenience sampling, due to the fact that only the English SMS advertisements which the researcher could get access were from her family members, friends, colleagues, and students in Egypt. The researcher collected 691 SMS advertisements, but this sample was too large for this study, so five SMSs were randomly selected for each theme of SMS advertisements. Only four Education and three Employment SMS advertisements were found; therefore, the number of SMS advertisements analysed in this study was 72. The themes and their abbreviations are illustrated in Table 2 as well as the number of SMS advertisements analysed and the number of words in each theme.

The SMS advertisements were analysed qualitatively as well as quantitatively by looking at the frequencies of the predominant grammatical features of language used in writing such advertisements. The framework of analysis of the discourse of text messaging used was based on Halliday's (2014) SFG framework.

Table 2. List of types of themes and their abbreviations

	Themes	Abbreviations	Number of SMSs	Number of Words
1	Banking	B	5	142
2	Clothes, Shoes, and Accessories Shops	CS	5	127
3	Delivery and Transportation	D&T	5	127
4	Events	E	5	106
5	Education	EDU	4	88
6	Employment	Em	3	62
7	Entertainment	En	5	107
8	Electronics and Cars	ES	5	132
9	Furniture Shops	F	5	132
10	Gifts and Toys Shops	G&T	5	120
11	Health and Fitness	H&F	5	141
12	Domestic Help	DH	5	102
13	Perfumes and Make-up Shops	P&M	5	125
14	Residences	R	5	107
15	Restaurants, Cafés, Hotels & Food Shops	R&C	5	128
			Total: 72	Total: 1,746

## 6. Analysis and Findings

### 6.1. Ideational level: Transitivity analysis

In this level of analysis, the types of Processes, Participants, and Circumstances found in the different themes of SMS advertisements, and their frequencies are examined. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the types of Processes used per theme. Concerning the types of Processes, Material ones

occurred the most in all themes, such as in “Check our website”. A possible explanation for this is that these processes are of doing and happening, and therefore, are suitable for advertising about different services, products, and activities. SMS advertisements, or any kind of advertisement, usually require some action on the part of the receivers of the advertisement or show the receivers what the product or service can do for them. Thus, it seems fitting to use Material Processes in such SMSs. The two themes in which Material Processes occurred the most were Events and Health & Fitness where the receivers of the SMSs were urged to perform some kind of action: attend an event “Don't miss FURNEX International Furniture & Furnishings fair”, or do sports and stay fit “lose 10kg or more & shape your body”.

**Table 3. Frequencies of types of processes per theme**

	Material	Mental	Relational	Verbal	Existential	Behavioural	Causative	Ergative	Total
Theme	9	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	17
1 B	53%	35%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theme	9	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	14
2 CS	65%	7%	14%	7%	0%	7%	0%	0%	
Theme	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	12
3 D&T	75%	8%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theme	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
4 E	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theme	7	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	10
5 EDU	70%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	10%	
Theme	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	12
6 Em	75%	8%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theme	8	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	12
7 En	68%	8%	8%	8%	0%	0%	8%	0%	
Theme	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
8 ES	77%	15%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Theme	7	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	13
9 F	55%	15%	15%	0%	0%	0%	15%	0%	
Theme	5	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	8
10	61%	13%	13%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	
G&T									
Theme	15	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	19
11	79%	0%	11%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%	
H&F									
Theme	7	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	11
12 DH	64%	0%	27%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	
Theme	9	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	13
13	69%	15%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
P&M									
Theme	12	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	17
14 R	70%	6%	12%	0%	0%	6%	6%	0%	
Theme	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	12
15	67%	25%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
R&C									

Furthermore, the two types of Processes frequently used in the SMS advertisements analysed, after Material Processes, were Mental and Relational Processes as shown in Table 3, however, each frequently occurred in different themes. For instance, Mental Processes occurred more frequently in Banking SMSs as in “Experience extra levels of online security”, Electronics & Cars SMSs “Enjoy The Highest Technologies”, Perfumes & Make-up SMSs “Surprise YOUR MOM”, and Restaurants, Cafés, Hotels & Food SMSs “Enjoy The biggest OPEN BUFFET”. Mental Processes, which are concerned with thoughts, feelings and perceptions, are appropriate for these themes because they appeal to the SMS receivers’ emotions and feelings. To convince someone to use the services of a certain bank, to buy electronics, perfumes and make-up, and to eat at a certain restaurant, you have to appeal to their senses and their desires, i.e., to convince them that these products will make their lives better and more enjoyable. As for Relational Processes, they occurred in almost all of the themes and the highest frequency was in Domestic Help SMSs as in “Foreign servant whose [who is] reliable”. Relational Processes, which are concerned with being, provide extra descriptive information about the products and services advertised in the SMSs.

Regarding the types of Material Processes, most of them were Intentional, such as “Check our website”, in all the SMS themes as shown in Table 4. In only half of the themes did Involuntary Material Processes occur once or twice. A possible explanation for this is that the Participants of such Processes intentionally perform certain actions. For example, in the Banking SMS “Use your AAIB Debit Card”, the advertiser urges the receiver of the SMS to intentionally use the Debit Card advertised.

Table 4. Frequencies of types of material processes per theme

	Intentional		Involuntary		Total
Theme 1 B	8	89%	1	11%	9
Theme 2 CS	9	100%	0	0%	9
Theme 3 D&T	9	100%	0	0%	9
Theme 4 E	8	80%	2	20%	10
Theme 5 EDU	6	86%	1	14%	7
Theme 6 Em	9	100%	0	0%	9
Theme 7 En	8	100%	0	0%	8
Theme 8 ES	9	90%	1	10%	10
Theme 9 F	7	100%	0	0%	7
Theme 10 G&T	5	100%	0	0%	5
Theme 11 H&F	13	87%	2	13%	15
Theme 12 DH	7	100%	0	0%	7
Theme 13 P&M	6	75%	2	25%	8
Theme 14 R	12	100%	0	0%	12
Theme 15 R&C	7	86%	1	14%	8



Examining the types of Mental Processes, one type occurred in nine themes which was Emotion, such as “enjoy up to 2% cashback”, as shown in Table 5. A possible explanation for this is that SMS advertisements stimulate the receivers’ emotional feelings towards the products or services advertised, i.e., these products and service would make their lives enjoyable as in “Enjoy The Highest Technologies”.

**Table 5. Frequencies of types of mental processes per theme**

	Emotion		Cognition		Perception		Desideration		Total
Theme 1 B	2	33%	1	17%	3	50%	-	0%	6
Theme 2 CS	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 3 D&T	-	0%	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 4 E	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 5 EDU	-	0%	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 6 Em	-	0%	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 7 En	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 8 ES	2	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2
Theme 9 F	2	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2
Theme 10 G&T	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 11 H&F	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Theme 12 DH	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-
Theme 13 P&M	-	0%	1	50%	-	0%	1	50%	2
Theme 14 R	1	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1
Theme 15 R&C	3	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	3

Regarding the types of Participants employed in the themes, the two most frequently used participants were Goal and Scope in most of the themes. The Goal Participant occurred more frequently than other Participants in the following eight themes: Clothes, Shoes, &Accessories (27%), Delivery & Transportation (26%), Events (51%), Education (36%), Employment (46%), Health & Fitness (32%), Perfumes & Make-up (42%), and Residence (28%). This is indicative of the centrality of the Goals in such SMSs because they are the focus of the advertisements as the Participants being acted upon. For example, in “Buy Cosmetics & Perfumes”, the main focus is on the “Cosmetics & Perfumes” which the receivers of the SMS are urged to buy.

As for the Scope Participant, it occurred more frequently than other Participants in the following four themes: Entertainment (39%), Electronics & Cars (27%), Gifts & Toys (38%), and Restaurants, Cafés, Hotels & Food (37%). This Participant is also central to SMS advertisements since it is the domain where the Material Process takes place. A recurrent example of these Scopes is: “call 23946902”, because at the end of most of the SMSs, the advertisers provide

the number which the receivers of the SMS could call or the address or website which they could visit.

Finally, the types of Circumstances used in the themes are numerous. The type which occurs most frequently in 10 themes is the Location Spatial Definite Circumstance, such as “at Nagy Store”. Most of these SMS advertisements are advertising for certain shops or places which provide services; hence, it seems appropriate for Circumstances about definite places to dominate. Another type of Circumstance which occurs in 11 out of 15 themes, although it does not occur in high frequencies, is the Cause Purpose Circumstance, such as “For more information”. This phrase is recurrent in most of the themes because it comes before the number the receivers of the SMSs should call if they have any inquiries about the product, the service, or the promotion advertised in the SMS. In addition, in the Domestic Help SMSs, there are no Circumstances found, and this can be explained by the fact that there is no specific centre or shop for this service and there are no offers which have to be purchased during a specific time. Thus, there is no need for Circumstances, especially those of Location, Extent or Cause, as is found in most of the other themes.

### ***6.2. Ideational level: Logico-Semantic analysis***

By examining the kinds of clauses used in the sample analysed in this study, it is found that more Clause Simplexes are used than Clause Complexes in all the themes except the themes of Banking and Employment as shown in Table 6. An example of a clause simplex is “Call 19835”, whereas an example of a clause complex is “Just go to this link and SIGN UP [www.evetalkonline.com](http://www.evetalkonline.com)”. The frequent use of clause simplexes is due to the limited space of the mobile screen which makes it harder for the advertiser to write long SMSs, and the fact that Clause Complexes might be confusing and boring for some readers and are, therefore, avoided by advertisers.

Moreover, Clause Complexes involve the logical linking of Experiential related meanings. There are two types of these logico-semantic relations: Paratactic, which happen between equal entities, such as in “Just go to this link and SIGN UP [www.evetalkonline.com](http://www.evetalkonline.com)”; and Hypotactic, which happen between an independent entity and a dependent one, such as in “Get 5% discount AND LE 500 free products when you buy a Mac”. Paratactic relations occur more frequently than Hypotactic relations in most of the themes, except for the themes of Delivery and Transportation, Events, and Domestic Help, as is apparent in Table 6. A possible explanation for this could be that the norm for such SMS advertisements is the use of Paratactic relations which are simpler in structure,

usually involving the use of a comma “,” or “and”. However, in SMSs where a lot of information is provided in a limited space, Hypotactic relations are used, such as in the following Events SMS “Don't miss FURNEX International Furniture & Furnishings fair, exceptional discounts on unique products 5-8 FEB at CICC, 11AM-10PM (Fri 2PM-10PM)”.

**Table 6. Frequencies of clause simplexes versus clause complexes per theme**

	Clause Complex			Clause Simplex		Total
	Paratactic	Hypotactic		Total		
Theme 1 B	3 50%	3 50%	6 55%	5 45%	11	
Theme 2 CS	4 80%	1 20%	5 38%	8 62%	13	
Theme 3 D&T	1 33%	2 67%	3 23%	10 77%	13	
Theme 4 E	1 25%	3 75%	4 36%	7 64%	11	
Theme 5 EDU	1 50%	1 50%	2 20%	8 80%	10	
Theme 6 Em	5 83%	1 17%	6 67%	3 33%	9	
Theme 7 En	3 100%	0 0	3 25%	9 75%	12	
Theme 8 ES	2 67%	1 33%	3 25%	9 75%	12	
Theme 9 F	1 100%	0 0	1 7%	13 93%	14	
Theme 10 G&T	1 50%	1 50%	2 17%	10 83%	12	
Theme 11 H&F	7 100%	0 0	7 44%	9 56%	16	
Theme 12 DH	1 33%	2 67%	3 23%	10 77%	13	
Theme 13 P&M	3 100%	0 0	3 25%	9 75%	12	
Theme 14 R	4 100%	0 0	4 31%	9 69%	13	
Theme 15 R&C	3 100%	0 0	3 23%	8 77%	11	

Furthermore, two Paratactic relations occurred in many of the themes: Expansion Extension Addition Adding, such as “go to this link and SIGN UP” where the receivers of the SMS, as in most of the other SMSs, are encouraged to do two actions together; and Expansion Enhancing Cause Reason, such as “Shop & Win” because in most of these SMSs the receivers of the SMSs are being encouraged to buy the products and services advertised by being provided with a reason for choosing this specific product or service.

### **6.3. Interpersonal level**

In this level of analysis, the types of clauses, the tenses used, Modality, the voice used, and the types of Adjuncts found in the different themes of SMS advertisements, and their frequencies are examined. Concerning the types of clauses used in the SMS advertisements, the Imperative Command clause is dominant in all the themes except for one theme: Delivery & Transportation SMSs, which focuses more on describing the offers using Declaratives. This is illustrated in Table 7. However, these Imperatives, such as “buy iPhone 6s”, do not really function as commands. A possible explanation for using Imperatives

is to grab the attention of the receivers of the SMS advertisements, to urge them to buy these products or services, and to make them feel that purchasing these things is a necessity. Hence, these Imperatives are more of requests than commands.

Table 7. Frequencies of types of clauses per theme

	Indicative:		Imperative			Indicative		Total			
	Declarative		Command	Let	Wh-Q	Yes/No Q					
Theme 1 B	7	39%	10	56%	-	0%	1	5%	-	0%	18
Theme 2 CS	6	30%	14	70%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	20
Theme 3 D&T	9	60%	6	40%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	15
Theme 4 E	1	9%	10	91%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	11
Theme 5 EDU	2	22%	6	67%	1	11%	-	0%	-	0%	9
Theme 6 Em	2	17%	10	83%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	12
Theme 7 En	3	27%	7	64%	-	0%	-	0%	1	9%	11
Theme 8 ES	5	33%	10	67%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	15
Theme 9 F	6	40%	8	53%	1	7%	-	0%	-	0%	15
Theme 10 G&T	3	23%	10	77%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	13
Theme 11 H&F	10	45%	10	45%	1	5%	-	0%	1	5%	22
Theme 12 DH	7	50%	7	50%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	14
Theme 13 P&M	6	43%	8	57%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	14
Theme 14 R	4	24%	12	70%	-	0%	-	0%	1	6%	17
Theme 15 R&C	3	21%	11	79%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	14

Furthermore, different tenses were employed in the SMS advertisements analysed in this study. However, the tense used most frequently in most of the SMS themes is the Simple Present Tense, such as in “We have the best designs”, as is shown in Table 8 below.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), there are three basic types of present: timeless, limited, and instantaneous. The last type can be expressed with either the progressive or the simple form. This type is the one found in most of the SMS advertisements analysed in this study. The Simple Present is the most appropriate tense because it refers to instantaneous actions which need to be taken on the part of the receivers of the SMSs in order to get the products or services advertised. The Future: Simple Present is used frequently as well, such as in “English courses start 21 Nov”. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973), this tense can be used to imply the meaning of ‘plan’ or ‘programme’. Therefore, it is suitable for themes which indicate future plans, such as Events, Education, Electronics & Cars, Health & Fitness, Residence, and Restaurants, Cafés, Hotels & Food Shops.

**Table 8. Frequencies of types of tenses per theme**

	Simple Present	Present Progressive	Future: Will + Infinitive	Future: Present Progressive	Future: Simple Present	Total
Theme 1 B	3 60%	0 0%	2 40%	0 0%	0 0%	5
Theme 2 CS	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2
Theme 3 D&T	2 40%	0 0%	1 20%	2 40%	0 0%	5
Theme 4 E	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1
Theme 5 EDU	2 67%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33%	3
Theme 6 Em	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2
Theme 7 En	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1
Theme 8 ES	1 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 50%	2
Theme 9 F	3 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3
Theme 10 G&T	1 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1
Theme 11 H&F	5 71%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 29%	7
Theme 12 DH	3 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3
Theme 13 P&M	1 33%	0 0%	1 33%	1 33%	0 0%	3
Theme 14 R	1 33%	1 33%	0 0%	0 0%	1 33%	3
Theme 15 R&C	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 100%	1

As for Modal operators, only six are found in the SMS advertisements. Two of them are Low Modals: “can” in a Furniture SMS and “can” in a Perfumes & Make-up SMS. The other four are “will”, a Medium Modal, in two Banking SMSs, a Delivery & Transportation SMS, and a Perfumes & Make-up SMS. The fact that there are no High Modals is normal because no one can force the receivers of the SMSs to buy the products or services advertised. In regards to voice, the Active voice is used almost exclusively in all the SMS themes except for only two instances: “Internet Banking & IVR services will be affected” in a Banking SMS and “University Student ID is required” in an Electronics & Cars SMS. The Active voice is more suitable for SMS advertisements because the receivers of the SMSs have to be aware of who the agent is, who is providing the service or selling the product.

The third functional element in a Residue is the Adjunct. Table 9 shows that one type of Adjuncts dominates all the themes, except the Domestic Help theme, which is the Circumstantial Adjunct, such as “at 12 midnight”. The reason is that a large number of Circumstances are used in these SMSs as has been explained before. In addition, there is no Polarity or Comment Adjuncts because these are more suitable for face-to-face conversations.

Table 9. Frequencies of types of adjuncts per theme

	Circumstantial		Conjunctive		Continuity		Vocative		Mood Intensification/ Minimisation		Total
Theme 1 B	13	73%	3	17%	-	0%	1	5%	1	5%	18
Theme 2 CS	18	90%	1	5%	-	0%	-	5%	1	0%	20
Theme 3 D&T	8	80%	2	20%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	10
Theme 4 E	19	82%	2	9%	-	0%	2	9%	-	0%	23
Theme 5 EDU	9	90%	1	10%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	10
Theme 6 Em	7	88%	1	12%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	8
Theme 7 En	8	73%	-	0%	1	9%	-	0%	2	18%	11
Theme 8 ES	16	88%	1	6%	-	0%	1	6%	-	0%	18
Theme 9 F	13	93%	-	0%	1	7%	-	0%	-	0%	14
Theme 10 G&T	11	92%	-	0%	1	8%	-	0%	-	0%	12
Theme 11 H&F	17	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	17
Theme 12 DH	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	3	100%	3
Theme 13 P&M	13	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	13
Theme 14 R	11	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	11
Theme 15 R&C	16	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	16

#### 6.4. Textual Level

In this level of analysis, the types of Themes, the Markedness of these Themes, and the types of Cohesive tools found in the different themes of SMS advertisements, and their frequencies are examined. The type of Theme which dominates all the themes of the SMS advertisements as shown in Table 10 is the Topical Theme, which is an element of the clause to which a transitivity function can be assigned. An example is “Check” in “Check our website for details”. Therefore, the part of the clause which serves as the starting point for the message is the transitivity function, either the Participants or the Circumstance. This is appropriate in SMS advertisements because they should start with the main topic so that the receivers of the SMS would immediately know what the message is about. The first few words of an SMS are crucial because after reading them, the receiver decides whether to continue reading or not.

**Table 10. Frequencies of types of theme per theme**

	Topical Theme		Interpersonal Theme		Textual Theme		Structural/Topical Theme		Total
Theme 1 B	15	71%	2	10%	4	19%	-	0%	21
Theme 2 CS	16	84%	1	5%	2	11%	-	0%	19
Theme 3 D&T	15	83%	1	6%	2	11%	-	0%	18
Theme 4 E	12	67%	4	22%	2	11%	-	0%	18
Theme 5 EDU	10	90%	-	0%	1	9%	-	0%	11
Theme 6 Em	11	84%	-	0%	1	8%	1	8%	13
Theme 7 En	10	72%	2	14%	2	14%	-	0%	14
Theme 8 ES	15	75%	1	5%	4	20%	-	0%	20
Theme 9 F	14	82%	2	12%	1	6%	-	0%	17
Theme 10 G&T	11	100%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	11
Theme 11 H&F	19	90%	-	0%	2	10%	-	0%	21
Theme 12 DH	10	77%	2	15%	1	8%	-	0%	13
Theme 13 P&M	12	86%	1	7%	1	7%	-	0%	14
Theme 14 R	16	80%	2	10%	2	10%	-	0%	20
Theme 15 R&C	14	88%	-	0%	2	12%	-	0%	16

In regards to Markedness, the Themes are mainly Unmarked as is shown in Table 11. An example is “Check” in “Check our website for details” because imperative clauses normally begin with a verb. A possible explanation for this is that advertisers prefer not to use marked structures so that the advertisements would not be confusing for the receivers of the SMSs. The SMSs should be straightforward with the message intended understood easily.

**Table 11. Frequencies of marked vs unmarked themes per theme**

	Unmarked Theme		Marked Theme		Total
Theme 1 B	11	73%	4	27%	15
Theme 2 CS	15	94%	1	6%	16
Theme 3 D&T	10	83%	2	17%	12
Theme 4 E	9	75%	3	25%	12
Theme 5 EDU	7	78%	2	22%	9
Theme 6 Em	10	100%	-	0%	10
Theme 7 En	8	89%	1	11%	9
Theme 8 ES	12	80%	3	20%	15
Theme 9 F	12	86%	2	14%	14
Theme 10 G&T	10	100%	-	0%	10
Theme 11 H&F	13	76%	4	24%	17
Theme 12 DH	10	100%	-	0%	10
Theme 13 P&M	10	83%	2	17%	12
Theme 14 R	13	82%	3	18%	16
Theme 15 R&C	12	86%	2	14%	14

On the other hand, the Marked Themes found in the SMSs mostly conflate with a Circumstantial Adjunct and mostly occur at the end of the SMSs where contact information is provided, such as “For inquiries, call 19555”. The reason why the

advertisers should be contacted is fronted and therefore, given importance in order to encourage the receivers of the SMSs to contact them.

Moreover, cohesion is the linguistic device by which the writer can signal the Experiential and Interpersonal Coherence of the text. There are two types of Cohesive tools: Grammatical and Lexical. In regards to Grammatical Cohesive tools, Table 12 shows that Repetition is frequently used in eight out of the 15 themes. Repetition is a feature of advertisements in general; and therefore, it comes as no surprise that Repetition frequently occurs in these SMS advertisements, such as in “Up to 50% Sale at **Promod!** Hurry! Visit **Promod** at Cairo Festival City as of tomorrow!” Another Cohesive tool that is frequently used in five out of the 15 themes is Exophoric Reference, such as “Is the cold making you dream of summer?” in which “you” refers to someone outside the text; it refers to the receivers of the SMS. This Cohesive tool is recurrent in such SMSs because they usually address the receivers of the SMSs using the second person pronoun “you” and the advertisers usually refer to themselves using the first person pronoun “us”.

Table 12. *Frequencies of types of grammatical cohesive tools per theme*

	Repetition		Reference				Ellipsis		Conjunctions		Total		
			Exophoric		Endophoric								
					Anaphoric	Cataphoric							
Theme 1 B	5	33%	4	26%	1	7%	-	0%	1	7%	4	26%	15
Theme 2 CS	10	50%	1	5%	2	10%	1	5%	5	25%	1	5%	20
Theme 3 D&T	4	31%	3	23%	1	8%	-	0%	2	15%	3	23%	13
Theme 4 E	4	40%	1	10%	-	0%	-	0%	3	30%	2	20%	10
Theme 5 EDU	3	33%	3	33%	-	0%	-	0%	2	23%	1	11%	9
Theme 6 Em	2	40%	1	20%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	40%	5
Theme 7 En	2	17%	3	25%	-	0%	2	17%	4	33%	1	8%	12
Theme 8 ES	5	36%	2	14%	-	0%	-	0%	3	21%	4	29%	14
Theme 9 F	7	50%	3	21%	1	8%	-	0%	3	21%	-	0%	14
Theme 10 G&T	7	35%	3	15%	-	0%	-	0%	10	50%	-	0%	20
Theme 11 H&F	3	23%	3	23%	-	0%	-	0%	6	46%	1	8%	13
Theme 12 DH	1	17%	4	66%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	17%	6
Theme 13 P&M	4	31%	7	54%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	15%	13
Theme 14 R	1	9%	6	55%	-	0%	-	0%	2	18%	2	18%	11
Theme 15 R&C	1	12%	4	50%	-	0%	-	0%	2	25%	1	12%	8

In addition, Ellipsis is used in most of the themes and frequently occurs in three themes: Entertainment, Gifts & Toys, and Health & Fitness. An example of Ellipsis is found in the Gifts & Toys SMS where “1 Day to VALENTINES DAY!” should have been “1 Day is left to VALENTINES DAY!”. Ellipsis is a Cohesive tool frequently used in SMS advertisements because of the limited space allowed for SMSs. In addition, a number of conjunctions are employed in these SMSs, such as “and” and “or”. These tie clauses together and do not take up much space and therefore, are suitable for writing SMS advertisements.



Table 13. *Frequencies of types of lexical cohesive tools per theme*

	Taxonomy										Expectancy			Total			
	Classification					Composition					Action + expected doer	Process + typical participant	Individual word + predictable nominal group				
	Similarity		Contrast		Co-hyponyms		Metonymy		Co-metonymy								
Theme 1 B	1	11%	1	11%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	11%	5	55%	1	11%	9
Theme 2 CS	1	20%	-	0%	1	20%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	40%	1	20%	5
Theme 3 D&T	2	33%	-	0%	1	17%	1	17%	-	0%	-	0%	2	33%	-	0%	6
Theme 4 E	1	11%	-	0%	2	22%	1	11%	-	0%	-	0%	5	56%	-	0%	9
Theme 5 EDU	4	36%	-	0%	-	0%	3	28%	-	0%	-	0%	4	36%	-	0%	11
Theme 6 Em	2	40%	-	0%	1	20%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	40%	-	0%	5
Theme 7 En	-	0%	1	20%	2	40%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	20%	-	0%	5
Theme 8 ES	1	8%	-	0%	4	33%	2	17%	-	0%	-	0%	5	42%	-	0%	12
Theme 9 F	2	33%	-	0%	2	33%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	17%	1	17%	6
Theme 10 G&T	0	0%	-	0%	4	80%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	20%	-	0%	5
Theme 11 H&F	2	33%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	4	67%	-	0%	6
Theme 12 DH	4	23%	1	6%	10	59%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	12%	-	0%	17
Theme 13 P&M	1	33%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	2	67%	-	0%	3
Theme 14 R	2	25%	1	12%	1	12%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	4	50%	-	0%	8
Theme 15 R&C	-	0%	-	0%	2	25%	2	25%	1	12%	-	0%	3	38%	-	0%	8

As for Lexical Cohesion, the tool of Expectancy, Process + typical Participant, is the most frequently used tool as shown in Table 13 above. Examples are “call 19007”, and “Check our website”. Similar instances are used in most of the SMS advertisements because it is crucial for advertisers to provide contact information in the SMSs so that the receivers of the SMSs could call them, visit their shops, or check their websites. Furthermore, Taxonomic Cohesive tools of Classification are used frequently, specifically Co-Hyponyms, such as “Lumia 920, Galaxy S Duos, Tab 2 10.1” which are different types of mobile devices, and Similarity, such as “dropping our prices - discount”. Co-Hyponyms are recurrent in advertisements because brands and types of products are usually listed. As for Similarity, it is a vital tool as it ties the ideas of the SMS together to form one unified message.

### 7. Discussion and Conclusion

The SFG analysis of the three Metafunctions clearly demonstrates that many of the features of the three metafunctions analysed are characteristic of all SMS advertisements in general, such as Material Processes, Circumstances which indicate definite locations, the Active voice, the Simple Present tense, Ellipsis,

Exophoric Reference, Repetition, Exophoric Reference, Ellipsis, and Co-Hyponyms. These features are suitable for the genre of SMS advertisements because they make these advertisements more effective and therefore, achieve their purpose of advertising for certain products or services. On the other hand, the features which would not help in making these advertisements effective are avoided or are rarely used, such as Ergative processes, the Passive voice, and High Modals.

However, some themes are characterised by specific features related to the services or products they advertise. One theme, which is unique in relation to several aspects, is the Domestic Help theme. The SMS advertisements of this theme have the highest frequency of Relational Processes, no Circumstances, and more Hypotactic clausal relations than Paratactic ones. Moreover, some features are not used in such SMSs because they would not make these advertisements effective. Two of these features are Ergative Processes, the Passive voice, and High Modals. Figure 1 below provides a summary of these features.

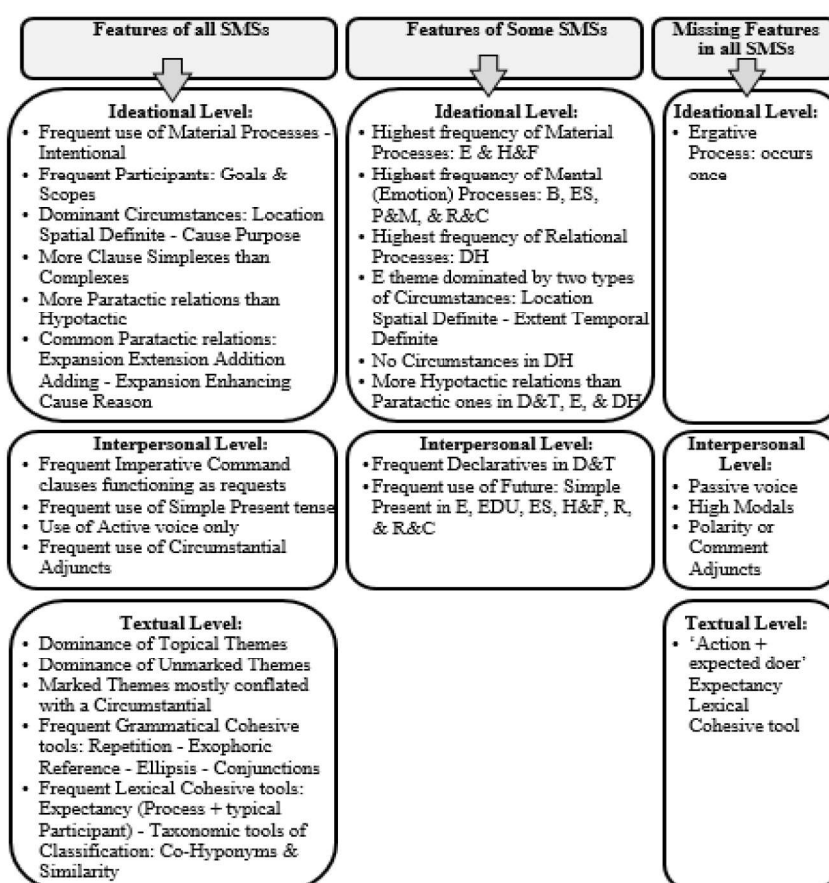


Figure 1. The features found in and missing from SMS advertisements and the features found in specific themes.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, only two empirical studies conducted on the grammatical features of SMSs were found in the literature, one examining personal SMS messages and one analysing SMS advertisements sent by Mobile Service Providers. Adebola (2011) applied Halliday's Theme-Rheme model of textual organisation on personal SMS messages in order to determine whether the Themes used were marked or unmarked, and simple or multiple. Adebola's results demonstrated the frequent use of marked and multiple Themes. This is contrary to the findings of the current study where unmarked Themes are dominant in the data analysed. In addition, the frequencies of occurrence of interpersonal and textual Themes are low in relation to Topical Themes which suggests that simple Themes are used more often than multiple Themes in the sample analysed in the current study. One possible explanation for this might be that the types of Themes used in SMS advertisements are different from the ones in personal SMS messages because they serve different functions in each of these kinds of SMS messages.

Moreover, El-Falaky (2016) analysed 110 SMS advertisements sent by Mobile Service Providers in Egypt by examining the grammatical choices as manifested through the types of clauses, tenses, and Adjuncts used in order to determine how mobile service providers made use of language to persuade their customers to buy their digital products. The results revealed the balance in the use of declaratives and imperatives as an attempt to create a conversational atmosphere void of any authoritarian impression. The findings of the current study do not support this, as imperatives are frequently used in the sample as a whole and in the theme of Mobile Service Providers in particular. Imperatives in the SMS advertisements analysed in the current study are used to make the consumers feel that a person is speaking to them through the advertisements, urging the customers to buy the products and services advertised. In addition, the use of the present tense was dominant in El-Falaky's (2016) sample in order to convince the consumers that the benefits stated in the SMSs were facts which they would definitely get. Moreover, the most frequently used type of Adjunct in El-Falaky's (2016) study was the circumstantial one because it described different circumstances about the services and products advertised, such as time, place and manner. The frequent use of the present tense and circumstantial Adjuncts is also found in the sample analysed in the current study, and is utilized for the same functions.

To sum up, this study attempted to apply Halliday's SFG analytical theory on English SMS advertisements sent to mobile phones in Egypt. These were divided into themes according to the products or services advertised in order to determine

whether the differences in themes would result in differences in the way they are written. The findings of this study illustrated that most of the themes are written in the same manner using almost the same features, so they would be effective.

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