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CONSTRUCTING GENDER IN TIKTOK ADVERTISING: AN EXPERIENTIAL METAFUNCTION ANALYSIS OF SONU PAII'S PROMOTIONAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how experiential metafunction contributes to the construction of gender representation in TikTok promotional discourse, focusing on videos produced by influencer @sonu_paii. Grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity system, the research employs a qualitative textual analysis of ten paid promotional videos published between 2023 and 2025. The findings indicate that material processes are the most dominant (30.7%), followed by mental and relational processes (23.1% each), verbal processes (15.4%), and existential processes (7.7%), while behavioral processes are absent. These patterns reveal that promotional discourse is primarily constructed through action-oriented and affective strategies that present products as part of everyday lived experience. Furthermore, the study identifies two contrasting gender representations: the "Mamak Karbol" persona, which embodies maternal authority, emotional expressiveness, and social control, and the "Sonu Paii" persona, which reflects fluid, playful, and performative masculinity. These identities are strategically realized through distinct configurations of transitivity choices. The study demonstrates that gender in social media advertising is not fixed but dynamically constructed through linguistic resources. Overall, this research highlights the role of experiential meaning as a key mechanism for persuasion, identity performance, and audience engagement in digital marketing discourse.

Keywords: *Constructing Gender, TikTok, Experential Metafunction, Propotional Discourse*

INTRODUCTION

Gender has long been recognized as a central dimension in the study of language, reflecting how individuals construct identity, negotiate social roles, and perform cultural meanings through communication. Page (2022) investigated gender performance among influencers and content creators, discovering that linguistic style, emoji use, and tone are all strong indicators of gender identity. In contemporary sociolinguistic research, gender is no longer understood as a fixed biological category but as a dynamic and socially constructed phenomenon, continuously produced and reproduced through discourse practices. With the rapid development of digital media, particularly social networking platforms, the relationship between language and gender has become increasingly complex, multimodal, and commercially oriented. Social media platforms provide spaces where individuals, especially influencers, strategically perform gender identities to engage audiences, build personal brands, and promote products.

One of the most influential platforms in this regard is TikTok, which has transformed the landscape of digital communication and marketing. TikTok enables users to create short-form videos that combine verbal language, visual imagery, music, and gestures, making it a highly multimodal environment for meaning-making. Abidin (2016) asserts that influencers serve as cultural bridges, converting brand messaging into material that their audience can relate on TikTok, where influencers can appear from anywhere throughout the world, brand messages transcend national boundaries while maintaining a regional appeal this is a real-life example of glocalization in action. In this platform, influencers play a crucial role as mediators between brands and consumers. They do not merely advertise products; rather, they construct narratives, identities, and emotional connections that make promotional content appear authentic and relatable. As a result, language use in TikTok promotional discourse becomes a powerful tool

for persuasion, identity construction, and audience engagement.

To explore this issue, this study adopts the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as developed by Halliday and further elaborated by Halliday and Matthiessen. SFL views language as a social semiotic system that functions to make meaning within specific contexts. One of its key components is the ideational metafunction, which is concerned with how language represents experience and reality. The ideational metafunction is divided into experiential and logical components, with the experiential metafunction focusing on how speakers encode actions, events, states, and relationships through language. This metafunction is realized through the transitivity system, which consists of process types (material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential), participants, and circumstances.

The experiential metafunction is particularly relevant for analyzing promotional discourse because it reveals how experiences are linguistically constructed to appear natural, authentic, and persuasive. Through specific choices of process types and participant roles, speakers can position themselves as actors, feelers, or evaluators, thereby shaping how audiences perceive products and messages. For instance, material processes emphasize concrete actions and activities, mental processes highlight emotions and perceptions, and relational processes define qualities and attributes. By examining these patterns, researchers can uncover the underlying strategies used to construct meaning and influence audience interpretation.

In addition to its relevance for meaning-making, the experiential metafunction also provides a valuable lens for analyzing gender representation. Gender identities are often realized through recurring patterns of action, emotion, and relational positioning in discourse. For example, femininity may be associated with emotional expressiveness and relational orientation, while masculinity may be linked to assertiveness and action. However, these associations are not fixed; they can be reconfigured and negotiated through linguistic choices, especially in digital contexts where performance and creativity are highly valued. Therefore, analyzing experiential metafunction allows for a deeper understanding of how gender is constructed, reinforced, or challenged through language.

This study focuses on the TikTok influencer @sonu_paii, a prominent content creator known for producing humorous and engaging promotional videos. What makes this influencer particularly interesting is the use of dual personas: "Mamak Karbol," a character that embodies a maternal, authoritative, and emotionally expressive female identity, and "Sonu Paii," a persona that reflects a more playful, fluid, and performative masculinity. Through these contrasting identities, the influencer not only entertains audiences but also strategically constructs gender representations that resonate with viewers. The use of localized language, regional dialects, and culturally specific humor further enhances the relatability and effectiveness of the promotional content.

Based on preliminary data from several paid promotional video clips uploaded by @sonu_paii on TikTok, various types of ideational metafunctions. The ideational metafunction itself is divided into two components, namely the experiential metafunction and the logical metafunction. The experiential metafunction deals with the representation of human experience, whether it is action, perception, emotion, or description of states, while the logical metafunction concerns how clauses are combined and related logically, such as cause and effect, condition, contrast, or sequence. Ibrahim (2024) investigated gendered communication in Nigeria and found that men and women differ in their choice of vocabulary, tone, and politeness strategies depending on cultural norms, suggesting that gender identity strongly mediates pragmatic language use.

Efendi, Rachman, Hamid, and Rahmawati (2025) examined gender differences in English learning strategies among university students in East Kalimantan. Their findings revealed that female learners tend to use more metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, while male learners rely more on cognitive and compensation strategies, indicating that gender affects how individuals regulate and approach language learning.

Limnios (2024) conducted a discourse analysis on transgender scientists' academic writing and found that "female language features," such as hedging, politeness markers, and emotional nuance, appeared alongside assertive and rational tones, reflecting the complex intersection of gender identity and linguistic representation in scholarly contexts. Li (2024) analyzed linguistic expression differences between male and female university students in China and found only minor variations, suggesting

that globalization and exposure to digital communication may have lessened traditional gendered language distinctions. Soegiarto (2024) explored the use and perception of gender-neutral language in Indonesian media and policymaking, revealing a growing awareness of inclusive linguistic practices but also highlighting resistance rooted in cultural and religious beliefs. Collectively, these studies emphasize that gender influences language use dynamically shaped by cultural context, identity, and social ideology rather than purely biological or grammatical distinctions.

Therefore, The Reseacher has reason of chosen @sonu_paii because the phenomenon of language use in digital content, especially in paid promotional videos by content creators such as @sonu_paii. Because @Sonupaii is actually a man. However, his content on TikTok, particularly when promoting something, uses different languages. This linguistic difference is based on his appearance, sometimes as a woman, called "Mamak Karbol," which represents himself as a woman or mother, and as a man, called Sonupaii, which represents as himself. Behind choosing this title can be explained through the three main focuses of the research: experiental metafunction, and realization of experiental metafunction and gender represented.

In the context of this study, the TikTok influencer @sonu_paii is chosen as the subject because of the consistent production of paid promotional videos that are widely viewed and shared by audiences. The influencer's language is rich with experiential elements that highlight personal usage of the products, This research therefore aims to investigate how experiential metafunctions are realized in the influencer's paid promotional videos, and how representation of gender of @sonu_paii.

The research is guided by three main questions: (1) What types of experiential metafunction are used in @sonu_paii's paid promotional videos? (2) How are these experiential metafunctions realized in the discourse? and (3) How is gender represented through these linguistic choices? By answering these questions, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how language functions as a resource for both persuasion and identity construction in digital media.

In summary, this study situates itself at the intersection of linguistics, gender studies, and digital communication. It highlights the importance of analyzing language not only as a system of structure but also as a tool for social action and meaning-making. Through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly the experiential metafunction, the study provides insights into how promotional discourse on TikTok is constructed and how gender identities are strategically performed. Ultimately, the findings are expected to enrich the field of applied linguistics by offering a comprehensive account of the relationship between language, gender, and digital marketing in contemporary social media environments.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative textual analysis approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Qualitative textual analysis concerned with the interpretation of meaning rather than the measurement of frequency or quantity. According to Silverman (2020), qualitative textual analysis aimed to explore how language and symbols construct and communicate social realities. Texts whether spoken, written, or visual are understood as meaningful cultural artifacts that reflect ideologies, values, and experiences.

The data in this study consist of Ideational Metafunction was produced by @sonu_paii in his paid promotional videos on TikTok. These utterances include experiential metafunction. The experiential metafunction deals with the representation of human experience, whether it is action, perception, emotion, or description of states. The experiential metafunction described how people perceive the world through language. The Process described what is happening, the Actor identifies who is involved, and the Circumstance provides context. In @Sonu_Paii's TikTok promotional videos, these elements interact in both linguistic and visual modes to represent daily activities, emotions, and humor, as well as gender and identity.

The primary data sources for this research was the paid promotional utterances by @sonu_paii on his official TikTok account. The researcher analyzed types of experential metafunction, the realization of experiential metafunction and the use of gender represented to show the differences between Mamak Karbol and @Sonu_paii, who sometimes he use woman's clothing such as Gamis(dress) and Jilbab(headscarf) as a woman and he is also use T-shirt as a man. The researcher collected 5 videos for Mamak Karbol and 5 videos for @Sonu_paii uploaded within the last three years (2023-2025)

before the data collection period to ensure that the data remain relevant and representative. The selected videos were mainly focus on promotional videos, as these types of content generally corresponding with gender. Each video has an approximate duration of one to three minutes which provides sufficient linguistic material for analysis. The criteria for selecting the videos are as follows: the video must be clearly identified as a paid partnership, sponsored post, or collaboration (indicated by hashtags such as #ad, #paidpartnership, or brand tagging); the video must feature spoken utterances by @sonu_paii (videos that rely only on text overlays or background music will be excluded).

The data in this study was collected using documentatation. Documentation was used as a tool in this paper. This study, the data was collected use non-participant observation and documentation techniques, focusing on the verbal content of @sonu_paii's paid promotional videos posted on TikTok. According to Moleong (2017), observation is a technique of data collection in which the researcher directly observes the object of study without being involved in the activity, aiming to gain naturalistic and objective data. The researcher selected a number of utterances that were clearly marked or indicated as paid promotions, ensuring that the utterances being analyzed were indeed used in a commercial communication context.

The researcher was selected paid promotional videos posted by @sonu_paii on his official TikTok account. The videos must meet specific criteria: they must be explicitly marked as paid promotions, involve direct verbal utterances by @sonu_paii, and have been posted. Each video was transcribed, capturing all spoken utterances, including significant paralinguistic features such as intonation, pauses, and emphasis that contribute to meaning. The transcription process aimed to ensure that the verbal data is accurately represented for further analysis. The data analysis in this research was conducted by using qualitative content analysis with a pragmatic approach, following the principles of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), who propose three concurrent steps in qualitative data analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the analysis, this study applies a systematic coding procedure based on the transitivity framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics. Each clause in the transcribed data was carefully segmented and categorized according to its process type, participants, and accompanying circumstances. The coding process was conducted iteratively to ensure consistency, with repeated cross-checking between data segments and theoretical categories. In addition, data triangulation was achieved by comparing patterns across the two personas, Mamak Karbol and Sonu Paii, to identify recurring linguistic features and variations in gender representation. Analytical rigor was further maintained by documenting all stages of data reduction, classification, and interpretation, allowing for transparency and traceability of findings. This methodological approach ensures that the analysis not only captures the richness of linguistic data but also produces credible and systematic interpretations of experiential meaning and gender construction in TikTok promotional discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Experential Metafunction in Sonupaii Promotional Paid Videos (Transitivity System)

Material process showed actions, it is very dominant in the promotional discourse because it draws activity use products and physical action. Mental processes are used to represent human inner experiences, such as feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and desires. Mental processes focus on what happens within human consciousness, not on visible physical actions. Therefore, mental processes explain how a person feels, thinks, understands, or evaluates something. These mental processes link products to positive psychological states. Self-confidence is positioned as a direct result of product use. Relational processes are a type of experiential metafunction in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). They function to represent states, identities, and relationships between entities in human experience. Unlike material processes, which emphasize actions, and mental processes, which emphasize inner experience, relational processes are used to explain what something is, what its nature is, and what it possesses. Relational processes essentially construct experience as "being" and "having," and are therefore often used to describe the qualities, characteristics, status, classification, and ownership of an object, individual, or phenomenon.

Verbal process is one type of process in the experiential metafunction in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which is used to represent the act of saying, conveying, or

communicating a message. Verbal process positions language as the primary means for exchanging information, instructions, and social interaction, making it very important in dialogic texts, such as conversations, advertisements, and social media content.

The existential process is a type of experiential metafunction in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which is used to represent the existence of something. This process serves to state that something exists, occurs, or is present in a particular context, without emphasizing who performs the action or how something is perceived. Grammatically, existential processes are typically realized through the use of "there is" and "there are" constructions. In these clauses, the word "there" functions as a grammatical subject without semantic meaning, while the verb "is" or "are" serves as the existential process. The entity whose existence is being asserted is referred to as the Existent. The focus of the clause is therefore not on an actor or a senser, but on the mere presence or availability of the entity introduced into the discourse.

Behavioral processes are a type of experiential metafunction in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) used to represent human physiological and psychological behavior. Behavioral processes occupy a transitional position between material and mental processes, as they describe actions originating from inner states but manifested in observable behavior. Behavioral processes typically involve a primary participant, called the Behaver, the individual performing the behavior. These processes are often realized through verbs indicating activities such as breathing, laughing, crying, smiling, staring, complaining, or reacting. These are neither entirely physical like material processes nor entirely internal like mental processes.

There is no data of behavioral process in sonupai promotional tiktok video.

Table 1 Percentage of Experential Metafunction

No	Types of Experiential Metafunction	Total	Percentages (%)
1	Material Process	4	30.7
2	Mental Process	3	23.1
3	Relational Process	3	23.1
4	Verbal Process	2	15.4
5	Existential Process	1	7.7
6	Behavioral Process	0	0
	Total	**13**	**100**

Realization of Experential Metafunction in Sonupaii_ Promotional Paid Videos

Material processes appear as the most dominant process type in the promotional videos. This dominance is realized through clauses that foreground concrete and observable actions performed by the speaker as the Actor. In the data, actions such as coming, buying, using, paying, trying, and visiting are repeatedly expressed through first-person actors ("I" or "aku"), positioning the speaker as an active participant in everyday activities. These material processes are frequently supported by circumstances of place (e.g., here, at the store), time (e.g., every day), and purpose (e.g., to pay taxes, to buy clothes). The realization of material processes in this way constructs promotion as lived experience, where products and services are embedded naturally within routine actions, reinforcing authenticity and persuasive impact.

Mental processes emerge as the second most frequent type, functioning to represent internal experiences that justify consumption. These processes are realized through sensing verbs such as feel, think, know, confused, and confident, with the speaker positioned as the Senser and emotional or cognitive states as the Phenomenon. Circumstances of cause, such as because there is a discount or because I use Propolis, play a crucial role in linking inner feelings to promotional reasons. Through this realization, products are not merely presented as objects but as triggers of confidence, relief, curiosity, or moral responsibility, allowing promotional discourse to appeal to the audience's emotions and reasoning.

These processes are realized through attributive and identifying clauses that assign values such as halal, complete, affordable, effective, and new. In these clauses, products act as Carriers or Identified participants, while positive characteristics function as Attributes or Identifiers. Circumstances of place and condition further specify where and why these attributes apply. The realization of relational processes stabilizes promotional meaning by presenting product qualities as factual and permanent.

Verbal processes play a strategic role in promotional realization. These processes are

realized through explicit recommendations, commands, and persuasive statements addressed directly to the audience. The speaker functions as the Sayer, the audience as the Receiver, and promotional messages as the Verbiage. Circumstances of condition (e.g., if you want to change your fate) intensify the persuasive force of the utterances. Through verbal processes, language itself becomes a marketing tool, directly guiding audience action and decision-making.

Existential processes are realized to emphasize the existence and availability of promotional benefits. These clauses typically use there is or there are constructions, where the Existent refers to discounts, variants, programs, or facilities. The absence or minimal use of circumstances in many existential clauses places full focus on existence itself, highlighting abundance and opportunity. This realization functions informationally, ensuring that viewers are aware of options, quantities, and promotional advantages.

Behavioral processes are realized through clauses representing everyday bodily and habitual actions such as watching, eating, meeting people, and trying products. In these realizations, the speaker appears as the Behaver, while the behavior is closely connected to consumption contexts. Circumstances of time and accompaniment frequently occur, situating these behaviors within daily routines. This realization supports the promotional narrative by portraying products as seamlessly integrated into ordinary life, making them appear necessary and practical rather than optional.

Gender representation in the @Sonu_paii promotional tiktok videos

In the promotional videos performed using the Mamak Karbol (MK), gender is predominantly represented through the construction of a maternal, domestic, and authoritative female identity. Linguistically, this representation is realized through frequent use of material and verbal processes in imperative and directive forms, such as giving orders, scolding, controlling situations, and managing others. The MK positions himself as an Actor who actively disciplines children, negotiates with public officers, manages household concerns, and makes purchasing decisions. This aligns with a culturally recognizable image of a strong, vocal, and dominant "mamak" figure in Indonesian society.

Mental processes in MK data further reinforce this gendered identity by expressing emotions such as anger, embarrassment, guilt, and pride. These emotions are openly verbalized, portraying femininity not as passive but as emotionally expressive and socially powerful. Circumstances of place (markets, tax offices, schools, clothing stores) and social interaction frame the MK within public spaces, challenging traditional notions that associate women solely with private or domestic spheres. However, the authority exercised remains closely tied to maternal and caretaking roles, reinforcing culturally embedded gender norms rather than fully subverting them.

Gender Representation of Sonu_paii (SP)

In contrast, Sonupaii (SP) constructs gender through a fluid, performative, and playful masculine identity. This gender representation is linguistically realized through a high frequency of verbal, mental, and relational processes. SP often positions himself as a Sayer who jokes, persuades, flirts, and directly engages the audience, especially in perfume, fashion, and lifestyle promotions.

Mental processes such as feeling confident, being curious, or enjoying experiences foreground personal sensation and self-expression rather than authority. Relational processes are used to attribute transformational power to products (e.g., perfume changing life or appearance), which aligns with a gender performance that values appearance, affect, and self-presentation. The frequent use of direct address ("you") and playful verbal strategies constructs intimacy and humor, distancing SP from hegemonic masculinity and instead presenting a hybrid gender identity that is both masculine and feminized.

When compared, the MK and SP represent gender through distinctly different yet complementary discursive strategies. The MK reinforces gender through role-based authority, where femininity is linked to motherhood, discipline, and moral responsibility. Language use emphasizes control, instruction, and social regulation, positioning MK as a figure of power within everyday communal contexts. This representation aligns with traditional gender expectations but amplifies them through exaggerated verbal aggression and public presence.

Meanwhile, the SP represents gender as performative and negotiable, where masculinity is not fixed but fluid. This fluidity is particularly effective in digital promotional contexts, where humor, relatability, are valued. Gender here becomes a strategic resource for branding and engagement rather than a stable identity. Both gender representations function as performative identities personalzed to algorithmic visibility and

audience engagement. The MK leverages culturally familiar maternal authority to gain trust and relatability, especially in promotions related to public services, education, and household consumption. Conversely, the SP persona capitalizes on gender play and humor to attract attention in lifestyle, perfume, food, and fashion promotions.

These representations demonstrate that gender in social media advertising is not merely reflected but actively constructed through linguistic choices. The experiential metafunction plays a central role in this construction by organizing actions, emotions, and identities in ways that align with audience expectations while also exploiting the affordances of digital platforms.

Based on table above, the data found that there are 4 data of material process, (30.7%), each 3 data of mental process and relational process (23.1%), 2 data of verbal process (15.4%), 1 data of existensial process (7.7%), and there is no data of behaviral process. So, the total are 13 data (100%). The realization of experiential metafunction in Sonupaii's paid promotional videos is predominantly constructed through material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential processes, as performed by both the Mamak Karbol (MK) and Sonupaii (SP). Material processes are realized through first-person actions embedded in daily activities, mental processes through expressions of emotion and cognition, relational processes through attribution of product qualities and prices, verbal processes through direct persuasive communication, and existential processes through statements of availability and promotional benefits. Each process type is supported by relevant circumstances such as place, time, reason, and condition, which contextualize the promotional messages within everyday social experiences.

The findings reveal two contrasting but complementary gender representations constructed through linguistic choices. The Mamak Karbol (MK) persona represents gender through a maternal, authoritative, and emotionally expressive femininity, while Sonupaii (SP) represents gender through a fluid, playful, and performative masculinity. These representations are realized through different configurations of experiential metafunction, particularly material, mental, relational, and verbal processes.

This study demonstrates that experiential metafunction, as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), plays a crucial role in constructing meaning in paid promotional TikTok videos produced by @Sonu_paii. The findings indicate that language in digital promotional discourse is not merely used to deliver information but to actively shape experience, emotion, identity, and gender representation. Through systematic choices of process types, participants, and circumstances, the promotional messages are framed as authentic, relatable, and persuasive social experiences.

Material processes emerge as the most dominant process type, reflecting the action-oriented nature of promotional discourse. The frequent use of material clauses such as use, buy, come, and pay positions the speaker as an active participant engaged in everyday activities. This dominance confirms that promotion on social media relies heavily on the construction of visible, concrete actions to legitimize product claims. By presenting consumption as routine behavior, the promotional discourse minimizes the impression of advertising and instead constructs the message as lived experience.

Mental processes function as a complementary persuasive strategy by linking products and services to internal psychological states. Feelings of confidence, guilt, and confusion are not incidental but strategically foregrounded to justify action. In this context, consumption and compliance are framed as emotional resolutions, reinforcing the idea that products and discounts are solutions to personal or moral dilemmas. This finding supports the argument that promotional discourse increasingly appeals to affective engagement rather than purely rational decision-making.

Relational processes play a stabilizing role in the discourse by defining product identity, qualities, prices, and benefits. Through attributive and identifying clauses, products are presented as natural, halal, complete, affordable, or effective. These linguistic constructions transform promotional claims into seemingly factual information, strengthening credibility and reducing consumer uncertainty. Relational processes thus function as a key mechanism for legitimizing promotional value in digital advertising. Verbal processes, although less frequent, are strategically significant. Direct recommendations, questions, and commands simulate everyday conversations and interpersonal interaction. By positioning the speaker as a Sayer and the audience as an implied Receiver, the promotional discourse becomes dialogic rather than monologic. This interactional quality

enhances engagement and positions language itself as a central marketing tool. Existential processes contribute by emphasizing availability, abundance, and opportunity. Statements such as the existence of discounts or product variants foreground possibility and urgency, encouraging immediate response. The minimal focus on circumstances in existential clauses further highlights existence as the core message, reinforcing the promotional appeal of "what is available now." In terms of gender representation, the findings reveal that gender is actively constructed through linguistic choices rather than passively reflected. The Mamak Karbol (MK) represents femininity through maternal authority, emotional expressiveness, and social control, realized primarily through material, mental, and verbal processes. This representation aligns with culturally familiar gender norms while amplifying them in public and institutional spaces. Conversely, the Sonupaii (SP) constructs masculinity as fluid, performative, and playful. Through humor, self-expression, and direct engagement, SP challenges rigid gender norms and presents gender as a flexible resource in digital promotion.

Overall, this study confirms that experiential metafunction provides a powerful analytical framework for understanding how promotional discourse on TikTok organizes experience, emotion, and identity. The strategic deployment of process types enables influencers to blend entertainment, persuasion, and cultural meaning, making promotional content appear natural, personal, and socially embedded. These findings highlight the dynamic relationship between language, digital media, and identity construction in contemporary social media advertising.

CONCLUSION

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis is restricted to a relatively small dataset consisting of ten paid promotional videos from a single TikTok influencer, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across different creators, platforms, or cultural contexts. Second, the study focuses exclusively on the experiential metafunction within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework, without incorporating interpersonal and textual metafunctions that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of meaning-making. Third, the analysis is confined to verbal language (spoken utterances), excluding multimodal elements such as visuals, gestures, music, and editing techniques, which are integral to TikTok discourse. Despite these limitations, this study offers significant contributions by demonstrating how experiential metafunction operates as a strategic resource in digital promotional discourse and by revealing how gender identities are dynamically constructed through transitivity patterns. The findings contribute to the growing body of research in applied linguistics, particularly in the areas of digital discourse analysis, gender studies, and social media marketing.

The implications of this study extend to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, the study reinforces the relevance of SFL, especially the experiential metafunction, as an effective analytical framework for examining language use in contemporary digital environments. Practically, the findings provide insights for content creators and marketers on how linguistic choices can enhance authenticity, emotional engagement, and persuasive impact in promotional content. Influencers may benefit from strategically combining material, mental, and verbal processes to construct relatable and compelling narratives, while also being aware of how gender representations influence audience perception. For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope by including a larger and more diverse dataset, involving multiple influencers and cross-cultural comparisons to capture broader discourse patterns. Additionally, further studies should integrate interpersonal and textual metafunctions, as well as multimodal analysis, to explore how verbal and non-verbal elements interact in shaping meaning. Longitudinal research could also be conducted to examine how linguistic strategies and gender performances evolve over time in response to platform dynamics and audience engagement.

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