An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

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Abstract

The study aims to analyze the mood structure and mood types used in Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands, investigating how these linguistic choices contribute to speech function, power, and identity construction within the mass media. Twenty Instagram posts from 10 brands (two posts from each brand) were used to compile the data. The interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) was applied during data analysis. The findings show a frequent use of declarative (48.98%) and imperative (38.78%) moods while the interrogative mood accounts for 6.12%. From the findings, the predominant speech functions of these captions are statements and commands respectively. Furthermore, power is conveyed through the imperative mood. Additionally, the identity of Black people, which includes the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), is not expressed in the advertising captions of these brands. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the mood choice shapes the interaction between brands and readers in advertisements of fashion brands owned by Black people.

Keywords: systemic functional grammar, interpersonal metafunction, Black-owned fashion, Instagram, captions

Introduction

Social media is an essential tool for communication in the digital age (Beaudoin, 2023). Instagram, an online application for sharing photos and videos, has grown in popularity among the various social media platforms. Beyond entertainment, it is used for political purposes, including promoting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement which is the political campaign founded to combat racism and inequality (Chang et al., 2022). It is also recognized as one of the most effective platforms for marketing (Kuligowski, 2023). As a result, Instagram users are likely to encounter various forms of advertising while browsing their accounts.

Previously, many researchers used Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to analyze the verbal language of online advertisements, including Chaisomkun (2017) and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019). Their results varied depending on the subjects and objectives of the studies. To elaborate, Chaisomkun's (2017) study aimed to analyze the systems of THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY of nouns and verbs in advertising texts of *Chewajit* lifestyle and wellness magazine. Meanwhile,

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Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta's (2019) study explored advertising strategies adopted in insurance advertisements and "to reveal the manipulation of customers' needs for annuity policies" (p. 69).

In addition to the goal of selling products, advertisements represent brand identity. Brand identity is how customers perceive a brand, and it can be undeniably influenced by the product itself, the advertising message, and other factors (Mindrut et al., 2015). Especially in the fashion industry, brand identity is important for increasing brand recognition (Conti et al., 2020). Thus, owners of fashion brands must create strategies to make their brands recognizable and visible as a social media platform like Instagram is driving the fashion industry forward (Casaló et al., 2021). Due to the potential of Instagram, brand owners use this application to promote racial equality. Though the equality of Black people has been promoted on various platforms, this topic remains a significant challenge faced by this group, including in the fashion industry (Segran, 2020). An example of a fashion brand that supports Black people through its Instagram advertisements is Polo Ralph Lauren. In 2022, it collaborated with two historically Black colleges, Spelman and Morehouse, after the case of George Floyd in 2020 (Tounsel, 2022). The collaboration was initiated by two alumni, and it resulted in the Morehouse and Spelman Collection (Tounsel, 2022). On the Instagram account of Polo Ralph Lauren, the company shared posts featuring images of Black models and used captions highlighting the importance, contribution, and history of the two colleges. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that when examining advertisements related to Black-owned fashion brands, their importance lies in their role in promoting and propagating Black identities.

Since fashion represents the cultural and socioeconomic values of a society (GreenSuggest, 2023), some ideologies of fashion brands involve promoting social justice, enhancing economic empowerment, and embracing diversity (Forbes Staff, 2024). To provide further clarification, the following descriptions of these concepts are presented. Initially, the promotion of social justice was a term that denoted the manner in which Black-owned fashion companies prioritized the equality of Black people within the fashion industry (Forbes Staff, 2024). It may entail equitable treatment or equal rights and opportunities (San Diego Foundation, 2024). Subsequently, economic empowerment involved providing support to Black entrepreneurs, leading to increased opportunities for a variety of stakeholders in the fashion industry (Forbes Staff, 2024). Lastly, diversity was associated with the fact that Black-owned companies do not restrict their representation to exclusively Black models; rather, they showcase models of various ethnicities and characteristics in their advertisements (Forbes Staff, 2024).

As indicated earlier, advertisements can reflect the identities of Black people. By adopting SFG to analyze advertisements, readers can understand how verbal language reflects cultural identities and the interpersonal relationships between brands and customers. Even though the studies adopting SFG are pervasive among English-speaking countries, the number of studies adopting SFG to analyze advertisements remains limited in Thailand (Chaisomkun, 2017). For this reason, this study aims to analyze the mood structure and mood types used in Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands to investigate how these linguistic choices contribute to speech function, power, and identity construction within the mass media. Even though the captions might not be written only by Black people, it can be assumed that they must

be approved of by the brand owners, founders, or marketing teams before being uploaded online as these captions serve as the representatives of the brands. Based on the findings of Chaisomkun (2017), Chueasuai (2017), and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019) and the researchers' observations, the researchers hypothesized that the prominent mood types found in the captions are declarative and imperative. Moreover, the hypothesis regarding the fact that these brands are Black-owned is that the concepts of social justice, economic empowerment, and diversity are embedded in the selection of mood structures and mood types.

Literature Review

In this section, the researchers provide readers with some background knowledge related to the research topic, the theoretical framework, and previous studies.

Communication, Identity, and Online Advertising

Communication involves generating meanings through various linguistic forms (Joseph, 2004). In addition to conveying meaning, communication also transfers identity (Beauchamp & Baran, 2017), meaning that individuals reveal their identities while they act or speak. To illustrate, Molnár and Lamont (2002) provided an example of how Black people use clothing to express their identities. Furthermore, Sidnell (2002) revealed how Black people use English differently from other native speakers. Accordingly, gaining insight into how individuals communicate can facilitate a deeper understanding of identity (Joseph, 2004).

Regarding the meaning of advertising, Laurie et al. (2019) explained that it is a type of communication that encompasses all marketing processes and production. Qader et al. (2022) divided advertising into five types based on the media used: online advertising, broadcast advertising, product placement advertising, outdoor advertising, and print advertising. Incidentally, online advertising is the most common type of communication among business owners (Farooqi & Ahmad, 2018), and social media has become another means of online communication (Jamil et al., 2021). Business owners use social media platforms, including Instagram, as a major tool for conducting business (Qader et al., 2022). What makes Instagram advertisements compelling is that they are visually appealing to the audience due to the features available on the application. Furthermore, brand owners can benefit from using a relevant caption for the advertising images or videos as it can enhance the post's engagement (Kratsas, 2013). Hence, Instagram is becoming an influential platform for doing business (Kuligowski, 2023). In brief, communication allows people to reveal their identities, and Instagram advertising enables brands to communicate with individuals who have a variety of preferences or identities.

Media Representation and Convergence in Instagram Advertising Captions

The representation of Black people remains problematic in the media. To give an example, Black people are often segregated from the mass media in the United States (Castañeda, 2018). Also, Black people encounter the same situation in social

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media (Cai, 2021). To reveal their identities, Black American English or African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is used on social media and other marketing platforms (Feminuity Team, n.d.). Nonetheless, their specific way of using English is viewed as a minor language (Cai, 2021). In addition, it is regarded as the language of uneducated people (Cai, 2021). Thus, Black businesses must adjust their language to connect with a diverse audience. One of the strategies introduced in the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) of Giles and Ogay (2007) is convergence. The convergence strategy occurs when speakers modify their languages to blend in with their interlocutors (Giles & Ogay, 2007). In addition to speech, convergence can also be applied to written language though the audience is not specified during the process of communicating through media (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This kind of linguistic accommodation reflects how social media plays an important role in shaping language use in the context of online marketing. In summary, media representation and language convergence are connected by the ways in which Black-owned fashion brands use language to express their identity and interact with their audience.

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

To examine the language used in the selected Instagram posts, the SFG of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) was adopted. Michael Halliday made a significant contribution to the linguistic field, specifically systemic functional linguistics (Pakir, 2019). His theory explains the connection between language and social roles, and the three types of meanings categorized by their language functions are ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, the focus will be on interpersonal metafunction because mood types can explain the relationship between the speaker and the listener as well as the speech function of the captions. Therefore, advertisers would be unable to communicate effectively with their customers without adopting the interpersonal metafunction. By selecting the appropriate language, advertisers can attract potential customers and arouse interest in their products or services (Pizarro, 2017).

The interpersonal metafunction emphasizes the interaction between the speaker and the listener. Besides human interaction, interpersonal metafunction concerns the meaning of a clause, which serves as the exchange of commodities between speakers and listeners (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Based on the theory, the two types of commodities are information and goods-&-services. Importantly, the indicative mood deals with the exchange of information. However, there are differences in the roles in the exchange between the two subtypes of the indicative mood: declarative and interrogative. The role in the exchange of a declarative mood is giving information, which corresponds with the speech function of a statement. In contrast, the role in the exchange of an interrogative mood is demanding information, which corresponds with the speech function of a question. Unlike the indicative mood, the imperative mood involves the exchange of goods-&-services. Accordingly, the role in the exchange of an imperative mood is demanding goods-&-services, which corresponds with the speech function of a command. In this study, the analysis of the MOOD system, which identifies the mood structure and mood types, was employed to reveal the interpersonal meaning of Instagram captions. Within the mood structure, the Mood element and

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Residue are two major components. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) stated that the Mood element comprises Subject and Finite as its components. Grammatically, a Subject component refers to the doer of an action mentioned in the clause. Next, a Finite component is the first element in the verbal group that deals with indicating tenses (past, present, and future) and modality (e.g., may, will). Additionally, the Finite component can be either negative or positive. For the negative Finite component, the word 'not' is used to indicate the negative polarity. Secondly, another component in the mood structure is the Residue, which includes three elements. Firstly, a Predicator is another verbal element, except the first one in the verbal group. If there is only one verb in a declarative clause, that verb functions as both Finite and Predicator. Furthermore, a Complement can be any nominal group that can function as the object or an element that can potentially function as the Subject. Lastly, an Adjunct is added to give extra meaning to the clause such as an "adverbial group or a prepositional phrase" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 155). For instance, the Adjunct of the clause 'She sat in the living room' is the prepositional phrase 'in the living room' indicating the location. Figure 1 presents a summary of mood structure.

Figure 1

Summary of Mood Structure Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)
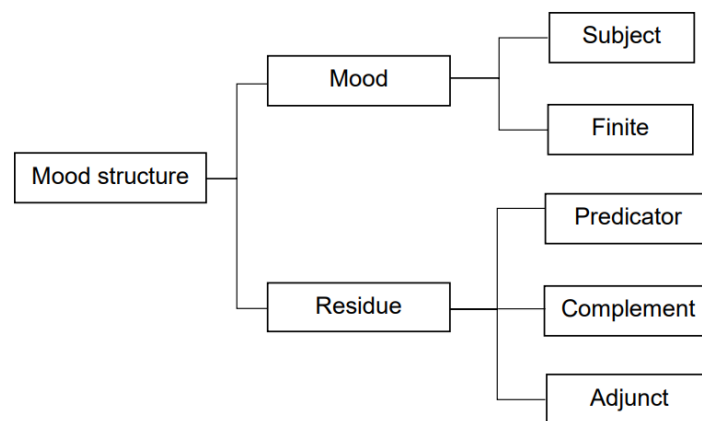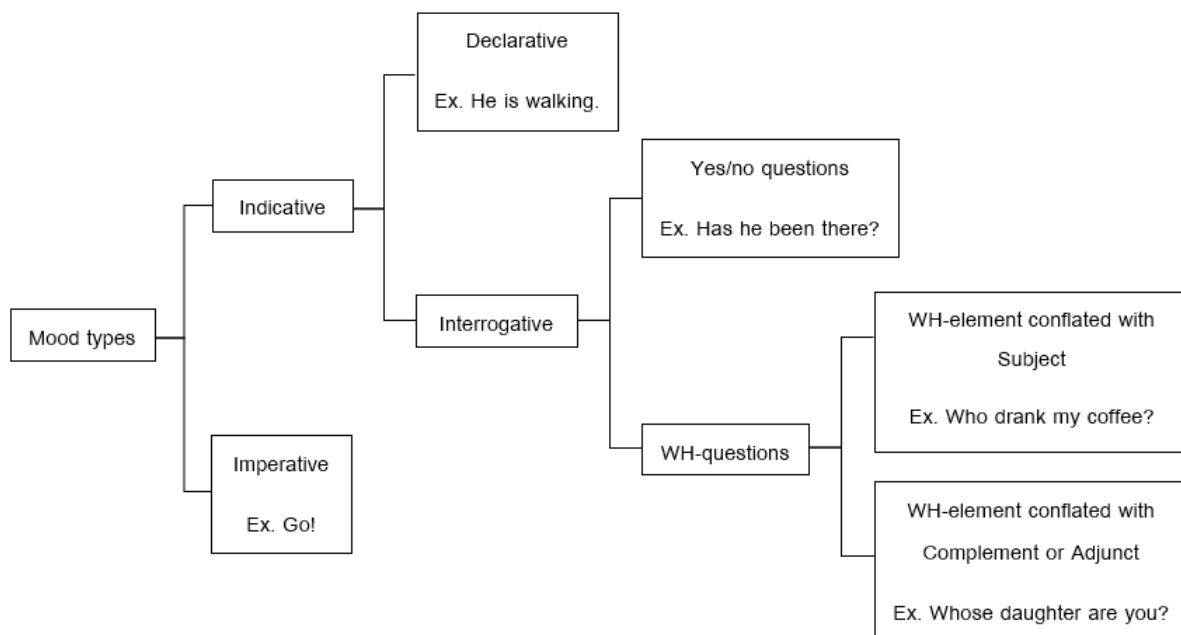

Another element in the interpersonal metafunction that should be considered is the mood type (see Figure 2). There are two main types of mood, namely indicative and imperative. It should be noted that bound clauses (dependent clauses) do not represent mood types such as free clauses (independent clauses). The difference between these two types of clauses is that free clauses "realize either propositions or proposals, serving to develop exchanges in dialogue either by initiating new exchanges or by responding to ones that have already been initiated" while bound clauses cannot do so (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 170). Another concern is that the order of Mood elements can denote a mood type. Within the indicative mood, there are two subtypes. Firstly, the declarative mood is commonly used to express statements (Butt et al., 2003). The order of its Mood elements is Subject, followed by Finite. For example, in the clause 'He is walking,' the Subject is the pronoun 'he,' and the Finite is the word 'is.' Secondly, the interrogative mood can be further categorized into yes/no questions (or polar interrogative) and WH- questions (questions beginning with who, what, where, when, which, whom, whose, how, or why). For the yes/no interrogative, the order of its Mood elements is Finite, followed by Subject. For instance, the clause 'Has he been there?' consists of the word 'has' serving as the

Finite and the word 'he' serving as the Subject. However, the elements in the WH-interrogative may differ case by case as there are two subtypes of WH- interrogatives. The first is the WH- element conflated with the Subject. This means that the WH-element itself serves as the Subject. For example, the Subject of the interrogative clause 'Who drank my coffee?' is 'who,' and the word 'drank' is both the Finite and the Predicator. Thus, the order of its Mood elements is Subject, followed by Finite. Next, the second subtype of WH- interrogatives is the WH- element conflated with Complement or Adjunct. To demonstrate, the WH- element conflated with Complement of the interrogative clause 'Whose daughter are you?' is 'whose daughter.' Also, the WH- element conflated with Adjunct of the interrogative clause 'Where has the lady gone?' is 'where' as it provides additional information about the location. The order of these interrogatives' Mood elements is Finite, followed by Subject. Finally, the last type is the imperative mood. If an imperative clause begins with a main verb, that verb itself is the Predicator (e.g., Go!). For the negative imperative, the Finite 'do' is presented at the beginning of the clause. Then, the word 'not' is added to make the imperative clause negative as in 'do not' or 'don't.' For instance, the imperative clause 'do not eat' consists of the words 'do' functioning as the Finite, 'not' functioning as part of the Finite that shows the negative polarity, and 'eat' functioning as the Predicator.

Figure 2
Summary of Mood Types Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)

Conclusively, the differences between the analysis of the mood structure and mood types of interpersonal metafunction are that the analysis of the mood structure focuses on the organization of grammatical elements within a clause while the analysis of mood types focuses on the communicative function of a clause. The analysis of mood structure and mood types is related to the present study since it illuminates how Black-owned fashion brands use language to communicate with their customers. Additionally, it can reflect the ideologies of Black-owned fashion brands, including social justice, economic empowerment, and diversity (Forbes Staff, 2024). For instance, using the declarative mood is associated with social justice, particularly

equality, as it does not imply any power. Moreover, using the imperative mood is related to economic empowerment because it often contains messages urging readers to support the brands. Since the study focuses on written language, analyzing mood structure can reveal diversity through linguistic choices, such as grammatical features that differ from the standardized forms. The hypothesis proposing that declarative and imperative moods are prominent in the captions is supported by the statements above, which demonstrate the connection between the mood choice and the ideologies of Black-owned fashion brands.

Previous Studies

In the studies of Chaisomkun (2017) and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), the systems of THEME, MOOD, and TRANSIVITY were analyzed. Concerning the system of THEME, the findings of Chaisomkun (2017) revealed that the topical theme, especially the unmarked topical one, prevails in texts. Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), on the other hand, focused on the Rhemes which mainly involve the average ages of Thai people, definitions of longevity, and details confirming the effectiveness of the BLA Unit Pension. Next, the results regarding the system of MOOD of both studies correspond since the declarative mood is by far the most common type of mood in their studies. While all mood types are found in the findings of Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), the interrogative mood is absent in the findings of Chaisomkun (2017). For the system of TRANSIVITY, Chaisomkun (2017) showed that the material processes are most commonly found, followed by relational, mental, and verbal processes. Likewise, Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019) indicated that all types of processes such as material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential are employed.

In addition to the two studies analyzing three aspects of language, Ajepe (2021) also adopted SFG to explore the language used in television advertisements of banks in Nigeria with a focus on interpersonal meanings. The researcher reported that the declarative mood is the most prominent, followed by the interrogative and imperative moods. In terms of interpersonal metafunction, the frequent use of a declarative mood shows that the messages function to provide information. Moreover, it creates a sense of harmonious interaction as it neither conveys any sense of command nor demands responses from readers. In addition, the analysis of the theme shows that the marked theme is prominent in the indicative mood, which includes declarative and interrogative moods.

To summarize, previous studies examined the use of language from three systems: THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY. However, the data in this study is restricted to interpersonal metafunction as advertising involves interaction between people. Hence, focusing solely on the interpersonal metafunction allows for a more complete examination within a limited scope and can lead to clearer interpretation of findings. The study aims to contribute to the linguistic field, providing another example of SFG analysis in the context of Black-owned brands that other researchers can adapt. Next, this study sheds light on the topic of language and race, particularly the language used by people of color. Apart from the contributions to the linguistic field, this study may be beneficial to people who would like to advertise their products

on Instagram, as they can study how other brands use different mood structures and mood types to communicate with their audience through captions.

Methodology

This section describes the research subject, the process of subject selection, the methods of data collection, and the procedures for data analysis.

Subjects

The subjects included 20 advertisement posts from 10 Black-owned fashion brands. Since the total number of posts from all brands was more than 20,000, the researchers decided to select only two posts from each brand to reduce data overload and allow them to focus on the most relevant information, thus making the data collection process more manageable. This study focuses on fashion advertisements because fashion has long been intertwined with human lives. Fashion has been used to express preferences, personalities, or identities for an extended duration (Priedel, 2022). Even in the present era, fashion has been an interesting topic that has gained a great deal of engagement on social media, especially on Instagram (Conant, 2023). Regrettably, it is not widely recognized that many fashion trends originate from Black communities. Thus, the scope of the study is restricted to Black-owned fashion brands' advertisements since the researchers would like to highlight the contributions of the Black community to the fashion industry. The 10 selected brands are Andrea Iyamah, CISE, Fe Noel, Kai Collective, lemlem, LITA by Ciara, Pantora Bridal, Simone I. Smith, Thebe Magugu, and Wales Bonner (see Appendix A). The advertisement posts of these brands can reveal their social media strategies on Instagram, including the use of high-quality and relevant images, promotional offerings, and reader-friendly captions to capture the viewers' attention. The names of these brands were sourced from *Oprah Daily* (https://www.oprahdaily.com/style/a35191214/black-owned-clothing-brands/), a website founded by Oprah Winfrey, an African-American billionaire renowned for her work in various industries, including entertainment and fashion (Bloomenthal, 2023; Mercer, 2024).

Subject Selection

The posts were purposefully selected based on two sets of criteria: criteria for selecting brands and criteria for selecting posts. Three criteria were used for selecting the brands. Firstly, the brands were classified as mid-tier influencers, meaning their Instagram accounts had between 50,000 and 500,000 followers. These brands are more approachable to customers since they are popular but less so than celebrities; therefore, brands with Instagram followers in this range should possess high level of skills in producing content to promote their products online (Sanders, 2023). Secondly, the brands had to display the number of likes on their Instagram posts. Lastly, they could not rely solely on phrases for their captions. Next, two criteria were applied for selecting posts. Firstly, advertisement posts had to be uploaded in 2023, the year that the research was conducted, to ensure the data was current and minimize potential biases during data collection. Secondly, all advertising images had to include at least

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one represented participant defined as "people, places and things" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 48).

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was applied to this research. From the outset, the researchers limited the scope of the data by focusing solely on fashion brands' advertisements. The term 'fashion' encompasses various trends, including clothes, shoes, bags, and accessories. Since the focus is on Black-owned brands, the researchers eliminated irrelevant information by selecting a website focusing solely on Black-owned businesses. After searching for a website providing names of Black-owned fashion brands, data from the *Oprah Daily* website was selected as the website creator also works in the realm of fashion (Mercer, 2024). Thus, the website should be able to provide accurate information relevant to Black-owned fashion brands as the website owner has extensive experience working in this industry. To clarify, the Black-owned brands in this study refer to brands whose founders are Black people. During this stage, information was sourced regarding the founders of the 10 brands, available on many websites. Next, the researchers searched for the name of each brand on Instagram to locate their official Instagram accounts. If Instagram accounts were found, the researchers listed mid-tier influencer brands meeting the criteria in a Microsoft Word document. Subsequently, the list of brands was sorted from those with the highest to the lowest number of followers. Then, only the first 10 brands were selected. Lastly, two of the most recent posts (between October and November 2023) that meet the criteria were selected from each brand. Figure 3 presents the summary of the data collection process.

Figure 3

Process of Data Collection
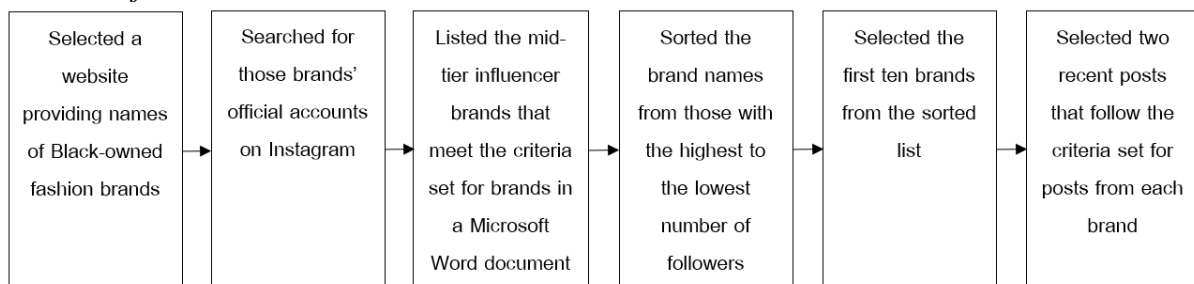
Data Analysis

Captions were analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) interpersonal metafunction framework. Each caption was examined by splitting sentences into individual clauses for analysis. This process resulted in 46 free clauses and three bound clauses, totaling 49 clauses.

An example of the caption analysis from an advertisement post is provided in Figure 4, which represents one of the subjects in this study, was presented in Table 1.

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Figure 4
Example of an Advertising Image from Kai Collective's Post

Table 1
Sample of Caption Analysis from Kai Collective's Post

Shop	her	now	at kaicollective.com
Predicator	Complement	Adjunct	Adjunct
Residue			

From Table 1, the caption's mood type is Imperative, which only consists of the elements in the Residue. The word 'shop' is the Predicator as it is the only verbal group. Furthermore, the noun 'her' is recognized as the Complement. Finally, the adverb of time 'now' and the prepositional phrase 'at kaicollective.com' are Adjuncts as they denote time and the website location.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study. Through a clause level analysis of the captions, it was determined that the most frequently used mood type was declarative, followed by imperative and interrogative moods. Table 5 shows that each mood type consists of different elements in the mood structure (see Appendix B for examples). By categorizing clauses into two types, which are free clauses and bound clauses, the findings reveal 46 free clauses and three bound clauses. This indicates that the total number of identifiable mood types is 46, as SFG specifies that only the mood types of free clauses can be identified. The findings supported the hypothesis that both declarative and imperative moods are prevalent in the captions of Black-owned brands' advertisements.

Declarative Mood and its Structure

Based on the analysis of captions, there were three obligatory elements in a declarative mood. The first two elements were Subject and Finite, which are parts of the Mood element, and the last element was the Predicator, which is part of the Residue. Upon further investigation of the mood structure, four structural patterns were revealed, which differ in terms of elements in the Residue.

Among 24 declarative clauses, the structure that contained obligatory elements solely could be found in two clauses, meaning that most clauses usually contain other optional elements in the Residue, including Complements and Adjuncts. Being the most prominent, the structure containing all elements in the mood structure was found in 11 clauses. Furthermore, there were 10 clauses containing the obligatory elements and Complements, while there was one clause containing the obligatory elements and Adjuncts. Significantly, it was clear that the positive polarity of the Finites was used more than the negative as only one negative Finite was used in the clause 'and we can't wait to say #yestothedress with future #pantorabrides this weekend.'

Apart from the presence of free clauses mentioned earlier, there was one clause serving as a bound clause used with one declarative clause. To illustrate, the bound clause was 'which features images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying' shown in Table 2. No different from an independent clause, the mood structure of the dependent clause is Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement).

Table 2

Analysis of an Embedded Structure of a Sentence from Thebe Magugu's Post

Lloyd	wears	the Heirloom Shirt	in Ice Blue,	which	features		images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying
Sub-ject	Finite	Predi-cator	Comple-ment	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
					Mood		Residue	
Mood		Residue						

To analyze the bound clause, the relative pronoun 'which' is the Subject. The verb 'features' functions as both the Finite and the Predicator, and the noun phrase 'images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying' is the Complement.

Imperative Mood and its Structure

Dissimilar to the declarative mood, the only obligatory element of the imperative mood is the Predicator, which is written in its base form. There are five structural patterns. A total of 19 imperative clauses were found in the data, primarily consisting of all elements in the Residue (11 clauses). An example of a clause employing this structure is presented in Table 1. Moreover, there were three clauses consisting of a Predicator and an Adjunct. Similarly, the structure consisting of a Predicator and a Complement was adopted in three clauses. Next, the structure consisting of the Predicator alone was used in one clause, which was 'DM to purchase.' Both 'DM,' which stands for 'direct message,' and 'to purchase' are Predicators. Despite the co-occurrence of elements in the Residue mentioned above, a Finite, which is part of the Mood element, can be used in an imperative clause as shown in Table 3. However, the example given below is the only clause using this structure.

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Table 3
Analysis of an Imperative Clause from LITA by Ciara's Post

Don't	miss	out	on the magic
Finite	Predicator	Adjunct	Adjunct
Mood	Residue		

In the above clause, the word 'don't' is the Finite showing the negative polarity. Unlike the other clauses, this clause is the only imperative clause that tells readers not to do something while most imperative clauses are positive. Next, the Predicator was the verb 'miss.' Nevertheless, the preposition 'out,' which is considered part of a phrasal verb, is not the Predicator, but recognized as the Adjunct. Also, the prepositional phrase 'on the magic' was the Adjunct.

Considering the bound clauses, two of these were used with the imperative clauses mentioned above. In the imperative sentence 'Shop now before they're gone,' the bound clause was 'before they're gone.' Its elements in the mood structure included the Mood element, consisting of the Subject 'they' and the Finite 'are,' and the element in the Residue, which is the Predicator 'gone.' Finally, the last bound clause was found in the sentence 'If you need a little something extra for your Thanksgiving menu, try this special cornbread recipe, inspired by my niece, Sydney.' The first clause was the bound clause. Its elements in the mood structure included the Mood elements which are the Subject 'you' and the Finite 'need' and the elements in the Residue which were the Predicator 'need,' the Complement 'a little something extra,' and the Adjunct 'for your Thanksgiving menu.'

Interrogative Mood and its Structure

All three interrogative clauses, which are WH- interrogatives use the same structure of Residue (Complement/WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct). An example of the caption using this structure is shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Analysis of an Interrogative Clause from CISE's Post

What statement	are	you	making	with your looks?
Complement/WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Adjunct
Residue	Mood		Residue	

In the interrogative clause 'What statement are you making with your looks,' the phrase 'what statement' is the WH- element conflated with Complement, making it part of the Residue. Next, the Mood elements include the verb 'are' serving as the Finite and the pronoun 'you' serving as the Subject. Ultimately, two more elements in the Residue are the Predicator 'making' and the Adjunct 'with your looks.'

Table 5

Distribution of Mood Structure and Types

Type of clause	Mood type	Mood structure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Free	Declarative	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	11	22.45
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)	10	20.41
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)	2	4.08
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	24	48.98
	Imperative	Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	11	22.45
		Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	3	6.12
		Residue (Predicator and Complement)	3	6.12
		Residue (Predicator)	1	2.04
		Mood (Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	19	38.78
	Interrogative	Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	3	6.12
		Total	3	6.12
Bound	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)	1	2.04
	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)	1	2.04
	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	3	6.12
		All total	49	100

In addition to the typical order of elements in the Residue which is Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), the results indicated that these elements can be placed between other elements. Consider the clause 'Sign up to join our world,' its elements consist of Predicator (sign), Adjunct (up), Predicator (to join), and Complement (our world). The Predicator appears again after the Adjunct while the Complement, which is usually placed before an Adjunct, is shown at the end of the clause. This type of interposition affects the complexity of the sentence as readers will need more time to comprehend the messages, especially when many elements are added to the same clause.

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To summarize the key findings of the mood structure and mood types, the most frequently found mood type was declarative, and its most common mood structure comprised all elements. Next, the second-most prominent mood type was imperative, which predominantly employed the mood structure that included all elements in the Residue. Ultimately, the interrogative mood was found least frequently, and all clauses used the mood structure of Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct). Concerning the elements in the mood structure, it is notable that most Subjects were human (e.g., proper names and pronouns), whereas most Complements were common nouns that are not human. Furthermore, the verbs functioning as the Predicators were related to the acts of shopping and booking more than the 'to be' verbs. Finally, most Adjuncts provided information related to the manner, time, and place or served as the particles of phrasal verbs.

Discussion and Conclusion

To sum up, this study examined the mood structure and mood types of Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands. Declarative mood was used far more frequently than the interrogative mood although both are subtypes of indicative mood. Next, the imperative mood was the second-most frequent mood type found in the captions. Regarding the variety of the mood structure, all interrogative clauses followed the same pattern while declarative and imperative moods used various patterns.

Interpretation of the Mood Choice in Instagram Advertising Captions

In the context of Instagram advertisements, the selection of mood types can indicate speech functions and power relations between the brands and readers. Concerning the speech function, the declarative mood indicates the speech function of statement because it is used to give information about Black-owned fashion brands' products straightforwardly. Readers are perceived as the receivers of information, and writers are recognized as the senders of information (Eggins, 2004). The most forthright way of demanding goods-&-services from readers is using the imperative mood (Butt et al., 2003). This mood type elicits a sense of urgency and demands actions. Moreover, the use of imperative clauses relates to the speech function of command. In Pennock-Speck and Fuster-Márquez's (2014) study, imperative clauses in advertisements primarily functioned as recommendations rather than direct commands. The interrogative mood, which serves as the speech function of asking questions, was found to be the least frequent. This could be due to its nature, as it requires responses from readers and prompts reflection. On the other hand, messages are more spontaneously conveyed through declarative and imperative moods. Additionally, because Instagram is a popular channel among those between the ages of 18 and 34 (Winter, 2024), keeping the captions concise with clear and encouraging messages is key (Wai, 2020). Hence, using declarative and imperative moods can fulfill this point. This results in the interrogative mood being recognized as less assertive than other mood types. Regardless of mood types, approximately 96% of these captions adopted the positive polarity of Finites. Kinney (2018) and Noemí

(2021) agree that the use of positive language is consistently more impactful than negative language, particularly when attempting to convince someone to act. Human brains are better at remembering core messages, not negative expressions like the words 'not' or 'no' (Noemí, 2021). Therefore, using messages that do not require readers to interpret them is more effective and memorable.

Apart from the speech function, power is reflected through the selection of mood types. First, the declarative mood is usually associated with conveying information in a non-coercive way. Although a modal Finite 'must,' which shows the necessity of an action, was used once in the declarative clause 'You must opt in to receive marketing and promotional SMS messages from CISE,' it does not serve as a direct command as does using an imperative clause. Hence, using this mood type results in an equal power distribution between the brands and the readers. Similarly, the interrogative mood does not reveal the writer's power over readers as it functions to engage readers and provoke their thoughts. Ultimately, the imperative mood indicates the brands' power over the readers. The advertiser's role is to guide the target audience to perform specific actions, such as clicking on a link or liking a post. Therefore, this mood type suggests a power dynamic in which the brand claims authority over customer behavior.

The findings are aligned with those of Chaisomkun (2017) in the way that the declarative mood is the most common mood type found in advertisements, followed by the imperative mood. The declarative mood is commonly used in advertising captions because it can function to describe a product, show the stance of the brand owner, or create brand credibility. Also, the imperative mood used in advertising captions functions to encourage readers to purchase a product and leave some remarks about the product. Hence, the study would seem to support the hypothesis that declarative and imperative moods are essential in advertising captions. Also, the concepts of social justice and economic empowerment are seen in the use of declarative and imperative moods, respectively. Nonetheless, the captions do not reveal the concept of diversity as only Standard English is used.

Convergence and Identity of Black People in Online Advertisements

As is widely recognized, Black people have a distinct way of using English known as AAVE. This includes features such as the use of habitual or invariant *be*, the omission of the auxiliary 'will' in the future tense, among others (Sidnell, 2002). Nevertheless, the findings of this study reveal no such linguistic features that are part of Black people's identities; all clauses used in the captions of these Black-owned brands use Standard English.

Given that the captions are presented on social media, there are several possible reasons why the brand owners choose not to use AAVE. Principally, using standard language makes captions more accessible to all groups of readers, not just Black people. As mentioned earlier, there are notable differences between AAVE and Standard English; readers who are unfamiliar with the dialect may find it difficult to fully understand the messages. In addition, the use of standard language can increase the credibility and professionalism of the brand. According to Williams (2022), dialects are often perceived as informal languages because they are used by a limited

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group of people. Furthermore, the grammatical features of the dialect that differ from Standard English may be regarded as ungrammatical. Consequently, employing standard language in online advertisements may be perceived as more professional. Considering all these factors, adopting a convergence strategy allows brands to reach diverse audiences and facilitates more accessible communication, albeit at the cost of not representing the identity of Black people.

Implications of the Study

This study analyzed mood structure and mood types to shed light on how marketers use SFG to design Instagram captions. An effective Instagram advertising caption captures attention, engages the audience, encourages conversation, and strengthens the brand's relationship with its readers. Purposeful mood selections that reflect the brand's identity and resonate with the target audience achieve this efficacy.

Black-owned fashion companies commonly use a combination of declarative and imperative moods to confidently announce their brand identity and inspire their audience to take action. They promote dialogue and foster a sense of community by employing interrogative expressions. Understanding these tactics can help other brands and marketers create captions that effectively engage audiences and establish deeper connections on Instagram. This insight links the study's findings on mood selection to practical marketing applications, illustrating how language choices can improve the overall effectiveness of social media advertising.

Limitations and Recommendations

The limitations of this study include the fact that not all aspects of the three metafunctions in SFG are addressed, and the sample size may be insufficient for generalizability to the wider population. Moreover, data were collected from only one social media platform due to time constraints. For future investigations, the researchers recommend that subsequent studies should analyze how the interpersonal metafunction varies across different social media platforms and types of discourse. In addition to language analysis, it would be valuable for future research to explore multimodality in advertising media.

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Appendix A
Information about the 10 Black-Owned Brands

Brand name	Year of establishment	Founder	Number of Instagram followers	Number of posts	Instagram account
Andrea Iyamah	2011	Dumebi Andrea Iyamah	417K	3,441	@andreaiyamah
Wales Bonner	2014	Grace Wales Bonner	356K	1,673	@walesbonner
Pantora Bridal	2013	Andrea Pitter	225K	5,239	@pantorabridal
Fe Noel	2011	Felisha Noel	188K	1,169	@fenoel
Thebe Magugu	2016	Thebe Magugu	177K	589	@thebemagugu
CISE	2020	Blake Van Putten	158K	1,308	@cise.store
Simone I. Smith	2011	Simone I. Smith	156K	2,258	@simoneismith
lemlem	2007	Liya Kebede	134K	3,633	@lemlemofficial
Kai Collective	2016	Fisayo Longe	132K	2,661	@kaicollective
LITA by Ciara	2021	Ciara Wilson, Russell Wilson, and Christine Day	113K	401	@litabyciara

Note. The number of Instagram followers and posts of every brand was collected in 2024, May 16. It should be noted that the sources of the abovementioned information are from the official Instagram accounts provided in the right column of the table. The data for Andrea Iyamah's year of establishment and founder are from *Black-owned swimwear brands for your next trip to the beach*, by Boitumelo Masihleho, 2022 (https://www.funtimesmagazine.com/2022/05/31/400845/black-owned-swimwear-brands-for-your-next-trip-to-the-beach). Copyright 2023 by Locable. The data for Wales Bonner's year of establishment and founder are from *Style spotlight on Grace Wales Bonner*, by Nick Remsen, 2021 (https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/wales-bonner-interview-paris-fashion-week/index.html). Copyright 2016 by Cable News Network. The data for Pantora Bridal's year of establishment and founder are from *Pantora Bridal founder Andrea Pitter gets real about lack of diversity in bridal industry*, by Angela Andaloro, 2021 (https://littlethings.com/lifestyle/andrea-pitter-pantora-bridal). Copyright 2023 by Wild Sky Media. The data for Fe Noel's year of establishment and founder are from *This Brooklyn designer is shifting the Eurocentric narrative around the Renaissance art trend*, by Brooke Bobb, 2019 (https://www.vogue.com/article/fe-noel-designer). Copyright 2023 by Condé Nast. The data for Thebe Magugu's year of establishment and founder are from *Thebe Magugu on the political power of fashion*, by Mellissa Huber, 2021 (https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/articles/2021/9/thebe-magugu-interview). Copyright 2000-2023 by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The data for CISE's year of establishment and founder are from *Inside the black-owned fashion line finding success with three simple words: 'Protect black people,'* by Jenna Caldwell, 2021

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(https://time.com/5935754/protect-black-people-fashion-time-100-talks/). Copyright 2023 by TIME USA, LLC. The data for Simone I. Smith's year of establishment and founder are from *Simone I. Smith honors hip-hop's legacy with new Majesty collection*, by Karen Dybis, 2023 (https://www.jckonline.com/editorial-article/simone-i-smith-hip-hop-legacy/). Copyright 2023 by RX USA. The data for lemlem's year of establishment and founder are from *Liya Kebede's brand lemlem offers Ethiopian craftsmanship that sells*, by Tom Wilson, 2019 (https://www.ft.com/content/fe23a512-91c7-11e9-aea1-2b1d33ac3271). Copyright 2023 by The Financial Times Ltd. The data for Kai Collective's year of establishment and founder are from *Kai Collective calls out Fendi for copying its signature designs*, by Dara Prant, 2021 (https://fashionista.com/2021/07/kai-collective-orange-gaia-fendi-print-copyright). Copyright 2023 by Breaking Media, Inc. The data for LITA by Ciara 's year of establishment and founders are from *Ciara launches new women's fashion brand LITA*, by Ny Magee, 2021 (https://thegrio.com/2021/08/26/ciara-launches-womens-brand-lita/). Copyright 2023 by theGrio.

Appendix B
Examples of Clauses Elicited from the Captions

Mood type	Speech function	Example	Mood structure
Declarative	Statement	1. The NEME Fringe MIDI Dress is dance floor approved.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)
		2. A statement has been made.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)
		3. We're loading all our goodies in our PBW Patent Leather Bags this year.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)
Imperative	Command	4. Dance with your heart.	Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)
		5. Embrace warmth this season with Andrea Iyamah Knitwear.	Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)
		6. Have a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving!	Residue (Predicator and Complement)
Interrogative	Question	7. What statement are you making with your looks?	Residue (Complement/WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)
		8. Who would you upload and immortalise through cloth?	Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)

Note. Only three clauses from each mood type are selected to give readers more explicit examples. Nonetheless, two out of three imperative clauses are the same. Thus, one of them has been removed from the table to prevent redundancy.