

# Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis: แนวคิดพื้นฐาน, แนวทางการวิเคราะห์, การประยุกต์ใช้ และข้อคิดเห็น ในการนำมาวิเคราะห์ด้วยภาษาไทย

## Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis: Basic Concepts, Approaches, Applications, and Reflections on Analyzing Thai Language Texts

ปิยะพร ปุณณกะศิริกุล (Piyaporn Punkasirikul)<sup>1\*</sup>

### บทคัดย่อ

จากความก้าวหน้าทางเทคโนโลยีส่งผลให้การสื่อสารในปัจจุบันเปลี่ยนแปลงไป กล่าวคือสิ่งที่ใช้สื่อความหมายไม่ได้จำกัดอยู่เพียงวจนภาษาเท่านั้นแต่รวมถึงสัญญาณอื่นๆ ที่สามารถใช้สื่อความหมายได้เช่น รูปภาพ, ดุ๊กตา, เสียง, ดนตรี, กลิ่น, สัมผัส, วัสดุ, หรือแม้แต่อนุสาวรีย์ เป็นต้น อีกทั้งนักวิจัยจากหลากหลายสาขารวมทั้งสาขาภาษาศาสตร์ก็หันมาสนใจศึกษาวิเคราะห์สัญญาณอื่นๆ นอกจากวจนภาษาในด้วยทด้วย บทความนี้จึงมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับภาพรวมของแนวการวิเคราะห์ แบบ multimodal critical discourse analysis สำหรับผู้ที่สนใจจะใช้แนวทางนี้ในงานวิจัยของตน เนื้อหาของบทความนี้ประกอบด้วย พัฒนาการของแนวการวิเคราะห์แบบ multimodal critical discourse analysis แนวคิดพื้นฐานของไวยากรณ์ระบบหน้าที่ (systemic functional grammar) และ social semiotics ซึ่งเป็นสองในหลายวิธีวิเคราะห์ที่นิยมนำมาประยุกต์ใช้ในงานวิจัยทางด้าน multimodal critical discourse analysis รวมถึงข้อคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับประเด็นที่ควรพิจารณาในการนำทั้งสองวิธีนี้มาวิเคราะห์ด้วยภาษาไทย

**คำสำคัญ:** multimodal critical discourse analysis, ไวยากรณ์ระบบหน้าที่ (systemic functional grammar), social semiotics

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer at English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University  
อาจารย์ประจำหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น

\* Corresponding author : piyaporn@kku.ac.th

## Abstract

Due to technological advances, communication has recently changed from monomodality to multimodality in which meanings are conveyed not only through verbal resources but also through other semiotic resources such as images, toys, sound, music, scent, touch, material, or even monuments. In addition, a number of practitioners of disparate fields have shifted their focus to analyze multimodal texts, including linguistics. This paper, therefore, aims at providing an overview of multimodal critical discourse analysis for readers who are interested in using multimodal critical discourse analysis as an analytical approach in their research. The paper covers the development of multimodal critical discourse analysis, basic concepts of systemic functional grammar and social semiotics as two among many other approaches to multimodal critical discourse analysis, their applications in previous research, and reflections on points that should be taken into consideration when using them in analyzing Thai language texts.

**keywords:** multimodal critical discourse analysis, systemic functional grammar, social semiotics

## 1. Introduction

Due to advanced technologies, communication has recently changed from monomodality to multimodality in which meanings are conveyed not only through verbal resources but also through other semiotic resources such as images, sounds, monument, etc. Researchers from disparate fields have shifted their focus to analyze multimodal texts, including linguistics (Machin, 2013, p. 347). This paper aims at providing an overview of multimodal critical discourse analysis for readers who are interested in using multimodal critical discourse analysis as an analytical framework in their research.

The paper begins with the development of multimodal discourse analysis, basic concepts of systemic functional grammar and social semiotics as approaches to multimodal critical discourse analysis, the applications of multimodal critical discourse analysis in previous research. The paper ends with reflections on points that should be taken into consideration when using systemic functional grammar and social semiotics in analyzing Thai language texts.

## 2. The development of multimodal critical discourse analysis and its basic concepts

The development of multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) can be traced back to critical linguistics which emerges in the late 1970s. Language is viewed as a form of social practice in critical linguistics. Critical linguistics aims to show “how certain kinds of practices, ideas, values and identities are promoted and naturalized” through language and grammar (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 2). However, critical linguistics faces the criticism of lacking the development of the nature of the link between language, power and ideology (Fairclough, 1992 as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012,

p. 4). Consequently, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been developed as a framework that can better represent the interrelationship between language, power, and ideology. Critical discourse analysts view language as “a means of social construction: language both shapes and is shaped by society” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). The goal of CDA is “to explain why and how linguistic features are produced and what possible ideological goals they might serve” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 5).

Partly due to advances in technologies, communication has recently shifted from monomodality to multimodality (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 347). The inherent character of multimodal communication is that meanings are expressed not only via language, but also via other semiotic resources; e.g., images, toys, films, sound, music, scent, touch, material, and monument (Harrison, 2008, p. 58; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012, pp. 488-489). In the late 1980s and 1990s, a number of scholars in the field of linguistics began to realize that meaning is generally communicated not only through language but also through other semiotic modes (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 6).

Multimodality enters linguistics through the groundbreaking work of Kress and Van Leeuwen in *Reading Images* (1996) and *Multimodal Discourse* (2001) (Machin, 2013, p. 347) to open linguistics up to a whole new world of visual communication as in the statement of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) that “Just as knowledge of other languages can open new perspective on one’s own language, so a knowledge of other semiotic modes can open new perspectives on language” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, Introduction). Multimodal critical discourse analysis has been developed as a field to fill the gap in critical discourse studies (Machin, 2013, p. 347). The aim of MCDA is to find out the way semiotic resources, both verbal and visual that are selected by speakers/writers, can signify ideas, values, identities, and sequences of activity in discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.9).

### **3. Approaches to multimodal critical discourse analysis: systemic functional grammar and social semiotics**

Several approaches have been employed to analyze multimodal texts; e.g., conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, multimodal discourse analysis, and multimodal interactional analysis (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010, pp.1-2; Harrison, 2008, p. 57; Jewitt, 2014, pp. 31-32). This paper, however, focuses on Halliday's systemic functional grammar and Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics. The rationale behind the selection of these two approaches is that systemic functional grammar has proved to be an effective tool for analyzing language in context and as a means of approaching real problems in human communication and social control (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p.231). Besides, Kress and van Leeuwen are the pioneers who apply a set of linguistic tools to analyze visual cues, and social semiotics also allows deeper analysis and a more systematic level of description (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 7). Furthermore, both systemic functional grammar and social semiotics are based on the same three assumptions that simultaneously discourse represents the speaker/writer's experience of the world, engages the listener/reader, and is organized in a coherent way (Harrison, 2008, p. 59). In addition, a wide range of research on multimodal discourse has used the combination of these two approaches as will be presented later in Section 4. Basic concepts and analytical tools of each approach are as follows:

#### **3.1 Systemic functional grammar (SFG)**

##### **3.1.1 Basic concept of systemic functional grammar**

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is developed by Michael Halliday to explain how human makes meaning. In systemic functional linguistics, "language consists of a set of systems which offer the speaker/writer unlimited choices of creating meanings" (Bloor & Bloor, 2004,

pp.3 & 228; Fairclough, 2003, p. 8). SFL mainly revolves around the relationship between language and society in the sense that texts are viewed as elements of social events (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 5 & 8). Words and grammar are used to picture reality in certain ways and bring about changes in people's beliefs and attitudes, actions, social relations, and the material world. A detailed analysis of texts can reveal power relations and ideological processes in discourse (Fairclough, 1989 as cited in Bloor & Bloor, 2004, pp. 228 & 229). The approach to grammar in systemic functional linguistics is called systemic functional grammar (SFG), which refers to the study of how meanings are built up through the choice of words and other grammatical resources (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p.2).

### 3.1.2 Analytical tools: three metafunctions of systemic functional grammar

Three metafunctions of systemic functional grammar have been employed to analyze verbal cues in a number of research studies as will be presented later in Section 4. According to Halliday, metafunction refers to the broad functions that language performs in contexts or purposes of language use which can be categorized into 3 categories: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p.10).

***Ideational metafunction*** refers to the concept human use language to express his experience and his perception of the world (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p.10). Ideational metafunction is analyzed through transitivity system in which each clause is analyzed into process, participants, and/or circumstances (optional). There are six process types or types of verbs in SFG: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Each process type has different main participants (Halliday, 1994, pp. 109-142). The samples of analysis are as follows:

1. Material processes refer to verbs of doing. Main participants are Actor and Goal.

the lion	caught	the tourist	in the forest
Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Actor	material	Goal	

(Adapted from Halliday, 1994, p. 109)

2. Mental processes refer to verbs of sensing. Main participants are Senser and Phenomenon.

Mary	liked	the gift
Participant	Process	Participant
Senser	mental	Phenomenon

(Halliday, 1994, p. 113)

3. Relational processes refer to verbs of being and having. Main participants are Carrier and Attribute, Possessor and Possession, and Token and Value.

Sarah	is	wise
Participant	Process	Participant
Carrier	relational	Attribute

(Halliday, 1994, p. 119)

Peter	has	a piano
Participant	Process	Participant
Possessor	relational	Possession

(Halliday, 1994, p. 119)

Henry	is	the villain
Participant	Process	Participant
Token	relational	Value

(Halliday, 1994, p.125)

4. Verbal processes are verbs of saying. Main participants are Sayer and Verbiage.

John	said	he was hungry
Participant	Process	Participant
Sayer	verbal	Verbiage

(Halliday, 1994, p. 140)

5. Behavioral processes include verbs of (typically human) physiological and psychological behavior. Main participants are Behaver and Matter.

I	'm talking	to you
Participant	Process	Participant
Behaver	behavioral	Matter

(Halliday, 1994, p. 139)

6. Existential processes represent that something exists or happens. There is only one main participant: Existent.

there	's	a man	at the door
	Process	Participant	Circumstance
	existential	Existent	

(Halliday, 1994, p. 143)

*Interpersonal metafunction* refers to the concept that human use language to interact with other people, to take on roles, and to express feelings, attitudes, including judgments (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 11).



Interpersonal metafunction can be analyzed through mood and modality in a clause.

Mood indicates the way the speaker/writer wishes to communicate with the listener/reader, and is determined by whether a clause is in declarative (a statement and an exclamation), interrogative (a question), or imperative (a command). Examples of each mood are as follows:

- “It was cool.” and “How cool it was! (declarative)
- “Was it cool?” and “What was cool? (interrogative)
- “Stay cool.” and “Let’s be cool.” (imperative)

(Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997, p. 61)

Modality indicates the speaker’s/writer’s attitude that can be expressed through a unit of language such as modal verbs. Modality reflects probability, obligation, and ability, etc. (Fairclough, 1992 as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 186). Examples of modality are as follows:

“I might go to France or I might stay here.” (probability)

“You ought to get yourself a new car.” (obligation)

“However hard I try, I can’t do it.” (ability)

(Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997, p. 91)

**Textual metafunction** refers to the concept that language is used to relate what is said/written to the rest of the text and to other linguistic events. Textual metafunction deals with the analysis of a clause structure that involves constituents labeled “Theme” and “Rheme”. The Theme is the point of departure of the clause where the speaker/writer sets out the topic for the rest of the clause. The Rheme is the rest of the clause which usually includes the verbal process and other content (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, pp. 11, 65 & 71). Example of Theme/Rheme analysis is as follows:

George Bernard Shaw	was born in Dublin
Theme	Rheme

(Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997, p. 24)

The details of the way three metafunctions of systemic function grammar are combined and applied in analyzing texts are provided later in Section 4.

### 3.2 Social semiotics

#### 3.2.1 Basic concept of social semiotics

Social semiotics is a branch of the field of semiotics. Social semiotics is interested in how people use signs to construct the life of a community. In other words, it deals with the interrelationship between language, individual, and society (Harrison, 2003, p. 47; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 13). Social semiotics is one of the three approaches to multimodality; the other two are multimodal discourse analysis and multimodal interactional analysis (Jewitt, 2014, pp. 31-32). Based on Halliday's functional view of language, social semiotics views language and other modes of communication as a resource of meaning-makings called semiotic resources. Semiotic resources are such as sound, a written text, an image, material, physical forms, and visual elements (Machin, 2013, p. 350). Different types of semiotic resources can be employed to perform different communicative tasks; e.g., creating meanings, expressing attitudes, or avoiding certain kinds of commitments (Kress, 2010 as cited in Machin, 2013, pp. 349 -350).

#### 3.2.2 Analytical tools: three metafunctions of social semiotics

Due to the fact that Kress and van Leeuwen have developed social semiotics based on Halliday's systemic functional grammar, they propose that an image also has three kinds of metafunctions to create meanings: representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and compositional metafunction (Harrison, 2003, p. 50).

### *Representational metafunction*

Representation metafunction refers to how the producer expresses his experience of the world through the depiction of people, places, and objects, which is called “represented participants (RPs)”, within a text. There are two types of representation metafunction: “narrative” and “conceptual” (Harrison, 2003, pp. 51-52).

A narrative image is created when the RPs are connected by a vector, which means they are represented as doing something to or for each other. On the other hand, in a conceptual image, the RPs are not engaged in any movement or action but are shown in a static, general state (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 88).

Some parts of visual analysis from Harrison (2008)’s study is exemplified as an example of how to analyze the representation metafunction. Harrison (2008) conducts a study, entitled “Real Men Do Wear Mascara: Advertising Discourse and Masculinity Identity” to investigate a metrosexual trend in an online advertisement for male mascara. The result shows that. The verbal and visual cues in the advert help encourage men to be consumers of mascara which is usually a feminine-style product, while at the same time allow them to maintain the qualities that have traditionally been gendered as masculine.



**Figure 1.** The mascara tube and a wand- a narrative image (Harrison, 2008, p. 64)

Figure 1 shows a narrative image of the mascara tube and a wand connected by a vector. In other words, the mascara tube resembling an upright tower, and the wand leans, in a vector of motion, at a sharp angle to it. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out that angularity is associated with technology and rationality (p. 55-56) which are traits associated with traditional masculinity (Harrison, 2008, p. 63).

### ***Interpersonal metafunction***

Interpersonal metafunction refers to the way the image engages the reader by using such aspects as gaze, social distance, and perspective. Gaze is related to the eyeline of the RPs in relation to the reader. Social distance involves feelings of intimacy or distance determined by how close the RPs in an image appear to the reader. Perspective refers to the way the image is photographed which can indicate engagement and power relations between the RPs and the reader (Harrison, 2008, pp. 53-54).

The findings of visual analysis in Najafian and Ketabi (2011)'s study is presented as an example showing how to analyze interpersonal metafunction. In Najafian and Ketabi (2011)'s study, "Advertising Social Semiotic Representation: A Critical Approach", two advertisements are analyzed to explore persuasive message and ideological assumption.



**Figure 2.** “OMEGA” watch advertisement (Najafian & Ketabi, 2011, p. 78)

In terms of gaze, the RP or the female model in figure 2 looks directly to the reader which signifies intimate relation between her and the reader. A close personal distance (an image showing the head and shoulders of the RP) is also employed in this advertisement to make an intimate relation between the female model in the picture and the reader. The images of human (the female model) and product (the watch) are photographed from a low angle which indicates their symbolic power over the reader (Najafian & Ketabi, 2011, pp. 71-72).

### ***Compositional metafunction***

Compositional metafunction refers to “the way the representational and interpersonal metafunctions integrate in the image to create a meaningful whole” (Harrison, 2003, p. 55). In compositional metafunction, an image is analyzed in terms of information value, salience, and framing.

Information value is the position of the image; whether it is placed on the left and right, top and bottom, center and margin in the text, can indicate

different information role. Salience refers to the ability of the elements in the picture to capture the reader's attention through the use of color, font size, capital letters, and emboldening, etc. Framing refers to the manner in which the message is embedded in contexts (Harrison, 2003, p.57).

To show how to analyze compositional metafunction in a text, some findings of visual analysis in Makoni (2012)'s study is used as an example. The purpose of her study, "Discourses of Silence: The Construction of 'Otherness' in Family Planning Pamphlets", is to analyze the verbal and visual cues in Zimbabwean contraceptive promotional pamphlets to explore the representation of women as contraceptive users who are an at-risk 'other', need protection, intervention, and reproductive regulation, which contraceptives can provide.



Figure 3. Family planning pamphlet cover (Makoni 2012, p. 410)

### *Information value*

Figure 3 indicates that the headline “NZIRA DZOKURONGA MHURI (Roads/Paths of Arranging a Family)” is placed at the top or the “Ideal” position which deals with emotive, imaginary information, in social semiotics. The pictures of different kinds of contraceptives, on the other hand, are at the bottom or the “Real” position that deals with factual and informative information in social semiotics. In this case, the pictures emphasize what the headline is about by showing different kinds of contraceptives (Makoni, 2012, p. 410).

### *Salience*

Concerning the font size, the use of capital letters, large font size, and bold print makes the headline stands out which indicates the importance this information. The font size of words at the Real position, however, is smaller than those at the position Ideal (Makoni, 2012, p. 410).

Due to the small font size of words in the Real position, color contrasts (sky-blue background) are used to counterbalance the title from the rest of the text. Besides, a hierarchy of information is also created through the triangle that casts a shadow. It is through this shadow that a color contrast is constructed with the bottom part in blue positioned to frame the top multicolored part with the pictures of different types of contraceptives. An analogous bracketing structure is created through the use of different colors: green and red (Makoni, 2012, p. 411).

### *Framing*

The message of this pamphlet is contextualized within the theme of a road as we can see from the word “nzira” in the headline which means road or paths. In addition, a picture of an inverted triangular reminds the reader of a “give way” or “yield” road sign that keeps traffic flowing smoothly and safely and helps in preventing accidents. In this case, the female productive system

is metaphorized as a road with potential dangers of accidents (pregnancy) that needs a regulatory mechanism (contraceptives) to prevent accident (Makoni, 2012, p. 411).

The details of how these three metafunctions of social semiotics are combined and applied in analyzing texts are provided in the following section.

#### **4. Applications of multimodal discourse analysis in analyzing texts of various genres**

A number of practitioners of disparate fields have employed a combination of systemic functional grammar and social semiotics to analyze multimodal texts of various genres such as advertisements, news articles, magazine covers (e.g., Bohlke, 2006; Gregorio-Godeo, 2009; Harrison, 2008; Jansson, 2014; Knox, 2009; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012; Makoni, 2012; Moran & Lee, 2013; Nascimento, 2011).

The studies of Jansson (2014) is exemplified here to show how each metafunction of systemic functional grammar and social semiotics has been combined and applied in analyzing multimodal text. In her study entitled “Hard Muscle, Slim Body: A Systemic Functional Analysis of the Covers of Men’s and Women’s Fitness Magazines”, Jansson (2014) analyzes both verbal and visual cues of eight covers of health and fitness magazines for men and women to investigate the construction of health. The example of verbal cues analysis in the covers of *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health* based on three metafunctions of systemic functional grammar is as follows:





Figure 4. *Women's Health* Cover (Jansson, 2014, p. 25)



Figure 5. *Men's Health* Cover (Jansson, 2014, p. 26)

### 1. Ideational metafunction

In figure 4, one clause on *Women's Health's* cover is “Drew Barrymore shares her personal beauty secrets.” which contains the verb “share” that is a verbal process or verb of saying in SFG, and can be analyzed based on a transitivity system as follows:

Drew Barrymore	shares	her personal beauty secrets
Sayer	Process	Verbiage

This clause is related to sharing the female model's beauty tips to the readers, and this clause is placed on the right side of the image of a female model to provide a clear picture of the word “beauty”.

From figure 5, one of the clauses on *Men's Health* is “Ronaldo (is) the fittest man alive.” which the relational process (the verb “is”) is omitted, and its transitivity analysis is as follows:

Ronaldo	(is)	the fittest man alive
Carrier	Process	Attribute

This clause aims to present the characteristic of a male model that he is strong and healthy. Like *Women's Health* cover, this clause appears next to the image of the model to provide a clear picture of how strong and healthy he is.

### 2. Interpersonal metafunction

Most of clauses on men and women's magazine covers are imperative aiming at giving advices to the readers as in "steal his workout and diet secrets" (Figure 5). A number of clauses on the magazine covers are in the form of interrogative and declarative or in a style of problem/solution pattern as in "Bored with the little black dress?" and "Sexy new party looks" (Figure 4). This pattern suggests that the readers are in need of advice on a particular subject (Jansson, 2014, pp. 22-23).

### 3. Textual metafunction

In Figure 4, the word "Tone" is placed in the Theme position which means that it is what the writer (producer of the magazines) puts an emphasis on in SFG. In this case, the magazine urges the readers to build up their body (Jansson, 2014, p. 30).

Tone	every zone
Theme	Rheme

In figure 5 the word "score" is placed in the Theme position which means that the magazine gives some tips for men to increase the size of their body.

Score	a raise with this mind trick
Theme	Rheme

The example of visual cue analysis in the covers of *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* based on three metafunctions of social semiotics is as follows:

### 1. *Representational metafunction*

The pictures of both male and female models in figure 4 and 5 belong to one type of conceptual image: “Analytical Process” in which the people are presented in terms of a part-whole structure in social semiotics. This allows readers to examine the shape of body, the clothes, and the accessories of the models, which in turn imply the concept of “health” that the magazines aim to convey (Jansson, 2014, p. 21).

### 2. *Interpersonal metafunction*

Both male and female models in figure 4 and 5 have a demand gaze or they look directly at the readers, and this is a form of visual direct address in social semiotics. In other words, The readers are addressed “you” by the models on the cover (Jansson, 2014, p. 26).

### 3. *Compositional metafunction*

Concerning the way the information is presented on the covers, the covers are organized in a “Center-Margin layout” in which pictures of the models are in the center surrounded by the verbal clauses. The clauses related to fitness and weight are placed at the top part of the layout, and the size of the letters decreases in size further down the layout (Jansson, 2014, p. 33).

It can be concluded that the combination of three metafunctions of systemic functional grammar and those of social semiotics is employed to construct the notion of “health” in the men’s and women’s fitness magazines. That is, men should be more concerned with having a hard or muscular body, whereas women should be more concerned with maintaining small and slender body. In addition, both verbal and visual cues on the covers also encourage the readers to concern about their own body.

From the above example of analysis, it is clear that visual cues help reinforce the meanings of verbal cues. The visual cues in Men's and Women's Fitness Magazines provide vivid image of a hard, muscle, slim body that the magazines aim to present. Consequently, it can be concluded that multimodal critical discourse analysis helps develop the studies of critical discourse analysis by expanding the scope of analysis to analyze all kinds of sign in a given text.

## **5. Reflections on using multimodal critical discourse analysis in analyzing texts written in Thai language and in interpreting visual signs within Thai culture**

Although systemic functional grammar has proved to be an effective approach in analyzing texts written not only in English, but also in various languages (Harrison, 2008, p. 60; Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997, p.1) including Thai language. There are some points that should be taken into consideration when using systemic functional grammar in analyzing Thai text due to certain grammatical differences between English and Thai: clause boundary and parts of speech.

### *Clause boundary*

A clause is a basic unit of analysis in systemic functional grammar (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p.7). The first step of the analysis is to mark a clause boundary. In systemic functional grammar, there are three types of clause boundary: clause complex, clause simplex, and embedded clause. A clause complex refers to a head clause together with other clauses that modify it; thus, a sentence (that is marked off by full stops) can be interpreted as a clause complex. A clause simplex is a clause within a clause complex,

roughly comparable to coordination in traditional grammar. An embedded clause is a clause that is part of a nominal/ adjectival/ adverbial group in a clause complex; e.g., a relative clause in traditional grammar (Hasselgård, 2015). See the clause boundary of an excerpt from a piece of English news below. Since every clause must contain a verbal group, all the verbs in the excerpt are underlined to help locate the clause.

*Original Text*

The fire broke out in the kitchen of the Ratsuphamit Hotel at 9.30 am. Guests and attendees of the seminar, which was being held on the hotel's ground floor, rushed out of the building after the fire alarm sounded. Eight fire engines arrived quickly and officers put out the blaze in matter of minutes, leaving only smoke inside the hotel.

*The Nation* (August 30, 2017)

*Clause boundary*

III The fire broke out in the kitchen of the Ratsuphamit Hotel at 9.30 am. III III Guests and attendees of the seminar, [[which was being held on the hotel's ground floor]], rushed out of the building //after the fire alarm sounded. III Eight fire engines arrived quickly //and officers put out the blaze in matter of minutes, leaving only smoke inside the hotel. III

N. B.	III	III	indicates boundary of a clause complex
	//	//	indicates boundary of a clause simplex
	[[	]]	indicates boundary of an embedded clause

Unlike English, there is no punctuation (i.e. full stops) to mark a clause boundary in Thai. Consequently, a researcher needs a careful consideration in breaking a text written in Thai into an individual clause for analysis. See the clause boundary of an excerpt from a piece of Thai news below.

*Original Text*

วันนี้ (30 ส.ค.) เมื่อเวลา 07.00 น.เจ้าหน้าที่เขตรักษาพันธุ์สัตว์ป่าเขาอ่างฤๅไน ได้ถ่ายภาพเจ้าอุนช้างป่าที่เดินออกมาจากป่าเกาะกลาง หรือป่าปาล์ม หมู่ที่ 1 ตำบลพวา อำเภอแก่งหางแมว จังหวัดจันทบุรี และพยายามเข้ามาทำร้ายเจ้าหน้าที่ที่ยืนถ่ายภาพอยู่ แต่ไม่สามารถที่จะข้ามคูดักช้างเข้ามาได้ ในเบื้องต้นทางเจ้าหน้าที่ได้เร่งผลักดันให้เจ้าอุนช้างป่าได้กลับเข้าไปรวมกับโขลงช้างป่าอีก 70 ตัวที่เดินออกหากินไปก่อนหน้านี้

Manger Online (August 30, 2017)

*Clause boundary*

III วันนี้ (30 ส.ค.) เมื่อเวลา 07.00 น.เจ้าหน้าที่เขตรักษาพันธุ์สัตว์ป่าเขาอ่างฤๅไน ได้ถ่ายภาพเจ้าอุนช้างป่า [ที่เดินออกมาจากป่าเกาะกลาง หรือป่าปาล์ม หมู่ที่ 1 ตำบลพวา อำเภอแก่งหางแมว จังหวัดจันทบุรี//และพยายามเข้ามาทำร้ายเจ้าหน้าที่[ที่ยืนถ่ายภาพอยู่]] //แต่ไม่สามารถที่จะข้ามคูดักช้างเข้ามาได้]] III IIIในเบื้องต้นทางเจ้าหน้าที่ได้เร่งผลักดันให้เจ้าอุนช้างป่าได้กลับเข้าไปรวมกับโขลงช้างป่าอีก 70 ตัว [ที่เดินออกหากินไปก่อนหน้านี้]] III

*Translation*

III Today (30 Aug.) at 7 am a forest ranger at Ang Rue Nai wildlife sanctuary took photos of Chao Chun, a wild elephant, [which came out of Khor-Klang Forest or Palm Forest Moo 1 Tambol Phawa, Kaeng Hang Maeo district of Chanthaburi province, //and tried to attack the ranger [who was taking its photos]], //but could not cross an elephant trap.]]III III At the initial stage, the rangers tried to help this wild elephant to get back to a herd of 70 wild elephants [that had already left for food earlier]]. III

N. B.	III	III	indicates boundary of a clause complex
	//	//	indicates boundary of a clause simplex
	[[	]]	indicates boundary of an embedded clause

Similarly, all the verbs in the excerpt are underlined to help locate the clause.

*Part of speech*

The majority of words in English and Thai is in the same type of part of speech. However, there are certain words that are a verb in Thai, but they are an adjective in English such as “หิว” (hungry), and “มั่นใจ” (confident). According to Thai Royal Institute and Lexicase Dependency Grammar, these two words are classified as a verb in Thai. In Lexicase Dependency

Grammar, each word contains not only meaning but also contextual feature that determines the morphosyntactic distribution with other words. The probe for testing a verb is that a verb can occur after the word “ไม่” (not) in Thai such as “ไม่หิว” (not hungry), and “ไม่มั่นใจ” (not confident) (Prasithrathsint, 2010, pp. 4, 47 & 107; Thai Royal Institute, 2011). Consequently, a careful consideration is needed in categorizing these two words. For the word “หิว” (hungry) should be classified as a relational process or verb of being as in “be hungry” or as a behavioral process or verb of physiological and psychological human behavior. For the word “มั่นใจ” (confident) should be classified as a relational process as in “be confident” or a mental process or verb of sensing which includes processes of perception, cognition, and affection.

For social semiotics, even though most elements of its meatfunctions are applicable to analyze visual signs in Thai culture, there are certain cultural-specific notions that should be taken into consideration. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explicate that social semiotics is limited to the interpretation of contemporary visual design in Western cultures (p. 3); thus, a careful consideration is needed in the interpretation of meaning of visual signs within cultures other than Western, especially on the notions that are culturally specific such as writing convention and colors. Visual communication in Western culture is affected by their convention of writing from left to right (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 4). By contrast, the writing convention of certain Eastern culture such as Japanese is from right to left, and this is also true for visual communication in Japan. Although the writing convention of Thai culture is the same with that of Western, the interpretation of colors is different to some extent.

As mentioned in previous section, salience is one element of analysis in compositional metafunction. Salience refers to the ability of the visual elements in the text in attracting reader's attention. Salience is analyzed

based on font size, emboldening, and colors. According to the concept of linguistic relativity, the language of a certain culture determines the way people of that culture think about the world (Clark 1996, p. 324); this includes their different perceptions of colors. Different cultures assign different meanings to colors. In Western cultures, for example, green is the color of fertility, hope, justice, and the bourgeoisie; red represents charity, life, and passion; white is the color of glory and joy; blue represents calm; and black signifies penitence and humility (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 227; Lirola & Chovanec, 2012, p. 496).

In Thai culture, colors are associated with several aspects of Thai ways of life: dress codes, paintings, and sculptures, etc. For instance, palaces, temples, and Buddha statues in Thailand are generally decorated or painted with bright colors glittering in the sun to signify power and authority (Anukool, 2009, pp. 38-39). The meanings of colors in Thai culture are largely influenced by Hinduism astrological beliefs. Some meanings of certain colors are the same as those in Western cultures, but some are different. For example, green is the colors of water and hope; red is the color of sacrifice and courage as in Thai flag; white signifies virtue and religion as in Thai flag; blue in Thai flag represents a monarch; and black represents evil. Besides, each day of a week is assigned a specific color based on the Hindu God who protects the day: yellow for Monday; pink for Tuesday; green for Wednesday; orange for Thursday; sky blue for Friday; purple for Saturday; and red for Sunday. In the past, the dress codes of Thais are based on the color of each day for the reason of luck. Many Thais believe that the color of their birthday is their lucky color as well (Anukool, 2009, pp. 44-46 & Suwanwattana, 2010, p. 19). Yellow, therefore, is also the color of royalty in Thailand because His Majesty King Bhumibol was born on Monday. Furthermore, since 2006 yellow and red have been associated with different political views of two groups



in Thailand: People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) or "The Yellows" who use yellow (the color of royalty) as their symbol to signify their loyalty to the monarch; and National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) or "The Reds" who use red as their symbol which is a subtle hint at the 'pro-left' movement. Consequently, these shades of symbolic meanings of colors should be taken into consideration in the analysis and interpretation of visual communication in Thai context.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper aims to provide an overview of multimodal critical discourse analysis for readers who are interested in using multimodal critical discourse analysis as an analytical approach in their research. The paper covers the development of multimodal critical discourse analysis, basic concepts of systemic functional grammar and social semiotics as two among many other approaches to multimodal critical discourse analysis, their applications in previous research, and reflections on points that should be taken into consideration when using them in analyzing Thai language texts.

Due to the current multimodality communication, multimodal critical discourse analysis has been developed as a field to fill the gap in critical discourse studies with the aim to find out how various types of semiotic resources, both verbal and visual, can signify ideas, values, identities, and sequences of activity in discourses. Among several approaches to multimodal critical discourse analysis, this paper focuses on Halliday's systemic functional grammar and Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics. The three metafunctions of each approach have been employed to analyze verbal and visual cues in multimodal texts of various genres such as advertisements, news articles, and magazine covers to disclose ideological assumptions and

power relations embedded in texts. Although systemic functional grammar has proved to be an effective approach in analyzing texts written in various languages, there are some points that should be taken into consideration when using systemic functional grammar in analyzing Thai text due to certain grammatical differences between English and Thai, namely clause boundary and parts of speech. For social semiotics, even though most elements of its meatfunctions can be applied to analyze visual signs in Thai culture, there are certain cultural-specific notions such as colors that should be taken into consideration. According to the concept of linguistic relativity, different cultures assign different meanings to colors. Some meanings of certain colors in Thai culture are the same as those in Western cultures, but some are different.

## References

- Anukool, C. (2009). The Use of Colors in Thai Culture. Human and Culture. Retrieved from [http://human.tru.ac.th/human\\_culture/download/c0010.pdf](http://human.tru.ac.th/human_culture/download/c0010.pdf)
- Bezemer, J. & C. Jewitt (2010). Multimodal Analysis: Key issues. In: L. Litosseliti (Ed), *Research Methods in Linguistics* (Pre-print version). London: Continuum.
- Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (2004). *The Functional Analysis of English: A Hallidayan Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Arnold ; New York : Distributed in the USA by Oxford University Press.
- Bohlke, R. (2006). A Multimodal Analysis of Gendered Messages in a Diet Advertisement for Women. *Proceedings: 33rd International Systemic Functional Congress*. Retrieved from <http://repositorio.furg.br/bitstream/handle/1/2973/A%20MULTIMODAL%20AI%20OF%20GENDERED%20MESSAGES%20IN%20A%20DIET%20ADVERTISEMENT%20FOR%20WOMEN.pdf?sequence=1>

- Clark, H.H. (1996). Communities, commonalities, and communication. In J. Gumperz & S. Levinson (eds.), *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Gregorio Godeo, Eduardo de. (2009). British men's magazines' scent advertising and the multimodal discursive construction of masculinity: a preliminary study. *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense* 17, 9-36. Retrieved from <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/EIUC/article/download/EIUC0909110009A/7638>
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- Harrison, C. (2003). Understanding How Still Images Make Meaning. *Technical Communication*, 50 (1), 46-60.
- Harrison, C. (2008). Real men do wear mascara: advertising discourse and masculine identity. *Critical Discourse Studies* 5 (1), 55-74. DOI:10.1080/17405900701768638
- Hasselgård, H. (2015). Clauses in combination (Clause complexes). Systemic Functional Grammar. Retrieved from [http://folk.uio.no/hasselg/systemic/clause\\_cohesion.halde.htm](http://folk.uio.no/hasselg/systemic/clause_cohesion.halde.htm)
- Jansson, P. (2014). Hard Muscle, Slim Body: A Systemic Functional Analysis of the Covers of Men's and Women's Fitness Magazines. (B.A. Project). Stockholm Univeristet: Stockholm.
- Jewitt, C. (2014). *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Knox, J. (2009). "Multimodal Discourse on Online Newspaper Home Pages: A Social-Semiotic Perspective". (Ph. D. Thesis). University of Sydney, Sydney.

- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of visual Design*. London : Routledge.
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal Discourse: The modes and media of contemporary Communication* London: Arnold.
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Lirola, M. & Chovanec, J. (2012). The dream of a perfect body come true: Multimodality in cosmetic surgery advertising. *Discourse & Society*, 23 (5), 487–507. DOI: 10.1177/0957926512452970
- Machin, D. (2013). What is multimodal critical discourse studies? *Critical Discourse Studies* 10 (4), 347-355. DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2013.813770.
- Machin, D. & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Makoni, B. (2012). Discourses of silence: The construction of ‘otherness’ in family planning pamphlets. *Discourse & Communication*, 6 (4), 401- 422.
- Martin, J.R., Matthiessen, Christian M. I. M. & Painter, C. (1997). *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.
- MGR Online. (2017, August 30). Forest rangers set a team to monitor “Chao Chun”, a wild elephant at Khor-Klang, from attacking villagers. *Manager Online*. Retrieved from <http://manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9600000088970>
- Moran, C. & Lee, C. (2013). Selling genital cosmetic surgery to healthy women: a multimodal discourse analysis of Australian surgical websites. *Critical Discourse Studies* 10 (4), 373-391. DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2013.813772.
- Najafian, M. & Ketabi, S. (2011). Advertising Social Semiotic Representation: A Critical Approach. *International Journal of Industrial Marketing*, 1 (1), 63-78.

- Nascimento, F.S. (2011). Bodies That Matter: Multimodal Discourse Analysis of *Junior Magazine's* Front Cover. (Ph. D. Term Paper). The Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis.
- Prasithrathsint, A. (2010). *Parts of Speech in Thai: A Syntactic Analysis*. Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Suwanwattana, C. (2010). Colors in Thai Culture Beliefs and Myth. (M.F.A. Thesis). Silpakorn University, Bangkok.
- Thai Royal Institute. (2011). Thai Dictionary (2011 ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.royin.go.th/dictionary/>
- The Nation. (2017, August 30). Panic as fire breaks out at Kanchanaburi hotel. *The Nation*. Retrieved from [http://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/around\\_thailand/30325299](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/around_thailand/30325299)