CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology of the study. It describes the research approach and design, conceptual framework, materials and data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and a summary of results from the pilot study. Beginning with a description of the corpus of CEFs collected and compiled from major supermarkets in the Klang Valley, this chapter proceeds to discuss the qualitative CDA approach, as well as a survey in the form of a questionnaire to gather quantitative data.

3.1 Research approach and design

Correlating with studies that fall under the social sciences, the present research refers to the term triangulation as an "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (Cohen & Manion, 1986, p. 254). Data triangulation was thus achieved through the collection of multiple data types including the corpus of CEFs and a consumer perceptions survey that was performed on two groups of participants. Theoretical triangulation was achieved through using more than one theoretical scheme including CDA, SFL and social semiotics to describe, interpret and explain data collected from both the qualitative and quantitative phases. Overall, one could also say that methodological triangulation was also achieved by using more than one method to gather data including empirical observations and questionnaires to address the research questions.

Beginning with a description of the corpus of CEFs collected and compiled from major supermarkets in the Klang Valley, this chapter proceeds to explain the use of the qualitative CDA approach and the survey in the form of a questionnaire to gather data. The description of the corpus was primarily aimed at assisting the process of identifying key textual components employed in CEFs. These include both linguistic and non-linguistic texts. The key textual components identified were then subjected to a critical analysis, the results of which were used to help construct the consumer perceptions survey.

Mixed methods research continues to expand in diverse fields from occupational therapy (Lysack & Krefting, 1994) to AIDS prevention (Janz et al., 1996) and interpersonal communication (Boneva & Frohlich, 2001). The diversity of fields that employ the mixed methods approach confirms the view that adding qualitative flesh to quantitative bones or vice versa can "enhance interpretation and evaluation" of research results (Creswell, 2003, p. 208). Green, Caracelli and Graham (1989, pp. 256-258) highlighted five key advantages of the mixed methods approach to help enhance the evaluation process: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. As explained, triangulation offers researchers the opportunity to test the consistency of findings obtained through different data, methods, instruments and samples. Complementarity helps clarify results from one method with the use of another method. In the present case, the consumer perception survey is designed to augment data about verbal and visual strategies that underlie the key textual components that emerged from the corpus of CEFs. At the same time, results from CDA could help qualify the outcomes of quantitative data analysis. Development helps to illustrate how results from one method can shape subsequent

steps in the research process. This advantage is demonstrated in the present research by way of drawing upon the initial results of a qualitative critical analysis to form and organise questions for the consumer survey. Initiation enables results obtained through a single method to be challenged, and expansion adds richness to the overall study by exploring specific features of each method.

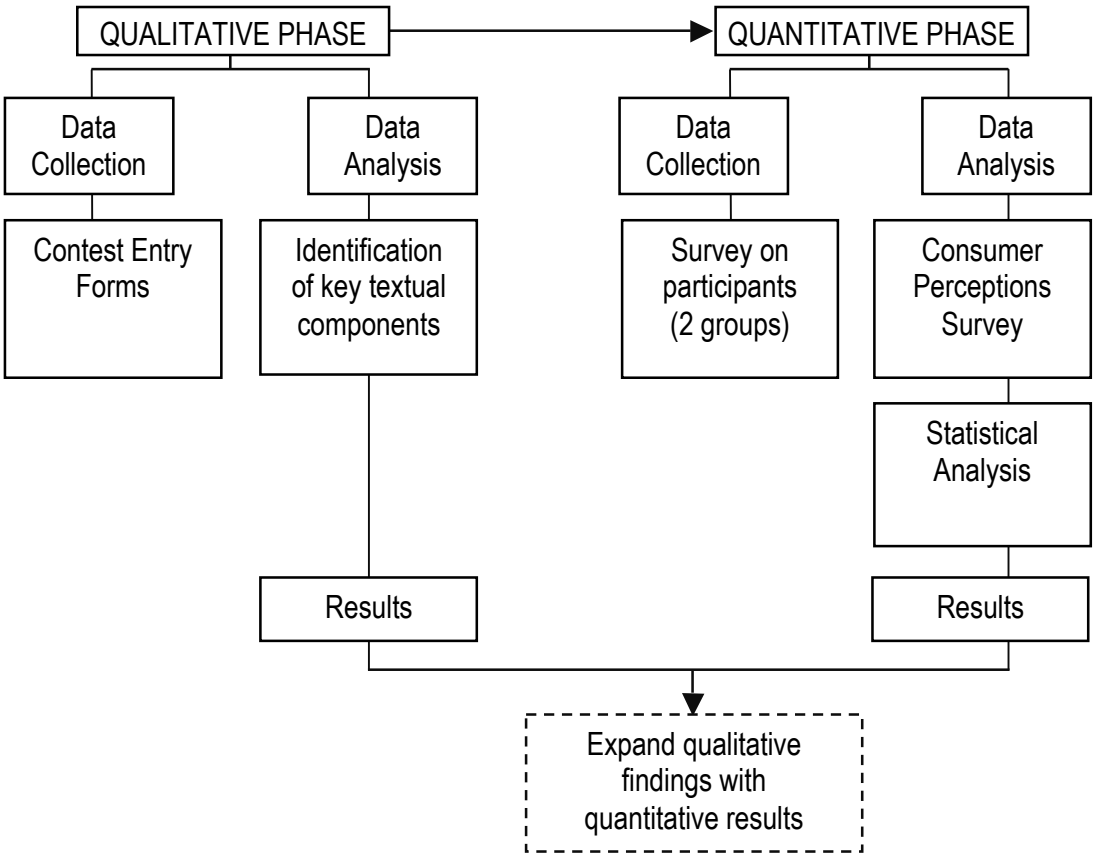

Figure 3.1. **Sequential exploratory research procedure** (Based on Creswell, 2003)

These advantages add to the contention for using mixed-methods in the present research. In addition, they help facilitate integration of procedures, expand the breadth of the study and enlighten some of the general debates on social change. Further, the mixed methods approach can offer the opportunity to produce creative alternatives to more traditional ways of conceiving and implementing evaluation (Sydenstricker-Neto, 1997).

Figure 3.1 is presented to provide a better understanding about the central phases involved in the research process and how they fit into the overall research. More concisely, three central phases were involved in the process of assessing the corpus of CEFs. First, the researcher collected CEFs from supermarkets throughout the Klang Valley that is, metropolitan areas surrounding Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. Then, the researcher proceeded to identify key textual components from the CEFs. Rooted in the premise that the identification of key textual components in CEFs would be useful for providing important insights to develop the survey instrument (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 121) the third phase involved developing a survey instrument based on the identified components to survey consumers' perceptions about consumer contests.

3.2 Conceptual framework

Taking into account the points put forward under the theoretical framework presented in chapter 1 (pp. 11-25), this section describes the conceptual framework of the study, which centres on the methodological suitability of related concepts in CDA, SFL and social semiotics for data analysis purposes. With reference to the "dimensions of discourse" (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 98) illustrated in Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1, the key textual components in CEFs are first described at the micro level of text. They are then interpreted at the meso level of discourse practice in terms of the independent variables (IV) that comprise the verbal and visual strategies realised as linguistic and non-linguistic components in CEFs. The strategies were in turn analysed and explained in terms of how they were deployed to manufacture consumer consent and thereby influence consumer perceptions (dependent variables or DV) at the macro level of sociocultural practice (see Figure 3.2).

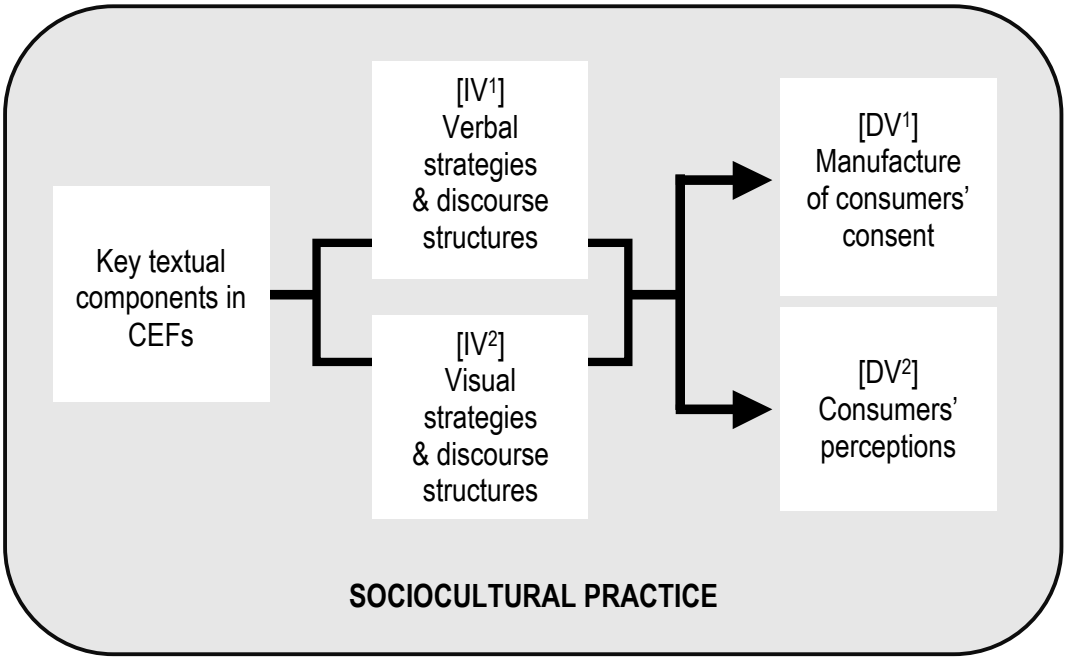

***Figure 3.2*. Conceptual framework** (Based on Fairclough, 1995a, p. 98)

Fairclough (1989; 1992a, p. 73; 1995a, p. 98) conceptualised CDA in terms of three dimensions: i. textual analysis dimension or micro level, which deals with the identification and description of key textual linguistic and non-linguistic components in CEFs ii. Discourse practice dimension or meso level which focuses on interpreting the key linguistic and non-linguistic components in terms of how they may be deconstructed to reveal strategies that underlie them; and iii. Sociocultural practice dimension or macro level where the underlying strategies were explained with regards to how they may be employed to manufacture consumers' consent. In consideration that not every CDA concept is equally useful, Huckin (1997) pointed out that a researcher should choose those that are most interesting from a critical perspective. To aid the process of making these choices, Huckin (1997, pp. 78-92) asserted that textual analysis (micro level) can be divided into three levels: i) Text as a whole, ii) A sentence, and, iii) A word. In tune with Huckin, the present

research includes genre, framing, foregrounding-backgrounding, presupposition and connotation as salient features of within the textual analysis level of CDA. Identifying genre helps to inform the analyst whether the text conforms to its type, or if the text producer has decided to include features of other genres to fulfil their own purposes. Framing signifies how the content of a text is presented and represents its structure, while the concept of foregrounding-backgrounding refers to the text producer's decision to emphasize or diminish certain factors. Presuppositions are implicit assumptions about the world, which writers use to present certain ideas as those that must be accepted without question. CDA of a text can also be conducted on a level of individual words via connotations, which allude to the occurrence of words in certain context that can also be conveyed by the use of metaphors. To offer a better understanding concerning the forms and patterns of these occurrences within the promotional advertising context and how they may be appraised according to the methodology of CDA, some concepts pertinent to the textual analysis dimension are presented in the following sections.

3.3 Analysing promotional advertising appeals

The corpus of CEFs collected thus far demonstrates that promotional advertisements tend to follow a basic format. There is always a headline, a core image that supports the headline, and accompanying bodies of verbal and visual components, which provide more information about the contest, the product and brand being promoted. Taken as a whole, the combination of these elements often leave consumers with an impression of the values that the text producers want to attach to the brand of product and at the same time, provide observers with a sense of who the potential consumers for the brand are (Soo & Faiz, 2008). A reason why promotional advertisers are able

to use well-tested formats effectively may lie in their ability to afford resources such as market research groups that inform them about certain lines of appeal that deal with our social and psychological needs. Knowledge gathered from such resources is employed to tap into our desires and fears (Gillian, 1982). Based on the initial data collected from the corpus of CEFs, some of these desires include a rich lifestyle, a healthier disposition in life and psychological satisfaction derived from material possessions. Taflinger (1996) described these as psychological appeals.

Although using psychological appeals do not automatically result in consumer purchase, using one or a combination of psychological appeals in a CEF can make a product seem more attractive to own. In the least, our subconscious mind influences how we perceive and decide, and what we do in response to a stimulus (Taflinger, 1996). Along these lines, it is possible to deduce that programming consumers' minds and feelings can lead to convince them that participation will be rewarding. This programming process tells individuals how to regard the things that come in through the senses unquestioningly, as long as the person is willing to accept new input and integrate it with old information (Byrne & Cherry, 1977, p. 111). Moreover, once a consumer's consent has been manufactured from individuals with a "higher authoritarian personality" (Bettinghaus, 1980, p. 58) it can be harder to sway these people with messages that contradict their present beliefs, even if the prospective messages are logical. In order to manipulate an impression individuals must store not only the sensory stimuli but also the symbolic impression of it, which must be labelled in some way (Fairclough, 1990). Promotional advertisers thus need to label symbolic impressions of messages in ways that consumers can recall and relate to. It is this production of labels, filtered through an individual's learned

responses that can lead to or disrupt strategies employed to manufacture consent. Promotional advertisers must show how a product can improve consumers' personal and social lives (Soo, 2005). Collectively, the text must expound on perceptions and beliefs to guide consumers to trust the authority of the messages conveyed and act on the messages is a "worthwhile thing to do" (Bettinghaus 1980, p. 59). Considering the aim of CEFs to turn individuals into consumers and the limited space on a CEF, text producers must use the most effective means to meet their goal. This makes the CEF an even more compelling genre for discourse studies since the interactions between various textual and contextual features must be maximised. Dianna (1993) and Garrahy (1982) offer more insights about the range of psychological appeals that may be employed in promotional advertising texts. Bearing in mind that that these appeals are not exhaustive, the following subsections discuss various appeals disclosed from the present corpus of CEFs.

3.3.1 Fear appeal

Our ability to remember past events and project into the future means that we are able to remember newspaper advertisements and announcements of contest winners we may have seen in the media. Since consumers are apt to respond to calls for contest participation based on their member's resources or MR, these exposures could influence how we react when faced with an invitation to join a contest. Moreover, most people may not even be conscious of a decision made to alleviate a constructed feeling of fear (LaTour, Snipes & Bliss, 1996) risen from the possibility of losing out on potential rewards, especially in cases where considerable cash prizes are offered. Cash prizes can serve to remind us about the need for money to provide for our daily needs or help alleviate financial obstacles. Hence, CEFs that foreground

a demonstration of the power of money, or a wealthier disposition in life can trigger an unsuspecting consumer's consent to join the contest. Although findings from a research project by Craig et al. (1993) showed that effectiveness and recall of advertising messages that employ the fear appeal decreases as the age of the audience dropped, they also offered a possible explanation that for the fear appeal to work, the audience must have a strong sense of future improvement, that is, a sense of what future rewards they may lose out on.

3.3.2 Greed appeal

Greed, which may loosely be defined as an overwhelming desire to have more of something such as money, food, or products than is needed is perhaps the most prominent of all appeals in CEFs: every piece in the corpus of CEFs foreground prizes to be won. A possible reason for the greed appeal's popularity in CEFs could be attributed to the assumption that if a person can be led to believe that they will get more than they bargained for they will purchase the product. While it may be easy to surmise that promotional advertisers are only doing their job in using this appeal while producing CEFs, the nature of messages within CEFs make it hard for consumers to see that they may not win the foregrounded prizes. For most people, unless they inherit it, the acquisition of more money is tantamount to hard work so the prospect of getting more with less effort is very enticing. This helps to explain why dominant messages in CEFs emphasize the ease of participation to win prizes. This is not to say that greed is bad. Greed can be good and a society that bans individual greed, can suffer because greed causes people to want to do things that they can be rewarded for (Taflinger, 1996). On the other hand, Edney (2005) opined that unrestrained greed could lead to callousness, arrogance and megalomania.

Persons dominated by greed may ignore the harm their actions can cause others. As a result, unrestrained greed can produce great inequalities, which makes it a negative and undemocratic force. Thus, both unrestrained greed and unrestrained disapproval of greed can be detrimental to a society. This suggests that promotional advertisers who take advantage of consumers' greed impulses to increase product sales should shun both unrestrained greed, and unrestrained disapproval of greed.

3.3.3 Self-esteem appeal

Self-esteem is a combination of psychological factors from confidence, assertiveness, self-respect and respect of other people. It also includes conceit and an attitude of superiority (Taflinger, 1996). In CEFs the concept of self-esteem manifests in texts that imply the purchase of certain products or participation in certain contests over others will improve the way people feel about themselves. In particular, the corpus revealed the use of a type of self-image, which Sirgy (1991) described as the ideal self-image. These messages allow consumers to imagine having the image that they aspire, or want others to have of themselves: they aspire to win and want others to see them as a winner. An intriguing point about self-esteem is that it requires individuals to perceive the differences between themselves and others, which entails the need for a sufficiently complex society like ours that allows a relative position between members of that society to carry an advantage (Taflinger, 1996). Since self-esteem generally arises from interactions people have with each other, the results of those interactions can raise or lower an individual's self-esteem. For example, if a consumer has won contest prizes or personally knows a person who has won prizes in contests, then chances are, gaining that particular individual's consent to participate in the present of future contests will be more easily manufactured.

3.3.4 Personal enjoyment appeal

While the means of arriving at enjoyment are as varied as individuals, there are a few events such as winning a prize, eating good food and travelling that people generally find enjoyable. This is attributed to our biologically dictated behaviours, social necessities and interactions (Taflinger, 1996). Personal enjoyment often comes from a pleasing stimulation of the senses, something that an individual would rather repeat such as being rewarded for a job well done. An example taken from the corpus is the idea of variety that is often touted to fuel one's passion for life. Empirical evidence abound on the notion that few people are lucky enough to get paid for doing whatever they want, whenever they want. For most people work can be tedious and our human ability to think exacerbates the problem since we can remember doing the same thing and project doing the same thing in future. This is perhaps why people devise activities such as vacations to break the monotony in daily living. For the same reason, contests that offer monotony-breaking opportunities such as the chance to win an all-expense paid holiday or a home entertainment system can be tempting. Another monotony-breaking strategy derived from the corpus of CEFs is challenge. People find mental stimulation and enjoyment in challenges (Ehninger, Gronbeck & Monroe, 1984) so for some people, contests can be an enjoyable challenge. The national regulation that binds businesses to attach a skill criterion to contests they organise may thus be exploited as an opportunity for potential participants to pit their skills against others in challenges such as slogan writing and creative signature.

3.4 Analysing verbal texts and linguistic forms

Given that written and visual texts are crucial components to learning, promotional advertisers employ a specific linguistic style to meet their goals. Unfortunately, this

style is often evasive and misleading. Grice's (1975) maxim of cooperation further confounds this style. In his work, Grice submitted that listeners assume speakers will cooperate in discourse so the intention to mislead is not automatically considered. This opens the door for writers to manipulate an audience who assumes cooperation. Proving the intention to mislead is difficult (Harris, Dubitsky & Bruno, 1983) so consumers need to be informed about deceptive linguistic constructions. What follows is a discussion about these constructions and how they may be analysed in terms of CDA to help reveal textual strategies employed in CEFs to manufacture consumers' consent.

3.4.1 Denotation, connotation, and myth

At the most basic level of linguistic analysis, a word has two meanings: the literal, commonsense or denotative meaning found in dictionaries and the connotative meaning or meaning that consumers may come to imagine in response to seeing, reading or hearing a word (Chandler, 2002). As a result, connotative meanings have a stronger emotional content. Orwig (2008) asserted that effective communication connects at a visceral level. Hence, to be effective, promotional advertising texts need to influence consumers through a subconscious language. In addition, when people first learn denotations, they are also being "positioned within ideology by learning dominant connotations" (Silverman, 1983, p. 30). As no strict division can be made between denotation and connotation because evaluation moulds referential meaning and "meaning is always permeated with value judgment" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 105), connotations are considered to be more powerful in their aptitude to produce the illusion of denotation by giving the impression that language is transparent. In short, one cannot argue away emotions that do not respond to logic

(Taflinger, 1996) so texts that persuade consumers on an emotional level will be able to retain those consumers on the grounds that it will be harder for the competition to sway a captured audience with logical arguments. Closely related to connotative meanings is the notion of myth. Barthes (1977) described myth as the dominant ideology of our time with a double function: to point out and notify, make us understand something and imposes that understanding on us. It functions to talk about things in ways that make them appear innocent so the argument seems natural and justified as if it is a statement of fact.

3.4.2 Fuzzy and concrete words

Concrete words are similar to denotations in having definite referents. Fuzzy words are comparable to connotations and have stronger emotional impact. Since they have no concrete referents, they can mean whatever a person think they should mean. However, no one actually thinks alike so fuzzy words like success, easy, and win could vary in meaning for different people. What some people think is easy could be hard for others, depending on how they view the task at hand. At the same time, what we know or think we know is based on our MR or past programming, much of which is achieved via words and images, particularly those we see in the media. This kind of programming can lead to changes in behaviour, which strengthens the argument that words can compel people to respond in certain emotional ways.

3.4.3 Logical fallacy

Logical fallacy refers to the unethical use of words that carry arguments containing a mistake in reasoning (Bassham et al., 2004). Based on word choice and syntax rather than evidence, logical fallacy provides the look or sound of evidence, but lacks

evidence. Writers often generate logical fallacy by mixing concrete and fuzzy words so the writer could mean one thing by a word, but allow their readers to assume differently. Table 3.1 lists some verbal tricks that may provide additional insights about deceptive promotional advertising texts in CEFs.

***Table 3.1*. Verbal tricks of the trade** (Adapted from Taflinger, 1996)

1.	**BLACK AND WHITE/ EITHER OR FALLACY**
Gives the impression that everything can be seen in terms of yes or no, true or false, win or lose, with no possibility of other choices. This trick may be used to make a statement that seems to provide insufficient options for a reader's argument. For example, a headline announcing, "Join now or miss your chance to win", sounds logical but does not allow options such as the possibilities of joining later or not buying at all.	
2.	**GENETIC FALLACY/ GUILT BY ASSOCIATION**
Suggestions implying that imported or organic products must be better than other products are genetic fallacies because no proof of product superiority is provided. Similarly, guilt by association entails using a positive statement about the product rather than a negative one. For example, consumers brought to believe that a contest is better than others because it is associated with a local celebrity do not prove its value to consumers.	
3.	**WEASEL WORDS AND DANGLING COMPARATIVE**
Words tossed into a sentence to change its meaning are weasel words. Weasel words are often used to avoid taking responsibility for anything said. For example, statements like "Your chance to win a dream home" does not say what the other chances are but allows readers to mentally finish the statement "this contest is my best chance to own my dream home."	
4.	**SELF-DEFINITION**
This trick involves using slippery words that have no concrete referent such as "easy", "win", "value" and "fantastic", which can mean whatever a consumer think they mean. For example, when a CEF highlights an image of a car, the appearance of the car defines that particular contest participant's reward and thus, consumers believe they must buy the product and participate in the contest to win the car, even though the consumer may win something different, if anything at all, by the end of the contest.	
5.	**METAPHORS AND METONYMY**
Also applicable in social semiotics, metaphor generated from words allow a writer to express the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar so consumers must make an imaginative leap to understand a fresh metaphor (Chandler, 2002). For example, a healthy lifestyle portrayed by a photograph of a sports celebrity is often used as a metaphor for health products. Metonymy allows writers to invoke a mental picture of an idea based on associative detail so unlike metaphor, it does not require readers to make an imaginative leap. Fiske (1982, p. 97) maintains that the selection of metonym is crucial because it is from it that readers construct the unknown remainder of a positive reality, as the writer intended. For example, a travel ticket could be a metonym for holidays while images of cash could be a metonym for more financial freedom.	

3.5 Analysing visual texts and non-linguistic forms

Fairclough (1992, p. 65) encapsulated the role of CDA in translating verbal and visual texts via asserting that discursive practice "contributes to reproducing society, its social identities, relationships, systems of knowledge and belief, as it contributes to transforming society." Further, visuals are interwoven with verbal communication so it would be "unnatural to conceive of discourse in exclusively verbal terms" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 27). Accordingly, the present study calls social semiotics to attention from its location within the broader field of CDA, where Fairclough and Wodak (1997) considers it to be a specialised domain to unveil the close relations among language, ideology and power in society. "Social semiotics draws attention to the multi-semiotic character of most texts in contemporary society, and explore ways of analysing visual images and the relationship between language and visual images" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 164). Studies by theorists such as van Leeuwen (1987), Hodge and Kress (1988), Kress and van Leeuwen (1990) and Thibault (1991) have been influential in shaping social semiotics into a methodological framework for analysing visual elements and their relations with verbal texts. The theoretical tools for analysing visual images within social semiotics can therefore prove to be useful to analyse the pertinent multiplicity of visual codes in CEFs, which include graphic images, choice of colour, typography and visuals in the form of photography, caricatures, illustrations, layout and design.

Despite developments in visual communication, Moriarty (1995) found that there remains a serious need to develop theories of visual communication that parallel the emphasis historically placed on language-based communication. While there are recent studies that focus on visual imagery (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Aiello

& Thurlow, 2006; Bauman, 2004; Hall, 2003) this deficit remains and possible reasons may be derived from the difficulty of capturing visual meaning and a lack of structured research approaches to code and categorize such information. In an attempt to address the dearth of research, Moriarty (1995) performed an exploratory study to investigate the production of visual meanings. His study concluded that not only was it possible for a semiotic analysis to be tested against viewer responses to identify patterns of meaning construction but also, visuals carrying different types of semiotic meanings could elicit different levels of viewer responses. In addition, visual elements with symbolic meanings are able to create a significant impact on audiences, which demonstrates the power of visual ambiguity to create interest. The key intention of this section is to focus on theories and analytical techniques within social semiotics and CDA to investigate the production of meaning within the key verbal and visual components in the corpus of CEFs. What follows are some key techniques whereby the analysis of these components may be performed via the framework of social semiotics within the broader field of CDA.

3.5.1 Social semiotics

To establish the practical application of social semiotics within the CDA framework, this section begins with a discussion about the background of social semiotics, and move to the concepts, terminology and tools that make up the framework of social semiotics. The framework of social semiotics can be summarized into three fields of study: sign, codes, and users of the sign (Fiske, 1990). The sign relates to the study of various types of signs, how these convey meaning, and the way that they relate to the people who use them. Codes into which signs are organised, recount the ways that various codes have developed to meet the needs of a society or exploit the

channels of communication available for their transmission. And, users of the sign or the culture within which these signs and codes operate are contingent on the use of signs and codes for their own existence. Ferdinand de Saussure defined the crux of semiotics as a science that studies the life of signs within a society (Hawkes, 1977, p. 123). Accordingly, semiotics is seen as part of social and general psychology. Charles Saunders Peirce is another early advocate of semiotics. He described the study of semiotics as social semiotics and explained that signs are in a class that includes pictures, symptoms, words, sentences, books, signals and orders of command, microscopes, musical concertos and performances (Gorleé, 1994, p. 50). Accordingly the scope of social semiotics, extend beyond linguistic signs to involve the systematic study of signs, sign systems, structures, processes, and functions. From this Peircean perspective, signs transcend linguistic barriers and include both verbal and visual texts. Here, it becomes evident that while de Saussure's views concentrated on linguistic aspects of signs, Peirce presented a broader scope. In contrast to Peirce's model, de Saussure's model excludes any reference to an object in the world.

This constitutes a problem when applied to promotional advertisements such as the CEF because within it, the signified and the signifier must be connected with some reference to the world or social context before a consumer is able to generate meaning from the signs and respond to its messages. Peirce offered a solution via focusing on language and expanded his outlook of the sign to include anything that is perceptible or imaginable on condition that it enters a relationship with its object to be interpreted to produce a new sign (Peirce, 1996). As shown in Figure 2.1, Peirce sees the sign, its interpretant and object in terms of a triangle. Each element is

dependent on the other and can only be understood in relation to the others. As such, "the sign has an effect in the mind of the user" (Fiske 1982, p. 47).

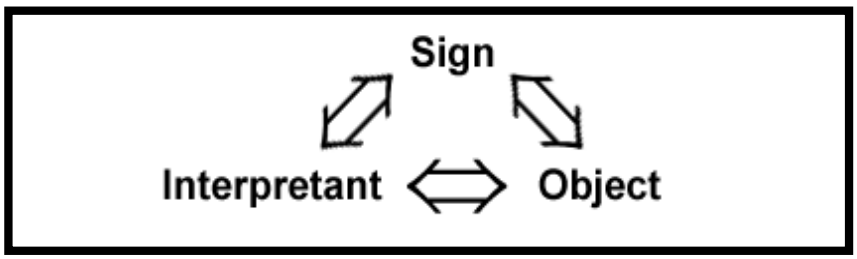

***Figure 3.3*. Peirce's triad** (Peirce, 1996)

The primary function of signs is to create or generate meaning. Each different sign generates different meanings depending on the context in which it takes place so a sign, which is always active, can create either a single or multiple meanings, and the relationship between signs can generate different sets of meaning. Meaning is then considered the "result of dynamic interaction between sign, interpretant and object, and as it is historically located, meaning may change with time" (Fiske, 1982, p. 49). This is germane in terms of promotional advertisements communicating with its consumers because the receiver has to generate meaning from the sign: the verbal and visual texts in CEFs. Fiske (1982, p. 51) added that its object determines the sign in three ways: first, by partaking in the character of the object i.e. "the sign as an icon." Second, by being connected with the individual object i.e. "the sign as an index" and thirdly, by approximating that the sign will be interpreted as denoting the object in sequence of a habit i.e. "the sign as a symbol." As an icon, the sign resembles its object in some way, whether in looks or sounds. Visual signs such as a photograph, map, illustrations and diagrams are examples of icons, and in the case of verbal language, onomatopoeia is iconic. The sign as a symbol has no resemblance

with the object because a symbol's connection with its object is a matter of convention between the users. Thus, words may be considered a symbol. For example, a no entry signboard on the road and the words "no entry" are symbols. As an index, the sign is directly connected in some way to its object. For instance, a sneeze signifies peppery food. Chandler (2002) added that signs are not mutually exclusive. Something can be either an icon and a symbol, or a combination of both. Accordingly, messages contained in CEFs may use all three types of signs: icon (visuals), symbol (verbal texts), and index (the effect of what is sent to print). Chandler (2001) elaborated that signs or units of meaning can be organised into codes by two methods, paradigms and syntagms. He presented these two dimensions as axes: the vertical axis is the paradigmatic and the horizontal axis, syntagmatic.

The paradigmatic level is a classification of signs or elements of some defining category, but in which each sign is different. An example is the alphabet that forms the paradigm for written language. Paradigms have two basic characteristics: i. "All elements must share characteristics" and ii. "Each element must be clearly distinguished from all the others in the paradigm" (Fiske, 1982, p. 61). Alternatively, syntagmatism is a combination of interacting signs, which form a meaningful whole (Chandler, 2001). Thus, when an element from a paradigm has been chosen and combined with other units, a syntagmatism is formed. An aspect about syntagmatism is the rules within which the combination of elements is made. In verbal texts, it would be grammar or syntax. The paradigmatic and syntagmatic thus represent two forms of structural relationships. The paradigmatic corresponds to a relationship of choice, while the syntagmatic level characterizes a relationship of combination. For the present research, a syntagmatic analysis of verbal and visual texts would

involve the study of its narrative sequence, which in turn, involves the analysis of visual elements, their sequence and how these relate to each other in a CEF. Having discussed the function of signs in generating meaning and how they fit into the scheme of social semiotics, what follows is a discussion about three fundamental aspects that relate to levels of meaning or signification: connotation and denotation; intertextuality; and, anchorage and relay to aid the comprehension about how they fit into the social semiotics' levels of signification within promotional advertising texts.

3.5.2 Connotations and denotations

Fiske (1982, p. 91) described denotation as "the first order of signification generated by the relationship between the signifier and the signified, within the sign." Just as it represents the obvious in the linguistic level of analysis, visually, denotation represents the obvious meaning of the sign. Connotation is the second order of signification and represents a sign's cultural associations. Hall (1996) articulated on these cultural associations, which he termed associative meaning on the basis that they are employed to describe the interaction that takes place when the sign meets the emotions of users and the value that they place on their society and culture. As a result, like its linguistic counterpart, visual connotation is subjective and involves emotional overtones, subjective interpretation, socio-cultural values and ideological assumptions (Chandler, 2001). It relates directly to the inner reality of the receiver so its meanings vary from user to user. In relation to CEFs, connotations include verbal testimonies of celebrities expressing a certain tone of voice or positive feelings about a product. Since connotations are linked to emotions, depending on our view of the visual and their associations, connotations are open to interpretation. Consequently, the task of using images to reach out and touch an audience's emotions become

crucial as the messages will be interpreted according to readers' "cultural conventions" (McCracken, 1987, p. 122). In short, visually, the collective messages within a CEF must visually "appeal to values that are salient in the culture of its intended audience" (Belk, Bryce & Pollay, 1985, p. 11). Further, although connotation may be considered arbitrary and culture-specific, certain words and images such as those referring to fiscal wealth or health functions can have similar connotations across a broad spectrum of cultures.

3.5.3 Intertextuality

Intertextuality occurs semiotically when texts are framed by other texts, or media genres. For example, a selection of textual components within a CEF may be aired via a television commercial, promoted in a newspaper spot, or in billboards to serve as an announcement or reminder to further persuade consumers' participation. Initial analysis showed that while CEFs contain all necessary information including the contest's rules and regulations (R&R), reproductions of the same campaign in other media often exclude information such as the R&R and skill criteria component. These truncated versions often only include a body of text that highlight the availability of the contest and direct people to get the CEF at nearby stores or visit a website for more information. Within social semiotics, these reminder genres could also be seen as codes that that utilise conventions to link messages together with other versions of that genre. In a nutshell, CEFs as promotional advertising discourse genre may not be as effective without supporting genres in the media. Cook (1992, p. 29) explained that this is because commercial texts typically occur together with, or are embedded in other discourses. Intertextuality in CEFs occur when the messages they carry borrow elements from other discourse types, including current

trends, movies, sporting events like the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and national holidays, and use these events for its own agenda to push product sales.

3.5.4 Anchorage and relay

Barthes (1977) introduced the term anchorage to describe a body of text that provides the link between the image and its context. In the present case, a caption for a picture or photograph of a grand prize in a CEF provides more information about the prize to the reader and explains how the picture should be read. Just as verbal elements can serve to anchor or constrain the preferred reading of an image, Barthes (1977) used the term relay to describe a shared relation between the verbal and visual text. In this sense, verbal and visual texts and their underlying strategies contribute towards the message as a whole. In looking at the bigger picture, it is possible to see how relay can also describe the relation of a succession of images to one another. An example from the corpus of CEFs collected is a sequence of images that feature a transition of prizes to be won from one panel to the next. Consumer glancing at a CEF will be able to gain a certain understanding about the images within the larger context of the CEF and this understanding will often coincide with the texts producers' intentions.

The concepts of anchorage and relay are useful to the present study because the use of captions can limit the meaning attached to an image and point readers towards a relatively specific interpretation. More recently, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), drawing on Halliday's (1985) SFL, presented a framework for analysing visual images in their book, *Reading Images*. It is based on this framework that the present study aims to analyse the way that visual texts operate simultaneously within the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The present study thus advocate

the notion that every semiotic element fulfils an ideational function that represents the world around and inside us; an interpersonal function that enacts social interactions as social relations; and a textual function where "elements of the text cohere internally, and which itself coheres with its relevant environment" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 15). These functions are materialised via the applicability of four SFL categories within social semiotics that figure in CDA. They comprise visual structure of representation, position of the viewer, modality and, composition.

3.5.5 Visual structure of representation

Visual structure of representation sees language as a means to both represent and construct our perceptions of reality via processes such as doing, sensing, being and, so on, of which there are different categories of participants including actors, goals, receivers and attributes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990). These processes may be narrative and conceptual. Narrative processes concern events taking place and vectors are used to represent actors doing something to or for each other. Vectors are lines or implied lines within a text that guide our vision. Elements within a visual composition are participants and a participant from where a vector departs is the actor and its arrival point the goal. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 15) added that meaning derived from narrative processes is "transaction" and if this transaction is reversible it is "interactive transaction." Conceptual processes involve an analysis of participants with a stable and unchanging nature such as diagrams and photographs.

Position of the viewer

Visual images involve interaction among participants represented in images, their producers, and their viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990). A pivotal point about

this interaction is eye contact. In CEFs, these often include models or sports talents, and consumers. For example, a picture of a celebrity with her eyes gazing directly at the reader may be interpreted as a demand for the viewer's attention. Close-up shots create a more personal sense of relation between participants and viewers, while distant shots may be employed to project more impersonal relations. Position of the viewer also involves the play of angles: frontal angles elicit an attitude of subjectivity and involvement, while oblique angles create an attitude of detachment and avoidance of a sense of subjectivity towards the viewer.

3.5.6 Modality

Modality markers are "established by the groups within which we interact as relatively reliable guides to the truth or factuality of messages and they have developed out of the central values, beliefs and social needs of that group" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990, p. 159). Modality refers to the truth-value of a visual: the higher the degree of modality, the more credible the message from the visual. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) identified eight markers to help determine the modality of an image: i. Colour saturation (scale running from full colours to the absence of colour, or black and white), ii. Colour differentiation (from maximally diversified range of colours to monochrome), iii. Colour modulation (from fully modulated colour e.g. different hues of red to plain), iv. Contextualization (scale from absence of background to fully articulated, detailed background), v. Representation (from abstraction to maximum representation of pictorial detail), vi. Depth (from absence to maximally deep perspectives), vii. Illumination (from fullest representation of play of light and shade to absence) and viii. Brightness (from maximum degrees of brightness to just two degrees of the same colour e.g. black and white). With regards

to these eight modality markers, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) further argued that any extreme of modality sub-categories causes the believability of an image to suffer. For example, too much colour saturation or brightness will cause an inherent dissonance that conveys a sub-reality. However, all categories have a mid-range where the believability of an image is strongest.

3.5.7 Composition

Compositional meanings are "concerned with the distribution of the information value or relative emphasis among elements" (Unsworth, 2001, p. 72). Composition thus relates to decisions about arrangements of forms within space. The position where elements are placed in an image influences the meaning conveyed by the image-maker. Crystal (1997, pp. 168-169) explicated that composition also concerns given and new information. "Given" refers to information already supplied in the context and "new" describes information that has not been previously supplied. Further, elements positioned on the left side may be regarded as either new or given information while those on the right side, will be perceived as new information. Kress and van Leeuwen (1990) add that elements positioned at the top of the image have an ideal value contrary to those situated at the bottom. Other compositional visual choices that affect meaning include size, colour, and fronting of elements, which suggest their levels of salience or degree in which a visual element is designed to draw audiences' attention.

3.6 Materials and data collection

This section details the materials used and data collection procedures for the present research. The discussion includes the subject of the survey instrument designed to

gauge consumer perceptions about consumer contests, particularly those delivered via CEFs, as well as data collected from two principal samples in the study: the texts for analysis i.e. the corpus of CEFs collected for the present study, and the sample of respondents who participated in the survey on consumer perceptions.

3.6.1 The survey questionnaire

This sequential exploratory mixed method research employed a survey in the form of a questionnaire to measure consumers' perception in a way that allowed the results to be generalised to a population (Creswell, 2003). The items in the questionnaire were determined not only by the research questions, but also by the dominant textual components identified from the corpus of CEFs. The survey items were thus generated from the initial qualitative analysis of the CEFs. The analysis was guided by the research questions with particular reference to salient textual components in the corpus and discursive strategies that were discerned in the genre. The bulk of items show a Likert semblance that use statements rated by the two groups of respondents for their level of agreement based on a six-point scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The six-point scale was used to address concerns that certain respondents might select the middle category by default in a scale containing an odd number of points. Also known in statistical terms, as the avoidance of regression to the mean, the middle category refers to the issue concerning respondents who tend to neither agree nor disagree with a statement to avoid making a real choice (Nunnally, 1978; Robson, 1993). The use of the six-point scale thus helps to avoid the drawbacks of this undecided category of respondents (Dornyei, 2003). In consideration of the prospect to "enrich and expand on data collected" (Dornyei, 2003, p. 15) a partially open-ended question have been included.

3.6.2 Sampling texts for analysis: The CEF corpus

CEFs are often strategically placed along product shelves in supermarkets throughout the country so consumers may easily spot them, take-one and ideally, make the necessary purchases to participate in the contest. The researcher collected as many CEFs as possible over a period of twelve months from the shelves and information counters of supermarkets across the Klang Valley, including Giant, Tesco, Jusco and Carrefour. These shopping outlets are often located close to housing estates and high consumer traffic areas like the city centres. Although many of the contests were found to run concurrently in various outlets, some dated CEFs were also collected from supermarket information counters, which could allow for a more longitudinal body of corpus for analysis. Next, the researcher organised the CEFs into "core categories" on the basis of identifiable recurring components (Glaser, 1998, p. 56). This process of identification utilised an open coding method, which Glaser (ibid.) described as "fracturing of data into analytic pieces which can then be raised to conceptual level." The process starts when data collection begins, and therefore, the researcher did not wait for all data to be collected before starting to list and identify key components from a growing corpus that emerged throughout the data collection process. At the same time constant comparison between the data were done as part of a systematic and continuous effort to check and refine emerging components.

As the number of CEFs collected for the study increased, some categories such as contest themes, headlines, proof of purchase requirements and various types of prizes were found to emerge with higher frequency than others. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 106) opined, "the basic, defining rule while coding an incident for a category is to compare it with previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the

same category." Eventually the categories of textual components are saturated and their true relevance is found among the other codes. In the present case, two core categories, verbal and visual components were established and the task is to relate components that reoccur frequently in the data with the core verbal and visual categories. Once the dominant components were identified, the researcher recorded any other identifiable connections between the verbal and visual components, adding to the sample of texts for analysis as necessary, until saturation or the point of diminishing returns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is the point where "new data yields no significant new insights" (Gasson, 2004, p. 86). For the present study, this point was achieved at the total number of 118 CEFs when it was found that new CEFs collected could add nothing new to the list of identified textual elements, its properties, and its relationship to the dominant verbal and visual components. At this stage, that the researcher stopped collecting CEFs focussed on analysis to describe, interpret and explain the ways in which promotional advertisers may employ the underlying strategies within the verbal and visual components in CEFs, to manufacture consumer consent.

The motive behind selecting the CEF is attributed to the observation that it represents the most comprehensive material in a consumer promotional advertising campaign. Materials in the same campaign featured in newspapers and magazines or aired over the radio, television and online spots were found to be reminders of the CEF. These supporting materials also carried materially less information such as a reproduction of solely the contest headline or theme as foregrounded in the CEF, which is often accompanied with a short message directing readers to "visit the nearest supermarket for your contest entry forms. These one or two liner messages also frequently end

with a line that reads, “Terms and conditions apply.” Additionally, it was found that instead of appearing in full colour and the size afforded in a CEF, these reminder or reproductions of the CEF usually appear in just black and white, grey tones or one spot colour (a single tone of colour) on a limited space, for example, at a corner of a newspaper’s or magazine’s page. For these reasons, the CEF may be regarded as the most comprehensive material in any promotional advertising campaign. Its selection could thus enable a more detailed analysis to help establish more useful observations. In retrospect, these grounds for selecting the CEF as an appropriate sampling text for the present study are further strengthened in consideration that it is also the only material in a promotional advertising campaign that contain the contest’s rules and regulations and the form that contest organisers require consumers to fill in, complete and send back to a given address.

3.6.3 Respondent samples

Two groups of respondents were invited to participate in the survey of consumer perceptions. The subjects were informed that to be eligible to participate in the study aimed at investigating consumer reactions to contests communicated via CEFs, they needed to be Malaysian citizens, aged 18 years and above. This criterion was lifted from the ubiquitous opening point in the R&R component across the corpus of CEFs. The first predefined group represented a sample of consumers whose occupation were directly related to the promotions and advertising industries. Those included held positions as creative and film directors, writers or copywriters, art directors, graphic designers, creative strategists, account directors and managers, marketing executives and consultants, photographers and media buyers. The second group comprised consumers whose occupations were not related to the promotions and

advertising industries. Those included here held occupations such as information technology (IT) technicians and service providers, accountants, food and beverage outlet managers, homemakers, retirees and teachers. Data collected from the first group included sixty respondents, thirty males and thirty females. These participants were selected by capitalising on informal social networks such as friends and friends of friends in the promotions and advertising fields to identify specific respondents who may be otherwise hard to locate. A type of purposive sampling called expert sampling it involves assembling a sample of persons with known expertise. Expert sampling is also the best way to elicit the views of persons with specific expertise (Trochim, 2002). Data from the second group were collected from respondents who were sized up as potential contest participants and approached at supermarkets as they were reading a CEF or were seen to carry a CEF in their shopping trolleys. In attempt to help reduce the researcher's increasing expenses for additional costs incurred in travelling to major supermarkets, looking for, approaching and inviting potential respondents to participate in the survey, data from this group was also collected via capitalising on informal social networks. The second group comprised fifty-nine respondents: thirty males and twenty-nine females.

In total, the final representative sample included 60 males (mean age = 36 years) and 59 females (mean age = 31 years). The classification of this sample adds to the overall expansion of results in two ways. First, sample respondents from the first group may express intentions behind their works that could provide more insights about how they see their positions as cultural encoders who actively employ textual forms to manufacture consumer consent in their daily work. Second, it would be interesting to find out if the second group share the views of those in the first group.

The 119 participants were considered to be representative of the required sample by comparing the sample size with past sample sizes in comparable studies. Past studies whose sample sizes were compared include those that examined ethical decisions between male and female managers (Kidwell, Stevens & Bethke, 1987) where data were collected from 100 participants; studies concerning functions and forms of symbolic discourse (Zimmermann, et al., 1990) where data were collected from 88 church leaders' stories; and studies that examined media exposure and sponsor recall (van Heerden, Kotzé & Bruwer, 2004) where data were collected from 120 respondents. Given these comparative studies, a sample size of 119 may be considered sufficient to garner data from a sample that is representative of the population and enable the findings to be adequately generalised.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

As part of the body of consumers targeted by promotional advertisers, and in line with the purpose of the present study, the researcher is personally interested in uncovering the ways in which promotional texts can influence purchasing habits and social lives. The fundamental steps taken to achieve these intentions are as follows:

1. Collect and compile the sample text for analysis (CEFs).
2. Commence analysis:
    a. Describe key components (linguistic and non-linguistic) at the micro level.
    b. Subject identified components to interpretation in ways that could help reveal underlying strategies at the meso level.
    c. Explain the components and strategies in terms of how they may be employed to manufacture consumers' consent.

3. Develop the survey questionnaire based on initial observations about the identified key components and their underlying strategies. The survey questions (App. XVI) were focussed on three salient areas:
   i. Questions pertaining to participants' perceived value of contests.
   ii. Questions pertaining to participants' preferences surrounding CEFs.
   iii. Questions pertaining to participants' views about contest prizes.

   In attempt to add to the overall findings of the research, an open-ended question was introduced at the end of the questionnaire to induce unbiased and thoughtful responses (Creswell, 2009).

4. Administer the survey on two groups of respondents:
   a. Those who work in and with promotions and advertising agencies
   b. Those who do not work in or with promotions and advertising agencies
5. Expand qualitative findings with quantitative results, i.e. integrate the results of both data analyses phases to achieve an overall description, interpretation and explanation of the entire analysis.

In conclusion to this chapter, a list of findings from the pilot study conducted to trial the procedures of the present research and help address any shortcomings are presented in the final section 3.8 on the following page.

3.8 Pilot study

Preliminary findings of the pilot study presented at The School of Language and Linguistics International Conference 2005 (SoLLs. INTEC.05) were published (Soo,

2007) in a social science book entitled "Windows to Reality: Investigating Representations and Meaning in Discourses." While the pilot did not include the survey, which had yet to be developed during the initial stages it was noted for its role to measure consumer perceptions. 10 CEFs were used for the pilot study. The following is a list of findings based on the preliminary results and interpretation of the qualitative data.

1. Contest titles highlight product and/or contest benefits in the form of prizes to be won.
2. Headlines appeal to consumers' sense of greed and are always supported by prominent visuals that lead consumers to the preferred meaning: buy and keep buying because participation means extra value.
3. Headlines underline the notion of "synthetic personalisation" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 52).
4. Benefits highlighted in contest titles and headlines are always supported with texts that lead readers to interpret the message as, "this is your culturally and socially appropriate chance to win."
5. Combination of texts often connote that readers must act as the message is from a credible source offering a limited chance to gain quick rewards.
6. Overall treatment of graphics in contest titles is always given a friendly yet authoritative appearance that complements the promoted brand and company.
7. References to rewards help consumers forget that the CEF is a sales promotion device and participation does not yield the power to turn dreams into reality.
8. Promotional advertisers use consumers' MR (understanding of related events) to make positive associations with the contest.

9. CEFs follow an established set of format in terms of how the various bodies of texts are organised so the desired take home message is achieved: buy and win.
10. Numerals are often used to indicate the number of prizes to be won.
11. In cases where asterisks are discreetly embedded into headlines, readers may oversee these as trivial. Similarly, the R&R component of any CEF is always featured as trivial.
12. "Common-sense reality" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 39) is often created via the manipulation of language based on the 5 types of clauses outlined in Searle's (1969) Speech Classification Act. For example, "Merdeka celebration contest" declares the motivation of a contest; "Join and win" expresses a presupposed desire to join the contest; and, "So easy to win so many prizes!" represents the contest as the perfect opportunity to enjoy added value.