

# การวิเคราะห์กลวิธีทางภาษาในโฆษณาประกันบำนาญ

## The Analysis of Linguistic Features in Annuity Advertisements<sup>1</sup>

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### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษากลวิธีทางภาษาที่ใช้ในการนำเสนอขายความมั่นคงทางการเงินที่เป็นสิ่งที่จับต้องไม่ได้และเพื่อเปิดเผยกลยุทธ์การโน้มน้าวผู้บริโภคของโฆษณาประกันบำนาญ โดยใช้ไวยากรณ์ระบบ-หน้าที่ของฮาลเดย์เป็นกรอบในการวิเคราะห์กลวิธีทางภาษาในแผ่นพับโฆษณาประกันบำนาญจำนวน 15 ชิ้น ผลการศึกษาพบว่า โฆษณาประกันบำนาญใช้กลวิธีทางภาษาหลากหลายชนิดในการโน้มน้าวให้ลูกค้าซื้อประกันบำนาญ กล่าวคือ คำกริยาทั้ง 6 ชนิดของไวยากรณ์ระบบ-หน้าที่ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย คำกริยาที่สื่อถึงการกระทำ, คำกริยาที่ใช้ในการให้คำนิยาม, คำกริยาที่สื่อถึงอารมณ์ความรู้สึกนึกคิด, คำกริยาเกี่ยวกับการพูด, คำกริยาที่แสดงถึงพฤติกรรมของมนุษย์ และ คำกริยาที่แสดงถึงการเกิดขึ้นหรือมีขึ้นของสิ่งต่างๆ อีกทั้งยังมีการใช้ทั้งประโยคบอกเล่า ประโยคคำถาม และ ประโยคคำสั่งในโฆษณาประกันบำนาญ บริษัทประกันชีวิตกระตุ้นให้ผู้บริโภคเห็นถึงความจำเป็นของประกันบำนาญโดยการผลิตข้อความที่กระตุ้นความรู้สึก, ความทรงจำ, และความรู้สึก

<sup>1</sup> This study deals with one aspect of the first author's dissertation, entitled "The Commodification of Security: a Critical Discourse Analysis of Thai Insurance Advertisements".

การเป็นสมาชิกครอบครัวที่พึงประสงค์ซึ่งวาทกรรมเหล่านี้ทำให้อุดมการณ์ทุนนิยมและเสรีนิยมใหม่ยังคงดำรงอยู่ต่อไปในสังคม อนึ่ง วาทกรรมของประกันบำนาญประสบความสำเร็จในการโน้มน้าวผู้บริโภคชาวไทยได้ระดับหนึ่ง เนื่องจากสอดคล้องกับระบบความคิดความเชื่อของคนไทยส่วนใหญ่ นั่นคือคำสอนทางพระพุทธศาสนา ในประเด็น ความทุกข์, ความไม่แน่นอน, การพึ่งตนเอง และ ค่านิยมเกี่ยวกับความกตัญญู

**คำสำคัญ:** ไวยากรณ์ระบบ-หน้าที่, โฆษณาประกันบำนาญ, ทุนนิยม, เสรีนิยมใหม่

### Abstract

The objectives of this study are to investigate the advertising strategies used in presenting financial security in insurance advertisements and to reveal the manipulation of customers' needs for annuity policies. Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) was employed to analyze verbal resources or linguistic features in 15 annuity brochures. The findings revealed that all six types of processes were employed: material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Three types of mood: declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives were also found. The insurance companies constitute and exploit consumer needs for financial security by reproducing the discourse of risk, discourse of happiness, and discourse of good family members to persuade customers that annuity policies are essential for a happy and secure retirement. Simultaneously, these discourses reproduce capitalist and neoliberal ideologies which circulate stereotypes about class inequality. To a certain degree, the discourses of annuity advertisements succeed in manipulating Thai customers because they run parallel with Buddhist teachings of suffering, impermanence, self-reliance, and Thai social value of gratitude, which form part of the Thai psyche.

**Keywords:** systemic functional grammar, annuity advertisement, capitalism, neoliberalism

## 1. Introduction

Aging society is the global phenomenon. Medical advances and improved standards of living have resulted in a falling trend in mortality across all segments of the population, including the elders, which means that the elders will live longer. The number of the elders is continuously growing worldwide including in Thailand. According to the demographic database of the National Statistical Office (2011), it is estimated that in 2020 the number of Thai people aged 60 years or over will reach 12.6 million, and in 2030 it will rise to 17.5 million (The College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University and the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute The College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University and the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute [TGRI], 2012).

The elderly population is physically, economically, and socially dependent. Due to declining health, they have both physical and mental problems. Nevertheless, since Thai society has changed from agricultural society, in which there is a close tie among family members and children takes care of their parents, to industrial society in which people work outside in government and private sectors and each family member needs to rely on themselves, including the elders. Concerning the economic situation of the elders, most of the elders are retired people which means they do not have regular income (salary), and their three largest sources of income are children (40.1 percent), savings (35.1 percent), and old age allowance from government (11.4 percent) (TGRI, 2012). Although they do not have regular income, they have continuous expenses; e.g., health care, food, utilities, and rent (Noisamram, 2010; Phutrakul, 2007). It has found that a large number of Thais are going into retirement unprepared and having insufficient savings, so financial security in retirement is one concerns of people nowadays. Financial experts advise

working population to prepare for retirement savings (Banchongduang, 2014), insurance companies see this as business opportunity by creating pension annuity policies as a means for retirement savings to meet the demand of customers who are planning for future incomes during their retirement. Among other saving options for retirement, annuity policies gain popularity. The market share of annuity policies is expanding even among Thailand coup d'état which is caused by people's worry about uncertainty in political and economic crisis and the government's support through tax-deduction as an incentive for those who purchase annuity insurance (Prachachat, 2014; Thansettakij, 2014).

Due to the fact that insurance business sells intangible future service (Sangkaew, 2011), it is interesting to examine the discursive strategies in Thai annuity advertisements. How the discourse of annuity advertisements manipulate Thai customers to willingly pay for non-material service that yields benefits in the future, e.g. the age for receiving benefits of annuity policies is 60.

Concerning previous Thai research on insurance, scholars in disparate academic disciplines, i.e., business administration, finance, law, and linguistics, including communication have conducted research on insurance. After reviewing related studies on insurance advertising in the field of language and communication, it appears the majority of them have focused on strategies employed in creating the advertisements via various analytical frameworks, i.e., interpretive theme analysis, overt and covert communication, and Saussurean semiology. The findings of these studies reveal that various strategies are employed in insurance advertisements: humor, metaphors, narratives, fear appeal, discourse of risk, and mixed strategies (Bua-lem, 1998; Nantasiri, 2011; Sangkaew, 2011). One study explored the insurance advertisements from a critical perspective to discover the construction of life value in life insurance

commercials (Nantasirisorn, 2014). The data sets for these previous studies consisted of the advertisements from life insurance policies. One survey study in the field of business administration studied annuity policies to discover marketing factors affecting the buying selection of annuity insurance policies (Dhammeunyong, 2016).

While in economic aspect advertising is used as a marketing tool in stimulating customer's demand for annuity policies; in cultural studies and critical aspects, advertising is regarded as a form of cultural artefacts which is the site that language and society mediated. From previous related literature, little attention has been paid to the analysis of annuity advertisements in the field of language and communication by employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as an analytical framework. To test whether different analytical framework will yield different results, this study, hence, aims to (1) investigate the advertising strategies used in presenting financial security in insurance brochures, drawing on Halliday's systemic functional grammar and (2) reveal the manipulation of customers' needs for annuity policies. Consequently, the findings of this study can fill a gap in knowledge of financial discourse in Thailand. Exposing how the discourses of annuity advertisements manipulate customers, this study also enhances the media literacy of the customers who read annuity advertisements by emancipating them from the exploitation of annuity advertisements.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Advertising strategies for the intangibles

The insurance business offers services rather than products to consumers. What they sell is intangible benefits; i.e., financial security, happiness, and peace of mind which are all abstract rather than concrete.

Consequently, these insurance firms need unique marketing strategies to make their services tangible, concrete, and vivid to the customers. Four strategies are generally employed to enhance perceived tangibility for services: visualization, association, physical representation, and documentation (Hill, Blodgett, Baer, & Wakefield, 2004; Mittal, 1999).

In the case of insurance services, an effective strategy that is used in insurance advertisements to create a vivid mental picture of the benefits or qualities of the insurance company is visualization, especially the narrative, which is a specific type of visualization strategy (Mittal, 1999).

A visualization strategy aims to convey a vivid mental picture of a service provider's benefits or qualities which are more likely to evoke emotions and memories of consumers. Advertisement is more vivid when it contains concrete words or when it contains pictorial stimuli rather than text alone (Hill, Blodgett, Baer, and Wakefield, 2004). Narrative advertisements persuade by a story which is a set of events in time depicted by actors or conveyed by another from such as song, dance, or mime. Since narrative advertisements dwell on the subjective human experience, they are likely to be more effective advertising strategies for a service which is an experience that is subjectively encoded by the customer (Mittal, 1999).

It can be concluded that linguistic features or verbal resources play a crucial role in presenting intangible benefits of the insurance business. Therefore, this study analyses verbal resources in annuity brochures in order to explore the persuasive strategies used in selling financial security in the annuity advertisements.

## 2.2 Systemic functional grammar as a means for analyzing verbal resources in advertising text

Because of the intangibility of the insurance service, words, images, grammatical styles, and rhetorical structure in advertisements play a significant role in revealing information about the company, the products or services, the customers, including lifestyles, identities, and many ideological messages (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2012; Stern, 1988). Every verbal and visual resource in the advertisements are carefully chosen with a clear communicative purpose to persuade the reader (Hackley, 2010). This study employs Halliday's systemic functional grammar for analyzing verbal resources in an annuity brochure to investigate the persuasive strategies.

Systemic functional grammar (SFG) refers to the study of how meanings are built up through the choice of words and other grammatical resources. SFG 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). According to Halliday, the purposes of language use or metafunction can be categorized into 3 categories: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday (1994, p. 108).

Ideational metafunction refers to the concept that language is used to organize, understand and express humans consciousness and perceptions of the world. In SFG, a clause is a major unit of grammatical analysis. Each clause is analyzed into process, participants, and/or circumstances. Participants indicate both the doer and the done-to which can be people, things, or abstract concepts. Participants are expressed as nominal groups in a clause. Processes are expressed as verbs and verbal groups in a clause. There are six process types: mental or verbs of perception, cognition, and affection; relational or verbs of classifying and identifying; verbal or verbs of speaking



and communicating; behavioral or verbs of volitional processes, bodily happenings and psychological states; and existential or verbs representing that something exists or happens (Halliday, 1994). Circumstances are expressed as adverbial groups or prepositional phrases in a clause, dealing with where, when, and how (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Transitivity analysis, then, can signify relationships and power relations among participants in the clause.

Interpersonal metafunction refers to social interaction between participants. Interpersonal metafunction can be analyzed through degree of mood and modality in language. 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) (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 1997).

Textual metafunction refers to relevance in context. In SFG, there are two parallel and interrelated systems used in the analysis of the structure of the clause: information structure, which concerns the constituents labeled Given and New, and thematic structure that involves constituents labeled Theme and Rheme (Bloor & Bloor, 2004).

A number of practitioners from various fields employed SFG as one of the analytical tools in their studies to analyze such text types as advertisements, news articles, and magazine covers. The aims of those studies are, for instance, to investigate how the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and the public images of Thai government, juvenile delinquents and the Rohingya refugees are constructed and represented in the media (e.g. Duanprakhon, 2012; Gregorio-Godeo, 2009; Heembenson, 2012; Moran & Lee, 2013; Nascimento, 2011; Silachai & Poonpon, 2016).

Since Halliday's SFG is an approach that concerns the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue (Coffin, Lillis, & O'Halloran, 2010). In other words, it deals with the exploration of how language can mislead and misinterpret in the interests of the dominant class at the expense of the subordinate class; thus, it is considered an appropriate analytical framework in this study whose objective is to reveal how insurance companies exploit customer's needs for annuity policies in annuity advertisements.

### 3. Methodology

The samples of this study are 15 annuity brochures aimed at the working population aged 20-55 and distributed during the period 2014-2016. The year 2014 marked one of Thailand's many coup d'états and led to a decline in consumer confidence and uncertainty about the economic and political situations (Sethapramote, 2014, The economic consequences of Thailand's political crisis Section, para. 2). Consequently, individuals have been seeking ways to strengthen their financial security. According to The Thai Life Assurance Association (2014), the expansion of the insurance industry saw an increase of 13.75% over that of 13.06% in 2013 due to public realization of the importance of the life insurance business and the availability of new products that are more responsive to the needs of the public and enjoyed a strong support from the government (p.75). Annuity policies are now seen as one means of building financial stability in retirement. It should be noted that only the brochures of the five insurance companies with the biggest market shares in 2014 were selected, based on the rationale that the biggest market shares can signify to a certain degree the companies' maturity and their success in marketing communication. The top five insurance companies are: 1. AIA 2. Muang Thai

Life Assurance 3. Thai Life Assurance 4. Bangkok Life Assurance (BLA), and 5. Krungthai-AXA Life Insurance (The Thai Life Assurance Association, 2015, p.12).

There are three separate rationales why annuity advertisements were analyzed in this study. First, annuity policies are created to meet the demands of the increasing number of elderly population who require incomes during their retirement (Noisamran, 2010, Annuity Review section, para. 6). Second, the government also supports the purchase of annuity policies in order to generate savings by offering tax deductions for annuity policies (Carden, 2010, Annuities - a New Year's Gift That Helps You Retire with Wealth section, para. 6). Finally, due to the government's tax deduction scheme, the majority of insurance firms in Thailand create and offer a variety of annuity policies to customers (The Thai Life Assurance Association, 2015, Member Companies section).

For the data analysis procedures, this study begins with the general observations about annuity brochures. All 15 brochures were described in relations to their structures and contents, drawing on Leech's (1966) structure of print advertisements: headline, illustration, body copy, signature, and standing details in order to discover the general information about annuity brochures (p. 59). Then the verbal analysis was presented. This study employed the three metafunctions of Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) as analytical tools. Since a clause is a basic unit of analysis in SFG, each clause in annuity brochures were analyzed based on these three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual analysis. In other words, each clause is analyzed in terms of transitivity analysis, the analysis of thematic structure, and the analysis of mood.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of annuity brochures revealed that insurance companies as a producer of annuity brochures employed both verbal and visual resources in commodifying financial security which is intangible. This finding runs parallel with previous studies on insurance advertisements, which indicate that both verbal and non-verbal resources were employed in insurance advertisements to persuade customers to buy insurance policies (Bua-lem, 1998; Nantasiri, 2011; Nantasirisorn, 2014; Sangkaew, 2011). This section presents the general observations of annuity brochures, the verbal resources employed in annuity brochures, and the persuasive strategies in annuity advertisements.

##### 4.1 General observations about annuity brochures

The annuity brochures of the top-five companies were purposively selected from each company website. In total, 15 brochures were chosen to be analyzed. They are (1) AIA Annuity 60/85, (2) AIA Annuity FIX, (3) AIA Annuity Smart, (4) BLA Unit Pension, (5) Annuity 600, (6) Annuity 555, (7) i-Wish, (8) PR 60, (9) Retirement Saving Plan G 55, 60, 65, (10) Retirement Saving Plan (1) 55, 60, 65, (11) Muang Thai Retirement Saver, (12) Muang Thai 8560 G 15, (13) Muang Thai Retirement 8501 and 9901, (14) Muang Thai 8501 D 55 and D 60, and (15) Muang Thai Return Retire. All of them were distributed during the period 2014-2016.

Concerning the structures and the contents of the brochure, the structures of the 15 annuity brochures are consistent with those of a press advertisement proposed by Leech (1966): headline, illustrations, body copy, signature line and standing details (p. 59). The length of a brochure is between four and eight pages.

In each brochure, the first page contains the headline that tells the name and the slogan of the annuity policy, including images of a person or an object that signifies the potential customers. All the companies present their trademark on the first page as well. The next part is the body copy, which is the main part of the advertising messages giving information about the necessity of having an annuity policy and the attractive benefits the policy offers to customers in order to persuade customers to purchase it. Charts, diagrams and tables that illustrate the benefits and the premium rates of the policy are also found in the body copy. The last page of most brochures is the signature line, in which the trademark is presented again. The standing details, which comprises the company's address and contact numbers, are also provided in the last page. Out of 15 brochures, 10 brochures provide QR codes on the last page as well. The last page of the brochures of certain companies also contain a blank space for the sales representative to write his/her name and contact numbers.

The main colors of the majority of the brochures are the same as those of the company. AIA employs white and red as the main colors of its brochures. Bangkok Life Assurance uses sky blue, white, and blue in its brochures. The major colors of Thai Life Assurance brochures are also sky blue, white, and blue. Muang Thai Life Assurance employs pink and white in its brochures. However, the main colors of Krungthai-AXA brochures are brown, orange, red, white, and grey, which differ from those of the company trademark, which are sky blue, white, and blue.

For the language used in all brochures, Thai is mainly used. This is because these brochures are produced and distributed in Thailand to promote annuity policies to Thai people. English is found only in company names and websites (e.g. AIA, Krungthai-AXA, and [www.bangkoklife.com](http://www.bangkoklife.com)), in the names

of annuity policies (e.g. AIA Annuity Smart, i-Wish, and Muang Thai Return Retire), and certain words in the body copy (e.g. lifestyle). In the case of company names, English names indicate that the companies are a chain of an international company which has worldwide branches. This signifies world-class service which can create a positive brand image. For company websites, English is used because Thai scripts are not applicable. For the names of the annuity policy and certain words in the body copy, English conveys more precise meanings than Thai, and it also signifies modernity.

The producers of annuity advertisements also utilize non-verbal resources in all 15 annuity brochures to reinforce the meanings of the verbal resources. The visual resources employed are of various types: images of persons; diagrams, tables and charts; images of objects; and miscellaneous images.

Images of persons and objects were used to indicate the age, gender, and social status of the target customers of annuities policies who are Thai white-collar middle class in their 20s-50s. The majority of the advertisements depict men as main characters. The number of the images of men is double those of women. Both men and women are presented as an individual, as a couple, or as a family. Interestingly, men are mostly presented as an individual, whereas women are mostly presented with men as a couple or as one of the family members. This implies that men are the major potential targets of annuity brochures due to their expected role as a good breadwinner taking care of the family, while women are presented as subordinate to men, i.e., they financially depend on men. The majority of diagrams and tables show the financial benefits and coverage offered by each annuity policy. Some present the premium rate of each policy, in which the premium rate for men is cheaper than that for women. Miscellaneous images cover the company trademark, QR

codes and awards the company has received. These visual resources are used to create a brand identity and the brand image of the insurance company as reliable, modern, and professional.

#### 4.2 Verbal Resources in annuity brochures

Employing Halliday's systemic functional grammar, the language in the advertisement is analyzed in terms of transitivity analysis, the analysis of thematic structure, and the analysis of mood. It should be noted that the system of transliteration employed in this study for writing Thai language words in the Latin alphabet is that of the Office of the Royal Society which does not include diacritic marks.

##### 4.2.1 *Transitivity analysis*

All six process types are found annuity advertisements. The following part indicates the sample analysis of each process type, the participants involved, and sample clauses in order to discover the communicative functions of each process type in annuity advertisements. It should be noted that in each example, the main participant in the subject position is in bold type, and the process is underlined.

##### 1. *Material processes*

Material processes are verbs dealing with doing and acting. The main participants are actor and goal (Halliday, 1994, p. 109). According to Machin and Mayr (2012), analyzing actors in a material clause can suggest who is active and who is passive in a clause which can signify power (pp. 106 & 111). In this study, the top-three actors in terms of frequency are customers, annuity policies, insurance companies, respectively, as in examples (1)-(3).

- (1) [คุณ] จ่าย เบี้ยสบาย ไร้หนี้อย่างร่ำรวย  
 Transliteration: [khun] chai bia sabai retire yang ramruai  
 Translation: [You] pay easy premium; retire wealthy.  
 Source: Muang Thai Return Retire

This clause accounts for the conditions in applying for annuity policies that it is convenient for customers in premium payment. It also constructs the idea that retirement savings are necessary for a happy, secure, and affluent life during retirement.

- (2) [เอไอเอ บำนาญ 60/85] พร้อมการันตีเงิน  
 บำนาญ 15 ปี  
 Transliteration: [AIA Annuity 60/85] prom karanti ngoen  
 bamnan 15 pi  
 Translation: [AIA Annuity 60/85] guarantees a pension  
 for 15 years.  
 Source: AIA Annuity 60/85

The producers of annuity advertisements use this language features to portray annuity policies as a good financial plan that offers numerous benefits to customers, i.e. guaranteeing a 15-year pension.

- (3) บริษัทกรุงไทย-แอกซ่าประกันชีวิต จำกัด  
 (มหาชน) ร่วมสร้างแผนเกษียณของคุณให้เป็น  
 จริงผ่านการออมอย่างเป็นระบบเพื่อที่จะทำให้  
 แผนเกษียณของคุณเป็นไปตามที่ตั้งใจไว้ด้วย  
 ผลประโยชน์สูงสุด  
 Transliteration: borisat krungthai-aeksa prakan chiwit  
 chamkat (mahachon) ruam sang phaen  
 kasian khong khun hai pen ching phan  
 kan-om yang pen rabop phuea thi cha tham



hai phaen kasian khong khun pen pai tam  
thi tangchai duai phonprayot sungsut  
Translation: **Krungthai-AXA Life Insurance Public  
Company Limited** tailors your retirement  
plan through systematic savings so as to  
meet your actual needs and desires with  
the greatest benefits.

Source: PR 60

The communicative function of this example is to create a brand image and brand positioning that the company is an expert who provides professional and reliable service.

Examples (2) and (3) are consistent with those of Angsuwiriya (2015), who found that financial institutions present themselves in advertisements as a financial assistant, an opportunity provider, or as a hero who can help and provide solutions for financial problems the customers encounter, which suggests the superiority of financial institutions over customers (pp. 8-9).

## 2. Relational processes

Relational processes refer to verbs of being and having. The main participants are carrier and attribute, possessor and possession, and token and value (Halliday, 1994, p. 119). Customers are portrayed as the participants of relational clauses. They are utilized to create a positive image of customers who purchase annuity policies as someone who can take care of themselves, not being a burden to their children, as shown in example (4).

(4) [คุณ] ไม่เป็นภาระของลูกหลาน  
Transliteration: [khun] mai pen phara luklan  
Translation: [You] will not be a burden to [your] children.  
Source: Retirement Saving Plan G 55, 60, 65

Insurance companies are also used as the participants of relational clauses. They are identified as reliable and professional, as shown in example (5).

- (5) และ [เอไอเอ ประเทศไทย] เป็นหนึ่งในสมาชิก  
 ของกลุ่มบริษัทเอไอเอ โดยให้ความคุ้มครอง  
 ในด้านการประกันชีวิต การวางแผนออมเงิน  
 เพื่อวัยเกษียณ การประกันภัยอุบัติเหตุและ  
 สุขภาพ และการประกันชีวิตแบบควบการลงทุน
- Transliteration: lae [AIA pratetthai] pen nueng nai samachik  
 khong krum borisat AIA doi hai kwamkhu  
 mkhrong nai dan kanprakan chiwit kanwang  
 phaen omngoen phuea wai kasian  
 kanprakanphai ubattihet lae sukkhaphap  
 lae kanprakan chiwit baep kuap kanlongthun
- Translation: And, [AIA Thailand] is a member of AIA  
 Group Limited, providing life insurance,  
 retirement savings plans, accident and  
 health insurance, and investment insurance.
- Source: Annuity Smart

The annuities policies are identified as a good financial plan that offers sufficient savings for a worry-free retirement, as shown in example (6).

- (6) **ทรัพย์บำนาญ (1)** เป็น อีกหนึ่งแบบประกัน  
 ที่จะช่วยกำกับการวางแผนเกษียณอย่างไร้ความ  
 กังวล ช่วยให้การดำเนินชีวิตเป็นไปอย่างราบรื่น  
 โดยมีรายได้ที่แน่นอนสำหรับใช้จ่ายในวัยหลัง  
 การเกษียณอายุ

- Transliteration: **sap bamnan (1)** pen ik nueng baep prakan  
thi cha chuai kamkap kanwangphaen kasian  
yang rai khwamkangwon chuai hai kan  
damnoen chiwit pen pai yang rapruen doi  
mi raidai thi naenon samrap chaichai nai  
wai lang kasian ayu
- Translation: **Retirement Saving Plan (1)** is another type  
of insurance that can be a component of  
your planning for a worry-free, easy-living  
retirement with a guaranteed income for  
post-retirement expenses.
- Source: Retirement Saving Plan (1) 55, 60, 65

### 3. *Mental processes*

Mental processes refer to verbs of sensing. The main participants are sensor and phenomenon (Halliday, 1994, p. 113). In this study, the customers and the insurance companies are foregrounded as the sensors of the mental process as in examples (7) and (8).

- (7) [คุณ] มั่นใจวัยเกษียณด้วยเงินก้อน ณ อายุ 60  
ปี ซึ่งขึ้นอยู่กับอายุรับประกันภัยเพื่อเป็นของขวัญ  
เริ่มต้นวัยเกษียณให้กับตัวคุณ
- Transliteration: [khun] manchai wai kasian duai ngoenkon  
na ayu 60 pi sueng khuenyukap ayu rap  
prakanphai phuea pen khongkhwan  
roemton wai kasian
- Translation: [You] can be confident of retirement age  
with a lump sum payout at 60, depending  
on age of becoming insured, as a retirement  
gift to yourself.

This clause constructs the idea that financial security can lead to a worry-free retirement.

(8) AIA เข้าใจชีวิต เข้าใจคุณ

Transliteration: AIA khaochai chiwit khaochai khun

Translation: AIA understands life and understands you.

Source: AIA Annuity 60/85

This clause is used to foreground insurance companies in caring and understanding for customers.

#### 4. Verbal clauses

Verbal processes are verbs of saying. The main participants are say-er and verbiage (Halliday, 1994, p. 140). Customers and insurance companies are presented as a say-er in verbal clauses as in examples (9) and (10).

(9) และ [คุณ] ไม่ต้องตอบคำถามสุขภาพ

Transliteration: lae [khun] maitong top khamtham sukkhaphap

Translation: And, [you] don't have to answer questions about your health.

Source: BLA Unit Pension

(10) กรณีผู้เอาประกัน ภัยไม่เปิดเผยข้อความจริง  
หรือแถลงข้อความเท็จ บริษัทฯ จะบอกกล่าว  
สัญญาภายใน 2 ปี นับตั้งแต่วันที่ทำสัญญา หรือ  
วันต่ออายุกรมธรรม์ หรือวันกลับคืนสู่สถานะเดิม  
ของกรมธรรม์ครั้งสุดท้าย

Transliteration: korani phu-ao-prakanphai mai poetphoei  
khokhwam ching rue thalaeng khokhwam  
tet borisat cha bok lang sanya phainai 2 pi

naptangtae wan tham sanya rue wan to ayu  
krommathan rue wan klap khuen su  
sathana doem khong krommathan khrang  
sutthai

Translation:

In case **the insured** conceals any fact or  
gives any false statement, **the Company**  
may void the contract within two years of  
the effective date of contract or of the date  
of the last extension or reinstatement of the  
policy.

Source:

Muang Thai Retirement Saver

These clauses are utilized to explicate conditions in applying for annuity policies that it is convenient for customers that a health questions are not required, and the insurance company has the authority to void the contract in case of false information.

### 5. Behavioral processes

Behavioral processes include verbs of (typically human) physiological and psychological behavior. The main participants are behavior and matter (Halliday, 1994, p. 139). Customers are foregrounded as the behaviors of behavioral processes as in example (11).

(11)

[คุณ] มองไกล [เพื่อ] เกษียณสบาย

Transliteration:

[khun] mong klai kasian sabai

Translation:

[You] look far ahead [for] a comfortable retirement.

Source:

BLA 555

This clause is used to urge customers to plan for retirement at present for a comfortable life in the future.

## 6. *Existential processes*

Existential processes represent that something exists or happens. There is only one main participant: existent (Halliday, 1994, p. 143). Existential clauses are used in annuity advertisements to present retirement period as a worrying one as in example (12).

(12) จากงานวิจัยพบว่า มีเพียง 15% ของผู้เกษียณ  
ที่มีชีวิตหลังเกษียณอย่างสุขสบาย

Transliteration: chak ngan wichai phop wa mi phiang 15%  
khong phukasian thi mi chiwit lang kasian  
yang suk sabai

Translation: Research shows that there is only 15% of  
retired persons leading a happy and com  
fortable life.

Source: i-Wish

### 4.2.2 *The analysis of thematic structure*

According to Bloor and Bloor (2004), the information at the Rheme position is the New information that is the focus of the speaker or writer's message. Table 1 indicates the position of information in each clause. The current and future average ages of Thai men and women, the definitions of living longer, and the information that BLA Unit Pension is a good annuity policy that guarantees sufficient retirement savings are placed in the Rheme position. In this case, the increasing average ages of Thai people, definitions of living longer, and that the advertised annuity policy is a good annuity policy are the information that the producer of the brochure would like the readers to pay special attention to.

**Table 1** Examples of the analysis of thematic structure of clauses in annuity brochures

No.	Theme	Rheme
1	<p>วันนี้อายุเฉลี่ยของชายไทย</p> <p>Transliteration: wan ni ayu chalia khong chai thai</p> <p>Translation: At present, the average age of Thai males</p>	<p>คือ 71 ปี หญิงไทย 78 ปี</p> <p>khue 71 pi ying thai 78 pi</p> <p>is 71 years, 78 for females.</p>
2	<p>อีก 15 ปีข้างหน้า อายุเฉลี่ยชายไทย</p> <p>Transliteration: ik 15 pi khang na ayu chalia chai thai</p> <p>Translation: In the next 15 years, the average age of Thai men</p>	<p>จะสูงขึ้นถึง 74 ปีและหญิงไทย 81 ปี</p> <p>cha sung khuen 74 pi lae ying thai 81 pi</p> <p>will be as high as 74, and 81 for females.</p>
3	<p>อายุยืนขึ้น</p> <p>Transliteration: ayu yuen khuen</p> <p>Translation: Living longer</p>	<p>หมายถึงระยะเวลาการใช้ชีวิตหลังเกษียณยาวนานขึ้น</p> <p>maithueng raya wela kan chai chiwit lang kasian yao nan khuen</p> <p>means a longer post-retirement life.</p>
4	<p>อายุยืนขึ้น</p> <p>Transliteration: ayu yuen khuen</p> <p>Translation: Living longer</p>	<p>หมายถึง ค่าใช้จ่ายในวัยเกษียณมากขึ้น</p> <p>maithueng kha chai chai nai wai kasian mak khuen</p> <p>means more expenses during retirement.</p>
5	<p>อายุยืนขึ้น</p> <p>Transliteration: ayu yuen khuen</p> <p>translation: Living longer</p>	<p>หมายถึง ต้องเตรียมเงินออมมากขึ้น</p> <p>maithueng tong triam ngoenom mak khuen</p> <p>means the need to save more in advance.</p>

No.	Theme	Rheme
6	<p>บีแอลเอ พร้อมเกษียณ</p> <p>Transliteration: Bi Ae0 E Prom Kasian</p> <p>Translation: BLA Unit Pension</p>	<p>คือประกันบำนาญรูปแบบใหม่ที่ช่วยให้การใช้ชีวิตหลังเกษียณเป็นเรื่องง่าย</p> <p>khue prakhan bamnan rup baep mai thi chuai hai kan chai chiwit lang kasian pen rueang ngai</p> <p>is a new annuity policy that can make life during retirement an easy one.</p>
7	<p>(บีแอลเอ พร้อมเกษียณ)</p> <p>Transliteration: Bi Ae0 E Prom Kasian</p> <p>Translation: (BLA Unit Pension)</p>	<p>เป็นการวางแผนเพื่อเตรียมเงินออมเป็นเงินบำนาญ เพียงพอรองรับค่าใช้จ่ายหลังเกษียณจนถึงอายุ 85 ปี</p> <p>pen kan wang phan phuea triam ngoenom pen ngoen bamnan phiangpho rongrap kha chai chai lang kasian chon thueng ayu 85 pi.</p> <p>is a plan for collecting sufficient savings that can cover your expenses until the age of 85.</p>

#### 4.2.3 *The analysis of mood*

Three types of mood were found in annuity advertisements to urge the readers to purchase annuity policies: declarative, interrogative and imperative. Since the main aim of advertisements is to persuade customers to purchase an advertised product or service, the majority of clauses in annuity brochures are declarative or statements giving details on benefits, premium rates, including terms and conditions of annuity policies as in examples (13) and (14).



(13)	อุ่นใจ ด้วยเงินคืนที่เพิ่มขึ้นทุกปี
Transliteration:	unchai duai ngoenkhuen thi phoem khuen thuk pi
Translation:	[You] feel secure with increasing annual returns
Source:	PR 60
(14)	เพราะชีวิตที่พร้อมคือชีวิต ที่มีความสุขมากกว่า
Transliteration:	phro chiwit thi phrom kue chiwit thi mi khwamsuk makkwa
Translation:	Because a well-prepared life is a happier life.
Source:	BLA 555

Interrogative or questions were also found in annuity advertisements. These questions are rhetorical question which refers to a question that is self-evident and no real answer is expected. It is used as an impressive persuasive device to makes an assertion and arouses the reader's interest (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 430). In this case, rhetorical questions are used in annuity advertisements to make several assertions to convince customers to buy annuity policies: presenting life during retirement as uncertain as in question (15), encouraging readers to ponder making a retirement plan as in question (16), presenting sufficient savings as necessary for a comfortable life during retirement as in questions (17), and the advertised annuity policy offers several benefits as in question (18).

- (15) เนื่องจากความเป็นไปได้ของระยะเวลาการใช้ชีวิตหลังวัยเกษียณอาจยาวนานกว่าระยะเวลาในการเก็บออมเพื่อการเกษียณและอีกมุมหนึ่งซึ่งก็คือเราก็ไม่ทราบว่า จะเจ็บป่วยอีกหรือไม่หรือแม้แต่ว่าจะมีชีวิตอยู่ได้นานอีกแค่ไหน
- Transliteration: nueang chak khwampenpaidai khong rayawela kanchaichiwit lang waikasian atcha yawnan kwa rayawela nai kankepom lae ik mumnueng sueng kho khue rao mai sap wa cha cheppuay ik rue mai rue mae tae wa cha mi chiwit yu dai ik nan kae nai
- Translation: Since it is possible that we might live longer after retirement than the period in which we saved for retirement, or, from another perspective, we do not know whether we will be ill again, and we do not know how much longer we will live.
- Source: Retirement Saving Plan (1) 55, 60, 65
- (16) ทำไมต้องเตรียมเกษียณ?
- Transliteration: tammai tong triam kasian
- Translation: Why do we need to prepare for retirement?
- Source: BLA Unit Pension
- (17) แล้วคุณ...เตรียมเงินไว้เพียงพอกับชีวิตหลังเกษียณแล้วหรือยัง?"
- Transliteration: laeo khun triam ngoen wai phiang pho khap chiwit lang kasian laeo rue yang

Translation	Have you collected sufficient savings for your retirement yet?).
(18)	เตรียมชีวิตวัยเกษียณกับเรา...ดีอย่างไร
Transliteration:	triam chiwit wai kasian kap rao di yang rai
Translation:	Why do you have to prepare for retirement with us?
Source:	Muang Thai 8560 G 15

Imperatives are used as an advice to encourage the customers to plan earlier for a happier retirement as in example (19) and to present life during retirement as a worrying one; i.e., as a period of time that people stop doing activities that they used to do while they are still working as in example (20).

(19)	เตรียมพร้อมเกษียณตั้งแต่วันนี้เพื่อความสุขที่มากกว่า
Transliteration:	triam phrom kasian tangtae wan ni phuea khwam suk thi mak kwa
Translation:	Start preparing for retirement today for greater happiness.
(20)	คุณอย่าหยุดทุกอย่างไปพร้อมกับคำว่าเกษียณ
Transliteration:	triam phrom kasian tangtae wan ni phuea khwam suk thi mak kwa
Translation:	Don't stop everything when you retire.
Source:	i-Wish

#### 4.3 Persuasive strategies in annuity brochures

Three discourses are reproduced in annuity advertisements to persuade customers that annuity policies are essential for retirement, namely, a discourse of risk, a discourse of happiness, and a discourse of good family

members. The details of each discourse are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### 4.3.1 *Discourse of risk*

The insurance industry makes use of the phenomenon of a risk society, in which risk is pervasive and society has become organized around the management and distribution of risks, together with an aging society in which people live longer and the number of the elderly population is continually rising.

The definition of longevity is created as a worrying one in the advertisements. The advertisements construct the idea that the longer people live, the more expenses they will incur. The life of the elderly in an aging society is full of risks, e.g., health problems, the rising cost of living, and medical expenses. A 2014 survey on financial planning for the retirement of Thai working-age people conducted by the Capital Market Academy, an organization supported by The Stock Exchange of Thailand was cited as evidence in the annuity advertisements. The survey revealed that the majority of Thais of working age (55%) will suffer from insufficient savings during retirement because their saving proportion is only 10-30% of the last income earned before retirement. The retirement period is presented in the advertisements as undesirable and full of risks. It is a period when people cannot do things as they can when they are still working. Besides, people currently tend to have a small number of children, or no children at all; thus, they have to take care of themselves when they get old.

That the discourse of risk in annuity advertisements presents retirement as worrying and full of risk runs parallel with Buddhist teachings, for which 90% of the Thai population have great respect, making daily decisions based on the teachings (Mills, 1999, p. 1). The discourse of risk in retirement

is consistent with one of the Four Noble Truths in Buddhist teaching, *dukkha*, which encompasses physical, mental, and emotional suffering such as aging, sickness, worry, dissatisfaction, and despair, which are natural parts of life (Moffitt, 2008, The Mind that Suffers section, para.1-3). The other three Noble Truths are the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering. According to the Buddha, the path to end suffering is *magga*, or the Noble Eightfold Path, which is a set of principles explicated in further teachings: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (Kozak, 2017, p. 58). The insurance industry, however, suggests different ways to manage *dukkha* in retirement. Individuals can cope with suffering in retirement by purchasing annuity policies that can lead to a happy, secure, worry-free and comfortable retirement, as presented in the following section.

#### 4.3.2 *Discourse of happiness*

According to the Department of Mental Health, one of the five aspects of happiness among the Thai elderly is financial security (Chumnanmak, et al., 2018, pp. 107-109; Department of Mental Health, 2012, p.13). Financial consultants also note that people feel happy, secure and worry-free when they have financial security after retirement, and savings are the crucial means to strengthen financial security for the well-being of the elderly in their golden years. Moreover, they advise that people should start saving while they are still working; the earlier they start saving, the more money they will obtain when they are in their retirement. These voices of experts are circulated in Thais society via mainstream media and official documents produced by the government and business sectors and are assumed to be the correct way of preparing for retirement (Department of Mental Health, 2012; Phutrakul, 2007; TGRI, 2012). Foucault's philosophy of power and knowledge can be used to explicate this situation.

According to Foucault (1972), a body of knowledge is constructed by an expert in the field and is disseminated constantly via social institutions such as the family, education, religion, and the media to manufacture consent and legitimacy. Each individual, as a social member, believes and accepts this body of knowledge as truth or as social norms (p. 225). In the case of financial security in retirement, when individuals read expert advice circulated in society, they perceive that savings are necessary for their well-being during retirement. Additionally, a feeling of uncertainty occurred in Thai society in 2014 due to the economic downturn caused by the coup d'état, and individuals sought a means to strengthen their security. Consequently, customers are more willing to pay for financial products and services that can strengthen financial security during retirement. Insurance policies were one of the popular options to reduce risk, as can be seen from the increasing revenues of insurance companies and the expanding market shares of annuity policies (Prachachat, 2014, para. 3; Thansettakij, 2014, Target Customers section, para. 1). The insurance industry deploys the knowledge constructed by financial experts to convince customers that retirement savings are essential. Annuity policies are created as a means of retirement savings that can help people manage all their expenses during retirement.

Annuity policies are vividly presented via both verbal and visual resources in the advertisements as a means that can strengthen financial security during retirement by offering a number of attractive benefits to customers. Annuity policies are portrayed as a good financial plan that guarantees sufficient retirement savings, is tax deductible, makes saving easy for customers, can make the customer's dream come true during the retirement period because the insured amount can help the customers to achieve their goals and help customers have color and variation in their life during their

golden years. All of these benefits can lead to a happy, secure, independent, worry-free, and comfortable life during retirement. The advertisements also stimulate the readers to start planning for their retirement while they are still working, with regular incomes because the earlier the customer buys annuity policies, the more benefits they will accrue, as we can see from the lexical choices referring to the benefits that annuity policies provide are such as *khwamsuk* (happiness), *mankhong* (secure), *saduaksabai* (comfortable), *manchai* (confident), *unchai* (peace of mind), *rapruen* (smooth), *maitong kangwon* (worry-free), and *mii isara* (independent).

The benefits that annuity policies provide are consistent with the current lifestyle and goal of individuals living in capitalist society of being happy, secure, and successful. Money is power, and success is measured from the possession of material things (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2012). Business and financial discourses usually revolve around happiness and success such as the study of Sroikudrua and Kaewjungate (2013), who investigated member's periodicals in network marketing business and found that discourses of happiness and career achievements were constructed to persuade customers to be a member of its business. Insurance companies also make use of this capitalist ideology in annuity advertisements by referring to the aforementioned survey that the majority of Thais in their working age will suffer from insufficient savings during retirement. Insurance companies, then, constitute and exploit consumer needs for profits by reproducing the hegemonic idea that retirement savings are necessary for a happy, secure, and worry-free retirement. This is consistent with Nantasiri (2011) and Nantasirisorn (2014), who revealed that insurance companies' TV commercials convince customers that purchasing insurance policies is a solution to the problem of how to manage risks in life, and the customer's happiness is caused by purchasing insurance policies and by receiving the services of the companies.

One of the persuasive strategies insurance companies use is that annuity policies are available for everyone aged 20-60 years. This persuasive strategy, however, perpetuates inequality and maintain class-based division in capitalist system. It seems to be class-free that annuity policies are available for every individuals, but actually only the person who can afford to pay for the premiums can purchase. In other words, only the upper and middle classes can purchase annuity policies. Additionally, the premium rates of annuity policies are quite high. They are between ten thousand baht to more than twenty thousand baht depending on the age and gender of customers which means that some people cannot afford. To a certain extent, annuity policies widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

Moreover, individuals living in a risk society with neoliberal ideology are encouraged to exercise choice, freedom, empowerment, and is positioned as fully response for their own success or failure (Crossley, 2005), people are encouraged to feel a sense of personal responsibility to cope with their risk (Beck, 1992). Furthermore, there is a change in family tie in Thai society that people nowadays have a small number of children or have no children which is different from the past when Thailand was agricultural society, family members take care of one another. Nowadays, Thailand is an industrial society, people work in government and business sectors, the elders need to take care of themselves. Insurance companies see market opportunity from this situation by turning retirement savings into a commodity for sale. Individuals can create their own financial security in retirement by purchasing annuity policies. Thai people might find this convincing because the neoliberal ideology that each individual take care of their own retirement runs parallel with the Buddhist teaching of self-reliance or the Thai saying: *ton pen ti phueng hang ton*. In Buddhist's teaching, each individual is responsible for one's own happiness



and well-being, and one need to eliminate the habits of dependency on others. Self-reliance covers two levels of development: mundane (worldly) and supra-mundane (higher spiritual) development under the *magga* or the Eightfold Noble Path. While supra-mundane (higher spiritual) development is related to aspects such as meditation, the mundane development deals with discarding all three types of dependencies in daily living: physical, mental, and livelihood. What is related to the findings of this study is developing self-reliance for livelihood. According to Buddhist teaching, one should develop self-reliance for livelihood by getting rid of financial or livelihood dependencies on other people like one's spouse. Since future is unpredictable, a breadwinner might have serious illness, injury or death. As a result, one should learn to be self-reliant by developing the potential to earn a living for oneself (Rajapakse, 2003). Insurance companies make use of this teaching by promoting that purchasing annuity policies is a way that an individual can be financially self-reliant during retirement because annuity policies provide incomes during retirement.

#### *4.3.3 Discourse of good family members*

In a capitalist society, every social interaction can be expressed as a commercial transaction and as a means of defining relationships (Hovland & Wolberg, 2010, p.51). Individuals can also acquire positive qualities, develop their identities, and even differentiate themselves as more successful than other people through the commodities they consume (Goatly, 2008, pp.93-94).

In the case of insurance policies, the advertisements present a positive image of people who purchase annuity policies as independent people who can provide financial security not only for themselves but also for their loved ones. This is consistent with the study of Nantasirisorn (2014), who

found that life insurance commercials construct the social value of Thai people's lives, in that one should care for and be cared for by loved ones.

This finding can also be discussed based on the Buddhist teaching of *anicca*, or impermanence, which is one of the *ti-lakkhana*, or basic characteristics of all phenomenon- based existence. Things are subject to change; nothing last forever (Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2018, What are the Four Noble Truths? Section, para. 4). The human body, for example, declines as people age. Life is full of changes and uncertainty. Death is unpredictable. According to the Buddha, attachment to *anicca* leads to suffering, and the ultimate means to eliminate it is by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path until reaching enlightenment (Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2018, What are the Four Noble Truths? Section, para 5-9). Annuity policies are represented in advertisements as a means to prepare for changes and uncertainty in life during retirement. Annuity policies are portrayed as not only providing financial security in retirement for the insured, but also strengthening financial security for family members in case one dies. This implies that annuity policies have the power to create positive qualities in individuals who purchase annuity policies as prudent and independent people, who care for their loved ones in the sense that they can take care of their own financial stability, not being a burden to the children. Moreover, they can provide financial security for loved ones in the case that they have passed away, and their loved ones receive the benefits from the annuity policies. This suggests that they are responsible spouses, caring parents, and grateful children. All of these are desired attributes for family members and are part of the Thai social values of parents taking care of their children, and in return children taking care of their parents when they get old or the Thai social value of gratitude. Consequently, a person who does not purchase annuity policies might be considered as failing to comply with social norms, which can lead to a feeling of inferiority.

## 5. Conclusion

Drawing on Halliday's systemic functional grammar, this study argues that the insurance companies constitute and exploit consumer needs for financial security by reproducing discourse of risk, discourse of happiness, and discourse of good family members. To a certain extent, the persuasive strategies of annuity advertisements are effective in convincing customers as they runs parallel the Buddhist teachings of suffering, impermanence, self-reliance, and Thai social value of gratitude. In sum, the findings of this study not only fill in knowledge gap of financial discourse in Thailand, but also enhance media literacy of the customers who read annuity advertisements by emancipating them from the exploitation of annuity advertisements which construct the idea that annuity policies are essential for a worry-free retirement.

Given this study objective to analyze the Thai annuity brochures, the researcher would like to recommend two aspects for further investigation. First, it would be constructive to analyze a variety of advertising texts for annuity policies and other insurance policies such as advertisements in newspapers, TV commercials, and billboards in order to offer less partial perspectives on the exploitation of consumer's needs for financial security and the reproduction of ideologies and social inequalities in insurance business. Second, further valuable insight could be stimulated by incorporating quantitative analysis in analyzing annuity advertisements together with the interviews of both producers and the receivers of the advertisements.

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