# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## A. The Background of the Study

Social semiotics is the study of the sign-making process that focuses on the specific context in which the sign is produced rather than having 'meaning by decree' or 'intrinsic relationships' (Kress and Leeuwen: 1996). The theory of social semiotics origin from Systemic functional linguistics by Halliday (1978) where this theory views language as a resource for making meaning and explaining language in actual use. Systemic functional grammar is concerned not only with the structure but also with how those structures construct meaning.

Social semiotics theory from Halliday was developed by Kress and Leeuwen (1996) where they extended the idea of meaning as choices, to develop a social semiotic approach to the visual and to theorize the visual as a mode. Language has grammar to describe how words combine in clauses, sentences, and text. Kress and Leeuwen believed that the visual also has grammar to describe the way elements depicted people, places, and things combined in visual 'statements' of greater or lesser complexity and extension (Kress and Leeuwen:1996). Visual semiotics is the visual component of a text as connected to but not dependent on written text for meaning (Jewitt:1998). Social semiotics in everyday life can be found in a social context such as printed media (magazines and billboards) or digital media (e-commerce and social media).

Every commercial organization makes a lot of effort and spends money to create the name of their products, slogans, and create messages that give meaning so the public will buy their products (Kreidler:1998). These advertisements can be found in our everyday life where the advertisement can be embedded the deeper social ideologies (Hussein:2010) and beauty advertisements have a big role in skin color stratification that can be on TV, radio, Print out magazines or newspapers, and other media have the influential role (Shevdev: 2008).

Nowadays in the digital era, people love to buy things from online shops because it is easier for them only by ordering things from home. The data from Digital Marketing Association showed that beauty care products are products that are the most searched and sold in e-commerce in 2021 and 2022 (DIGIMIND: 2022). One of the most popular e-commerce in Indonesia is Shopee based on a survey conducted by Snapcart, Iprice, and market research Ipsos Indonesia in 2021 (Nurhalizah: 2022) (Tantomi: 2021). The image information of the company can be negative or positive where the positive image of the company can develop improvements of consumers to buy their products and give the consideration to consumers in deciding to buy their products (Mbete and Tanamal:2020).

There are many advertisements for skin beauty products on Shopee which give efforts to create messages in the form of verbal and non-verbal that contain meaning to attract the public's attention to buy their products. The verbal and non-verbal language used in these advertisements can affect the public's perspective on the standard beauty of skin color. This view as a

concern in this study tries to find out the verbal and non-verbal meanings in skin beauty advertisements on Shopee regarding skin color.

The previous research was conducted by Fauziyah Amatulla, et.al (2019) that examined the multimodal in beauty product advertisements namely, Wardah Exclusive Matte Lip Cream and Purbasari Hi Matte Lip Cream advertisements. The researchers analyzed the visual advertisements by using theory of Kress and Leuween (2001) and for verbal analysis using the theory of Halliday as well as the multimodality theory of Cheong's generic structure of advertisement (2004). This study found that each verbal and visual metafunction has the same potential for interpreting meaning.

In this study, the researcher also used the visual semiotics theory from Kress and Leeuwen (2006) and verbal using the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory from Halliday (1994) in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee to find out the meaning of the visual and verbal in the ad to skin color.
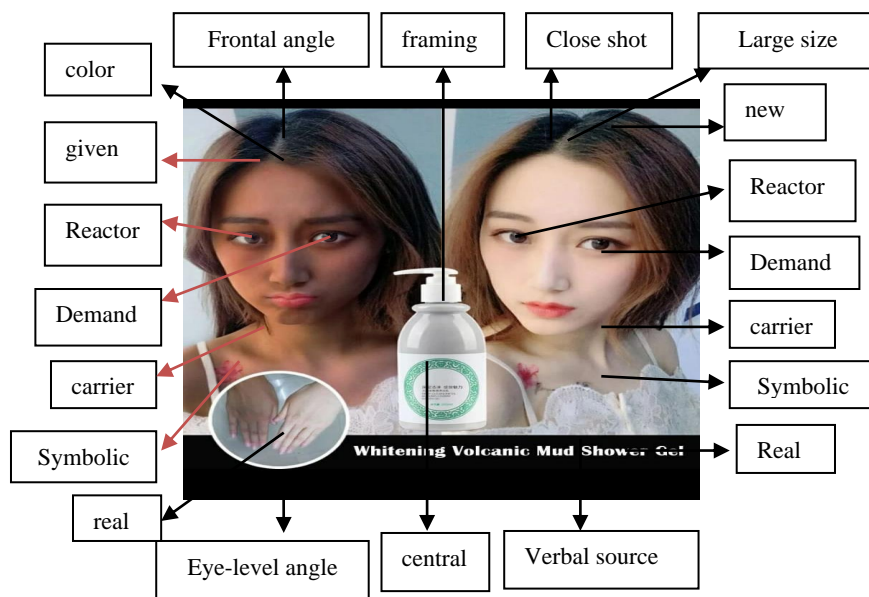
figure 1.1

The picture above was analyzed by applying visual semiotics theory from Kress and Leeuwen that found the representational meaning, interactional meaning, and compositional meaning :

The representational meaning was found the narrative process and conceptual process. The narrative process, it was found that the non-transactional reaction where participants I and II gaze outside the picture means there is no goal in the picture. It was also found that the conceptual process namely the Symbolic suggestive process where the participants as a carrier represents themselves by their skin color as the identity of the represented participants which is the same person with different skin color.

The interactional meaning was found the reaction from the represented participants by her eye-contact and different gestures of expression where participant I shows a sad expression and participant II shows a confident expression. This contact reaction between represented participants and viewers is demanding. The information put on the bottom is the verbal source and the picture of different color of hands that mean real or fact information. The social distance of this ad is the close shot which means the viewers feel close or intimate. The picture uses the frontal angle where this angle creates the involvement between the participants represented and the viewers. The modality of this picture is represented by the participants from the difference of the conrast color of their skin.

The compositional meaning was found the framing that represented by line and product that was put at the center of the picture. That framing separates left participant and the right participant where the left participant

interpreted as a given and the right participant as a new. The large size of the participants will draw the focus of the viewers on the participants and the product puts on the center to attract the viewers to know their product.

The Verbal source was found in this advertisement is "whitening volcanic mud shower gel". That will be analyzed by ideational function from sytemic functional linguistics by Halliday. The verbal source promoted the product as a whitening product.

## B. The Problems of the Study

Based on the topic of this study, the researcher figured out the following problems:

1. How is the visual semiotics in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee interpreted?

2. How is the systemic functional linguistics in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee interpreted?

3. What is the representation of visual semiotics and systemic functional linguistics on skin color in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee?

## C. The Objective of the Study

1) Interpreting the meaning of visual semiotics in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee

2) Interpreting the meaning of systemic functional linguistics in Indonesian beauty advertisements

3) Describing the representation of skin color behind the visual and textual in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee

**D. The Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is ten Indonesian beauty advertisements was taken from online shops on Shopee and the advertisement used as the data is static picture advertisements which means ads are only images and text without audio or video. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling, in which one product has several image slides and the researcher only selected one image from those slides.

The purposive sampling was chosen to have the data following research objectives where the data is beauty advertisements about skin  which have the campaign about beauty skin color in their advertisements. The data will be analyzed by visual semiotics theory from Kress and Leeuwen for visual sources in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee and the ideational function from SFL theory from Halliday to analyze the verbal sources in Indonesian beauty advertisements on Shopee.

**E. The significance of the Study**

Theoretically, this research is expected to be a helper for readers to understand the visual semiotics and SFL of skin color in beauty advertisements and this research can add the insight about semiotics of skin color in beauty advertisements.

Practically for other researchers, This research can be their reference on visual semiotics and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) of skin color in beauty ads for further research and for society, this finding is giving awareness about colorism practice in beauty ads is the rooted of racism .